

Chapter Ten

A Comprehensive Education Program

While local history has focused on the successes at the high school where Faust was principal, and to a lesser degree the elementary schooling, these were not the only educational programs initiated by the WRA at the Shelter. The WRA saw education as a comprehensive program. It was not limited to elementary and secondary schooling. It extended to vocational training, language training, kindergarten, scouting, and what is now called pre-school. The refugees were fortunate that their resumption of schooling, so long denied, was administered by government officials who believed education was a life-long, comprehensive process.

The WRA also saw education as a major responsibility to those individuals who were forced to reside in their facilities. Whether it was seen as compensation for their condition of internment or an extension of New Deal progressivism was unclear. Nevertheless, the WRA viewed education as not just an obligation but a tool. It was through education the Japanese Americans and Japanese resident aliens were to remedy the perceived lack of patriotism which was one of the rationalizations for their internment. It was through education that refugees living at Fort Ontario were improving themselves either to return and help rebuild Europe or to become American citizens.

English Language Training

While in Oswego facilitating the refugee children's admission into Oswego's schools, Ade worked with the college to provide English language training for those

students. This training conducted through Oswego State was part of a “school routine workshop.” The student newspaper *Oswegonian*, described the training in an October 9, 1944 edition. It read, “The teaching of the American language and school routine to the refugee children at Fort Ontario...was in session from August 15 to September 8.” It was apparent that Ade planned for rudimentary training to take place before school began with the bulk of English language training taking place in the individual classrooms of the elementary and secondary schools. As indicated in the *Six Week Report*, “The pupils received preliminary instruction in English before the school term began.”¹

The adult English language training had no pre-existing institutional infrastructure to fall back on. Nevertheless, while the refugees were living at the Shelter they could be trained in English. Ade’s itinerary in Albany was an indication of what he conceived as the full scope of educational programs to be offered at the Shelter. After resolving the time-sensitive schooling issues of the elementary and secondary refugee students the most important educational need was English instruction. In the memo Ade described to Smart how the program could wait. He wrote, “The adult English program will be postponed until after September 5, and it is hoped that Miss Caroline Whipple, State Director of English Teaching at Albany, and others will be able to help in initiating and developing the adult English language program.”² Some refugees had limited English proficiency, a skill which contributed to their selection for emigration by Allied representatives in Italy, yet even the most proficient were in need of additional training.

Ade had developed the policy regarding educational programs at the Japanese American internment camps. At the internment centers a minority of the residents faced

similar language challenges. Due to restrictions on Japanese immigration enforced for more than three decades, all of the internees were either native-born Japanese Americans or long-term resident aliens. Due to discrimination and the associated isolation, most of the Japanese resident aliens had not acquired a high level of English proficiency, they comprised about one-third of the internment camp population.

English training was the educational program which involved the largest number of refugees, it was also the easiest program to create. Solid relationships with the local educational officials had been forged in the process of admitting the refugee children to Oswego's schools. By the time it came to create an English language program, Smart had worked extensively with Riley. More importantly, because the program only needed the nominal approval of the Superintendent and did not utilize public school facilities in any way, there were not the political intrigues associated with garnering public and political support for the program's creation.

Smart had to keep the creation of this program outside normal political channels for other reasons. He could not involve the Advisory Committee to politically motivate the Oswego community because the mere fact of the refugees learning English might provoke a political controversy. Whereas it could be rationalized that the refugees would need to be retrained vocationally to prepare them to live in post-war Europe, similar logic could not be applied to justify English training. In essence, if these people were not going to remain in America, why did they have to learn English? Wisely, Smart kept such debates within the Shelter. The only outside involvement beside that solicited by Ade from Albany was when Smart asked Riley to recommend local individuals to offer the

instruction which would take place in facilities inside the Shelter. Riley recommended local individuals, many of them substitute teachers in the school district, who could work days and evenings offering language instruction.

Unlike the Shelter's other educational programs the English language program was initiated by a WRA specialist. A summary of the program published December 4, 1944, *Report on Fort Ontario Refugee Shelter Language Center*, described the process where Dr. Golda VanBuskirk, a WRA language consultant, established a language training program in Oswego. The report read: "Her [Miss VanBuskirk] assignment was to organize and maintain an English school for the adult refugees. After a week of preliminary negotiations with city school officials, the State Department of Education, and the Coordinating Committee the school was opened on October 16 with an enrollment of something over five hundred. Twelve part-time teachers (one full time) were hired from the recommended list submitted by Mr. Riley, Superintendent of Oswego public schools [sic]. Some of these teachers are on his substitute list. Others are at present employed in the elementary or the high school of the city. Another teacher has been employed also to take care of the advanced classes which Miss Van Buskirk taught as long as she was directing the school."³ The refugees were divided into four groups based upon their English language proficiency. VanBuskirk stated that it was difficult to assess how many refugees were actually enrolled in the program; she wrote, "There are five hundred twelve students enrolled in the school but the class rolls show a total of around five hundred fifty because some zealous students take two or three classes a day."⁴

One indication of the effort put forth by WRA officials to offer the refugees the

best training possible was evident in VanBuskirk's evaluation of the instructional materials. She wrote: "The school is unusually well equipped with teaching materials—texts, supplementary reading materials, and visual and auditory aids, dictionaries, English exercise books, speech and accent books, a complete set of linguaphone records, tablets, notebooks, and pencils have been provided by the Coordinating Committee."⁵ Most English language materials were provided by one of the charities which formed the Coordinating Committee. The Committee on Refugee Education proved to be an invaluable resource in what could have otherwise become an expensive and unwieldy program.

The English language training at the Shelter was not limited to the standard instructional approaches employed in more traditional programs. College professors donated their time to use English as a basis for cultural training. One example was described, "Each Tuesday evening forum discussions are held under the leadership of Dr. Wells, Professor of English at Oswego State Teachers College. Speakers for the evening are chosen by his committee on cultural development."⁶

Even Smart utilized the English training to improve communications between him and the refugees. VanBuskirk described Smart's effort: "Mr. Smart, Shelter Director, undertook to answer questions of the residents about problems affecting their life at the Shelter."⁷ Other WRA and Shelter officials participated in this effort to provide practical exercises which complement the refugees' language instruction, "The average attendance at these Tuesday and Friday meeting runs about sixty."⁸

Though most of the local residents employed as language instructors were not

professionally trained they approached their responsibilities with enthusiasm. VanBuskirk described how the teachers attempted to integrate their instruction with practical experience around the community. She wrote: “Some effort has been made also to teach English through activities in the city of Oswego— restaurants, stores, etc.— but this is difficult because of the size of most of the classes. Many of the teachers bring outside speakers to their classes in order to give the students interesting contacts with cultured Americans.”⁹ When former refugees recalled what impressed them most about Oswego and its people, they often mentioned the language teachers in concert with the professional educators they encountered at the high school and the various elementary schools.

The English language instruction demonstrated a quality in the Shelter’s adults which those teaching their children also discovered. The refugees were eager to learn. VanBuskirk wrote: “Without a doubt the students of the school are learning English much faster than is usual in such schools. Beginning students can now carry on a simple conversation in English after only six weeks in school. Advanced students show marked improvement in accent and in vocabulary range.”¹⁰ VanBuskirk described the interaction between learning and morale generally, and learning English and its impact specifically. VanBuskirk continued: “They are very proud of their own progress. Without a doubt the best justification for the school; however, is its morale value. While the people feel their need for cultural activity, they also recognize an even greater need for psychological rehabilitation. School routines, friendly contacts, and a chance to work and think cooperatively with others all serve to integrate emotionally unbalanced personalities. If for no other reason, the school should be continued as long as possible in order to carry

on this process of stabilization.”¹¹ By “emotionally unbalanced,” VanBuskirk likely meant the psychological toll events had taken on the refugees, as described by Bondy’s report. English training had an unanticipated impact on the refugees. It increased their understanding of American culture which heightened their desire to participate in the privileges and exercise the rights which Americans enjoy. Initially, this improved morale, but when those rights were denied it fueled the sense of alienation and exclusion.

The Nursery School

As was the case in every other component of the Shelter’s educational program, Ade laid the groundwork with Albany officials for a nursery school at the Shelter. When Ade listed all of his Albany contacts he described what steps he took to create a nursery school. Ade wrote: “With respect to the nursery school program, Dr. Stoddard requested Dr. William E. Young, State Director of Elementary Education in New York; Dr. Ruth Adrus, Chief of the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education and Miss Elizabeth A. Woodward, Adult Education Supervisor, to cooperate with Mrs. Kendrick Foot of Oswego and Mrs. Fuchs, the Refuge Administrative Assistant, in formulating and developing the nursery school program. Dr. Young promised to get the group together within the next ten days, and he has been told that we do not have funds with which to develop the program, and that it will have to be on a voluntary basis.”¹² Among all the educational programs at the Shelter the nursery school had the lowest priority. While other time sensitive programs were created, the Shelter’s youngest children were safe within the cocoon created by the restrictions imposed on their parents.

The creation of a nursery school was for its time an innovation. It was an

indication of the progressive educational philosophies of WRA officials. In this era before the value of pre-school programs had been established, Ade had promoted similar programs when leading Pennsylvania's public schools. Smart, as a former WRA regional director, saw the value in pre-school education as a means of promoting American values and affording free time to parents so that they may pursue training. On a practical level, by virtue of their age the younger children of the Shelter would be better prepared for American schools than the older refugee students.

Creating the nursery school took longer than the other educational programs. Not that the process was more difficult, it simply was not as pressing as were the other programs. Language and vocational training were seen as an elixir for the morale problems emerging among the refugees. A summary written by the Coordinating Committee's last Executive Director read: "As of February 1, a nursery school program was initiated at the Shelter, under the supervision of a professionally trained teacher who was highly recommended by the State Department of Education. Twenty-five children between two and six years of age attend. This program is being financed as part of the English Education Project."¹³ The source of funding, "the English Education Project," was a strong indication as to how significant English language training was for this pre-school program. The February 1st reference as to when the nursery program was initiated is suspect. A December letter to Smart from a rabbi, Dr. Wise, referred to an operational nursery school, and a visitation by Education Department officials who had offered observations of an ongoing program. The first *Six Week Report* read: "A nursery school for about 30 children is being conducted at the Shelter..."¹⁴ Nevertheless, there were no

more official acknowledgments of the nursery school's existence in any summaries after that first report. Smart may have been awaiting Albany's formal approval before officially acknowledging the program.

As was the case with the English language training, the nursery school program produced no substantive controversy. Unlike the English program, however, Albany officials played a more direct role in the program's ultimate approval. Dr. Ruth Andrus, whom Ade had met in Albany, sent an associate to review the Shelter's facilities where the nursery was to be housed. Andrus sent Ade a list of recommendations made by her associate, Miss Reeve, regarding the planned program. The critique offered a specificity not normally associated with a state-wide regulating agency's evaluation of a federal program. Reeve wrote: "The activity rooms in the nursery should be changed to face south. At present they are on the north side near the lake which will be cold and windy in the winter."¹⁵ Smart was working with limited facilities provided by the federal government, in an aged facility on the shore of a lake known for its cold and windy winters, subsequently such a suggestion was impractical. Reeve continued, "There should be congoleum or linoleum on the floor of the activity room."¹⁶ This was not as impractical as moving the nursery school to another facility or even changing rooms, but it appeared to again offer a demeaning level of specificity. Reeve also recommended the installation of a fence demarcating a play area and the installing of playground equipment.

However, some of Reeve's recommendations were programmatic and therefore attainable. She wrote: "The age range of the children (1 ½ - 5 ½) for the two teachers is too great. The younger ones are sometimes over stimulated and the old ones apt to run

wild. It is questionable to have children under 2 in such a set up. The younger and older children should be separated for most activities.”¹⁷ Other reasonable suggestions involved addressing the eating habits of the refugees. There was little doubt that years of flight and hiding had impacted negatively upon the refugees’ dietary practices. Furthermore, it was clear that these children, who were likely denied proper diets during these early, formative years, must be given the highest priority. Such criticism of minute practices might have been appropriate when dealing with privately operated nursery schools. Smart might not have been paying adequate attention to the program, but it was more than likely he was doing the best he could with the resources he had at his disposal. Albany officials were aware of Ade’s background and his intimate relationship with the Shelter’s educational program.

Ade wrote to Adrus and Reeve on November 21, 1944. He was as diplomatic as one might expect. He said, “Director Smart will give serious consideration to each of the recommendations at the earliest practicable time.”¹⁸ Ade then offered cover for Smart. He wrote: “I am not sure at this point just what the limitations are under which Mr. Smart must operate and I am not sure whether he has been able to secure sufficient funds from private agencies to do the many things that he would like to do at the Shelter. I am confident that the nursery school program is high on his priority list and that if it can be done, he and Mr. Berger will know how to find the solutions to the nursery school problems at Oswego.”¹⁹ Ade knew what the limitations there were in Oswego, additionally, as the author of the WRA Education Regulations he knew the fiscal and legal constraints under which Smart operated.

As suggested by Ade, Smart turned to the Coordinating Committee for support.

The nursery school was funded by the Coordinating Committee effective February 1, 1945. The nursery school, like virtually all of the educational programs at the Shelter, was yet another instance where the void between government policy and practical application was filled by their funds secured from the Coordinating Committee. Any delay securing funds from the Coordinating Committee was a product of the deteriorating relations between Smart and Berger, a conflict which ultimately resulted in Berger's resignation.

Like the English training, the nursery school was an educational program which followed the self-contained model first proposed at WRA. Smart knew that these children had, at the very least, to be exposed to English instruction and some form of Americanization, not to mention an effort to ameliorate the impact of having been uprooted and fleeing for their lives during their early, formative years. Though it took longer to establish than any other of the educational programs, except admission to college, like the other educational programs originating at the Shelter, Smart and his associates ultimately accomplished what they had set out to do.

Vocational Education

The problems associated with vocational training were more complex than encountered in any other education program. The refugees were selected as much for their skills as for any other trait with the exception of the mandated preference for families. Many of the refugees had initially avoided capture by Nazis and Fascists because of their stature within their communities. Some were artists, while others were business operators. In most instances, the refugees were talented people. But their talents had to

be retooled. A former business owner who no longer had the capital to start a new enterprise had to learn new skills. An opera singer who had not sung in years and whose age and experiences had made starting at the bottom again impractical, had to learn to do something new. Few of the refugees had vocational skills which were directly transferable to America. What they did possess were the character traits which contributed to their survival. Those traits were resilience, tenacity, and an eagerness to learn.

As with the schooling of the children, the Oswego school board made it clear they would play no role in providing vocational training. One of the few official records which showed this stance of the school board was a letter sent by Riley to Oakley Furney, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education in New York State. Riley wrote, “Our Board of Education has taken the position that no part of the educational program conducted for the refugees should cost the local community anything.”²⁰ He noted that beyond that limitation the school board will work with WRA officials. Riley added, “If we can find the teachers and can operate a suitable program without cost to the Board of Education, I see no reason they would not be willing to cooperate.”²¹

Ade had met in Albany with Dr. Lewis A. Wilson, Deputy Commissioner in Charge of Vocational Education, to create a vocational program at the Shelter. Five days earlier Ade had outlined a comprehensive vocational training program for the Shelter. As was the case with the refugee children, Oswego State filled the void caused by the Oswego school board’s stilted view of their educational responsibilities to the Shelter community. Richard B. Johnson, WRA Vocational Training Supervisor, visited Oswego State to secure the institution’s support for vocational training for the Shelter’s adult

population. Johnson wrote:

... it was my good fortune to have a series of meetings with (a) the President, Dr. Ralph Swetman, and (b) the Director of Industrial Arts Teacher Training, Dr. Gordon Wilbur and Mr. Arthur Hauler, Supervisor of Cadet Teachers.

The purpose of the meetings was to explore ways in which the facilities and staff of the State Teachers College might be made available to the residents of the Emergency Refugee Shelter desiring vocational training within the limits of the College facilities.

Reviewing for Dr. Swetman all aspects of the evolving plan for vocational training at the Shelter, I inquired concerning the availability of college equipment and staff if, when and as a need developed for these services.

Dr. Swetman expressed on behalf of himself and the members of the faculty genuine interest in the Shelter and its program. In a refreshing spirit of understanding and cooperation he placed the facilities of the college entirely at the disposal of WRA.²²

Swetman's unqualified support was in stark contrast to the school board's policies.

However, the college was not the only institution which offered to assist in providing vocational training for the adult refugees.

On August 28, 1944, Swetman received a letter from Samuel Marshall, Technical Director for The American ORT Federation. As indicated on the organization's letterhead in 1944 it was an organization "Devoted To The Creation Of A New Occupational Existence For Refugees And The Masses Of European Jews Through Trade Schools, Farm Colonies [*sic*] Industrial Workshops." Marshall wrote: "Confirming my conversation with you on Thursday, August 24th regarding the use of the shop facilities of the State Normal School for the refugees at Fort Ontario, would you be good enough to let me know as soon as possible whether the arrangements can be considered definite."²³

Swetman wrote Marshall on September 1, 1944: "Confirming our conference of August 24th and in reply to your letter of August 28th, I believe we may proceed with the plans

under discussion concerning our cooperation with the needs of the refugees at Fort Ontario. I shall be happy to see you when you arrive in Oswego next week.”²⁴

Marshall’s request for a confirmation in writing of oral commitments may have been an indication of his disbelief that Swetman was as eager to help as he indicated.

Nevertheless, with the commitment for facilities from the college and the offering of the programmatic experience of ORT, the vocational training program for the Shelter was in good hands.

Myer wrote Smart on September 1, 1944 outlining the educational programs offered at the Shelter as he understood them to be. He wrote: “A program of vocational education for both men and women, involving approximately eight courses for men and three courses for women has been formulated by ORT. This vocational work will be done at no expense to WRA mainly at the Emergency Refugee Shelter. The proposed courses for men are: Machine Shop Practices, Electric Wiring and Installation, Plumbing, Carpentry and Woodworking, Auto Mechanics, Radio Mechanics, Shoemaking and Repairs, and Baking. The courses for women are: Power Sewing Machine Operating, Millinery Design and Hat Making, and Beauty Culture.”²⁵ Myer may have been unaware that many of the training sites were at Oswego State or collaborating with Smart by omitting this detail. If Myer was ignorant of this fact it may have been because Smart only gradually introduced any complicating details to his superiors.

Summer Programs

Though every effort was made to help the refugee children adjust to schooling in Oswego, there were those students from the Shelter who were in need of continued

remediation. Some of the refugee children, many of whom had never been to school before their Oswego experience, needed to attend summer school following their first full year of schooling in America. As was the case with other educational programs, the Coordinating Committee provided the necessary funds while Oswego State provided the facilities.

The Coordinating Committee's final report offered a concise description of the summer programs, it read: "A group of 50 children, from 8 to 11 years, attended summer practice school at the State Teachers College. The salaries of 2 teachers as well as all the materials necessary were paid by the Coordinating Committee. This provided a more disciplined activity for this age group than the group work at the Shelter. It also removed from the Shelter, during the morning hours, the most difficult age group. Children and parents alike enjoyed the children's attendance at State Teachers College. The teachers were most enthusiastic about the children's eagerness to learn. Many parents stated that the attendance in summer school helped the children a great deal to adjust to American life. A few of the children were allowed to move on to the next grade as a result of their summer school activity."²⁶ Swetman's persistent willingness to allow and encourage the college community to assist the cause of the refugees whenever possible was one of the unheralded contributions to the Shelter's existence and ultimate success.

Recreational Programs

As was the case with the Japanese American internment camps, the WRA recognized that a captive population must be kept busy. Chores designed to allow the Shelter to be self-sufficient, language and vocational classes, not to mention familial

responsibilities, had kept active those adults who chose to be busy. The youths of the camp presented a challenge of a different sort. Though they could be pressed to perform menial chores, their days could not be filled with such labor. The experience of the WRA internment camps taught officials that they must provide the children of the camp with organized and constructive activities. There was sufficient artistic talent among the refugee population to produce plays, concerts, recitals and scores of other activities dependent upon those skills. However, the refugees were not all artists, nor those who were possessed the talents and were interested in helping could perform all the time. It would be left to a group of volunteers to meet this need.

The leisure time activities of the refugee children became the focus of a group of religiously-motivated volunteers who had come to Oswego specifically to work with the refugee children. The Coordinating Committee's final report described the program: "During the summer of 1945, a group of 12 workers from the Americans Friends Service Committee resided at the Shelter and provided a planned group work activity program. The financial needs of this program were covered by the National Refugee Service and the Administrative supervision of the program was given by the Coordinating Committee."²⁷ The Quaker volunteers had a profound impact on the children of the Shelter. They lived among them and learned about the refugees with an intimacy not afforded by the limited contact school hours produced.

Shelter Director C.H. Powers wrote to Myer describing the importance of the Quaker volunteers. He wrote: "We believe you will agree that it is important, both from our point of view and from the point of view of the residents, that a sound group-work

program continue at the Shelter. Considerable resident leadership has been developed, but we believe it is still necessary to retain the services of a small number of these skilled workers if the high standard already set is to be maintained. Whatever final disposition may be made of the Shelter and its residents, a proper group-work program would be of immeasurable assistance in maintaining calm and in pressing our program effectively.”²⁸

Former refugee student Manfred recalled the impact the Quaker volunteers had on the youths of the Shelter. Manfred believed the work done by the Quakers was essential and “unheralded.” In fact, one of the women volunteers became a life-long friend of his. Smart and the other WRA officials understood the need for a wide range of educational programs to facilitate development in youths. They were fortunate to have at their disposal volunteers of the character and quality as those who were part of the American Friends Service Committee.

Scouting

Like the summer recreation programs the WRA had learned that a full compliment of educational programs must be offered to its charges. Many, if not all, of the educational policies employed at the Shelter had their roots in the internment camp experience. One of the rationales offered for the relocation of more than 110,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry and Japanese resident aliens was the belief that, for some reason, citizenship had not taken hold in the Japanese American community.

Scouting was viewed by WRA officials as an after-hours educational program which instilled citizenship values. Very early in the life of the Shelter, a Boy Scout troop was formed with the help of a local scout master. Two months after the Shelter was

opened there was a viable Scout Troop operating in Fort Ontario. The Coordinating Committee's final report describing their organization's role in supporting the Shelter's program. The report read: "Scout troops were formed at Fort Ontario comprising of 16 Boy Scouts, 20 Cub Scouts and 14 Girl Scouts. Uniforms for Cub Scout and Boy Scout troops were supplied by the Coordinating Committee and for the most part repaid by the boys who earned this money through paper salvage. The girls met their expenses by a cookie sale. Due to the fact that the Boy Scouts in Oswego were chiefly organized on a church basis, the Boy Scout troop of Fort Ontario could not socially be part of the local troops. They were, however, invited several times by the Minetto Scout troop for hikes and entertainment."²⁹ Though the financial support of the Coordinating Committee was critical to the success of the Scouting program, the time and effort put forth by unselfish local volunteers proved to be invaluable.

Harold Clark was a factory worker at Fitzgibbons Boiler Works in Oswego who lived six miles south of the city along the Oswego River in the village of Minetto. At work he could see the refugee children at play inside the Shelter. Clark recalled what motivated him to form a Scout Troop at the Shelter, in addition to the troop he headed at home in Minetto. Clark said: "They didn't have very much. I thought here's an opportunity though I had a troop of my own. I thought that it would be good for some of the boys of our troop to be leaders there and have the experience. I asked how many would like to get on, and right away I had to do some picking. I got three or four of them to come down with me. We go down on Tuesday night and then on Thursday night we'd have our own meetings. So back and forth we went in my four-door, thirty-five car. They

didn't want us to leave, they'd climb all over the car on the fenders and everything.”³⁰

Short of supplies normally provided by the sponsoring institution, Clark and his refugee Boy Scouts had to improvise projects which were to be the focus of each meeting. Clark continued: “They were eager to have an organization and have someone pay attention to them. So we started right in having games. What impressed me more than anything at the beginning was, even though they couldn't speak only through an interpreter, that we'd play games where they'd have to get down on their hands and knees sometimes. Of course, the floors hadn't been dusted in years, the old army barracks. Before we did anything else outside of the games, why the first thing, they'd raise their hands, through the interpreter they'd want permission to wash their hands, which was more than our boys. They'd just rub their hands on their pants. These fellows no, they had to go wash their hands. It took a little time. They were very clean.”³¹ Clark, who was accustomed to the behavior of American children, was surprised by the conduct of the refugee youths. Like so many people in the Oswego community Clark had yet to comprehend the paradox of destitute refugees who had at one time in their lives been part of the upper class of their respective communities.

According to Clark, the Coordinating Committee did help the boys buy uniforms, but it was a gradual process. Clark reflected that the program was a success. He said: “So scouting, although probably they'd heard of it, was a new experience for them. Well, it took a little while, but eventually they got a neckerchief, maybe a shirt and a cap. After a while they got a belt and a pair of pants. As you see by the picture here they're in full uniform. We had three patrols. They became very proficient and within a year several of

them became first class. Which is exceptional.”³² Walter Greenberg, one of the refugee children who participated in the Boy Scout program, affirmed the importance of the program for the individual child. He recalled in a 1994 interview how important the program was for him. Greenberg recalled: “Well, I didn’t realize until recently how it influenced me as a person. First of all, I was part of a Boy Scout Troop. I was also a leader in the Cub Scouts. I was very active. I was very proud of my uniform coming from a kind of place where uniforms meant power. To have my uniform which meant good in it, be prepared to help others, don’t cheat, and all the values that the Boy Scouts, the love of nature which I liked. Our Boy Scout leader was a very kind man. He used to come around with his two children sometimes. I think that he was, in a way, a father to us, the way our parents or fathers couldn’t perform.”³³ Little did Clark or the refugee youths realize then how important his Scout Troop was to the Shelter. Though this small part of the educational program benefitted only fifty children directly, the refugee youths’ participation in Scouting had a significant impact on the process of advocating for the refugees’ permanent admission to the United States.

Endnotes

¹ Myer September 14, 1944.

² Ade August 24, 1944.

³ Golda VanBuskirk, Ph.D., December 4, 1944, memorandum to Lester K. Ade, “Report on Fort Ontario Refugee Shelter Language Shelter,” Education File, Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, 1.

- ⁴ VanBuskirk 1944, 1.
- ⁵ VanBuskirk 1944, 2.
- ⁶ VanBuskirk 1944, 4.
- ⁷ VanBuskirk 1944, 4.
- ⁸ VanBuskirk 1944, 4.
- ⁹ VanBuskirk 1944, 5.
- ¹⁰ VanBuskirk 1944, 5.
- ¹¹ VanBuskirk 1944, 5.
- ¹² Ade August 31, 1944.
- ¹³ Loeb February 21, 1946, 2.
- ¹⁴ Myer September 14, 1944, 5.
- ¹⁵ Ruth Andrus, November 10, 1944, letter to Dr. Lester K. Ade, Education File, Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, 2.
- ¹⁶ Andrus 1944, 2.
- ¹⁷ Andrus 1944, 2.
- ¹⁸ Lester K. Ade, Ph.D., November 21, 1944b, letter to Dr. Ruth Andrus, Education File, Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.
- ¹⁹ Ade November 21, 1944b.
- ²⁰ Riley September 26, 1944.
- ²¹ Riley September 26, 1944.
- ²² Richard B. Johnson, September 16, 1944, memorandum to Dr. Lester K. Ade, "Oswego State Teachers College participation in Shelter program of vocational education," Box 12, The Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, The

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²³ Samuel L. Marshall, August 28, 1944, letter Dr. R. Swetman, File 9, Safe Haven Collection, Special Collections, Penfield Library, State University of New York at Oswego.

²⁴ Ralph W. Swetman, Ph.D., September 1, 1944b, letter to Samuel L. Marshall, File 6, Safe Haven Collection, Special Collections, Penfield Library, State University of New York at Oswego.

²⁵ Dillon S. Myer, September 1, 1944, memorandum to Joseph H. Smart, Box 12, The Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁶ Loeb February 21, 1946, 6.

²⁷ Loeb February 21, 1946, 6.

²⁸ Clyde Powers, 1945, report by Clyde Powers, ERS Director, undated, circa Summer 1945, Remaining Readers' File, Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, 1.

²⁹ Loeb February 21, 1946, 7, 8.

³⁰ Clark 1984.

³¹ Clark 1984.

³² Clark 1984.

³³ Greenberg 1984.

