

THE STIRLING COUNTY STUDY

A Research Program in Social Factors  
Related to Psychiatric Health

Sixth Annual Report

June 30, 1956

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## Preface

The activities of the Stirling County Study during the past year have been characterized by the fact that analysis and reporting ran concurrent with laying plans for future research based on the results of the present study. It is intended that this Sixth Annual Report will reflect the dual nature of the year's undertaking.

Like the previous annual reports, the following resumé includes a progress statement stemming from its predecessor. A publication prospectus was delineated in the Fifth Annual Report. It described the six major volumes which will incorporate our research methods and findings. During this year emphasis has been on the four main books; one on theory, one on the epidemiology of psychiatric symptoms, one on the sociocultural analysis of the county, and a final volume on correlation studies and the restatement of theory. The other two reports, one on case studies and the other on the small town psychiatric clinic, remain for further attention.

Additional funds have been granted to the Study for the completion of these books by the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and work will continue through June 30, 1959.

Thus, the first part of this report is designed to show the efforts of the past year toward the realization of publication goals, with secondary emphasis on supplementary field work. Very little background will be given since it is assumed that the reader has some familiarity with the previous annual reports.

The second part deals with materials prepared for publication. In the former annual reports this section included a number of articles published in journals and papers presented at professional meetings. This year greater attention has been devoted to the four main volumes and less to the shorter

reports on initial findings and brief descriptions of methods. Nonetheless, two publications form the basis of this aspect of the report.

The third part of the report concerns efforts to formulate plans and secure funds for future research growing out of the current analysis and to anticipate changes for the operation and administration of the Psychiatric Clinic in Bristol.

#### Staff and Staff Changes.

In the annual report of 1953 a complete list of staff was presented. Since then only personnel changes have been given. As a review both the permanent staff and changes made within the year are indicated here. The basic staff at the beginning of the year consisted of Dr. Alexander H. Leighton, Director; Dr. Allister M. Macmillan, Deputy Director; Dr. Bruce Dohrenwend, Social Analyst, Dr. Eric Cleveland, Chief Psychiatrist, Mr. Bernard Hebert, Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Dorothea C. Leighton, Assistant to the Director; Mrs. Alice Longaker, Editorial Assistant, Dr. William D. Longaker, Associate Psychiatrist, Miss Janice Ross, Social Worker, Dr. M. Adélar Tremblay, Chief of the Social Science Unit, Professor W.H.D. Vernon, Psychologist and Clinic Administrator; and Dr. Toshio Yatsushiro, Social Scientist. Graduate Assistants doing work with the social science unit were Norman A. Chance, Malcolm Willison, and Frank W. Young. Mrs. Jean Vernon served as Administrative Assistant at the Clinic, and Mrs. Ada MacLeod served a similar function at Cornell.

Regarding changes during the year, Dr. Eric J. Cleveland left his position at the Bristol Clinic to head a Mental Health Clinic which our staff had assisted in establishing in a nearby community. He has continued in a consultative capacity. Dr. William D. Longaker took over the

responsibilities of Chief Psychiatrist and also of Clinic Administrator. Miss Janice Ross vacated the position of Social Worker to assume the role of psychological counsellor in the school system of a neighboring county. She has retained a part-time affiliation with the Study in completing field work with school-age children. Professor W.H.D. Vernon left the Clinic in order to carry out graduate studies at Cornell University, and Mrs. Jean Vernon left her position as Administrative Assistant although she has continued to help the Cornell staff on a part-time basis. In addition to her work as editorial advisor, Mrs. Alice Longaker assumed the responsibility of Administrative Assistant. Dr. John H. Cumming joined the clinic staff as Associate Psychiatrist, and Dr. Elaine Cumming has filled the position of Social Worker and undertaken the development of some research, as well. For a portion of the year, Mr. David Newell, a psychologist from the University of New Brunswick, worked with the staff in the psychological testing program.

In connection with the social science unit, Mr. Charles C. Hughes re-joined the Cornell staff. Dr. Robert N. Wilson of the Social Science Research Council participated as a part-time consultant and editorial assistant. Dr. Robert N. Sapoport and Professor Emile Gosselin, former staff members, have continued to give assistance in analysis and writing on a part-time basis.

Mrs. Jane M. Hughes resumed her responsibility as Administrative Assistant following a year's leave of absence. The clerical and computational staff of the Cornell office as well as the Psychiatric Clinic were enlarged as the demands of analysis required.

There has been some work in collaboration with other universities and with local agencies. The names of such outside colleagues who have cooperated with us as temporary consultants are listed in the text.

Part I - Progress Statement.

1. Theory and Operational Planning.

A series of staff meetings were held at Cornell during the fall and winter to discuss social science theory in general, with emphasis on the particular hypotheses with which the Study is concerned. These seminars were intended to crystallize thinking and promote interchange of ideas among the staff who bring the value of several different disciplinary orientations. A number of informal reports were prepared which contributed to the clarity and communicability of theory apposite to the relationship of social environment and psychiatric disorder.

Another aspect of the development of theory has been the participation of A. H. Leighton in the preparation of a book on social psychiatry to be issued by the Social Science Research Council (U.S.). In the collaboration with other psychiatrists and social scientists interested in the same broad areas of research, new insights were gained with regard to many theoretical implications.

Toward the end of the academic year an Advisory Group for the Study was formed consisting of Dr. John Harding, Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Relationships, Dr. Edward A. Suchman, Professor of Sociology, and Dr. Robin M. Williams, Professor of Sociology, all of Cornell University. Two of the consultants have been familiar with our work since the beginning of the project, and it is anticipated that during the next years they will give considerable guidance to various phases of the analysis.

2. Study of the Social Environment.

The major tasks of the social science unit during this year have been the preparation of a guide for the analysis of sociocultural data, preliminary

drafting of a volume designed to give a sociographic picture of the county, and the completion of a monograph on sentiment systems. Although there has been some field work to round out the picture of social environment, the main effort has been in writing and analysis.

During the year a series of planning sessions were held. One result was the preparation of a guide to analysis mentioned above. This proposed a scheme for intergrating data which had been gathered during the entire research period and for focussing the analysis upon those aspects of sociocultural data which are considered essential to understanding the relation of environment and psychiatric disturbance. Another result was a major re-orientation in publication intentions. Originally it was planned to prepare a separate monograph on each of the 14 social conditions chosen for analysis and a summary monograph on the implications of these factors in studying various communities within the county. The plan for cementing together these disparate reports into one volume will be given below. However, there was extensive work done on the preparation of two of the initially planned monographs, one dealing with poverty and affluence and the other with secularization. Both of these have been source material for the more comprehensive volume, and it is hoped that at a later date they can be revised for separate publication as examples of intensive and detailed focus upon two significant criteria of community organization.

A tentative title, Cove and Woodlot, was chosen for the main volume, which will present the social environment with particular emphasis on social disorganization. In line with the publication syllabus given in the Fifth Annual Report, this volume is one in a series; it will delimit the sociocultural factors to be later correlated with the findings regarding the distribution of symptoms. Thus,

it is part of a larger scheme, and the social factors depicted are selected as having bearing on mental illness. Three general purposes are envisioned: (1) to describe a rural (as opposed to urban) setting in terms of these sociological factors, (2) to analyze contrasting communities within the county regarding the patterning of organization and disorganization of the social structure, and (3) to set the stage for a correlation between specific instances of organized and disorganized communities and the psychiatric symptom count.

The introductory chapters of this volume include the description of each of the 14 variables or sociocultural conditions which have been selected as indicators of social organization. Particular attention is focussed on three factors - poverty, acculturation and secularization. Then reviewed are the processes by which the communities were chosen as contrasting examples of disorganized communities and well-organized communities. Two communities were selected as organized, four as disorganized, and two as complex. Complexity has been defined as that situation which exists when an area as a whole is neither disorganized nor well organized by our criteria but which evidences pockets of both.

More intense examination of each of these model areas is underway. They will be presented as a series of instances of the varying degrees and distributions of the sociocultural factors described in the first part of the book. A significant portion of the data concerning these focus community models has been gathered by anthropological interviewing. However, much enrichment is added by the results of the county-wide survey (FLS) which has been described in previous annual reports. The final section of the book will reconsider the types and patterns of social organization found in the county and point to their possible consequences in mental health.



Throughout this volume the approach taken is that of the presentation of cases. The focal communities are treated as cases of social organization or disorganization. They will in turn be compared to the distribution of individual human cases as indicated by the symptom patterns identified through the evaluation and testing program. Matching the community case studies with individual case studies is designed to give a first approximation of the concurrence of certain types of social environment and mental health.

Two chapters concerned with the sociocultural conditions have been completed, and reports have been prepared describing all of the focus communities. The selection of these areas has been described, giving the methods and rationale by which the focus communities were sorted out in regard to secularization, poverty, acculturation and other indicators of social disintegration. Analysis of the survey has reached the stage where the three main variables have been reported in accordance with an index-building operation which aims at corroboration of the anthropological findings. The results of additional field work regarding occupations and industries will be incorporated into the analysis of poverty. The original data provided by the FLS on occupations have been re-coded for a more refined categorization on the basis of the field operation mentioned above.

The monograph on sentiments in contrasting communities has been revised. This volume, now titled Three Views of Life, deals with the ideas and feelings shared by people in three distinct sub-units which exemplify both organization and disorganization. The geographic units analysed here are also the focal communities described in Cove and Woodlot, and it is hoped that the special emphasis on sentiment systems will enhance the broader analysis of numerous social factors which play a significant role in the production or reduction of mental illness. The concept of sentiments as

part of the matrix of sociocultural conditions in which individuals grow up is inherent in our frame of reference as one of the avenues by which psychological stability is either buttressed or weakened. Consequently, the introduction of this monograph discusses the theoretical import of a study of systems of belief, values, and attitudes for psychiatric health. Following this background, attention shifts to three social units and to the contrasting sentiments found in each. A final comparative chapter offers some inferences from the data on patterns of social organization found in areas of such diverse sentiment systems, and some ideas as to how sentiments such as these may affect mental health.

Beside the main objectives in reporting social science data, an article was prepared on the use of selected key informants in gathering specific information on the delimitation of communities as poor or wealthy. It appears in the second part of this report.

A limited amount of field work was sponsored during the year. A study of one of the organized communities was completed in order to fill out some aspects of the social science book. Additional data were also gathered in this area on sentiments for Three Views of Life. In connection with a doctoral dissertation, one of the graduate assistants studied a community to gauge the effect of urbanization on the organizational structure of a small fishing town. This information is available in the general file on social factors and will be used for illustrative material where pertinent. Mr. Lionel Vallee, a student from Montreal University, carried out a descriptive analysis of a typical family in one of the well organized communities pictured in Three Views of Life. This narrowed and intensified view of the complex of social relations within a family contributes to our understanding of the social setting in this community and also to the role of socialization processes and personality formation.

There has been continued cooperation with Mr. William Jenkins of the Extension Service of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Professor J. K. Galbraith of Harvard University in the farm assay project mentioned in the Fifth Annual Report. This study attempts a formulation of the optimal farm organization suitable for the county. Adequate acreage, land exploitation, mechanization and managerial structure are some aspects of the analysis. The study is concerned not only with the proposal of an adequate farm organization but also with the problem of innovation. Such obstacles as tenure and absentee ownership are being investigated, as well as the underlying problem of psychological resistance. Findings indicate that there is considerable good land not being reclaimed and that family holdings have been divided into such small units that adequate exploitation is no longer possible. The sample of farm areas used in this analysis corresponds to the land divisions established for the FLS, and the results of this study will be articulated with our hypotheses on the relation of socio-economic level and psychological stress. Data are being gathered on the attitudes and customs of different kinds of farmers in the area - profit farmers, subsistence farmers, and those who hold part-time jobs in nearby industries. Such an analysis will contribute to our study of occupational diversification.

Two projects involving library research deal with the historical setting of the county and will amplify understanding of the current social changes. The local newspapers of Bristol are being examined for data on each of the 14 variables. It is hoped that a thorough survey of this source will be possible covering the period from 1900 to the present. However, analysis is now concentrated on significant historical periods of smaller dimension.

Professor Edgar McKay of the University of Maine has continued study of the economic history of one of the semi-urban centers in the county. This study is primarily based on field work but is now being supplemented by newspaper analysis of the local weekly papers. In the latter process, a collection of newspapers from the late 19th century has been discovered. This series will be available to our Study and will give depth and detail to the analysis of economic expansion, shipbuilding, and sea commerce which characterized that period.

Following the pilot study in the Bristol area on the identification of primary sociological groups denominated as Friendship Clusters, further exploration has been carried out regarding a similar type of analysis for two well-organized communities. Preliminary field work for this operation has been completed. A cursory review of the data already available for the four disorganized focus communities seems to indicate that they may be amenable to the same kind of treatment. This type of categorization represents an exploratory breakdown into social units for comparison between communities and against which can be projected the distribution of psychiatric symptoms.

### 3. Study of Psychiatric Illnesses.

#### A. Epidemiological Study

As in the case of the study of the social environment, the main goal of this aspect of the research is the preparation of a volume indicating the degree, kinds and distribution of psychiatrically significant symptoms in the county. Two epidemiological testing operations have been devised to substantiate findings and to contribute mutually to a picture of the distribution of cases in the study area: one is called the psychiatric evaluation, and the other, a psychological screening test, is called the Health Opinion Survey (HOS).

The introduction and first chapters have been written in first draft. These deal with the method of construction, validation and administration of the tests as well as the development of an evaluative process. The progress toward psychiatric assessment of the county as a whole by these two instruments will be considered separately below.

(1) The psychiatric evaluation. In March of this year the results of the first evaluation procedure were reported in the American Journal of Psychiatry. This tabulated the assessments of four psychiatrists concerning a 20% probability sample in the town of Bristol. The amount of time involved in completing the evaluation for even this restricted area and the size of the board of psychiatrists pointed to the need for some modification of procedure. As a result a check was made of the reliability of the four psychiatric evaluators to see if the number could be reduced. By cross-checking the evaluations of each of the 283 Bristol cases for the correspondence of each psychiatrist with the other three and with the group assessment, it was discovered that there were no differences indicating a trend for any one evaluator to note and rate symptoms in a significantly divergent manner. With this assurance, it seemed feasible to proceed with the evaluations and to rely upon the ratings of two psychiatrists and a concomitant joint evaluation.

The next step involved disguising the protocols of the focus area respondents in such a way as to prevent recognition of the specific locale and of extremes of either social organization or disorganization. A preliminary examination indicated that the questionnaires would have to be re-copied with four changes: (1) translation of the French protocols into English, (2) elimination of the interviewer's name, (3) omission of the names of

physicians who had given additional information, and (4) disguise or elimination of place and proper names. The evaluation of a randomly selected group of questionnaires prepared in this fashion led to further pruning and disguise.

Various other researchers in social psychiatry, such as Faris, Dunham, Hollingshead, Redlich and others, have presented theories that certain socio-cultural factors are regularly associated with mental illness. They have correlated class position and residence in a particular part of a city with psychiatric disorders. It has been evident from the beginning of our work that serious problems are raised if the evaluator of psychiatric symptoms utilizes sociocultural data that are also employed in determining incidences of social disorganization. However, we have hoped to simulate a clinical appraisal of symptoms in our psychiatric evaluation, and such an appraisal cannot be made without some indication of the behavior of the patient in his social context. This is especially pertinent to symptoms of sociopathic type and to evaluation regarding the amount of impairment to normal functioning. Therefore, experimentation was made with successive measures of control and re-analysis.

The first operation in this direction was the extraction from the full questionnaire of only the health information plus those minimal sociological items (age, sex, marital status) deemed **critical** to the evaluation. These skeletal protocols were combined with hospital records and the information given by local doctors. The comments of the doctors were also screened, first to make sure that the doctor had identified the sample respondent correctly, and second to delete data on sociological characteristics. A preliminary evaluation will be made on this limited information, and a second evaluation on the basis of the restored socio-cultural data similar

to that which had been included in the protocols for the first round of evaluations in the Bristol area. Comparison of results as to the influence of the sociocultural data will then be possible. Three pilot studies, the clerical preparation of new protocols, additional field work in interviewing doctors who had misidentified respondents consumed an unexpectedly large amount of time. But it is our expectation that the 370 protocols in this sample will be evaluated by early winter.

(2) The psychological screening test. The Macmillan article describing the construction and validation of the HOS in two neighboring counties, was presented in the Fourth Annual Report. It has been revised and is ready for submission to professional journals. In expanded form this study will be one chapter of the book dealing with epidemiological assessment.

The original validation of the screening test had been done on the basis of two criterion groups: community adults and diagnosed patients from the in-patient and out-patient departments of several hospitals. The results showed a significant difference in the response patterns of these two groups, and it was presumed that this indicated the relative amounts of psychoneurotic illness found in each group. However, the two groups had been interviewed under very different conditions, and it was conceived that the disparity between the hospital context of patients under treatment and the more normal community situation might affect the response patterns. If this were true, the response patterns would not be an indication of the true prevalence of psychoneurotic symptoms. This year additional field work was undertaken to see what effect hospital treatment has on the appearance of symptoms in the test results. If another criterion group

of hospital patients under treatment for illnesses not presumed to have psychiatric significance were compared to the first two groups, it was expected that this group would fall some place intermediate between the response patterns of the non-treated community adults and the other extreme of psychiatrically diagnosed patients. Such results would provide evidence regarding the influence of hospitalization.

With the assistance of the staff of Dalhousie University a pilot survey was begun on selected medical ward cases with preliminary elimination of those which show obvious psychiatric overtones. Another dimension of the current survey is a more adequate delineation between male and female response patterns. It is postulated that there is a greater propensity for females to admit sickness readily and possibly to place more emphasis on the type of symptomatology which indicates psychoneurosis. Thus another control group has been introduced into the female sampling - respondents from the obstetrical ward. The hospital sample of 120 cases for this study is divided into thirds: males undergoing non-psychiatrically loaded medical treatment, females undergoing non-psychiatrically loaded medical treatment, and maternity cases. A substantial beginning had been made when personnel difficulties prevented completion of the interviewing. However, work will soon be resumed, and it is expected that the data will be ready for processing during the winter.

Latent structure analysis was halted in 1954, but during this year the services of an outside consultation bureau have been obtained and plans are underway for its activation.



Several procedures have been designed for the recalibration of the HOS for use in complementing the psychiatric evaluation in the study area. The results of the first psychiatric evaluation provided a group of relatively symptom free cases which can be used as a point of comparison. The scores of the HOS for those Bristol Clinic cases which have been diagnosed by clinical procedures provides another comparative group. Using these new criterion groups, exploration is now being made into the necessary weighting of items of the HOS to make it appropriate for use in Stirling County as a supplement to the other case-finding techniques.

#### B. Depth Study (Psychodynamics)

The purpose of the epidemiological study is the discovery of the distribution and kinds of psychiatric symptoms in our county population. The aim of the psychodynamic study, on the other hand, is analysis of the etiological factors which contribute to the appearance of psychiatric symptoms in the same population. The Psychiatric Clinic has been in a particularly unique and valuable position to provide data based on long-term psychotherapy. Beside the collection of case histories, the staff members have had steady contact with the community and can throw light on an analysis of social conditions which tend to engender or precipitate mental illness.

(1) Psychiatric Case Studies. Presented in the Fifth Annual Report was the Cleveland and Longaker article on patterns of neurotic behavior as illustrated in one particular family of whom several members have been Clinic patients. It will appear in revised form in the Social Science Research Council book on social psychiatry. The recording of case materials has continued as an integral part of the clinic operation, and the inventory of case infor-

mation includes a questionnaire similar to the county-wide sociological survey. It has been administered to the majority of incoming patients.

Analysis of the case records and the clinical impressions of staff members have led to a study of one family with a seemingly hereditary predisposition toward manic depressive psychosis. A genealogy has been developed concerning this family, noteworthy for having 8 out of 9 siblings diagnosed as psychotic - most of them manic depressive. This appears to be a hereditary predisposition, and a number of the unaffected family members have been interviewed. A report has been written describing how the response to this family disaster varies according to the kind of relationship the informant has to the affected sibling. Those who are affinally related tend to see environmental causes.

(2) The Psychiatric Clinic Sample. This refers to the questionnaire survey of Clinic patients mentioned above. Since there is a continuous influx of patients, there is no terminal date for this study. However, the sample has been coded and the data are being used for two other operations: as part of the HOS analysis and as a validation measure in the evaluations.

(3) Psychological Testing Program. Following the plan outlined in the Fifth Annual Report, intensive field work was undertaken during the first part of this year. After a pilot study in two different communities, the psychological test battery (consisting of intelligence scales, factor tests, and projective devices) was administered to a group of leaders in the Bristol area. Not only do the tests provide material on leadership in Bristol, but the cooperation of the leader sample favorably influenced the reception of the testing by the rank and file interviewees. A group of community members who had not been interviewed in other surveys but who were, for the most part, relatives of respondents picked in other

surveys, were invited to evening group sessions. Part of the test battery was administered there and part by later individual interviews. A third control group was included consisting of a number of patients who were or who had been under treatment at the Bristol Clinic. They were included to compare the evaluated psychiatrically ill group with the test results of the community sample. The total population for this analysis consists of 83 persons. Analysis of a portion of the data has started. Thirty cases have been selected for statistical analysis (10 symptomatic, 10 asymptomatic and 10 patients). To combine the results of the diverse tests into a portrait of the individual's personality and to render the portrait capable of statistical analysis, the Q-sort technique was chosen. All tests administered to the thirty individuals have been scored and interpreted by this means, and reliability has been examined by an independent re-check. The statistical analysis remains to be done; and the expectation is that it will be completed in the next year.

As an adjunct to the **factorial** analysis, another method of analysis is planned. By subjecting the test array to clinical judgement and impressionistic assessment it is hoped that understanding will be gained into the inner dynamic factors, personality traits and intellectual functioning of the sample group. Ultimately, therefore, three independent indicators (1. psychiatric evaluation, 2. HOS scores, and 3. clinical assessment of the psychological test battery) will point to the distribution and types of psychiatric illness in the same ecological area.

#### (4) Study of School Children:

Data-gathering has been completed for the study of school children of Bristol town. This included administering the California Personality

Inventory test, a questionnaire on health factors including the HOS, and teacher interviews concerning all sample children. Scoring of the psychological test on personal and social adjustment will be done by the California Test Bureau. Beside the individual ratings, the Bureau will provide us with an outside norm against which to view the Bristol School children. This should give considerable insight into possible variations in the personality patterns during formative years between the sample population and a general standard set by similar surveys in other places. It may also indicate a significant breakdown into factors of personality adjustment which will contribute to our understanding of the socialization process characteristic in our study area. A graduate student at Cornell, Mrs. Sylvia Mangalam, is using some aspects of the California Test data and the supplemental interviews for analysis of the children whose parents appeared in the random sample of the Bristol ecological area and upon whom our psychiatric assessment is based.

4. Explorations into the relationship of socio-cultural factors with psychiatric evaluations.

A preliminary step was taken toward coordination of the results of defining the sociological groupings in Bristol with the psychiatric evaluation of the random sample. A report of findings from this overlay of social environmental characteristics upon the distribution picture of psychiatric symptoms was presented at the American Psychiatric Association meetings in May, 1956.

Also some exploratory research was carried out through the Bristol Clinic into the relationship between diversified occupations of an individual and a predisposition toward mental illness. Family structure, education, religion and other social patterns appear to be relatively more stable than work habits, and it is hoped that comparison of Stirling

County with other parts of Canada will indicate the amount of variation. It is also expected that ~~these~~ data, supplemented by an analysis of the occupational data provided in the county survey, will demonstrate the kind of emotional meaning and possible disruption inherent in diversification as a style of life.

##### 5. The Bristol Clinic as part of the Community.

An important aspect of the research has been the study of community acceptance of a psychiatric service clinic and its operation in a rural area. The Fifth Annual Report gave an extended description of the activities of the Bristol Clinic. During the current year plans have been made for the culmination of sponsorship by a university research group and the inauguration of management by community leaders. It is pertinent, therefore, to give some additional follow up on the operation of the clinic.

This year particular effort was directed toward the long term goal of making the Clinic a locally governed institution. An interim Clinic Advisory Board nominated by the Mental Health Association was set up by invitation. As a result of this, a society known as the Western Nova Scotia Mental Health Group was formed and articles of association and by-laws were drawn up. The society has applied for the status of a corporate body in order to be able to take over the responsibility of Clinic supervision. The board has met regularly to hear reports on Clinic functioning and to give advice on particular problems, especially on the relationship of the Clinic to the community.

The Fifth Annual Report included a preliminary draft of an article by A. Leighton and A. Longaker on the clinic as an innovation in the community. This will appear in the Social Science Research Council volume on social psychiatry.

An expansion of psychiatric service during the year was the establishment of a clinic one day a week in Plymouth, a town 68 miles to the west of Bristol. This was done with encouragement and help from the Mental Health Association of the town and county and the Public Health Officer for Western Nova Scotia. The clinic began with two persons in attendance, but demand for service has been such that it usually required four of the Bristol Clinic staff to deal with the problems presented. All records have been maintained at the Bristol Clinic and will be available for research analysis.

One of the research possibilities encountered in this new clinic outpost is a study regarding the point at which the general practitioner feels that a psychiatric referral is indicated. A preliminary step has been taken in this direction, and a series of questions developed for appendage to the routine referral forms. The data are now available for analysis.

At the Bristol Clinic treatment of early psychoses and some of the more severe neuroses has included an increased use of drugs - Ritalin, Sparine, Serpatilin, Serpasil, and Largactil. There has also been more frequent use of the local hospital facilities for in-patient treatment. The growing interaction with the hospital resulted in an indication from the nurses that they would like to have instruction on methods of nursing psychiatric patients. Plans are being made to meet this need.

Contact with the medical profession and with the clergy has been maintained. Counseling has been offered at a nearby Catholic College. A number of students have received therapy or vocational guidance. The Plymouth Mental Health Association, with which the Clinic has been in liason, has budgetted funds for an institute on pastoral counseling to be held next year. The Clinic has also provided speakers for various community groups, general practitioners, nurses, teachers, and service clubs.

6. Review of articles and presentations.

It was decided in the early part of last year that brief reporting of specific aspects of the research should be encouraged, although as mentioned before the major effort has been the preparation of the four volumes. In the case of each article, the materials are part of the larger program of book-length studies. The following is a recapitulation of articles which have been published or accepted for publication during the year. With the exception of the one article written in French, they have been presented in previous annual reports or appear in the second part of this report.

- 1.) Leighton, Dorothea C., "The Distribution of Psychiatric Symptoms in a Small Town," The American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 112, No. 9., March, 1956.
- 2.) Leighton, Alexander H., "Psychiatric Disorder and Social Environment, An Outline for a Frame of Reference," Psychiatry, Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes, Vol. 18, No. 4, November, 1955.
- 3.) Hebert, Bernard, "Facteurs Sociaux et Santé Mentale (Stirling County Study)", Contributions à l'Etude des Sciences de l'Homme, 1956, No. 3.
- 4.) Dohrenwend, Bruce, "The Stirling County Study. A Research Program on Relations Between Sociocultural Factors and Mental Illness" accepted for publication in the American Psychologist.
- 5.) Cleveland, E.J., and Longaker, W.D., "Neurotic Patterns in the Family" will be published in the Social Science Research Council volume on social psychiatry.
- 6.) Leighton, A.H., and Longaker, Alice, "The Psychiatric Clinic as a Community Innovation" will appear in the forthcoming book of the Social Science Research Council.
- 7.) Sayres, William C., Sammy Louis, The Life History of a Young Micmac, The Compass Publishing Company, New Haven, 1956.

Numerous presentations to professional organizations were given by staff members. The majority of these were descriptive and orientative in nature. However, a more intensive presentation of findings was presented at the American Psychiatric Association meetings in May, 1956.

Part II - Reports for Publication

One of the main reports finished this year is a book length personality study of a Micmac Indian youth. It has been prepared and published by a former staff member, Dr. William Sayres, Department of Anthropology of Yale University. Due to its length it cannot be reproduced here. However, its general nature and relationship to the Stirling Study may be seen from the Foreword by A. H. Leighton. This is quoted in full as the first report in this section. The second is an article by Dr. Marc-Adélarde Tremblay regarding the technique of using a key informant as exemplified in the data-gathering of our Study. This is ready for submission to the American Anthropologist.



SAMMY LOUIS

The Life History of a Young Micmac<sup>1.</sup>

Collected and edited by William C. Sayres, Yale University  
Forward by Alexander H. Leighton, Cornell University

Foreword

The life history of Sammy Louis is presented by the author as a study document; hence the number of copies is limited and the distribution primarily to libraries. It may be likened in purpose to a collection of well ordered and annotated museum specimens. In this it is realistic and appropriate to existing needs, but there is some danger that its modesty will obscure points of major significance both in the purpose and in the life story itself.

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1. Sayres, William C. Sammy Louis, The Life History of a Young Micmac, The Compass Publishing Company, New Haven, 1956.

The importance of building accumulations of raw materials prepared for anthropological study has long been stressed, particularly by Clyde Kluckhohn. A gap exists between field notes, on the one hand, which are, as a rule, useful only to the person who gathered them, and on the other hand published reports which are necessarily condensed and deal with conclusions rather than observation. Something intermediate is needed so that by having numbers of minds with different orientations view the same data, it may be possible to approach replication of conclusions, and enhance the opportunity for intra-cultural and cross-cultural comparisons and the generation of hypotheses. Sammy Louis, as a model of well organized though still essentially raw data, helps fill this gap.

The monograph also demonstrates a method of data collection and assembly with regard to personality. The aim is toward well rounded coverage, rather than a teasing out of a particular theme in terms of one or another model of psychological motivation. The advantages of this approach are several. To the degree that it is actually well rounded and dedicated to covering, in so far as field conditions permit, all the aspects of personality and personal history known to be of relevance in understanding the behavior of the individual, to that extent it avoids the danger of failing to report significant observable aspects. Not being restricted by a particular theoretical orientation, it opens numerous avenues for serendipity.

With such material there is, in the course of analysis and interpretation, opportunity for examining the same items in terms of different theoretical systems. This point can be well seen if one compares Sammy

Louis with another similar study, Gregorio.<sup>2</sup> In the former, a psycho-analytic formulation is offered. In the latter the orientation is psychobiological, with more emphasis on unawareness of social-psychological functions than on unconscious motivation as such. In both studies the formulation could be transposed. That is to say, a psychoanalytic interpretation of Gregorio could be given and similarly, a psychobiological formulation of Sammy Louis. Other theoretical orientations could, of course, also be applied. From this kind of comparison and analysis of many life stories there is hope for a rich flow of concepts and theory leading ultimately to propositions that are sufficiently specific and operational for testing.

Such results are especially likely, if the collection of the life stories for study is carried out in terms of some organizing principle. This could be a given ethnic group, a sub-culture, or a cross-cultural situation, or it could be in terms of role types, or of life's common crises viewed in a number of different cultures. By systematic coverage, these life stories could provide some approach to replication of conclusions by independent analysts, such as is now possible with projective tests.

Turning to a different set of considerations, Sammy Louis, as a life story of a Micmac, is a contribution to knowledge with regard to a neglected group of American Indians. That their culture is on the verge of total disappearance makes this work all the more valuable, particularly the perspectives given across three generations and the review of shifts that seem to have occurred during this time.

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2. Leighton, Alexander H. and Leighton, Dorothea C. Gregorio, The Hand Trembler. Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. 1949

As a piece of work affiliated with the Stirling County Study in Mental Health, Sammy Louis has a specialized contribution to make. Since Sammy was born in Stirling and the greater part of his life story deals with persons and events occurring there, background data and insights are provided with regard to the situation of the Indian minority in that county. Thus the individual experiential view point, and interpretations derived from this, are added to the more general sociocultural data that have been compiled in the course of the Stirling Study.

Second and more important, is the bearing Sammy Louis has had on some of the conclusions being reached in the Study with regard to relationships between sociocultural environment and mental health. Starting with a general frame of reference, explorations of an epidemiological character have been made which suggest that certain sociocultural conditions which we have termed "disorganization" are of etiological significance in the emergence of some types of psychiatric disorder. Sammy Louis' life history is that of a man who has felt from his earliest years extremes of disorganizing sociocultural influences. As an account collected, organized and interpreted by an anthropologist, the work is of considerable interest in providing through the experience of one individual a view of developmental sequences in the course of growing up under such conditions. Many of Sammy's relationships are common in all disorganized groups. Thus, to take an example, the inadequacy of the father figure is apparently endemic among such people. Sammy Louis gives us some idea of how this functioned in his life and how it may relate to other experiences and to the main characteristics of his adult personality. Sammy Louis, therefore, in terms of the Stirling County Study comes as a first publication touching on an

area of major concern. It will be followed by related studies from other social scientists and from psychiatrists who will take up numbers of the problems illustrated in Sammy and attempt further explication.

In conclusion, then, it may be said that the present volume is of value as a model study document, as a contribution in anthropology and as a contribution in the study of mental health.

THE KEY INFORMANT TECHNIQUE:  
A NON-ETHNOGRAPHIC APPLICATION <sup>1</sup>

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There has been extensive use of the key informant technique in anthropological field work but relatively few attempts to spell it out, especially from the viewpoint of its planning and its place in a structured, yet flexible, research design for data gathering. This article, which draws its material from the Stirling County Study, will explain why and how key informants were selected for a particular phase of the research (that of identifying the poorest and wealthiest communities of the county). It is hoped that from such a detailed presentation of a specific case, some general principles of use can be drawn.

In this article we shall define what we mean by the technique, then analyze its use in gathering data. This will be followed by a section on the kinds of data we hoped to discover through the use of the technique. Our research design will then be outlined and the reasons for deviating from the original design will be explored. Finally, the manner in which the operation was carried out will be described. The procedures of the analysis of the data as well as the results are not pertinent to the paper and are therefore omitted from it but they can be found elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This term has been employed in professional writing at least as early as 1939. See Nadel, S. F., "Interview Technique in Social Anthropology," Study of Society, edited by Frederic Bartlett and others; London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1939, pp. 317-327. It has received wide recognition since it avoids the terminological difficulties of either the "anthropological method" or "unstructured interviewing."

2. Tremblay, M-Adé/ard, "Social Disorganization in Stirling County According to a Poverty-Affluence Indicator," Unpublished report of the Stirling County Study, 1955.

## THE KEY INFORMANT TECHNIQUE

1. Definition of Terms. As used here, the term "key informant" has a more delimited definition than is usual. In traditional anthropological field research, key informants are used primarily as a source of information on such topics as kinship and family organization, economic system, political structure, and religious beliefs and practices. In brief, they are interviewed intensively over a long period of time for the purpose of providing a relatively complete ethnographic description of the social and cultural patterns of their group. In that particular fashion, a few informants are interviewed with the aim of securing the total patterning of a culture.<sup>3</sup> The technique is preeminently suited to the gathering of the kinds of qualitative and descriptive data that are difficult or time-consuming to unearth through structured data-gathering techniques such as questionnaire surveys.<sup>4</sup>

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3. There are a number of studies in anthropology based on a single key-informant. See Osgood, Cornelius, Ingalik Material Culture; New Haven, Yale University Publication in Anthropology, No. 22, 1940; and Yang, Martin, Taitou: A Chinese Village; New York, John Day, 1954. The latter is the author's retrospective reconstruction of his own native village. An account of the division of labor in a northern Indian village is reported by Opler and Singh, the latter being the informant. See Opler, Morris, and Singh, Rudra Datt, "The Division of Labor in an Indian Village," A Reader in General Anthropology, edited by Carleton S. Coon; New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1948, pp, 464-496.

4. Although the emphasis is on qualitative aspects, it is also possible to get a great deal of valuable concrete quantitative data. For instance by interviewing a saw-mill operator, one is likely to get much specific data such as the number of thousand feet of lumber sawed in a day, the number of workers required to maintain a certain rate of woodcutting, the predicted production of a piece of woodland, etc.. This, of course, does not mean that qualitative data of great importance cannot be obtained in a survey. For instance many surveys have open-ended questions which allow respondents to give a good deal of qualitative data as in the Morale Survey of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey reported by Leighton. See Leighton, Alexander H., Human Relations in a Changing World, New York, E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1949.

This kind of interviewing labelled "key informant technique" is often named "the anthropological technique" or referred to as "unstructured interviewing". There is, in our opinion, some objection to using either term. As for the first, despite the fact that anthropologists have made a major contribution to the development of this approach and laid down many of its principles, it cannot be considered as belonging solely to that discipline. It has been used in economics and in the political sciences and is a common procedure in journalism.

On the other hand the term "unstructured interviewing" creates the impression that the technique has limitless plasticity and lacks system. As we shall demonstrate later, the technique can have structure although it is a different kind from that used in the design and administration of questionnaire surveys. In using key informants, one chooses them strategically, considering the structure of the society and the content of the inquiry. Furthermore, in the interview itself, although the informant is given latitude to choose his own order and manner of presentation, there is a systematic attempt on the part of the researcher to cover completely the topic under analysis. When we use key informants, we are not randomly sampling from the universe of characteristics under study. Rather we are selectively sampling specialized knowledge of the characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

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5. It should be noted that there is usually considerable difference between an anthropologically selected key informant and a statistically drawn respondent. The former is able to make comparisons between communities of the county and judgmentally differentiate the poorest from the richest, mainly because this had been the criterion for selecting him. Most respondents of a questionnaire survey, being more limited in scope and knowledge, could hardly make these comparisons.



There is also emphasis on progressive restructuring of both the choice of additional informants, and the content of the interviews as a result of the information gathered; that is to say, "feedback"<sup>6</sup> is an important element in the conception and operation of the method.

The term "key informant" seems to avoid the connotations of these other terms. It does not suggest any single scientific discipline, and at the same time it does imply, indirectly at least, some structuring in the selection of informants.<sup>7</sup> Also the interview itself will be more or less standardized depending on the type of data required and the interaction between interviewer and informant.

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6. "Feedback" can be described very briefly as a "self-corrective process." See Wiener, Norbert, The Human Use of Human Beings, Cybernetics and Society; Second Revised Edition; New York, Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1954, pp. 24-26, 33, 49-50, 58-61, 63, 96, 151-153, 156-158, 164 and following. On page 61 the following passage appears: "I repeat, feedback is a method of controlling a system by inserting into it the results of its past performance. If these results are merely used as numerical data for the criticism of the system and its regulations, we have the simple feedback of the control engineers. If, however, the information which proceeds backward from the performance is able to change the general method and pattern of performance, we have a process which may well be called learning." For another excellent statement on this process, see Spicer, Edward H, (ed.) Human Problems in Technological Change; New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1952, pp. 125-126.

7. See Madge, John, The Tools of Social Science; New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1953, pp. 144-177. In his chapter on "Interview" he identifies three types of respondents; (a) Potentate or individuals occupying authority positions, (b) Expert or individuals with specialized knowledge, and (c) People or the lay public. In this scheme, most of the Stirling key informants for the identification of extremely poor and extremely rich communities would be considered as occupying authority positions and as having special knowledge.

2. A Focussed Use of Key Informants. We have used key informants, in the traditional anthropological sense, during preliminary phases of the Stirling County Study and during intensive community studies. In this operation, however, our use of informants has been in the study of specific aspects of a cultural setting rather than the cultural whole usually detailed in ethnographies. Such delimitation of the technique was in this sense very restricted. The narrowness of our interest meant that we did not search for informants who might add to our total understanding of the culture but for informants who might be expected to have specialized information on particular topics. Yet it compares with ethnographic usage in that schedules are not utilized in the interview situation, and informants are not randomly selected as in a sample survey interview. It differs from the traditional anthropological technique, however, in that a large number of key informants are selected and interviewed within a restricted framework of questions with highly focussed objectives. If we were to take as our research setting a relatively unexplored culture, our interviewing procedure might be as follows: use of ethnographic key informant technique as the first stage of investigation; use of the focussed key informant technique at the second stage of the inquiry; to be followed at the third stage by use of sample surveys. A focussed use of key informants is thus intermediate in nature. It assumes broad knowledge of the area but precedes the ability to choose the relevant alternatives incorporated in a well designed sample survey.

This paper will be concerned primarily with the relatively unexplored focussed use of key informants mentioned above. It is structured in the sense that the interviewer, familiar and intimately

acquainted with the type of information sought from the informant, has a framework of questions in mind. This framework, which gives an idea of the type of material sought and which limits the universe to be studied, is explained to the key informant at the beginning of the interview in order to give him some orientation. If the informant's conversation is irrelevant to the topic or if he veers repeatedly from the main focus of the interview, the research worker interjects comments or questions intended to bring him back without, however, forcing him to adopt a pre-defined pattern of conversation. The technique is flexible in that the informant is allowed considerable leeway in regard to the content of his answers and the manner of presentation. He is encouraged to follow, by associative processes, from one thought to the other with relative freedom. A salient feature of the informant-researcher interaction is that the former is encouraged to bring out all the facts pertinent to the researcher's interest. Clues are followed and clarifications requested so that the informant's interest is continuously revived and sustained in the process of recounting.

The technique is self-developing since the researcher can refine his interviewing method during the course of a session or through repeated contacts as the amount of knowledge gained about the problem increases and as the ability of the informant is fully revealed. The interview process develops the informant's skills to recall facts and situations, stimulates his memory, and facilitates the expression of these recollections.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE KEY INFORMANT TECHNIQUE IN THIS RESEARCH OPERATION

The self-developing quality of the technique and the nature of the interview data made the use of key informants particularly suitable for some phases of research in the Stirling County Study. A further reason for choosing it was that the size of the county, the large number of communities, and the overall research design ruled out more expensive and time-consuming methods of data gathering. Study planning called for comparisons of all true communities in the county on seven conditions. The key informant technique was applied to one of these, ~~poverty~~-affluence, with the idea that if it proved sufficiently accurate for research purposes, it could then be applied with relative ease to the remaining variables.

There were three types of data that we wanted from key informants -- definitional, objective, and judgmental. These types of data were to be brought to bear on the following research objectives.

1. To Develop a Definition of the Dimensions Involved. One purpose was to develop a conception regarding the nature of poverty and its opposite as specific phenomena in Stirling County. This is well in accord with the feedback mechanism and the process of self-development alluded to earlier.

We wanted to use the informants' own terms for "poverty" or "wealth" instead of more abstract or more measurable terms. We feared that such terms might, by their unfamiliarity, lead the informants to imprecise or erroneous judgments. As a matter of procedure, the researcher gave a preliminary general assessment of what he hoped to discover. In response,

key informants would either identify the poorest communities (in which case they would be asked to define what they meant) or they would translate our cues into their own terms for describing poverty (in which case they would be asked to identify the extremes.)

As a result of this practice, we came to define poverty as existing in communities (or sub-communities) in which the residents had no capital, few possessions, low credit, no skills of economic value, and both low and irregular incomes. As the informants suggested, these conditions manifested themselves in dilapidated and unpainted houses, leaky roofs, untidy yards, broken windows, loose clapboards, broken steps, and shacks or big houses that had deteriorated. In the course of identifying and characterizing the poorest communities, a number of key informants made comments which indicated their awareness of some of the most noted characteristics associated with poverty, such as the lack of normal social controls, aspirations, and values comparable to those prevailing elsewhere in the county.

2. To Discover Boundaries of Communities. Another objective of the key informant technique was to delineate the boundaries of those communities which were identified as being either the poorest or richest.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>. Since it was suspected that formal boundaries, such as school, postal, electoral and church districts did not necessarily coincide with natural communities, it was important to let informants define the communities they named. The idea behind this procedure was to find groups of people, even though they might belong to two different administrative units, who regarded themselves as belonging together and as being different from those surrounding them and who were regarded by their neighbors as being different.

As it turned out, key informants mentioned a number of communities which were not administrative entities and were not recorded on our maps of the county. This was especially true of the poorer sections which were often submerged in larger and richer areas. For instance, Northwest Jonesville and The Bog were mentioned again and again as "natural areas" (an assertion which was later verified by intensive anthropological observation of these areas). They are not administrative or political units and hence they do not appear on county maps as separate entities.

3. To Identify Extremes. Another general research objective was to identify the most extreme communities in terms of poverty and affluence, that is, the poorest and richest communities in the county.<sup>9</sup> This required a relatively straightforward evaluation by the informants, although it was, of course, based on their own impressions and other subjective data, as well as on whatever objective information they might possess. The details of having informants rank communities between the extremes will be described later in this paper.

4. To Increase Knowledge of the Problem. The final goal, which is more indirect than the others but more in line with traditional field work, was to maximize the chances of collecting relevant information not explicitly stated in the research design. By this means further insight might be gained into some of the phenomena pertaining to the variable under investigation.<sup>10</sup>

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9. If we had an absolute scale, this would imply a comparison of Stirling communities against communities in general in that part of the country. But in a relative scale, of the type developed here, there have to be richer communities to compare against the middle range as well as poorer communities.

10. Merton has called this "serendipity." See Merton, Robert K., Social Theory and Social Structure; Illinois, The Free Press, 1949, pp. 12, 98-102, 376-377.

## PRELIMINARY RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Criteria for Selection of Informants. To get the data required it was necessary, of course, to have the best possible informants. The following criteria for the "ideal" informant were outlined:

Role-in-community. His formal role should continuously expose him to the kind of information being sought.

Knowledge. In addition to having direct access to the information desired, the informant should have absorbed the information meaningfully.

Willingness. The informant should be willing to communicate his knowledge to the interviewer and cooperate with him as fully as possible.

Communicability. He should be able to communicate his knowledge in a manner that makes sense and is intelligible to the social scientist.

Impartiality. As an ideal, personal bias should be at a minimum; such biases as do exist should be known to the research worker. For instance, if the informant has a bias conditioned by his class position, this should be known to the interviewer so its effects can be properly appraised.

Of these five criteria of eligibility, only role-in-community can be determined in advance. The other qualifications are apt to be a matter of personality rather than position in the social structure. Once individuals performing key roles in the economic structure are detected, the other four criteria serve as a screening device for separating the "good" from the "poor" informants. After having prepared an ideal list of informants on the basis of role-in-community, we could expect to make some changes as a result of personal contact and appraisal. It was also anticipated that repeated contacts with informants might lead to singling out the best ones for more attention.

For judging the information provided by the informants and for judging the informants themselves, the following criteria are considered

important: internal consistency, productivity and reliability. Our aim, of course, is to obtain valid information. The above criteria are preliminary to checks against outside standards, e.g. census materials, surveys, intensive field work in the locations. Let us spell out these preliminary checks.

Internal Consistency. Though not the only prerequisite, a necessary condition for accurate information is internal consistency. Such consistency can be checked in the course of data-collection and analysis of each informant. Furthermore there should be a cogent explanation for any specialized knowledge which key informants exhibit in the interview situation. This is especially true when the richness of detail goes beyond what one would expect. For example, one individual was particularly detailed in his accounts of the economic and social relations of families in one section of the county. When asked why he knew all these facts, he cited his participation in numerous fund-raising campaigns and his career as newspaper reporter. He had also worked in local government committees concerned with taxes, education and police administration.

Productivity. Productivity implies the ability to give a substantial amount of information concerning the problem. In our case it meant that the informant knew a large number of communities and a great deal about their economic structure.

Reliability. With a technique like this, cross-comparison is feasible and should be utilized as much as possible during data collection. This will give some indication of reliability and uncover areas of discrepancy where more intensive interviewing is needed.

In this connection, (criterion of "good" informant) it is worth



noting that in every community of any size there are one or two individuals with particular skills as informants. We have come to designate them "natural observers".<sup>11</sup> These people have been life-long students of the human scene. They are interested in the behavior of their fellow men and observe the development of institutions. They are often able to speculate and make inferences about both. Usually, they have no one with whom they can exchange these interests, and the appearance of a social scientist seems to provide them with considerable satisfaction. The qualities of the "natural observer" seem to appear in a variety of roles. Sometimes, such people have very limited horizons, as in isolated farms and small villages. More often, however, they occupy positions from which they can derive a broad knowledge of human affairs, e.g. police magistrate, municipal clerk, teacher or doctor in rural districts.

2. Preliminary Selection of Informants. On the basis of formal role participation, a preliminary list of informants was developed. Our choice of roles was determined by the nature of the information sought and the political structure of the county. Since we were interested in the distribution of poverty and wealth, we chose informants whose roles might provide them with accurate knowledge of financial conditions in the county.<sup>12</sup> Among these were the more obvious roles of bankers,

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11. The term is suggested by Alexander H. Leighton, and many of these observations are derived from his experiences as a field worker.

12. See Committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute, "Methods and Techniques in Social Anthropology," Notes and Queries on Anthropology; 6th edition, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd. 1951, pp. 36-62. See Paul, Benjamin D., "Interview Technique and Field Relationships," Anthropology To-Day, edited by A. L. Kroeber and others; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953, pp. 430-451. See also Kluckhohn, Clyde, "The Personal Document in Anthropological Science," Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology and Sociology by L. Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn and R. Angell, Social Science Research Council Bulletin, No. 53, 1945, pp. 114-117.

large-scale employers, and local government and welfare personnel, as well as such roles as those of newspaper reporters and doctors whose work might be expected to lead to wide general knowledge of the county. The second determinant was the fact that the county is divided into two dissimilar municipalities. To keep our data symmetrical we imposed the requirement that, if possible, an equal number of informants be used and that comparable role-representation be provided for each sector. The number of people in the county who filled these two qualifications of role-eligibility and symmetry are indicated in the following table.

TABLE I  
RANGE AND FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE  
OF FORMAL ROLES IN STIRLING COUNTY

Roles	Number
Municipal Councillors	21
Municipality Wardens	2
Municipal Clerks	2
Saw-Mill Owners (large), and Cooperative Managers	8
Medical Doctors and Welfare Officers	12
Local Bankers	5
Newspaper Reporters	2
Total	52

#### RESEARCH OPERATIONS

1. Deviation from the Preliminary Design. A number of changes were introduced into the design as it was applied in the field. There were several reasons for such deviation. In some instances an informant

chosen on the basis of the first criterion (role participation) did not qualify with regard to the last four criteria (knowledge, willingness, communicability, and impartiality). The obverse was also true, and individuals were discovered who fulfilled these four criteria but who did not occupy formal positions that suggested their special knowledge. Overlapping of roles and limitations inherent in the field situation were also causes for deviation from the original design.

The overlapping of roles. Some individuals occupied more than one of the roles selected as a point of departure. Some of the saw-mill operators and cooperative managers, for instance, were also municipal councillors. Thus, where the symmetrical design called for two separate interviews, the field operation yielded only one.

Lack of knowledge. This particular factor was the basis for eliminating a good many individuals from the original list. A short contact with individuals occupying some of the formal roles made it evident that a prolonged interview would yield little valuable information.

Discovery of new informants. In the course of contacting and interviewing people occupying the roles listed in the design, some individuals suggested others whom they considered particularly well qualified as informants. In a number of cases, contact was made and relevant data were collected.

Intensive versus extensive interviewing. There were on the list a few informants who were highly productive and exceptionally well qualified by all the criteria of "good" mentioned earlier. In order to get the full detail of their knowledge it was essential to interview them more often than was anticipated. Particularly in the urban center of Bristol many interviews ran three and four hours each, and one key informant was

interviewed during three months at regular intervals. Since time was limited, this made it impossible for us to contact some potential informants listed, although we aimed at interviewing a maximum number.

Personality factors. As with lack of knowledge, a few individuals had to be left out primarily for personality factors that interfered with or made impossible communication between field worker and informant.

Operational inconveniences. This refers to practical factors in the field. An example was the impossibility of interviewing two of the bankers in the largest town in the study area because it was thought necessary to get permission from the companies' head offices in Montreal. By the time this could have been accomplished, the research as a whole would have passed beyond the deadline for this particular operation.

The following table presents the preliminary design and deviation from it as was carried out in the field operation.

TABLE 2  
 DEVIATION FROM THE DESIGN  
 IN KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWING

Roles	No. in Design	No. Interviewed
Municipal Councillors	21	6
Municipal Wardens	2	2
Municipal Clerks	2	2
Newspaper Reporters	2	1
Saw-Mill Owners and Cooperative Managers	8	6
Doctors and Welfare Officers	12	7
Bankers	5	2
Farmers		3
Member Legislative Assembly		2
Electric Power Superintendent		1
Tax Collector		1
Store Owner		1
Fisherman		1
Priest		1
Fish Plant Owner		1
Salesman		1
School Inspector		1
Agronomist		1
Garage Owner		1
Total 19 roles	52	41 #

# Altogether there were twenty-eight key informants who occupied a total of forty-one major economic roles. The difference between the two numbers represents the overlap in roles.

Selection of informants was not based on representativeness of age, sex and locality of residence. The latter would have been important if these individuals had been randomly selected respondents rather than judgmentally selected key informants. The selection was based almost exclusively on intensive knowledge of many communities in the county and ability to impart the knowledge to the interviewer. The symmetrical

design was of great utility in maximizing the chances of locating individuals who combined a high degree of knowledge with the ability to communicate it accurately. In short, it was a device for finding "good" informants by looking first into the formal roles which they were likely to occupy.

2. Management of the Interview. As noted earlier, many of the informants had been previously interviewed by other members of the Project. Consequently they had a fairly sophisticated knowledge of the general nature of our work. The few who did not know the Study's goals and activities were given a general introductory explanation and a printed brochure as means of orientation.

All key informants, however, needed specific explanations on the nature of the immediate task. A standard, yet flexible, procedure was developed by the two main interviewers in order to maximize consistency and get comparable qualitative data.

The first step was to discuss our interest in grading and comparing communities of the county from the standpoint of material wealth. The key informant was then given a map and asked to consider the communities he knew best and to rate them on a continuum of material wealth.

Because of the quality and nature of data we hoped to procure, a decision was made to use a map rather than a check-list of the place names as an aide-memoire. A check-list would probably have resulted in maximally standardized procedures (i.e., entire coverage, similar order of presentation of communities, etc.). However, it would probably have minimized the informant's sense of freedom to concentrate his discussion

on the communities he knew best regardless of instructions. He might have felt obliged to discuss all names whether he was well informed on them or not.

The use of the map would avoid this disadvantage. Used only as a visual aid to stimulate the informant to organize material himself, it would encourage his thinking on those communities he knew best. The disadvantage of this system was that the informant was likely to overlook some communities. This could be overcome somewhat by having the interviewer ask directly about any areas of the county which the informant had not discussed after the informant had given detailed information on the communities he knew best.

After the informant had a chance to examine the map, he was asked to pinpoint:

All the poorest communities  
All of the richest communities.

This was done to sharpen and then to utilize the informants' sense of contrasts between the extremes of poverty and affluence. After the informant had enumerated all the communities which he tagged either poorest or richest (and the reasons therefore) then he was asked to single out:

All of the poorer than average communities  
which were not as poor as the poorest.

All of the better than average communities  
which were not as affluent as the richest.

Communities which had not been rated after additional queries had been made were therefore either unknown to the informant or considered as average. In such cases, communities which the informant considered average or did not know were often undifferentiated by this procedure.

After all the ratings had been completed for these four categories, the informant was asked to rank-order the communities he had mentioned within each class of wealth. For instance, if a respondent had mentioned Loomervale, The Bog, and Monkeytown as belonging to the poorest class, he was then asked to rate these three from poorest to least poor. However, in numerous instances, informants felt that they could not make such refined distinctions, and they were not pressed further. Because rank-orderings within wealth categories were incomplete, it was impossible to develop a method which would further refine the within-class-rating of informants.

In accord with our aim to define poverty and wealth in the local idiom, we encouraged informants to explain their reasons for rating the communities as they did. We also encouraged them to delimit and describe the places they rated since we had an interest in isolating all true communities in the area.

We tried to record the interviews as fully as possible. Colored pencils were supplied and informants were encouraged to use them to spot the communities they discussed. Such maps, of course, were kept as part of the interview record. Informants were interviewed to the fullest exploitation of their knowledge. Some of them required only one interview to exhaust the relevant information, while some others needed a second, third, or more interviews. Extensive notes were taken during the interviews and on some occasions total recordings were made.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although this paper deals with the illustrative case of poverty, this procedure was repeated for other sociocultural factors similarly relevant to our main problem. On the basis of these focussed key informant operations, we were able to gather the necessary information for the design of a sample survey to be used in the study area as a whole and for the preliminary selection of focus communities for intensive analysis with both "structured" and "non-structured" techniques of interviewing and observation. Thus, not only did the technique provide us with the information essential for the refinement of the overall research design, but also it dictated the steps whereby its validity could be checked through comparison with the findings of subsequent research operations.

At a later date we hope to publish the results of this validity check for the focussed key informant technique described in this paper and to set forth some salient comparisons of results achieved with this and with other research tools in the course of our study.

Part III - Research Planning for the Future1. Extension of Current Research

When the Ford Foundation announced its intention to grant funds to program-type research in the field of mental health, it was thought that the Stirling Study and the Midtown Study of the Cornell Medical College were eligible as candidates for such appropriations. The Midtown Study under the direction of the late Dr. Thomas A. C. Rennie has been in existence for three years, and its purpose is an analysis of social stress and psychiatric disorder similar to that of the Stirling Study. The Midtown district is a cross section of residential areas in metropolitan New York. As in the study of a rural Maritime province which the Stirling Study has undertaken, the Midtown project is concerned with the occurrence and differential distribution of psychiatric disorder and the social correlates which are postulated as contributory factors.

There are striking similarities between the Stirling and Midtown Studies in the broader areas of purpose and methods, and yet the contrasts of rural and urban populations provide interesting possibilities for comparison. During the past three years there has been informal cooperation between the studies, but when it became apparent that a formal amalgamation might be possible for the extension and intensification of common research, Drs. Rennie and Leighton proposed to the Foundation a program of research building on and adding to work already done.

In June the Ford Foundation granted funds for this program. The Midtown Study was to be responsible for the intensive urban analysis, and the Stirling Study for the cross-cultural aspects. However, due to the death of Dr. Rennie, there has been a re-organization of the proposal. Dr. Leighton has accepted the position of director of the two studies

which will be combined in 1958 following the completion of work now in progress. Some reorientation has and will continue to grow out of the combined nature of the research program. Nevertheless the central aim continues, as before, the exploration of the relationship between psychiatric disorder and environment for the purpose of evaluating the proposition that social and cultural factors have significant effects on mental health. Research is planned in three areas: (1) psychiatric disorders and the diagnostic process from the viewpoint of social psychiatry, (2) comparative analysis of factors in mental health and mental illness, and (3) cross-cultural comparative studies probably involving an overseas study of some non-European group.

## 2. The Bristol Psychiatric Clinic.

As mentioned previously it has been the intention from the beginning of the Stirling Study to establish a community Clinic which could, after an initial period of sponsorship, be an integral part of Bristol and serve as a headquarters for treatment and education in preventive psychiatry in a wider geographic area. During the current year, negotiations with the Provincial and Federal Governments have been undertaken for support of the Clinic. A small portion of funds of the Stirling Study will remain available to the Clinic for research. It will also be the responsibility of the Study to recruit professional personnel and to continue close communication both in the planning of new research projects and in supervising the treatment and community service aspects. It is planned that analysis of the Clinic as an organization in the community will continue. Additional researches will be made into such problems as why some portions of the population seek therapy and others do not.

Case materials will be available for projects originating in the Clinic as well as for such studies as may be carried on as an outgrowth of the Stirling-Midtown program.

3. Canadian National Health Grant for the Comparison of Organic and Psychiatric Symptoms in a Small Town.

Typifying the kind of smaller research projects which can now be undertaken on separate problems is a current study supported by a National Health Research Grant administered through the Nova Scotia Department of Public Health and Welfare. A proposal was drawn up, in cooperation with Dalhousie University, and with the resultant appropriation of funds, plans are now being developed under the direction of Dr. William D. Longaker. The purpose of this study is a comparison of the distribution and frequency of organic illnesses with the psychiatric symptom patterns evolved from the evaluation of our 20% probability sample of the Bristol area. This will include an analysis of the individual health history provided by the survey, interviews with local physicians and hospital records. Such information will be useful in public health planning, particularly with reference to estimating the needs for different kinds of medical service. It is our expectation that this study will be completed in March 1957.