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DIARY

H E

OF A

H O U S I N G

M A N A G E R

BY ABRAHAM GOLDFELD



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THE DIARY OF
A HOUSING MANAGER



T H E D I A R Y
of a H O U S I N G
M A N A G E R

~~~~~ *By* A B R A H A M   G O L D F E L D

N A T I O N A L   A S S O C I A T I O N  
O F   H O U S I N G   O F F I C I A L S

~~~~~ C H I C A G O

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1938

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FOREWORD

FOR some time past nearly everyone interested in public or publicly assisted large-scale housing has been saying that its success or failure will depend largely upon how it is managed. Relatively little has been done, however, to define clearly the functions and responsibilities of managers, the qualities and experience they should possess, the special preparation, if any, they should undergo, or their relation to other parts of a moving housing program. In its first management training course NAHO has made a start on these problems but much remains to be done. Organizations of non-officials, I am sure, would also admit that they have more questions than answers on the really important phases of housing management.

As its title suggests, in this book Mr. Goldfeld has not tried to give a systematic answer to these questions. It is an abridged edition of the diary he kept during the earlier days of his work as manager of the Lavanburg Homes on the lower east side of New York with editorial comments by the diarist, himself, as he looked back upon the written record after several years of successful management experience. It was originally revised for the NAHO management training course in which Mr. Goldfeld was an instructor, but its character seemed to justify a wider audience.

Although the diary is a strongly personal document, both in the sense of emphasizing those phases of management in which Mr. Goldfeld is himself most keenly interested and in the sense of dealing with those problems that actually arose in this one development, I believe it is a genuine contribution to the literature of this profession in the making. It is specific and concrete. It shows how background in certain phases of the job has to be supplemented by common sense and native ability in others. It emphasizes the fact that the really crucial problems of housing management lie in the human relations between the tenants and the manager and among the tenants themselves. Although naturally it has relatively little to say about the problems of maintaining and operating the physical plant, it does make very clear that these problems cannot be divorced from those of tenant relations without causing an unending series of troubles.

I believe that NAHO's gratitude to Mr. Goldfeld will be shared by those who read this booklet. Its publication is sponsored by NAHO's Committee on Housing Management.

COLEMAN WOODBURY,
Director, NAHO

PREFACE

DIARIES are ordinarily kept by individuals to record the daily incidents of their lives. By and large they are not regarded as important documents because they are filled with the commonplace events that go to make up a person's day, important perhaps to the diarist, but uninteresting to others.

Diaries are maintained by people in a variety of fields: thus, every ship's captain keeps a daily log; military heads submit daily records to their superiors; high executive officials file day-by-day reports. These daily accounts are necessary to build a permanent store of information and to help in fixing responsibilities. In the field of social welfare, a form similar to the diary has been developed as a tool of research and has usefully served the needs of both students and investigators.

The Diary of a Housing Manager does not comply with any definite set of rules in regard to its form. It is offered primarily for the information on one type of housing management which it contains. Information on housing management, unfortunately, is meager. The experience in European countries is not always readily available in English, while that of the United States has been for the most part gained by private commercial enterprises and is not recorded in any easily accessible form. Any material on housing management, therefore, becomes a desirable contribution to students of the subject.

In the conduct of a large-scale apartment or low-rent housing projects, management assumes a vital role. Once a house is built and tenants move in, an organism has been created whose development thereafter depends mainly upon good management. Day by day many problems involving both the physical building and its inhabitants arise. These problems are unpredictable. They emerge unexpectedly, and they are insistent in their demand for a quick, intelligent answer. To supply such answers is the job of the housing manager. The effectiveness of his answers will depend upon his ingenuity, his resourcefulness, his understanding of people. Experience will help him. Pertinent information obtained from others will also aid him in the solution of his problems.

This diary was commenced with no other purpose than to record

daily events which were related to the manager's job at the Lavanburg Homes, a large-scale, low-rent model housing project conceived and instituted by Fred L. Lavanburg, a New York industrialist and philanthropist. The first entry in the diary was made on the manager's first day at the project. Thereafter, daily entries were recorded for a period of ten years.

In editing the diary with a view to its serving as a source book of housing information, it was found expedient to eliminate much of the material covered during the ten years in order to omit the inconsequential events and avoid repetition. The entries of the events of only the first two years are taken verbatim from the original records just as they were written at the time of their occurrence, and of these events only the most significant are selected. The subsequent eight years are summarized so that the reader may obtain a complete picture of the manager's ten years at the Lavanburg Homes.

To carry out the purpose of constructing a useful source book of management information, the writer has appended to various diary entries brief critical comments. These were added while editing the work for publication to explain the events described in the diary. They will also round out the incidents, evaluate "spot" decisions, and pass more mature judgments upon the day-by-day thinking.

No attempt has been made to give the diary a literary style or manner. The informal method of diary keeping is maintained to give the reader the feeling of participation in the daily life at the Lavanburg project.

In order that no one may be identified, the names of tenants have been changed. A few situations have also been altered to avoid any possible embarrassment to tenants who still live at the Homes.

The writer wishes to make acknowledgments to those who directly or indirectly aided him in preparing this book for publication. He is greatly indebted to Walter W. Pettit, Assistant Director of the New York School of Social Work, who first taught and developed in him an appreciation of the diary form as a useful method in research; to Arthur Bohnen for valuable criticism; to Beatrice B. Schalet and Jacob E. Schwab for assistance in editing the diary for publication.

ABRAHAM GOLDFELD

New York, N. Y.
November, 1937

CONTENTS

I

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LAVANBURG HOMES

Page 1

II

THE DIARY, 1927-1930

Page 5

III

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD 1931-1937

Page 103

The Diary of a Housing Manager



I. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LAVANBURG HOMES

MANY years ago Mr. Lavanburg became disturbed over the fact that housing facilities provided by profit-making corporations were not supplying the needs of the low-income working men and women. Shortly after the war, while on a trip abroad, he visited both municipally- and privately-aided housing projects in London and Paris. Influenced by what he saw he conceived the idea of endowing a large-scale low-rent model housing project in New York City, hoping that his action would stimulate similar projects by private individuals as well as by municipal authorities.

To carry forward his plan he formed the Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation, invited a group of distinguished citizens to serve on the board of directors, and communicated with various social service and building agencies in order to benefit from their experience and advice. Architects were engaged and plans were drawn.

On January 26, 1927, at the City Club of New York City, a meeting of a special advisory committee was held to discuss policy. Among those attending were Benjamin Tuska, Alexander M. Bing, Boyden Sparkes, and Arthur Somers, all members of the Foundation's board of directors; W. C. Sommerfeld, the architect; Clarence Stein, the consulting architect; Clarence H. Holmes, president of the City & Suburban Homes Company; Lee L. Hanmer and Clarence A. Perry of the Russell Sage Foundation; and Miss Lillian D. Wald, head worker, Henry Street Settlement.

The Diary of a Housing Manager

Rentals was the chief subject of their discussion. Mr. Bing arrived at an estimated rental per room in the following manner:

Even if it is decided that there shall be no return on the capital invested, the maintenance of the buildings will involve certain disbursements for which rents will have to be charged. These disbursements can be roughly estimated as follows:

| | <i>Per Room
Per Month</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Maintenance (Heat, hall lighting, janitor's wages, repairs, insurance, etc.) | \$3.50 to \$4.00 |
| Taxes on Land | 1.00 |
| Taxes on Building | 1.60 |
| Depreciation | 1.60 |

It will, therefore, be seen that if there is no tax exemption, and if it is desired to accumulate a fund with which these buildings can be replaced when they have completely outlived their usefulness, but if no other income on investment is desired, it will be necessary to charge a rent per room per month of \$7.70 to \$8.20

His estimate, of course, did not make allowances for the cost of community activities, and it proved to be surprisingly accurate. Our present average rent per room per month is about \$7.00, made possible by complete tax exemption.

However, the consensus of the meeting was that it would not be practicable to base rental on a cost figure, at least for the first year, until the cost of operation and other uncertain factors could be determined by actual experience. The committee also suggested that provision be made for carrying desirable tenants who might become in arrears. Their precautions were well founded. Even though it was decided to operate on a cost basis, the Foundation later made allowances for tenants who for good reason could not continue paying the original rent.

Various suggestions were made concerning the facilities for community activities in the building. A roof playground was first proposed. Representatives of the City and Suburban Homes expressed the opinion that a roof playground was not desirable because of the noise and discomfort created by children running through the hallways. This opinion was concurred in by the representatives of the Russell Sage Foundation and by Miss Wald.

Separate boys' and girls' recreation rooms and a meeting hall for the tenants, to be located in the basement, were recommended. The need for proper recreational supervision was stressed, the committee also emphasizing the desirability of a layout that would simplify the problem of supervision.

Playgrounds in the courts were not endorsed, the committee believing that the noise would disturb the tenants. A basement laundry was considered inadvisable. Mr. Holmes explained that the laundries in his buildings were gradually being removed, as tenants preferred to launder clothes in their apartments. A nurse's office and first aid room were also disapproved because a number of health agencies existed in the vicinity. A day nursery in the building was held impracticable because of the expense and supervisory difficulties involved.

The selection of tenants was briefly discussed. The committee thought it undesirable to have the building recognized as one for dependent people; the charitable feature of the undertaking was, therefore, to be stressed as little as possible. It was agreed, however, that people in fairly good financial position should not be accepted as tenants.

Subsequently the board of directors met to consider the committee's suggestions. It decided in favor of a roof playground, a meeting hall for the tenants, and recreation rooms for the children.

In March, 1927, the Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York,

to . . . provide and to further the movement to provide sanitary housing accommodations at low rentals for persons of small income, primarily those living in New York City and vicinity who are unable to obtain within their means proper, sanitary housing. The Corporation, as a means to such end, may engage in research or publication; . . . (and) may employ any other means or agencies which from time to time shall to the Corporation seem expedient.

The site which Mr. Lavanburg acquired was in the Lower East Side at 124-142 Goerck Street. This was one of the most notorious slum neighborhoods in New York City. Mr. Lavanburg hoped the influence of his model tenement house would improve the character of its surroundings.

In May, 1927, the general building contract was awarded to the

Fredburn Construction Company. The structure designed was a six-story walk-up, of semi-fireproof construction. The plans called for an E-shaped apartment house, made of Holland brick, containing 113 apartments, of which 51 were to have three rooms, 48 four rooms, and 14 five rooms.

The average dimensions of the rooms were:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Living rooms | 10'4" x 15' |
| Bed rooms | 9' x 12' |
| Kitchens | 7' x 11' |
| Bath rooms | 4'8" x 8' |

The equipment specified included all modern conveniences such as steam heat, hot water, electricity, dumb-waiters, ample closets, and hardwood floors. The kitchens were to contain two porcelain stationary tubs, a porcelain sink, a gas range, electric outlets, a combination ice box, kitchen closets, shelves, an overhead dryer, and a compartment for garbage cans. The bathrooms were to be tiled and equipped with built-in tubs, showers, and medicine cabinets. Other features of the house were brass plumbing and cross ventilation in every apartment.

A large playground was planned on the roof, to be surrounded by a parapet of good height. To protect the lower apartments from the noise of the playground, the roof was to be constructed of tile over steel beams and concrete arches.

In June, 1927, while the building was under construction, the diary was begun.

II. THE DIARY, 1927-1930

JUNE 1, 1927

MY FIRST day as Manager of the Lavanburg Homes. Spent it looking over the hundreds of applications already received. The number of them at this early date amazes me—it will be months before the building is ready. Noticed the great bulk are from residents of the Lower East Side and only a very few from the Bronx and Brooklyn. Thought of the best way to make a personal visit to the homes of all eligible applicants in my limited time. Decided to draw a map of the Lower East Side, note the location of every family. Using this as a guide, I shall be able to interview several families living in the same neighborhood during each trip.

[This plan was a great time-saver, enabling me to complete the large number of interviews in a relatively short period of time.]

JUNE 2, 1927

Down on Goerck Street to watch construction. Found the activity interesting. Planning to make a number of trips before the building is finished to learn as much as I can about it. Looked over the plans and was surprised to see no provision for office. The construction supervisor promised to call this to the attention of the architect.

[A three-room apartment on the first floor was turned into an office and living quarters for me. This arrangement provided but one small room for my assistant and me. We felt crowded and I also deplored the absence of privacy for discussing personal matters with the tenants. Eventually, the entire apartment was converted into an office, and I was given another three-room apartment for my living quarters.]

JUNE 6, 1927

News of the construction of the building is spreading and people come to Mr. Lavanburg's office in person for application blanks.

Discussed with Mr. Lavanburg the general plans for house activities. Glad to find him of the opinion it would be best to forego definite plans until the house is occupied and the tenants can be consulted. He is eager to have various community activities take place

in the building and remarked, "That is why I want you to be the manager."

[I first met Mr. Lavanburg in 1926, while working at Federation Settlement, a community center serving a thickly populated area in New York City. At this institution I organized and experienced activities and programs for both adults and children. My background and training helped me later, when social activities of an extensive nature developed at the Lavanburg Homes.]

JUNE 8, 1927

Interviewed twelve families today. Several of them asked if they might take in boarders. Took this up with Mr. Bing of our board who ruled against it because of eventual overcrowding. He frowned upon any idea to use the apartments for profit-making.

JUNE 10, 1927

Have worked out with Mr. Lavanburg a few simple principles for making final selections of tenants:

1. Will not consider families whose income permits them to pay a higher rent. In determining what constitutes income proportionate to the rent and size of family, will consult the budgets of the Jewish Social Service Association. [Mr. Lavanburg later told me, after he had consulted with Mr. Bing, that the rental had been set at \$7.50 per week for three rooms, \$8.50 for four and \$10.50 for five. Owing to the disadvantages of the fifth- and sixth-floor apartments (building is a walk-up), a 25 cent per week reduction was made for the fifth floor and 50 cents per week for the sixth. This averages about \$9.50 a room a month for the whole house. The cheapest rental for its equal at this time was \$17 or \$18 a room a month. On the East Side, in the slum tenements, rooms averaged around \$6 per month. Many people who could afford to pay \$9 or \$10 were compelled to remain in the slum district because they could not pay \$18.]
2. Will accept only families with children. Those with younger children will be given preference for the reason that social and educational activities should be approached from the preventive point of view, which is most effective with young children. In families where children are grown and presum-

ably working, the combined income is likely to be large enough to pay a higher rental elsewhere without hardship.

- 3. Families having decent living quarters at the time of application will not be eligible.
- 4. No families will be considered which in their present homes are not maintaining standards of cleanliness and decency such as would indicate reasonable use of new facilities. [I later decided to try the experiment of accepting about 10 per cent of the tenants from those whose homes I found ill kept. I wanted to see what effect the new environment would have on them. Some years later, I was interested to observe that of the four families living at Lavanburg who persistently did not maintain decent standards, only two were from this group.]
- 5. In order to maintain acceptable standards of non-crowding, will assign apartments according to the size of the family as follows:

| | |
|---|---------|
| 3 or 4 persons | 3 rooms |
| 5 or 6 persons | 4 rooms |
| 7 or 8 persons | 5 rooms |
| No more than 2 adults in each apartment | |

- 6. When deciding on which floor to assign each family, will take into account the health condition of its members, such as cardiac diseases, high blood pressure, pregnancy, and so on. It will not be feasible to consider tenants' personal preferences.

JUNE 12, 1927

Today was exceptionally hot. In some of the tenement houses, the combination of littered garbage and airless stairways created a stench that was stifling. I now understand better why many women become emotional, even bursting into tears, when they tell me how much new bright rooms would mean to them and to their families.

JUNE 15, 1927

Had a most valuable talk with Dr. Merrick of the West Side Settlement House today. He is a social worker of great reputation. I found he had given much thought to the type of house we are building. To him this project presented a great opportunity to serve people who are normal instead of families who are "cases." He

thought that the idea of teaching people to use modern housing facilities was very important, and that our experiences might stimulate the development of similar projects for which there is such dire need. He urged that I approach the parents through their children, saying, "If the parents think the Manager is fond of their children and is interested in their welfare, they will be much more willing to accept restrictions."

Dr. Merrick also suggested weekly rentals. Such an arrangement, he indicated, would work out better for both tenant and project. First, because the tenant is usually paid weekly and it is easier for him to budget his rent on the same basis; and second, if for any reason the tenant is unable to pay, the Manager learns of it quickly and can take whatever steps seem necessary.

[Dr. Merrick's two recommendations were successfully adopted. Approach to the parents through the children is always stressed; and rents are paid weekly.]

JUNE 20, 1927

Called on scattered families in Brooklyn. Find that such calls require much time and frequently the family is not at home. Will try sending printed application blanks with specific questions. If the information returned meets the requirements, the family will be visited in due course.

[This procedure was eventually used in all instances where letters of application were received, and it saved much time.]

JUNE 25, 1927

On my visits to the East Side people frequently stop me to inquire anxiously about the fate of their applications. Three young women stepped up to me today to ask the usual question. Of course there was nothing I could tell them, and one, becoming impatient, exclaimed, "I bet if only I knew Mr. X. we'd be *sure* to get in!" Mr. X. is a powerful political figure in this section. Apparently these people have great faith in political "pull." I told the woman that her remark would be held against her when considering her application. I thought this would be a good way to let people know that favors from politicians had nothing to do with the selection of tenants.

JUNE 27, 1927

Received letter from the Jewish Social Service Association expressing interest in the Foundation. Will contact this organization to establish a relationship of mutual cooperation. It will be a good plan, while interviewing people in the neighborhood of Goerck Street, to visit all local social service agencies. I want to know what services are available here, and also to acquaint these agencies of what is planned at the new project.

JULY 2, 1927

A terribly hot day. Climbed to several sixth-floor flats to find no one at home. Neighbors helpfully informed me that the families left for Coney Island early in the morning to spend the entire day there. They eagerly ask if I have any message to leave. . . .

JULY 18, 1927

Saw Miss Rifkin of the Jewish Social Service Association. We agreed that cooperation between the two agencies would be helpful to both. Made the suggestion to Miss R. that she recommend to us several of her permanent clients. She assured me she would do so, and seemed pleased with the possibility of having several of her families living at the Lavanburg Homes.

[Managers of projects like the Lavanburg Homes are often called upon to deal with individual and family situations. They must deal with the child unable to make adequate group adjustment; with families not qualified by one reason or another to take care of their own health problems; with the growing boy or girl who desires to learn a particular trade; with parents unable to cope with a delinquent child; with families threatened with disintegration. Problems of this character the manager need not try to solve by himself; it were better for him to be familiar with the many community resources and social agencies equipped to handle these situations. With this knowledge he is always ready to make proper "referrals" once an unusual situation arises, and bring immediate assistance to his tenants.]

JULY 27, 1927

Walked into the filthiest flat thus far visited. I have never seen such dirt and disorder. An unmade folding-bed in the living-room

was littered with soiled clothing, newspapers, and magazines. Bedding lay on the floor where it had fallen. Cast-off clothing, shoes, cartons, and dirty dishes cluttered the chairs or were piled high in every corner. The young fellow who received me made no effort to clean a chair or to excuse the state of the room. During our conversation, I noticed he was wearing a university key. He told me he is a junior at New York University. Evidently his college environment has had no effect upon his home life.

On the other hand, among the hundred families already visited were many that kept their homes scrupulously clean. Sometimes I would find stairways so littered with refuse that I could pick my way only with difficulty, and then I would step into a flat clean and sparkling. In these surroundings, which lacked the most common modern home conveniences, such efficient housekeeping is no mean feat. I found living in the slum, as everywhere, all types of people. Some are clean and some dirty; some intelligent, others subnormal. Most do not take their living conditions passively and show an aggressive attitude in their efforts to better them, particularly "for the sake of the children." As yet there is no crystalization of their strong wish for better housing. All of their efforts are directed toward making more money to take fuller advantage of what is at present available.

[In the last few years, the younger men and women have become active in their efforts to get decent housing. The Lower East Side Public Housing Conference is one of the organizations in the neighborhood which is organizing the consumer to demand better quarters. It aims to enforce New York City building regulations and secure new government subsidized housing.]

AUGUST 2, 1927

Visited Black Neighborhood House, located two blocks from the Homes. Was asked many questions about the Foundation. There seems to be much curiosity about it in professional circles. The Settlement House is quite large, but there is nothing inviting about it. The personnel appears to lack enthusiasm and a drab air pervades the institution. They do have a pre-school kindergarten which I found very interesting. I was told it would be possible to arrange to have the children of the Lavanburg project use their "gym," as physical limitations prevent our planning for one.

AUGUST 14, 1927

Mr. Lavanburg took the architect and me to inspect several apartment houses. We were especially interested to see the finishes of various hallways.

Mr. Lavanburg takes great personal interest in all of these details. Every day, on his way to his office, he stops off to look over the progress of the building. He is an exceptionally large man and the crowd which always gathers about us easily recognizes him. His attitude is very friendly, especially to the children, and they as well as the adults do not hesitate to talk to him.

[Years later Mr. Lavanburg became a legendary figure in the neighborhood, and many were the tales told of him, his generosity, and his friendliness.]

AUGUST 23, 1927

Rained steadily yesterday and today and I have been taking life easy. Planned a printed card which I shall use to notify people no longer being considered so that they can look for other apartments. Of course, the card will not state the real reason for not including the applicant on our waiting list. It is hard to tell a man he is not a suitable tenant because his wife keeps a filthy home or because he earns too much money.

AUGUST 28, 1927

Made the first calls on employers to check financial information given by applicants. Plan to visit or write all concerns employing qualifying heads of families to ascertain whether the income and vocation are as stated.

Sent list of names to the Social Service Exchange to find out whether any of the families are known to the social service agencies. Will follow up the slips returned by the Exchange to get a record of the contact.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1927

Have come to know more people in the neighborhood, such as the staff of the local library and the police sergeant of this precinct. The sergeant is very derisive of the idea of a first-class apartment house on Goerck Street. He bet me a dinner that the tenants would be throwing garbage out of the windows (as is a daily occurrence

here) before the building had been occupied even six months.

[Months later, I went to the station to collect my bet. Unfortunately, the sergeant had been transferred to another precinct.]

SEPTEMBER 19, 1927

A truck driver clambered down from his seat today to have a few words with me about the notice he had just received. "Say, mister," said he, "they tell me I can't get in because I make \$45 and only got one kid? So if I made \$30 and had two kids you'd want me maybe? A fine thing! Nowadays a fellow should not make so much and have lots of kids to get a decent place to live in!"

But I had just come from a home painfully bare and clean. Nine were in the family. One was a cripple and some of the others were visibly undernourished. The father makes about \$18 a week peddling umbrellas. How can he possibly pay our rent of \$10.50 a week for a five-room apartment? Yet he is surely entitled to better living quarters. I have a feeling of hopelessness when I realize that our project will benefit so few among the many who need better housing.

[Mr. Lavanburg had hoped that his example would inspire other men of means to invest their money at no interest or at a very nominal interest for low rent housing. My experience at the Homes has proved to me conclusively that without government participation in heavily subsidized housing, the tenement dweller will have to go on living, as he nearly always does, in filthy, insanitary, below-standard houses.]

SEPTEMBER 25, 1927

Attended a meeting of the East Side Community Council, an organization of all the local social agencies. Was introduced as a neophyte and asked to say a few words about the Lavanburg Homes.

Have often wondered why the building does not include the north and south corners and completely cover the block on which it stands. Asked Mr. Lavanburg about this and he explained that the two owners held out for so much money that he was forced to let them go. He had originally intended a larger building.

OCTOBER 5, 1927

Much publicity being given the project. News articles have appeared in all the important New York newspapers. Could see a

greater value to these news stories if they were more accurate. One announced a flat monthly rental of \$25 and I have been questioned about this by applicants ever since.

[Realizing the importance of acquainting the public with accurate facts about the project I adopted the practice of sending reports to the newspapers explaining the nature of the Lavanburg Homes and keeping the editors supplied with facts about the rents, number of apartments, number of tenants, and statistical information about the different activities sponsored. Very often after such a report was sent the editors would assign a special reporter to interview me about developments.

Our publicity policy also requires the mailing of annual reports to individuals and organizations interested in housing. Requests by clubs and community groups for an address on housing management and related housing questions are always favorably considered.]

OCTOBER 7, 1927

Applications passed the 900 mark today. Did considerable work on classifying the accumulated data.

OCTOBER 27, 1927

On my trips through the East Side, I notice much vandalism and writing on the walls by the children. My estimate is that we will have between 200 and 300 children in the house. What to do to keep them out of mischief and from damaging the property? It is a great challenge. One thing is obvious—children with no opportunities for play will use their energies to do mischief.

NOVEMBER 5, 1927

Mr. Lavanburg died today. He had been ill for only a short period. The whole office of the Lavanburg Company in great grief and confusion. Could not help but wonder how this will affect the project.

NOVEMBER 7, 1927

The work goes on. Mr. Somers, a partner of Mr. Lavanburg and chairman of the board of directors, together with Mr. Roger W. Straus, Mr. Lavanburg's nephew, assume the direction of the Foundation.

NOVEMBER 15, 1927

Have a list of 200 applications ready for submission to the committee for final selection of the 111 tenants. Am working on report of my work to date and recommendations for staffing the building.

NOVEMBER 22, 1927

The breakdown of all the applications received is at last complete and I find the facts very interesting. From June 1 to November 20, 1130 applications were received. Of these I visited 765 homes in order to ascertain the living standards of the applicants.

A study of the 930 rejected applications shows the following reasons:

| | |
|--|-----|
| High income | 535 |
| Badly kept home | 90 |
| No children | 91 |
| Grown-up children | 137 |
| Miscellaneous (Have relatives or parents, or live in a modern building at present) | 77 |

In this group there were 235 applicants whose income was below \$35 per week and 695 over \$35 per week.

I also find interesting that among all the applications received:

413 families applied for 3-room apartments

613 families applied for 4-room apartments

104 families applied for 5-room apartments

DECEMBER 2, 1927

Today I was introduced to the board. The directors were somewhat skeptical of my fitness for the job because of my youth and lack of real estate experience. Mr. Lavanburg evidently had not consulted the board when he had engaged me. However, I was apparently able to satisfy them as they remarked: "Go ahead and see what you can do."

Although the finishing details of the building will still take a few weeks to complete, we decided to have the official opening on December 28. The Mayor will be invited as well as representatives of social service, civic, and neighborhood organizations.

DECEMBER 6, 1927

Engaged Miss Brown as an assistant today. She has held an executive position with a large social service agency. She understands

that she will take care of the office routine, including the bookkeeping, as well as help the tenants in some of their problems and also lead some of the social activities under my supervision.

[Because of her former executive position, she could not be reconciled to working under another and we soon clashed. Also, Miss Brown became quite intimate with the tenants, accepting frequent dinner and luncheon invitations, so that the tenants, knowing her too well, showed her scant respect. The situation becoming intolerable, I let Miss Brown go.]

DECEMBER 9, 1927

The debris has been cleared away from the front of the building. Inside, the painters, plumbers, and electricians are working feverishly to have everything in readiness by the middle of next month. Word has spread that the Homes are soon to be formally opened and the crowds of onlookers grow larger each day.

The building stands out more attractively here than it would anywhere else in the city. To reach it, one must pass through blocks of the worst slum-tenement area in this country. The streets are crowded with old, incredibly dingy buildings, whose window-sills and fire-escapes are cluttered with household articles. The gutters are choked with all kinds of refuse. A corner is turned and one is face to face with the new building, simple, dignified, and spacious. The contrast is startling.

DECEMBER 15, 1927

Moved into the new office. Spent much time purchasing necessary equipment.

DECEMBER 20, 1927

Have engaged a superintendent. Am greatly relieved to have this settled, as getting a competent man able to handle a small staff and do minor repair-work was difficult. He will live in one of the three-room apartments.

DECEMBER 22, 1927

Terrribly hectic day. Workmen hammering in the office, applicants coming and going, telephone man installing phones, painters spilling paint, nerves of office staff sorely tried.

DECEMBER 28, 1927

Dedication and official opening ceremonies. Weather a little murky but mild, and the sun pierced through the clouds occasionally. A platform had been erected and was decorated with flags and bunting. The open court in front was swept clean and chairs placed.

Mayor James J. Walker, guest of honor, made an address. New York State Senator Bernard Downing and Rev. Dr. Nathan Krass of Congregation Emanuel-El also spoke. All paid tribute to Fred L. Lavanburg for creating a concrete embodiment of his idea and for blazing the trail for sanitary housing on the Lower East Side. The press was well represented.

The courtyard was filled to overflowing with neighborhood people, including a large number of children. Police held off the crowd to clear a way for invited guests, and it was most befitting to see a solid row of youngsters, two and three deep, forming the front ranks.

JANUARY 2, 1928

Have selected a number of additional applicants to form a reserve list from which to choose should any of the originally selected families wish to withdraw.

[This proved to be wise as a number of the selected families did not accept, chiefly because they were not satisfied with the location of the apartment assigned to them.]

JANUARY 11, 1928

Started signing leases and taking two weeks' rent as security. The general attitude of the future tenants is a very happy one. Many are leaving dark and dingy rooms in dilapidated houses where they have lived for nine and ten years and even longer. Few have ever enjoyed the convenience of steam heat and hot water.

[The majority of the tenants are Jewish, as the neighborhood is predominantly Jewish.]

House rules and regulations have caused much concern. Gossip and exaggeration are rampant and many of the tenants are hesitant about signing leases, fearing that their freedom will be curtailed. Their misgivings are, of course, due to their unfamiliarity with sanitary living conditions. Am taking much care to dispel unfounded concern.

[I have often thought since this time that it would be better to have tenants sign compliance to house rules, rather than sign leases, even month-to-month leases as ours were. We find there is nothing we can do in cases of nonpayment of rent, as most of our tenants are without assets.]

JANUARY 12, 1928

The sixth-floor apartments are very difficult to rent. The physical strain of climbing makes them undesirable to families with small children. The five-room apartments also are not being rented readily. Rental of \$10.50 per week is too much for families where the father is the only source of income. These factors will probably necessitate our stretching a point and calling in families with grown children, or families whose income is derived from more than one member of the family.

[In the five-room apartments, several families were accepted where older children supplemented the father's income. We have never allowed families to supplement income with rent from lodgers and boarders.]

JANUARY 22, 1928

Am being besieged by tradesmen who wish to cater to the tenants. Since it would be desirable to limit the number of men having access to the building, passes will be issued to those given special privileges.

[Passes were given an ice-man, a milk-man, and a laundry-man. This method worked out badly. Tenants complained that the ice-man, knowing the tenants could not buy elsewhere, gave short-weights. The laundry, for similar reason, also rendered poor service. The tenants are serviced now by whomever they wish, and this arrangement is perfectly satisfactory.]

The first family moved in today. We are not scheduled to receive tenants until the 25th, but as this man's month ended today, and as his landlord threatened to sue for a new month's rent if he remained the few days, we admitted him. We made it perfectly clear, however, that he must not expect the services of a finished building.

JANUARY 25, 1928

Welcomed the first batch of tenants. Thirty families moved in, all smiles. A moving schedule had been worked out in advance, spread-

ing operations over the day to avoid conflicts and confusion. The plan worked smoothly, with scarcely a hitch.

Still have several top-floor apartments available. Suggested to the board of directors that two of these apartments be rented to students of social work who would be asked to give certain periods to recreational and community work in return for reduced rental. The matter was left in abeyance to be decided at a future meeting.

JANUARY 26, 1928

Three-year-old Rose Feldman was reported lost by her frantic mother this afternoon. I telephoned the nearby police station to give a description of the baby. About an hour later, the little girl was found calmly wandering about the roof.

The Siegels' infant daughter is very ill. She was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. The doctor's diagnosis reported her suffering from malnutrition. Noticed that the mother looks wan and undernourished. Here it is obvious that instruction in proper diet would help. What about income?

JANUARY 31, 1928

Almost all of the tenants have moved in. The remaining unleased apartments (rejected because of their location) are gradually being rented from our reserve list.

FEBRUARY 4, 1928

Rented an apartment to a family recommended by a neighborhood health clinic. Did this in order to establish a friendly contact. It will help to create a spirit of cooperation toward the Lavanburg Homes experiment; to facilitate a wider scope of activity; and to give evidence of our desire to promote the welfare of the people and the community.

FEBRUARY 6, 1928

Received a phone call from a Congressman of this district regarding a family whose qualifications did not measure up to our standards. I went over the application very carefully with Mr. Z. explaining why the family had not been accepted. He asked me to reconsider as "a personal favor." I explained that on our board we have various political parties represented, and the directors had instructed me not to make any concessions on the basis of politics. Under the circum-

stances, I did not see how I could accommodate him. He seemed to understand my position and did not press the matter.

FEBRUARY 8, 1928

The children already present a problem. They play very noisily in the courts until late at night. Their little friends from the neighborhood gather here too, adding to the noise. Measures must be taken immediately to check this type of disorder, or it will become unmanageable. Will appoint a number of children to assume responsibility for peace and order, and meanwhile will ask the parents not to permit their children to play in the courts after seven in the evening.

Things are beginning to appear on the fire-escapes against house rules. I asked the janitor to call on the offending housewife as soon as he notices anything on the sills or fire-escapes, and to remind her that such infractions of the house rules will not be permitted.

[I later changed this plan to that of having every infraction of the house rules reported at the office. I then sent a note to the tenant about the matter, keeping a duplicate on file. In this way, a very useful record of every tenant's willingness to cooperate was made available. If, after a note, the situation did not improve, I asked the tenant to come to the office to discuss the difficulty. Usually this proved to be sufficient.]

The porters hose down the courts every morning, and they are kept quite clean throughout the day. This is an unusual sight for Goerck Street.

Tenants are complaining of insufficient hot water. Our boiler does not seem to heat enough. The consulting engineers think we use a great deal more hot water than usual for such a building, perhaps because many of the families do their own washing.

FEBRUARY 9, 1928

Started work on gathering the following statistical data:

Trades of tenants

Previous addresses

Ages of parents

Ages and sex of children

Income of families

The routine is beginning to smooth out. Fire-escapes and courts are being kept fairly clear. The tenants have learned to use modern

home conveniences such as burglar locks, showers, dumb-waiters, etc., which before were unknown to the majority of them and at first gave much trouble.

Complaints poured in the first few days. They were all about such minor things as windows painted tight, balky faucets, missing shelves in the medicine chests and so on. Slowly, these things are becoming adjusted.

[When requests for repairs are made, a form is filled out in duplicate in the office. The original is routed to the superintendent, and the duplicate remains in book showing date, apartment making request, etc. When repair is complete, tenant is asked to sign original slip signifying that the work is finished. These slips are filed in tenant's folder along with other data. The kind of repair is also recorded on a mimeographed sheet listing all possible repairs, which is likewise filed. When a periodic breakdown of repairs is prepared, the detail is gathered from these mimeographed sheets.]

FEBRUARY 10, 1928

Tenants are still complaining that they cannot rest in the evening because the children play on the sidewalks and streets. In this neighborhood there is no other place for them except the street. Am urging the completion of the roof and basement. Wrote for estimates on roof playground equipment today.

My assistant and I are working out a rent-paying system. Tentatively, the plan calls for each tenant to pay weekly on a specified day, between 9:00 and 11:30 A.M.

[This system, as eventually worked out, remained essentially the same. The only change was that it seemed more practicable to have but two rent-paying days, Wednesday and Friday. As a result of this system the tenants paid on whichever day was the most convenient.]

FEBRUARY 11, 1928

Board meeting yesterday. The decision was made to start work on the basement to prepare it for a recreational center. I was asked to prepare an estimate of the cost of social rooms to include an assembly hall, game-room, study-room, library, three clubrooms, and workshop.

FEBRUARY 14, 1928

Dr. Cushman of the Ridge Street Center asked me to see him. Wanted to discuss the possibility of maintaining a home-making demonstration apartment in the Homes. He was ready to furnish an apartment and have a teacher from the Board of Education who would work under the supervision of the Women's Department of his Center. She would conduct a course on model housekeeping; the course to be open to the tenants and neighborhood women. After some thought, decided to do nothing about installing such an apartment just now. Explained to Dr. Cushman I felt it important to go very slowly with the development of various activities because of the danger of institutionalizing the Homes. It is my feeling that as the tenants become acquainted with each other, suggestions of what they want will come from them.

[In guiding the recreational and community life of the Homes, my theory has been to let the activities develop slowly and to grow out of the desires of the tenants.]

FEBRUARY 16, 1928

Mrs. Finestein and Mrs. Timberg came in at 1:15 to pay their rent. Great was their surprise when Miss Brown refused to accept the money, pointing out that the hours for collections were from 9:00 to 11:30. The two women went out, a bit flustered, one remarking, "This is the first time I have seen a landlord who does not want his money!"

[After a few such experiences, the tenants realized we were serious about keeping office hours, and we seldom had any further instances of people wandering in at any hour to pay their rent.]

FEBRUARY 19, 1928

Called in a group of the older boys (between 14 and 16) to help me maintain the house rules. Asked whether they were ready to aid and, judging by their answer, felt that my invitation and man-to-man talk had pleased them. Told them it will be their job to see that the courts and hallways are kept clean and quiet. Delegated two boys to each hallway. They will go through them twice daily and report on their condition; see that stray papers are picked up and thrown

into the waste cans; and be of assistance to the younger children whenever they can. After talking with the boys about the responsibilities I was entrusting to them, I asked what they wanted to call themselves. Of the suggestions offered they decided on "commissioners." They plan to have elections, meet regularly, and proceed in a systematic manner. The plans completed, they left the office elated and excited about their new undertaking. I was glad to make this contact with them. Children must feel that adults consider them responsible people.

[This group was extremely successful. Though new to Lavanburg, these boys were well behaved because of the responsibility placed on them. The work we did together formed a friendly basis for good will and cooperation. By this group's example, the younger children, too, were taught early how to keep the rules.]

FEBRUARY 20, 1928

Five different people were here today to inspect the boiler plant to see what could be done to remedy the hot water shortage. I was told the average allowance of hot water in the city is 20 gallons per family. Our allowance of 40 gallons is not sufficient.

[The installation of a Gleason heater was the satisfactory solution of the problem.]

FEBRUARY 21, 1928

Not a single repair complaint today. The tenants are getting settled. Even the interest of the surrounding neighborhood is decreasing. Two or three weeks ago, it was difficult to get through the courts because of the crowd of visitors, all curious to see the new building. Many were relatives and friends of the tenants, and much showing off went on in the face of all the envy displayed.

FEBRUARY 22, 1928

Washington's Birthday, and the office is closed. Just came in from playing with the children outside. The adults gathered in front and seemed surprised and a little amused to see a grown-up at play with their children. Although the parents are devoted, they do not know how to play. I believe playing with the children to be a good policy, and I enjoy the games as well. In my opinion, such a relationship

makes for a happy understanding between the management and the children.

FEBRUARY 23, 1928

Told several mothers they could not keep their carriages in the courts and on the sidewalks. There are so many babies in the house that when the weather is fine it is difficult to pass through the courts because of the carriages. Suggested to the mothers that they take their babies to the roof.

[It being a task for most of the mothers to get their baby carriages up the stairs to the roof, we relaxed this regulation. Mothers were asked not to place the carriages in the courts, but to keep them on the wide sidewalks in front of the house.]

FEBRUARY 24, 1928

Received a letter from the architect informing me that we are to take over the management of the boilers from the steam engineers. Until now they had been responsible for the operation of the heating system.

FEBRUARY 25, 1928

Mrs. Cooper, who took Miss Brown's place, has been spending several afternoons investigating applicants with a view to renting several remaining top-floor apartments. The last apartment, with the exception of the two tentatively set aside for resident recreational workers, was rented today. The following data summarize the information about the tenants:

| POPULATION | | INCOME | |
|------------------------|-----|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Men | 107 | 13 | Tenants make \$25-30 per week |
| Women | 111 | 38 | Tenants make 30-35 per week |
| Total adults | 218 | 32 | Tenants make 35-40 per week |
| Boys | 168 | 10 | Tenants make 40-45 per week |
| Girls | 161 | 5 | Tenants make over 45 per week |
| Total juveniles | 329 | 9 | Tenants are supported by agencies |
| Total population | 547 | | |

TRADES

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|---|
| Cloak operators | 21 | Shipping clerks | 4 |
| Peddlers | 9 | Street cleaners | 3 |
| Taxi drivers | 6 | Sales clerks | 3 |
| Truck drivers | 4 | Barbers | 3 |

TRADES—*continued*

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Bookbinders | 2 | Clerk—Custom House | 1 |
| City laborers | 2 | Watchcase maker | 1 |
| Plumbers | 2 | Fur nailer | 1 |
| Color workers | 2 | Newspaper deliveries | 1 |
| Waiters | 2 | Neckwear operator | 1 |
| Leather cutters | 2 | Solderer | 1 |
| Painters | 2 | Shoe maker | 1 |
| Cap makers | 2 | Conductor | 1 |
| Embroiderers | 2 | Pocketbook maker | 1 |
| Bakers | 2 | Post Office clerk | 1 |
| Rag pickers | 1 | Slippers operator | 1 |
| Cable clerk | 1 | Garter maker | 1 |
| Coppersmith | 1 | Basket weaver | 1 |
| Presser | 1 | Letter carrier | 1 |
| Rodman—Bureau of Construction.. | 1 | Auto mechanic | 1 |

All but two of the tenants came from the Lower East Side. The two exceptions are from Yorkville and Brooklyn.

[For similar information about tenants living at the project in 1937, see page 114.]

FEBRUARY 26, 1928

Supervised the play on the roof for the first time this afternoon. Started with a group of ten boys. By the time the program of games, story-telling, and cheering was over, sixty children were taking part. Announced similar play periods for every Sunday afternoon, and invited the neighborhood children as well as those in the house to take part.

[Slum areas are particularly dangerous to children because they provide no adequate facilities for play and recreation. Housing projects which bring great numbers of children of all ages together must provide playtime facilities and community organization of play. Absence of these will show themselves in a number of ways—mischief, rowdyism, property destruction, delinquency—so that project managers in self-defense, if not in any other spirit, must provide a rounded program of recreation based upon the leisure-time activities and needs of the children at their projects and in the neighborhood of the projects.

At the Lavanburg Homes the children were supplied with all the facilities for a complete recreational program; the resources in the neighborhood, city, and other agencies were used only to fill in the gaps.]

Met with the "commissioners" in the early evening. Two new appointees were made. Irregularities such as playing in the hall and bell-rings were discussed. These children are a great help.

FEBRUARY 27, 1928

Four o'clock. Went through halls and courts. Latter very clean, halls fairly so. Stairs need painting owing to the wear and tear of moving day. Walls in D section have many pencil marks. Will mention this to the "commissioners" of this hallway.

FEBRUARY 28, 1928

The janitor and his wife startled the house by the violent quarrel they had last night. The wife broke two windows with her hands and cut her wrist so seriously that stitches had to be taken. The reason for the disturbance is the wife's jealousy. Our janitor is not much in evidence today. . . .

FEBRUARY 29, 1928

Learned from our secretary's office that Mr. Marcus, in F 30, wrote to the president of the Foundation for another day on which to pay his rent. The letter was referred, of course, to this office. Asked Mr. Marcus to see me. This will give me an opportunity to impress upon him (and through him the other tenants) that the management problems are handled solely on the premises, and that only really serious problems can be taken up with the directors. Unless the tenants are straightened out on this, they will be continually carrying petty complaints to the board.

MARCH 1, 1928

One of the mothers remarked about Mrs. Gold's having two sets of twins. Our file records but one. Mrs. Cooper paid a visit to Mrs. Gold and discovered she really has two sets. Mrs. Gold explained with some embarrassment that she was ashamed to admit the four children were two sets of twins. She felt that people laughed at her because of it.

MARCH 2, 1928

Am hastening the construction of the assembly hall. Putting things on fire-escapes, parked baby carriages in the courts, and littered hall-

ways still continue. It would be best to handle these matters by having group meetings of the whole house so that I could make the tenants understand that the cleanliness of the building is their responsibility. Just as soon as the assembly hall is ready, I will call a tenants' meeting.

[I do not want to create the impression that the building did not look well; but there were a few people who did not respond well to the rules and it was primarily for their benefit that this action was contemplated.]

MARCH 4, 1928

Sunday afternoons on the roof are attracting greater numbers of children every week. Counted over one hundred last Sunday. Am planning to engage a recreational assistant to help with the activities.

Two of our 14-year-old girls called on me today to ask if the girls might have a club and also participate as commissioners. I was delighted with their attitude and suggested they speak to other girls and arrange for all to meet me on the roof the following Sunday morning at ten o'clock to form their club.

The superintendent tells me that Mrs. Halpern had new furniture brought in last night and the old taken out. It was done after dark because she was ashamed to have her neighbors see her old furniture.

MARCH 5, 1928

Have several times accepted invitations to dinner with families. Decided not to accept such invitations in the future. Some, having entertained me, might feel themselves in a position to ask special favors. Others might feel that they too must entertain me.

[The relationship of the manager with his tenants cannot be easily codified for no set of rules can possibly be formulated. Every manager should have his share of common sense, maturity of judgment, wide experience, and an uncompromising sincerity. Thus equipped he will apply the principles of management in his own way.

I have found, however, the following general rules of conduct efficacious in my dealings with the tenants:

1. Fair treatment to all tenants, making no favorites nor handling them with abnormal severity or leniency.

2. Special favors to none. Abide religiously by the house rules and permit no deviation either for particular cases or for limited periods of time.
3. Carry out every promise made to the tenants.
4. Courteous treatment to all. Avoid undue interest, over-familiarity, exaggeration of formalities. Be wary of creating the "one big happy family" feeling and shun paternalism.]

Made a sketch of wall decorations for the assembly hall. The basement is so dark that bright and cheerful colors would help. Think it will be a good idea to have these decorations carried out by tenants who are available and can do this kind of work. One who is a painter has already expressed his willingness to help with the job. Naturally, such work would carry a nominal remuneration.

MARCH 9, 1928

Still having difficulty keeping the baby carriages out of the courts. The mothers say the sidewalks become overcrowded and they cannot get the heavy carriages up the stairs. Will investigate the cost of small hammocks in which the babies could be more conveniently kept on the roof.

[Found nothing suitable in hammocks, but did arrange for group buying of light collapsible baby carts at a reduced cost. Many bought carts and found them convenient for the street as well as the roof. The mothers fell into the habit of keeping the carriages out of the courts and we have not had this problem for several years.]

MARCH 11, 1928

Small bulletin boards have been placed in every hall. They were put to use today when we hung posters inviting the children to Sunday afternoon roof-play.

Met the two girls who wanted to form a club and their friends on the roof. We organized the FLL Girls. Membership, they decided, will be open to girls of the building and the neighborhood who are between 11 and 14. They plan to alternate social programs with discussions of books. Mrs. Cooper agreed to lead the club.

[I want to emphasize that from the beginning the neighborhood was invited to join all of our groups. I had several definite reasons for stressing the activities as being for the neighborhood rather than just for the house. First, I felt it would help promote

a friendly relationship with the neighbors; second, it would teach our children that they had no privileges other than those available to all children; and third, in social activities, interest is always enlivened by new blood.

In the beginning, the fathers and mothers were opposed to inviting neighbors and their children. They wanted to feel they possessed special advantages, but gradually, they themselves started inviting outsiders.

Experience has proved our policy to be a good one. The people of the neighborhood have always been friendly and helpful, and we have had no difficulty with neighborhood children as might otherwise have been expected.]

MARCH 12, 1928

Miss Wermel and Miss Sokolsky, daughters of tenants, have offered to assist at Sunday roof-play. They will supervise the girls and I will continue with the boys. Received a new basketball that will be put to hard use next Sunday.

During the week the children freely drop into the office to talk to me, especially the six- and seven-year-olds who find my wastebasket very fascinating. I have found that those who know me well accept my occasional admonitions in a friendly way. The more children I make my friends, the easier they will be for me to handle.

MARCH 14, 1928

Board meeting. Much time spent discussing the need for facilities as a means to develop community interest. The assembly hall and game-room were considered the most important with which to begin. It was also made definite that the two top-floor apartments be turned into residences for students of social work who will help with the fast developing club and handicraft groups.

The trustees were very pleased with the appearance of the building. The fire-escapes are perfectly clear, there is no rubbish in the halls and courts, and the trimly curtained windows lend a cheerful and inviting air to the building.

MARCH 18, 1928

The tenants are getting to know one another and new friendships are being formed. I see many busily chattering groups of women gathered in front of the building every clear afternoon.

MARCH 22, 1928

The rent is being paid regularly. So far, no trouble with collections. The wives, who usually bring in the rent-money each week, are very friendly and stop to chat with Mrs. Cooper. We are beginning to know them by name and to become acquainted with some of the happenings in their families, such as baby Harry Wemel's two new teeth, and Rose Sitnitskey's exceptional school marks.

MARCH 25, 1928

The Purim holidays are here and the children are dressed in their finest. This is a Jewish holiday of thanksgiving. Following custom, shalachmonus—gifts of goodies—have been sent to the office. These small tokens of good will from the tenants please me very much.

MARCH 26, 1928

The basement was initiated today with a social meeting of the FLL Girls.

Sunday afternoons on the roof are attracting a number of parents. We shall have to get some small tables and benches so that the adults can play chess, checkers, and other games. Our roof provides a beautiful view of the East River with its constantly changing panorama of boat traffic. Off to one side looms the Williamsburg Bridge and in the distance are the outlines of Brooklyn's huge navy yard.

Mrs. Boyarsky reported that her tile dish tray had been broken, and asked us for a new one. I pointed out that where damage is done because of carelessness, the tenant would have to stand the cost. Mrs. Boyarsky readily admitted being at fault and was willing to accept our nominal charge for replacing the tray.

[It is my belief that the tenants should pay charges of this sort even if it does not cover the cost of the damage. They should have the feeling of their own responsibility.]

MARCH 29, 1928

Mrs. Cooper informs me that the FLL Girls split into two groups at their last meeting. This was because the girls of 14 had no common interests with those of 11. The club had also become very large. Junior and senior groups will be easier for Mrs. Cooper to handle.

We were visited by a class in social science from Columbia Uni-

versity. They showed considerable interest in our housing project and asked many questions, but it is amazing how little college seniors know about the subject of housing. Several of them thought that the City Housing Corporation is an agency of the City and few realized that the number of tenants in old law tenement flats in New York reaches the staggering figure of 550,000.

MARCH 30, 1928

Asked several mothers to give a certain amount of time each afternoon to supervise children who wish to play on the roof and to look after babies left in their carriages by mothers who wanted to go on with their work. The women I spoke to were enthusiastic about the idea and expressed their willingness to cooperate. They decided that each would give one afternoon a week. This is a first attempt of the tenants to assume some measure of community responsibility, and I am curious to see how it will work out.

[I believe it is very important for our mothers and fathers to engage in activities of this nature because it betters their relationship with their children. For instance, soon after a schedule for mothers' roof supervision had been posted on the bulletin boards, I overheard a boy who had been reading it exclaim, "Look, my mother—a *teacher!*" That is, it gives to a parent the status of a human being qualified to do other things than hand out pennies.]

MARCH 31, 1928

Have been interviewing students of social work for our resident staff. Three women and two men have been engaged and they are:

Miss Finestein of the Jewish Social Service Association, B.A., Barnard College, and courses at the New York School for Social Work.

Miss Sohnfeld, B.A., University of Wisconsin; student, Training School for Social Work.

Miss Mack, A.B., Western Reserve University; student, Training School for Social Work.

Mr. Rineberg, boys' worker, Federation Settlement.

Mr. Eisenstein, A.B., New York University; graduate, Training School for Jewish Social Work.

Under our terms these residents will be charged \$12 a month to

cover the cost of gas, electricity, wear and tear of furniture, maid service, and other incidentals. Each of these residents will devote two afternoons or evenings a week to community or recreational work.

[The reasons for engaging these residents were twofold. First, the sixth-floor apartments were very difficult to rent; and, second, it was thought we might be able to secure trained people at a reasonable cost. At the same time, an opportunity for field work training was given these students such as would be difficult to find elsewhere.]

APRIL 1, 1928

Two boys' clubs, the Lavanburg Health Group, and the Lavanburg Pioneers, have been formed. The children plan many hikes and outings. Next week the Pioneers are making a trip to the Palisades, and the Health Group will go to the Bronx Zoo. We also have a folk-dancing class for girls and we have been promised a performance soon.

Our "commissioners" reported about their work. The misdemeanors of eating and playing in the halls by the youngsters seemed to have caused the most trouble.

Happened to stay late in the office. Several of the neighbors from across the street dropped in to chat. They told me a great deal about themselves and of what they thought of the Lavanburg Homes. One said, "Honestly, Mr. Goldfeld, if someone had told me some time ago that a building across the street from me could be kept so clean I never would have believed him. You know, not all people who live in slums are dirty, but there are some living in my house who make the place smelly and bad. You don't have such people. My wife always tells me, 'Abe, look at the windows of the Lavanburg Homes across the street. They are so nice and clean!' " Of course, in my mind I asked myself, "How long will it last? Is it just because of the newness? Or will the building always look this way?"

APRIL 2, 1928

It seems to be difficult to enforce our ruling about keeping the window-ledges clear. Many tenants do not realize the danger of objects falling on children playing below. Yesterday, a flower-pot dropped, missing little Frieda Kirchbaum by barely an inch. Her irate mother ran up to the apartment from where the pot fell. . . .

Fortunately I overheard the commotion and straightened matters out. Wonder whether the architect could not have constructed the ledges on a slant, making it automatically impossible to put things on them.

[The realization that a number of management problems could be eliminated by wiser architectural design and construction served as an impetus to keep track of the desirable and undesirable features of the building. For instance, no matter how often we washed the panes of glass in our doors, they could not be kept clean, because of the large number of children here. Doors with opaque panes would have been the answer. Easy access to plumbing would have made our problem of breaking up tile and patching it again unnecessary. Such considerations were incorporated in a study made by the Housing Study Guild entitled *A Preliminary Study of Low-Rental-Housing Maintenance Problems as Affected by the Work of the Architect*, published May 1, 1935.]

The mothers, three at a time, are supervising play periods on the roof week-day afternoons. The plan is working beyond expectation. The mothers enter into the spirit of play and help organize games for the children. Afterwards they told me of their satisfaction and pleasure in doing something for others.

I notice an average attendance of about eighty children on the roof every afternoon.

APRIL 4, 1928

In order to keep the families informed about the widening range of social and community activities, decided to publish a house bulletin. The mimeograph will serve as our printing press.

Several complaints about mice. Apparently the exterminating company engaged on a contract basis is not doing the work effectively. They will have to show better results or we will get another exterminator.

APRIL 6, 1928

Great concern in the neighborhood about the children playing in the street. A boy living across the street was run over by a truck while playing ball and has been taken to the hospital in a serious condition.

APRIL 12, 1928

Mr. Cohen, one of our tenants, came into the office to inquire about Mr. Lavanburg's Yiddish name. He and his wife have decided to name their new baby boy after Mr. Lavanburg. I have been invited to the "brith," the Jewish rite of circumcision when the child is named. Rumors have spread in the neighborhood that the Foundation would give cash to the first baby born in the Lavanburg Homes. Of course they are unfounded.

Today *The Lavanburg News* came off press and the "commissioners" distributed the copies.

APRIL 13, 1928

Mrs. Krentzman, inspired by an appeal in the *Jewish Daily Forward* to help the striking miners in Pennsylvania, decided to make a door-to-door collection. She arrived at the office with a little over five dollars, and somewhat fearful of being scolded for making the collection. Both Mrs. Cooper and I added to the fund, but I did caution Mrs. Krentzman that in the future she must carry a statement and have each contributor write his name and the amount given. I explained this as a procedure to avoid unpleasant reflections about her integrity in making the collection.

[The practice of collecting from door to door is very prevalent in the neighborhood. It is the old-world idea of neighbor helping neighbor.]

Worked on estimate of income and expenditures for the year. The big question is whether the Foundation will have to pay taxes on the building and the land.

[Eventually, through court litigation, the buildings and land were declared tax exempt because of the charitable nature of the Foundation.]

APRIL 17, 1928

First meeting of the resident-workers held in office. After having outlined the background and fundamental purposes of the Lavanburg Homes, we discussed the schedule of work and responsibilities:

Mr. Rineberg is to be in charge of the Pioneers and a period on the roof Sundays.

Mr. Eisenstein is to lead the Health Club and assist with the several children who present a behavior problem.

Miss Sohnfeld is to make a survey of the neighborhood in order to measure the influence, if any, of model housing on delinquency and health.

Miss Mack is to keep in touch with the mothers who have indicated they want a club, and will take charge of the library.

Miss Finestein is to supervise roof activities.

APRIL 22, 1928

The superintendent complains he spends much time clearing clogged toilets due to tenants' carelessness in throwing hard objects down the drain. Told him we would notify tenants that in the future there would be a small charge whenever clogging is the tenants' fault.

[It would be a good idea when tenants first move into a building, to give them not only a copy of the house rules but also a list of charges for breakage and other damages due to carelessness.]

Miss Fineblum, daughter of one of our families, has organized the girls of nine and ten into the Jolly Girls Club. Today they met in my apartment and I enjoyed being with them for a while. They made several kinds of artificial flowers with the help of their conscientious leader, who seems to take her duties seriously.

APRIL 25, 1928

The weather having become quite warm, groups of fathers gather at evening in front of the building. They discuss all kinds of things, from the political scene to their marital difficulties. Mr. Kirchbaum and Mr. Sokolsky are coaching the boys' basketball team. It is evident the time is not far distant when they will want to form a fathers' club. One reason they cannot start now is the lack of a meeting place. As soon as the basement rooms are completed, space will be available.

APRIL 27, 1928

Several tenants have reported petty thefts from the carriage-room in the basement. Hereafter will keep this room locked and will supply keys only to tenants owning carriages.

Have noticed that the street in front of our house is littered with our neighbors' garbage. Before I came to know the neighborhood, I thought the city street cleaners never visited this section. Now I

know that they come and do their job every day, but five minutes after they leave, garbage is scattered over the pavement again, and one could never guess it had just been cleaned. The refuse in the tenement houses is not collected at regular hours, so the people bring or fling their garbage into the street whenever they choose. Paper wrappings burst and the resulting mess is revolting. Will put large refuse cans with swinging tops in front of our building so that at least this small part of the street will be kept clean.

[The cans, if anything, aggravated our situation. The refuse of the neighborhood was dropped into them, soon filling them to overflowing, making the sidewalks in front of the house filthier than ever. I gave up trying to do anything about it and had our cans brought in.]

APRIL 29, 1928

Two groups of mothers' clubs from various settlements came to the building. They are studying the housing problem. I went over the policy and aims of the Foundation and escorted them through our building on a tour of inspection. Overheard a number of wishful sighs and remarks such as, "When will we have apartments like these?" A few realized that it will take many years before comparable homes would be made available for them. Private real estate interests cannot provide decent low-rent housing and it will be a long time before the government, that is, the community, will build for them.

It was a welcome relief to see the sun shine again after the continual rains of last week. The children and the adults took full advantage of the fair weather and the roof had its largest attendance so far.

While playing ball, Irving Kummer was knocked down by an automobile. Fortunately, he escaped bad injuries but he was terribly frightened. This is the second automobile accident in this block in a short period of time. Society, in accepting the automobile, must make provision for safe playing space for the children.

My secretary is getting in touch with various camps by letter and telephone. The camps are indicating their willingness to cooperate with our tenants, and I think many parents will be able to secure accommodations for their children, as the cost is very nominal.

Three young women from a training school for teachers came to

offer volunteer service. They said that they had read about the Lavanburg Homes in the newspapers and thought it was the kind of project they would like to do volunteer work for. We decided one would conduct a story-telling hour, another a group in dramatics, and the third a class in physical training.

Mr. Kirchbaum in office. Told me he represented several fathers who want to organize a fathers' club and wondered if notices could not be sent by the office to announce the first meeting. I said I would be glad to cooperate and we set the date for Wednesday, May 2, at 8:30 P.M.

APRIL 30, 1928

Received several complimentary tickets for a concert at Town Hall which I gave to tenants. As most of the families live on a very close margin which does not allow them any leeway for recreation, they cannot afford concerts. The matter of recreation, a vital need, will be partially solved with the inauguration of our own program of social activities.

MAY 1, 1928

Mrs. Wermel and her daughter, Augusta, called at the office. The mother complained that her daughter is very slow at school. She is thirteen years old and is only in the fifth grade. I suggested the possibility of a psychological test and gave her a letter to Dr. H's Clinic.

[The tenants are now coming to the office with all kinds of personal problems and I have to draw the line between those we ought to assist in solving, and those which ought to be left solely to the tenants. The question of independent action is a very serious one. It is so easy in our set-up to encourage the tenants to depend upon us in all things that they may come to feel we are ready to assist them in all their problems.]

Engaged a new superintendent. The previous one persisted in having public quarrels with his wife, despite several warnings that he must keep such difficulties behind his own doors.

MAY 2, 1928

Walter W. Pettit of the New York School of Social Work requested a brief outline of the activities of the tenants at the Lavan-

burg Homes during their first three months of residence. Report sent today.

Mrs. Marcus, who was one week in arrears with her rent, made payment today. Her husband has been out of work and it was necessary for their fraternal society to assist them. She asked for an extension of her next week's rent which we allowed.

Mrs. Holland, a tenant, at the office. She is a young woman who has a public school education, and who seems to be aware of the difficulties of her three young children. Related how her son, Howard, aged four, has extreme temper tantrums whenever his wishes are crossed. According to her description they appear to be of a serious nature. I spoke to Mrs. Holland briefly about emotional outbursts in children and gave her a pamphlet entitled: "Habit Training of Children," wherein this problem was discussed fully. Suggested that if she wished, she might consult with Mr. Eisenstein about the child and she indicated she was very ready to do so. This mother shows intelligent insight in the rearing of children. She also mentioned that her daughter, Matilda, eight, is anxious to join a club and I am sending her an invitation to come to the next meeting of the Jolly Girls.

I took this opportunity to talk to Mrs. Holland of our plans to form a mothers' club where matters of common interest to the group could be discussed. She assured me she would be glad to become a member.

Our parapet on the roof is not high enough for some of the more venturesome children, and a fence is essential. Children were seen climbing onto the parapet and it quite upset a few mothers who happened to catch them.

The first meeting of the Fathers' Club was held tonight. Thirty-two fathers responded to the call, a very satisfactory attendance. I addressed the group and told them of the advantages to be derived from the organization of the club and of the responsibilities they have toward their children and themselves in the matters of recreation, education, and health. Also pointed out that the experiences at Lavanburg would be of great value in the movement for better housing.

Mr. Wermel proposed the appointment of a committee to investigate the possibility of closing Goerck Street for children's play purposes. Mr. Kummer suggested a plan for buying ice cooperatively. The proposal was postponed for future consideration.

The discussion was unusually lively for the first meeting and a number of the fathers participated. Some, of course, did not express themselves as fluently as others, but there was no feeling of reticence. The members were greatly interested in the possibilities of cooperative buying, but all such plans must be held in abeyance until the club is better organized.

[The plan for buying ice cooperatively never materialized, because some of the tenants began to get ice at the docks a block away at a price lower than the neighborhood iceman could charge.

Because of the relatively small number of families residing at Lavanburg, cooperative buying was never attempted, although the Eastern League Cooperative contacted the tenants concerning their milk supply. The tenants, however, showed very little interest.]

MAY 3, 1928

An enormous amount of office work yet to be done. Detail piles up. Mr. Somers, treasurer of the Foundation, came to the office with the accountant to look over the books and to install a more efficient method of bookkeeping.

[For a number of years the auditing and most of the bookkeeping were done at the office of the Foundation. Since 1935, however, the bookkeeping has been done on the premises. Every month a statement is sent to the auditor showing the amount of rent collected, deposited, the accumulated security on deposit, arrears, loss from vacancies, and loss from unpaid rents.]

MAY 6, 1928

John, the new superintendent, has a number of ideas to improve the operation of the building. One is an ash hoist. He tells me that hauling the ashes up the stairs from the basement by hand is very time-consuming.

Dr. Edith Elmer Wood, writer and lecturer on housing problems, at Columbia University, visited the office for information on the project. Wishes to use the information in a book to be published shortly.

[The book, *Recent Trends in American Housing*, by Edith Elmer Wood, was published in 1931.]

Mrs. Jacobs gave notice that she could not afford the rent and must move. I talked over the situation with the family and offered to accept small sums in payment for rent until things improved; provided they agree to then pay full rent plus small installments on accumulated arrears. They are considering this arrangement.

[The family decided, finally, to move. But on the day before leaving, Mrs. Jacobs was suddenly stricken with appendicitis and was rushed to the hospital. Her husband came to ask permission to remain in the apartment, explaining that as he was out of work he could not pay more than half the rent. He promised to begin paying arrears when he became reemployed. He deposited security which, together with past payments, was sufficient to cover his rent for the coming month.]

MAY 8, 1928

Meeting of the "commissioners" today. Attendance poor and interest at low ebb. Announced a picnic at Pelham Bay Park where this group would take charge of a younger club. The lagging enthusiasm brightened considerably at the prospect of an outing.

Mrs. Goldman complained that because the family above her takes so many showers, water is coming through and is spoiling her bedroom ceiling. She asked me to place a limitation upon the number of showers in order to avoid further damage. Explained to her that the leak was very likely due to a defective pipe rather than to an excessive use of the shower. Assured her we would attend to this at once.

[Many of the tenants, when reporting a need for repair, assumed an apologetic air, usually saying, "I do not want to bother you or to make trouble, but . . ." We emphasized, again and again, that reports of this kind were not "complaints." The office stressed the need for knowing about anything not working right so that proper repairs might be made.]

MAY 10, 1928

Mr. Dubin complained about Mrs. Marcus, who had created a commotion in the hall of her section. It all began from quarrels among the children. Mothers joined the quarrel and it seems that Mrs. Marcus cursed Mrs. Dubin: the latter, superstitious by nature, feared some evil might befall her. Mr. Dubin was careful to report that Mrs. Marcus in her fury had even included me in her denunciations.

Later, when Mrs. Marcus called at the office in reference to another matter, I asked her about the incident. She stated that Mrs. Dubin had made insulting remarks to her child about the manner in which she was dressed, and Mrs. Marcus felt justified in retaliating as she had. She keenly feels the slurs cast upon the appearance of her children's clothes but is helpless because she has not known economic security for a long time. In addition, she had been very ill for the past week and had found it difficult even to feed her children properly. Her husband had assisted by preparing food in the morning before going out to look for work. She was very bitter in her attitude toward her neighbors who, she declared, are unfriendly.

[Later, the Mothers' Club, in real emergencies, did much to assist mothers who could not attend to their children because of severe illness.]

MAY 12, 1928

Sent notices about Mothers' Club meeting for May 15. The mothers are anxious to get started. Their feeling, as one put it, is, "There are other things in life besides washing dishes and scrubbing floors." A great need for social contacts exists here among the adults as well as among the children.

Miss A., principal of a near-by kindergarten school, came in to talk about interesting our mothers in sending their very young children to the kindergarten class. The school has new plans for the fall which she would like to explain. Offered to give her the names of mothers having small children so that she can talk to them personally. Later, when we are ready for assembly, she will be invited to address all the mothers.

MAY 14, 1928

This evening a group of boys and girls were to go to the movies. Twenty-five children had been invited; only three responded. The poor turnout is probably owing to the fact that today is a week day and the children have to stay home and do home-work. At any rate, it indicates that the children should not be invited on "week day" parties.

MAY 15, 1928

Organization meeting of the Mothers' Club. Fifty-eight attended. They agreed to the appointment of a Mutual Aid Committee of ten

mothers to lend a helping hand with cooking meals, taking care of the children, etc., for members who are ill. The Fourth of July celebration was announced and several mothers gladly volunteered to contribute refreshments. A committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements.

MAY 20, 1928

In registering the families residing in the Lavanburg Homes with the Social Service Exchange, found that thirty-six have received service from twenty-five agencies. Letters have been received from these agencies giving reports of the contacts. This information will be of value in dealing with the families who may come to us for assistance.

MAY 24, 1928

The younger boys, many of them brothers of the "commissioners," have been anxiously inquiring whether I have "jobs" for them. Today I appointed a number as deputy-commissioners who will see that paper and other litter is not scattered about the premises. Others were made letter-carriers to deliver notes from the office to the tenants. I am holding a party for the new "staff" on June 3. One little fellow, who holds the double position of letter-carrier and deputy, asked if he couldn't come "twice"!

The second meeting of the Fathers' Club was held last night. The constitution, as prepared by a committee, was the subject of most of the discussion. It was accepted with some modifications. One of the changes, to my amusement, stipulated that the board of directors and the manager are to be honorary members of the club instead of having only the right to be present as originally stated. At my suggestion it was agreed that they are not to have a vote. Election of officers was held. The posts were hotly contested and a great deal of interest was shown by all members.

MAY 27, 1928

Miss Mack will lead another group instead of the Mothers' Club. I felt that Mrs. Cooper, my secretary, who has constant contact with the tenants, is better situated to lead the Mothers' Club than a new resident who does not see them frequently. This move was made to prevent the feeling that an outsider is leading their activities.

Schvuoth, a Jewish spring festival, is almost here, and the wives are busily preparing for the holidays. They come from the market with overflowing baskets, and windows and apartments are being cleaned with gusto.

MAY 29, 1928

The Bonnes Amies (we have a relish for fancy names) were unable to go on their hike today because of rain. They met instead in the office where a spelling bee and other games were held. Miss Sohnfeld, leader of the club, brought down a portable victrola from her apartment, and the girls danced. Later they went to the movies and on their return ate their picnic lunch in the office.

[The use of the office for social activities was avoided after adequate space in the basement was provided.]

In the evening the executive committee of the Fathers' Club met. Outings, a boat-ride, celebrations, and lectures were discussed. It was decided to sponsor a Fourth of July celebration. The fathers will decorate the roof for the holiday and arrange to secure an orchestra.

Today being Schvuoth, all the children were home from school, playing in the courtyards and on the roof. The children and their parents were dressed in holiday clothes and a general air of festivity pervaded the building, which fairly glistened on this happy, bright day.

MAY 31, 1928

Had a meeting of the janitorial staff. Discussed such matters as pencil marks on the walls and paper and waste thrown about the basement. Tried to make the workers take more interest in the building and its appearance. They are going to meet once monthly with me to talk over the care of the building. The superintendent reported that several of the electric light bulbs had been stolen from the halls during the night. He suggested wire guards and I told him to install them.

[Regular meetings of janitor and porters did not work out. After the first few months, occasional meetings were called to discuss such problems as washing of uniforms, wearing caps with the Lavanburg insignia, the staff's relationship with the children, and courtesy to tenants.]

From the report of the superintendent and my own impressions, I judge that at present the children are our chief problem. With the coming of warm weather, they play in the courts the entire day and evening, creating a great deal of noise and general disturbance. We have a rule prohibiting the children from playing in the courts after the lights are turned on, but in the last week or two the rule has been disregarded, and there is much noise until eleven at night. Instructed the porters to be on duty in the courts every night until this disturbance subsides. This is important because the parents, and especially the fathers, are entitled to a quiet home when they return from work.

The halls, too, are getting more wear than usual; the children run in and out all the time. There is no willful destruction, but with 340 children living here, it is very difficult to keep the building as clean as I would like to see it.

I have noticed, however, that the fire-escapes continue to be kept in excellent shape.

JUNE 1, 1928

How strangers misinterpret our house rules was illustrated to me the other night. Coming home in a cab, I gave the driver my address. "Oh," said he, "I know that building! That's where they have a fellow who goes around every night at eleven o'clock to see that everyone is in bed!"

The first meeting of the social club leaders was held this evening, and the following topics were discussed:

The importance of keeping correct records in order to prevent children joining two or three clubs at the same time. This condition exists at the present. A system of membership cards was suggested.

The July Fourth celebration was taken up. Various clubs will participate in the program.

The leaders will help organize a library for the tenants.

It was decided that whenever children are taken on hikes, permission blanks are to be signed by the parents.

Afterwards, the residents joined in the meeting and we discussed the progress of community activities.

JUNE 3, 1928

Mr. Leavitt, a tenant, in to inquire about the policy of the board in connection with tenants opening a business. He wants to open a candy store in the neighborhood. Told him I was not ready to answer his question, but would do so in a few days.

JUNE 4, 1928

Met with the board of directors, and the following matters were acted upon:

1. Roof supervision for the summer months. It was decided that should Mr. Somers be unable to have the Board of Education provide teachers, I am to determine whether a teacher be engaged for the vacation period.
2. Realizing the need to protect the roof from the sun, the board required me to investigate how shade is provided on the roofs of other buildings.
3. I was authorized to spend up to \$150 for lights to illuminate the roof.
4. I wanted to know what the directors thought about a tenants' council. It was agreed that the time was not yet ripe for this, although the consensus was that such a council would be helpful.
5. After considering the estimate for the improvement of the basement, the board decided to leave the matter at Mr. Somers' discretion after he had determined whether the improvements were in accordance with the tenement house and fire department regulations.
6. Discussion was held on the policy of the board in regard to tenants whose earnings increase. It was decided that for the present no action be taken so as not to disrupt the friendly relationship. As for Mr. Leavitt's proposed candy store, they felt it should not affect his status here, as it could not materially alter his financial standing. Their entire attitude on this subject was very liberal. They did think, however, that if a tenant earns a great deal above the average income prevailing in these buildings he should move out and let someone else have his apartment.
7. The last item discussed was my vacation. It was agreed that I take one month's leave of absence and the two months' vacation due me and go abroad to study housing.

The whole spirit of the meeting seemed to reflect satisfaction with

the present state of affairs at the Lavanburg Homes. The directors were most cooperative in granting the various requests.

JUNE 6, 1928

Fathers' Club meeting. About forty-five were present. Twelve new members joined, bringing the total membership to sixty-five.

The meeting in general was very poorly conducted. Mr. Berlin and Mr. Landow asked prolonged and foolish questions. Mr. Kirchbaum, the chairman, frequently lost his temper and banged on the table with the gavel to preserve order. Most of the argument was over the question of whether or not Yiddish should be spoken at the meetings. It was finally agreed that English be the only language spoken. Several fathers find it difficult to express themselves in English but the decision is that since the club is in America all should learn the English language.

The Good and Welfare Committee brought up the question of buying window screens cooperatively. Several members were named to investigate prices and report at a future meeting.

[Eventually the office made arrangements to buy from a local hardware store a quantity of screens at a reduced price which we sold to the tenants at cost.]

JUNE 7, 1928

The "commissioners" collected books from the tenants for our library. The response was gratifying—over 200 children's books were collected.

JUNE 8, 1928

At 8:30 in the evening the Fathers' and Mothers' Clubs held a joint meeting to discuss plans for the Fourth. This meeting was also badly conducted and again the chairman lost his temper in deciding on points of order.

It was thought best not to have outsiders at this first celebration because of lack of experience in running affairs and because we have over 500 people here—enough to tax the capacity of the roof. Every family is to receive an invitation.

Later, the question of expenditures came up and it was evident that the majority of the tenants were against bearing any of the cost. One of the members suggested that the board of directors be asked

to pay for the band, saying, "It will give them (the directors) much pleasure to know that the tenants are going to have a good time and that such celebrations take place in their building. Besides, the Lavanburg Foundation is very rich and \$40 would never be missed. . . ." I told the tenants I was sure the directors would not care whether we celebrated the Fourth or not and that their policy was to help the tenants help themselves. I reminded them that this is not an institution; and that the fathers and mothers sacrifice their independence by asking the Foundation to pay for their entertainment. The members saw my point and passed the motion that the Fathers' Club meet the cost of the band and the Mothers' Club provide all refreshments.

Throughout the meeting Mr. Berlin again asked lengthy and pointless questions, taxing the patience of other members and arousing some resentment. I think Mr. Berlin's oral wanderings are due to his physical condition. He is a pensioned World War veteran, having been seriously gassed while in service.

After the meeting, I spoke to Mr. Kirchbaum about his inability to control the meetings. He readily admitted his difficulty and said that whenever his wife is present he feels very embarrassed and excited. I tried again to inform him on procedure rules which he promised to make use of at the next meeting.

[The tenants never again thought of soliciting the board for funds. They have conducted all kinds of affairs completely on their own and there is never any question of how they are to be financed. The only subsidy the Foundation ever gave to a group was in connection with the Fathers' Clubroom where it contributed half of the cost of the furniture and paint.]

JUNE 9, 1928

Met Mr. Berlin on the street and spoke to him about his questions at the Fathers' Club. Tried to explain that people become very irritated and annoyed when very involved statements are made. He was quite apologetic and told me his brain does not function as well as it used to and that he does not realize when he speaks so incoherently. He was glad his attention was called to it and said he would try to control himself. From this he drifted to talk about sex and religion—subjects he had brought up before—demonstrating a great need to talk about these topics.

[Mr. Berlin never was able to control his tongue. He finally came to be known as a "type" and was accepted as such.]

Mr. Kirchbaum and I went to New Jersey to buy fireworks for the Fourth of July celebration.

JUNE 10, 1928

The tenants are greatly alarmed over reports that thieves got into the backyard and climbed the fire-escapes. Evidently they were frightened off before they could break in anywhere, because nothing was missed. I visited police headquarters and spoke to a detective who had little to suggest. Mr. Somers came over, and after discussing the situation with him I decided to put up a high fence around the yard with gates at the rear entrance.

[Petty thefts subsided for a number of years, not recurring until in 1935 when three successive cases were reported. Several tenants thought that a pass-key was used to gain entrance to the apartments. In order to give them a feeling of security, we changed all the cylinders of the locks, and now no pass-key can be used.]

The "commissioners" took twenty-one younger boys to Pelham Bay Park. I went with them and enjoyed the outing. Though the idea was to make the older boys feel responsible for the younger ones, it did not work out that way. While in the park, the "commissioners" met some girls and spent the greater part of the time with them. The youngsters were left to themselves and it fell upon me to do most of the entertaining. Nevertheless, all of the boys were highly pleased with the day.

JUNE 12, 1928

Last night the Just Pals Club gave an entertainment and a play for the fathers and mothers. The performance of the play entitled "The Aunt from California" lacked finishing touches, but was rich in sincerity and interest. Both the individual numbers and the dramatic piece were enthusiastically received by the mothers and fathers.

JUNE 15, 1928

Bought a small piano to be used in the recreational programs on the roof.

[My experience with a piano for roof activities taught me that

the most practical and economical plan was to hire a piano on a monthly rental basis. The instrument can be used as long as desirable and be removed on request.]

JUNE 16, 1928

A group of mothers have asked about a class in Jewish history for the children. Today Miss Kaufman, sent by the Jewish Educational Society, came to volunteer her services. She is a professional teacher and seems to be greatly interested in the work. The class will begin next Saturday.

JUNE 17, 1928

Recently several radios were bought by tenants who strung the aerials haphazardly, and at odd angles, the wire marring the appearance of the building. Sent notices to the tenants calling their attention to this condition and advising them to consult our superintendent who knows where and how to string aerials so that all will be in orderly arrangement.

[This plan was very satisfactory. Occasionally, a tenant would have his aerial connected in his own way but we insisted on a general conformity to our plan.]

JUNE 18, 1928

Mrs. Gottlieb in to talk to me on behalf of Mrs. Jacobs who, Mrs. G. explained, is ashamed to come in herself. Mr. Jacobs is still unemployed and the family needs help. He is the tenant who previously planned to move because of financial difficulties, but was forced to remain when his wife became ill. I suggested to Mrs. Gottlieb that she tell Mrs. Jacobs to come to the office herself since there is no need to be ashamed of discussing such matters.

Later Mrs. Jacobs appeared. She related that her husband is working for her brother who is a painter but receives only \$15 a week, which obviously is not enough to support a family. She has already borrowed to the limit from her relatives. Mrs. Jacobs insists she does not want charity but would go to work herself if she could find a place to leave her children. I told her we would try to locate a nursery where the children would be well cared for while she was at work.

Called the Jewish Social Service Association and explained the case to the supervisor. A social worker is coming to see what can be done.

JUNE 20, 1928

Fathers' Club meeting. Discussion of the Fourth of July celebration took up most of the time. There was much argument. Evidently the men, because of frequent meetings, are gradually losing respect for each other's opinions.

After every meeting, we go in a group to a neighborhood restaurant for coffee and more talk. They never seem to get enough. These meetings are really adjourned only when the restaurant lights are turned out. The amusing thing is that despite their "fights" in the clubroom, they are the best of friends in the restaurant.

JUNE 24, 1928

Ordered coal to fill our bins. It was bad economy to have built the bins so small. Coal in large quantities at this time of the year is cheap, and a considerable saving could have been made to put in the winter supply at this time.

I do not know why the engineer placed the rheostat on our boiler at a point so difficult to reach. Will order it moved. Also will put up wooden barriers for the roof exits to the fire escapes. These exits are unprotected now, and several children have attempted going down that way, a dangerous practice.

It is a pleasing sight to see the fathers play with the boys on the roof. They umpire the games and voluntarily form mixed teams for some lively bouts of volley ball.

The adults complain that the benches on the roof are uncomfortable and hard to sit on. I have suggested that they buy beach chairs, but somehow they do not take to the idea.

[Two years ago I bought two dozen beach chairs which we rented to the tenants at 2 cents a night; or a tenant could pay 5 cents a night until he paid for the cost of the chair (\$1.60) and own it. As a result of this plan a number of tenants bought their own chairs.]

JUNE 28, 1928

The public school near by complains that smoke from our chimney drifts into their windows. Evidently the smokestack is not high enough and will have to be extended.

Late last evening several fathers and I had a discussion about the

problems of child-rearing and family relations. They enjoyed the talk so much that they expressed a wish to carry on similar conversations. Quite naturally, then, an Adult Education Group formed. It plans to meet every other week for such talks as that of last night. The group will be limited to about fifteen members, and the fathers will invite only those who appear to be progressive enough in their attitude to be interested in these discussions. July 13 is the date set for the first meeting, and out of the several subjects proposed the fathers have chosen "Why Men and Women Marry."

JULY 2, 1928

Finished preparing the fourth issue of *The Lavanburg News*. The paper has grown to four pages. This time it is devoted to the July Fourth celebration. There is a picture of Mr. Lavanburg on the first page, and all the presidents of the various clubs contributed signed statements.

JULY 4, 1928

The big day. In the morning met several fathers on the roof and we started hanging the decorations. Worked hard all day, and late in the afternoon the roof was gaily dressed in bunting and colored paper. But alas, at six o'clock just as the doors were to be opened, a storm arose and lasted long enough to make all our work a bedraggled sight. We did not know whether we would hold our celebration or not, but at eight the sky cleared, and, sappy bunting notwithstanding, the tenants began to gather and the show went on.

The amateur entertainers were very well received, indicating the great joy of parents and children in watching their friends on the stage. There were several impromptu numbers. The speaker of the evening, because of the unsettled weather, arrived late. His speech was a trifle too long. None the less, he received a generous round of applause. At ten dancing began for the parents and children, the music playing until half past twelve. Folk dances of foreign homelands alternated with American ballroom dancing. About one o'clock the party ended though it took some effort to persuade friends to go home.

The only flaw to mar the otherwise enjoyable evening was the news that one of our families had been robbed while the tenants were having a good time on the roof.

JULY 11, 1928

Rents continue to be paid with marked regularity. No changes or removals are indicated. The oft-repeated opinion that with the advent of warm weather a number of people would move out because there would be no need for steam heat appears to be groundless.

JULY 12, 1928

We are receiving a number of complaints about overflows from the ice-boxes. The water trays are so high that they touch the bottom of the boxes, making them almost inaccessible for cleaning and causing clogging.

Two teachers sent by the Board of Education to conduct play-school here for the summer appeared today and began their classes. Over one hundred children attended the first session. Discipline was poor, probably owing to the mixed ages of the children. Classes are scheduled to be held from 1:30 to 4:30, with a fifteen minute milk period. Sheffield Farms, a local dairy company, is furnishing the milk for the children at 5 cents a bottle.

[For four successive summers the Board of Education provided men and women teachers. In 1932, because of economies instituted by the city, we had to provide our own. This we did with the cooperation of the Child Study Association of America. Our summer play-school became, eventually, a cooperative project with the Child Study Association. We supply the funds and they the expert advice and supervision. Additional teachers are furnished by the WPA.]

JULY 13, 1928

Seven men attended the first meeting of the Adult Educational Group, held this evening. Each person gave reasons to explain why men and women marry. One brought out man's desire for legitimate sex-expression; another his desire to have children; another the need for companionship. Apparently, all spoke about themselves. It was gratifying, indeed, to find men in this way earnestly searching for truth. The meeting was well conducted and everyone revealed a grand spirit of tolerance and respect for the opinions of others. The talk finally drifted into channels that brought up the question of companionate marriage. As the time was growing short, it was de-

cided to discuss companionate marriage and divorce at the next meeting.

As I was passing through the court at 11:30 A.M., Mr. and Mrs. Silberman overtook me and excitedly said they wanted to see me about something very important. We went into the office and there they told me that young Samuel Fishbein, the 14-year-old son of one of the tenants, had attempted an "act of immorality," upon their daughter. This had happened about two hours earlier on the roof. They had already gone to police headquarters to report the case, and after conferring with two sergeants there, decided to demand the eviction of the Fishbein family on pain of reporting the boy to the Children's Court. I tried to calm the parents, and suggested the consideration of this matter in a more mature way; I pointed out that sex curiosity among children is a well established fact and that children experiment with sex. Further, I offered to talk to the boy and to assure the parents that similar occurrences would not happen again. They were willing to leave the matter in my hands.

JULY 14, 1928

Called young Fishbein into the office to talk to him about the episode on the roof. He was apparently prepared for the interview because he talked profusely with but slight encouragement. He immediately put the blame on several other boys, saying that he was merely a bystander and was pushed into doing what he did. The thought of possible punishment frightened him and he wept throughout the conversation. After emphasizing to him how bad an act it is to molest girls, I let him go. During the day I talked to the other boys involved, who in their turn shifted the responsibility to the others. Apparently the whole thing originated as a game which culminated in the desire to show off. All of the boys realize what is right and what is wrong. They are ready to promise not to play such games again. I think this whole situation was accidental and not premeditated. However, one boy does require attention. I get reports that he swears frequently and sometimes suggests unhealthy ideas to the other children. All of these boys are members of the Health Club. When Mr. Eisenstein returns in the early fall, I will talk to him about looking into the situation. Meanwhile will keep in touch with the children.

[Similar instances happened several times and had to be handled.

Our policy was not to make a fuss about it. In most cases, a quiet talk with the children seemed to be sufficient. In only one instance, where a father became over-familiar with several of the little girls, was another course taken. I contacted the Crime Prevention Bureau and together we planned the following procedure which was very successful. The Bureau sent for this man and he was brought to the police station. There they told him a written complaint had been made about his conduct. I was called in as a character witness. We spoke to the father about the gravity of the offense, and he became so frightened that he never again caused trouble.

The children know a great many sex terms. They use various profane words and phrases freely. Whether they know the precise meaning of their profanity is hard to tell. In the neighborhood, the adults swear openly and children soon pick up this kind of language.]

JULY 16, 1928

The New York Edison Company exhibited on the roof movies of various electrical devices and of the growth of electrical service in the city. About 300 adults and children saw the pictures, which were shown here for the first time. Many residents from the neighborhood came and all appeared to enjoy the show.

JULY 17, 1928

The summer wear and tear on the stairs is very evident. When the paint wore off too quickly I thought at first it was because of poor quality. But after trying several kinds of paint in different hallways, I find that concrete will not hold any kind for any length of time. It was a mistake to make the stairs of cement, which is porous, instead of slate or tile which has a smooth surface and is suited to extra heavy usage.

Fathers' Club meeting. Mr. Silberman brought up the question of roof supervision, apparently having in mind his daughter's recent experience. Two fathers will supervise the roof every night. A motion was also passed to prohibit card playing on the roof.

[This last rule was never enforced. We sectioned off a part of the roof where the fathers and older boys might play on summer nights. Card playing in this neighborhood is very prevalent and it is healthier to play here than in other less wholesome places.

It was agreed, however, that the games be of a sociable nature and that gambling for large sums be prohibited.]

JULY 21, 1928

Miss Sohnfeld, who is making a study of the neighborhood, returned from her vacation and came to talk to me about her work. She finds she cannot give as much time here during the day as we require, but she is willing to spend an evening each week doing recreational work. I suggested the possibility of forming a dramatic group, especially since several adults have mentioned their desire for one. The idea appealed to her and she will get in touch with those who are interested. Her community study, she informs me, is gradually taking concrete shape. I hope to see some results soon.

[Miss Sohnfeld never completed the study of the neighborhood, which was planned to include an investigation of nationalities and community facilities in recreation and health.]

JULY 23, 1928

Twenty children from the Social Circle of the Church of All Nations visited the building. Took them around and explained the nature of our activities.

At 4:30 the Play School gave a party to a group of parents. Various children recited pieces and sang songs. The mothers were highly pleased and commented favorably upon the value of the school.

JULY 26, 1928

Sheffield Farms Company was scheduled to show movies on the roof, but to our great disappointment their representatives failed to appear. A large group of children and parents had gathered. Fortunately, I had invited a photographer to take pictures, which served as an attraction.

JULY 27, 1928

A reporter from one of the metropolitan newspapers came to interview me about the progress of the homes.

JULY 28, 1928

The Mock Marriage took place last night. This was an entertainment planned and staged by the tenants themselves to which they

invited guests. Though we limited the number of invitations, the roof was jammed with over 600 people. It is evident that we cannot permit tenants to invite people on this scale as such huge roof congregations are dangerous.

The comic nature of the program gave the men full opportunity for their histrionics and they acted their parts vehemently. After performing for an hour and a half, they gave no signs of ending their hilarious slapstick. I finally prevailed upon them to give their audience a chance to rest.

Afterwards refreshments were served and everyone danced. I purposely gave very little cooperation in order to learn how far they could assume responsibility for planning and running their own social activities.

Two quarrels marred this otherwise successful evening. Mrs. Papoosha lost her ice-cream ticket and that brought on a heated argument in which epithets were hurled such as I never before heard. The other quarrel was between Mr. London and Mr. Wolfe. Theirs was an altercation over the awarding of the prizes. Both disputes apparently would have gone on indefinitely had I not interfered and restored order.

JULY 29, 1928

All in all last night's entertainment was a memorable affair. So much that when I came to the roof today, at least fifteen participants were there discussing its highlights.

JULY 31, 1928

The janitor situation is the problem of the month. Tremendous turnover of porters creates a difficult situation for the superintendent and myself. I believe the men leave because of the poor living quarters provided here for them, lack of opportunity to make tips and money on the side, and the long hours of work necessary to maintain our standards of cleanliness. During the summer the building is not easy to care for. The children are here so much of the time and they are apt to scatter about the premises fruit pits, nut shells, and fruit cores. They also linger in the courts and hallways and use the roof scarcely at all during the daytime because of the intense heat. An awning is really very necessary if the roof is to be used to its fullest advantage by the tenants.

AUGUST 1, 1928

At the Fathers' Club meeting tonight, the members took up the question of how to observe the memory of Mr. Lavanburg. A Memorial Committee was appointed. Mr. Romansky read a letter from a Republican Assemblyman in which he asked for the privilege of addressing the club. A lively debate ensued as many of the fathers are ardent Democrats. A motion was made to ban speeches at the club by men representing political parties. Another motion was made to permit political speakers to address the meetings, provided they did not talk about politics! However, these motions did not pass. A final motion was carried to have political speeches from representatives of all parties. However, until the series of speeches are arranged, no response would be made to the overture of the Republican Assemblyman.

As before, Mr. Berlin was a disturbing element. Tempers were so ruffled by his long speeches and the bitter arguments they caused that several members got up to leave, remaining only after an appeal from the chair pacified them.

AUGUST 2, 1928

Spoke to an active member of the Fathers' Club about the arguments and disagreements that take place at every meeting. He said he thought that jealousy was a contributing factor. Later I saw the club's president and we discussed the same problem. He suggested that meetings be held only once monthly for business, because it is around business matters that the arguments center. The other meeting could be devoted to educational and social activities.

AUGUST 6, 1928

Two of the 16-year-old boys have asked for jobs as porters. Will give them a trial for the rest of the summer to see how such an arrangement works out.

[After they had worked one day, one of the boys' mothers decided the job was below her son's dignity, and the whole matter was dropped. With the advent of the depression, however, many fathers and older boys have asked for work. One of our tenants is now our highly satisfactory superintendent, and other of the boys and men do such odd jobs as polishing floors, removing

snow, etc. Nothing is beneath them so long as they can make some money at it.]

AUGUST 8, 1928

In the morning had a talk with Mr. Eisenstein, who has just returned from his vacation. For the remainder of the summer, he will concentrate his attention upon individual boys who present problems, as well as the group of boys involved in sexual delinquencies.

[Mr. Eisenstein succeeded in a measure with the boys who gave difficulty. However, after his departure, we had no one to continue his work. In a few instances where the situation was very serious we referred the parents to clinics.]

Again was gratified to see a large group of parents and children playing together on the roof. Some were enjoying games of checkers and chess; others a fast game of handball. In one corner, a mother was leading a group of small children in songs and games. This spirit on the roof is very fine. Practically every night there is some impromptu entertainment. I am learning that I do not have to be on the roof every night since the parents and resident workers are able to supervise activities successfully.

AUGUST 9, 1928

Mrs. Cooper called Mrs. Reskin's attention to her rent arrears of one week. Mrs. R. denied owing the rent, claiming she was up to date in her payments. Mrs. C. went over the records in order to convince her that she was mistaken. When asked to compare these details with her own rent-book, she claimed it had been lost just at the time the arrears occurred. This being the case, we pointed out that she would have to accept our figures. She left the office feeling dissatisfied and unconvinced.

AUGUST 10, 1928

Mr. Reskin in to corroborate his wife's story and claimed that his wife is sure she paid the rent. I repeated what I had told his wife the day before that since the arrears occurred at the time the rent-book had been lost, and since there existed no other way of checking, we were obliged to abide by our books. He was displeased, but let the matter rest.

Three students from the New York School of Social Work visited to look around the building.

Fifty of our children went to the Rivoli, an uptown motion picture theatre. This was the first time for many of them to see a talking moving picture.

Have been investigating the cost of heating. Ours appears to be excessive compared to similar buildings. Someone has suggested that the uncovered pipes in the basement cause losses in heat and that they will constitute a source of danger when our proposed basement activities commence.

[Although the pipes were subsequently covered with asbestos, the high fuel costs persisted. In 1933 a consulting engineer was brought in, who advised certain technical changes which when installed did effect substantial savings in fuel costs.]

AUGUST 14, 1928

Noted that attendance in the afternoon Play School has dropped considerably. Milk period attendance, too, has decreased. Apparently the novelty has worn off.

AUGUST 20, 1928

Mrs. Kummer reported to my secretary that for the second time a pillow had been taken from her baby carriage kept in the basement. She was incensed about the theft, although her chief complaint was about the "pettiness" of it. When her temper was calmed, we urged her to remove all pillows and bedding from the carriage hereafter as she could readily understand there was very little we could do to prevent recurrences of the thefts.

AUGUST 24, 1928

Two of our cooperative fathers in to find out whether we would furnish wire if they gave their labor to extend the fence on the roof so that the volley ball would not fall off. Appreciating their interest, I was glad to arrange for the purchase of the wire.

AUGUST 31, 1928

Ice cream party given to the children of the Play School. About 150 present. Many had never been to the Play School before, but the magic words "ice cream" brought them out in large numbers.

Have had several reports of minor accidents on the roof caused by children running into the vent pipes. Another difficulty, leaders and parents inform me, is presented by the lack of toilets and water fountain for the children. The building's being a six-story walk-up makes such equipment on the roof very necessary.

[There was nothing that could be done about the vent pipes, but a water fountain and boys' toilets were installed. This additional expenditure could have been avoided, had the installation been made while the building was under construction.]

SEPTEMBER 2, 1928

Have been thinking of ways to stimulate the lagging interest of the "commissioners." Called the boys into my office today to suggest a clean-up drive to be launched with a mass meeting. They accepted the idea enthusiastically. I held forth the possibility of getting a magician to perform at the meeting, whereupon they suggested getting out a newspaper for that day. I left them in the office busily planning posters to announce the event.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1928

Dropped in to see the evening rehearsal of the Adult Dramatic Group. Was impressed with their eagerness to act well. Ironically, Mr. Berlin, the bane of the Fathers' Club, is the star performer. Several babies slept peacefully in the hall while their mothers rehearsed. Of the nine in the cast, only one had ever acted in a play before. After the rehearsal was over, there was a great deal of discussion about invitations to people, admission charges, and publicity plans.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1928

When I returned from a Labor Day week-end in the country, I was pleasantly surprised to find that not only had the fathers raised the fence with the wire we provided, but they had also put up another net so that more people could play volley ball on the roof.

Mrs. Cohn has gone to the hospital for a very serious operation. All the tenants were concerned about her condition, and constantly asked for information, indicating the great interest they have in the welfare of their neighbors. Neighborliness is apparent in other ways as well. Mothers care for their neighbors' children to permit shopping, they visit sick neighbors in the hospitals, and help one another

out in various other ways. One father remarked, "Before I came to Lavanburg I had one neighbor. Now I have many."

SEPTEMBER 6, 1928

Discovered more pencil marks than usual in the building. We have also had a report recently of a tenant throwing bundles of refuse out of the window. I spoke to Mr. Holland (one of the leaders among the tenants) about these violations of rules. He suggested a special meeting of the tenants to put the problem up to them as a body. He thought that once they realized the situation, they would be helpful about it. Sent out notices of a tenants' meeting for Friday, September 13.

[It is now our custom to hold one or two meetings a year devoted to the question of building sanitation. The last meeting was held under the auspices of the Tenants' Council. Have found these meetings very effective. They tone up the general morale and also provide an opportunity to tell the new tenants of our objectives.]

Mailed a report of our summer activities to the directors.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1928

The Lavanburg News out today, consisting in the main of contributions from the tenants. Announcements of fall plans of the different groups are featured.

In the evening the Adult Educational Group met.

[After we had more or less exhausted the topics of interest, this discussion group turned into a Traveling Group and I went with them to visit a number of places of interest, such as the Daily News Building, the telephone exchange, a Broadway play, etc.]

SEPTEMBER 8, 1928

Our library has been open for a week now, and Miss Mack reports that seventy-five children between the ages of seven and fifteen registered. I tried to get a loan of books from the neighborhood public library, but was informed that because the library is located only five blocks away, it would be preferable to have the children go there.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1928

Visited the roof tonight and found a large group of fathers gathered in a corner discussing the situation of the Markow family. The mother had been taken to the hospital late in the afternoon and the children were left all alone. The men asked me whether they could not do something for the unfortunate family. Told them the family was being cared for by the Jewish Social Service Association. In this particular case the cooperation of the Fathers' Club was not needed, but I thanked them for their splendid spirit. Shortly afterwards, a housekeeper, sent by the JSSA came to look after the family.

SEPTEMBER 11, 1928

Joseph Bernstein, age 12, left his home on Monday evening at 8 o'clock and did not return until the next morning at 11 o'clock. His mother was frantic with worry. Joseph told the following story when he came to the office. He was playing with some boys on Avenue D and 3rd Street when a truck came along. The driver invited all of them for a ride. The other boys refused and ran away but the man grabbed Joseph and forced him to go. They rode around all night. In the morning the man let him go. After walking for two hours, Joseph found his way home.

The entire story sounds improbable. There are several discrepancies in the tale. Will refer the boy to Mr. Eisenstein.

Mr. Domroff, a tenant, started painting the basement in preparation for the winter activities. I have worked out a design that will create a cheerful effect in bright colors.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1928

Miss Mack, resident worker, tendered her resignation as of September 15, to take a position in St. Louis.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1928

The first meeting of the tenants was held this evening. About two hundred people were present, mostly adults; and from a roll-call, we found eighty families represented. I talked to them about the condition of the back-yard, dumb-waiters, sidewalks, carriage-room, and fire escapes. They listened attentively. Afterwards, the officers of the Fathers' Club spoke and pointed out that the responsibility of the

tenants is as great as that of the management and exhorted all to give their most active cooperation. In turn, the tenants took the opportunity to complain about the ice-boxes which continue to give trouble. I promised to do whatever was possible.

[I employed a carpenter to raise all ice-boxes several inches.]

Mr. Falk of the Board telephoned to say that he liked the report about our summer activities very much.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1928

Several children were stopped from eating in the court and their mothers came into the office to protest. They claimed their children would not eat bread and butter in the home and they therefore found it necessary to bring it to the children wherever they might be. I explained that this encouraged poor habits of eating and created extra work for the porters. I was very firm about enforcing the rule.

Training children to eat at the table might be a suitable topic for discussion of the Mothers' Club some day.

[The eating rule has always been rigidly enforced, and sometimes drastically. That is, if a child was found eating in the court, he was made to throw the food into the waste can. In many instances there were tears, but results were obtained. It is very seldom now that a child is seen eating in any of the forbidden places about the building.]

SEPTEMBER 26, 1928

Mrs. Wermel's dog bit Ida Reskin. Mrs. Reskin took out a summons against Mrs. W., but I suggested that a settlement be made instead. Both women readily agreed to the decision I would consider fair. So we arranged for Mrs. Wermel to pay \$5 compensation to Mrs. Reskin, which satisfactorily closed the matter for both parties.

[I was the first to break the rule forbidding dogs in the house by bringing mine when I moved in. For about three years there were only two other dogs on the premises and they caused no trouble, except in the above mentioned instance. Then we had an epidemic of dogs. At one time there were fourteen kept by the tenants, causing considerable extra cleaning for the porters. Dog-owner meetings were held and the tenants agreed to give up their pets if they could not care for them properly. Gradually the number of dogs decreased, as the tenants discovered how

difficult it was to keep a dog in an apartment. There are only about five dogs in the building now.]

SEPTEMBER 30, 1928

At 2:30 the "commissioners" held their mass meeting. About one hundred and fifty children and several parents attended. The "commissioners" put their case in the form of a skit entitled "The Cleaning-up Process, and the Appearance Afterwards."

The magician, of course, was the hit of the program.

[By and large, to maintain thorough cleanliness in the building was beyond expectation. Now and then individual children and adults need reminding. Many visitors have commented that expensive apartment houses in more fashionable parts of the city are not better kept.]

Attended Mothers' Club meeting in the evening. Spoke to them about an English class which is being formed, health works for the children, and the memorial ceremonies the fathers are planning in honor of Mr. Lavanburg.

[For three years we had an English class conducted under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. For reasons of economy necessitated by the depression the Board discontinued the class. A year later, however, the teacher who had been in charge came back and offered his services in exchange for an apartment at a somewhat reduced rental. This was arranged and the class became one of our own activities. The attendance has been well-sustained but the majority of the women are enrolled from the neighborhood.]

OCTOBER 2, 1928

Bought furniture for the Fathers' Clubroom, games for the game-room and chairs for the social hall. Slowly the basement is taking on an attractive lively air. Curtains (which the mothers have volunteered to make for us), lamps with colorful shades, and some vivid wall-drawings will give the finishing touches.

OCTOBER 4, 1928

Mr. Hochman, the tenant who runs a taxi-cab, is in difficulties. Yesterday he became involved in an accident—a child ran under his cab. Although the child was unhurt, the case was reported to the

Yellow Taxi Corporation where he is employed. Mr. Hochman claims that because his superior does not like him, he used the accident as an excuse to fire him. He asked me to write a character reference for him which I was glad to do.

OCTOBER 15, 1928

Since a father came in to find out whether he could use the auditorium, I announced that anyone may rent it for \$5 an evening or \$7.50 with the use of the kitchen. Tenants sometimes desire the auditorium for family affairs, such as confirmations, weddings, or parties. The space is just right for family social functions, and its use will help to prevent abuse of the apartments, and annoyance to the neighbors.

In the evening the Educational Group, Dramatic Group, and Memorial Committee all met. Find that the same people participate in all of these activities, which causes confusion. If only our project were larger. In my opinion a community with three or four times as many adults would be healthier.

OCTOBER 22, 1928

Memorial Evening, in honor of Mr. Lavanburg. Services were conducted by one of the tenants according to orthodox Jewish rites. A picture of Mr. Lavanburg was presented to the building by the Fathers' Club. Roger W. Straus, representing the board of directors, and Rabbi Schulman, of Temple Emanu-El, eulogized the life and interests of the founder.

At the beginning of the evening a slight disturbance was caused by some tenants who had neglected to secure tickets in advance. Attendance at our affairs must be controlled, and this situation served as a lesson to those who thought admission would be a free-for-all despite the advance notice.

OCTOBER 25, 1928

Am starting to equip my office with all the data on housing I can secure. This will include books, pamphlets, magazine articles, and newspaper clippings.

NOVEMBER 2, 1928

Our game-room is officially open and in full swing. Among the games are ping-pong, crokinole, checkers, chess, and puff-ball. The

racket is terrific but I feel this should be one place where the boys and girls can let off steam. The children are not disciplined unless they interfere with one another. Three fathers supervise the activities at all times.

Visited the library which continues to be popular with the children. However, two or three, instead of reading were playing and annoying others. I noticed that when Miss Wermel, a volunteer leader, is in charge the library is in a turmoil. Evidently she does not know how to handle the children. It will be better to keep the library closed on evenings when Miss London, the regular librarian, is not here.

Story Hour is well attended. About one hundred eager faces were in the circle listening to the tales tonight.

NOVEMBER 12, 1928

Mrs. Broun, who lives in one of the tenements across the street, came in weeping because she had been dispossessed and did not know what to do with her furniture. She asked leave to store her belongings temporarily in our basement; I agreed. Neighbors occasionally come in and ask for help. Of course, as with tenants, I assist them only when it is a problem they cannot handle themselves.

NOVEMBER 23, 1928

Alexander Bing, Claude Leah, and their wives visited. Mr. Bing is the president of the City Housing Corporation and a member of our board. Mr. Leah is engaged in real estate in London and came to New York to study the housing situation and also allied social and community work problems. They commented on the state of cleanliness in the building and were impressed with the variety of the activities.

NOVEMBER 24, 1928

Miss D., social service worker from Beth Israel Hospital, in office to discuss the case of the Solomon family. Mr. Solomon has been out of work for several months. Mrs. Solomon refuses to go to the Jewish Social Service Association for financial aid as she does not want to accept charity. The hospital has been helping the family out with food and clothing, but since this is not its function, it cannot continue to do so. Informed Miss D. that the Foundation could

not help the family directly, as we are not a relief organization, but we would try to persuade the mother to go to the JSSA. Miss D. will ask Mrs. Solomon to see me at the office.

[Prevailed upon Mrs. Solomon to let the JSSA assist. Fortunately, her husband found work soon afterwards.]

Attended a meeting of the Lavanburg Seniors, boys between the ages of 16 and 18. Two cliques in the club have made it difficult for the group to continue and they decided to disband.

A dietitian came to speak to the members of the Mothers' Club on "Jewish Food Habits." She stressed the values of vegetables which are often lacking in the Jewish diet.

NOVEMBER 28, 1928

Have been reading *The New Day in Housing* by Louis H. Pink which has just come off press. What he writes about the Lavanburg Homes experiment is very interesting:

. . . Mr. Lavanburg's splendid gift to the poor of New York City is an out-and-out philanthropy. It offers no solution for the housing problem. While Mr. Lavanburg expressed the hope, before he died, that many other wealthy men would follow his example, we know that this is not likely to be the case. Permanent housing relief can come only from the intensive use of private capital at a fair return, or from government subsidy in some form, or both.

. . . there is little danger of vandalism or serious abuse, if proper emphasis is placed upon management. It is management which will make or break this experiment. Only time will tell whether the tenants will respond to the new environment. Those who are supercritical do not realize how hard it is to keep spick-and-span a dark, dingy flat, without sunlight or modern plumbing or even ordinary repairs.

Rentals, while on a weekly basis, average \$9 a room per month. The building is not expected to make a profit. Mr. Lavanburg's idea was to provide the very best for families who could only afford the worst. It is rather astounding, and not encouraging to those who offer to produce \$8 rentals in Manhattan, that it is necessary to charge \$9 a room even though no interest is asked on the money invested. In fairness it must be pointed out, however, that management costs in this group are undoubtedly high.

It is small for economical supervision and the social activities require extra service. This is all essential to the success of the plan but increases the rent.

The Lavanburg Players presented "The Crisis," a play in two acts. As far as I know this is the first dramatic group of tenants in New York City. The play was given much publicity in the Jewish press. Three performances were given in the South Hall and more than one hundred and fifty friends and neighbors were present each time. Their success went to the heads of some of the players; two of them very seriously discussed putting on the play in one of the theatres on Second Avenue, the Jewish Rialto of New York City.

DECEMBER 5, 1928

Noticed that in spite of the cool weather, the clothes-lines on the roof are in use as much as ever. The women seem to prefer open-air drying to the overhead dryers in their kitchens.

DECEMBER 10, 1928

Moving pictures sponsored by the *New York Evening Sun* shown. Children who are members of the game-room were admitted free; others were charged three cents.

DECEMBER 18, 1928

A representative of the Travelers Insurance Company came to get particulars of an accident which happened on our stairs a few weeks ago to a Mrs. Rose Meizman. She claimed that when she left the building after visiting one of the tenants, she fell on the steps because it was dark and slippery. She is suing the Foundation for \$350.

[After investigation, the insurance company informed us that Mrs. Meizman had a long record of accidents. Subsequently, the case was dropped.]

DECEMBER 26, 1928

A group of youngsters have organized the Lavanburg Savings Bank. Accounts may be started with a 1-cent deposit. The bank is open twice weekly in the office where the officers of the bank conduct their banking business.

[This lasted about two years. But because it required too much

work on the part of the office staff, who had to help the bank president with the books, it was finally discontinued.]

The Jacobs family suddenly decided to move out. Upon questioning, Mrs. Jacobs admitted that her husband had deserted the family. I further learned that he has been out of work for some time and she confessed that she had been nagging him. She plans to take the children to her mother and then look for work.

DECEMBER 28, 1928

Today we celebrated our first anniversary. A special issue of *The Lavanburg News* carried several testimonials from the tenants. Mrs. Mannheim wrote:

Much has been said and written of the many advantages and blessings that the Lavanburg Homes offer to the family of limited means. We who have lived in the old tenements know that the surroundings in general were such that the housewife could not take any interest in her home and in her children's education and up-bringing. The terrible hallway, and the dismal, gloomy view of the entire tenement were so depressing that even the bravest housewife became discouraged and simply let things drift. Her only hope was for supper to be over so she could hurry to the local movie there to forget for a while her unhappy lot.

What a change the Lavanburg Homes has brought about in our lives! Not the moving picture house, but our Home is now the center of our attention. Freed from a good deal of the drudgery connected with the old tenement, we use our spare time to improve ourselves and enjoy some of the finer things in life. We take a deeper interest in the education of our children and ourselves; we take an active part in the various social and cultural activities of our organizations, notably the Dramatic Group where we play an active part. This is only a small beginning. We hope to enlarge our activities as we go along and to accomplish great things in the near future. For these reasons the housewife feels a special sense of gratitude and the day we moved into the Lavanburg Apartments will always remain in our memory as marking an important turning-point in our lives for a better and happier future.

Have been reflecting on the effect the model tenement house has had on the neighborhood in general and our tenants in particular.

At the present it is hard to tell or measure it. More time is necessary to evaluate the effect, if any. However, I have noticed that several tenements across the street received a "fixing-up" in the form of painting and remodeling. One landlord even put in a front door which looks exactly like ours, with curtains and outside lights. This sprucing up, of course, has helped to rent some of the empty flats which abound in the locality. We were told that migration from this neighborhood decreased upon the completion of our building.

As to the extent of the influence of the building on the lives of our tenants, this, too, is hard to tell or measure. I do know that they have learned (some perhaps under pressure) not to barricade their fire-escapes, or to throw refuse out of the windows; and the children have learned not to deface the walls.

The eagerness with which they carry on their group programs and the vitality expressed in the activities all point to the fact that these are abundantly needed. However, one should not believe that all the adults and children residing in the Lavanburg Homes are equally interested in the activities. There are several families who prefer to remain isolated. These are left alone. No effort is made to direct their lives, so long as they pay their rent and keep their homes in good order.

Mention must also be made of the gossip, petty jealousies, and quarrels which occur among our tenants. But when one remembers the group that resides in these homes, a group that for many years had been deprived of elementary human comforts, always struggling for existence and always living from hand to mouth, one marvels that there is not much more bickering and evidence of irritation.

On the whole the buildings have always presented a neat and bright appearance. I do not know of any tenants guilty of intentional damage. There are so few families who have not cooperated in observing the rules that they are of negligible importance. About 95 per cent of the apartments are kept spotless. The clean, cheerful-looking curtains help the building stand out against the old, dilapidated, unsanitary tenements surrounding us.

Though the rules give me the right to enter an apartment in order to ascertain its condition, I have not used it. Entry to apartments is made only when repairs are needed, and these occasions have proved sufficient to obtain a picture of the general state in which they are kept.

[Since 1932 the neighborhood has been definitely on the decline. Some buildings have been boarded up, some torn down. The majority of the residents are recipients of public relief, and there is a general air of decay all around us. The contrast between our building and the others near by is even more striking than before.]

JANUARY 18, 1929

Mrs. Cooper informs me that \$16 has disappeared from her cash box. She has no idea where to place the blame or whom to accuse.

JANUARY 19, 1929

Received a letter from Harry Frank, 15, in which he confesses he stole the money. I called him and in questioning learned that he needed money to cover funds belonging to his school club which he had lost shooting dice. It seems that Harry is already an habitual gambler. After a long discussion about the dangers of gambling and stealing, the young fellow promised to "keep straight." He returned a part of the money and agreed to pay the rest at 10 cents a week.

[As Frank came in to make payments, we became very good friends. Eventually, he repaid about half of the amount stolen. The rest he escaped paying for a variety of reasons. About a year later the family moved away. Two years after leaving, they rented one of our apartments again. Frank was about 19 and a steady wage earner. One day he came in and asked for the letter because he did not want anything "in the record" about his act and I returned it to him. He then admitted that the story about his losing school money was made up.]

JANUARY 29, 1929

A health lecture on "Periodic Examinations" was given by Dr. Nelson of the New York Tuberculosis Health Association. Two nurses from the Health Clinic assisted. They gave information as to where and how people may be examined. A motion picture illustrated the talk.

FEBRUARY 2, 1929

Fathers' Clubroom officially opened with a party. Several fathers spoke on the need of coming together to enjoy social contacts. The members who helped paint and decorate the room were highly

praised. The clubroom looked very cosy with its wicker chairs, tables, books, rugs, and painted walls finished in a colorful design. Several boxes of candy were auctioned off for the benefit of the club.

[To provide this clubroom it was necessary to transform one of the two baby-carriage rooms. The fathers agreed to contribute the work involved, asking me to help them. Together we decorated. They themselves could not do all the work and since I did not want to do it for them the best compromise was to do it with them.

The clubroom has been turned over completely to the fathers. They are responsible for its care and they pay for the gas and electricity used. With their approval, the English class and other functions are sometimes held here.]

FEBRUARY 12, 1929

Tonight a photographer took pictures of the activities, to be used in our annual report which I am preparing. To answer the many questions visitors ask, I plan to make the report in the form of a booklet which will describe the experiences and purposes of the Foundation.

FEBRUARY 25, 1929

Several apartments have been badly damaged by the recent heavy rains. Evidently the mortar between the bricks is no longer waterproof. Will consult a firm that specializes in this type of work.

MARCH 10, 1929

It is definite that I leave March 20 for a four months' trip to Europe to study housing in several European cities. Held a conference with Mrs. Cooper, my secretary; Andrew, the superintendent; and Mr. Rineberg, my assistant on recreational activities. Went over a schedule of each one's duties and responsibilities during my absence. Feel everything is almost ready for my departure.

MARCH 19, 1929

I was greatly surprised by a delegation of fathers who asked me to come down to the Fathers' Clubroom where a farewell party had been prepared by the tenants. They presented me a briefcase as a

farewell gift. I was deeply touched by the surprise party and the gift.

From this point the diary was kept by Mrs. Cooper for the period of my trip:

MARCH 31, 1929

A Purim Party for 200 children was given by the Mothers' Club. All between the ages of five and twelve were invited. Most of the children were in attractive costumes, designed in large part by their mothers. One child, dressed in the garb of an old religious Jew, acted as though bent with years. This eight-year-old, well coached by his mother, did not relax his role until after being awarded the first prize. The Social Committee of the Mothers' Club took entire charge of the program.

APRIL 2, 1929

The place was visited by eight social workers from the Association of Volunteers. Two representatives of the Amtorg buying agency of Soviet Russia also visited today.

APRIL 20, 1929

Think the porters are trying to take advantage of Mr. Goldfeld's absence. The stairways do not look as though they had been cleaned very carefully this morning.

Spoke to Mr. Arnstein about the young man who seems to be staying with them. Mr. A. explained that the man is his guest who just came from Baltimore and will move out just as soon as he gets a job.

MAY 3, 1929

Mr. and Mrs. Markow in the office to ask for work for Mr. Markow. He said that for the past several weeks the Jewish Social Service Association has not been helping and that they have no money for the Passover holidays. Phoned Miss K. of JSSA who promised to come the next day.

Miss K. came and recommended that the family move May 4, 1929, to cheaper quarters. The Mothers' Club heard of the situation and came to the rescue with a donation of \$25.

[Subsequently I telephoned the Central Employment Bureau of

the Bowery YMCA. The agency asked me to send Mr. Markow for an interview. The next week Mrs. Markow informed me that her husband was again working three days a week at his old trade.]

MAY 8, 1929

The Wiederman family moved out today because a near relative had died, making it advisable for the family to live with Mr. Wiederman's mother.

MAY 10, 1929

Mrs. Alex, now occupying an apartment on the fifth floor, applied for the Wiederman apartment which is on a lower floor. She presented a statement from her doctor indicating a bad heart condition and pregnancy. Because of these circumstances the change will be made. Mrs. Alex recommended her cousin for her present apartment. After the lease was signed and security deposited, the office was informed by the JSSA that this family is under its care. Although the agency is not giving the family financial aid, it thought it inadvisable for them to move. The lease was canceled and the money refunded.

MAY 15, 1929

The Fathers' Club has passed a motion that the Club sponsor a May party and parade for all the children in the house between the ages of three and twelve. The office suggested that a parade was inadvisable because there could not be sufficient supervision. Nevertheless, the Club insisted they could take entire charge of the program and are going ahead with their plans.

[The May Day celebration was a huge success despite our doubts. At 12 o'clock all of the children assembled dressed in costume. Two tots were garbed as king and queen and were set high on improvised thrones. The procession marched through the neighborhood and then back for a frolic on the roof where cake and ice-cream were served.]

MAY 21, 1929

The families in D 11, B 11 and E 11 came rushing to the office early this morning to report water back-flushing in their baths, wash-tubs and sinks. Called Mr. H. of the construction company for his

advice. He referred us to the sewerage department of the city, whose representatives went over the situation with the superintendent. Apparently one of the pipes is clogged.

JUNE 5, 1929

The second family to leave the Homes moved today. The mother of this family is seriously ill in the hospital and the family has had to break up. The youngsters were sent to a home for children.

JUNE 25, 1929

First Annual Club Rally, which began June 21, ended today. Both adult and children's clubs participated. One of the residents, assisted by a few of the tenants, directed the entire program. The presentation was well worth all the work put into it.

[The stage is very low in the South Hall, making it difficult for all in the audience to see. Later, we built a bleacher arrangement of benches, enabling the smallest to get a full view of the stage.]

JUNE 26, 1929

Arnstein's little boy fell out of a first-floor window. Sent him to Gouverneur Hospital to be examined for internal injuries.

JUNE 28, 1929

Mrs. Rubin in office with Mrs. Elman. Mrs. E. very upset, saying she is going to move because her husband has deserted her and is living with another woman. Calmed her somewhat and advised her to reconsider her decision and let me know her conclusion in a few days.

[Mrs. Elman later came in to inform me that her spouse had decided to return and they are staying on.]

JULY 8, 1929

Returned from my trip today. Found the Play School already opened. Besides the two teachers assigned last year by the Board of Education, there is an additional male teacher. This arrangement is a considerable improvement. Attendance is very good. The children were apparently glad to see me back in the building, as they followed me wherever I went.

JULY 10, 1929

As a gesture of good will toward me, and to surprise me upon my return, the Fathers' Club planted trees on the sidewalk of the Homes, hoping the trees would furnish shade as well as beautify the buildings.

[The trees never took root in the ground and later died. Subsequent efforts to plant trees and shrubs on our grounds likewise failed.]

JULY 11, 1929

Inspection of the building shows very little mischief had been done while I was away. Several panes of glass, broken by children playing ball in the courts, were the only replacements I found necessary.

JULY 12, 1929

Attended a welcome-home party. About eighty fathers and mothers, who had arranged the affair entirely on their own, were present. I expressed my appreciation of their cordiality. They asked many questions about my observations abroad and I talked to them about what I had seen in Europe and Soviet Russia.

JULY 13, 1929

I have learned that several tenants took advantage of my absence by doing things they would not otherwise have done, such as putting articles on fire-escapes, keeping baby carriages in the courts, giving children food in the halls, and generally disobeying the rules. All this means there are several tenants needing discipline against violating house rules.

JULY 15, 1929

The roof is as well attended this year as last. The scene on top of the building is indeed a colorful and happy one. I noticed four separate activities last night which were supervised by mothers and fathers with the assistance of two of the resident workers.

JULY 24, 1929

Mrs. Marcus asked assistance today in arranging for a reduction in the cost of her approaching confinement. The Marcus family has

had an unusually long stretch of seasonable unemployment this year. Telephoned the maternity hospital and after talking over the family's situation, they agreed to reduce the fee from \$40 to \$20.

JULY 26, 1929

Visited a large housing project opened about a year ago. Its extensive grounds, beautiful gardens, cool lawns, and large buildings were magnificent. It had an over-abundance of space which could have been ideally used for a variety of community activities. Yet this project fostered no activities of that nature. While admiring the project, I couldn't help but feel envious and found myself wishing that such extraordinary beauty and unlimited opportunities might exist at the Lavanburg project.

JULY 30, 1929

The Fathers' Club meeting started off badly last night with several resignations and complaints. The president in a written statement accused the secretary of deliberate obstruction of his plans. Mr. Berlin, another member, sent in his resignation because he could not work together with another father named on a committee with him. During the excitement, five of the members walked out of the meeting. The outlook for the Fathers' Club is not very encouraging.

[Two factions had developed in the club, one composed of the American born and the other of the foreign born. The former always ridiculed the stumbling English of the "greenhorns," although they themselves spoke in the ungrammatical East Side vernacular.

The immigrants were the ones really interested in improving the lot of themselves and their children. The others were apt to be flippant in the offensive manner of the worldly New Yorker. This group snickered and poked fun at the actions and ambitions of their brethren. However, it was the latter who took their responsibilities seriously, undertaking most of the work done by the club.

When the American born resigned in a group at the meeting, they came to me requesting recognition as another club. "We are going to show those others what we can do," they boasted.

But contrary to their boasts they never organized their club. Curiously, during the summer months, all played and worked

together on the roof without any disturbance. Most of the tenants who later moved in were foreign born and mixed with the old Fathers' Club group harmoniously.]

JULY 31, 1929

Installed a street shower loaned by the fire department. All day long there is a dancing horde of delighted kids under it, enjoying the cool spray.

AUGUST 1, 1929

Several families went to the country this year. A number also go daily to the beach at Coney Island. This, coupled with the fact that many children attend Play School from one to five, gives the building this year an unusually orderly appearance.

AUGUST 9, 1929

I was held up today at the point of a gun by three robbers. The three men had entered my office and began with an innocent request for information about one of the tenants. I began to answer their questions when suddenly one of them whipped out a gun and commanded me to stand in the doorway leading to the foyer of the bathroom. I thought of the \$500 rent money I had in the office desk and realized then that these men had in some way received information of this money. I knew the bathroom door behind me was unlocked. Quickly I jumped for the door, and closed it behind me. Then I smashed the window with my hand and called loudly for help. My noise and the fall of broken glass alarmed the robbers who fled without waiting to look for the money.

[After this experience I made arrangements to protect the office against similar raids. Now a policeman is stationed in the office on rent collection days from 9:30 to 11:30 A.M., and he guards the money until it is safely deposited in the bank.]

AUGUST 10, 1929

A number of tenants have reported cracked wash-basins. So many, in fact, that it is safe to assume that in due time all will be similarly affected. Undoubtedly the cracks are caused by defective material. Wrote a letter to the architect about it.

[The company supplying these fixtures was persuaded to replace them with new ones at a nominal charge for the labor

only. However, it was not long before these too started to crack in the same way.]

AUGUST 18, 1929

Arranged a vacation for the two Markow boys at a camp conducted by a Day Nursery in the neighborhood. These boys are in need of country air and sunshine. Mr. Markow agreed to pay back the cost to the office on the installment basis.

Pete, the superintendent, came into the office in a very excitable state. Relates that on the evening before his wife had a fist fight with Mrs. Hochman. Mrs. Hochman asked him to open the toilet in the basement for the children. After he complied, he returned later to find the seat dirty. He reproached Mrs. H. for this but she claimed her children were not responsible for it. Later, she went down to the basement to look over the toilet and began arguing with him. On her way back, Pete claims, she hit his wife with her pocketbook which started the battle between the two women. He does not want to stay on the premises any longer, claiming that the tenants do not like him. About an hour later, Mr. and Mrs. Hochman came in to tell the same story except that instead of Mrs. Hochman having struck the superintendent's wife, Mrs. H. claimed that when she was in the basement, Pete shouted to his wife, "Why don't you hit her? You're a woman!" The blow was struck and that precipitated the quarrel.

[Before I had a chance to investigate fully the affair, Mr. Hochman employed a couple of "strong-arm" men from the neighborhood to beat Pete up, the following evening. Mr. Hochman felt that Pete had been insulting to his wife and that his action was completely justified under such circumstances. Feeling, pro and con, ran high in the house. It was the single topic of conversation. I felt the situation to be too critical for myself to set judgment and suggested a group of tenants be appointed to try the case, fasten the guilt, and apply punishment.

Mr. and Mrs. Hochman and the witnesses were heard in my office and a court stenographer (a tenant who donated his services for this improvised trial) took the testimony. The tenants found their fellow-member at fault and a fine of \$25 was imposed to be paid in weekly installments.

Despite the tense feeling in the house, the trial settled the matter to everyone's satisfaction and sense of justice.]

AUGUST 30, 1929

Was informed that the fathers and mothers would have a joint meeting protesting the recent Jewish massacres by Arabs in Palestine. Many of our adults are orthodox Jews and take a deep emotional interest in the rebuilding of a national home in Palestine.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1929

A large number of children are sick with whooping-cough. Reserved a space in the backyard for them to play. Instructions were sent to the mothers to be watchful and not to allow their children to mix with their playmates.

[There were one or two mothers who were uncooperative in their attitude. One said, "If my child had it, why shouldn't the other children get it too?" I was very strict in seeing that due precautions were followed.]

Mrs. Kaplan in to ask permission to keep boarders. She explained that if her present income is not supplemented, she would have to move. I could not stretch the rule forbidding boarders because of the danger of setting a precedent, but we worked out a plan by which she will take care of my apartment to enable her to earn extra money.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1929

A new janitor, Andrew, started work.

Mass meeting for Palestine relief. Sixty were present. The Palestine situation brought about new difficulties in the Fathers' Club as the men who lean toward Communism are very much opposed to the Palestine drive. During the last few days one could observe much excitement in the building because of this issue. The office was informed that in several instances the high feeling almost brought on fist-fighting. Similar conflicts are current throughout the entire East Side between the Communists and the Zionists.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1929

Meeting of the Fathers' Club was scheduled for 9:00 this evening. At 9:30 only nine fathers had gathered and it was decided not to hold the meeting. But at ten o'clock, I was called back since about twenty had arrived. The meeting was quiet until Mr. Cohen arose to demand who was responsible for a sign posted on the bulletin

board reading, "Down with Communism" and urging reprisals for the Communists' position on Palestine. A heated argument started and the chairman was forced to close the meeting. Since tempers were at a dangerously high pitch, I encouraged the men to talk the thing through right then, rather than to risk a brawl later on the outside. All talked, and though no common point of view was reached, their tempers gradually cooled.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1929

A representative of the Child Study Association came to the office to discuss the possibility of organizing a child study group. Learned we would have to pay the leader for conducting the session, so thought it advisable to let the matter rest for a while.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1929

We have been having a number of changes in our resident workers. Because of graduation from school, several of them departed and it is necessary now to look for new workers.

Plans for winter activities are shaping up. The basement is being redecorated and additional equipment has been ordered. New activities include a Sewing Circle for the mothers, Arts and Crafts, a Stamp Collecting Club and a Chess Club. The various social clubs, game-room, library, and nature study group will keep on.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1929

Our recent vacancies were on the fourth and fifth floors, and some difficulty was experienced in re-renting these apartments. I find that our present waiting-list is practically exhausted. A number of former applicants have moved away and others are not interested in renting apartments situated so high up. There have been many requests for apartments from young married couples without children.

[We later waived the house rule qualifying applicants only if they had children and permitted childless families to rent the top-floor apartments. The difficulties of renting these apartments compelled this action.]

OCTOBER 1, 1929

Discussed the office work and our social activities with Mrs. Cooper. It developed that she finds the combination of office and

social work too much to handle. Hereafter she will limit herself to the office.

Made arrangements with Mr. Berlin to work in the basement. His job will be to see that all children have membership cards before being admitted. This job will prevent Berlin from devoting so much time to the Fathers' Club, where he continues to be a disruptive influence. He will be paid \$15 monthly for his work and he is highly pleased as his pension is small and he has much idle time on his hands.

OCTOBER 20, 1929

On the whole, rents continue to be paid promptly. Due to irregularity of employment, and illness, some tenants have had difficulty in meeting the rent, but at no time has any tenant been in arrears for more than a month.

OCTOBER 21, 1929

There has been some trouble in keeping our dumb-waiter shafts free of refuse. Some of the tenants persistently throw bundles of refuse down the shafts but it is impossible to detect the offenders as a number of families use the same shaft. I have made inquiries among building managers in regard to this situation. They inform me that the only safeguard is to install the dumb-waiter lock system. The locks automatically fasten all the doors to the shafts except when released by a control in the basement. We are ordering locks for one shaft to see how they work out.

[Unfortunately, the locks were not proof against abuse of the dumb-waiters. Tenants learned how to keep their doors from locking and the porters continued to report finding refuse. The condition improved greatly when I provided special containers for garbage disposal.]

OCTOBER 22, 1929

An estimate for repainting the apartments has just been approved. It is now almost two years since they have been painted. Bids were asked for, and I was authorized by the board to select one of the three lowest estimates. Am planning to have the work done just before the Passover season, a time when it is customary among religious Jews to redecorate in preparation for the holidays.

As an experiment, tried doing several of the apartments by hiring

painters on an hourly basis and furnishing supplies. Hoped to get the job done cheaper this way. However, after three apartments had been redecorated, I found it considerably more expensive than to contract the whole job.

OCTOBER 24, 1929

Today we officially started on the membership-card system. Our plan divides the year into a summer and winter season and charges for the card by the season. In this way our families will be made to feel that they share the cost of the social activities. The fees for everyone including outsiders are: up to 8 years, 10 cents; 8 to 12, 15 cents; 12 to 14, 20 cents; over 14, 25 cents.

[The membership card system worked out very well. It is retained in this form up to the present writing.]

This year there has been a noticeable improvement in the recreational program because one individual, Mr. Rineberg, has been made responsible for all the functions. Last year, every leader headed his own activity without anyone's coordinating the whole program.

NOVEMBER 5, 1929

Andrew reports that an inspector from the Board of Health came to inspect the water in Section A in response to a complaint allegedly made by the Boardman family that the water is rusty. Mrs. Boardman, when questioned, denied knowledge of the act. The inspector was puzzled as he found no basis for any complaint.

NOVEMBER 11, 1929

Professor C. of New York University telephoned to learn whether two of his students might come to Lavanburg for field training. I gave my assent to the plan. The students will spend two evenings and one afternoon a week here.

Mrs. Holland in, and very upset over her sister who has tuberculosis and is in need of medical care. Although her sister is not a tenant, she spends considerable time here as a volunteer worker. Gave her a letter to the National Committee for Tuberculous Jews.

NOVEMBER 15, 1929

Mrs. J. and Mr. A., of the Jewish Social Service Association, came in to get acquainted. They are going to work in our neighborhood.

NOVEMBER 16, 1929

Wedding of Mr. Milstein's daughter held in the South Hall tonight. At the same time another family gave a linen shower in the Fathers' Clubroom for a relative. I am becoming somewhat tired of attending all these family functions such as Bar Mitzvahs, showers and weddings.

NOVEMBER 18, 1929

Several tenants complained that the late parties disturb them. Will have to be more restrictive in allowing the use of the assembly-rooms. Eleven o'clock will be the curfew.

Mrs. Patman in office, very indignant. Complained that Mr. Rineberg kicked her son yesterday and now he is ill. Went to her apartment to see the boy. He told me he felt all right, though his stomach ached about an hour ago.

NOVEMBER 19, 1929

Had a long discussion with Mr. Rineberg about disciplining the children. He emphatically denied having kicked the Patman boy, saying he had only taken him by the ear and told him to get out. I pointed out that care must be taken not to touch the children in any way. Acts of this sort are easily magnified and can cause serious trouble.

At their meeting tonight, the fathers established a Loan Fund. The fund will be available for the use of every member in good standing, who may make a maximum loan of \$15, to be paid back at \$1 a week, without any interest. To help raise money, it was decided that a charge of five cents a game be imposed for card-playing, all charges to be turned over to the fund. The men appeared to be enthusiastic about their new undertaking.

[Very often the fathers need a few dollars and there is no place for them to get it except from "loan sharks," who charge usurious rates of interest. The Loan Fund, providing facilities for small loans in times of need, set up a useful service.]

NOVEMBER 22, 1929

Attended first social of boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 18. They are planning to hold dances on alternate Friday nights for young people of the house and the neighborhood. Unfortunately, last night one or two behaved in a rough manner. The Seniors are

fearful that the undesirables from the neighborhood cannot be kept under control.

[To keep out the people who disturbed the dances, the Seniors made them invitation affairs. They still have these socials whenever they care to.]

NOVEMBER 25, 1929

At the meeting of the board of directors, there was much discussion relative to broadening the work of the Foundation. Mr. Straus appointed a committee composed of three members of the board to consider ways and means of developing the work. All the directors expressed their satisfaction with the management of the property of the Foundation. I was asked to prepare a statement for the next board meeting showing the cost of social activities. I am also to get information concerning the costs of two front gates and planting shrubbery in the courts.

NOVEMBER 26, 1929

Had a talk with Mr. P., a practising psychologist, who agreed to give a series of lectures on child study for a nominal fee. We will issue cards inviting parents to register for the entire series at a charge of 25 cents. This will insure a regular attendance.

[Mr. P.'s eight lectures were a great success. His talks were simple and caught the interest of his audience. They were mostly about the parent-child relationship, a subject very close to these parents' hearts, judging by the number of questions asked. For two successive years, the tenants requested Mr. P. again, and to indicate their appreciation of the help he gave in their problems, presented him with a desk fountain-pen at the close of his last series.]

DECEMBER 10, 1929

Have innovated a baby-room for our children, ages four to seven. Equipment includes blocks and punch-boards, wooden beads, crayons, etc. This group is entirely under the supervision of the mothers and older children. The latter take charge, even to signing the attendance card. The mothers watch out for those difficulties which might develop suddenly.

[These young children were formerly sent down by their parents to play with their older brothers and sisters. To help the

youngsters, we started the baby-room. Very young children, without a doubt, should have been in bed by this hour, but the fact was that they were not. In facing the problem realistically, we provided suitable facilities for them.]

DECEMBER 15, 1929

Miss Blumenthal, one of the resident workers, informs me that because of personal reasons she is not able to stay on. Because of the turnover of residents and the difficulty of getting suitable people whenever there is a vacancy, I wonder whether it would not be better to secure trained leaders. This will be presented to the directors for discussion.

[The apartments used for residence by the social workers were discontinued as such and rented to families. I found that the hiring of part-time workers for special activities proved to be the most satisfactory method for getting supervisors.]

DECEMBER 31, 1929

Am working on the annual report of the social activities. Noted a remarkable increase in attendance. Last November, 1962 attended and in November of this year attendance reached 3648.

Our second anniversary was celebrated this afternoon and evening. A party was given to the children by the Mothers' and Fathers' Clubs in the afternoon. Movies were shown and refreshments distributed. In the evening, a concert and dance was held for the members of the adult clubs. Speeches were made by the officers of the various groups.

JANUARY 7, 1930

Went with the Traveling Group to make a night visit to the Amalgamated Apartments. The fathers asked many questions about the management of the buildings. Evidently this is a subject of much discussion among them. They noted particularly that the tenants pay for all activities as well as for the use of clubrooms and halls. They made comparisons exclaiming, "Look, this is different," or "This is the same as we have!"

JANUARY 15, 1930

Making plans to print *The Lavanburg News* instead of mimeographing it. Two of the leaders will edit the paper and news items

will be contributed by members of the house. Several of the fathers have offered to contact local business men for ads to cover part of the costs.

JANUARY 20, 1930

Figures of the cost of operation of a number of housing projects have been issued by the State Housing Board. This is fine; now I am able to compare the operating costs of the Lavanburg Homes with more or less similar projects. However, in making these comparisons it is important to remember that the difference in size of the rooms, height of buildings, land coverage, usable space and conditions of crowding, all produce a lack of uniformity in basic units. The cost of social activities in the various developments must also be one of the major factors taken into account.

In our case, 360 children live on the premises and we conduct a variety of social activities. These are important elements in the cost of operating the building. I learn that the annual maintenance cost per room, less cost of administrative management in eight projects, runs from \$30.27 to \$42.95. Our figure is \$35.53. The annual fuel cost is from \$8.19 to \$13.94; ours is \$11.08. Wages range from \$6.41 to \$12.13 compared to our \$10.57. The annual cost of building repairs and supplies per room runs from \$3.59 to \$9.15; ours averages \$4.35 per room. Redecorating extends from \$5.11 to \$10.04; our cost is \$6.33.

JANUARY 27, 1930

Sent out a questionnaire today to be used for bringing our records up to date. There have been many changes in income, trades, and like matters. Considerable commotion was caused by our request for the data; many of the tenants feel that we should not ask for this information. I expect, however, that all will answer. At the same time, we distributed notices in connection with the painting work to be done, informing the tenants of the date when their apartments will be painted.

[Statistical information is obtained every year. No difficulties are experienced and everyone takes it as a matter of routine.]

JANUARY 28, 1930

The fathers are discussing ways and means of increasing their

Loan Fund. They are taxing every member 10 cents a month, and plan to allocate a portion from every money-raising affair to the Fund. In addition they have invited the Mothers' Club to join the Fund.

[The mothers never joined the Loan Fund. They could not agree on terms, and subsequently organized their own fund with which to send their children to camp.]

FEBRUARY 7, 1930

Notices sent to Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb, Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Markow, and Mr. and Mrs. Kummer inviting them to the office on Sunday at 11:00 A.M. Complaints have been received about the noise they make and their heavy swearing. These families live on the three sides of the dumb-waiter and quarrel with each other through the shaft.

[There was no way to find out who was at fault. Under the circumstances informed them all that whoever started the next quarrel would be asked to move.]

FEBRUARY 14, 1930

Informed by the fire insurance inspector that there are violations on the premises in that a number of the tenants have installed electric outlets with exposed wiring. Notices sent asking the tenants to remove these hazards and informing them that upon request we would provide extra outlets at cost.

[Only one extra outlet was provided a room, when the house was first wired. Obviously, modern lighting requires more.]

MARCH 18, 1930

First printed edition of *The Lavanburg News* out today. What a change! The paper looks like a real news-sheet. The fathers obtained \$30 worth of ads for this number.

Mrs. Siegler informed the office that due to reduction of pension she cannot continue to stay in her apartment. Mr. Feinberg also gave notice that he is planning to move. His wife is ill and must live on the ground floor. Several tenants have heard of possible vacancies and came to inquire whether their relatives and friends are eligible. Gave them application forms to be filled out.

MARCH 20, 1930

Mr. Einhorn has complained to the Board of Health of insufficient heat in the building. Inspector here at 6:00 A.M. today and found everything O. K. I was of course much surprised at the complaint. Asked Mr. Einhorn to come and explain why he first did not speak to me before appealing to the Board of Health. He was somewhat embarrassed that I had found out he had made the complaint but arrogantly told me that he had reported his radiator trouble to the porters several times and that nothing had been done. I went to his apartment with him to look over the radiators and discovered that one of the valves had clogged which was a matter of only a few minutes to adjust.

MARCH 28, 1930

Mr. Wermel in the office to tell me that because Mr. Gottlieb and Mr. Krentzman have grievances (Mr. Gottlieb wants a four-room apartment and Mr. Krentzman received a note regarding electrical violations), they do not want to participate in our social activities. They are also trying to influence others to withdraw. He thought if their grievances were discussed, it would help. I told him to invite the two men to the office on Sunday morning because if they felt they had not been treated fairly they should be heard.

APRIL 4, 1930

The mothers are planning a Better Babies Contest for May 1. The Department of Health has written us its offer to cooperate and a doctor will be sent to examine the children.

With the coming of warm weather, children play ball against the wall. Windows are broken but we never know who is responsible.

APRIL 6, 1930

At 11:00 A.M., Mr. Wermel, Mr. Gottlieb, and Mr. and Mrs. Krentzman met in the office. Explained to them how unfair it is for tenants to allow their relationship with the manager to interfere with house activities; that one had nothing to do with the other. If it happens that I am unable to satisfy their wishes, that surely was no reason for resigning from clubs, committees, etc.

Mrs. Krentzman defended her attitude. She said she would not participate in any house activity because I had sent a letter to her husband

regarding electrical violations in their apartment. I brought out records showing that an identical letter had gone to at least a dozen other families for the same reason and no personal affront was meant. To my great surprise, Mrs. Krentzman suddenly turned on her husband and upbraided him for taking offense over such a thing and for being so uncooperative in his attitude. Somewhat shamefully they all laughed about the whole incident and left the office in good spirits.

[Whenever a tenant held a grudge I tried to provide an opportunity to air the grievance. I must say that at times a number of the adults acted like children. Grievances were often made personal and I would suddenly find that a tenant was not on speaking terms with me. I disregarded the attitude, kept on speaking to him, and shortly the whole thing would blow over. I have found that one good helpful rule on such occasions was to be unusually friendly with their children. It is difficult, anyway, for a person to hold a one-sided grudge.]

APRIL 9, 1930

The turnover in porters is still high; I think the reason for it is the poor sleeping quarters we provide. The directors have approved an increase in salary which will enable them to rent better rooms in the neighborhood. Talked with men today and they seem well satisfied with the new arrangement.

APRIL 15, 1930

Discovered that the Dubin family has a relative living with them. On calling upon him to make inquiries, Mr. Dubin became impudent and resentful. I informed him that he would have to move unless he asked his roomer to find other quarters. In the afternoon, Mrs. Dubin called to ask permission to remain in her apartment. I said that the matter would not be discussed further unless her husband indicated his willingness to comply with the rules of the house.

APRIL 16, 1930

Mr. Dubin in office very apologetic. He explained that he has so many worries he flares up easily, and asked to be excused for what he said on the previous day. It happens that it is his sister who is staying with the family and he said he thought that if he wrote to the directors they would grant permission for her to remain with them. I

said I had no objection to his writing but that I did not think it would help him.

[Mr. Dubin wrote and was informed by the secretary that no exceptions could be made. I let Mr. Dubin know I had received a copy of the letter and that he would have to decide whether he wished to remain. Two weeks later the sister moved.]

Asked by the Mothers' Club to arrange for a speaker on birth control. Telephoned the Birth Control League and they said that they would send Dr. S. His topic will be, "Parents' Responsibility Toward Their Children."

APRIL 21, 1930

Fifty children, accompanied by Mr. Rineberg and several mothers, attended the circus.

New desks have arrived for the English class. The old ones, bought from the Board of Education some time ago, were constantly in need of repairs, and were of an inconvenient size. The new desks, of the side-arm type, are especially designed for varied utility.

APRIL 22, 1930

The Fathers' Club is sponsoring a series of political lectures. Four lectures are planned, by representatives of the Republican, Democratic, Socialist and Communist parties. The men tell me that attendance so far has been very good at their meetings.

[Lectures on political topics have never been sponsored by the management. When the groups wish them, they make their own arrangements.]

APRIL 29, 1930

Having received the board's approval, I moved today from the building. My constant surveillance is no longer needed and, although the tenants never interfered with my privacy, living as well as working on the premises becomes monotonous.

MAY 8, 1930

Mr. Palmetti in the office at my request. I wanted to ask him about a third child mentioned by the family at the time of their application. His explanation was that the third child is his sister's and that now

she is able to take care of him. The child is now with her. I pointed out to Mr. Palmetti that in the minds of the other tenants it was unfair to keep a four-room apartment with but four people in the family; and that if he wished to remain, there would be an increase of \$1.50 in his weekly rental.

[He agreed to this arrangement. About a year later, another baby was born and his rent was adjusted accordingly.]

MAY 21, 1930

Aaron Sokolsky is giving us a great deal of trouble in the basement. He is very unruly at all times. The superintendent and the porters have also complained of his escapades and expressed the wish to be rid of him. That, however, is impossible so long as the boy's family lives here. We certainly cannot penalize the parents for their son's mischievous behavior. Will call a family conference to get their cooperation for new ways to handle the boy. In the meantime I talked to Mr. Rineberg about ways of providing suitable outlets for the boy's energy.

[Occasionally I had difficulty making the porters take a lenient view toward the mischief of children. The children found the porters good game for teasing and took advantage of every opportunity to tax their patience. I tried to make the men feel that though these acts were exasperating, they were not serious.]

MAY 29, 1930

Mrs. Marks in to pay her rent. She was disappointed to find no announcement of her baby's birth in *The Lavanburg News*. Apologies were made and we promised an appropriate item for the next issue.

JUNE 4, 1930

One of the local Yiddish newspapers printed an article about the Lavanburg Homes that caused great excitement and indignation here. In it was a reference to our tenants as "the poorest of the poor."

[I think that people living in bare circumstances do not like to be labeled as "poor." Knowing of the sensitivity of the tenants, we have avoided emphasizing their poverty.]

Our basement activities are coming to an end. A rally will close the season. Shortly afterwards the roof will be opened.

Went through the building today. The carriage room, roof, and basement are in first-class shape.

JUNE 6, 1930

Mr. Weinstein in to see me. He was very shy and did not know how to begin the conversation. After some encouragements he blurted out that he wanted birth control information. He said that he and his wife feel another child would be a great burden as they have all they can take care of now. I referred him to the Birth Control Bureau which has a clinic in a local settlement house.

JUNE 16, 1930

Mr. Rineberg at the office to discuss the program of social activities for the past year. I told him that although there had been a tremendous improvement in the growth of interest and attendance, there is still opportunity for further progress. I advised that one of the aims for next year should be the better handling of problem children who disturb and disrupt activities.

I have advised the Fathers' Club to adjourn for the summer months. Quarrels and resignations take place at every meeting. After summer is over the club can be reorganized if the interest of the fathers demands it. I have been thinking that with the Fathers' Club animosities out of the way, the tenants could form a Roof Association to be responsible for the summer program on the roof.

JUNE 18, 1930

Miss Schaeffer, one of our workers who is interviewing all the tenants in connection with a survey, came in to talk to me about Mrs. Marcus. When she called on her today, Mrs. Marcus, evidently needing someone to talk to, confided that she was extremely unhappy. She related that both of her children had died in the first few days of their infancy and that she had developed deafness because of this great misfortune. She would like to see a doctor about her condition but could not afford the expense. Meanwhile she was sure that people laughed at her and talked about her because she could not hear. When Miss Schaeffer suggested going to Mr. Goldfeld, Mrs. Marcus drew back, saying that Mr. G. had once remarked to her husband, "Why did you marry this deaf woman?"

I talked over Mrs. Marcus' attitude with Mrs. Cooper and suggested

that she be very friendly to her, and we might be able to help her overcome her feeling of persecution.

[Eventually, Mrs. Marcus willingly came to me for advice. I told her that I did not know where she got the idea I had talked about her. I referred her to Mt. Sinai. The examining doctors found she was in need of considerable mental and physical treatment. It developed that her deafness had started in her early girlhood and that nothing could be done about it. As part of the treatment, we gave Mrs. Marcus the job of supervising the baby-room and she was very happy with the work, which lasted for about three years. In 1933, after a long period of unemployment, her husband deserted and she left Lavanburg to live with her mother.]

JUNE 22, 1930

While I was having a conference with three fathers, Mr. Krentzman burst into the office greatly excited. He complained loudly about finding his radio wire cut and about someone tampering with his mail. I inferred that the latter complaint arose out of the fact that there are three Krentzmans living in his hall-way and that he considers such a distribution of tenants as unintelligent.

As he became more and more worked up, his voice raised to a shout. He threatened to inform the main office about the manner in which the house is managed.

When he had finished his uninterrupted tirade, I told him quietly that the mail problem could be easily adjusted at the post office and that the three Krentzman families were put in the same building only because vacancies happened to occur in that section. Further, that any tenant would receive courteous consideration in the office at any time providing he controlled his temper. That for the time there was nothing further to discuss, and that Mr. Krentzman was free at any time to go to the main office.

JUNE 23, 1930

Mr. Krentzman dropped in nonchalantly as though nothing had happened. He soon started to talk in a loud voice again. I told him I could do nothing unless he controlled himself. This seemed to bring him up sharply. His attitude changed immediately and he explained that he meant no offense in raising his voice as that is his usual manner of talking. He also said that he did not mean what he said yesterday. After a little talk, he agreed that things could be adjusted quietly.

[I have often noticed that many of the men raise their voices, without intending anger, not realizing it might be offensive to others.]

JUNE 30, 1930

Plans are now ready for the summer play school. Four teachers have been appointed by the Board of Education to help conduct the activities. This summer, for the first time, we have playground equipment on the roof including see-saws, slides and swings. A large awning provides shade over a considerable space.

Mrs. Menshevitz in and very angry because she has been requested to pay 75 cents for damage to the apartment below caused by her negligence. She had used the shower for one of her children without the curtain. I told her that since tenants were responsible for damages due to carelessness it would be necessary for her to pay the cost. She paid but made it evident that she did not like it.

JULY 17, 1930

Big party on the roof last evening. The Arrangement Committee obtained a band that helped the affair considerably. I was told that everyone had a very enjoyable evening. The Roof Association is carrying on activities with little assistance from me, which is a good indication that its members are taking their responsibilities seriously.

JULY 24, 1930

A meeting of the Loan Fund. The report announced that the Fund has about \$100 and that \$25 has been loaned. I was asked to print this story in the next issue of the *News*. A good idea, as the tenants will know the Fund is functioning, and it will make the fathers realize that a strict accounting of the money must be kept.

JUNE 25, 1930

On June 26, Mrs. Silberbery was served with a dispossess because of her refusal to discontinue keeping a roomer in her apartment after several notices from the office. The case was tried in court on July 2 and today we were notified by our attorney that he had agreed to give the family two months time in which to find another apartment.

[Following this, Mrs. Silberberg frequently called to see me, pleading for permission to remain and promising that she would

abide by the house rules. After indicating a great deal of resistance, I finally agreed to reconsider the dispossession if she paid a fine of \$25.

This money was turned over to the Loan Fund. Since there are no secrets in our building, the punishment became known to the other tenants. There has been no more trouble over boarders or lodgers.]

AUGUST 7, 1930

The effects of the depression and unemployment are becoming very evident. Several families are constantly in arrears with their rent. One is as much as nine weeks behind and three are four weeks in arrears.

[These were the first signs of the depression at the Lavanburg Homes. Later it affected a large number of our families. In 1935, 80 families owed rent for 1041 weeks.]

AUGUST 14, 1930

Great to-do over the escapade of a group of boys who climbed into the leaders' office and helped themselves to lolly-pops and soda water which had been stored there. Since these refreshments belonged to the Roof Association, the boys were made to pay a quarter each for what they took. Punishment was probably also meted out in their homes for their mothers soon learned of the incident.

AUGUST 20, 1930

Am still sighing with relief over an accident on the roof last night, which we narrowly averted.

By chance I was in the neighborhood in a car at about 9 o'clock. As we rode by I noticed that the electric lights on the roof were out. Knowing Amateur Night had been planned, I went to the roof to investigate. I was horrified when I viewed the scene. The roof was packed with over 400 people huddled under the awning in complete darkness except for one flashlight which was focused at a child singing on the stage. I edged my way through the mass of people dreading less the sound of a frightened child's scream might send the crowd charging for the narrow exits. When I had reached the front, the leader told me that when the lights first went out, she held everyone on the roof as she was sure they would be fixed very shortly. But that

was over thirty minutes ago and now she did not know what to do. Very briefly I spoke to the people, reassuring them, and as simply as possible directed them in details off the roof. There was no misunderstanding and everything clicked. As the last few filed safely down the stairs, one woman stopped me. She shook her head, fully realizing what might have happened. "Lavanburg," said she, "looked down from heaven and sent you here tonight!"

AUGUST 25, 1930

Our carriage room is approached by a short flight of stairs and the mothers find the strain of raising the carriages to the sidewalk very severe. I thought of building a run-way in place of the stairs, but was informed that building regulations do not permit it. The length of a run-way must be seven times the depth of the decline, and we do not have enough space.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1930

Rounding out plans for winter activities. We need new games, better lighting for the South Hall, a new stage curtain, linoleum in the basement, and a different type of membership card. Last year's cards wore out very quickly and the children found it necessary to buy cards very frequently. Because of the short life of the cards, some of the children thought the office wanted them to spend their money this way. Also, we need more leaders. Am going to try advertising in *The Nation* for young men and women volunteers.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1930

Mrs. Golden in. She told me she was an expectant mother and asked if her family couldn't get a larger apartment. I assured her that her request was reasonable and that she would get larger quarters to suit the needs of her family. I told her also that she would have to wait a while as there were no vacancies available at the moment.

[Increase in the size of families created a constant demand for larger apartments. As few of our tenants move it was not easy to satisfy these demands and thus a vexing problem was presented which was hard to meet. The management made every effort to cooperate with growing families, knowing how undesirable it is for maturing children to sleep together, and attempting to prevent crowding in the project.]

SEPTEMBER 19, 1930

Last year the leaders on several occasions needed reference books on club work. A small library of selected books dealing with games and the psychology of children would be very useful. Will start building up such a library in the leaders' office.

The basement from now on will be known as the Lavanburg Social Center. The word "basement" seems unattractive, especially for people not very familiar with our activities.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1930

A porter reports that children make a great noise skating on the sidewalks in the evening. As soon as cold weather comes, this seasonal problem disappears.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1930

Miss Schaeffer in the office to report on her questionnaires. I was very much interested to read the following interviews:

"Mr. Holland is a burly taxi driver, emotionally very sensitive, and with a struggling intelligence. His wife is a dark, attractive woman who appears to be unusually intelligent. Both are leaders in the adult clubs. They have three children, Harry, 6, Helen, 11, and Martin, 13, all of whom partake in the activities.

"Both of the parents are very happy to have their children take part in the life downstairs since the children enjoy it so much. Mr. Holland said, 'It keeps them off the streets and they even learn things while they play down there. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for them.'

"Their children were never before members of organized groups and school clubs, nor had they attended the movies in the evenings. They used to go to the movies three afternoons a week but now they go only once. The afternoons, before coming to Lavanburg, they spent playing on the streets; now they do their school homework in the afternoons in order to be free to go to the Center in the evening.

"During the summer the children have always, as now, gone to the country for ten weeks. The parents remarked that at Lavanburg their children give more attention to personal neatness and cleanliness. The children find the shower so much fun that they have fallen into the habit of taking one every night before going to bed.

"Concerning their own activities in the Fathers' and Mothers' Clubs,

the Hollands were most enthusiastic. Both Mr. and Mrs. Holland find the lectures interesting and though they never before had attended any, they take care not to miss any of those held in the building. They especially enjoyed the lectures on child guidance which opened for them new ways to train their children.

“Both do volunteer work at supervising the children. This activity they have found is a source of much pleasure. Mr. Holland summed up his feelings about his life here in this way: ‘Before, when I came home from work, I just flopped down on the bed and went to sleep. Now, my wife and me, we both work in the same activities and here, when we are home together, we have that to talk over together. So my wife says I am more of a companion to her because we discuss the things we do instead of me just coming home to sleep.’”

Excerpts from another interview: “Mr. and Mrs. Koch were interviewed at the same time. They were most cordial and willing to talk over the details of living at Lavanburg. Mrs. Koch is an attractive middle-aged woman. She talks rapidly and jerkily, and complains often of her health and her nerves. She started off by saying that she would like to move to a part of the city which would be nearer to her husband’s work except that she was afraid she would miss her friends here. Her husband interposed, saying that although she had lived in this section all her life, she had scarcely any friends at all, that she kept almost entirely by herself. Mr. Koch is a quiet man, a laundry truck driver of pleasing appearance, who seems to be trying his best for his wife and children. He is troubled about his wife’s nervousness and constantly reminds her not to work too hard when she complains of how much she has to do. She mentioned that he had come home that night to clean the rugs and the house. This couple does not partake of any of the house activities because they do not wish to mix with the foreign element. However, their two children, Walter, 9, and Sally, 6, do attend the activities. Their parents approve because the children enjoy themselves so much.

“Before coming here, Mrs. Koch and the children went to the country every summer. Now, Sally stays home because her mother believes that the summer play facilities make a vacation in the country no longer necessary. Walter goes to camp for two weeks every year. Both children used to be very careless with their spending money. However, since the organization of the Lavanburg Bank they save their pennies and spend less on candy and ice cream. Mrs. Koch re-

marked at this point, 'It has done the children a great deal of good to live here. Before we came, they were inclined to be unsociable and to play by themselves. Now, because of the games downstairs, they mingle with other children and are much more free in their play.'

"Both parents attend the house lectures though they never before had listened to any. They enjoyed especially the lectures on child guidance. They have utilized a number of the ideas expounded by Mr. P., such as encouraging the children to do small household daily chores in exchange for an allowance.

"Mrs. Koch feels extremely grateful toward the office for the help it extended in getting medical treatment for her son. Walter, up to a short while ago, had persisted in wetting his bed every night. She carried her problem to Mr. Goldfeld who recommended the Child Guidance Clinic. The treatment was very helpful; the child has overcome the bed-wetting habit and a highly nervous condition has become somewhat relaxed. He has acquired more confidence in himself and his work at school and at home has improved.

"Mrs. Koch asked whether a young married men's and women's club could be formed for the American-born living in the house."

Another interview with the mother of two children disclosed several interesting things:

"Mrs. Leeman is an unusually heavy woman. She has an aggressive mien. Her first complaint was about the difficulties of living on the sixth floor. She said that climbing the stairs has caused considerable trouble with her feet.

"This mother favors house activities, declaring that the children learn from whatever they do and also that they are kept off the streets. 'However,' she remarked, 'some people in the house think activities keep children from doing homework but I believe if they weren't busy with their activities they'd be in the street and they'd not get their homework done anyhow. I believe the social part is a good influence for the children.' She also mentioned that many husbands and wives feel that their mates spend too much of their time at these activities to the neglect of their own affairs.

"Mrs. Leeman's family used to spend their whole summer in the country. Now the children spend just two weeks away from home, because they find summer so comfortable here. Mrs. Leeman said, 'I don't believe it is necessary to take my children away. The roof is a vacation. I have no reason to spend the money.'"

[Unfortunately, after completing about twenty of these interviews, Miss Schaeffer was unable to continue the work. The survey was never fully made.]

OCTOBER 9, 1930

Mrs. Milstein notified me today the family is leaving because of financial difficulties. They have taken over a candy store and will live in the two small rooms in the rear. She wept because she "hated to leave such nice rooms," and asked me to promise her an opportunity to return whenever she could afford it again.

OCTOBER 20, 1930

Due to the amount of time the children spend at the Center, some mothers claim the activities affect their children's school-work. Others do not agree. It would be helpful to find out the true state of affairs. Will ask Mr. Rineberg to inquire of every mother her feeling about the activities in relation to her children, and also to make a study of the school records of all the Lavanburg children.

[After a study of the scholastic standing of the Lavanburg children had been concluded, we learned that only a few children were backward. These few, however, were not especially active at the Center. All of those who took a strenuous part were either average or above average. The attitude of the majority of the mothers was in favor of their children playing at the Center.]

NOVEMBER 10, 1930

Mrs. Menshevitz in office very upset. Came to see whether I could do anything about the late card-playing in the Fathers' Clubroom. I had already heard of it, and I told her I would be glad to take the matter up with the fathers. When she further pressed me to urge her husband to spend more time at home, I reminded her that since that was a family problem, she herself would have to handle it.

NOVEMBER 12, 1930

Porters reported that a three weeks' old baby was found in the C hallway at 4:30 A.M. Infant was turned over to the police.

The rent situation is becoming worse. There is an ever-growing group of tenants who have difficulty paying their rent. This week 14 tenants owe for 56 weeks. Of course, the delinquencies are due to unemployment and not because the tenants do not want to pay. I

learned that a number of the wives have gone out to work at odd jobs, and some have taken on night work as charwomen in office buildings. We have helped some of the needy fathers and mothers with part-time work about the building and in the Social Center.

NOVEMBER 17, 1930

Visited Mr. Bing of the board and went over the recent financial report of the project with him. He thought that our expenses were normal and even below the average. He said that considering our large number of children, the repair bill was unusually low.

DECEMBER 10, 1930

Took up with the directors the problem of rent arrears. It is obvious that during the depression there will have to be a set policy about accepting part-payment of the rent. Personally, and I hope the directors will see it my way, I think we should help the tenants in this period. All of them previously paid on time and as yet I do not know of anyone who is taking advantage of the existing situation.

[The directors concurred with my recommendation and as the need arose, I adjusted the tenant's rent. Occasionally, as tenants became re-employed, arrears were met. In 1933 a summary of the rent situation showed the following:

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|---------|---------|------|-------------|------|
| 27 families | paid | between | 91% and | 100% | of standard | rent |
| 21 | " | " | 81% " | 90% | " | " |
| 7 | " | " | 71% " | 80% | " | " |
| 16 | " | " | 61% " | 70% | " | " |
| 12 | " | " | 51% " | 60% | " | " |
| 4 | " | " | 41% " | 50% | " | " |
| 4 | " | " | 31% " | 40% | " | " |
| 2 | " | " | 21% " | 30% | " | " |
| 1 family | " | " | 1% " | 10% | " | " |
| 4 families | " | nothing | | | | |

DECEMBER 20, 1930

A number of changes in club leaders. Some who had come in response to our advertisement gradually dropped out. Whether this was due to lack of time or the inconvenience of getting here, I do not know.

DECEMBER 26, 1930

The tenants met together to commemorate the third anniversary. I addressed them on our three years' record, pointing out that there

have been but twelve changes in tenancy and that no families were ever dispossessed. Three of the fathers related how much they had gained by living here. Mr. London emphasized his improvement in public speaking due to his activity in the Fathers' Club and how that had given him greater confidence in himself. There were other testimonials voiced in praise of living at the Lavanburg.

All was calm until one tenant took as a personal insult the remarks made by one of the speakers. He jumped to his feet and made an excited reply. The two men began to argue. However, in a few minutes it all blew over. I saw them later walking together arm-in-arm.

During her recital of a testimonial, Mrs. Mannheim expressed a wish for new shades. This led to a discussion of the financial situation of the Homes. Without mentioning names, I cited the fact that a number of tenants were not paying full rent, and pointed out that we must be careful with expenditures, because we incur a deficit even when full rents are paid.

About seventy-five fathers and mothers attended the meeting and all cliques were represented. The affair was well-conducted. With the exception of the one tiff, everything ran smoothly.

III. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD 1931-1937

FATHERS' CLUB

The Fathers' Club has continued. The members still bicker endlessly over such details as whether the financial or recording secretary should send out notices. One of the chief subjects for debate today is how to bring pressure on members delinquent in dues.

MOTHERS' CLUB

The Mothers' Club confines itself chiefly to raising money for its Camp Fund with which one child of all members in good standing is sent away each year for a vacation. As many as thirty children benefited during one summer. The American-born mothers have broken away to organize their own club. They meet once a week to play bridge or to go to the theatre. A bit of rivalry exists between the two groups.

The summer activities on the roof attract a large number of adults as well as children.

The interest of the adults in their clubs rises and falls through the years. New families, who moved in during the last three years, helped to revive the adult group and sustain the interest.

SOCIAL CENTER

The Social Center program continues to be conducted by a recreational director employed by the Foundation. In the last three years he has been assisted by WPA workers. Several tenants, who pay a part of their rent with this work, make up the rest of the staff.

The children still form an impatient line at opening time every evening. About nine-tenths of the juvenile population of the Homes and some two hundred from the neighborhood participate in the activities.

The focus of communal life is either on the roof or at the Social Center. During the winter of 1936 there were twenty-five different group activities going on, ranging from the simple playroom for children of four and five to a history-study club for boys of high

school and college age. The house newspaper is published at irregular intervals, written and edited by boys and girls of from eight to twenty. A cooperative store, capitalized and managed by a group of ten-year-old boys for the sale of candy, marbles and the like, paid dividends. A bookbinding group, under the leadership of an unemployed father whose trade is bookbinding, has charge of reconditioning our library.

The "commissioners" and deputies have fallen in the rise of Lavanburg City. Now there is an elected mayor, a board of aldermen, commissioners of education and sanitation, in the pattern of the New York City government. Control of our City's administration is effected through a two-party system consisting of the Golds and the Silvers. Nominated candidates make every effort to win the hotly-contested elections. Their posters read, "Vote for the Golds! We stand for more baseball games!" The Silver party platform in the last campaign promised a workshop for the girls and a cooking class for the boys. The aldermen meet frequently to discuss ways and means of keeping the place clean and to suggest improvements. A staff of members acts as an advisor for each party.

The relationship between the children and the management continues to be a very friendly one. I have now observed these children grow and develop over a space of nine years. I have watched the problem children of six or seven years of age grow into fine young men and women. I have seen new problem children arise but I have never had to contend with a really vicious child who deliberately planned mischief.

SENIORS

Some of the Seniors (young men and women between seventeen and twenty-one years of age) of the house and the neighborhood changed into grown-ups before my eyes. They constitute a very serious group and are vitally concerned with the problems of unemployment and vocational guidance. Many of them just kill time doing nothing and frequently I have a sense of guilt in not knowing what to tell them about their predicament. Only on rare occasions was I able to find any of them jobs. Several of the girls who volunteered their services are being trained as leaders by a member of the staff. For the past two years, about forty Senior boys and girls have used the basement as a recreational center between the hours of 9:30 and

11:00 P.M. They are supervised only when required. Their evening program includes dramatics, a current events study group, dances, and games. The basement, therefore, now accommodates two groups: Juniors, from 7:00 to 9:30, and Seniors, from 9:30 to 11:00.

NURSERY

In 1933, a nursery school was organized for children of from two to five years, under the direction of a member of the staff. At first the nursery used the South Hall, but as its success became assured, a five-room apartment on the first floor was converted into a nursery.

In the beginning, mothers had to be educated in the idea of pre-school training for their very young children. Many were foreign-born and were opposed to "losing" their babies sooner than the conventional kindergarten age. Others were in the habit of putting their children to bed very late, with the result that they did not arise sufficiently early for our morning session beginning at 9:30. After the first year, however, the mothers of the children in our first class were only too glad to return their children to the nursery. They also encouraged other mothers to send theirs.

The nursery holds morning and afternoon sessions with rest and milk periods in between. When the weather is good, the children are kept out of doors in a nearby park or playground, or go on outings. Among the interesting city sights which have been visited are a chicken market, the East River piers, a lumber yard, and a fire-engine house.

Children are charged only 20 cents a week for their milk and crackers. Several families in difficult circumstances pay 10 cents a week and those on relief do not pay anything.

I am very proud of the nursery. Its rooms are bright and colorful, well-equipped and ably directed. One of the fathers last year painted nursery rhyme murals on the walls that are very lovely. Mothers have told me their children's development and behavior have noticeably improved after a season's attendance at the nursery.

HOMEWORK

The depression brought homework into Lavanburg. A large number of families supplement their income by cutting lace. The amount they can earn is very small and yet a number of mothers, older children, and occasionally even young ones sit endlessly for hours cutting

lace. The NRA stopped it for a while but it was revived when NRA restrictions were abolished. Many mothers have complained that their eyesight is going bad because of this exacting work but they remark, "I can't help it. I must do this work for a living." Even a few dollars means a great deal to them.

Several families became sub-contractors and soon about eighty per cent of the tenants were cutting lace.

The physical condition of the house showed the effects of the homework. In spite of repeated notices to the lace-cutters, scraps of lace littered the hall-ways, roof, and courts. Families took in outsiders to work in their homes and the sub-contractors gave out work to people of the neighborhood, so that there was a constant traffic of people coming and going with bundles of lace. I did not like to stop this source of income, meager though it was, since in many cases it was the only means of subsistence for the tenants. Circumstances, however, forced the step.

Under the state law, the building in which homework is performed must have a license from the Department of Labor. This was secured at the tenants' request. It then came to my notice that children under fourteen had been put to work, since young eyes are good for this painstaking work, and that they worked far into the night. I notified the Department of Labor and asked them to revoke the license until the tenants indicated their willingness to abide by the state child labor laws.

The license was discontinued October 1, 1933, and on October 26 the tenants called a meeting to discuss the situation. They pleaded for the re-issuance of the license, pointing out how badly they needed this work. I agreed to renew the license provided the tenants observed strictly the child labor laws and took extra pains to keep the building clean. The following agreement was drawn up for the sub-contractors living in the building:

For the privilege of obtaining a permit to give out work on the outside, I, the undersigned, agree to abide by the following rules:

1. Submit to the manager names of those people to whom I give out work.
2. See that the hall of the building in which I live is kept free of lace scraps.
3. No children under fourteen years of age are to be em-

ployed at any time by anyone cutting lace for me. The children between fourteen and seventeen cutting lace must have working papers.

4. See that the person to whom I give the work is licensed or lives in a licensed house.

5. No work after five o'clock in the evening for those who have working papers and are under seventeen.

6. No one except my immediate family is to be allowed to work in my apartment.

It is understood that if it is found that I do not abide by the above rules, my permit will be automatically canceled.

Signature.....

Since the signing of this agreement, there has never been any violation. The outcome of this situation is very interesting. It shows how even the most unusual of tenants' problems can be adjusted and how they themselves can be made to shoulder various types of responsibility.

TENANTS' COUNCIL

Early in 1933, a rumor reached me that several fathers were circulating a petition among the tenants asking for a general rent reduction. When the alleged leader of the group happened to come into the office I asked if this were true. He readily admitted the fact, and I suggested that he bring the other men into the office to talk the matter over.

At our meeting a few days later, I outlined to them the Foundation's reasons for not having reduced the rent. I pointed out that the Foundation does not dispossess tenants for non-payment of rent due to unemployment as landlords do all over the East Side, and that we are providing part-time work for families whose economic conditions are very bad. I stated, also, that I could see no reason why people who are still able to pay our rent scales should need or ask for reduction.

The men saw the reason in my expressions and they suggested that a tenants' meeting be called where the matter could be explained to all. I named a date for the meeting. Then I expressed to the men my disappointment over other matters that indirectly came to my attention, and referred to the rumors of a strike, and other methods to gain distasteful publicity should the Foundation fail to accede to the tenants' demands.

At a meeting a few days later, about eighty families were represented. Several of the tenants made very emotional speeches and afterwards a resolution was passed unanimously to ask the Foundation for a rent reduction of \$1.50 a room per week.

On February 17, 1933, a tenants' committee met with Mr. Straus and Mr. Stern. The two directors were very sympathetic. They asked various questions and then gave in substance my explanation to show that a horizontal rent reduction could not be the solution. However, they offered to present the matter to the board and to advise the committee of the result.

Shortly afterwards, the tenants' committee received a letter containing the board's resolution to the effect that since it was not possible to grant a general rent reduction and at the same time to continue rendering aid in individual cases, only the latter policy would be continued. The board further recommended to tenants who felt they could not meet the full rental to talk their situation over with the office so that an adjustment could be made, if found necessary. This decision and plan seemed to satisfy the tenants.

An interesting development of the petition and the conference with the directors was the formation of a Tenants' Council. Unfortunately, after its formation the excitement subsided, and no further council meetings were arranged.

In June, 1935, I felt it would be wise to get the Council together once more. Carelessness on the part of the tenants in maintaining house rules was causing us considerable trouble. I seemed to sense a general feeling of discouragement because of the difficult struggle to make ends meet. As a result there was an air of irresponsibility and disorganization in the building. I thought that a Tenants' Council ought to take a hand in the situation, and call a tenants' committee together.

I explained to them that we were having more problems touching their own comfort than in the past, and that in unison we might be able to overcome them. The question was immediately raised whether a Tenants' Council would be able to discuss problems such as ice-boxes and rent. I indicated that whatever concerned the tenants could be fully discussed, with every effort made to reach amicable adjustments.

We decided to call a general tenants' meeting so that I might explain some of the problems facing the management. Mr. Cohen was

to suggest that each hallway re-elect two delegates to the council.

Seventy-one families were represented at the meeting held June 28. Election of representatives was the only transaction concluded. It was decided that one vote be allowed each family in order to prevent ballot stuffing. The elections were then held and the duly elected council immediately laid plans for action.

At their first meeting, the tenants' demands held the center of the floor. The subject of a rent reduction was again brought up. They also asked for new ice-boxes, new gas stoves, and that every apartment be painted every two years regardless of rent arrears. I told them that I was aware that the ice-boxes had outworn their usefulness and that I was arranging for the purchase of new ones. As for new gas ranges, I informed them I was planning a change, but only for those who had taken reasonable care of their stoves.

On the subject of rent, the council decided to ask for a cancelation of all accumulated rent arrears. Under date of September 16, 1935, the following communication was sent to the directors:

The Officers and Directors
Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation
120 Broadway
New York City

Gentlemen:

We take this opportunity to inform you that the tenants of the Lavanburg Homes reorganized on July 1, 1935, for the purpose of bettering their conditions through organized cooperation with the management of the Homes.

We who live here are well aware of the advantages to us of these houses, and it is in no spirit of criticism that we feel it necessary to call your attention to certain situations which seem to us to need correction.

In 1932 a committee from the board of directors met with representatives of the tenants and agreed to a policy of rent adjustment in proportion to the economic circumstances of the families here. At that time you and we believed that the depression would last but a short time, and the arrangement we made was suited to this belief. We agreed to record all reductions made as a debt against the tenant, to be paid as soon as general economic conditions improved.

Nearly three years have passed since that agreement was reached, but instead of finding ourselves out of the depression and able to pay these rent arrears, most of us are a little worse off. Instead of finding ourselves with a comparatively small debt, accumulated over a few weeks or months, we are now faced with the accumulation of years. In the cases where economic conditions may improve with a family, this debt will be an overwhelming burden for a long while; and in most cases there is no sign of improvement.

We, therefore, request that, in honesty on our side and fairness on yours, you reconsider the agreement we made three years ago, and declare these debts annulled. This does not mean that we never expect to pay the standard

rents again. On the contrary, it is agreed by us that we shall as soon as possible resume paying of the standard rent, just as soon as the economic conditions improve with any tenant; but in the meantime we ask you that the accumulated debt be considered no debt at all but a temporary and actual reduction.

Another problem, related to the question of rents, is that of painting the apartments. It is at the present time the practice to paint apartments regularly every two years, where the rent is not in arrears, but not otherwise.

In discussing this question, the tenants agreed to request that painting be done every two years without regard to arrears in rent. This seems to us to be a good business judgment as well as an advantage to the tenants. Obviously, deterioration will go on more rapidly if painting is not done for any reason. More urgent to us is the fact that living in an apartment for four years without its being painted is unpleasant and unsanitary. This fact is so clear that we feel sure it will require no further argument.

We also wish to inform you that the above is not the only problem undertaken by the committee. We assume the responsibility of various problems concerning the office and the tenants. If you desire more detailed information, we know that Mr. Goldfeld will gladly furnish you with same.

And finally, we request that a committee be set up, consisting of one representative of the board of directors, the Supervisor of the Homes, and two representatives of the tenants, to meet at the common convenience of all, on the call of any one member, to discuss any problems which may arise in the future. It is our belief that such a committee, meeting more or less regularly, will promote mutual understanding and cooperation between the tenants and the management.

Very truly yours,

THE TENANTS' COUNCIL OF THE LAVANBURG HOMES

The directors were very sympathetic to the requests of the tenants and replied as follows:

September 24, 1936

Mr. Louis Holland, Chairman
The Tenants' Council of Lavanburg Homes
132 Goerck Street
New York, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Holland:

I am in receipt of letter of September 16 on behalf of the Tenants' Council of the Lavanburg Homes, signed by you and Frieda Klaus as Secretary. This letter was presented at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation yesterday.

The Trustees asked me to express our appreciation of the sentiments expressed by the Tenants' Council, and to assure you that we reciprocate them, and are interested in the welfare of all the tenants in the Lavanburg Homes.

With regard to the plan of rent adjustment inaugurated in 1932 to which you refer, the Board of Trustees authorized the cancelation of the rent arrears due to such adjustment up to April 1, 1935.

With regard to the question of painting the apartments to which you refer, the Trustees asked me to inform you that it was their general policy to keep the building in proper repair, but that the detail as to which apartments are to be painted is left to the discretion of Mr. Goldfeld.

Activities During the Period 1931-1937 I I I

In connection with your suggestion that the Board appoint a member, who will from time to time as occasion requires meet with Mr. Goldfeld and a committee of two from the Tenants' Council of the Lavanburg Homes, the Trustees are glad to comply with your request and have appointed Mr. Edward Schafer, Jr., to this committee.

We are delighted to cooperate with your committee as well as with the individual tenants themselves, with the view of making the Lavanburg Homes a comfortable home for the tenants.

Sincerely yours,
ROGER W. STRAUS, *President*

Needless to say, the Council was delighted with the spirit and contents of this letter.

In the beginning, I was afraid the Council would be interested only in what it could get, and that it would extend no cooperation to the office. My fears were quieted, however, when I received a Council letter asking me to make known what my problems were. Another instance of its cooperation is contained in the following letter which was sent to every family:

Dear Tenant:

There have been instances of tenants disregarding the rules of the Lavanburg Homes. Although the office has taken the necessary steps to remedy the situation, some of the tenants continue to ignore the rules. Therefore, we, the Tenants' Council (with the full cooperation of Mr. Goldfeld), are urging all the tenants to abide by the following rules:

1. No garbage to be placed in cans on roof or courts.
2. No articles to be kept on fire-escapes.
3. No pillows on window-sills.
4. No eating in courts, halls and roof.
5. No playing (children) in the halls.
6. No screaming in court after 10:00 P. M.
7. No radio playing after 11:00 P. M.
8. No rubbish thrown down the dumb-waiter shaft.
9. No writing with chalk.
10. No skating on sidewalk after gate lights are turned on.
11. No children to use fire-escapes.

We wish to inform you that should a tenant fail to comply with the above rules for the first time, said tenant will be called down to a Tenants' Council meeting for an explanation. A fine will be imposed upon anyone disregarding the rules for a second time. Parents will be held responsible for the behavior of their children.

Please bear these rules in mind and avoid future embarrassment and expense.

Very sincerely yours,
THE TENANTS' COUNCIL

There has been a considerable change in the attitude of the tenants. The Council has taken cognizance of every violation, following up the case of any offender.

On the other hand, it has notified every tenant that if any office decision is unsatisfactory, it will look into the matter upon request. One case it handled jointly with me was a rent adjustment for one of the families; another was a removal of a family to a lower floor. In the last several months the energies of the Council have been spent primarily on sponsoring social activities for children and adults, replacing the Roof Association in this work. At the present time there are no burning issues calling for Council intervention or cooperation.

All in all, I think the Tenants' Council is our most important recent development and I feel it to be, in function and purpose, a very constructive organization.

POLICY

It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Foundation is ready to adjust rentals in proportion to an individual's ability to pay. However, some time ago, a question was raised by the directors regarding the advisability of continuing this policy. A committee was appointed to study the matter. I was asked to prepare a report that would indicate the potential rent which could be charged, eliminating social service considerations.

After the investigation, the board again approved the policy of basing rents on the individual's ability to pay.

SELECTION OF TENANTS

Our regulations against boarders and over-crowding still hold, but we no longer interview families in their homes. The application forms are still used, the credit of each applicant is checked, and as a matter of routine every new family is cleared through the Social Service Exchange.

VISITORS

When the Lavanburg project first opened, there was a great deal of local curiosity and excitement. Then followed a fairly long period when unusual interest was not openly manifested and only infrequently did people visit the building or come to talk with me. But in the last two years the question of housing has received new stimulation and Lavanburg has again become a source of study for students and other groups interested in the question. In the last few months, visitors have come from New York Hospital; the Senior High School of Long Branch, New Jersey; Hunter College; New York University

School of Architecture, and other institutions. Information regarding our project has been requested by a number of private and government organizations; and we have had inquiries from as far away as Australia and Japan.

TENANCY

Of the 107 families now living here, we find that:

- 55 families have been living here for 9 years
- 5 families have been living here for 6 years
- 5 families have been living here for 5 years
- 4 families have been living here for 4 years
- 8 families have been living here for 3 years
- 9 families have been living here for 2 years
- 12 families have been living here for 1 year
- 9 families have been living here for less than a year

It is interesting to observe that although there have been a number of changes in tenancy, the type of tenant has not changed markedly. For the purpose of comparison, I cite below [page 114] the list of occupations of tenants in 1928 and 1937.

In comparing the number of children in the building, we find there are approximately the same number as in 1928:

| | 1928 | 1937 |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Boys | 168 | 170 |
| Girls | 161 | 156 |
| | 329 | 326 |

FOUNDATION

Since the opening of the Lavanburg Homes, the activities of the Lavanburg Foundation have considerably expanded. Nevertheless the pressure of my work at the Homes has lessened and much of my time is spent outside of the building, enabling me to pursue studies of general interest in the field of housing. One of these was a survey of the community activities in five housing projects. Another was entitled, "What Happens to Families Who Are Made to Move Because of Slum Clearance," a study conducted jointly with the Hamilton House and published by the Foundation. At the present time I am completing a study of the relationship of juvenile delinquency and housing.

NEIGHBORHOOD

It was Mr. Lavanburg's thought that the erection of a model housing project such as the Lavanburg Homes would react favorably

OCCUPATIONS, 1928 AND 1937

| | 1928 | 1937 | | 1928 | 1937 |
|--------------------------|------|------|---------------------------|------|------|
| Auto mechanic | 1 | 1 | Neckwear operator | 1 | 1 |
| Baker | 2 | 1 | Newspaper deliverer | 1 | — |
| Basket weaver | 1 | — | Painter | — | 1 |
| Barber | 3 | 4 | Peddler | 9 | 4 |
| Bookbinder | 2 | 1 | Pianist | — | 1 |
| Building sup't. | — | 2 | Plumber | 2 | 2 |
| Butcher | 1 | — | Pocketbook maker | 1 | — |
| Bus driver | — | 3 | Post Office clerk | 1 | 1 |
| Cable clerk | 1 | 1 | Postman | — | 1 |
| Cap maker | 2 | — | Presser | 1 | 1 |
| Chauffeur | — | 1 | Printer | 2 | — |
| City employe | — | 1 | Rags sorter | 2 | — |
| City laborer | 2 | 3 | Rodman | 1 | — |
| Clerk, Custom House .. | 1 | — | Sales clerk | 3 | 1 |
| Cloak operator | 21 | 17 | Salesman | — | 6 |
| Color works | 2 | 1 | Sheetmetal worker | — | 1 |
| Conductor | 1 | — | Shipping clerk | — | 1 |
| Coppersmith | 1 | — | Shoemaker | 1 | 1 |
| Electrician | 1 | — | Slipper operator | 1 | — |
| Elevator operator | — | 1 | Solderer | 1 | — |
| Embroiderer | 2 | — | Stenographer | — | 1 |
| Fur nailer | 1 | — | Steward | — | 1 |
| Garter maker | 1 | 1 | Street cleaner | 3 | 1 |
| Hebrew teacher | 1 | — | Tailor | — | 1 |
| In business | — | 2 | Taxi driver | 6 | 2 |
| Lace cutter | — | 2 | Teacher | — | 1 |
| Laundry salesman | — | 2 | Truck driver | 4 | 3 |
| Leather cutter | 2 | — | Waiter | 2 | 2 |
| Letter carrier | 1 | — | Watchcase maker | 1 | 1 |
| Manager of theatre | — | 1 | Watchmaker | — | 1 |
| Millinery worker | 1 | — | Window cleaner | — | 1 |
| | | | WPA | — | 7 |

UNEMPLOYED, 1937

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Basket weaver | 1 |
| Bus driver | 1 |
| Cutter | 1 |
| Leather goods operator | 1 |
| Newspaper deliverer | 1 |
| Clothing operator | 2 |
| Painter | 1 |
| Peddler | 1 |
| Rags sorter | 2 |
| Translator | 1 |

upon the neighborhood, induce others to build as he did, and eradicate the slum areas.

Unfortunately this has not happened. Instead, the East Side has deteriorated enormously since the erection of the building. Our immediate vicinity is a picture of desolation. Many stores are vacant and many tenements are either in a shocking state of neglect or boarded up and abandoned.

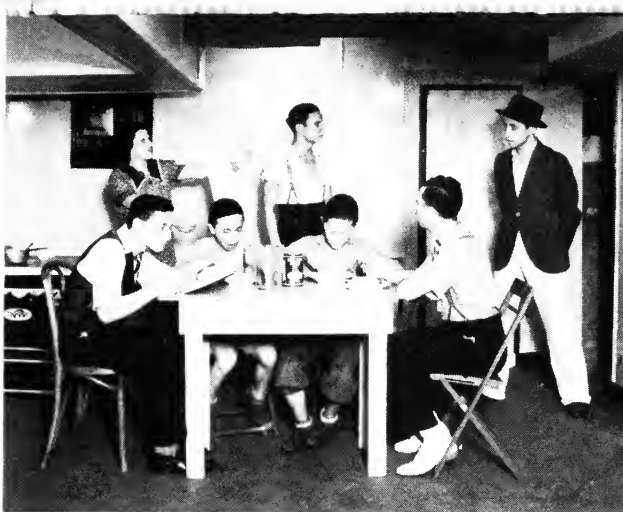
All of these tenements are for sale. But practically all are on lots of 25 x 100 feet, and under the present building codes it would be impossible to build on such small areas. Land assembly at reasonable land cost is—with our legal structure—impossible. The rental in new multiple dwellings would be considerably above what our present neighbors can pay. If higher income families can be induced to come to this neighborhood, better schools, more playgrounds, and better transportation must first be provided.

In the past, real estate on the East Side was of a speculative nature. People bought and sold on short turnover, and could do so because of the influx of immigrants who made this section their first station. Now the whole shelter problem here must be approached as an investment. In my opinion, this neighborhood for years to come will remain a slum area.

A small project like ours cannot react favorably upon the neighborhood. On the contrary, it is our project which may be reacted upon, and consequently we must constantly watch against adverse influences. At this period we are still vibrant with life and activity, set down in this slum area as an oasis in a desert, and providing a contrast that is greater than ever.

Date Due

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