

Illinois A Graphic History of Juvenile Justice



Written and Illustrated by
Rachel Marie-Crane Williams

After over a year of work, I am thrilled to announce the publication of a series of zines about the juvenile justice and prison systems. This collaborative experience was a truly rewarding and wonderful one. When I approached my friend Lisa Lee, of the Jane Addams Hull House Museum, with the idea of creating a graphic novel about the history and current manifestations of juvenile justice, I could not have imagined where we'd end up today. We both agreed that this project would only make sense if we centered the voices of incarcerated youth as well as young people on the outside. We knew that we wanted to find partners who would share our vision and would have the skills to execute it. We were incredibly lucky to find talented and dedicated teaching artists like Rachel Marie-Crane Williams and Elgin Smith to work with on this project. Both of them collaborated respectfully with the young people who participated in what would eventually come to be known as our "cradle to prison pipeline" comic arts project. After that, they spent countless hours drawing and authoring the zines that we are releasing today. If we had paid them what they are worth, we would all be bankrupt.

We were also blessed to partner with the Chicago Freedom School which provided a meeting space for youth and with Eva Nagao, Freedom School board co-chair, who took it upon herself to recruit young people for this project. Eva handled all of the logistics for the 5 weeks of the comic arts program for youth on the outside. Special thanks also to Rachel Shine who volunteered her time with the youth as they learned about juvenile justice and drew their own images.

The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) welcomed us for 4 weeks in August 2010 to work with the young people who were incarcerated there. Teaching artist Elgin Smith, who already works at JTDC, led comic arts workshops for both girls and boys at the jail. We are indebted to the youth for sharing their stories and talents with us.

As an added bonus, artist and activist Billy Dee, working with members of the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective, has created a zine about the prison industrial complex that the Museum has generously printed too. There is no way that anyone who looks at the "PIC Is" zine will miss Billy's talent or huge heart. Both are apparent throughout the publication.

This project would not have been as seamless or as enjoyable as it was without the presence and guidance of Teresa Silva. Teresa's steady hand and her soft touch moved us along and helped bring the project to completion. Thanks to Teresa for all of her contributions.

There are few people in the world as unique and inspiring as Lisa Lee. Over the years, Lisa has fostered opportunities for youth and adults across Chicago to learn about history, art, and social justice. She does this without fanfare but always with unmatched generosity of spirit. This project would not have happened without her. I am eternally grateful to Lisa for all that she has done and will undoubtedly continue to do in the future.

Finally, a point of personal privilege... I am committed to using art as a tool for social transformation and justice. I believe that art has the capacity to speak across difference and to help educate and incite people to action. I hope that those individuals who read these zines come away asking the question: How can I contribute to dismantling the prison industrial complex? If even only one person asks, then we will have done our part.

In Peace and Solidarity,

--Mariame Kaba, Director, Project NIA

This zine series was made in connection with "Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice," the community-curated exhibit at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, on view through August 2011.

"Unfinished Business" is curated in collaboration with over a dozen community partners and makes connections between the founding of the nation's first Juvenile Court in 1899 and the pressing contemporary issues of juvenile justice and prison reform. The exhibit fosters dialogue and provides opportunities for visitors to participate onsite in several forms of civic engagement. While much progress has been made on the issue about which Jane Addams and other Hull-House reformers cared so deeply, we wanted visitors to know that there is still a lot of "unfinished business." The work of creating a more just society continues, and we can all be part of transformative social change. These zines—created in collaboration with Project NIA; the Chicago Freedom School; teaching artists Rachel Marie Crane-Williams and Elgin-Bokari T. Smith; artist and activist Billy Dee; and youth inside and outside the system—attempt to create a critical awareness of the issues by addressing the many facets of juvenile justice. Five zines speak to the History of the Juvenile Court, Girls in the System, Youth Stories (of the Incarcerated), the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and the Prison-Industrial Complex. Through dialogue and creative thinking, we believe that a series of zines allows us to become a more effective public history site and enables us to contribute to popular education in a unique way. These zines challenge preconceived notions, stir our imaginations, and generate new community beyond the Museum's walls.

So, what is a zine? Fanzines or "zines" are do-it-yourself (DIY) mini-books that have a long history of communicating openly, honestly, and plainly. Zines are independent and capture the spirit of a localized scene, but are meant to have far-reaching effects. Once you read a zine, pass it along to a friend or acquaintance. By sharing and discussing zines, the community grows, and you've made a valuable connection with someone.

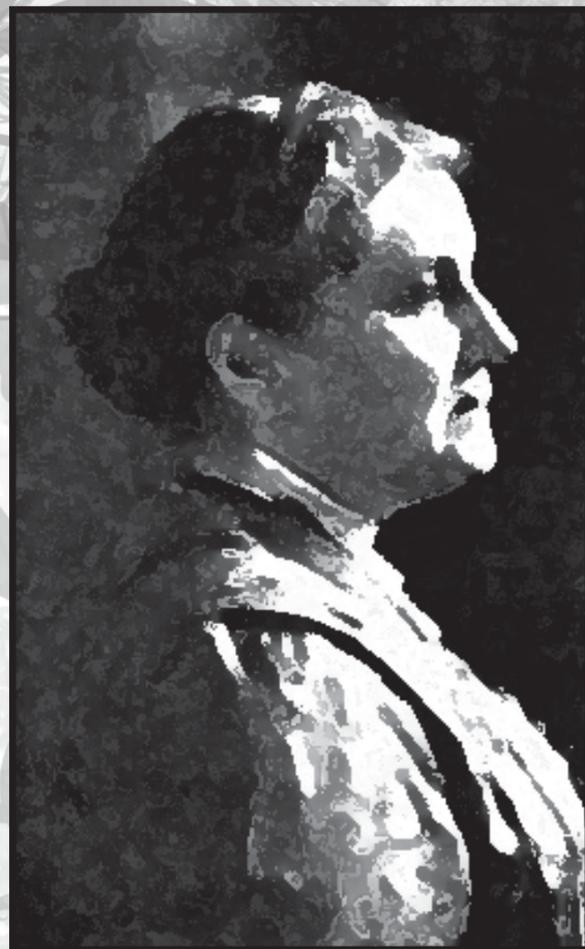
The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum serves as a dynamic memorial to Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jane Addams and other resident social reformers whose work influenced the lives of their immigrant neighbors as well as national and international public policy.

The Museum preserves and develops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continuation of the historic settlement house vision, linking research, education, and social engagement.

The zine series is a valuable tool for civic engagement and emphasizes that "history is not a spectator sport" but something that everyone can and should be engaged in making at all times.

Want to find out more or get involved? Check us out and download copies of the zines at: www.hull-housemuseum.org

--Teresa Silva, community curator of "Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice," Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, 2011



“Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself--”

Jane Addams

THE JUVENILE COURT ACT OF 1899

Ironically, the United States, a country that incarcerates more people than any other place on earth, and was practically the last government on earth to abolish the death penalty for juvenile offenders, established the first juvenile court in the world in 1899. The establishment of the Juvenile Court of Cook County was the result of nearly a

decade of work by progressive women welfare workers, philanthropists, and lawyers.

Brutal treatment brutalizes and thus prepares for crime!



John Altgeld
1847-1902



Julia Lathrop 1858-1932

The growing child must NOT be treated by those rigid rules of criminal procedure which confessedly fail to prevent offenses on the part of adults or cure adult offenders!

a juvenile court could act as a nurturing parent for children who are lacking this element in their lives....

Lucy Flower 1837-1927



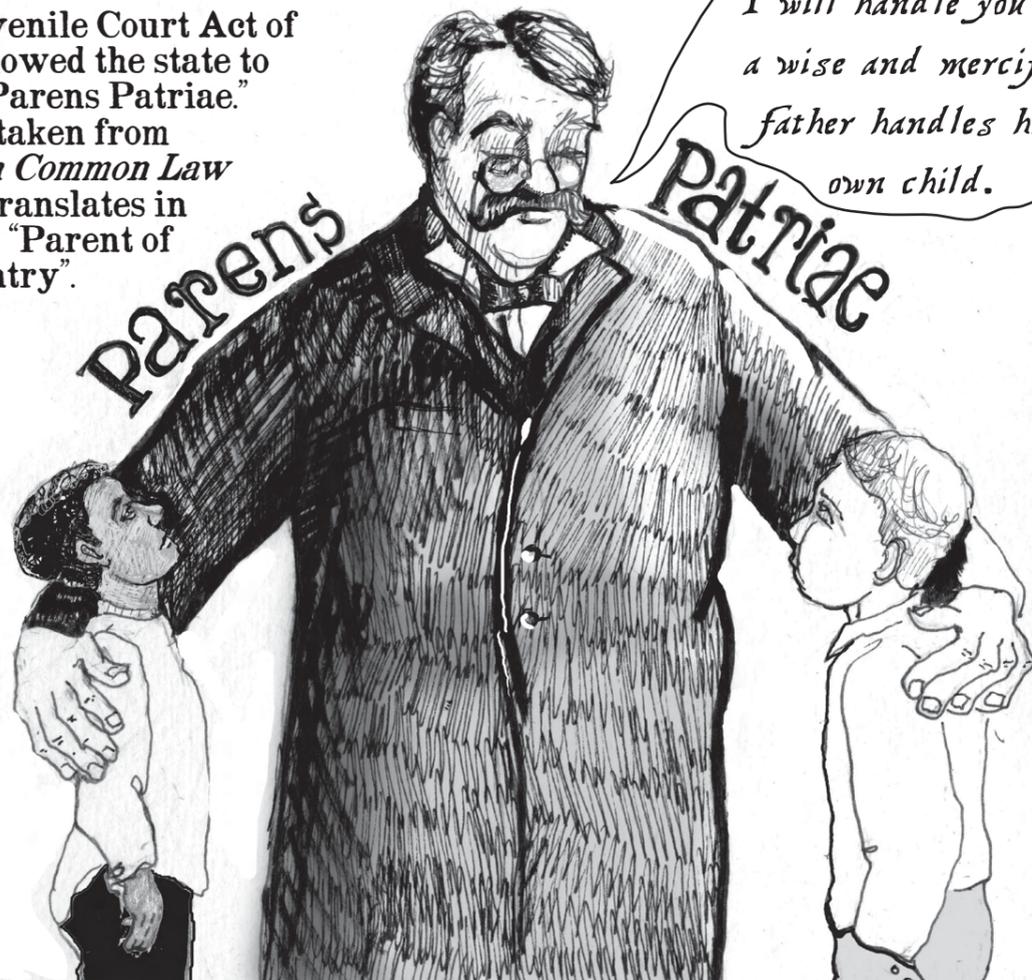
There are many pitiful cases of little children confined in the police stations or the jails--one boy... had been bitten by rats!!!

Rattus rattus 1890-1895



Jane Addams 1860-1935

The Juvenile Court Act of 1899 allowed the state to act as "Parens Patriae." A term taken from *English Common Law* which translates in Latin to "Parent of his country".



I will handle you as a wise and merciful father handles his own child.

The act expanded the court's jurisdiction to include not only juvenile delinquents but also unfortunate children who were:



Neglected,



Homeless,



caught begging,



Exposed to criminal acts such as prostitution,



treated cruelly,

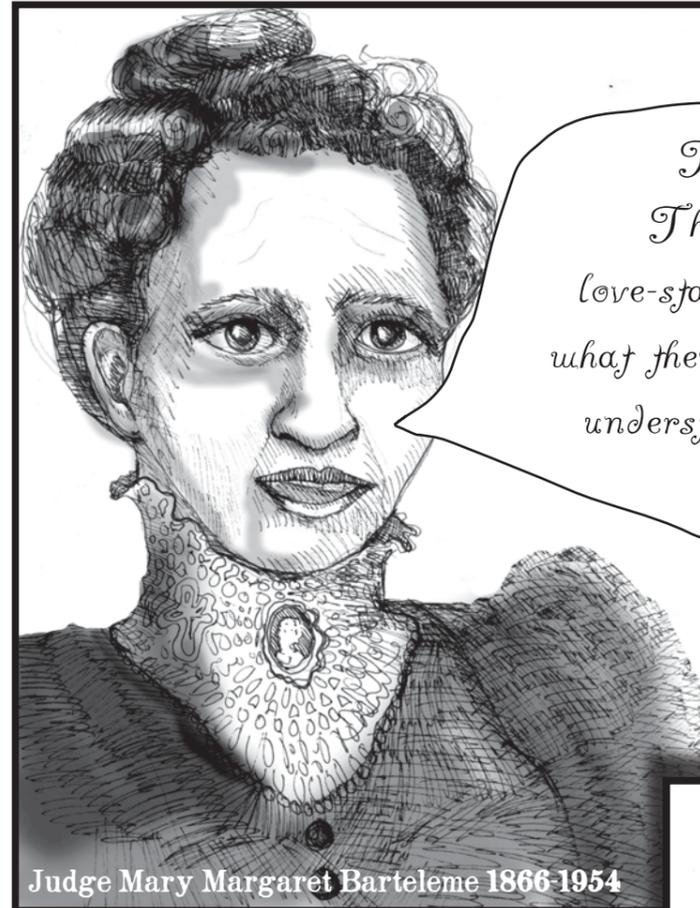


dependent on public charity,



or under the age of 8 and found working on the streets as a peddler, or street musician to raise money.

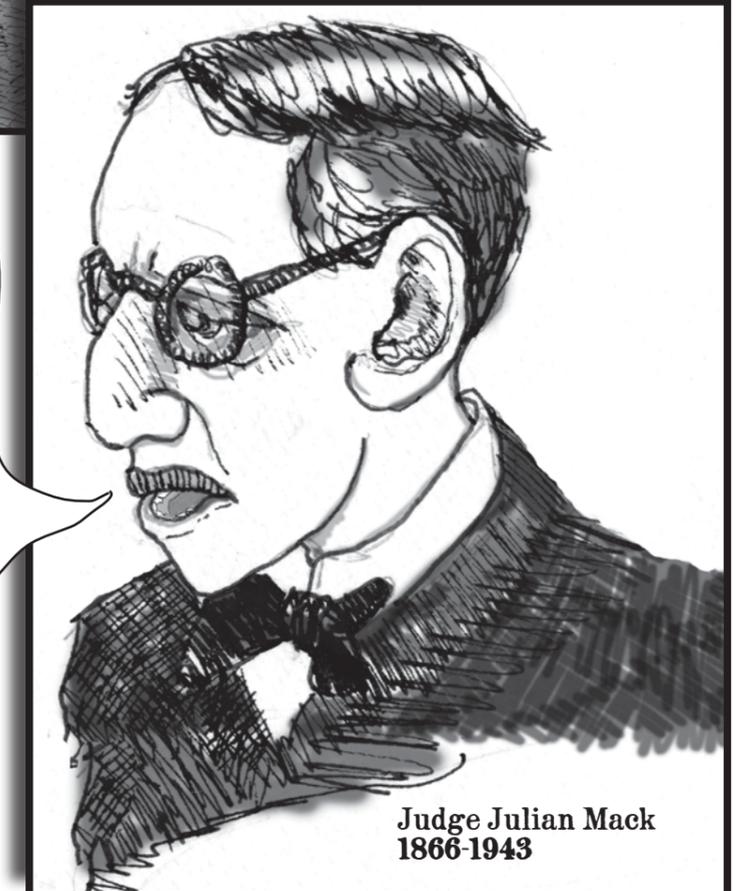
Progressive reformers like Judges Mary Margaret Barteleme and Julian Mack wanted the court to act in the best interest of the child. Sometimes this meant removing the child from their home and parents.



Judge Mary Margaret Barteleme 1866-1954

There are no bad children. There are confused, neglected, love-starved and resentful children and what they need most I try to give them-- understanding and a fresh start in the right direction.

THE CHILD THAT HAS BEGUN TO GO WRONG... IS TO BE TAKEN IN HAND BY THE STATE NOT AS AN ENEMY BUT AS A PROTECTOR, AS THE ULTIMATE GUARDIAN, BECAUSE THE UNWILLINGNESS OR THE INABILITY OF THE NATURAL PARENTS TO GUIDE IT TOWARD GOOD CITIZENSHIP HAS COMPELLED ITS INTERVENTION.



Judge Julian Mack 1866-1943

In spite of the intentions of Progressive child savers like Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, Mary Margaret Barteleme, John Altgeld, Richard Tuthill, and Julian Mack, some criticized their ideas and the actions of the juvenile court. Critics believed that the initiative of The Juvenile Court Act to help dependent children was designed as a way to inculcate immigrants, intrude in the homes of people who were lower class and foist middle class values, hygiene, and judgement, on the masses in order to better control them. Some felt that these ideas were counter to the realities of industrial urban life and the prevailing attitudes toward children of immigrants.



The court act was designed to help children between the ages of 7 and 16.

7 Adolescence 16

CHILD

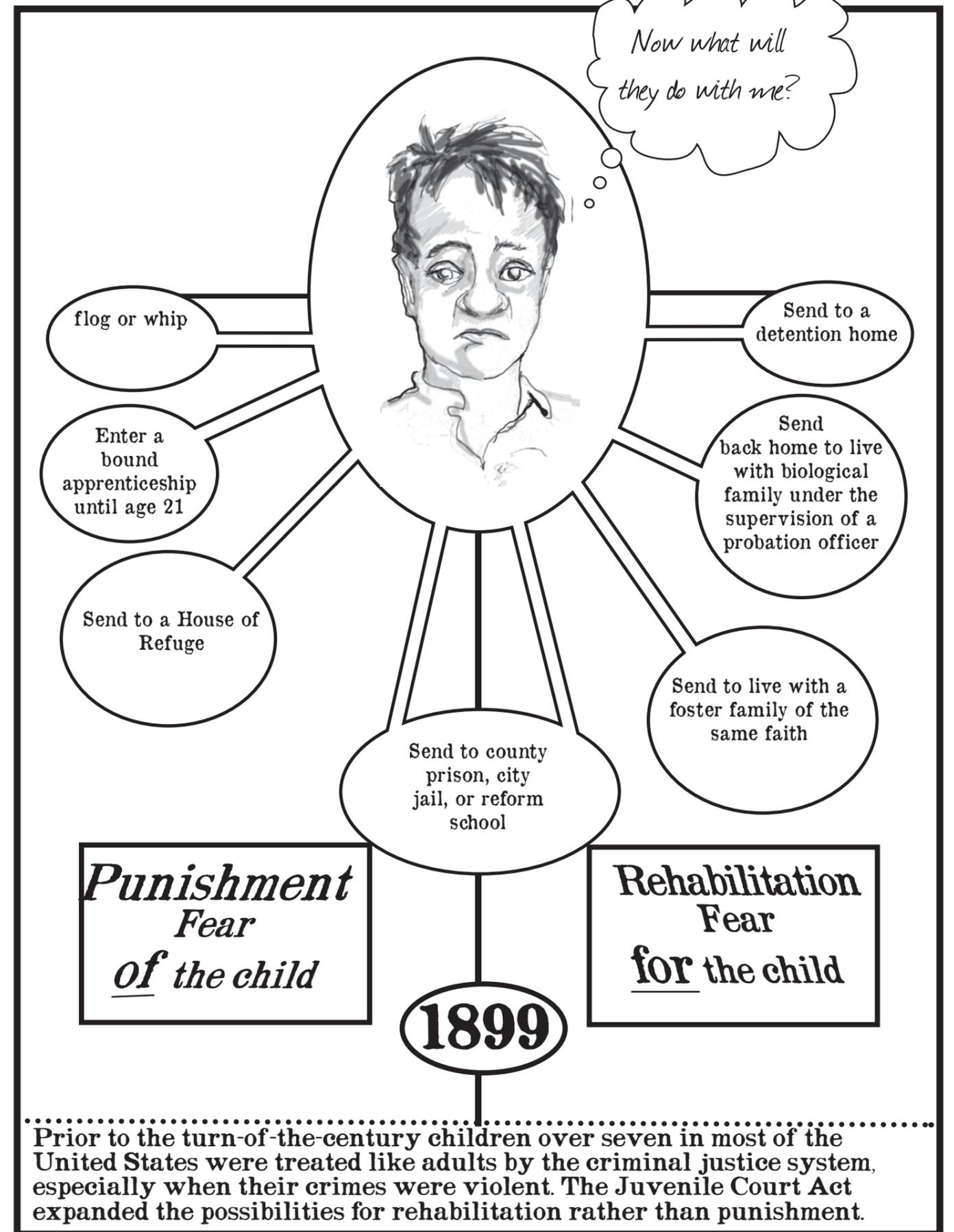


By bracketing off children between the ages of 7 and 16, they helped to herald in the legal recognition of adolescence. Children between these ages were not dealt with as children or adults. It was the belief of the court that juvenile delinquents and children who were neglected, abandoned, or mistreated all had similar needs. All of them deserved a second chance. The courts were focused on the needs of the child, not their criminal guilt or misdeeds.

Adult



Why is it not the duty of the state, instead of asking merely whether a boy or girl has committed a specific offense, to find out what he is physically, mentally, morally, and then if it learns that he is treading the path that leads to criminality, to take him in charge, not so much to punish as to reform, not to degrade but to uplift, not to crush but to develop, not to make him a criminal but a worthy citizen.



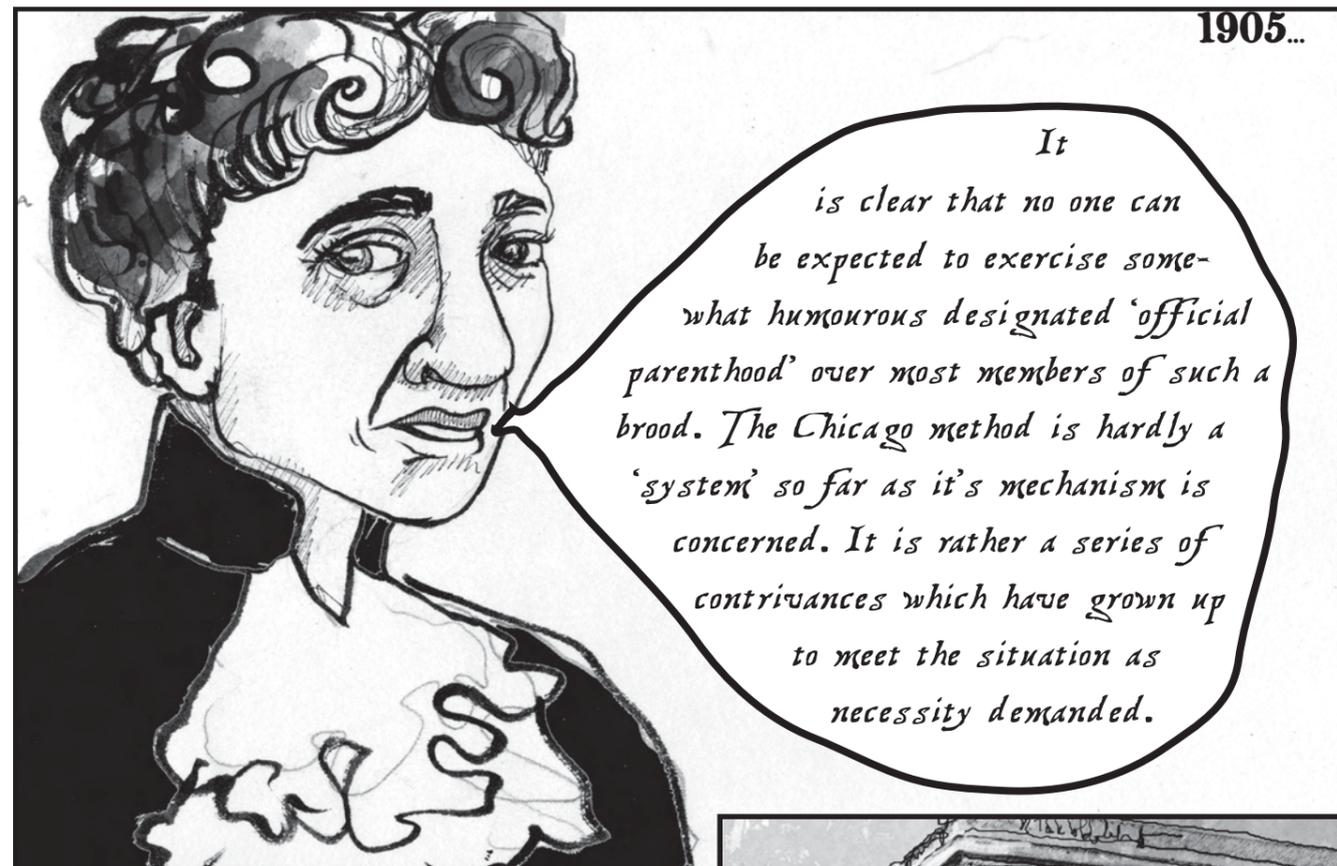


That poor boy. The John Worthy School is overcrowded, poorly equipped, and badly suited. It seems more like a prison than a school.

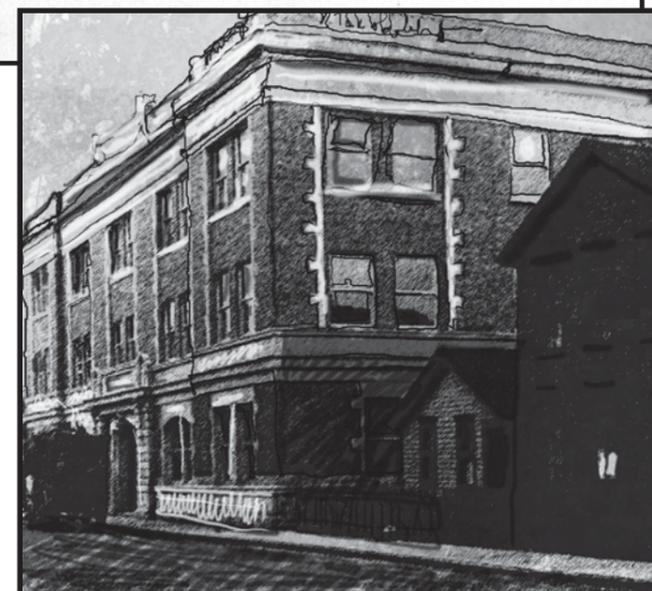


While the Juvenile Court Act of 1899 was very progressive and designed to help children and society as a whole, it had many downsides and, therefore, continued to evolve over time.

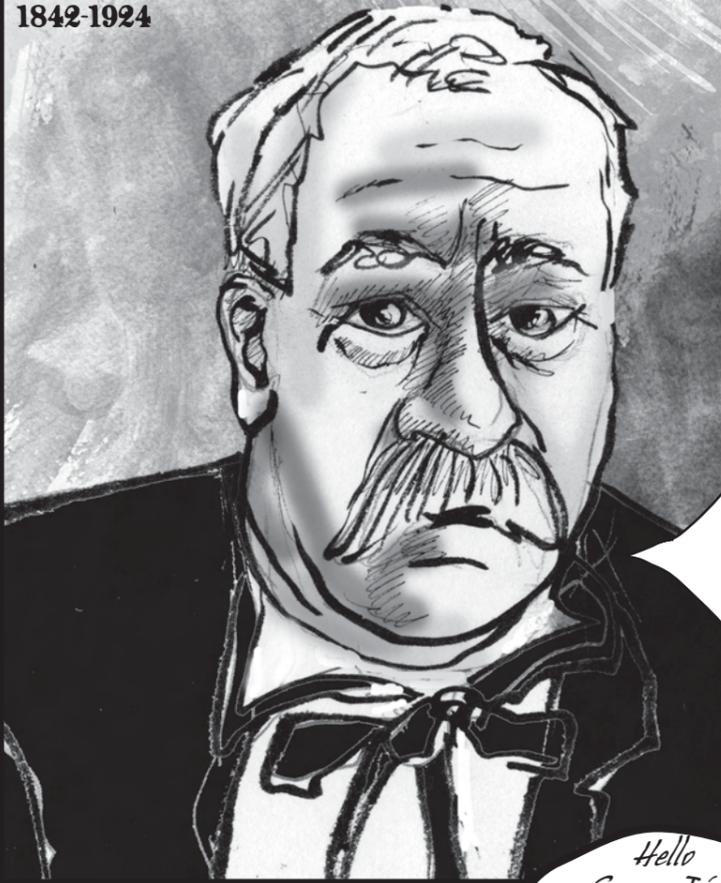
The John Worthy School not only educated boys in the system but it was also used as a place to detain them before their appearance in court. Like many places of its kind, it was poorly equipped and poorly funded. The child savers worked together to establish the Detention Home only two miles from the Cook County court house at 625 West Adams Street. When it was established in 1903, over 2500 children passed through the doors. Much of the funding was raised through philanthropy. The county provided eleven cents per child and a system of shabby transportation that eventually failed completely. Julia Lathrop, a supporter, was also a realist.



In 1907 the Juvenile Court Committee disbanded and reformed under a new name, the Juvenile Protection League. This was the same year that a juvenile court building was built on Ewing Street. Along with a new building, the state began to develop new attitudes about the Juvenile Court. There was a shift away from the use of volunteers. This paved the way for a number of professions based in the juvenile justice system including probation officers, social workers, and medical experts interested in the mental health of children.



Judge James H. Cartwright
1842-1924



Probation officers were a major component of the juvenile court. The court had the sole power to appoint, remove, and supervise the probation officers. This was decided by Supreme Court Judge Cartwright in *Witter vs. County Commissioners* after a lengthy and bitter disagreement.

Probation officers are part of the judicial branch. They are assistants to the juvenile court judges.

Probation officers helped the judge to keep children that came before the court out of prison.

Hello Sean, I just wanted to visit with you for a few minutes and see how your week has been. Would that be acceptable?

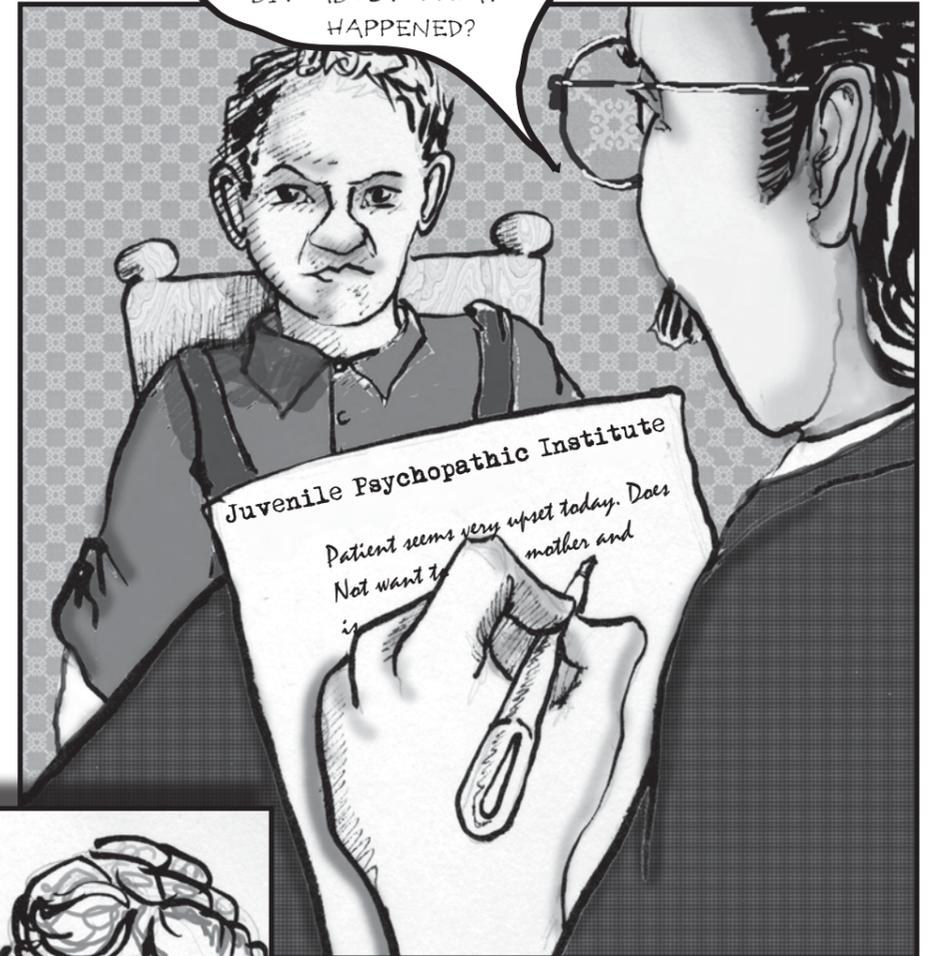


Alzina Parsons Stevens was a Hull-House resident and the first probation officer of the Cook County Juvenile Court Committee.



Juvenile Court Judges felt they needed the help of others to truly understand and "help" the children who appeared before them. In 1909 with support from Ethel Sturges Dummer, William Healy, a neurologist in training, founded the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute. The Institute was created not only to study delinquency but also to treat it. Initially the Institute was privately funded by Dummer. By 1917 the juvenile court assumed the burden of funding the institute which the state rolled into the Department of Public Welfare.

So son, it seems like things have been tough at home these days... can you tell me a little bit about what happened?



Juvenile Psychopathic Institute

Patient seems very upset today. Does not want to see mother and is



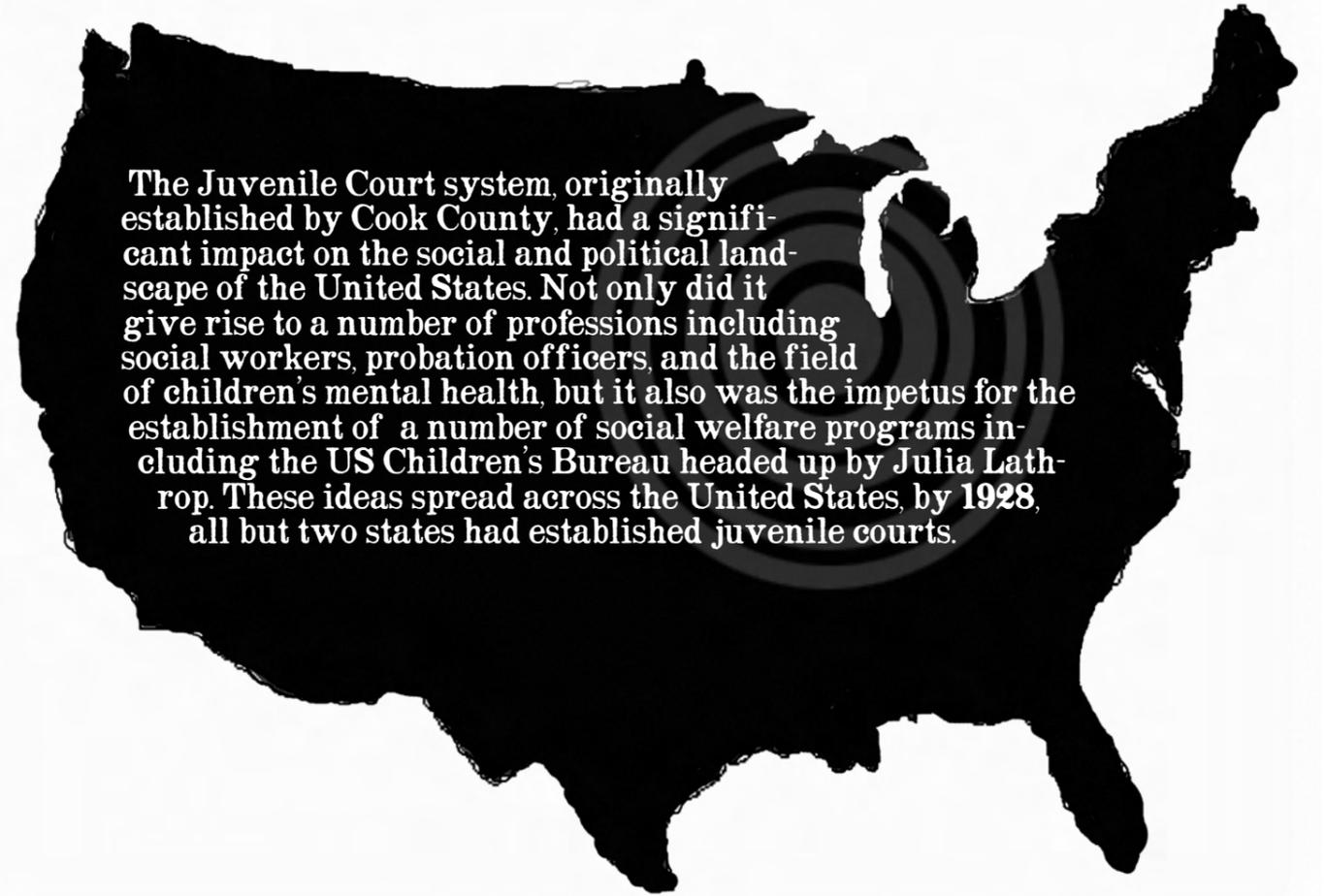
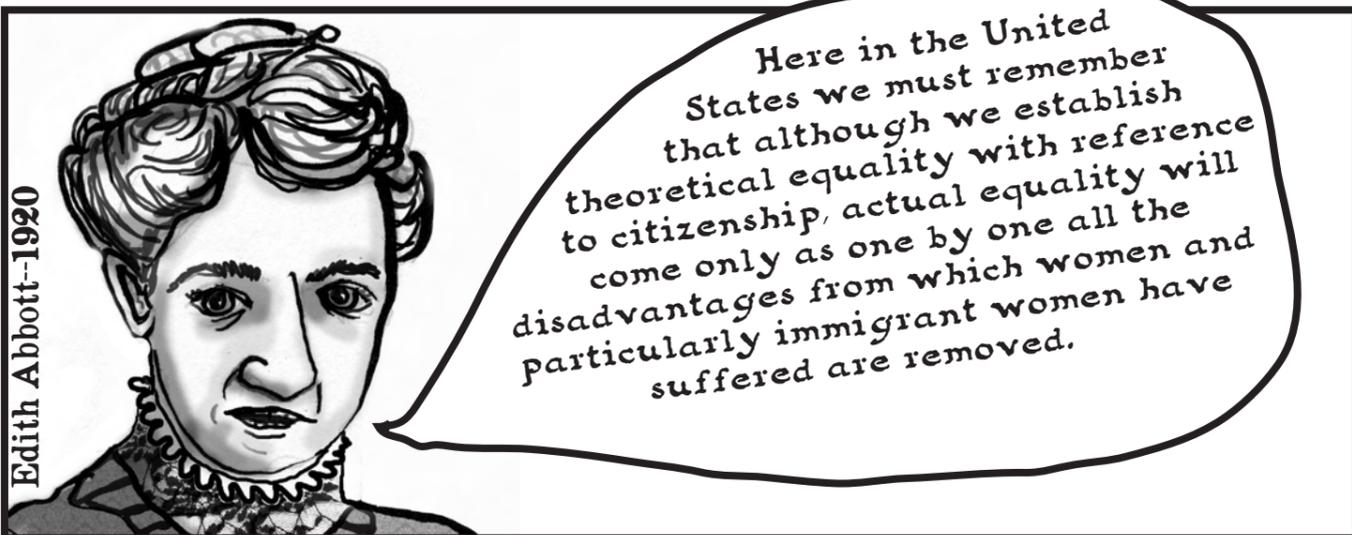
Sophonisba Breckinridge*

Edith Abbott

Sophonisba Brekinridge and Edith Abbott, both residents of Hull House, helped to professionalize the field of social work. They made a link between child welfare and juvenile justice and helped to found The Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. In 1912, Breckinridge published *The Delinquent Child and the Home*. The Juvenile Court judge relied on people like Brekinridge and Abbott as well as probation officers and doctors to learn about the whole child and their individual circumstances.

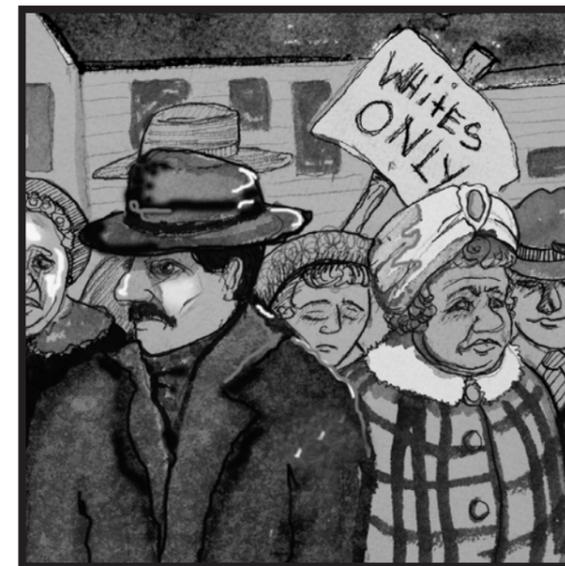
*sometimes spelled Brekenridge

The Court spawned new professions and a series of programs aimed to improve public welfare. In 1911, reformers helped to pass the Mothers' Pension Act, which aided fit but poor parents keep their children from being placed in foster care or orphanages. This was an amendment to the Juvenile Court Act. The amendment, championed by women like Breckinridge and Abbott, focused on the economic vulnerability of women. It sought to promote the acceptance of the single mother and value her contributions to society. One of the difficulties for women who wanted to qualify for assistance through the program was that they had to be a U.S. citizen. The women of Hull-House, who worked with immigrant families all across the city, saw the impact of this rule first hand



The Juvenile Court system, originally established by Cook County, had a significant impact on the social and political landscape of the United States. Not only did it give rise to a number of professions including social workers, probation officers, and the field of children's mental health, but it also was the impetus for the establishment of a number of social welfare programs including the US Children's Bureau headed up by Julia Lathrop. These ideas spread across the United States, by 1928, all but two states had established juvenile courts.

Like the juvenile justice system, which was full of conflicts and tensions by the late 1920s, Chicago's political and social landscape was also changing.





Between 1916 and 1929, more than 75,000 African Americans moved from the South to Chicago to take advantage of the industrial boom that took place after World War I. There was also a large migration of Southern whites to Chicago. While the meatpacking industry and the stockyards needed workers, the rest of the city was unprepared for such a large influx.



In 1919, there was a race riot in Chicago that left almost 40 people dead and over 500 with injuries. The fight was fueled by the tension brewing in neighborhoods on the South Side near the stockyards between newly migrated African Americans and the ethnic Irish men and women who had immigrated only decades earlier.

Walter White, 1919



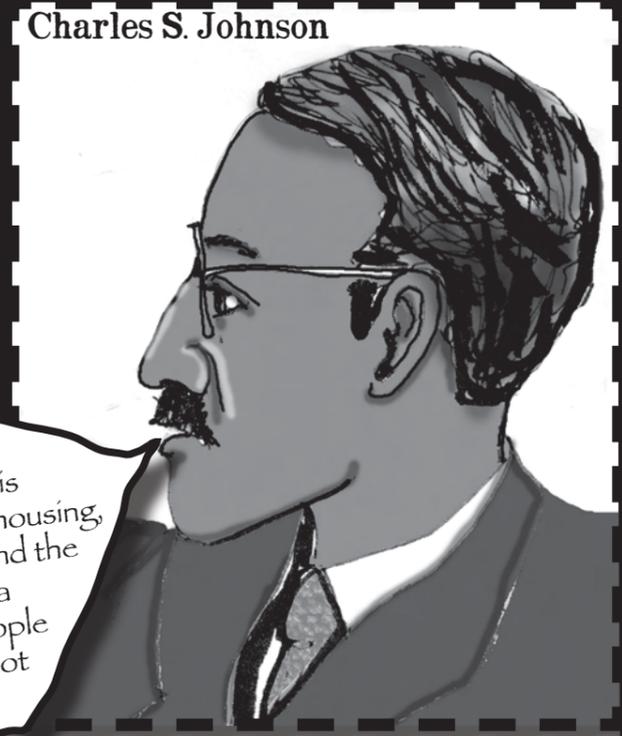
AS IS USUALLY THE CASE, THE NEGRO IS MADE TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF IT ALL--TO BE "THE SCAPE-GOAT." A BACKGROUND OF STRAINED RACE RELATIONS BROUGHT TO A HEAD MORE RAPIDLY THROUGH POLITICAL CORRUPTION, ECONOMIC COMPETITION AND CLASHES DUE TO THE OVERFLOW OF THE GREATLY INCREASED COLORED POPULATION INTO SECTIONS OUTSIDE OF THE SO-CALLED "BLACK BELT," EMBRACING THE SECOND AND THIRD WARD, ALL OF THESE CONTRIBUTED, AIDED BY MAGNIFYING OF NEGRO CRIME BY NEWSPAPERS, TO THE FORMATION OF A SITUATION WHERE ONLY A SPARK WAS NEEDED TO IGNITE THE FLAMES OF RACIAL ANTAGONISM.

The riots were an outcome of much bigger problems for African Americans in Chicago.



Mary McDowell

The race riots ... brought to the consciousness of thoughtful, unprejudiced citizens the fact that it is not possible to have a well-governed city with a segregated group within its boundaries.



Charles S. Johnson

Our report finds that in Chicago there is anti-negro discrimination in housing, employment, labor unions and the court. The press plays a major role in prejudicing people against negroes. Police do not treat blacks fairly.

Police, most of whom were Irish, played a huge role in how juveniles were treated and surveilled. Certain neighborhoods such as the Near West Side, where

The Hull House was located, were home to a many African Americans, Jewish people, and Italians. Between 1928, and 1930, the delinquency rate for the city as a whole was 42 per 1000 youths. In the Near West Side the rate was 73 per 1000. In the "Black Belt" of Chicago the rate was 80 per 1000. In spite of this higher number, were very similar to crimes committed by young people throughout all of Chicago. Yet, police were more likely to send African American children to the Juvenile Detention Home which was opened in 1923. By 1930 African Americans were 6.9% of the population in Chicago but 21.3% of the boys seen in Juvenile Court. Unfortunately, this trend of disproportionate minority contact has continued to be a problem in the juvenile justice system.*

*(Wolcott, D. (2005) Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America 1890-1940)

1924 was a pivotal year for the Juvenile Court. Jane Addams chaired the Citizens Anniversary Committee to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Juvenile Court and to reignite public interest in the ideals of the child-saving movement. Unfortunately this followed on the heels of the trial of the century...

Richard Loeb, 18, and Nathan Leopold, 19, two young men from wealthy families, plotted, kid-napped, and killed Bobby Franks, 14, with a chisel. Then they poured acid on his body and stuffed it in a culvert drain in the marshes. Later they asked his parents for a ransom. They were caught when Leopold's eyeglasses were discovered near the body.

Richard Loeb



Clarence Darrow's summation for the defense lasted over 12 hours. He persuaded the judge to give the boys long prison sentences instead of death. Loeb was killed in prison and Leopold was released in 1958. After such a horrific trial, the public was not sympathetic toward the cause of juvenile justice. In spite of this a conference was planned by the Citizens Anniversary Committee around issues of the Juvenile Court.

You would be dealing a staggering blow to all that has been done in the city of Chicago in the last 20 years for the protection of infancy and childhood and youth.



Some early supporters and proponents were beleaguered. William Healy, who had testified in the Loeb and Leopold trial, agreed to give a paper but was worried about how his opinion might affect the tone of the conference.



Healy did speak at the conference and so did Mariam Van Waters, a rising star among the second generation of reformers who were concerned with the justice system. Van Waters had risen to become the referee of the Los Angeles Court. Her work with women and girls would become famous in the 20th century.

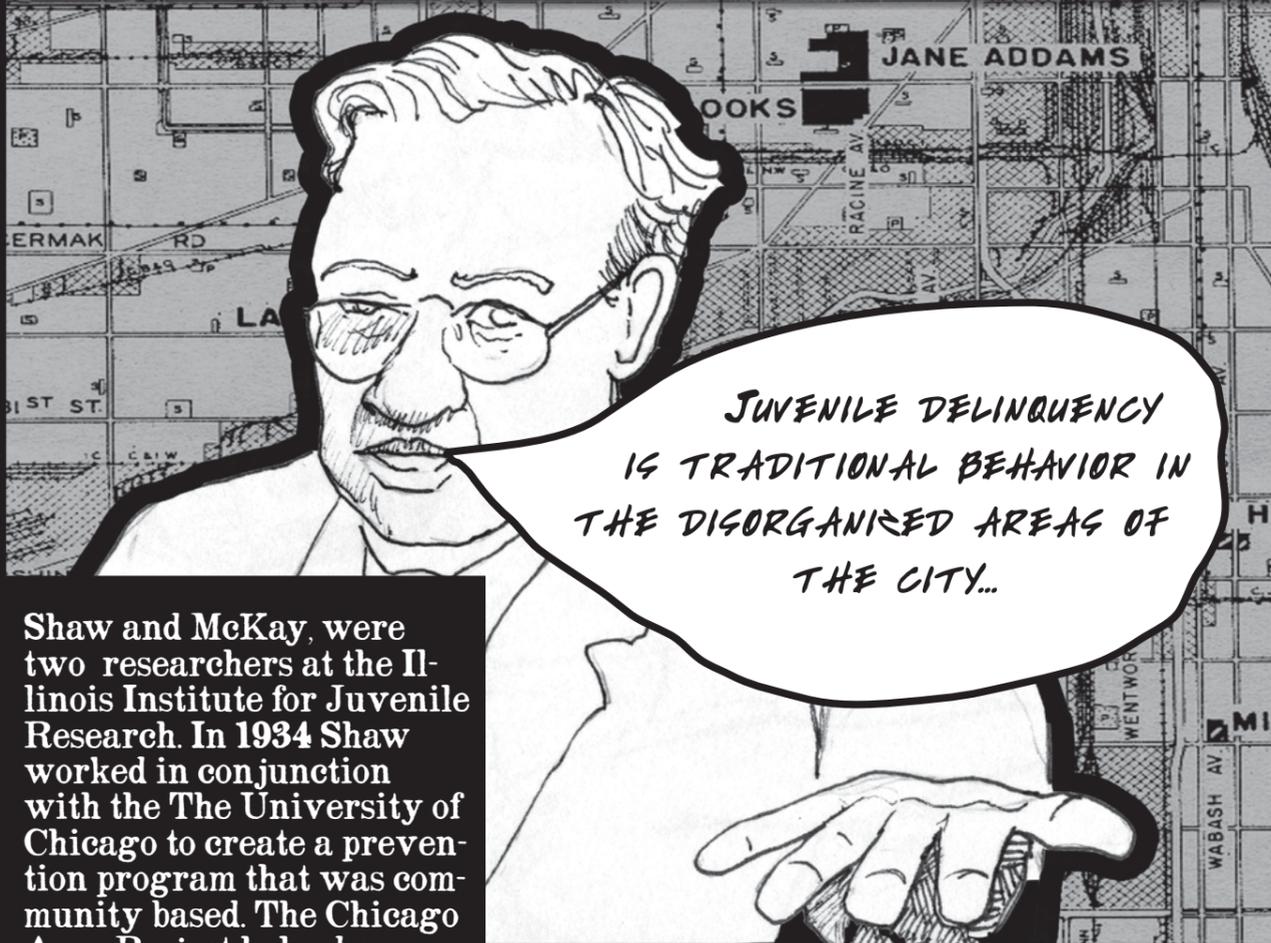
*It is the only force that can be substituted legally for weakening parental control... The court must continue to play a central role in the policing of the child. Local communities have to be more involved with their children! We must have committed professionals that can communicate with children in order to keep the juvenile court machinery from stamping out the juvenile court ideas!**



On the 25th anniversary of the Juvenile Court Act, many Progressives felt that while the creation of the court was a victory for the child savers, the court as a whole was overburdened and bureaucratic.

* paraphrased from Tanenhaus, D. (2004). Juvenile Justice in the Making. Oxford University Press.

A second wave of reformers sought solutions outside of the court to the problem of juvenile crime and delinquency.



Clifford Shaw

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IS TRADITIONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE DISORGANIZED AREAS OF THE CITY...

Shaw and McKay were two researchers at the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research. In 1934 Shaw worked in conjunction with the The University of Chicago to create a prevention program that was community based. The Chicago Area Project helped communities organize to create recreation opportunities for young people, clean up neighborhoods and empower and train street workers from the community to work directly with youth who lived in the area.

Henry D. McKay



IT IS CLEARLY PLACE NOT RACE THAT PRODUCES HIGH RATES OF CRIME.



Jane Addams 1860-1935

1935 signaled the end of an era, both for the Progressive child savers, Hull-House, and the Juvenile Court. Jane Addams passed away in 1935 just four years after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. She was the first American woman to receive this award. By the 1930s, attitudes toward juvenile crime had become more punitive across the United States. The Illinois Juvenile Court maintained concurrent jurisdiction with the regular criminal court. During the previous decade, the State of Illinois began to prosecute more and more juveniles as adults. However, the tension between the Juvenile Court and the Illinois Attorney General eventually was appeased when a series of cases came before the Supreme Court which finally set clear boundaries for the juvenile justice system.

On February 23, 1935, Susie Lattimore changed history.



Lattimore, who was fifteen, went out to a local tavern. She had a few drinks and fatally stabbed another patron in the tavern.

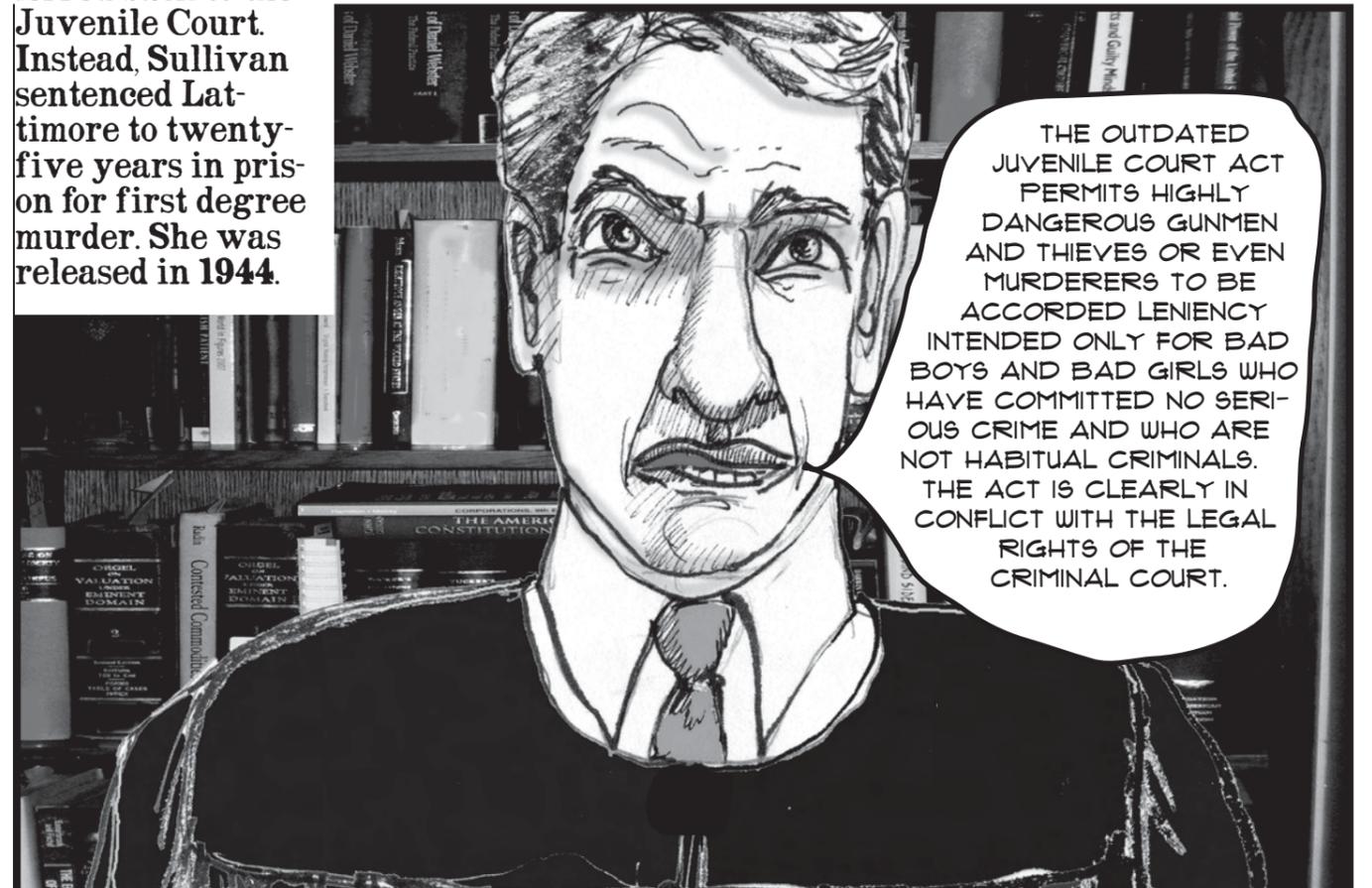


I didn't mean to kill her... I didn't even know she was hurt bad when I left the tavern. I didn't know she was even dead until the police came to my house.

Lattimore was taken into custody and sent before the Juvenile Court. Shortly afterward she was examined by a psychologist from the Institute for Juvenile Research. The Juvenile Court ignored the opinion of the psychologist and transferred her to the criminal court. She pleaded not guilty and waived her right to a trial by a jury of her peers. The judge, Chief Justice Dennis Sullivan, wanted nothing more than to restrict the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. Lattimore's public defender wanted her case transferred back to the Juvenile Court. Instead, Sullivan sentenced Lattimore to twenty-five years in prison for first degree murder. She was released in 1944.



She is a high grade mental defective. Mentally she is ten years and one month old. She should be sent to Dixon State Hospital for treatment. Clearly she needs help.



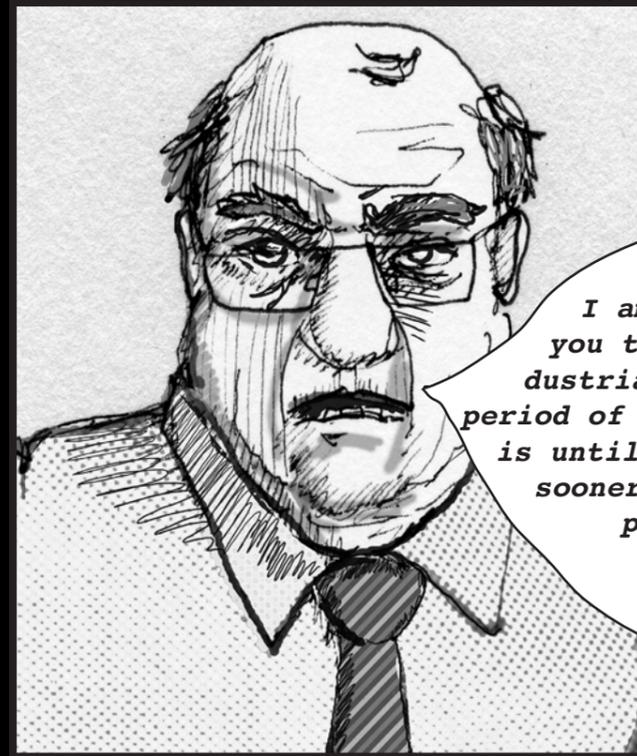
THE OUTDATED JUVENILE COURT ACT PERMITS HIGHLY DANGEROUS GUNMEN AND THIEVES OR EVEN MURDERERS TO BE ACCORDED LENIENCY INTENDED ONLY FOR BAD BOYS AND BAD GIRLS WHO HAVE COMMITTED NO SERIOUS CRIME AND WHO ARE NOT HABITUAL CRIMINALS. THE ACT IS CLEARLY IN CONFLICT WITH THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE CRIMINAL COURT.

As a result of her case, the state's attorney general gained the power to prosecute any child over the age of ten and sentence them to an adult correctional facility.

1899 Brown Deer Rd ELY 52227 848-3290
 COLLUM Chris 1520 Ranmar Ct 643-5532
 S 520 N Oliphant WSHGTN 52353 653-7036
 COLMAN Dennis & Sharon 615 S 7th Av 358-7044
 COLON R 627-4371
 Ann L DDS 803 E Market St
 CONNORS-BOE Gary & Marjorie
 4014 Lakeview Dr SW
 CONRAD Cameron & Chelsea Nizzi 406 C Av
 CDR RP 52404 632-1778
 KLNA 52247 656-3207
 52240 339-1518
 339-0303
 33-7659
 22-4032
 88-7249
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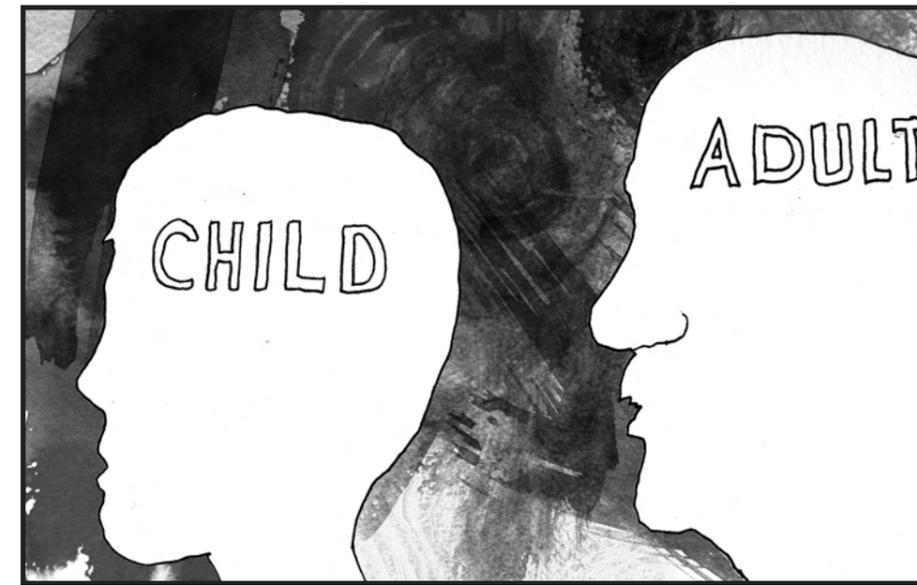
Mrs. Gault
 Judge Mc Gee has set Monday
 June 15, 1964 at 11:00 AM
 as the date and time for
 further Hearings on Gerald's
 delinquency.
 IS/Flagg

On June 15th, Gerald's family, Ronald Lewis and his Father, the two probation officers and the judge were present for the Habeas Corpus proceeding. Mrs. Cook was not present. Gerald was charged with "lewd phone calls" in a referral report filed by the probation officers.



Gerald,
 I am committing you to the State Industrial School for the period of your minority, that is until you are 21, unless sooner discharged by due process of law.

By 1967 Gault's appeals had made it all the way to the US Supreme Court. The court found that juveniles were entitled to due process under the law. In Gerald Gault's case he had been denied the right to an attorney, had not been formally notified of the charges against him, had not been informed of his right against self-incrimination, and had no opportunity to confront his accusers.



Gault signaled the end of the traditional Juvenile Court. Essentially it became more and more difficult to distinguish the juvenile court from the regular criminal court. The impact of Gault affected the juvenile court in Illinois. In 1965 the state overhauled the original act written in 1899. The 1965 Act made the court more adversarial by introducing public defenders, changing the role of the judge, and by

giving the state's Attorney General the right to transfer any child over the age of 13 instead of 10 to adult court. As time passed the states tried harder and harder to separate children who were neglected and abused, from status offenders, and finally from

Juvenile courts in urban areas are faced with many teenagers whose conduct cannot be ignored because it poses a significant threat to the security of the public, and who, as a group, elude the rehabilitative capabilities of the court. For many youth the principal function that the court is serving ... is temporary incapacitation of children whose conduct threatens society.
 But we cannot let the media mythologize juvenile crime. Juvenile arrests have declined throughout the United States--The idea that our children are going to hell and taking the communities of this country with them is the most pernicious and dangerous of myths.*



Judge William S. White, the 2nd African American Juvenile Court Judge for Illinois. (1914-2004)

The 75th anniversary of the court came and went with little fanfare, but proponents were still making a case for the necessity of the court and for helping children.

*combined quote from two different places



The Illinois General Assembly said goodbye to the 1970s with the passage of the Illinois Habitual Juvenile Offender Act, which declared that juveniles convicted of a third serious felony would automatically be committed to the Department of Corrections. The 1980s widened the school-to-prison pipeline with harsher sentencing, despite the fact that juvenile crime had continued to decline. From 1980 to 1982, the number of juveniles sentenced to juvenile correctional institutions doubled. In the 1990s juveniles received much harsher treatment for weapons, fighting, gang activity and drugs than they had in the past, especially if they already had a felony record. These policies disproportionately targeted immigrants, young men, and youth of color, especially African Americans. In 1995 James Q. Wilson and John DiIulio created the myth of the young amoral super-predator. They predicted that by 2000 there would be a huge escalation in the number of violent juveniles. Luckily this never came to pass, but the media exploited these myths and focused on a series of violent crimes committed by children.

In 1994 the Cook County Juvenile Court was reorganized into three distinct divisions. The number of juvenile court judges was increased and the Cook County Juvenile Detention Home became the largest juvenile detention facility in the world. Most of the youth held are young men of color. In 1999 as the court turned 100 the new reorganization gave some supporters a sense of hope. In spite of this the State the Juvenile Justice Reform Act. One of the main parts of the act was that decisions did not have to be made in the best interest of the minor. This flew in the face against everything the original supporters of the 1899 Juvenile Court Act fought so hard to gain.



The juvenile justice system in Illinois still has a number of problems; in spite of this supporters of the court have made a great deal of progress and have in many ways returned to the original vision of the court held by Jane Addams and the other progressive women and men of the early 20th century. In 2010 Illinois passed three new laws focused on helping children involved with the juvenile justice system. Redeploy Illinois gives incentives to counties to keep youth out of the juvenile correctional system and instead find ways to help delinquent youth remain in their communities. A new law has also been passed to help juveniles with misdemeanor records expunge them automatically through a hearing process when they turn 18. Finally, young people who are under the age of 17 now fall under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court if they have committed a misdemeanor. All of these reforms point to a child-centered approach that is less expensive for the state and less burdensome for the system as a whole.

Steps to Reform

Hold the media accountable for the stories and images they produce related to juvenile crime, delinquency and reform.

Join a national youth advocacy organization and lobby for reform in your state.

Contribute an opinion editorial to your local paper to highlight issues around continued reform for juvenile justice, child poverty, education, welfare, substance abuse, mental health care, and disproportionate minority contact.

Schedule a tour or visit your local juvenile justice detention center, training school, youth shelter, or juvenile court.

Lobby for appropriate aftercare opportunities for juveniles who have been in the juvenile justice system.

Support community-based alternatives to detention.

Demand that everyone is treated fairly and with humanity when they come into contact with the justice system regardless of race, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, and physical and/or mental condition.

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Time Line of Important Events for the History of Juvenile Justice Reform in Illinois

1899
Juvenile Justice Act
Passed in Illinois

1909
Juvenile
Psychopathic
Institute opens

1917
Department of Public
Welfare created by state

1919
Chicago Race Riot

1907
Juvenile Protection
League created and the
Juvenile Court Building is
opened

1911
Mothers' Pension
Act Passed

1924
25th Anniversary of
Juvenile Court

1926
People v. Fitzgerald

1931
People v. Bruno

1934
Chicago Area
Project

1935
Jane Addams dies

1935
People v. Lattimore

1965
Illinois Juvenile Court Act

1961
Department of
Public Welfare
abolished and re-
placed with the De-
partment of Mental
Health

Kent V.
United
States

1967
re. Gault

1970
re. Winship

1974
75th Anniversary of Juvenile
Court Act

1971
War on Drugs begins

1982
Illinois Habitual
Juvenile Offender
Act

1989
Supreme Court
upholds death
penalty for chil-
dren over the
age of 16

1994
Cook County
Juvenile Court
Reorganized into
3 branches

1995
Creation of
super-predator
myth

2005
The U.S. Supreme
Court outlawed
the execution of
juveniles

2010
Illinois Redeploy
Public Act 95-10310
Public Act 96-0707

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