The Montana study : idealistic failure or innovative success
by Janice Elaine Counter

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

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The purpose of this current study was to examine critically why the Montana Study was not institutionalized and whether the Montana Study's techniques were viable methods for adult education and community development. This investigation employed a case study approach using historical analysis of primary documents and oral histories from study group participants. Primary sources used were from the Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York; Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana; and Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

The Montana Study survived from 1943 to 1947. Political pressure against the Study, fierce rivalries between Montana State College and Montana State University, and problems within the Montana Study staff led to the Study's demise. Yet the current study found that there was an impact on some of the eleven Montana Study groups. The groups developed different phases in the community development process including community awareness, group involvement, and community commitment. The commitment phase in Conrad, Montana created a longterm development in that community.

There were several factors which affected short-term and long-term community development. Leadership which came from within the groups created more active participation in the community-research process. Having a diverse group of people influenced the communities' acceptance of change. Active participation in community research and group discussion helped stimulate the formation of action groups.

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Janice Elaine Counter

This thesis has been read by each member of the author's committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

May 13, 1991
Date

Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

June 14, 1991
Date

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Date May 13, 1991

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Dolores Lawrence Maykuth, who sixty years ago became the first member in her family to receive a college degree. Her dedication to learning has been an inspiration for her siblings, children, and grandchildren. It has been a guiding light for me.

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ABSTRACT

The Montana Study was a 1940s educational research project conducted by the Montana State University System and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The project experimented with study groups and community research as a technique for stabilizing and improving community living.

The purpose of this current study was to examine critically why the Montana Study was not institutionalized and whether the Montana Study's techniques were viable methods for adult education and community development. This investigation employed a case study approach using historical analysis of primary documents and oral histories from study group participants. Primary sources used were from the Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York; Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana; and Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

The Montana Study survived from 1943 to 1947. Political pressure against the Study, fierce rivalries between Montana State College and Montana State University, and problems within the Montana Study staff led to the Study's demise. Yet the current study found that there was an impact on some of the eleven Montana Study groups. The groups developed different phases in the community development process including community awareness, group involvement, and community commitment. The commitment phase in Conrad, Montana created a long-term development in that community.

There were several factors which affected short-term and long-term community development. Leadership which came from within the groups created more active participation in the community-research process. Having a diverse group of people influenced the communities' acceptance of change. Active participation in community research and group discussion helped stimulate the formation of action groups.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The rural areas in the United States are deprived of an equitable share of the national wealth and denied a standard of living enjoyed in urban areas. Rural United States contains one-fourth of the country's population. Yet in the past two decades, rural areas have experienced declining economies, higher percentage of poverty, poorer housing standards, poorer or non-existent medical facilities, fewer educational opportunities, and limited public services. A 1989 report estimated that rural children were more likely to face failure due to social and economic strains. "Services from prenatal care to recreation are limited, and unfortunately, poverty is the common denominator for the lack of services."[1] The inequalities in living standards pose a challenge to citizens living in rural areas. How can rural people achieve a better standard of living?

One vehicle for improving the quality of life has been education in the community setting which helps to empower people to solve their own problems. Empowering community members can be done through a joint effort of all educational institutions and agencies. Educational

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[1]Denise Alston, "Risk of Failure Highest for Rural School Children," Billings Gazette, 23 May 1990, 2.

programs and training help rural people balance jobs, family, and community responsibilities.[2]

However, lower income levels, higher tuition cost for outreach programs, and long distance travel to higher education institutions often limit accessibility to such opportunities. Rural residents are unlikely to take advantage of formal or traditional higher education programs because they tend to feel uncomfortable in developing study skills, lack confidence in their learning abilities, or fail to see the relevance of programs to their everyday life situations.[3]

In problem-solving, rural adults are creative, resourceful, and have a high energy level. Individual resourcefulness creates independence, which must be dealt with in the methods and delivery system employed by adult educators.[4] People who participate in adult education or outreach programs need to have a voice in directing their learning geared toward practical outcomes which meet the community's and their needs. The program curriculums need to provide opportunities for rural adults to become change agents in their communities.[5]

The Montana Study, a 1940s humanities research project, used study groups and community research for community development. Organized by

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[2]Douglas Treadway, Higher Education in Rural America, Serving the Adult Learner (New York: College Entrance Board, 1984), 19.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Emmalou Van Tilberg and Allen B. Moore, "Education for Rural Adults," ed. Sharan Merriam and Phyllis Cunningham, Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989), 544.

[5]Ibid.

the Montana University System and the Rockefeller Foundation in 1944, the Study looked for ways in which the humanities in higher education could "contribute to improvement of life in small rural communities, by helping these communities assess and develop their economic, social, and cultural resources."[6] Study groups such as those in the Montana Study are useful in helping people solve their own community problems. Such groups have been organized throughout the world, including the countries of Denmark (Danish Folk Schools), Sweden (Study Circles), Great Britain (Education Priority Areas Project), and Canada (Farm Forums). With the expressed purpose of acquiring new skills and knowledge for managing their community situation, learners establish the groups or educators help stimulate them. Members within the group do the teaching while the trained educator acts as a facilitator in helping the group find resources.[7]

In the past, the study groups in the United States were used extensively as an informal adult education method. In 1727, Benjamin Franklin formed the Junto, an informal study group. The Lyceum movement started in 1832. Jane Addams formed study groups for immigrant adults in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Hutchins and Adler utilized study groups in The Great Books Program in

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[6]Baker Brownell, "First Progress Report of the Montana Study, 1945," [mimeographed], Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[7]Stephen Brookfield, Adult Learners, Adult Education, and the Community (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1983), 114.

the 1940s. These types of study groups were organized to broaden the participants' knowledge of the world.[8]

The Montana Study employed a community research process which was very similar to the present day participatory research.

> Participatory research is an old idea with a new name. Cooperative Extension agents in North America advocated its use in the first part of the century. Participatory research is a process where those who control [the] research determine the content (what is studied) as well as the outcomes of the research (who benefits).[9]

The participating members actively investigate and analyze their community through an educative process. This type of research involves participants in defining the research problems, gathering data, analyzing the data, and taking action on it. The groups are oriented toward social, political, and economic change.[10]

People who are engaged in the research simultaneously enhance their understanding and knowledge of a particular situation as well as take action to change it to their benefit.[11] Through the new

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[8]Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Education Movement in the United States (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1962), 18.

[9]David Deshler and Nancy Hazan, "Adult Education Research: Issues and Directions," ed. Sharan Merriam and Phyllis Cunningham. Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989), 153.

[10]Brookfield, 114.

[11]Rajesh Tandon, "Participatory Research in the Empowerment of People," Convergence XIV, 3 (1981): 23-26.

understanding, participants become aware of their abilities and resources in doing community action.[12]

Participatory research emphasizes dialogue which "develops critical thinking, historical knowledge, and social inquiry."[13] The dialogue seems to be crucial in developing the community. Community has been defined as

> A group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision-making and who share certain practices that both define the community and are nurtured by it. It [the community] almost always has a history defined in part by its past.[14]

One of the benefits of participatory research is the development of popular knowledge.[15] Popular knowledge is constantly being created in the daily experiences of work and community life.[16] Such knowledge has provided people in their everyday setting with "practical, vital, and empowering knowledge which helps them survive, interpret, create,

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[12]Budd Hall, "Participatory Research: Popular Knowledge and Power: A Personal Reflection," Convergence XIV, 3 (1981): 14.

[13]Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogue on Transforming Education (South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1987), 185.

[14]Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton, Habits of the Heart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 333.

[15]Popular knowledge has been defined as the process of knowing, conceptualizing, and disseminating information by people in their everyday life. "It is the knowledge belonging to people at the grassroots and constituting part of their culture heritage." Quote of Orlando Fals Borda by John Gaventa, "Participatory Research in North America," Convergence XXI, 2/3 (1988): 23.

[16]Ibid., 23.

produce, and work over centuries."[17] Participatory research helps the participants to take

> the "raw" and somewhat unformed, or at least, unexpressed knowledge of ordinary people into a collectable whole through discussion, analysis, and reflected knowledge gained with or without allied intellectuals and those who have both broader and deeper insights.[18]

Study groups and participatory research have been used extensively in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This approach has been less developed in North America particularly in the United States.[19] Highlander Research and Education Center in Tennessee, for example, has used this type of research for helping Appalachian communities solve community problems.[20]

In North America, there seem to be social and cultural assumptions that participatory research does not fit in with the prevalent ideas of rugged individualism, mobility, and the success ethic. Levine in 1945 wrote:

> The United States with its heterogeneity, individualism, and success ethic may never have been a fertile soil for the growth of Gemeinschalf culture characterized by permanence, intimacy and binding traditions.[21]

Even in the days when community research was being used, Stanley Rand, an evaluator of the process wrote:

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[17]Ibid., 24.

[18]Hall, 12.

[19]Gaventa, 25.

[20]Frank Adams, Unearthing Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1976), 206.

[21]Lawrence Levine quote in Carla Homstad, Small Town Eden: The Montana Study (Master thesis, University of Montana, Missoula), 98.

> Among the farmers generally is the growing awareness that individual action is not meeting some basic needs of life and that only by overcoming isolation and engaging in team work and cooperative action can the desired goals be attained . . . . The evidence, however, was that cooperative activity is not accepted in the United States as in Canada and to some extent is looked upon with definite suspicion.[22]

In a recent thesis on the Montana Study, Homstad questioned whether the methods used in the Montana Study developed the community.

> While there is much of a positive nature that can be identified in . . . the study group process--community self-analysis and expression, appreciation of indigenous culture, a degree of local control of social and economic problems--the study fundamentally never enjoyed genuine grassroots support.[23]

Historical Overview of the Montana Study

In 1943, President Ernest Melby of Montana State University, Missoula, was appointed chancellor of the Montana State University System. Melby's mission as chancellor was to reform the economically burdensome system. He came to Montana State University in 1941, and, as president, had been increasingly disturbed about how the system was financed and administered. He was also disturbed by the lack of support the general population gave to higher education. Convinced that the reason the university system stayed underfunded was the taxpayers' lack of understanding of higher education, Melby pushed for adult education and university outreach. If people could receive more

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[22]Stanley Rand, "Northern Plains in Change Project in a World of Change: A Report on the Use of the Study, 1942," (mimeographed), Northern-Plains Collection, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[23]Homstad, 74.

educational services in their communities, they would better understand the higher education system and support its needs.[24]

The Board of Education appointed a 19-member commission on higher education. Melby and the commission studied the problems of the university and post-war education. The commission also investigated building stronger links between the university system and Montana communities.

The opportunity to form such a link came when the university system received a three-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1944. The $25,000 grant established a research project to examine ways higher education and the humanities could contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in small rural communities.[25] The three objectives of the study were as follows:

1. The Montana Study was to research ways whereby the true community in Montana and the family could be stabilized.

2. The Montana Study was to find ways to get the university off the campus and to bring facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities and within their occupational situation.

3. The Montana Study was to research ways to raise the appreciative and spiritual standards of living of able young people in their home communities.[26]

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[24]H. G. Merriam, University of Montana, A History (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana Press, 1970), 99.

[25]Ernest Melby, "Proposal for Rockefeller Foundation Grant, 1944," (mimeographed), Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[26]Brownell, 1945, 3.

The grant supported three staff members, Baker Brownell, a philosopher from Northwestern University; Paul Meadows, a rural sociologist from Northwestern University; and Joseph Kinsey Howard, a Montana journalist and author. Brownell was the director for the project.

The main part of the research project focused on using community study groups to research life and traditions in each community. A ten-week study guide used in the research was piloted in Lonepine, Montana. Other communities which had community research groups included Darby, Stevensville, Woodman, Hamilton, Victor, Conrad, Lewistown, Libby, Dixon, and a Native American group from the Salish-Kootenai reservation.

The Montana Study had problems from the very beginning. It lost its administrative ramrod when Melby left the state for a position at New York University. Adding to the difficulties, two staff members, Howard and Meadows, became embroiled in a political controversy which brought about opposition to the study.

Most of the staff left the project by 1946 leaving Ruth Robinson, a member of the Conrad Study Group, as acting director for the final year. Attempts by the new chancellor, George Selke, and the Board of Education to gain funding from the legislature and Rockefeller Foundation appeared to be unsuccessful. The Montana Study research project came to an end in July 1947.

Poston summed up the Montana Study in this way:

> From the stimulus to establish home industries, local incomes had been raised by hundreds of thousands of dollars, and from scores of community projects, both cultural and physical,

> local citizens had found the meaning of creative living. Adult men and women had gained a deeper feeling for American democracy and had become alert to the needs of their local society. Through their influence, this kind of planning will go on and on until the original stimulus has been lost in time. Perhaps it is this kind of planning that will help rural Montana to emerge from her cultural frontier.[27]

Statement of the Purpose

The major thesis for this current study was that the Montana Study failed to reach its stated goal of finding ways humanities and higher education could contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in small rural communities. A second thesis was that the Montana Study succeeded in achieving unstated or unanticipated outcomes by demonstrating that study groups and community research were appropriate adult education techniques for rural community development.

In order to investigate the stated theses, the following questions were explored:

1. What was the motivation for developing and implementing the Montana Study? How was the Montana Study implemented?

2. What were the political, economic, and social factors at the time of the study? How did those three factors impact the study?

3. What were the strengths and/or weaknesses of the organizational and administrative processes in the study?

4. Did the academic community in higher education in Montana support the Montana Study? What evidence was there for support or the lack thereof?

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[27]Richard Poston, Small Town Renaissance (New York: Harper & Brother, 1950), 92.

5. In regard to the three original objectives of the Montana Study, did the humanities study stabilize the small communities in Montana and raise the "appreciative and spiritual standards of living of the people of the state"? What was the impact on the communities of the Montana Study? What role did units of higher education play in bringing higher education to the communities?

6. Beyond the monetary impact, what influence did the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation have on the development and the implementation of the Montana Study?

7. Though the Montana Study seemed to fail, in what areas could the Montana Study be deemed a success?

8. What were the changes in the communities which could be attributed to utilization of the study groups?

A. Which features associated with the study groups contributed to community development?

B. Which features of the study groups did not adapt well to rural areas?

C. Which features of the study groups were satisfying to the participants in the study?

D. Which features of the study groups were frustrating to the participants of the study?

9. Can the study group and community research designed for other societies and cultures survive the assumptions of the United States' rural culture and traditions?

Significance of the Study

This current case study, using historical analysis of the Montana Study, was based on the assumption that the community study groups and research process are viable in rural adult education and community development in today's society. In contemporary adult education, there has been renewed interest and advocacy for community research in social problem-solving and action. Many adult educators including Brookfield, and Freire have all advocated forms of group study in creating a new social awareness.[28] Yet this type of research has primarily been used in developing third world countries rather than for the United States.

The Montana Study was one of the few and earliest documented examples of this type of research done in the United States. Serving as a root of community development and the community education movement, the Study used community research to create social and economic change as well as to enhance the cultural aspects of the community.

Darkenwald observed, "Adult education can ill afford to lose touch with its historical roots, its traditions, and the forms and forces which shaped its development."[29] Another adult educator, Brookfield urged examination of adult education history, "One wonders how long educational policy makers can afford to ignore history in general and

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[28]Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1972).

[29]Gary Darkenwald, "Editor's Notes," Adult Education Quarterly 26, (1976): 21.

that of adult education in particular."[30] The Montana Study, an example of the application of the progressive education philosophy to adult education, received little recognition for methods incorporated in it.

Today, contemporary adult education literature has renewed interest in adult learning through study groups and participatory research. Participatory research has been suggested as a way not only to empower citizens to solve community problems but to maintain the democratic processes in the United States as well. In examining the procedures and processes used in the Montana Study, adult educators can gain knowledge and insights into the Montana Study's processes and the long-term effects the Study had on communities which participated.

The present case study is a revisionist's look at the Montana Study. Though there has been other research done, this present study is the most comprehensive examination to date done on the Montana Study. Poston in 1950 received a Newberry Award to write on the project. The present research after fifty years candidly and objectively investigated the Montana Study, a limitation which Poston faced. Homstad's 1983 master's thesis examined Brownell's progressive philosophy and the failure of Brownell to save small rural communities in Montana. The present study was different from Homstad's in that it focused on the short-term and long-term impact of the study group process on community action.

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[30]Brookfield, 6-7.

This historical research of the Montana Study gives new insight into how community research affected communities and people who participated in the research over a forty year period. The value of historical research is that it

> enables solutions to contemporary problems to be sought in the past; it throws light on the present and future trends; it stresses the relative importance and effects of various interactions which are found within all cultures . . . ."[31]

Finally, the words of Chancellor Selke should be heeded,

> . . . the Montana Study is water over the dam except as we learn to profit from the situation that now is history and improve the organization, administration, and procedures of similar projects in the state.[32]

For these reasons, a thorough historical examination of the Montana Study, the community research process, and study groups can contribute to the a better understanding of the processes used in the context of United States society and culture and their effects on community action and development.

Methodology

The methodology for this current study used the case study approach with historical research and oral histories. Historical research can be defined as:

> the systematic and objective location of evidence in order to establish and draw conclusions about past events. It is an act to achieve reconstruction undertaken in the spirit of

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[31]Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, Research Methods in Eduction (Dover, New Hampshire: Croom-Helm Publishing, 1985), 48-49.

[32]George Selke to Baker Brownell, 15 April 1948, Montana Study, Record Series 72, Box 18, Folder 12, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

> critical enquiry designed to achieve a faithful representation of previous times.[33]

Carlson[34] urged that researchers in historical study define a consistent philosophy of life and let the research reflect that philosophy. The conceptual framework for this study was the progressive education philosophy.

The contextual framework for this study was the Montana political, social, and economic history between 1898 and 1955 and the progressive adult education movement in the United States up to 1955. It analyzed the relationships among the Montana Study, the Montana University System, the Montana political system, and the communities involved in the Montana Study.

Historical Analysis

The research methodology used traditional historical techniques examining primary and secondary documents from the following archives. The Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana, housed the original files of the Montana Study including letters, evaluation, and day books of the staff; records from meeting and reports written by the community research groups; and reports and articles written on the Study. The personal files of Joseph Kinsey Howard were investigated. Montana Study files, located in the Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York, contained documents and records, interview notes, foundation

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[33]Cohen & Manion, 48.

[34]Robert Carlson, "Humanistic Historical Research," ed. Huey Long and Roger Hiemstra, Changing Approaches to Studying Adult Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982), 44.

meeting notes, correspondence between foundation staff and Montana Study staff; and the foundation's own personal insights and evaluation on the progress of the Montana Study. These files were significant because they contain the pertinent correspondence between Brownell and Stevens not available in the Montana Historical Association Archives. Montana State University, Bozeman, holds the letters and records of three presidents including Strand, Cobleigh, and Renne. Burlingame and Kraenzel records located at Montana State University archives, as well as records on the university system, were used.

Secondary documents included two books: The College and the Community (1952) and the Human Community written by Brownell as part of a project done at Northwestern University. A case study, done on the Montana Study in 1950 called Small Town Renaissance by Richard Poston, provided comparison in the analysis of information that was gathered.

External and internal criticism became critical not so much to prove authenticity of documents but to establish the total picture of what happened in the Montana Study.[35] A series of questions were employed to help establish the accuracy of the documents and records. This became very important as many documents were missing from the official Montana Study files. The questions were as follows:

1. What was the history of the document?
2. What was the source of the document and the record?
3. Was the document complete?
4. Was the document edited?
5. Who was the author?

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[35]It became obvious early on in the investigation that pertinent correspondence was left out of university system files turned over to the historical society. Such omissions tended to color some participants in a rosy light which in fact they did not deserve.

6. What was the author trying to accomplish?
7. What was the author's source of information?
8. What was the author's bias?
9. To what extent was the author likely to want to tell the truth?
10. Why was the document produced?
11. Do other documents exist that will shed additional light on the same story?[36]

Oral Histories

Oral histories were also used in this study. To help determine what were effective approaches to community action and development, the oral histories were used for evaluating the study group techniques, community research, and educative processes employed in the Montana Study. The oral histories focused on the recollections of those who had participated in the ten-week Montana Study groups and the action groups which came out of the study groups. Though the events happened more than forty years before, the oral histories served as valuable primary sources and helped to fill in information lacking in available documentation.

Fourteen participants of the study groups were interviewed in Libby, Conrad, Darby, and Hamilton. The interviews helped to reinforce information gathered from other sources and added new insights into the community, institutions, the personalities of those involved in the study, and into the process used in community research. The personal reminiscences often unveiled attitudes and opinions which were not

[36]Egon Guba and Yvonne Lincoln, Effective Evaluation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981), 238.

usually expressed in the official documents.[37] "Personal reminiscences are what add substance and feeling to any study---they help us understand how people lived, what they thought and felt about their work, family, and community."[38]

Oral histories for this study were semi-structured. The following questions were asked, as well as follow up questions which seemed appropriate at the time of the interview.

1. How long have you been a part of this community? Tell me about yourself and your family.
2. How did you get involved in the Montana Study?
3. What were your impressions of the Montana Study?
4. What part did you take in the study?
5. What did you learn from the project?
6. What projects did your study group undertake in your community?
7. What happened in your community because of the projects? Do you think the Montana Study affected you community?
8. Who were the leaders in your study group? How did they become leaders?
9. Did you have someone from the Montana Study staff help you with your study group? What role did they play and what were your impressions of him/her?
10. Do you feel that the Montana Study had any lasting results in your community? If you do, what were these?
11. What were the differences between learning in a study group and other types of learning you had experienced? What did you like about learning in a study group? What did you not like about it?

The questions opened the discussion, and the participants discussed at length what they could remember about the Study. The last question on their own learning often became awkward because the purpose of the Study for them was more socialization and community service.

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[37]Montana Oral History Association, Oral History of Montana: A Manual (Helena, Montana: Montana Historical Society, 1983), 34.

[38]Guba and Lincoln, 162.

They usually associated learning with schooling and, therefore, did not think of the research and discussion process as a learning activity.

Procedures for the Oral Histories

The interviews were conducted using procedures recommended by the Montana Oral History Association. A list of names of participants from the five communities were taken from the minutes of the study groups. The list was sent to people in the communities who helped identify survivors. Contacts were made through association with the Kellogg Extension Education Project and the Oral History Division of the Montana Historical Society. A letter was sent to people identified as participants of one of the study groups. The letter explained the purpose of the interview, how the interview would be conducted, and how the transcripts of the interview would be used. Permission to record the interviews and use the transcripts was obtained from those who were interviewed. Twenty-seven people were contacted about doing an interview. A total of fourteen people were finally interviewed in Conrad, Hamilton, Libby, and Darby.

The researcher transcribed the interviews. The transcriptions were done according to the manner suggested by the Montana Oral History Association. Interviews and notes were audited for theme areas and a summary was done of each interview. The themes included specific events and ideas relating to the Montana Study and the questions being researched. The summary was entered on d-Base, a computer data base program, along theme areas. The information on each community was

compiled as a composite, using the specific theme area, and for each person who gave an interview.

Limitations of the Study

The context of this historical analysis was the Montana social, economic, and political history of the 1940s. The Montana Study illustrated practical application of the progressive education philosophy for the 1940s. Comparing the study with present day participatory research was not valid because of the difference in cultural and social context between then and now.

The oral histories created a challenge in proving trustworthiness because the information gathered was the personal perceptions of those folks being interviewed. Perceptions also were influenced by the passage of time, errors in recollection, unconscious bias in memory and reporting. This proved especially true for those participants of the Montana Study who were now in their late eighties. Information gathered in the interviews was cross-checked with other interviews and with primary source documents. The second problem encountered was the unwillingness of participants to do interviews.

Definitions

The following definitions are pertinent to this study.

Board of Education--the name given the governing body of the Montana State University System, an appointed board with the governor, attorney general, and superintendent of schools as ex-official members. The Board of Education also handled public-school policy

and took care of institutions such as Warm Springs, Boulder, and Twin Bridges. The governing board was changed later to the Board of Regents with responsibility for only Montana's higher education system.

Community Study Groups--a model of adult education adopted from Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, and Canada. The study groups were lead by participants and the method used for learning was discussion for mutual understanding and enlightenment. Study groups used in the Montana Study were designed after the Danish Folk Schools and the Canadian Farm Forums. The Study used a guide, yet it had no set learning outcomes, examinations, or grades. The leader was a member of the group and did not assume the traditional role of teacher/lecturer. Educators provided information when requested, taught process for problem solving, and helped facilitate the group dynamics when needed.

The Company--a term used to refer to Anaconda Copper Company and Montana Power Company. By the 1940s, these companies were managed separately, yet in the minds of many people in Montana, they remained as one powerful unit.

University of Montana--the combined six units in the Montana University System. Both names were used by Melby, who envisioned the six units as one university under one governing board and one administrator.

Humanities--a term defined by Baker Brownell to mean an approach to the human experience in

> human values as contrasted with institutional values, supernatural values, or scientific values. This human experience emphasized human living as it was found among neighbors and in small communities.[39]

For this study, humanities should not be considered as a series of academic disciplines.

Montana State College--the name used until July, 1965 for the campus at Bozeman, Montana.

Montana State University--the name used until July, 1965 for the campus at Missoula, Montana.

Montana Study--a research project to find ways higher education and the humanities could help stabilize the rural population and improve the standard of living in rural communities. Community groups researched information about their community, the history, traditions, values, and ways to help improve their community.

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[39]Brownell, 1945, 2.

CHAPTER 2

THE MONTANA STUDY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A case study might be compared to a tapestry with patterns made of the threads of history, people, events, politics, with economics interwoven to make up the unique design that becomes the case study's story. The Montana Study is such a tapestry.

The Montana Study (1943–1947) was a research project the purpose of which was to find ways higher education and the humanities could improve life in small rural communities by helping communities assess and develop their own social, economic, and cultural resources. The project, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and implemented by the Montana University System, was unique in that it used the Danish Folk School model of discussion groups and community research similar to participatory research. Community members were involved in defining the research problem, gathering data, collectively analyzing the information, and interpreting it for community action.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an overview of Montana's economic, social, and political history and an overview of the Montana University System as related to the Montana Study. The final part of the chapter is an overview of the Montana Study's projects done between 1944–1947.

Overview of Montana

Montana, a remote and sparsely populated area of mountains and plains, became a state in 1889. Montana's history has been described as a story of "too much too soon."[40] When Montana became a state, the land, climate, and remoteness from the rest of the country greatly influenced the patterns which developed economically, socially, politically, and culturally. The western section of the state was settled first starting with the gold rushes in the 1860s. Gold was discovered at various sites such as Grasshopper Creek, Alder Gulch, and Last Chance Gulch. The towns of Butte, Helena, and Virginia City grew from the gold, silver, and copper booms. Eastern Montana continued to be sparsely populated when the government offered acreage and the railroads offered transportation to land-hungry homesteaders. An estimated 70,000-80,000 people[41] came to Montana during 1900-1919.

The Montana economy, supported basically by mining and agriculture, depended on the whims of nature and humans. A pattern emerged in the economy of "exploitation, overexpansion, boom, and bust."[42] This pattern was repeated through the eras of fur trapping, ranching, mining, lumbering, and homesteading.

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[40]K. Ross Toole, Montana: An Uncommon Land (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 5.

[41]K. Ross Toole, Twentieth Century Montana (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 26.

[42]Toole, 1959, 5.

The politics had as many extreme conditions as the economy. It went from "fiery wide-open violence to apathetic resignation."[43] Montana politics were formed on the ideas of rugged individualism of the frontier, yet were greatly influenced by new and powerful industries which were developing in the early stages of the state's history. Montana was an area of abundant natural resources. However, a great amount of capital was needed to extract the wealth of the state, and the capital came from Eastern and sometimes foreign investors. The capital brought about development and a measure of prosperity. But the state ". . . had to pay a high price for copper [and it could be added other resources] which came to dominate its economy and to rule the roost politically."[44] The political wars among the three copper magnates--Clark, Daly, and Heinze--illustrated graphically how money influenced Montana's politics. Clark bought a United States Senate seat, Heinze bought judges, and Clark and Daly paid roughly $56 a vote in a battle over the state capitol.[45] Their battles for power created a condition and tradition which would contaminate Montana's politics for many decades.

A new force came into play in the political scene in 1899 when Standard Oil purchased Daly's Anaconda Copper Company. Renamed Amalgamated Copper Company for a time, the company grew to include most of the copper mining and smelters in Butte; refineries in Great Falls,

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[43]Ibid.

[44]Michael Malone and Richard Roeder, Montana: A History of Two Centuries (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 152.

[45]Ibid., 161.

Butte, and Anaconda; timberland and lumber mills in Western Montana; and a chain of newspapers throughout the state. Montana politics commenced to be influenced by a "corporation controlled from Wall Street and insensitive to the concerns of Montanans."[46]

Amalgamated formed the Montana Power Company in 1912. John D. Ryan was president of both companies until his death in 1932. Though Montana Power was not a subsidiary of Amalgamated, in the minds of many Montanans the corporations were perceived as one and nicknamed "the Company."

> The Amalgamated wielded an economic-political strength which no opposing coterie of groups could match for long. Allying with its Siamese twin Montana Power, with railroads and other corporations, and with instinctively conservative stockman of the plains, it ruled the roost as a giant faction in a small commonwealth Montana.[47]

This group evolved into an effective political network, with the help of the company-owned newspapers, which impacted the election of state officials over several decades. The political power of this group was potent and its influence was felt on all aspects of the public sector including higher education, and ultimately on what happened to the Montana Study.

The groups opposing the conservatives and especially "the Company," were the progressive grassroots organizations such as the Farmers Union, the American Federation of Labor, and the Congress of Industrial Works. This coalition helped to elect many progressive and

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[46]Ibid., 176.

[47]Michael P. Malone, The Battle for Butte (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 210.

liberal United States Senators such as Welch, Wheeler, Murray, and Mansfield.

Overview of the Montana University System

Politics and the economy greatly influenced the formation of the Montana University System. The four separate units, the University in Missoula, the agricultural college in Bozeman, a normal school in Dillon, and the mining college in Butte, were created to "gratify several ambitious cities and keep hard feelings to a minimum."[48] This system, concocted out of political expediency, became economically burdensome to the state, a situation that continues today.

The constitution of 1889 set up provisions to establish a system of higher education and a governing body to manage it. The legislature however delayed setting up the system until 1893. The delay was due to the political maneuvering among the various politicians who were trying to get the state capitol or an institution into their home communities. Bozeman, for example, was trying to get the state capitol in that community. The Great Falls Tribune accused The Helena Independence of supporting Bozeman as the site for the agriculture college in exchange for Bozeman pulling out of the capital race and supporting Helena as the capital.[49] Helena became the state capital and Bozeman soon hosted the agricultural college.

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[48]Malone & Roeder, 276.

[49]Edward Chennette, "The Montana State Board of Education: A Study of Higher Education in Conflict, 1884–1959" (Ed.D. Dissertation, University of Montana, 1972), 44.

When the 1893 legislature finally established the higher education system, debate in both the newspapers and on the floor of the legislature focused on whether the colleges---agriculture, normal and mining--should be separated or on one campus. Paris Gibson, senator from Great Falls, introduced a bill which would have placed all the colleges in one location and under one management system.[50] At the same time, a bill was introduced to place the four colleges at separate locations; the university in Missoula, the agricultural college in Bozeman, a normal school in Twin Bridges, and the mining college in Butte. The Great Falls Tribune pleaded with the legislature to consolidate the university system and support Gibson's bill.

> In Heaven's name do not let them (the colleges) be scattered about to become the puny laughing stock of the world and a constant source of irritation and fruitless expense to the state.[51]

Unfortunately, the legislature ignored the plea and established campuses in Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, and Missoula. Twin Bridges received the orphans' home rather than the normal school.

The Montana Board of Education,[52] established at the same time as the higher education system, was a "complicated and politically dominated supervisory system."[53] The governor controlled the Board through appointment of members and by being an active ex-official

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[50]Ibid., 45.

[51]Ibid., 48.

[52]The Board of Education was the governing body for the Montana Higher Education System.

[53]Ibid., 58.

member. This Board over a forty-five year period, was responsible for "book-burnings, suppression of academic freedom, firing without hearing of both professors and presidents."[54]

It would seem that the Board of Education had broad governing powers. But in fact, the Board was given limited powers over the university units. Each campus unit had an autonomous administration and budget, as well as separate funding from the legislature. The lack of unity in governance led to competition among the unit presidents for state funding and to the university system being susceptible to political maneuvering from outside the university system.

Early in the history of the system, the units launched campaigns to build facilities to carry out their own private missions and to protect their academic turf. The university units, especially those in Missoula and Bozeman, "rapidly developed courses and degrees, lobbied individually for state funding, and recruited students."[55] The competition between Missoula and Bozeman was often aggressive and bitter. Some historians have described the competition as "guerrilla warfare."[56]

A few presidents of the units recognized that the competition among the units was creating a weakened university system. Craig, the first president of Montana State University (now the University of Montana) recommended that ". . . each [unit] be employed on its own and

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[54]Ibid., 96

[55]Malone & Roeder, 277.

[56]Ibid., 277.

the work can be accomplished with the resource in its command."[57] Duniway, the president who succeeded Craig, proposed administrative unity for the system which would give the Board of Education a great deal of control over all units. Greater control, Duniway reasoned, would help to build cooperation, unity, and discourage duplication. Craighead, the president who followed Duniway, urged consolidation which he felt would remedy the duplication which "created a needless waste of money in a state which could not afford the waste of even a penny."[58]

A bill to consolidate the units was introduced into the legislature in 1913. The people at Bozeman, Dillon, and Butte suspected that the campaign for consolidation was actually a campaign to eliminate their own campuses. The legislature defeated consolidation at a ratio of three to two.

Undaunted by the defeat in the legislature, the proponents of consolidation lead by Craighead brought an initiative to the voters in 1914. The main opposition against consolidation came from the Bozeman unit and from the farmers and ranchers who supported the agricultural college. Many Montana people distrusted the academic types who they feared would have unpopular influence on the politics of the state if they were united on one campus. An editorial in the Forsyth Times-Journal charged that "the supporters of the consolidation scheme, for scheme it is, seemed to represent the educational cult, caste, or

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[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

highbrow theorists of the State."[59] The voters defeated the initiative by a vote of 46,311 to 30,465.[60]

Many educators, politicians, and concerned citizens reasoned if consolidation was impossible, at least the system could be improved by better coordination of the units and by putting a stop to expensive duplication and expansion. The Leighton Act was passed as a result of this concern. This law attempted to "bring a measure of administrative unity to the four institutions."[61] The Act gave the State Board of Education the power to eliminate unnecessary duplication and to create the position of chancellor. The appointment of the chancellor did not cure the problems of the system.[62]

Even though the university system was plagued with financial woes, the legislature from the beginning, pressured by Eastern Montana, created two more higher education units in Billings and Havre. Problems for the system expanded when the homesteading boom ended in 1919. The state economy plummeted into a depression when falling prices for raw materials and agricultural products, plus a severe drought struck the eastern plains. Farmers, who had over extended during the prosperous years, now lost their land. Businesses and banks failed, and unemployment gripped the state. The population drastically

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[59]Jules Karlin, "Conflict and Crisis in University Politics: The Firing of President E. B. Craighead, 1915," Montana, The Magazine of Western History 36, 3 (Summer, 1986): 50.

[60]Ibid., 48

[61]Ibid.

[62]Malone & Roeder, 277.

dropped and most of the population loss came from small rural communities in Eastern Montana.

A result of the agricultural depression was that the conservative legislature failed to fund the six units of the higher education system adequately. Efforts to close the smaller units were met with strong political opposition from the communities where the units were located. Unable to close the smaller colleges, the legislature reduced appropriations to the units and cut funding for the chancellor's position. The system remained without a chancellor from 1933-1943.[63]

The conservative political block greatly affected the higher education system.

> The four institutions were adversely affected by the insistence of Amalgamate Copper Company that they be strongholds of economic and social orthodoxy. The powers of the company were considerable, and its recommendations could not be ignored.[64]

Two professors, who questioned the influence of "the Company" were fired by the State Board of Education. Levine, an economics professor, was fired over a paper on the Montana tax system which favored the mining interest. Fischer, an instructor at the law school, was fired after getting into a dispute with The Missoulian, a company-owned newspaper.[65]

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[63]Malone & Roeder, 278.

[64]Karlin, 50.

[65]Toole, 1972, 231.

Overview of the Montana Study

In 1941, a number of events took place which would change the course of the university system in Montana. Sam Ford, a Republican elected as governor in 1940, was determined to reorganize the state government so as to make it more efficient and economic. Ford appointed a committee to study the entire structure of state government including higher education. The firm of Griffenhagen and Associates surveyed the institutions and departments and made recommendations for reforms.

This study of higher education listed forty-one recommendations on governance of the six units. A major recommendation was that the six units be organized into one university with one president as the administrator of the system with one business and registrar's office. Staff and students could shift freely among all of the units.[66] The study also called for the status of Dillon, Havre, and Billings to be changed to two-year programs. Finally the report suggested a reconstruction of the Board of Education in order to reduce undo political pressure on the decision-making process.[67]

Near the same time, Ernest Melby, the Dean of Education at Northwestern University, became the president of Montana State University. The Board of Education fired the previous president because of rancor and discontent at the Missoula campus. Melby's

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[66]Chennette, 383.

[67]Ibid., 302.

mission was to help correct the morale problem of the faculty and students.

Melby was a progressive educator, a contemporary of John Dewey and William James. Melby was described as an optimist, idealist, and a dreamer.[68] Melby believed strongly in the democratic way of life and in citizen participation in keeping the democratic process going. He committed the University to lifelong learning, adult education, and extension. Melby believed higher education should relate to the everyday life of people and the faculty should serve the communities of the state. In his inauguration address as president, Melby asserted:

> Universities have given nurture to science which has made the world, but they have not equipped man to live in the world. They have given wings to his mind without beauty and love in his heart.[69]

When Melby came to Montana, he was appalled by the conditions of the Missoula campus and the poor morale of students and faculty. Melby was convinced that the adult education and higher education connection could build the necessary grassroots support for funding of the higher education system in Montana. He wanted to expand extension work, but he realized such an expansion would be impossible with the funding system that was in place. "The development of a program of higher education which promotes the creative living for all of the people is a project which needs only to be understood by the people to win their support."[70]

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[68]Merriam, 99.

[69]Ibid., 100.

[70]Chennette, 390.

Melby soon became a leader on the Executive Council of Presidents.[71] He was articulate and very concerned with the problems of the whole university system. Melby supported the other presidents in their attempts to get funding for repairing the campuses and increasing the salaries of the faculty. Even before his appointment to the chancellor's position, he tried to unify the presidents in securing the support of the legislators in their districts for all the units. As Melby wrote to President Cobleigh, "A meeting with the legislators would vie each president a chance to present the needs of his own institution and the need for solidarity in the legislative groups of the six communities."[72] The five other presidents reacted positively to Melby's suggestion.

The Board of Education appointed Melby to the position of chancellor in April, 1943. The appointment came after Governor Ford had pressured the legislature to fund the position. Ford noted higher education had suffered from underfunding and the physical plants had deteriorated from inadequate support. Ford requested funding for the chancellorship and a commission to study the problems of the higher education system. The legislature appropriated $10,000 for the chancellor's salary.

Melby became chancellor July 1, 1943. His mission was to help a commission of higher education find solutions to the problems in higher

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[71]The Executive Council, an advisor board to the Board of Education, was made up of the six university presidents.

[72]Ernest Melby to William Cobleigh, 19 November 1942, Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

education. He took the position with the stipulation that he could take a leave-of-absence as president of Montana State University.[73] The presidents of the other units were suspicious of Melby's continued connections to the University.

Melby got his financial opportunity to link the university system and Montana communities when the Rockefeller Foundation gave the university system a research grant in 1944. The project became known as the Montana Study.

David H. Stevens, Director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, visited Montana State College in May, 1943. The meeting involved a proposal for implementing the work of Dr. Carl F. Kraenzel, a rural sociologist with the Montana Extension Service. A previous project, the Northern Plains Regional Study, a joint effort of the extension services in North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, and the Prairie Provinces of Canada, developed a study outline of the plains region for use in adult forum groups. The purpose of the groups was to bring together people in the Northern Plains area for "free, full panel discussion of all the problems of the region."[74] The forum groups were suppose to challenge the participants to think, study, plan, and act in making the communities of the region better places to live. The objectives of the forums were listed as follows:

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[73]Chennette, 390.

[74]Carl Kraenzel, The Northern Plains in a World of Change (Canada: Gregory-Cartwright LTD., 1942), 5.

> To build a rural society to which the sons of the region will wish to return because it holds the possibility of a decent and secure livelihood and creative life and to plan for social reconstruction after the victory of democracy in the field of battle, is the business of those who stayed on the home front, and the plans must satisfy the rightful demands of those who have risked their lives for democracy's survival.[75]

Kraenzel was delighted when Melby attended the meetings with Stevens and supported the project. Kraenzel felt confident the new proposal would be funded with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.[76]

But even though Melby gave support to the Northern Plains project, Stevens decided not to fund the project. Stevens suggested that Kraenzel needed to find another funding source to support for the project.[77]

Stevens was impressed, however, with the new chancellor's vision for the university system. He wrote to Melby shortly after the meeting about the possibilities of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

> This is to report my pleasure at the chance to talk with you regarding the educational matters in Montana. I know that you had little suggestions of my feelings after the day at Bozeman, therefore I am sending this note . . . . It was a satisfaction to find that there is prospect of movement beyond the study of economic questions . . . . This means that my personal interest in your planning for the

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[75]Ibid., 4.

[76]Richard Poston, Small Town Renaissance (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 18.

[77]David Steven's notes on the 15 May 1943 meeting in Bozeman, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.82, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

> institutions of the State might be defined in other ways than through the recent publication of your men in Bozeman.[78]

Stevens encouraged Melby to develop ideas the Humanities Division of the Foundation could support. Melby first proposed setting up an educational service center for groups of all ages. This was not an acceptable idea to the Rockefeller Foundation, which did not support adult education projects. Stevens then suggested a project which focused on the traditions, history, and culture of small rural communities. He discussed a model like a project done by Cornell University in community drama and culture.[79]

Stevens wanted to try techniques from study-discussion groups he had observed in Denmark, England, and Canada. As the director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation,[80] Stevens became involved with Saint Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia and A. B. MacDonald, the rector of the school. The work being done in Nova Scotia was known as the Antigonish Movement. While working with

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[78]David Stevens to Ernest Melby, 24 May 24 1943, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.82, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Stevens received his English doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1914. In 1930, he was appointed to the General Education Board of Rockefeller Foundation and became the director of the Humanities Division in 1932 where he remained until his resignation in 1950. He said of his resignation, "This leave-takings were speedily followed by chances to exercise my new freedom of choice. Some of them had been on my mind awaiting their release form the rules of 'fair play' that govern the Foundation." Ironically his project was a documented article on Joseph McCarthy. Bibliography Files, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

MacDonald on a library-service grant, Stevens met Father Coady, the founder of the movement. Stevens wrote in a report:

> Father Coady . . . during seven years has made adult study groups, credit unions, and consumers stores the source of new self-reliance for the northern part of Nova Scotia. Buying and selling together, borrowing from common savings at moderate rates, study of current ideas affecting their lives, the workers have developed their own substitute for dependence and poverty.[81]

In his discussions with Father Coady and Rector MacDonald, Stevens saw a great deal of merit in Coady's community work, and urged him to take a leave of absence in order to write manuscripts on his experiences. "These would record seven years of work under his inspiration and would give his philosophy of community education to other areas."[82]

Also in 1937, Stevens traveled to London where he met with Sir Walter Moberly, chairman of the University Grants Commission. The two discussed support for regional programs for study groups maintained by Universities. Stevens noted in visiting Liverpool that "workers in England exercised their abilities through group meeting . . . talking on labor conditions."[83]

These visits seemed to have a lasting impression on Stevens. He wrote in 1940 after a conference,

> To strengthen the culture of Democracy, we need to . . . introduce such concepts as those of humanity, integrity,

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[81]David Stevens' interview notes on Canadian trip, Diaries of D. H. Stevens , (August 12-14, 1937), 436-438, Record Series R612.1 Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[82]Ibid., 438.

[83]Ibid.

> loyalty, and services to one's fellows . . . . We have failed to supply necessary information to aid citizens in solving their problems of living.

Stevens saw the study group as a method of doing this. Stevens suggested to the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board that the use of the adult education methods used in Nova Scotia might be applicable to the rural and Southern States.[84] During the period of 1940–1950 under Steven's direction, the Humanities Division moved toward regional studies emphasizing community building through history, art, drama, and study groups.[85]

Stevens arranged for the Humanities division of the Rockefeller Foundation to send two history professors, Burlingame from Montana State College and Merriam for Montana State University, to Canada to examine Canadian adult education programs and community study forums. Their reviews and ideas on community study groups became the basis of the proposal submitted to the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation.

With Burlingame's and Merriam's information, Melby submitted a proposal to the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation in March, 1944. The proposal stated:

> The University of Montana wishes to undertake a research program to determine the contribution of the humanities to a program of higher education designed to improve the quality of living in the State of Montana. Through such a study, the University hopes to develop its educational program so as to meet the needs of the state more fully. If education in the humanistic field is to have validity and effectiveness, it must be closely attuned to the cultural background and

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[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid.

> present environment of the people whose education we seek to further. If, therefore, the University of Montana wishes to improve the quality of living in the state, it should have available an adequate basis of fact regarding the quality of living in the state, the people of the state, and their needs.[86]

The proposal called for a director to coordinate the research and "integrate the activities of the existing staff members and facilities of the University of Montana."[87] Councils were to be formed in the rural communities and resources in the communities were to be "mobilized in doing research."[88] Educational programs were to be developed after the data had been collected by the councils. The eleven areas of research were as follows: ethnic patterns, folk development, evolution of the Indian civilization, literature and life, aspects of education, influences on stability of community life, influence of topography and climate, land tenure patterns, political party directions and influence, artist and art forms, and other policy influences.

The Rockefeller Foundation approved the proposal with a grant-in-aid of $25,000 over a three year period. The grant gave full funding of $12,500 for the first year. The university system would pick up equal shares for the last two years.

Baker Brownell, philosophy professor at Northwestern University, actively campaigned for the position of director. Brownell was one of

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[86]Melby, 2.

[87]Ibid., 5.

[88]Ibid.

the nation's outstanding authorities on problems of rural America during his time.

Brownell, a Harvard University graduate, with a doctorate in philosophy, had studied under eminent progressives William James, Josiah Royce, and George Santyana.[89] Except for the short period when he was the director of the Montana Study, Brownell instructed at Northwestern University from 1920-1953. Like many progressives of his time, Brownell saw the changes created by science and technology as important to the growth of the country. However, technology created a movement to cities which developed strong individualism, fragmentation, and alienation. All of these were threats to democracy. Brownell wrote:

> Cities to a great extent are parasitic and disintegrative. In themselves, they seem incapable of survival except increasingly unbalanced exploitation of areas and folks within and without their borders . . . . The suicide, the crime, the insanity, and the drunkenness are old and sickening stories . . . . The moral responsibility in massive, anonymous societies is one of the seeds of disaster . . . . The increasing tendency toward authoritarian controls is another. The indifference, callowness, the strong egotism, urban speed, and competition are others.[90]

Brownell believed the small town to be the salvation of the democratic system. The face-to-face relationships created strong democratic communities. "The decline of the primary communities is probably the most critical problem in American life . . . . Our basic

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[89]Homstad, 29-32.

[90]Baker Brownell, The Human Community (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 25.

order, our freedom, our democratic way of life depends on the small communities."[91]

Brownell placed the blame for the decline of the small communities partially on higher education. "The modern general college is partly a cause of the drift of educated youth toward the city and its customs."[92] The colleges were killing small towns because the country boys and girls were "drained by the colleges into the urban districts where their family life and culture soon became extinct."[93]

Brownell urged higher education to take a more active role in preserving small towns. "Liberal education in our Western culture is associated inextricably with the culture of small communities and with the democratic order that we have learned to association with small communities."[94]

When Brownell heard about Melby's search for a director of the Montana Study, he saw this as an opportunity to field test his philosophy of small communities. He wrote to Melby,

> If it is the kind of research that I think it is, I would be very much interested in undertaking leadership in it . . . . The kind of humanities program that might reach into and become a part of this regional culture, are fields that I

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[91]Baker Brownell, "Project in Educational Reorientation," Religious Education (July-August, 1944): 2.

[92]Brownell, 1950, 19.

[93]Ibid., 20.

[94]Ibid., 25.

would be glad to explore with the prospect of making a real contribution.[95]

Brownell was appointed director of the research project. Two research assistants, Joseph Kinsey Howard, a Montana journalist, and Paul Meadows, a rural life sociologist, completed the project's staff.

Stevens and Melby meet with Brownell April 28, 1944 to iron out the problems Stevens saw in the proposal. The three discussed problems that faced Montana and how the humanities could help find ways to stabilize the family and the rural communities in Montana and the United States.

The Montana Study was a strange mix and practical application of two educational philosophies: progressivism of James, Dewey, and Lindeman and the liberalism of Meiklejohn. The progressive educational leaders believed strongly that a strong democratic society required strong community ties and citizens involved in community problem-solving. They saw science and technology producing a mass society that brought about isolation, fragmentation, and impersonal, professionally run communities and finally the collapse of democracy and the democratic process. Urbanism, industrialism, and specialism were throwing the democratic experiment off track.

The solution for this dilemma could be found in people in small communities. A person had significance only to the extent that he/she

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[95]Baker Brownell to Ernest Melby, 17 January 1944, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United State, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

was a member of a functioning group. Participation and involvement were integral parts of the process.

> In a fact-finding process, the facts become the common property of all, used to help participants clarify their purposes and to identify functions needed to achieve them. The only true learning occurred as participants gained insights and understanding derived from facts and feelings combined. [The end result of this process was] intelligence applied to life, exercise of freedom and power, self-expression, creativeness in the conduct of life, overcoming dependence on experts, and making collective life responsive to individual needs.[96]

The second major philosophical influence came from the liberal-education philosophy. Advocates of this philosophy included Adler, Hutchins, Maritain, and Meiklejohn. The purpose of a liberal education was to develop a rational person with an intellectual capacity to move from information and knowledge to wisdom.[97] Secondly, a liberal education was suppose to develop a moral person who pursued "prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude." Finally the liberal education developed the spiritual nature of the person and the aesthetic senses. "Appreciation of beauty in nature and in art led to the quest for the true, the good, and the holy."[98]

Alexander Meiklejohn was the most influential of the liberal educators on the Montana Study. Meiklejohn believed in the creation of

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[96]Harold Stubblefield, Towards a History of Adult Education in America (London: Croom-Helm, 1988), 142-144.

[97]Wisdom could be defined in two ways—practical which referred to the ability to apply information and knowledge and theoretical which is the search for truth about the human condition and the world. John Elias and Sharan Merriam, Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education (Huntington, New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing, 1980), 23.

[98]Ibid., 26.

an active and enlightened public mind and intelligence that would become "the thinking power of the democracy."[99] In turn, the enlightened citizenry would work to improve the social condition which would then do the same for democracy. The best method for such development was through group study. "The group process, provided a dynamic-action form for realizing democracy in social behavior, education by experience in the techniques of democratic thinking."[100]

The final draft of the proposal called for the project to research ways of stabilizing communities by helping communities assess and develop their social, cultural and economic resources. The study was suppose to help community members develop activities so that people in the community might gain "a deeper knowledge and appreciation of their own culture and historical traditions."[101]

The proposal established three objectives for the Study:

1. To research ways whereby the true community in Montana and family could be stabilized.

2. To get the university off the campus and to bring the facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities and within their occupational situation.

3. To research ways to raise the appreciative and spiritual standards of living of able young people in their communities.[102]

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[99]Stubblefield, 104.

[100]Ibid., 107. Howard and Brownell in their speeches and writings on the Montana Study often pointed to Meikeljohn as a source of inspiration as they worked through the Montana Study.

[101]Brownell, 1945, 2.

[102]Ibid., 3.

Brownell and his two research assistants, Meadows and Howard, traveled throughout the United States visiting people in the field of community education, community sociology, and community development as well as other projects that seemed to fit within the parameters of the research study. They met with Hugh Masters, Education Director of the Kellogg Foundation, on methods of approaching the communities and on finding a point of leverage that differed from community to community. They also talked with Misner, Superintendent of the Louisiana School Project, about dealing with community factions and methods in handling those type of problems. Curtis McDougall gave them strategies for dealing with powerful people and corporations. William and Joel Hunter, sociologists with the United Charities, suggested methods of working with small communities.[103] Interviews on techniques in adult education included Howard McClusky, Ann Arbor; Ray Cowden, head of the Writers Workshop; and Virgil Herrick, Ralph Tyler, and Cyril Houle from the University of Chicago.[104]

Time was spent with John Barton of the Wisconsin Folk School Project in Madison, Wisconsin. Barton gathered examples of various works of art in rural districts of Wisconsin such as paintings of John Stuart Curry. Barton also developed song books and a bibliography of the regional literature. At the University of Minnesota, Howard interviewed Watson Dickerman of Extension; A. R. Holst, Continuing

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[103]"Montana Study Day Book, 1944," pp.8-15, Montana Study Collection, Record Series 72, Box 18, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

[104]Ibid., 48.

Education Center; and Ralph Casey on a project Minnesota used to develop folk humanities.[105]

The three researchers brought their ideas back to Montana, and working with Stevens, developed a plan for the Montana Study. The Study was divided into three parts.

The first part involved the field work and fact finding projects "to get general data on the cultural patterns of Montana and find ways to find help for communities."[106] The project intended to research means of stabilizing communities by helping communities assess and develop their own social, cultural, and economic resources. Through a community research process, the Study would develop activities so that people in the community might gain "a deeper knowledge and appreciation of their own culture and historical traditions."[107] Through the process, the participants would gather data about their community, discuss the cultural and historical traditions, and find ways they could improve their lives.[108]

> Community members studied their communities and becoming more aware of their assets in the Humanities and deficiencies with the idea of encouraging spontaneous interest in development of these idea lines within the communities themselves.[109]

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[105]Ibid.

[106]Baker Brownell, "Suggestions for Rockefeller Foundation Projects in Humanities in Montana," Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United State, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[107]Brownell, 1945, 2.

[108]Brownell, 1946, 34.

[109]Ibid.

The hope was that the study project would develop "learning methods and techniques for application to the state and nation."[110] Information gathered from study groups was to be used to plan ways higher education and the humanities could directly bring education to the people within their own communities and occupational situation. Humanities provided "the most available practical means of educating the common man in self-realization, largeness of understanding, and the ability to meet contemporary needs."[111]

The second part of the study focused on training teachers in "the new conception of Humanities, leading to folkschools fashioned after those in Denmark."[112] This training particularly emphasized family-centered or community-centered education in terms of action and services to the community.[113]

The third area covered was the organization of the data from the field work. The staff of the Montana Study assimilated the information into reports and appropriate materials for dissemination within and without the state.

Series I--Montana Study Groups

The Montana Study project started on July 1, 1944. The first act of the Montana Study was to create a guide for the community research

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[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid., 4.

[112]Ibid., 3.

[113]Ibid., 2.

groups. Brownell, Howard, and Meadows using gathered information developed the study guide. The researchers used the materials Burlingame and Merriam brought back from an Alberta adult education project as a model for the study guide.

The guide developed research questions revolving around the community's social, economic, and political past, present, and future. The study group process was piloted in Lonepine, a small community in the Little Bitterroot Valley. The guide was named Life in Montana as Seen from Lonepine, A Small Community. Each week the group explored a topic area. Volunteers from the groups took questions under a topic, researched the questions, and then brought the information back to the whole group for discussion and analysis.

The study guide set down rules for the group as follows:

> We are here to discuss problems of our community, our state, and our nation with the view toward finding out how living in communities many become more interesting and secure. We will use three simple methods for accomplishing these goals: discussion, cooperative research, and objective thinking.[114]

The problem for the first week analyzed "the composition of the community as to nationality, history, occupation, religion, politics, education, and recreation."[115] The second week of the study focused on the people in the community. "One of the most important elements affecting the stability of our community is human connections. The feeling of belonging to a group of people who know each other,

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[114]Baker Brownell, Joseph Kinsey Howard, and Paul Meadows, Life in Montana as Seen from Lonepine: A Small Community (Missoula, Montana: The Montana Study, 1945), 6-7.

[115]Ibid., 6-12.

understand each other and are interested in each other, seems to be necessary part of human happiness and security."[116] Research questions focused on how churches, schools, lodges, clubs, and recreation played a part in human companionship and how human connections could be expanded in enhancing the community's life.

The third week's topic focused on different ways in which the people in the community made a living and how people utilized their resources. The fourth week examined the relationship of the community to the state. The fifth looked at the cultural differences in the community, and the sixth topic examined the relationship of the community to the nation. Topic seven explored the future of the Montana, while during the eighth week, participants researched future possibilities for the community.

The ninth week explored how action could be used to stabilize the community. Research questions called for finding ways to pool resources in the community to help facilitate change, to find ways of gaining control over means of making a living in the community, to build a stronger education system, and to develop the cultural and artistic aspects in the community.[117]

The last topic called for evaluation of the study group process. The evaluation examined the ability of the group to carry on discussion without "undue emotion and prejudice, and for the sake of solving a

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[116]Ibid., 21.

[117]Ibid., 97-105.

problem, not in winning a debate";[118] evaluation of how well the group gathered information and used it in "constructive action";[119] and, finally, evaluation of how enjoyable the study group process had been for the participants.

Between 1945-1947, eleven studies took place in Montana. These included study groups in Lonepine, Hamilton, Stevensville, Darby, Lewistown, Conrad, Woodman, Dixon, Libby, Victor, and on the Salish-Kootenai reservation.

Other Montana Study Projects

To augment the findings of the community research, a series of conferences were held throughout the state on the impact of modern trends on rural life, family, church, and the state. E. O. Baker, senior agricultural economist with the United States Department of Agriculture, and Arthur Morgan, past chair of the Tennessee Valley Authority, gave a series of lecturers on the future of families and small communities in a changing world. Other projects focused on building community schools, stabilizing a forest community, creating community pageants and drama, and developing music, arts, and crafts in the communities.

Forest Community Research

A series of projects on community life and land usage were held in conjunction with the Forest Service. Dr. and Mrs. H. F. Kaufman, rural

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[118]Ibid., 107.

[119]Ibid., 110.

sociologists from Missouri, were hired to do a study on how the sustained-yield policy of the Forest Service would impact community life in Libby and Lincoln County.

The purpose of the study was to obtain factual data on a small forest community in Western Montana. The study looked at the significant factors involved in community life and "how those factors could be integrated and developed or suppressed so the community could thrive and contribute healthy, happy, and intelligent members to the state."[120]

The problems of the forest communities in 1940s developed from the reduced output of logs. For fifty years, private property which usually provided cutting areas, had been heavily cut and no longer had usable timber. Timber that remained was in the National Forest areas on poorer soil, in the steepest mountains, and with the poorest access. The Forest Service at that time had implemented a sustained-yield management policy.[121] The study included looking at a fuller utilization and greater variety of products from the forest in order to provide long-term opportunities for the community's stabilization and improvement.

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[120]H. T. Gisborne, "Montana Study Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, 1945," [mimeographed], Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 37, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[121]Ibid., 10.

Public School and Community Improvement

In conjunction with the Montana Study, the School of Education at Montana State University explored ways the public schools could improve the quality of living in small communities. The intent was "to determine the special skills, abilities, and knowledge needed by teachers and other community leaders to enable them to enrich the life in the communities."[122]

The study focused on discovering what schools were doing in small communities in the area of community work; finding out what educators considered needed activities if schools were to carry out community education, and finding out what educators thought were the desirable abilities, skills, and knowledge teachers had to have if they were to work successfully in such a program.[123] Edward Krug, a professor at Montana State University, surveyed administrators, teachers, and community leaders in 44 Montana communities. The survey found little relationship between community activities and school curriculum. Most schools, however, reported extensive adult education outside the school system in local and civic organizations. Out of the 44 schools, 11 schools reported not having any adult education programs for community improvement within or outside the school. "It seems clear that there is a general lack of adult education activities for community improvement."[124]

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[122]Ibid., 13.

[123]Edward Krug, The Public School and Community Improvement (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1945), 2.

[124]Ibid., 3.

The survey suggested that activities that might help to create adult education programs for community improvement were community planning projects and community forums on social problems.

> We have evidence that some Montana communities see the need for such important community activities as continuous community planning, discussion of modern problems, improving the appearance of the community, and good fun.[125]

The respondents felt the most important qualification for teachers was

> . . . a genuine interest in community life and people. This means obviously teachers who are interested enough to make a career in the small community, to become identified with its concerns, and to gain acceptance as a member of the community.[126]

The second and third qualities were the abilities to stimulate and guide community-planning activities. He/she also needed skills in leading public discussion on social problems. However, it was noted that the type of training needed to develop these skills was not a part of the conventional teachers' training program.[127]

Teachers and administrators alike questioned whether teachers' leadership in public affairs was actually a positive activity. One administrator responded to the questions as follows:

> I do believe there is a place for adult education, but I do not believe it should be handled by teachers of the community, primarily because the teacher has twice as much to do now than she has time to do well . . . . Most communities do not want teachers whom the community feels are foreigners

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[125]Ibid., 4.

[126]Ibid., 4.

[127]Ibid., 5. Other qualities mentioned included ability to lead group singing, sensitivity to community history and resources, ability in group psychology, and the ability to play bridge.

> to lead, but rather to give ideas from the side, do the work and give the credit to the natives.[128]

In summary, Krug listed the major needs of communities as: community planning projects, discussion groups on modern problems, improvement of community appearance, book review and music activities, local history studies, and recreation projects.

> To accomplish this, these communities needed teachers with an interest in community life and problems, who can stimulate and guide community planning, who can lead discussion groups, who can lead group singing, and who can help with local history studies.

Krug felt teachers' training programs were the place to begin educating teachers about life in a small community. Such training would include leading in community singing and discussion groups.

> The training of the prospective teacher should include considerable emphasis on the regional movement in American art, literature, and music and on the characteristics of American life in rural and small communities . . . . We want the teacher to go into the small community with considerable more insight and basic human sympathy than Carol Kennicott revealed in Main Street. The prospective teachers along this same line might be given some elementary techniques in the studies of local history and in the carrying on projects of local history in the school.[129]

Krug, however, felt there was a need to promote greater community acceptance of teachers. Teacher housing in many small communities was disgraceful. "In one town I visited recently, a teacher had to live in a dingy, vermin-infested, broken-down hotel."[130] Teachers' salaries remained low and he concluded that Montana needed to have a better

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[128]Ibid., 6.

[129]Ibid., 9.

[130]Ibid.

financial support for the school systems. He also suggested a campaign with a slogan, "Every teacher a community member."[131]

Finally, Krug concluded that the job of community leadership could not be left to teachers alone. Lay leaders in the communities would also receive leadership training in community improvement. Summer workshops could be designed to be flexible and based on planning with the participants. Topics suggested for training included the following:

> . . . regional movement in American life and implications for community development, local history projects, community planning, community recreation including art, music, literary, and dramatic activities, community appearance, school and community relationships, community health, community economic life in relation to resource use, and community government.[132]

Krug concluded that education could be "a favorable force for improving the quality of small-town living"[133] if teachers would actively become citizens of a community on a long-term basis; communities would accept teachers as fellow citizens; and lay people would "devote time and effort to study and participate in community activities."[134]

Community Drama

Community drama and historical pageants helped communities "focus on the past in genuinely analytical and critical ways."[135] The drama

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[131]Ibid., 6.

[132]Ibid., 9.

[133]Ibid., 10.

[134]Ibid.

[135]Ibid.

led to a "common interest in the community's welfare and the feeling of belonging."[136] Members of the study groups wrote a series of episodes taken from the history and problems of the community. The episodes then were put together and presented to the whole community.

Bert Hansen, Professor of English from Montana State College, coordinated the dramas in Darby, Stevensville, Conrad, and for the Salish-Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Valley. Each drama was adapted to the particular needs of the communities involved in a form and subject matter different from the others.[137]

Darby was the first community to produce a play. Called "Darby Looks at Itself," the play incorporated a series of episodes based on problems the community was having in 1945. Large lumber companies were moving out of the area after cutting the most profitable timber. The Forest Services implemented a new land-use policy in an effort to conserve dwindling resources. Many people feared Darby would become a ghost town. The drama focused on these fears and the problems facing the community.

Written by Darby Study Group, three themes were presented: long-range planning programs in connection the community's natural resources, immediate plans for better economic stability, and the

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[136]Bert Hansen, "Tales of the Bitterroot: Pageantry as Sociodrama." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 33, 2 (1947): 162.

[137]Bert Hansen, "Sociodrama in Small-Community Therapy-Programs," Sociatry 1, 1 (March 1947): 93.

qualities of the community which built a spirit.[138] The sociodrama was given in the winter of 1946 to 300 people.[139]

Stevensville, as part of its study, did a historical pageant-drama around the early Montana mission. Conrad did a pageant around a fall festival. The Salish-Kootenai tribes did one on their traditions. Each community's project was similar in effect and function, but each was different according to the resources and interest of the community. "The dynamic symbolization of the community's life and problems was an essential part of all the programs."[140]

Series II--Cultural Study

At the beginning of the third year, Brownell traveled to Berea College in Kentucky to study this college's projects in folk art, music, and culture. Frank Smith, a recreation specialist from Kentucky, was recruited to the Montana Study staff to help direct cultural activities in Eastern Montana. He worked out of Lewistown. Smith with Brownell organized a second series of study groups, focusing on community drama, art, dancing, crafts, and local history.

The staff of the Montana Study and others who were involved in the Study wrote a series of papers about the Study. This dissemination of information on the program reached many journals.

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[138]Ibid., 94.

[139]It was estimated that there were 126 people participating in the drama.

[140]Baker Brownell, "The Community Drama in Adult Education." The Teachers College Journal XVIII, 2 (November 1946): 2.

Montana Margins: The State Anthology

One of the major projects of the Montana Study was the development of a state anthology to promote a "wider recognition of Montana's own glamorous traditions."[141] The anthology was part of the study of Montana communities and the various phases of its economic and cultural life, including historical and literary materials, speeches and political documents, poetry, novels, and non-fiction writing of the pre-1940s. Brownell, in 1944, assigned Joseph Kinsey Howard the task of compiling an anthology depicting the true life in Montana. The Rockefeller Foundation agreed to additional funding for the project.

> If he [Howard] cared to ask his paper for a year's leave of absence to undertake the work under the sponsorship of the university, the Foundation could, I think, readily consider a request for a grant-in-aid to the university toward the expenses involved.[142]

Two grants-in-aid totaling $7200 were given to the university system.[143]

The anthology took Howard two years to complete. The book originally was planned as a simple volume to be mimeographed or published by the Montana Study. "But as value of the materials became apparent, Mr. Brownell thought the book might merit commercial

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[141]Joseph Kinsey Howard, Montana Margins (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), viii.

[142]John Marshall to Ernest Melby, 29 May 1944, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United State, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.82, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[143]Of this total Howard received $3200 for working half-time on the project. The anthology became a highly charged issue between Howard and the Board of Education.

publication."[144] Howard, in 1945, negotiated with Yale University Press to publish the book. The interest of the Yale University Press in the anthology prompted Howard to do a more complete volume.

The book was named Montana Margins to "illustrate the broad physical and mental margins that belong uniquely to Montana."[145] The anthology was to encourage "a participative attitude toward arts, or literature, or human activity."[146] Howard's vision of Montana's margins was as follows:

> The fully functioning community will provide the experience of beauty for its citizens: in Montana, it will help them to interpret in music and painting, in drama and literature, the elemental values of life in this State which have been too often overlooked--space and freedom, sun and clean air, the cold majesty of the mountains and the loneliness of the plains, the gaiety of a country dance, the easy friendliness of the people. These are the margins around the sometimes fretful business of earning a living. These are what Thoreau meant when he said, "I love a broad margin to my life." These are the beauties, in Montana; and they give this book its title . . . . We tend to forget the resources of our culture are not purchased in expertness but in ourselves and our region.[147]

The 515-page collection was arranged according to subject matter: war, the river, the land, beyond the law, men and women, industry, social life, animals, travel and transportation, and the spirit of the people. Each piece contained an editorial comment on the piece, the

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[144]Joseph Kinsey Howard to George Selke, 14 October 1946, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27. Box 5, Folder 5, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

[145]Ruth Robinson to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 20 November 1946, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

[146]Howard, 1946, ix.

[147]Ibid.

source, or the author. A chronological table of content was also included in the anthology. The book was published November, 1946.[148]

The Last Year

Brownell announced his resignation in July, 1946, at the end of the second year. He had been on leave from his position at Northwestern University. Joseph Kinsey Howard also resigned to pursue a professional writing career.

Three new people became members of the Montana Study Staff. Ruth Robinson, who was an English teacher in Conrad and a participant in that study group, took over the position of acting director. Bert Hansen, who had worked with community drama in Darby, became a research associate to handle study groups in the western part of the state and Frank Smith, a recreation specialist, was hired for Eastern Montana.

In the last year, Robinson and the staff carried on several projects including community drama in Lonepine, Series I Study Groups in Dixon, Woodman, Libby, and Victor; and Series II Study Groups in Darby, Victor, Conrad, and Lewistown. Activity groups for dancing crafts and local history were organized in many of the communities. Robinson set up workshops in leadership at each of the six units. The Montana Study ended before this project could be completed.

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[148]Howard became bitter over the anthology when the Board of Education refused to give him the royalties from the book sales which he felt he deserved.

CHAPTER 3

THE MONTANA STUDY: IDEALISTIC FAILURE?

By any standard, the accomplishments of the Montana Study would seem outstanding as well as productive. In the view of many members of the community research groups, the Montana Study had successfully made them aware of new possibilities for their communities. Yet it had not gained the funding and support it needed to survive. On July 19, 1947, three short years after it started the Montana Study project was finished. What happened to the Study was a mix of complicated circumstances.

This chapter examines the problems the Montana Study had in sustaining a permanent program in Montana. The areas examined are Renne's opposition to the Montana Study, Howard's problems with the political structure in Montana, and the internal administrative problems within the Montana Study.

Melby and Reorganization

Ernest Melby became chancellor of the Montana University System July 1, 1943. Melby, with the Higher Education Reorganization Committee, embarked on a study of the system and his stance won him the respect of the other unit presidents on the Executive Council. Even before Melby's appointment as chancellor, he unified the university system presidents in procuring the support of legislators

for all the units. Melby wrote to William Cobleigh, president of Montana State College, that meeting with the legislators would give each president a chance to present the needs of his own institution and reemphasize the need for solidarity in the legislative groups of the six communities.[149] The five other unit presidents reacted positively to Melby's suggestion.

When the Board of Education appointed Melby chancellor, the Executive Council unanimously supported him. Yet within a short year, Melby, reorganization of the system, and the Montana Study became the center of another bitter feud in the university system. Both university reorganization and the Montana Study were ultimately the victims. How did a chosen leader, recognized not only by the Board of Education but by his peers become the center of dispute? The answer lies in a series of events, misunderstandings, and mistakes.

The beginning of the problem started back at the turn of the century with the strong rivalry with Montana State University and Montana State College. The academics in both systems tended to view the other system with suspicion. As far as the Montana State College faculty was concerned, Melby was in a testing period when he attended the Stevens-Kraenzel meeting in May 1943. Kraenzel, who had just finished a project in conjunction with other extension units in Canada and the Northern Plains states, was hopeful that the Rockefeller Foundation would support the implementation of the research project.

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[149]Ernest Melby to W. M. Cobleigh, 19 November 1942, Renne Collection, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

Melby promoted Kraenzel's project and offered the Montana University System support in implementing the project.

However, Stevens, director for the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, indicated to Kraenzel that the foundation would not continue to support the project beyond the original study. In notes written on the subject, Stevens had three basic reasons for not lending support on the projects. First, the project focused on economic development which the humanities divisions was reluctant to support. Secondly, the Rand Corporation evaluating the pilot project, suggested that the people in the Northern Plains states viewed the project with suspicion and were reluctant to participate.[150] The third area of concern centered on the exclusion of Canadian prairie provinces from the proposed project.

Stevens and the newly appointed chancellor met during the Bozeman meeting. Stevens, impressed with Melby's vision for the university system, believed Melby was the man to implement some ideas Stevens had on developing humanities in the rural areas. In May, 1943, Stevens approached Melby about developing a proposal to help build links among higher education, humanities, and small rural communities. When the faculty at Bozeman's Montana State College, especially the Extension Service people, became aware of the new situation between Stevens and

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[150]Stevens report on Kraenzel Project, May, 1943, Northern Plains Studies-Thomson, Record Group 1.1, Record Series 226S, Box 263, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York. Rand noted that people in the Prairie Provinces adopted the study group process more readily than those in the Northern Plains States.

Melby, they saw Melby as having moved in on Kraenzel's project in order to get funding for Melby's Missoula campus.

President Cobleigh, supportive of Melby, resigned from Montana State College to take a position in Oregon. Roland Renne, a young agriculture economist with the Extension Service, was appointed president of the college effective July 1, 1943. Renne had been in Extension since 1935. As had many of his colleagues, Renne developed a strong suspicion that Montana State University at Missoula was trying to eliminate the Bozeman agricultural college. Melby's dialogue with the Rockefeller Foundation only helped to increase that suspicion.

In the early phase of the university reorganization planning, June 1943, Melby met with the Executive Council on future possibilities for the higher education system, hoping to get a sense of direction from the presidents on the course they felt the university system should follow. Melby brought to the gathering different experts on higher education including President Fred Engelhardt of the University of New Hampshire. The group hammered out various options they felt would work for reforming the system. On the whole, the presidents felt the system should be united under one chief executive. The presidents also wanted a single budgeting system. Unfortunately Renne, though invited, did not attended the planning sessions and he soon began to clamor that Montana State College was left out of the reorganization planning.[151]

From July 1943 to January 1944, Melby researched overall problems of the Montana University System. He traveled to each of the units and

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[151]Merrill Burlingame, Bozeman, Montana, April, 1987, interview with author [notes].

talked to the presidents and faculties about problems unique to their units. He also did an extensive historical study of the university system and the Board of Education[152] in which he recognized two major weaknesses in the university system. For one, the Board of Education had limited power when controlling the university system.

> I am convinced that the difficulties which have been encountered in the past and are being encountered at the present are deeply rooted in the existing legislative straight-jacket under which the State Board of Education operates.[153]

The board had the responsibility for control of higher education, but the authority for control rested with the legislature. Melby also questioned the usefulness of the chancellorship under the present university system, "Any recommendations which he [chancellor] makes to the Board may be of no consequence since the Board lacks the power to carry them out"[154]

Melby saw the separate units as a major source of problems. The separation of units also created fiscal problems, in that "fiscally independent units made any attempts at unified administration a mere mockery."[155]

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[152]Ernest Melby, "Memorandum to the Commission on Higher Education, 19 May 1944," [mimeographed], Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Helena, Montana.

[153]Ernest Melby, "Report to the Board of Education, April 24, 1944," [mimeographed], Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[154]Ibid., 3.

[155]Ibid.

Melby then studied the organization of higher education in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and California. He recommended a reorganization of the higher education system modeled after the California system.

> If the University of Montana were constituted as a unified, single institution, with phases of its program operating at different points in the state, it would be practicable for the president of one of these units to function as the chancellor and chief executive for the Board of Education.[156]

In January 1944, The Board of Education appointed nineteen people to the Commission on Higher Education. The commission, made up of men and women from various professions and areas of the state, appointed Judge Lephart, Miles City, chair. The commission examined the needs of the University system in the postwar era and offered recommendations in solving problems that would arise from the influx of servicemen and women back into the different university units.[157]

The first meeting of the commission, in Helena, January 28, 1944, convened the commission itself, members of the Board of Education, and the presidents from the various university units. Melby outlined for the commission the postwar problems facing the system. One of the major concerns was the increased student population to a university system that was understaffed and underfunded. The demand for different areas of education, Melby said, would expand beyond the present

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[156]Ernest Melby, "Report to the Commission of Higher Education, 19 May 1944." p. 4, [mimeographed], Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[157]Chennette, 392.

curriculum in the units. "The greatest demand will be for training for life apart from training in liberal arts and for a profession."[158]

The commission reviewed various ways the six units could be structured to best serve the student population. The discussion centered on the possibilities of turning the Dillon, Havre, and Billings units into junior colleges with transfer programs into the larger institutions. Those three units would also have teacher training and terminal two year vocational programs. The group felt that junior college preparation would cost a fourth as much as the cost of educating students in the four year colleges.

Throughout the meeting, Melby emphasized the need for adult education to help solve the problems of the state.

> You will see there is not one problem that relates to human life that is not the concern of the University. There are state and community problems to be solved, irrigation, inroads of the federal government; the people can not solve them unless they have the facts . . . . The Agricultural Extension Service of the State College . . . needs to broadened its base to include ways to help people live a better life.[159]

Renne, who attended the meeting, agreed that Extension needed to expand its areas to include other aspects of community life. Yet when questioned about the back-to-the-soil movement, Renne replied he hoped there would not be such a movement "as it would be on a poverty basis.

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[158]"Montana Commission on Higher Education Minutes, January 28, 1944." p. 2, Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[159]Ibid., 5.

The program of a little land for each man and a job did not work out well in Montana."[160]

Even at this early date, the philosophical difference between Renne and Melby on the purpose of higher education began to surface. These differences not only created problems for the university system but also for the Montana Study.

After the January meeting, Renne and Melby exchanged a series of letters in which the difference between the two men became apparent. Melby, in an effort to find a middle ground, proposed bringing in an outside person to mediate the differences between the two units. Renne emphatically opposed the idea, stating:

> Your proposal to bring in some outside authority to make a study of the problem of the distribution of fields of activity between university and college . . . assisting in arriving at an equitable decision in term of student welfare . . . . I sincerely hope that you will not propose this because I am sure this will not be well received. This is primarily the job of the chancellor with the presidents of the units involved and would weaken your position considerably.[161]

The Commission of Higher Education recommended a number of changes for the university system. The major recommendation proposed welding together the six units into one university for "carrying on one educational program, the budgetary control, and the administration of all the units."[162] The commission recommended increasing the power of the Board of Education. Working with an Executive Board made up of the

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[160]Ibid., 13.

[161]Roland Renne to Ernest Melby, 4 March 1944, Renne Collection, Reorganization Files, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[162]"Report to Commission of Higher Education."

presidents of the units, the executive head of the state system could present a unified budget to the legislature.

> One fundamental weakness [of the Board of Education] is the fiscal dependence . . . and the separation of the University budgets into private contracts with the legislature . . . It [the Board of Education] has responsibility, but not the authority . . . Unification of the system is a fiction as long as that condition exists.[163]

Under the plan, less essential courses and unnecessary duplication would be eliminated. Finally, to appease suspicions that Melby or any other unit was trying to take over the system, the Commission recommended that the executive head of the system not be a president of any of the units.[164]

The Montana Commission on Higher Education met at the state capitol in March 1944. Melby had become convinced that the university system did not need a chancellor as long as the State Board of Education remained a weak body.

Melby also knew the renewed rivalry between Montana State University and Montana State College would hamper any efforts for university system reform. In April 1944, Melby resigned to return to his position as president at Montana State University. The Board of Education asked Melby to remain as executive officer to the Board. This action confirmed suspicions of the other units that Melby and the

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[163]"Minutes of Montana Higher Education Commission, 24 March 1944," p. 13, [mimeographed], Renne Collection, Reorganization File, Record Series 0030, Box 28, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[164]"Report on Higher Education."

university were engaged in a power squeeze, reminiscent of maneuvers thirty years in the past.[165]

Ironically, the Rockefeller Foundation approved a $25,000 grant to the Montana University System for the Montana Study in March of 1944. Brownell was hired in April as director of the project.

When Brownell came to Montana in August, Melby suggested that the Montana Study staff work closely with Montana State College and President Renne. Renne rebuffed any attempts to develop links between the Study and Montana State College. Attempts to move the Montana Study's office to Montana State College to appease the people there were resisted, and Brownell wrote to Stevens,

> This spring I [Brownell] offered to move our office to Bozeman for the coming year, but Doctor Renne said at the time that he did not wish it . . . . Unfortunately the Extension Service and perhaps President Renne seem to think of the Montana Study as a competitor. Neither the Extension Services nor the State College has done any work in the fields where we are working. But I suspect that they [Extension Service] wish to keep the field clear.[166]

When the Board of Education asked Melby to present the reorganization plan to the 1945 legislature, a bitter fight ensued.

> The legislature failed to act . . . on the recommendations of the commission. Instead it departed from a longtime practice and asked the several institutions to submit a budget separately. It also passed a statute to the effect that no

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[165]Merrill Burlingame, A History: Montana State University. (Bozeman, Montana: Montana State University Office of Publication, 1968), 187.

[166]Baker Brownell to David Stevens, 9 August 1945, Record Group 1.2, Record Series, United States, 200R Montana State University Regional Studies, Box 382, Folder 3330.84, Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

> president of one of the institutions could serve as an executive officer of the State Board of Education.[167]

As long as Melby remained executive officer of the Board of Education, Renne was cautious about doing overt attacks on the Montana Study. Melby resigned as president of Montana State University in September 1945, to become Dean of Education at New York University.[168] The Montana Study lost its protector and champion. "The fact that President Melby is leaving . . . is no less than a disaster to the plans of the Montana Study."[169]

Renne was the first to suggest that since the various units were helping to fund the Montana Study, the presidents of the units should have a say into the project. In a letter to Brownell, Renne wrote the following:

> Since the Montana State College is one of the four units of the system helping to finance the Montana Study this year, I would like to ask you to work out with us and with our county agents first your program and procedures before anything is done in a given county where we have county agricultural people or home demonstration agents.[170]

The issue again came up during a tour of Ravalli County by Brandborg, Renne, Howard, Brownell, and the county agent. At that meeting, Renne again raised the issue of clearing the study groups with the county agents.

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[167]Burlingame, 87.

[168]Merriam, 107.

[169]Ibid., 2.

[170]Renne to Brownell, 7 November 1944.

Renne was not the only obstacle for the Montana Study. When the issue of further funding from the six university units was discussed at an Executive Council meeting, the six presidents were on the whole unfavorable. Without Melby to champion the Montana Study, the State Board of Education tended not to support the research project.

The reasons for these attitudes in the presidents and the state board were complex and various. Behind most of them was the old inter-unit conflict and competition, plus the bitter reaction setting in against Melby's progressive leadership. Brownell saw the mounting opposition as making it impossible to continue the study.

> The presidents, so far as I can determine, have never been favorable to The Montana Study, partly because it was part of Melby's state-wide educational policy. Now they remain negative and ask, "What has it done in our school?" or just "What has it done?" Had they read the reports sent them they would have seen that it has done really a good deal for a small organization in one year.[171]

With the encouragement of Stevens, who was director in the Rockefeller Foundation, Brownell returned to his faculty position at Northwestern University in September 1946.[172]

Brownell evaluated the problem in this way.

> . . . we received only luke-warm support and in some cases opposition from the Agricultural Extension Service and in general from the faculties and administrators of the six units of university system. This seemed to be due partly to fear, which was quite baseless, that we would encroach on their territory, and partly due to suspicion of what seemed to them educational radicalism. The highly competitive

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[171]Brownell to Stevens, 9 August 1945.

[172]The Rockefeller Foundation gave Northwestern University a grant-in-aid for Brownell to disseminate information gathered on the study and to write two books on the Montana Study experiment: The Human Community and The College and the Community.

> situation among the six units of the university also made an over-all project difficult. In regard to the Extension Service I think the situation was largely a local one since the Extension Service . . . . The professional men in agriculture are likely to be trained only in production. Very often they concern themselves only with the better class of lands and the commercially more efficient farms and encourage the abandonment of the rest.[173]

Three new people were added to the Montana Study staff the last year of operation: Ruth Robinson, a Conrad teacher; Bert Hansen, Montana State College English professor; and Frank Smith, recreation specialist from Berea College in Kentucky. Robinson, who became the director, was besieged with problems from the new President McCain at Montana State University. McCain approached Robinson about relinquishing the Montana Study offices to Andrew Cogswell, new director of the University's Public Service Division.

> President McCain then came to the point of the interview by asking for The Montana Study offices for Mr. Cogswell's Division of Public Services, the Montana Study presumably to keep desk space. The implication was that the Montana Study would become a part of Mr. Cogswell's department . . . . The Montana Study's work in research would be vitiated should it become allied with a public-relations program, and the Montana Study's conception of community education is not at all related to the extension program of lectures or the correspondence program of subject and hour credits toward a degree . . . . The Montana Study's approach to adult education through the study group bears very little connection to the formalized university extension service . . . . The Montana Study is supported by the entire university system, and we really ought not to be thought of as a Missoula institution.[174]

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[173]Baker Brownell to Raymond Fosdick, 8 January 1947, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 220R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 382, Folder 3330.86, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[174]Ibid.

McCain's interest in the Montana Study became obvious to Brownell who informed Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation. McCain's apparent purpose was to milk the Rockefeller Foundation for funds by incorporating the Montana Study into that department. Brownell wrote,

> The presence of the Montana Study on the university grounds tends to stimulate competition in these quarters. If the study were not there . . . such a movement would peter out in a short time, since neither McCain nor Cogswell have the vision or the experience to do anything really significant in the field.[175]

At this point in time, Chancellor Selke incorporated administration of the Montana Study under his office. However, it stayed on the Missoula campus sharing office space with the public service department.

In the third year, Robinson worked with several of the university units to establish leadership training programs for teachers and community leaders. Though unit presidents showed some interest, action to establish the workshops was never completed. Most of the units did not have space or staff for doing the training, and the presidents made very little effort in helping to establish the program.

Attempts to get funding from the legislature to continue the Montana Study failed. Some of the pressure to discontinue the program came from the presidents, who felt the money was being wasted on

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[175]Baker Brownell to Ruth Robinson, 26 November 1946, Montana Study, Record Series 72, Box 18, Folder 15, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

"unrealistic goals" and "based upon the unjust assumption that Montana was a folk art center."[176]

The offices of the Montana Study closed on July 19, 1947. Attempts to revise the study both on the part of the Rockefeller Foundation and by the Montana University System failed. Stevens offered Foundation financial support for the Montana Study, if Chancellor Selke would secure an independent position for Robinson at Montana State University, but Selke was unwilling to give Robinson such an appointment. The Rockefeller Foundation broke off negotiations with the University System for any further grants-in-aid as Stevens explained to Selke,

> The disturbed state of affairs related to education in Montana, I am sure everyone will agree, in no way favors participation by an outside agency . . . . The primary reason for wanting good conditions is that it will give promoters of the plan a fair chance to provide others with a demonstration of effective work nationally and even internationally.[177]

Thus, the Montana Study failed in reaching its second objective: to get the university off the campus and to bring the facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities and within their occupational situation. The college and university faculty failed to see any tangible results or benefits of the study for their institutions. Therefore, higher education would not share their

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[176]Raymond Fosdick, "Rockefeller Foundation Report, 1948," p. 5 [mimeographed], Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 382, Folder 3330.85, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[177]David Stevens to George Selke, 19 August 1948, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 382, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

limited staff, money for the project, or space to house the Montana Study.

Howard and the "Company"

> In the final analysis, there were no less than eight facets of opposition to the Montana Study. Seven of them had no apparent relation to the company.[178]

Another factor that lead to the Montana Study's demise was the opposition launched by the large corporations, Anaconda Copper Company and Montana Power Company. Their opposition centered on one of the researchers for the Montana Study, Joseph Kinsey Howard. Howard had come to the study because of his national reputation accrued from his book, Montana, High, Wide, and Handsome.[179]

Howard, as a reporter for the Great Falls Tribune, had frequently attacked "the Company." Most of his criticism centered on the way "the Company" had treated the state and its people. Consequently, "the Company" was incensed when in September 1944, an article written by Howard came out in Harper's Magazine entitled "The Montana Twins in Trouble?" Howard compared the two corporate giants to the story book characters "Tweedledum and Tweedledee."

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[178]Richard Poston to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 9 June 1945, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[179]Howard received national recognition for the book. Stevens was impressed with the book and recommended Howard for the job of researcher. Stevens remained loyal to Howard and helped him get other grants from the Rockefeller Foundation.

> For almost a generation, a pair of fat boys like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, an arm of each flung chummily across the other's shoulder have been running the show in Montana.[180]

The article went on to describe in unflattering terms how Montana Power had manipulated to become a power monopoly in the state and how it manipulated in politics to control many of the natural resources of the state. Howard was jubilant that Montana Power was finally having problems getting what they wanted. "The company is not as impregnable as it looks, so political control may yet be wrested from the dominant twins."[181]

Howard concluded his article with this quote from Through the Looking-Glass:

> Tweedledum spread a large umbrella over himself and his brother, and looked up into it.
>
> "No I don't think it will rain," he said. "At least not under here, nohow. But it may rain outside?"
>
> "It may—if it chooses," said Tweedledee, "We've no objections contrariwise."
>
> But it is beginning to look as if the umbrella had sprung a leak. And the clouds rolling over the Rockies are dark indeed.[182]

The article came out two months after the Montana Study started and Howard had already been hired as a researcher. Montana Power launched a campaign with the Board of Education and the Rockefeller Foundation to have Howard removed from the study. When that failed, an underhanded smear campaign against the study started throughout the state which eventually included the governor, Sam Ford.

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[180]Joseph Kinsey Howard, "The Montana Twins in Trouble?" Harpers Magazine, (September 1944): 342.

[181]Ibid.

[182]Ibid.

The attack on Howard did not come directly from "the Company." The first inkling of problems came in the form of a letter to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., from Charles Towne, a retired Montana Power public relations executive. The letter dated October 16, 1944, complained about the grant which the humanities division of the Foundation had given to the university and the hiring of Howard as a researcher.

> Howard has long been a trouble maker in Montana. Financed and backed by the Foundation, the kind of "research" which seems to loom over Montana would grievously injure Montana industrial interests. . . Howard has repeatedly demonstrated radical, but communistic tendencies. Indeed until recently, I am credibly informed, Howard carried a membership in the Communist party and on one convivial occasion, displayed it boastfully.

Brownell in October 1944, visited Glover, counsel for Montana Power Company to enlist the help of the corporation in starting the Montana Study. Glover, in no uncertain terms, expressed his disapproval of the Montana Study and Melby. But his anger was mostly directed toward Howard. In describing the meeting, Brownell told how Glover pulled out "a large dossier and gave a litany of grievances" against the project and Joseph Kinsey Howard.

> [Glover] was very bitter over the fact that Howard was associated with us and many times said that he wondered what Mr. Rockefeller would think if he knew it. . . . He found something in the original proposal of which he had a copy, which he thought was an attack on the company.[183]

Though Howard tried to remain in a non-controversial role, his association with the Montana Study brought about attacks on it. A

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[183]Baker Brownell to David Stevens, 14 November 1944, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 382, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

second Harper's article, entitled "The Golden River," appeared May 1945. The article praised the concept of a Missouri Valley Authority patterned after the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Missouri Valley Authority was considered a threat in Montana to "state rights and to Montana Power's monopoly control of electrical power in Montana." In the article, Howard slammed Governor Sam Ford as well as the power company.

> Electric Bond and Share--American Power and Light utility tree--produce knotty clubs which swing threateningly over the heads of legislators and executives. Montana's Governor Ford, after winning re-election against a company-opposed young Supreme Court justice, devoted a major share of his message to the legislature to denunciation of the Missouri Valley Authority--though he previously called upon a congressional committee for "a statesmen approach, one great plan" . . . we do not believe that the interests of the basin will be served by piecemeal consideration of different features of the Missouri River legislation.[184]

When the United States Senate invited Howard to testify for the Missouri Valley Authority, Governor Ford was there to testify against it. From that point on, Ford was enraged with Howard's presence on the Montana Study staff. Ford made a statement in the Great Falls Tribune condemning the work of the Montana Study because he did not "believe in turning a lot of foreigners loose with wild ideas on Montana."[185] The Conrad Study Group secretary, Veta Marsh, wrote a letter to the Great Falls Tribune questioning the governor's appraisal of the Montana Study. In answer to Marsh's criticism on his position, Ford stated,

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[184]Joseph Kinsey Howard, "The Golden River," Harpers (May, 1945): 519.

[185]Great Falls Tribune, December 19, 1945.

> I did not criticize the Montana Study. I have criticized and will continue to do so, some of the personnel who are attempting to sell the people of Montana on the idea of State Socialism.[186]

Near the same time, Paul Meadows, a rural sociologist and research associate for the Montana Study, crusaded for reforming the economic structure of Montana. He started in 1944 campaigning for the Missouri Valley Authority. A debate was held in Kalispell between Meadows and J. H. Toelle, a University law professor on the Missouri Valley Authority. Charles Baldwin, a member of Board of Education, and others opposed to the Missouri Valley Authority, accused Meadows of being a communist and the Montana Study as a "red front" for the valley authorities.[187]

The anger of the company and the conservative block against the two men soon focused on the Montana Study. In some communities, such as Stevensville and Lewistown, opposition to the study groups mounted until some people avoided participating because they did not want to be branded communist. When the study ended, Poston, a researcher on the project, wrote:

> I have found the story far more complex than I ever expected . . . . The opposition to the Study mounted to a degree of bitterness I have never dreamed existed. In Lewistown it was said to be nothing but an insidious force infiltrating the state for the sole purpose of spreading class hatred and strife among people. It got so bad in Lewistown that several members of the study group actually quit. In Stevensville, the American Legion was set to stop the Montana Study and run Bert Hansen out of town as a

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[186]Sam Ford to Veta Marsh, 27 December 1945, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, File 2, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[187]Poston, 69.

> subversive character. In fact, this proposal was brought up openly in a Legion meeting and would have been attempted except for the prompt action of Father Jensen.[188]

Killing the Montana Study proved an easy task in a legislature dominated by a powerful political machine. The Montana Study was not reported outside of the subcommittee.

Problems Within the Project

A major problem the Montana Study staff had was its inability to articulate the goals of the project not only to the lay public but to the academic professionals. Chancellor Selke gave the Rockefeller Foundation an evaluation of the Montana Study in 1948. Selke, named chancellor in May, 1946, was not a part of organizing the Study, but in its last year, his office had to deal with the problems inherent in the program.

In his report to the Rockefeller Foundation, Selke's main criticism was that the Montana Study did not have clear goals and objectives. He found six different purposes for the Montana Study listed in various documents and reports.

> The quotations have been presented to point out the evident fact that the Montana Study was launched . . . without a concise statement of definite objectives . . . . By the third year, however, it was apparent that the inability to state positive and definite aims and objectives was a disadvantage . . . . Many persons who were interested in the Study and whose support the Study might have gained, wished to know about the blue-prints for the future.[189]

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[188]Poston to Howard, 9 June 1948.

[189]George Selke, "Organization and Procedures for the Montana Study," 12 March 1947, Rockefeller Archives, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Study, Box 382,

Brownell talked in terms of process which was seen as too idealist and without substance. To those on the outside of the process, he appeared to be an evangelist preaching the gospel of small town resurrection.[190]

Brownell recognized early in the development of the study that in small communities a process did exist and that the goal of the Montana Study was to help enhance that process which was already in place. He wrote,

> The humanities refer not to the isolated ends but to the process of living and its values. They involve primarily not the acquisition of knowledge or skills or goods or charm, but the participation in living as it goes along. They ask that this process be enriched and made interesting, and that life be identified in that process with a self-reliant community of friends and fellow workers. When educator forgets these simple truths and when our massive changing society repudiates them then indeed we are lost.[191]

Brownell's eagerness to "idealize small communities and rural life" tended to create communication problems with the academic community. "Although the staff professed faith in the method of objective inquiry and cooperative study, they advocated preconceived ideas of their own."[192]

Still another major problem for the Montana Study was that it "tried to do too much with too little." The size of the staff was too small for the research task undertaken. Brownell was the only full

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Folder 3332.87, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[190]Homstad, 73.

[191]Brownell, 1950, 92.

[192]Selke, 1948, 5.

time person, with Howard and Meadows only half-time the first year. Meadows went off the staff starting the second year of the project and Howard spent much of his time working on the state anthology.

The major focus of the first year needed to be on the community research and the study group process. Even with the manual, which took study groups through the community research process, Brownell had little faith in the people to organize study groups and to develop the leadership to carry out the community research. Brownell was unwilling to allow people to start the study group process on their own. Therefore, the majority of the study group sites were in the Bitterroot Valley, near the Missoula campus.

> The concentration of Montana Study groups has been in the western part of the state. You see that seven of the nine study groups are located in two valleys west of the mountains and four of them are in one county. We have been called the Ravalli County Study. Neither Conrad nor Lewistown group was started as a result of field work of the Montana Study. They were initiated by the people in those communities who had become interested in the Montana Study through other channels.[193]

Even though sixteen communities requested study groups, Brownell was reluctant to allow new study groups to start without the assistance of the staff. The staff was too small to carry on study groups especially in communities in Eastern Montana. This lack of commitment to the whole state, brought about a measure of resentment. "The

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[193]Ruth Robinson to George Selke, 26 September 1946, Montana Study, Record Group 72, Box 18, Folder 15, Montana State Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

Montana Study has neglected this part of the state. No community groups have been set up anywhere near the college."[194]

Another administrative problem was the turnover of personnel during the three years of the Study. Melby's departure from the chancellor's position and then from the state of Montana left the Study in a state of limbo with no apparent link or support in the university system. The new chancellor, Selke, did not have a clear understanding of the Montana Study.

With the academic and political problems associated with the Study, Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation urged Brownell to go back to his position at Northwestern University. The Rockefeller Foundation had at the end of the second year decided not to refund the project. Brownell left as director of the Montana Study in July, 1946. The Board of Education asked Brownell to remain as the director-in-absentia.

Robinson, the new director, was besieged with problems with the staff from the very first. Frank Smith, a recreation specialist from Kentucky, was supposed to work in Eastern Montana out of the Lewistown area. But Smith sold his car before coming to Montana. Brownell wrote to Robinson about the problem:

> I can see he [Smith] is spending much of his time sitting in Lewistown where our help is perhaps less needed than in any town in Montana . . . . He is unable to reach the little communities in which our most important work will be performed. Our strength will come from these little places,

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[194]Rush Jordan to George Selke, November 1946, Montana Study, Record Group 72, Box 72, Folder 15, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

> not from persuading townspeople who don't particularly need us that we all are pretty good.[195]

Robinson tried on several occasions to get Smith out in Eastern Montana to set up study groups. When Robinson tried to correct some of the problems with Smith, he would write to Chancellor Selke that Robinson was treating him unfairly and that "her expectations are directed in the wrong way."[196] Smith made very few attempts to get study groups started in Eastern Montana.

Hansen, on-leave from Montana State College, also was a problem for Robinson and the Montana Study. Brownell wrote to Selke that he had fears that "Hansen's temperamental intensity" might cause problems for the Study.[197] Howard also wrote to Selke about his concerns over Hansen.

> When he [Brownell] left, he admitted to me [Howard] that Hansen had been a difficult problem of adjustment for him [Brownell]; and he expected that Hansen would be similarly difficult for Miss Robinson.[198]

Robinson's attempts to save the Montana Study were in vain. She tried to correct many of the problems in the Study such as to whom the director reported and matching projects to the Study's objectives.

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[195]Baker Brownell to Ruth Robinson, 22 November 1946, Montana Study, Record Series 72, Box 18, Folder 14, Montana State Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

[196]Frank Smith to George Selke, 23 September 1946, Montana Study, Record Series 72, Box 18, Folder 14, Montana State Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[197]Baker Brownell to George Selke, 6 October 1947, Montana Study, Record Series 72, Box 18, Folder 14, Montana State Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[198]Howard to Selke, 5 January 1947.

Efforts to get $50,000 funding from the 1947 legislature to carry out the Study failed. The subcommittee on higher education did not report the report out to the full committee. Four members of the legislative higher education subcommittee killed the Montana Study.

After months of negotiations between the Rockefeller Foundation and the Montana University System, Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation wrote a terse letter saying:

> The disturbed state of affairs related to education in Montana, I am sure everyone will agree, in no way favors participation by an outside agency . . . . The primary reason for wanting good conditions is that it will give promoters of the plan a fair chance to provide others with a demonstration of effective work nationally and even internationally.[199]

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[199]Stevens to Selke, 19 August 1948.

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY GROUPS: INNOVATIVE SUCCESS?

The ten-week community research study group process was organized as one of the first projects of the Montana Study. Brownell, Howard, and Meadows modeled the study guide from a Canadian Study Group and from information gathered from experts in community education. This chapter examines the Montana Study group guide, seven of the groups which participated in the Montana Study, the stages of development in the study groups, and the factors within the study groups which affected long-term and short-term development.

The Montana Study Guide

Each ten-week study was designed to help communities assess and develop their own social, cultural, and economic resources that would stabilize their communities. The community research process focused on questions and activities that would help community folks gain "a deeper knowledge and appreciation of their own culture and historical traditions."[200]

During the ten weeks, each group researched, analyzed, and discussed the following:

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[200]Brownell, Howard, and Meadows, 4.

(1) The composition of the community as to nationality, history, occupation, religion, politics, education, and recreation.
(2) How churches, schools, lodges, clubs, and recreation played a part in human companionship and how those human connections could be expanded.
(3) The different ways people made a living and how they used their resources.
(4) The relationship of the community with the state and nation.
(5) The future possibilities for the community and the state.
(6) How action could facilitate change by helping to find ways "to gain control over means of making a living and developing the cultural and artistic aspects within the community.
(7) The ability of the group in gathering information, discussing, and using it in a constructive action.[201]

The process was based on a simple idea. "The Montana Study . . . was accommodated to the small community and its processes."[202] Brownell saw the processes in the small community as different from those in urban areas and he geared the methods in the ten-week study toward what he perceived as the principles and processes of democracy. One process of community life, he believed, was the intimate "interrelationships of functions" which "integrated life in the community," gave it coherence and mutual responsiveness affecting men's morals and cultural attitudes.

> In the village a man's economic activities are probably on the same scene as are the other functions of his life . . . . There is common acquaintance with these processes through seeing, hearing, and familiar conversation. There are endless cross references from one function to another and

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[201]Ibid., 21-111.

[202]Baker Brownell, The College and the Community (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1952), 236.

> from one man to another in performing them. The processes of community have unity of place.[203]

Community members studied the possibility of their communities becoming more aware of their deficiencies and their assets in the humanities with the idea of encouraging spontaneous interest in development of these idea lines within the communities themselves.[204] The hope of the project was to develop "learning methods and techniques for application to the state and nation,"[205] Humanities provided "the most available practical means of educating the common man in self-realization, largeness of understanding, and the ability to meet contemporary needs."[206]

The study guide consisted of ten sections, one for each week. The first section set up the structure for the group and procedures. The group selected a chairperson for the ten-week period. A secretary was chosen to record discussions and to put together reports from the community research. A different leader each week led discussions. The guide also established each week's course of action.

> What we are going to do is discuss some of the problems of our community, ourselves, our children and of our state and nation with a view towards finding out how living in communities like ours can be made better, more interesting, and more secure. We also expect to have a good time. How we are going to do it is through objective, friendly discussion that does not dodge the facts or the real issues . . . . This is not a debate. It is cooperative thinking rather than competitive thinking. Can we do it? Can we take as well as

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[203]Ibid.

[204]Brownell, Howard, and Meadows, 34.

[205]Ibid.

[206]Ibid., 4.

> give in this effort not to win in argument but to find the answer to a problem?[207]

Community research and discussion were seen as the paramount activity of the study group. The objective was research not action.

> Cooperative research in our community and our region will . . . be a part of the activities of our group. A leader will be appointed for each research problem. The results will be presented to this group for criticisms.[208]

Discussion came out of the research.

> Discussion is an exchange process. It has many values. Sometimes it is purely recreational. A good part of the time it is a process of solving problems, in such cases, problems are stated, issues declared, values formulated, solutions suggested, policies recommended. Discussion is a method of action and of preparing for action.[209]

The study guide cautioned the group to be objective in discussing the research questions and the information gathered.

> Group thinking on any problem is constructive and profitable only when it is objective. The objective person is fact-minded; he [she] seeks all the facts which seem relevant and which are available; he [she] tries to draw all the facts which seem relevant and which are available; he [she] tries to draw clearly and honestly conclusions from the facts themselves. It is this set of habits which will make our group discussions worth our time and effort.[210]

Each of the ten sections in the study guide contained information to be used as a spring board for the discussion group questions. At the end of section, research questions were assigned and resources were listed.

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[207]Ibid., 7.

[208]Ibid.

[209]Ibid.

[210]Ibid.

The opening section emphasized a workable group. Information given in the study guide provided statistics on Montana and its people. The first questions asked about the group's composition according to occupation, religion, politics, and special interest and hobbies. "What kind of people are we, economically, socially, and educationally? Why do we live in this community? How would I like to see this community changed?"[211] Each individual was asked to write down their answers to these questions and rewrite their answers after the ten-week study.

The study guide was not value neutral in its promoting the idea of community as the foundation of democracy.

> A community is a group of neighbors who know each other. (Face-to-face, primary group.) It is a diversified group as to age, sex, skill, function and mutual service to each other. It is a cooperative group, in which many of the main activities of life are carried on cooperatively. It is a group having a sense of "belonging," or group identity. It is a rather small group, such as the family or small town, in which people can know each other as whole person, not as functional fragments. When the group under consideration is so large that people in it do not know each other, the community disappears.[212]

The first set of research problems centered on the community itself and called for the group to develop histories of the churches, schools, business and economy, significant men and women, cultural aspects of the community.[213] It called for a map to be developed showing the features of the community both present and past.

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[211]Ibid.

[212]Ibid., 8.

[213]Ibid., 12-13.

The second week of the study focused on the people in the community.

> One of the most important elements affecting the stability of our community is the human connection. The feeling of belonging to a group of people who know each other, understand each other and are interested in each other seems to be necessary part of human happiness and security.[214]

The research questions focused on how churches, schools, lodges, clubs, and recreation played a part in human companionship and how human connections could be expanded in enhancing the community's life. The third section was on the different ways in which the people in the community made a living and how people utilized their resources.

> The technological changes affected our institutions, such as our schools, churches, lodges, and clubs, as well as the general cultural quality of our lives. They affected deeply the quality of living in our community.[215]

The questions focused on how technology had changed the way people in the community lived and its effects, both positive and negative.

The fourth week dealt with the relationship of the community to the state. The study guide emphasized the advantages and disadvantages of living in a rural state such as Montana. Advantages listed include less crime, more stable family life, larger and more diversified acquaintance and friendships, and personalized government. Weaknesses in the system were the loss of young people from the state, wealth flowing out of the state, and "the controls over its economy are

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[214]Ibid.

[215]Ibid.

usually centralized in dominant towns."[216] The state's economy was viewed as a problem.

> The fact that Montana has been built up so largely by the exportation of a few raw materials to more diversified and more populated regions outside of the State has made it somewhat similar to an economic colony; it is subject to all the fluctuations of a single market.[217]

The questions in this section focused on critical factors affecting the welfare of the communities and how this compared to other communities in the state. "Where does our community fit in the Montana picture? What are we producing and where is it going?"[218]

The topic compared the economic and social relationships between the plains and mountain areas of the state. "Are the two parts of the state respectively more related to outside districts more like them in character? It asks really whether Montana is one or two states."[219]

The fifth section looked at the cultural differences in the community and in the state. It covered different aspects of life and culture in Montana: the Native American, the miner, the stockgrower, the farmer, the business person and the laborer. Each scenario gave a brief history of the development, the characteristics and belief system of the groups, and the problems the groups had encountered in Montana. Brownell concluded in the study guide that Montanans were conditioned to accept change as normal.

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[216]Ibid., 38.

[217]Ibid.

[218]Ibid., 43.

[219]Ibid., 42.

> A sense of resignation toward the inevitability of change, abdication of will in regard to it tends to insecurity and discourages social progress in the community. But on the other hand recognition of change and rededication to the spirit of the pioneer whose confidence and courage enabled him to conquer each new obstacle is a progressive social force. When we lose this resiliency we have lost the frontier "drive," our most precious heritage because it was more responsible than anything else for establishing and maintaining American Democracy. . . . Montana is still a frontier, physically, and culturally. Though some of its natural resources have been sadly exploited, none has been exhausted; and hundreds of others are untouched. The cultural job—that of providing a satisfying and exciting community and family life—has hardly begun.
>
> Until recent years there was little opportunity for this because the rapidity of economic change and the dominance of the exploitative motive did not encourage establishment of stable, permanent communities. There are fewer and fewer among us who are blind to the unique benefits of our lives in Montana—the elemental values of sun and space and clean air—are here only to make money and go somewhere else. Most of us in this room cherish Montana and would like to have our children cherish it, grow to maturity here and establish homes. Otherwise we would not be here making this study.
>
> Nevertheless, as Montanans we recognize change, and the pioneer spirit surviving in us convinces us that we can so shape this change as to make our lives happier and more successful.[220]

The questions which were the focus of this study were

> What is meant by modernism as found in our town? What advantages does it have? What disadvantages? What should be done to cherish the way of life in Montana and the traditions that we value? What definitely might be done in this direction in our own community? What have been the most important changes in our community?[221]

The powerful rhetoric of this fifth session, written by Joseph Kinsey Howard, was meant to stir community pride and commitment. The Conrad Study was greatly affected by this section. The group

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[220]Ibid., 63.

[221]Ibid., 64.

identified strong community values that continued to impact how the community viewed and dealt with changes.

The sixth topic examined the relationship between the community and the nation. Information given in this section described the cultural and economical factors in six regions of the nation. Questions related to how the communities were connected to the different regions economically, educationally, and culturally.

The seventh week researched ideas about future possibilities for the state. In this section, three factors, biological, economic, and appreciative, were analyzed according to the effect they had on the communities. Biological factors included the weather and unpredictable natural forces, plus the trend to smaller families and the drain of young people from the state. Economic factors considered the distance Montana was from markets and the state's dependence on natural resources and out of state capital. The appreciative aspect related to "human values and worthwhileness of living in Montana."[222] Values were defined as those connected to living in the state, not in finding greater wealth.

> These Montanans have found a real treasure in this "treasure state," a country, a people, a way of living which in spite of many handicaps has somehow been deeply satisfying. They are proud of having held on and having won out. It is the pride of settlement, the kind of pride which other parts of America know only through books. Here it is living tradition. They did not look elsewhere for their values. They had faith that they could create their own values at home.[223]

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[222]Ibid., 85.

[223]Ibid.

The biggest problem facing the state was the drainage of valuable people from the Montana. The guide saw solution to the problems in group and community planning.

> Group planning means that people having the same problem get together, identify that problem, examine its causes, consider various methods for its solution, work together for its solution, periodically survey the results with an eye to improvement. Planning either by the group or by the individual is simply problem-solving: As somebody has put it, it is organized foresight plus collective hindsight . . . . Planning for Montanans as for any other people must be a grass-roots partnership."[224]

The study groups had now been introduced to the idea of community action. The major concern of seventh section focused on the "outstanding problem for planning in the community"[225] and the community changes that had caused the problem.

The eighth week discussion looked ahead to the future of the community in relation to its people. Guide information focused on what factors kept communities stable and what caused communities to decline. The question for this section asked what helped make the community permanent and stable. What are things that cause decline and disappearance of communities?[226]

The ninth section explored how action could be used to stabilize the community. The study guide delved into the concept of what quality of human life meant.

> The quality of human life refers to standards or values that we find in living, and it includes a wide range of interests

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[224]Ibid., 86.

[225]Ibid., 87.

[226]Ibid., 89.

> from the physical, economic, and social to moral, artistic, and appreciative aspects of life called spiritual. A high quality of living usually means a kind of living in which all of these valued interests and activities have a place. In such a life there is an integration of theses values.[227]

In a well balanced culture individual interest and social interest are not separated or competitive. Cooperation was seen as the key to stabilizing and creating balance in communities. Research questions called for finding ways to pool resources in the community to help facilitate change, to find ways of gaining control over the means of making a living in the community, to find ways to build a stronger education system and to develop the cultural and artistic aspects in the community.[228]

The final topic called for an evaluation of the study group process. The evaluation examined the ability of the group to carry on discussion without "undue emotion and prejudice and for the sake of solving a problem, not in winning a debate."[229] The group also evaluated how well they gathered information and used it in planning constructive action. Finally the group evaluated how enjoyable the study group process had been for the participants.

> Implicit in all of these ten weeks of discussion has been the belief that a good life is a whole life in which all the normal functions of living, the biological, the economic, the social, the intellectual, the appreciative and spiritual, are coordinated with each other, and in which all have opportunity for expression. We have assumed that human beings as organic creatures with diversified functions and interests are of more value than institutional organizations

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[227]Ibid., 97.

[228]Ibid., 97-105.

[229]Ibid., 107.

> such as the state, the corporation, property, class, or certain techniques of politics or of production . . . . We believe that the enrichment of human life in this sense is most important . . . . This, from our point of view, is the central meaning of "the humanities."[230]

The Community Study Groups

Eleven study groups were conducted between 1945–1947 in the following communities: Lonepine, Hamilton, Stevensville, Darby, Lewistown, Conrad, Woodman, Dixon, Libby, Victor, and a Native American group on the Salish–Kootenai reservation. Nine of the communities were in Western Montana and three were in the Bitterroot Valley. Conrad and Lewistown were the only two communities east of the Continental Divide.

Agriculture was an important part of all the communities' economies. In Hamilton, Libby, Stevensville, Victor, and Darby, lumbering was also part of the economic base.

Two study groups were conducted on the Salish–Kootenai reservation. Unfortunately the study group process was modified significantly to accommodate the staff perception of what the Native American group could handle. The one positive result was a recording of the tribal history of the Salish and Kootenai tribes from the older members of the tribe.

The groups were fairly homogenous. Participants in the study groups included housewives, farmers, retired folks, government officials, community leaders, clergy, educators, and in some

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[230]Ibid., 110–111.

communities business people. Except in Libby, blue collar workers and lumberjacks did not participate.

Seven of the groups were compared in this current study to see what differences there were within the communities and the processes used in the study groups. The analysis examined the processes and factors which influenced short-term or long-term effects on community action and development. The seven groups compared were Lonepine, Darby, Hamilton, Stevensville, Lewistown, Libby, and Conrad. All seven used the same study guide, and all had completed records of the study group process. Interviews were conducted with participants from Darby, Hamilton, Libby, and Conrad. Participants contacted from Lewistown and Stevensville felt they did not remember enough to be able to give information or were reluctant to talk about their experiences.

Effects of the Study on communities fell into three categories: communities where no significant action was taken, communities where there was short-term development, and one community where there was long-term development.

Lonepine Study Group

Lonepine, a small community in the Little Bitterroot, was selected to pilot the study guide. Harvey Baty, a minister who directed religious activities at Montana State University, suggested to Brownell that Lonepine might be a good site to pilot the study guide because the community already had close ties. Baty, who also conducted community service in Lonepine, took Brownell to the annual community Thanksgiving dinner. While there, Brownell had the opportunity to talk to some of

the citizens about using Lonepine to experiment with the process and test the study group guide. One member commented that he felt it was not too bad an idea to be a guinea pig.[231] Brownell, Howard, and Meadows started the study group there in January 1945. A total of 25 people attended the first meeting.[232] According to Poston's account, the group was a hit.[233] The study group process and the study guide seemed to work effectively in Lonepine. From the minutes of the group, participants did the community research and discussion with a great amount of zeal.

> You would have thought Lonepine was preparing to print a section in the World Almanac . . . . The questions were given serious, detailed consideration. Almost no phase of community life escaped attention--past, present, and future.[234]

And there were times when they had a great deal of fun. For example, one of their researchers wrote about a doctor who had come into the community in the early days:

> The first to pose as a doctor was a bewhiskered gentleman who probably carried more germs in his whiskers than pills in his case, and only a couple of the latter was he capable of using, a sedative and a laxative. It was reported that he was at one time a veterinarian, but people no longer trusted their livestock in his care so he took up the treatment of humans. It was in this man's care that the health of the local Indians was intrusted, which probably helps to account for the rapid decrease of Indian life in our neighborhood.[235]

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[231]Poston, 32.

[232]Ibid.

[233]Ibid. Poston in his account of the study group, caught the drama of the process in the Lonepine group.

[234]Ibid., 44.

[235]Ibid., 45.

By the end of the ten weeks, the researchers felt comfortable with the study group process they had created and felt sure that it could be successfully executed in other communities.

> As they drew near the end of their tenth week they began considering what they had accomplished. It had been fun. Everybody agreed on that. They had dug into the history of Lonepine to create their own literature. They had recorded anecdotal information about their own past that otherwise would have been lost. To the people, this was of immeasurable value. They had carefully studied the social, economic, and recreational problems that could make life empty in their community, or could make it abundant. And from working together to analyze and understand these problems they had recaptured the spirit of simple contentment which made Lonepine a community of neighbors where down-to-earth American democracy is a living reality. Perhaps their greatest accomplishment was what they had done to their attitudes of mind. This, to be sure, was pretty intangible, but it was terribly significant, for it had given them a deeper understanding of themselves and more conscious appreciation of life in their community.[236]

The people were excited about their experience in the Montana Study. Each week, the learned men from the University had come to help them through the process. Participants had been faithful in doing the research and in discussing the present, past, and future of the community. In the evaluation at the end of the study, they reported that they felt the cooperative community ties had been strengthened. The group felt they had fun in doing the study and that they were more aware of and had a more conscious appreciation of the life in their community.[237] One tangible result from the study was a library for the community. The community did a pageant with Bert Hansen. People in

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[236]Ibid., 45.

[237]Brownell, Howard, and Meadows, 43.

Lonepine stayed very loyal to the Montana Study and later protested Governor Ford's criticisms of the Montana Study.

Hamilton Study Group

The policy of the Montana Study was to go only to communities that requested the study. Hamilton became the second community to try a study group. Guy Brandborg, United States Forest Supervisor and member of the Board of Education, spearheaded efforts to get the Study into Hamilton.

However, the Hamilton group was not very successful. According to the Hamilton report, participants attended the ten-week sessions sporadically and did not become actively involved in the community research process or the discussions. In this group, Brownell took on the role of leader in the discussion sessions. By the third week, volunteers were not completing the assigned research. Brownell then brought in a number of outside experts to talk to the group on different aspects of community, the Missouri Valley Authority, and recreation.

In an analysis of the study groups, Poston wrote: "Hamilton was not much because of over-organization and lack of interest."[238] People in Hamilton, interviewed in 1989, reported that they remembered very little about their experience with the Montana Study. Participants remembered that University people were very interesting, but "not very

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[238]Richard Poston to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 5 December 1948, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana State Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

much came out of the study in Hamilton."[239] One women remarked, "Brownell approached the study group as an evangelist with missionary zeal. He was very inspiring."[240]

Another problem in Hamilton was that the group lacked business people and merchants as members of the group.[241]

> . . . if business leaders are in the group the thing has more prestige, and therefore more weight in the town. Of course the little guys, and the so called radicals ought to also be in there and have a definite part to play. It has to be in fact as well as in theory, a cross-section of the community.[242]

Darby Study Group

In 1945, Darby was a lumbering community of 500 people, but the large lumber companies had moved out after most of the profitable timber had been cut down. The Forest Service implemented a land use policy in an effort to conserve the dwindling forest resources. The times were hard for the community. With dwindling resources and a limited economic base, it appeared that Darby was dying. The approach to life of the people of Darby was

> the essence of rugged individualism—[they] called no man 'mister' and [they] bowed to no authority—individual or state. They were almost automatically opposed to government,

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[239]Ibid.

[240]Ruth Brandborg, Hamilton, Montana, interview with author, November 1988, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[241]Robert Smith, "A History of Development and Improvement Efforts in Ravalli County, 1976), p. 8, [photocopy], original with Robert Smith, Hamilton, Montana.

[242]Richard Poston to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 5 December 1948, Howard Collection, Manuscript Series, Box 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana State Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

> particularly bureaucratic government concerned with regulations and control.[243]

The Forest Service was a prominent government body in the community. People saw the government as "alien agencies" which were a "menace to their rugged individualism."[244]

Champ Hannon, a teacher, put in a request to Baker Brownell to undertake a ten-week study group in Darby, and Brownell started the group through the research process. Hannon became permanent chair of the group. Participants in the study remembered Brownell as being very dynamic and interesting. "Baker Brownell was very lively and well informed. He did a lot to get us organized."[245] The Montana Study Group gave participants a chance to hear people such as Ernest Melby and E. O. Baker. "Baker Brownell had a marvelous personality. He was so stimulating."[246]

The primary goal in Darby was to find work for young people so they could stay in the community. "We had to have industry or we would lose our young people. We had to help people stay. A big outfit (lumber) came out of Washington and chocked out our little mills."[247]

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[243]Bert Hansen, "Darby, Montana Looks at Itself," Adult Education Bulletin (April, 1946): 100.

[244]Ibid.

[245]Bessie Hannon, Darby, Montana, interview with author, March 1990, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[246]Agnes Cooper, Darby, Montana, interview with author, December 1988, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[247]Hannon interview.

Under the direction of Bert Hansen, Professor of English at Montana State College, the Darby Study Group decided to put on a play depicting the problems confronting their community. People were asked to write a series of ten- to fifteen-minute episodes concerning community life. "The episodes were to be expressions of conflicting ideas about their welfare as the welfare related to the past, the present and a hope for the future."[248]

Those active in writing and producing the play were Champ Hannon, a Mrs. Ford, and School Superintendent Arden Cole. "People were interested, enthusiastic, and excited about the pageant."[249] They saw the pageant as a way to deal with the community issues. "Episodes dealt with logging and farming."[250] Mrs. Arden Cole directed the play which was made up of nine episodes under three theme areas. The first theme dealt with long-range planning programs in connection with the community's natural resources. The second dealt with immediate plans for better economic stability. The final theme dealt with the community spirit.

The play appealed for greater understanding about the need for conservation.

> The episodes had to plead for a greater understanding and sympathy on the part of a people to whom governmental

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[248]Hansen, 1946, 94.

[249]Hannon interview.

[250]Abbie Osborne, interview with author, March 1990, [tape recording] in possession of author.

regulations and control of property seemed contrary to a free way of life.[251]

As protagonist, the devil intent on destruction of the beautiful Bitterroot Valley, was portrayed. "Bob Prinz played the devil. He took the opposite side of the fence."[252] The devil came into the different episodes to tell the farmers and lumberjack it was all right to help themselves to the abundance; to override the protests of those who wanted to conserve. He bullied them into believing "that anything that suggested regulation and control of resources was unamerican."[253]

The cast of 126 citizens of Darby ranged in age from three to over eighty. Cash outlay for the entire play came to less than five dollars. The Sewing Club furnished costumes and props. The school choirs sang two songs written especially for the play. "Austere and prestigious garden club, dressed in grab-bag clothes, put on a humorous skit."[254] High-school students put on another humorous skit "satirizing the youth/age conflict."[255] The city council met on the stage and passed ordinances appropriate to the occasion.

Presented on December 7, 1946, the program lasted three hours with nearly 500 hundred attending. Coffee and doughnuts were served after the play, followed by a community dance.

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[251]Hansen, 1946, 99.

[252]Osborne interview.

[253]Hansen, 1946, 99.

[254]Brownell, 1946, 1.

[255]Ibid.

Brownell and Hansen praised the community drama's action and subject-matter as a way to bring about "active unity in community life as well as the community's articulate symbol."[256] The benefits reached all age groups. "Either as players or audience-participants, they entered into that organic unity of human co-operation possible only in the small, face to face community."[257]

Numerous articles were written about the sociodrama "Darby Looks at Itself." One article appeared in Reader's Digest. Participants, at the time of the study and after, did not appreciate the attention they received.

At a meeting held two months after the play, the Darby people discussed the drama and the publicity that had come about because of it. The group felt that the community drama had

> tended to show Darby as a sort of guinea-pig community given an injection of experimental sociological pedagogy . . . and that it had been selected because it showed all the symptoms of a hard-headed old scoundrel on his last legs.[258]

The participants also resented articles that exaggerated how the drama had changed the community from a "staid, static, and unimaginative town into a more alert and progressive community."[259]

Years later the articles still miffed the participants. "They [Reader's Digest] blew the thing [play] up. It did not do much for

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[256]Ibid.

[257]Ibid.

[258]Hansen, 1946, 105.

[259]Ibid.

Darby. Darby was already a good community."[260] Projects such as the library, well-child clinic, and a Memorial Park fundraiser were considered an extension of the community already in place. "The people here were always wonderful, friendly, and helpful. The people always turned out to help. Even in the hard times, the community gave a helping hand. The Bitterroot Valley took care of a lot of people. We do not allow people to suffer."[261]

Participants agreed that the study and the drama stimulated discussion in the community. "It gave us information on logging. It got people talking about the possibilities for the community."[262] As far as long-term results, all of them felt the study had been extremely interesting and stimulating, "but nothing much came out of the study."[263]

Stevensville Study Group

Stevensville started the fourth study group in 1945. The Stevensville group got off on the wrong foot from the very beginning. The Farmer's Union group in Stevensville asked for the study to come in to Stevensville. C. H. McDonald, a Forest Service Ranger, came to Brownell very much against doing a study there. "There is a strong tension there between the Farmer's Union and the town's people. It

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[260]Osborne interview.

[261]Hannon interview.

[262]Ibid.

[263]Cooper interview.

will be a difficult place to organize a representative study group."[264] His statement reflected the major problem for the Stevensville Study Group. The Stevensville group was predominately made up of Farmer's Union folks, with very few business or towns people. The study of Stevensville took the slant of those like-minded people.

> More time ought to be spent investigating a town to determine who's who, and what's what, before the study group is organized. That was one of the big reasons for the trouble in Stevensville. They had too many people in the group who saw eye to eye which left them more vulnerable to attack from other people in the community who didn't understand what they were doing.[265]

Poston wrote a flattering commentary on the Stevensville group,

> By the method of asking questions, analyzing, and discussing the evidence, they made themselves aware of local problems they had never known existed, and they acquired a knowledge of community needs which they had known about but never really understood. It was a deliberate effort by interested citizens to get at the truth of local conditions. And because their problems were vital, their discussions often became heated-sometimes downright personal. But they were developing in the technique of group thinking and working together for the welfare of their community-a novelty for Stevensville.[266]

But Poston was not as complimentary when he wrote Howard about his observations of Stevensville,

> I doubt if you could pick a tougher county than Ravalli. They have more stresses and strains than Brownell's dog Timmy. In the previous study groups it seemed that Ravalli people had a gift for getting themselves all wound up and doing everything the hard way . . . on the whole the people

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[264]"Montana Study Day Book, 28 September, 1945," Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[265]Poston to Howard, 5 December 1948.

[266]Poston, 1950, 77.

> of Stevensville have more lethargy than any place I've ever seen in my life.[267]

Having one faction of the community involved in the study group and the other faction sitting on the outside, trying to guess what was going on led to a great deal of animosity, not only in Stevensville but for the Montana Study in general. Rumors started going around Stevensville that the study group was Communist inspired. The American Legion was the group most upset about the situation, and Jim Smith, the commander of the post, brought the subject up at one of the Legion meetings.

> If, for example, the fellows who brought the attacks against them had been in the group, such as Jim Smith, there would have been no attacks. Take Jim Smith for example, he was commander of the Legion there, he made the communist allegations public, but after I had spent four hours with him and had dinner with his wife and him in their home and explained the Study, they both apologized all over the place for the trouble, and said that had they known all that before they would have gladly participated in the group. It was too late for them, but it would have certainly made a big difference if they had been in the group--and besides that Smith happens to be a guy with considerable vision of community improvement, which would have made him valuable from another standpoint.[268]

The red-baiting created a taint on the Montana Study that has lasted up into the 1980s. Local old timers, who were not participants in the Montana Study, often labeled individuals who were in the Study as Communist.[269]

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[267]Poston to Howard, 5 December 1948, 3.

[268]Ibid.

[269]Five people who participated in the Stevensville study group were contacted. None of the five were willing to be interviewed.

The Stevensville group did put on a community pageant depicting the history of the area. Bert Hansen, professor of English from Montana State College, helped a local group write the narrative and organize the pageant. Its purpose was to bring about unity in the community and "perhaps, understanding and cooperation from the people of Stevensville."[270] The pageant, written in narrative style, was read over loud speakers with action pantomimed. Called "A Tale of the Bitterroot," it depicted the coming of Father DeSmitt to the Flathead Indians, the building of Fort Owens, and the moving of Chief Charlot and his people out of the Bitterroot.

The pageant, held outside on a summer evening, attracted 2500 people.

> Actors stood ready with horses and covered wagons. A hundred men and women adjusted their costumes. Musicians took their places. Narrators stood at their microphones. Lighting technicians and stage hands checked their equipment. Hansen glanced over the community park. There was the forest setting. Tribal tepees stood among the pines. Smoke curled up from burning campfires as Indians moved about them. And silhouetted against a starlit sky the jagged Bitterroot mountains rose behind the outdoor stage.[271]

At the end of the play, Paul Charlot delivered the speech his grandfather had given. "I shall never return. The white chief has taken the land of my fathers away from me and my people. It is his. Let him do with it what he will."[272] The Native Americans took down their tepees and left the scene.

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[270]Poston, 1950, 76.

[271]Ibid., 82.

[272]Ibid., 83.

But Stevensville was not successful in starting short-term change.

> The Stevensville Study Group was handicapped from the beginning by a misunderstanding of its purpose and by its failure to start with a broad enough representation of the entire community . . . . Slowly the way of inertia is receding and in its place, there are people to keep alive the progress that has been started.[273]

Lewistown Study Group

An October 1945, blizzard prevented Brownell and Howard from reaching an organizational meeting in Lewistown. Ironically, the group members found their own leaders and set up a course of study for themselves. Mostly housewives whose husbands were away in the service and retired folks, the group showed little interest in starting a community action group, but focused on gathering the history and folk lore of the community. The group collected anecdotes about pioneer days in central Montana and formed a recreational group for dancing, art, and crafts. Betty Attwell, one of the Lewistown study group leaders, wrote:

> People have been educated to believe that few possess greatness in art, but this not necessarily so. To fully appreciate art forms one must participate. There are a few very gifted artists, but that does not mean others do not have a capacity for expression. Self-expression to many seems inadequate at first but with guided adult education in the arts, it will come to really express the lives of Montanans.[274]

A prominent Lewistown rancher, Glen Morton, was opposed to the Montana Study.

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[273]Ibid., 86.

[274]"Lewistown Study Group Minutes, 1945." p. 4, [mimeographed], Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

> In Lewistown, it was said to be nothing but an insidious force infiltrating the state for the sole purpose of spreading class hatred and strife among the people. And consequently Glen Morton organized a lobby to oppose it in the legislature. I am sure now that if Glen Morton isn't the prominent Montana stockman who said he wouldn't serve on the statewide advisory committee because the Study would only "stir the people up," that such a remark certainly would not be above the level of his warped intelligence. It got to be so bad in Lewistown that several members of the study group actually quit because of what it was doing to their reputation.[275]

Frank Smith, a recreational specialist from Berea College, went to Lewistown to help conduct study groups in Eastern Montana. He was willing to start the Series II Studies addressing art, music, dance, and crafts; but he was not willing to start the Series I studies in new communities. The reason stemmed from the feeling in Lewistown about the Montana Study being a subversive plot. Lewistown participants did not discuss why they chose not to follow the regular format of the Montana Study or why they did not try an action group. The reason may have well been the "red-baiting" and the insecurity of the study group to buck local public opinion or the local powers.

Victor Study Group

Victor, a small community between Stevensville and Hamilton, started a study group in 1945. Formed as a "matter of jealousy toward Stevensville rather than a desire to do something worthwhile for their

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[275]Richard Poston to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 9 June, 1948, p. 4. Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

community,"[276] Victor Study Group did not prove to be very productive. Made up of mostly Farmers Union people, the lack of diversity hindered the group in much the same way as it had the Stevensville group. In addition, lack of real interest in doing the study virtually killed the project. One participant from Victor said the local study group suffered from "that damn Bitterroot attitude—this valley is the best place there is, and if you have any other idea just take your idea somewhere else."[277]

Conrad Study Group

Two teachers, Alicia O'Brien and Ruth Robinson, approached Baker Brownell, the director of the Montana Study, about starting a study group in Conrad. Brownell hesitated. "He hadn't even considered Conrad because it was not as up and coming as Shelby and Cut Bank. They thought Conrad was a pretty slow town. But we were the kind to accept it well and we turned out to be the best chapter."[278] Conrad formed its study group October 16, 1945, with twenty people attending. Out of that group, fourteen became actively involved in the community research and discussion group.

The people in the Conrad Study Group were likely candidates for success at the study group process promoted by the Montana Study. The

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[276]Richard Poston to Joseph Kinsey Howard, 20 December, 1948. Howard Collection, Manuscript Series 27, Box 5, Folder 5, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[277]Smith, 1976, 8.

[278]Alicia O'Brien, Conrad, Montana, December, 1988, interview with author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

community had a long history of cooperation dating back to the homestead days through the drought and depression between 1919–1939. "My husband went through the bad years around 1919 when almost everyone went broke. That's when they separated the men from the boys."[279] Those who stayed survived by working together with others in the community. "Cooperation was important. They [the farmers] got together to buy the goods they needed like coal for the winter. They could not have afforded to buy it on their own. They learned to help each other."[280] The people remained optimistic about their own future and the future of their community. "Even through the Great Depression, we remained optimistic that through working together as a community, we could survive anything."[281]

On top of the cooperative spirit, the group was made up of avid learners. Most of the participants came to the study with a wide variety of interests and skills. Many such as the ministers and teachers, came to the group with a formal education, while others had an informal education through the Farmers Union, a progressive grassroots agricultural association. "We were learning [in Farmers Union] how to be better citizens while we got to know each other. We were taught how to conduct meetings, work with people, and give

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[279]Ibid.

[280]Norma Keil, Conrad, Montana, April 1989, interview with author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[281]Dorothy Floerchinger, Conrad, Montana, April 1989, interview with Gary Conti, Lynn Paul, and author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

instruction."[282] Another person indicated that "We learned to do community action in those camps. We learned about the world we lived in."[283]

According to the minutes of the study group and from interviews, all participants were actively involved in community research and group discussion on the research. "Out of the discussions, problems within the community began to surface"[284] Through discussion, participants, such as the Farmers Union group, learned that they also had something to contribute. Every member of the group became actively involved by the fifth week. They found that each person was important to getting a well-rounded perspective on an issue. "The Study was a tool where we could use our skills to help the community. We were once two groups—townspeople and farmers—and the study brought us together. They found out we [the farmers] were doing a lot of things they [the townspeople] did not know about and we [the participants in the study] learned a lot about each other."[285]

One of the most important discussions this group had, concerned the rapid changes taking place in their community. The discussion began with the question of what was meant by modernism as found in Conrad. The leader opened by saying

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[282]Edna Hostetter, Conrad, Montana, April 1989, interview with Gary Conti, Lynn Paul, and author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[283]Floerchinger interview.

[284]Hostetter interview.

[285]Floerchinger interview.

> Modernism . . . represents the glamour which seeks the new, the distant, and the daring. The tendency seems to be to discard the old and accept the new. The differences among the ideas of the frontier folks and the modern people seemed to be that the frontier people accepted challenges of problems while the moderns seek professional aid; the frontier led to stability of friendship while moderns [have] more acquaintances; frontier people planned a more static society [while] moderns social contacts reach farther.[286]

The group recognized how the changes in transportation and communications affected their social, economic, and political world. They recognized that changes brought "a more competitive society."[287] They decided the advantages of modernization included better towns, more satisfaction and pride to citizens. The disadvantages they said were that

> a wide range of activities, scattered interest, had a tendency to create disunity, and created breakdowns of old-fashioned loyalty. Citizens lose perspective and fail to see their own local problems.[288]

The study group participants brainstormed a list of cherished ideals from their old traditions that they hoped to blend into the new way of living in a changing world. The list was as follows:

(1) The pioneers solved their own problems.
(2) The pioneers established true friendships in the sanctuaries of their own community.
(3) The pioneers were visionaries, but stable and knew the proper values of life.
(4) The pioneers accepted the modern, but measured it in the lights of the true and tried.

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[286]Veta Marsh, "Minutes of the Conrad Study Group, 1945," p. 21, [mimeographed], Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[287]Ibid., 20.

[288]Ibid.

(5) We need to remember the solid, progressive community is subject to exploitation and guard against it.[289]

These five values became important themes that influenced members of both the study group and the action group. The Montana Study helped the group focus on the important values and traditions of the community, helping participants describe what is known as "the community of memory."[290] The study group retold stories of the pioneers and identified the values and traditions that embodied and exemplified the meaning of their community. The process focused on the past as a guide to turn the people toward the "future as a community of hope."[291]

The Conrad group believed they could solve their own community problems. "We didn't have to have outside help."[292] When new projects were started, the people remained in control of the processes of development. "We had come through the depression and our community needed an awful lot. It was up to us to do it."[293] They learned not to turn over their community to others. "It's the kind of thing of which the community has to be aware, that is not letting other

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[289]Ibid.

[290]Bellah, 152.

[291]Ibid.

[292]O'Brien interview.

[293]Veta Marsh, Conrad, Montana, April 1989, interview with Gary Conti, Lynn Paul, and author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

outsiders come in and take over because it is not in the best interest of the community."[294]

The group members learned to value the friendships and the social networks. "A good community was started. Great cooperation, enthusiasm, and friendships developed which lasted over time."[295] They learned that if everyone took a role in the development of the project, the project became easy to do. "It did not take a big organization to do the projects. We learned that if we worked together we could do it."[296]

Toward the end of the ten-week study, however, the fourteen participants realized that they alone could not bring about the changes in their community they felt were needed. The group decided to try to form an action group to explore ways to make the "community a better place in which to live."[297]

A long discussion was held about who should be in the action group and how members for the action should be recruited. Though there was strong group cohesion, the group realized that an action group needed to be open to a larger cross section of the community. They decided the best way to reach most of the community was through all the organizations in the community. "We organized the action group. We

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[294]O'Brien interview.

[295]Jesse Andersen, Conrad, Montana, April, 1989, interview with author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[296]Floerchinger interview.

[297]Marsh, 1945, 44.

planted the seed in people."[298] Thirty-five organizations were contacted about the meeting in which "the purpose was to discuss and plan for securing a community recreation program."[299]

With this call to action, the research group came to an end. "We ran out materials on which to work. We felt grieved for two or three years that there were not any more materials for us to use."[300] The energy, spirit, involvement, and commitment that were brought together in the Montana Study were transferred to the newly formed community action group.

The first meeting of the action group was held January 30, 1946. Eighty people representing the thirty-five organizations attended, a cross section of city and country folks. LeRoy Andersen was elected chair. Andersen used discussion to help the group focus on what was needed to make the community become the best possible. In the discussions, a new vision of Conrad emerged. When people began to wonder about the feasibility of the ideas, Andersen said, "The assumption we will work with is that if we want something bad enough, we will get it."[301] This idea, "We can do," would continue to be important to the way the community thought about new problems and

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[298]Ibid.

[299]Veta Marsh, "Minutes of the Pondera Education and Recreation Association, 1946," [mimeographed], Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

[300]O'Brien interview.

[301]Veta Marsh, "Minutes of Pondera Education and Recreation Association, 1946" p. 2. [mimeographed], Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.

community change. "We never thought of limits. We've been too busy all our lives. We dived in and got things done."[302]

The association became a clearing house for community projects. A process emerged utilizing the method of research and discussion from the Montana Study. "The Pondera Education and Recreation Association would meet a couple times a year to see if anything else needed to be done in the community."[303] Organizations in the community brought ideas about a project to the community action group. Members of the community group using research methods adapted from the Montana Study investigated the needs, possibilities, legalities, and implementation. "We went to see what was good in places and learned about rest homes. We went to see what was good and bad."[304] The committees returned to the association to share the information they had gathered which was thoroughly discussed. The group was not afraid to have open discussion on the ideas. This in the long run seemed to bring about better projects and stronger support throughout the community. "We were able to overcome the single issue focus which so many other communities have."[305] When the association supported a project, members went out and actively campaigned it. "We went out as a team of three to talk to

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[302]Floerchinger interview.

[303]Andersen interview.

[304]O'Brien interview.

[305]Keil interview.

the county voters and to get people registered. We mobilized the community."[306]

People who were active in developing projects felt a commitment to continue to monitor the projects by getting involved on governing boards. "I worked a lot on the building of the Pioneer home . . . . When we got something established, we would try to get on the boards."[307]

The group remained proactive over the next forty years. "The things that kept us on track were the changes in the economy in the town and in agriculture--the ups and downs. We were always keeping the ups going. We were always busy."[308] Projects included a nursing home, retirement-apartment complex, senior center, swimming pool, and high school. The dreams of this community just did not happen without considerable effort. "A lot of the projects we've done have taken nerve, courage, and friendship."[309]

The Montana Study had an impact on the greater community of Conrad. "The Montana Study had as much influence as anything has had in the community in getting projects rolling."[310] It brought about a strong commitment and a strong involvement for bettering the community from those who participated. The study brought together a fairly

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[306]Andersen interview.

[307]O'Brien interview.

[308]Ibid.

[309]Keil interview.

[310]O'Brien interview.

divergent group of people who were able to share their knowledge as they worked together, helping to nurture one another.

Reflecting on their experiences in the Montana Study and community action group, participants told about their satisfaction in making their community a good place to live. "The Montana Study and Pondera Education Association were good organizations which became the nucleus of community action through out the years."[311] They felt a true sense of pride in their accomplishments.

> We brought the whole community together. The Montana Study and the Pondera Education and Recreation Association were tools where we could use our skills to help the community . . . . To get people interested, you need to study about the needs. You can study about how to do a meeting, but if you don't have a purpose, they won't stay. We all talked about what would make this a better place to raise our kids and we looked for new interest.[312]

The people in the group repeated over and over that "Working together was fun." [313]

When asked what lessons can be learned from their community, Norma Keil summed it up the best,

> A community is working together. The way the overall community has been able to work, even though we are individuals or are in small focus groups, is our ability to come together and discuss [issues] over time. We haven't developed into factions and we have stayed on that. We have been able to listen to others and respect their thoughts as being different from our own. Respecting other peoples' ideas is really important. I think it is remarkable that we have these kind of people to work with in this community. We have people who work with each other. I hope it continues so

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[311]Andersen interview.

[312]Floerchinger interview.

[313]Andersen interview.

the younger generation has as much fun as we have had putting it all together.[314]

Libby Study Group

The Libby Study Group, the last of the Montana Study groups, started on January 7, 1947. Libby had been the subject of a study by Doctor Harold Kaufman and his wife on the effects of sustained-yield on a forest community, during which angry feelings toward the Forest Service's policy surfaced.

Public Law 273 allowed the Forest Service to go into a cooperative agreement with large lumbering firms and, in Libby, that was the J. E. Neils Company. The concept of the policy was to encourage large companies to replant their private holdings in exchange for a guaranteed amount of timber from the Forest Service's lands.[315]

During an interview with the Kaufmans, small operators and the union people aired their concerns. Independent lumberjacks feared there would not be enough lumber in the forest, and they would be cut out from any timber sales. The people of nearby Troy were afraid their community would die because the Libby industry would take over the forest.[316]

The Kaufman report stimulated discussion in the community. Public forums were held at the library. The same complaints continued to be

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[314]Keil interview.

[315]Harold and Lois Kaufman, "Toward the Stabilization and Enrichment of a Forest Community, 1946," [mimeographed], United States Forest Service, Missoula, Montana.

[316]Poston, 151.

voiced, and the community broke up into angry factions. Inez Herrig, the city librarian, felt the whole feud had gone on long enough and that the disagreement was getting out of hand. She asked Baker Brownell to start a study group in the Libby area. Brownell was reluctant since Libby was a long distance from Missoula and therefore difficult to oversee. He finally decided to allow the Libby group to start because Herrig was acquainted with the study group process. "Brownell wanted to see what an independent group could do."[317]

Those in the community who organized the study made "dozens of phone calls," sent letters, and went to meetings of community organizations. Twenty people attended the first meeting. All types of people came: laborers, business people, loggers, teachers, ministers, forest-service personnel, and industrial administrators. "We had a core--a wonderful core . . . . It was an unusual group of people."[318]

Ruth Robinson, who had become the acting director of the Montana Study, organized the group, and Herrig was chosen permanent chairperson. But the group decided that the leadership would be rotated among the participants and weekly leadership roles were assigned at the first meeting.[319]

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[317]Inez Herrig, Libby, Montana, January, 1989, interview with author, [tape recording] in author's possession.

[318]Ibid.

[319]"Libby Montana Study Group Minutes, 1947," [mimeographed], Montana Study Collection, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

The first meetings consisted of a "lady-aidish sort of discussion much below the level that many of us in the group knew we could do."[320] Discussions in the first two meetings were disjointed and opinionated. By the third meeting the group was involved in the research process and discussion focused on the topics and information the group had gathered.[321] "The next leader kept the level of the conversation at a higher level, establishing a standard for discussions. It became a real discussion group instead of a gossip session."[322]

Interest centered on the lumbering industry and how lumbering affected the attitudes of the residents. The members not only brought back their research but began to share with the group their expertise and diverse perspectives.

George Neils, one of the owners of the lumbering company, disagreed with the statement in Life in Montana about communities becoming impoverished because of cut-over areas. "He said the wonderful dairy country around the Great Lakes and Cass Lake, Minnesota, is a cut-over area. He considered the loss infinitesimal on account of improved farming methods and tourist trade."[323]

This lead the group into the discussion on the pros and cons of the sustained yield program. Members focused on the differences between fears and the reality of what was actually occurring in

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[320]Herrig interview.

[321]"Libby Minutes", 4.

[322]Herrig interview.

[323]"Libby Minutes," 4.

lumbering in their area. Participants talked about how fear created problems in raising funds for community. The community lacked a sense of permanency. That feeling affected the way people supported the community. There was in Libby

> a general apathy toward organizational work . . . a general lack of interest in the affairs of Libby as shown by the small vote at city and school elections. A council member who had been on the city council for six years could not recall any time when a citizen came to attend a meeting.[324]

All the apathy was reflected in how people took care of their property and the community on the whole.

Arthur Bowman, a forester from Saint Maries, Idaho, which had a sustained yield program, came to Libby to explain how the program was working there. George Neils explained why independent loggers did not like the policy.

> He said that the highest bidder usually gets the timber but under Public Law 273, the United States Forest Service is permitted to enter into an agreement with a cooperator whereby the cooperator would be subject to regulations by the Forest Service on their [cooperator's] timber sales . . . . The cooperator is guaranteed a certain definite supply during the period of the agreement.[325]

The Troy area, a small community west of Libby, hired a lawyer to present their side at a public hearing. "They [Troy] believed that the proposed agreement there would give Libby everything without them having enough to support their town."[326]

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[324]Ibid., 17.

[325]Ibid., 19-20.

[326]Ibid., 22.

The Libby group then focused on how sustained yield policy could help the community become more stable through a planning process for both private and public lands over a 35-year period. They decided to support the proposal for the area.

> The proposed cooperative sustained yield agreement between the J. Neils Lumber Company, in the opinion of the group, would have the desired effects of stabilizing income and values to the residents of this entire area and would result in long-range planning by all.[327]

The group recognized that lumbering should not be the sole economic support for their community. New industries proposed for the area included mining and tourist trade. They also discussed pushing the Montana state government to finish improving their highway system "in order to bring tourists into the community."[328]

The study group continued for thirteen weeks instead of the ten weeks suggested in the study guide. Discussions were often long and needed to be extended into the next week's session. At the end, the study group decided to place a full page advertisement in the Western News, the Libby newspaper, giving results of the research and recommendations from the group. The advertisement also invited the public and all organizations to attend a community wide town meeting. "The purpose of this meeting was to try to organize and elect a planning board which could work on plans for achievement of specific goals."[329]

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[327]Ibid., 22.

[328]Ibid., 23.

[329]Herrig interview.

A public meeting was held May 9, 1947, to form the Greater Libby Association. The association was not an action group like Conrad's group, but a clearing house on local issues.[330]

The study group participants had achieved their purpose of getting people together to work for the betterment of the community. "They made the community more attractive and raised $91,000 to build a hospital."[331] The significant change in the community was the change in people's attitudes toward their town. "As people worked to make the town more attractive, the whole attitude changed. The people saw the possibilities for Libby staying their permanent home."[332]

After the core leadership of the Libby study group became the executive committee of the Greater Libby Association, there was no further movement of new people into the organization or into the leadership roles. "When this core group left Libby, the association died. We [the study group] had accomplished our goals. We got people together to work together . . . . We started these things of changing the attitude and making the town attractive."[333]

Phases in the Study Groups' Development

Analysis of each of the eleven study groups, shows that there were three different level of development. The level of development is

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[330]Poston, 159.

[331]Herrig interview.

[332]Ibid.

[333]Ibid.

significant for study group impact on both short-term and long-term community change.

The first phase of development built awareness about the community. In this stage, the participants were mostly passive learners who gained information from the Montana Study staff. The group learned about their community and about new ideas that were developing in the state and nation. Discussion and participation at this stage was limited to the professionals and to the most aggressive members of the group. Many of the groups such as Victor, Hamilton, Stevensville, and Dixon ended at this level of development, and any community development that came out of the study groups was limited or non-existent.

The second level of development was active involvement. Active participation in the study group process, community research, and group discussion marked this phase of development. Active participants did their share of the community research. The whole group shared the research, which was actively discussed. The participant was not only a learner in the situation, but was also a teacher to his/her peers in the group. It was in this phase where the Conrad group identified the community values and traditions which seem to guide further community action. This phase had a nurturing aspect in group discussion which helped to build individual confidence in sharing information and a group feeling of camaraderie.

In some cases, the group felt a great amount of ownership of the information gathered and the process that had developed. During this phase, the members of the group developed new skills in community

research, community problem-solving, group dynamics and discussion, and resource identification. Darby, Lonepine, and Lewistown were communities that developed through this stage.

The third and final level of development could be called the empowerment phase. In this stage, group members made a commitment to community problem-solving. The participants were confident that they could create change in their community, and they were willing to put effort, money, and time into doing what they had to do to make their community a better place to live. They had a strong sense about who they were as a community of people. Being called a communistic front did not affect how they felt about their group. The group knew they were in a better position than outsiders to know what was good for their community, and they developed their own problem-solving process. From the Libby study group, a clearinghouse organization evolved for community problem-solving. In Conrad, a community action group developed that used research, resource identification, and group discussion from the Montana Study process. The Conrad Group also created a monitoring system to make sure the projects were carried out as the group envisioned. Group members found working together fun and satisfying. This phase brought short-term and long-term community action.

The Conrad group remained active for four decades, continuing to renew the phases and revitalize itself as new members came into the group. The three phases of the process continued to operate creating a spiral or advancement upwards in community action and development to meet changing times and conditions. This level produced a hardy

community that felt in control of their destiny, knew who they were as a community, and saw change as a challenge instead of a threat.

Factors Influencing Development

A number of factors were identified which could have affected the level of development each group achieved. The factors included the source of leadership, style of leadership, community diversity, level of participation, ownership of research materials, motivation of the group in doing the study, and outside influences on group perceptions.

From where the leadership of the group came influenced whether the study group moved on into an action group. When Brownell assumed the leadership role, the participants found the meetings stimulating. Brownell, a dynamic speaker, made the study interesting, and created feelings of privilege for having prominent people coming to the community. The groups, such as Hamilton, Stevensville, and Victor never really became involved in the research process or the discussions. Their groups were willing to let the experts tell them how to go about community change. The lack of ownership in the process and the information created a lethargy or a resistance to change.

In communities where leadership came out of the group, members were more active in doing the research and in participating in the discussion. The group took ownership of the information. The style of leadership also influenced how the group developed. The leadership style in the Conrad group was shared. The priest and minister were careful in helping the participants become active in the research and in the discussion of the research. Discussions were often heated in

this group, but led to a greater understanding of each other's points of view and the outside influences on the community's development. Participants in this group developed more confidence in themselves and a willingness to allow others to become a part of the community action process. Over four decades, the Conrad group continued to renew itself with new membership and new ideas.

Libby also formed a cohesive community group. A few of the men in the group became leaders. As the study ended, the Libby group set up a clearinghouse for community change. The leadership in the original group, however, failed to bring in new people into the group and was unwilling to relinquish control once the group had developed. As the leaders of the group moved away from Libby, the group disintegrated by 1956.

Another factor influencing the effectiveness of the group was whether group membership represented the diversity of the community. Poston reported that the Stevensville and Victor groups were made up of mostly Farmers Union members. Had the town and business people been involved, there would have been a better chance to create an action group.

> Business people were not included in the Stevensville group . . . . More time ought to be spent investigating who's who, and what's what, before the study group is organized. That was one of the big reasons for the trouble in Stevensville.[334]

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[334]Poston to Howard, 5 December 1948.

Rumors started in these communities and were believed because many influential people in the community were not involved in the study group.

Motivation for starting the group was also an important factor. Those communities that started groups because of crisis in the community, had a focus and a purpose for going through the study. Libby and Darby were lumbering communities facing hard times and a declining economy. Both of these communities were fighting for their lives. People in Conrad wanted their young people to come back into the community after World War II. They were looking for ways not only to save their town but to make it a better place to live.

In Stevensville and Victor, the motivation for starting the group was based on community rivalry—not on trying to improve the community situation. In Hamilton, the impetus was the pressure George Brandborg put on community leaders because he thought it would be a good idea. The participants were not very interested in either the study or in doing community action. In Lewistown, motivation for doing the study was social. There were a number of young wives of servicemen in the community. Along with a group of aging citizens, this group focused their study on the history and culture of the Lewistown area. They never concerned themselves with creating change in the community.

Another factor affecting short-range and long-range community action was the outside pressure on the community. In Lewistown, a prominent Montana stockman, Glen Morton, opposed the study because it would "stir the people up." Many people left the Lewistown Study for fear their reputation would be sullied. Accusations of communism in

Stevensville adversely affected an opportunity for community problem-solving. In Darby, an article in the Reader's Digest made the Darby people look like sociological guinea pigs when the Montana Study was given credit for creating a positive community atmosphere. The Darby group felt they had already been an active community and resented the implication of the article that they had been a backwards community.

The Conrad and Libby Study Groups came toward the end of the last year. Outside conservative influence did not impact these studies. The two groups received very little publicity and were viewed as a purely community activity. Therefore, they continued to direct themselves toward community betterment and change.

Finally, a factor that influenced Conrad a great deal was the historical study done about the community. Examining the past and reflecting on folk heroes, stories, hopes, fears, values, and traditions, helped the Conrad group to define themselves as a community and to nurture hope for the future. The group identified a number of values that exemplified qualities the group admired in the pioneers: solving their own problems, developing friendships, working together, testing changes, and guarding against exploitation. These values became important in structuring the action group.

CHAPTER 5

THE MONTANA STUDY: LESSONS LEARNED

The Montana Study Research project took place more than forty-five years ago. This present historical case study attempted to examine and analyze both the goals and objectives, as well as the causes for the failure of the Montana Study. A second purpose was to examine in depth the study groups and the community research processes used in the Montana Study to determine if these were appropriate adult education methods for community development in rural areas.

The questions which were examined were as follows:

1. What was the motivation for developing and implementing the Montana Study? How was the Montana Study implemented?

2. What were the political, economic, and social factors at the time of the study? How did those three factors impact the study?

3. What were the strengths and/or weaknesses of the organizational and administrative processes in the study?

4. Did the academic community in higher education in Montana support the Montana Study? What evidence was there for support or the lack thereof?

5. In regard to the three original objectives of the Montana Study, did the humanities study stabilize the small communities in Montana and raise the "appreciative and spiritual standards of living of the people of the state"? What was the impact on the communities of

the Montana Study? What role did units of higher education play in bringing higher education to the communities?

6. Beyond the monetary impact, what influence did the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation have on the development and the implementation of the Montana Study?

7. Though the Montana Study seemed to fail, in what areas could the Montana Study be deemed a success?

8. What were the changes in the communities which could be attributed to utilization of the study groups?

A. Which features associated with the study groups contributed to community development?

B. Which features of the study groups did not adapt well to rural areas?

C. Which features of the study groups were satisfying to the participants in the study?

D. Which features of the study groups were frustrating to the participants of the study?

9. Can the study group and community research designed for other societies and cultures survive the assumptions of the United States' rural culture and traditions?

Was the Montana Study an idealistic failure or was it in fact, an innovative success? This study confirms that the Montana study was both. The Montana Study proved to be a success in creating short-term and long-term change in some of the communities that participated in the study group process, but it failed to sustain continuing support through the Montana higher education system.

Montana Study: Idealistic Failure

The motivation for developing and implementing the Montana Study came from application of the progressive education goals of two men--David Stevens, Humanities Director of the Rockefeller Foundation and Ernest Melby, Chancellor of the Montana University System. Stevens had witnessed group study which had enhanced community life and strengthened the democratic process in Canada, England, and Denmark. He tried to encourage the development of such study groups in the United States. He saw Melby as a worthy candidate for leading a project and Montana as a likely site for an experiment in group study methods. Melby envisioned a higher education system developing adult education programs that would assist Montana communities in bettering themselves. The partnership between the two men seemed to promise success for the Montana Study.

The Montana Study, implemented between 1944 and 1947, attained the idealistic objectives on a very limited basis. The three objectives included the following:

1. The Montana Study was to research ways whereby the true community in Montana and the family could be stabilized.

2. The Montana Study was to find ways to get the university off the campus and to bring facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities and within their occupational situation.

3. The Montana Study was to research ways to raise the appreciative and spiritual standards of living of able young people in their home communities.[335]

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[335]Brownell, 1945, 3.

The major failure in implementing the objectives of the Montana Study was the inability to "get the university off campus and bring facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities . . . ."[336] In an evaluation of the Montana Study, the director of the humanities division of the Rockefeller Foundation stated the reasons for termination of Rockefeller funding as "events growing out of intra- and interdepartmental feuds and political moves within the state to which the University was subjected."[337]

The Montana Study helped to rekindle the old rivalries between Montana State College and Montana State University. The problems really began when Stevens, Humanities Director for the Rockefeller Foundation, came to Montana State College to review the accomplishments of a humanities grant to Karl Kraenzel, an Extension rural sociologist. At the meeting Stevens was introduced to the new chancellor of the University, Ernest Melby. Stevens, impressed with the vision Melby had for restructuring the university system and building higher education ties to Montana communities, saw Montana as an excellent site for demonstrating study groups and other techniques. Rather than supporting further work of the Northern Plains Research Project, Stevens approached Melby about a humanities grant for the university system. When Kraenzel did not receive a grant for the Northern Plains

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[336]Ibid.

[337]Raymond Fosdick, "Rockefeller Foundation Appropriation to Montana State University for Regional Studies, 1944-1947." p. 5, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 200R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

Research Project, the Extension people believed Melby had sabotaged refunding the project in order to secure funding for his own ideas and institution.

Roland Renne, former agriculture economist at Montana State College for fourteen years, who became president of the Bozeman campus in July, 1943, brought to the presidency the traditions of animosity between the University and the State College. Melby's leave-of-absence from the Montana State University presidency only increased the apprehension toward Melby's intent in restructuring the Montana higher education system. Renne opposed both the university system reorganization and the Montana Study.

Renne saw the Montana Study as an intrusion on educational areas previously administered by the Extension Service. The intrusion fueled the feud between Renne and Melby.

Brownell wrote to Fosdick,

> . . . we [the Montana Study] received only luke-warm support and in some cases opposition from the Agricultural Extension Service. . . . This seemed to be due partly to fear, which was quite baseless, that we would encroach on their territory, and partly due to suspicion of what seemed to them educational radicalism. [338]

As Renne fought the reorganization of higher education, the other presidents saw the two larger units once again deadlocked over reorganization and they broke rank with Melby. Their withdrawal of support stemmed from economic factors impacting the higher education

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[338]Baker Brownell to Raymond Fosdick, 8 January 1947, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 220R Montana State University-Regional Studies, Box 381, Folder 3330.83, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

units. The state still suffered economically from the Great Depression. Many young people left the state at the beginning of World War II, and prospects of them coming back to Montana seemed slim. When the study started, Montana higher education units were understaffed and underfunded. Many faculty members had been called into active duty leaving a skeleton staff to work in the higher education institutions. In addition, many of the faculty were leaving the state to take better paying jobs in other institutions. The general sentiment in the system was that the faculty was already overworked and underpaid, and that there was too little time to spend on projects such as the Montana Study and too little funding to share with a project that had no clear purpose.

The major problem between the Montana Study and the academic community stemmed from their philosophical differences on the role of higher education, technology, and humanities in the development of Montana communities. The Montana Study philosophy was stated as

> so simple, yet so great, I wonder that more men have not seen it before. For what we have in this ideal . . . is the whole of life; a means whereby men can examine themselves and their culture, and in the process translate their democratic faith into democratic action.[339]

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[339]Richard Poston to David Stevens, 8 December 1948, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 220R Montana State University–Regional Study, Box 382, Folder 3330.87, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

The Montana higher education community did not buy into those ideals. "It [the Montana Study] was based on unrealistic philosophical premise that Montana is a folk-arts situation."[340]

Melby, Brownell, and Stevens knew from the beginning that the project worked with a process of adult learning in community living and decision-making. Working with process was not an ideal which was readily accepted in higher education where the focus was on content or product.[341] The academic community had problems accepting the concept of enhancing the process of community living. The goals, objectives, and methodology were too nebulous for the majority of the faculty in the university system.

> Dean J. W. Maucker, School of Education, Montana State University, who was sympathetic and friendly to the Study in the last year of operation, thinks that "the program was too loose-jointed, lacking in clear-cut definition of objectives. . . ." many persons who were interested in the Study and whose support the Study might have gained, wished to know about the blue-prints for the future . . . . Additional time . . . might have won enough friends to the project to have established it permanently.[342]

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[340]George Selke to David Stevens, 12 March 1948, Record Group 1.2, Record Series 200 United States, 220R Montana State University-Regional Study, Box 382, Folder 3332.87, Rockefeller Archives, Tarrytown, New York.

[341]Anne Wilson-Schaeff postulates that academic community does not educate in process. "We been educated in a system that is static and focuses almost exclusively on contents or product. We have little knowledge of or skills with processes." Anne Wilson-Schaeff, When Society Becomes An Addict (San Francisco: Harper Row Publishers, 1987), 130.

[342] George Selke to David Stevens, 12 March 1948, 3.

The lack of clear goals, objectives, direction, and content in the Montana Study left the academic community condemning the project as folk craft without real purpose.

Another major problem for the Montana Study with higher education was Brownell's continuous criticism of higher education's removal of students from the their home communities. In his first article on the Montana Study, Brownell wrote,

> The Montana Study is a research project concerned in the integration of the human community and the enrichment of human life. This, to be sure, is a large order for a small groups of men trying to find their bearings in a confused and contradictory culture. It is justified only by the belief that our formal institutions of liberal education are largely a failure and that educational reorientation has become necessary.[343]

The academic community did not accept Brownell's criticism and in turn often criticized the Montana Study.

> It received too precipitate national publicity. Achievements were reported which did not materialize. There was not enough attention to good public relations within the university. Although the staff professed faith in the method of objective inquiry and cooperative study, they advocated preconceived ideas of their own. The work was carried on with too much of an eye on the professional audience to be reached through professional journals. Too much of an effort was made to rejuvenate communities too small in size and lacking in a reasonable economic base.[344]

When Melby resigned as chancellor and returned to the presidency of Montana State University, the Board of Education appointed him as the Executive Officer of the Montana University System. In this position, Melby was able to protect the Montana Study from attack for

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[343]Baker Brownell, "A Project in Education Reorientation," Religious Education (July-August, 1945): 2.

[344]Selke to Stevens, 8 January 1947.

the first year of operation. But as soon as he resigned the Montana University presidency to take a position at New York University, the other presidents withdrew financial support and availability of personnel. Even at Montana State University, the new president, McCain, only recognized the Montana Study as a program to get more funds for the Missoula campus.

When it became apparent at the end of its second year that the university system and the political powers in Montana would not support the Montana Study, Stevens encouraged Brownell to return to his position at Northwestern University.

Overall the Montana Study failed in the second objective of finding ways to get the university off the campus and to bring the facilities of higher education directly to the people in their own communities and within their occupational situation. Melby's vision of making this link was not to become a reality at this point in time.

Another problem for the Montana Study was the controversial nature of some staff members. This tended to reflect negatively on the Montana Study and brought about political opposition to the project.

Political opposition focused on Joseph Kinsey Howard. Howard incensed two large corporations, Montana Power and Anaconda Copper Company, by writing a series of articles critical of the corporations in Harper's Magazine. Attacking Howard's association with the Montana Study, "the Company" launched a war against the project. The Company's supporters wrote numerous letters to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to stop the foundation's financial support for the Montana Study.

When the Rockefeller Foundation did not immediately remove support for the Montana Study, rumors circulated. Though there were no direct links between the rumors and "the Company," the same accusations used in Glover's conversation with Brownell and the letters written to John D. Rockefeller--that the study groups were communistic--surfaced in Ravalli County, Lewistown, and Miles City. Unless a good cross section of the community members became involved, the study groups were perceived as causing problems. In Lewistown, some people participating in the study groups dropped out rather than suffer from being branded communists. In Stevensville, the American Legion launched a campaign against the study group.[345]

Howard's association with the Study brought about Governor Ford's condemnation of the Montana Study in the press. When funding for the Study came up in the legislature in 1947, the political powers defeated the bill in a subcommittee. There were indications that pressure on John D. Rockefeller, such as letters from close associates, forced the Rockefeller Foundation to drop funding for the Montana Study. Times were changing. McCarthyism was gaining momentum, and projects such as the Montana Study came under fire as being communistic not only in Montana, but throughout United States.

It would appear that the Montana Study might have survived if Joseph Kinsey Howard had not been hired as a research associate. Yet the Montana Study administrators did not try to avoid controversy. As Melby reported to the advisory committee:

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[345]Poston, 85.

> When people become afraid to express their opinions, they have lost their freedom. We have to be careful that we are as respectful of the freedom to learn as we are of the freedom to teach . . . . We must not cover up the evidence on the opposing side. We must not close any doors to all sides of an issue. Every person has a right to see the whole array of evidence as impartially as he can.[346]

However, in a program like the Montana Study, where the purpose of community research was developing a greater understanding of the political power structure, conflict was bound to arise.

> They [status quo] did not like the idea of people learning how the strings were pulled and by whom and accordingly did their best to squelch the whole thing [the Montana Study].[347]

Other reasons for the failure of the Montana Study centered around problems in its administration. The size of the staff was too small and limited to only one full-time person. The drastic changes in personnel in both the university system and the staff created havoc for the Montana Study.

Therefore, when Melby and Brownell left Montana, it became apparent that the Montana Study did not have a supporting umbrella within the university system. The Rockefeller Foundation had given the grant to the chancellor's office, which was not staffed between 1944 and 1946. Melby proposed the project while serving as chancellor of the university system. However, the Montana Study project began after Melby resigned as chancellor to return as Montana State University president.

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[346]Ernest Melby, "Minutes of the Montana Study Advisory Committee, 2 February 1945," [mimeographed], Montana State University Archives, Bozeman, Montana.

[347]Smith, 8.

One administrative problem was that the hierarchy for the study was never delineated. Though Melby was able to support the Montana Study over the year he remained at Missoula, his resignation as president proved to be a disaster for the Study. Selke, appointed chancellor in 1946, placed the Study within his office, but did not fully understand the Study and gave it only half-hearted support.

Associate researchers spent only a short term with the Study. Meadows worked part time for a period of six months doing a special demographic profile. Howard started out on a part-time basis, but a special grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to edit the state anthology, consumed much of his time during the first and second year of the study.

After Brownell left in the final year of the Study, Ruth Robinson became acting director for the last nine months of operations. During that time, two new people joined the staff. Bert Hansen, loaned from Montana State College, worked in the Ravalli County doing study groups, community drama, and community pageants; and Frank Smith from Berea College, worked in Eastern Montana with recreation and study groups.

The changes in staff created misunderstandings and friction within the Montana Study and with the higher education units. A continuous changing staff prevented development of the continuity needed to build a stable program and to create the data base necessary to prove the effectiveness of the experiment.

Community Study Groups: Innovative Success

To implement objectives two and three of the Montana Study, Brownell and the staff created ten-week community study agendas. The ten-week studies were intended to experiment with the study group process, community research, and discussion as appropriate methods in developing the community in rural United States. The underlying assumption was that if small rural communities could be stabilized, declining democratic processes would be strengthened.

The ten-week study group process and community research projects undertaken in 11 communities, proved to be the most effective part of the Montana Study. In this study, effectiveness and success were equated with long-term and short-term community action. The concept of success of study groups is not, however, limited to community action. Though the Stevensville group was unable to move into community action, Stevensville's historical pageant had over 100 actors and actresses as well as 2500 spectators. This activity impacted people's awareness of their community, an impact which is harder to observe than community action. The community study groups in Lonepine, Darby, Hamilton, Lewistown, Libby, Dixon, Victor, and Conrad were analyzed as to whether or not the study group process and community research had any affect on short-term and long-term community action and development. This current study also examined the impact of the group on the individual, personal development of participants in the study group process.

From the beginning, Brownell talked about stabilizing the community and helping communities find their spiritual values. In a

society which was very control-, product-, and content-oriented, the purpose was too idealistic and unattainable. This perception was one societal difference with which the Montana Study staff could not quite deal or overcome. Though those who become intimately involved with the Montana Study knew the process worked, they could not articulate satisfactorily how the process impacted the people or the community.

After the study groups completed the ten-week study, the Montana Study staff had a better understanding of the process. The study groups involved members as active participants in the process. The study group process proved most effective when members actively participated in the community research project and in the discussion and dialogue that came out of the research. When participants became actively involved in the process, they developed an awareness of the problems in the community and were committed to the group and to the community as a whole.

Three phases of development were identified in the study groups. The first phase seemed to be that the participants became aware of their community's values, traditions, history, and problems. Socialization, research, sharing, and learning helped the development of this awareness. In the second phase, the participants became actively involved in the community research and group discussion. The participants formed into a cohesive working group. Awareness, peer teaching and learning, active participation, positive peer feedback, and clarification of community values helped to foster involvement. In the final phase, the group became committed to making their community a better place to live. In this phase, the group felt confident in their

ability to create community change and to finish a project. The members of the group were willing to risk personally and financially to create change. Involvement, ownership of research, group cohesion, and community problem-solving were an integral part of this phase.

Commitment resulted in community action and development. When action and development occurred, the individuals in the group felt a great deal of satisfaction. When the action group remained open to new membership, the process of learning-teaching and phases of awareness, involvement, and commitment went through a renewal process.

The seven communities studied in this research project went through various stages of the process. In Hamilton, Victor, and Stevensville, the Montana Study had little if any impact on community change or on personal development. Ideas for change in Hamilton were ignored while in Stevensville the suggestions for change were met with open hostility. People recently interviewed from these communities remembered very little about the ten-week study.

In the communities of Lonepine, Lewistown and Darby, there was little evidence in the records or interviews to suggest that the ten-week study had created community change. However, people in the study groups remembered that the process had given them a new awareness and appreciation of their community.

The two communities of Libby and Conrad succeeded at community action and community development after going through the study group and research process. In these communities, interviewed participants readily remembered their experiences in the study and community groups.

A number of factors contributed to the different levels of success of the seven study groups: leadership, level of participation in the community research and the group discussion, and diversity of community members involved in the study groups.

Whether the group became involved in community development or not was influenced by the source of the leadership. In Lonepine, Hamilton, Victor, Darby, and Stevensville, Brownell and Montana Study staff provided the leadership for the study groups. The participants in these groups remembered that Brownell conducted the meetings and that the meetings were very stimulating. These four groups were inspired by many speakers from Montana State University and from around the country. "It was a privilege to have such prominent men come to our community."[348]

Participants in the Hamilton Study Group never got involved in the community research process or formed a cohesive discussion group. They depended on Brownell for leadership and program. Darby people felt the study group process had given "a lot to think about and the study group stimulated discussion around the community."[349] Even though they participated in community drama reported in the popular press to have stimulated new thought, participants really did not have ownership in the group process or the community drama. The Darby group seemed to resent being a sociological guinea pig.

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[348]Hannon interview.

[349]Ibid.

In all of these communities, Brownell and his associates had come to the study group with their own agenda. Brownell, though a very bright man and an accomplished writer, had strong biases stemming from his progressive philosophy about the purpose of small communities in American democracy. He failed to realize the capability of people in the communities to do their own community research without the direct guidance and direction of the Montana Study staff. Brownell had come to save democracy by preserving the small town. But by taking over leadership of the study groups and controlling the vital community research and group discussion, he stymied the process that could have enhanced and developed the small rural community. "The intellectual missionary had come from the East to rescue the country bumpkin in the West."[350]

In contrast, where the leadership came from within the study group such as in Libby and Conrad, the study group process worked more effectively and led to community action and development. All the communities were far enough from the Missoula headquarters, as to be impractical for the staff to travel there, each of these community study groups developed their own unique leadership as they followed through the ten-week course of study and did their own community research. In these communities, research took on different characteristics that matched the needs the participants recognized about their community.

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[350]Homstad, 73.

Leadership seemed to be an important key to the success of Libby and Conrad. The leadership in Conrad involved all participants in the community research and discussion. Conflicts developed within the group, but were not allowed to go to a personal level. Mutual understanding and respect were given to all the members, and each member was encouraged to be active in the group. Confidence of the individual members seemed to be a result of this process.

The leadership in the Conrad group also emphasized a need to open the group to others rather than maintain a closed system as in Libby. In the long term, this openness allowed the group to teach new people skills and develop abilities in community action. As the group evolved, participants developed areas of expertise that enhanced the ability of the group to achieve many community projects over time. In Conrad, community action continued over four decades.

Community research was an important factor in building the study group into an action group. Participants learned how to gather information and find resources. The community research allowed participants to become knowledgeable about where to gather information and to develop that information in their own perspective. Research helped participants become involved in the group process. Their ownership in the information was important to their perspective on community change.

> Participants needed to analyze and build on their own experiences with community. Doing their own research helped participants to better understand the information and the processes which affected their community and lives. People doing their own research creates an ownership in the information as well as in the process. . . . participatory research can empower people and those people are still

> empowered today. If that project had been done for those people, they would have the information but they wouldn't have been empowered by someone else's information. This way it [the research] was theirs.[351]

Dialogue has been defined as "a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it."[352] Dialogue and discussion taught study group participants how to evaluate and share information. The discussion gave the participants in the Montana Study the opportunity to share not only the information they had gathered but their own personal skills and abilities. Dialogue was used to sort out the community problems, identify resources, assign roles to people in the group usually based on ability and knowledge, and filter the project through the value and historical system.

> In communicating among ourselves in the process of knowing, the reality which we transform, we communicate and know socially . . . the process of communicating, knowing, and changing has an individual dimension.[353]

Discussion usually brought about commitment to the project and the group. In the Conrad group, those underlying values became the margins within which the community action group worked for years.

Individualism was enhanced by working in a group. Individual development was hard to draw out in the interviews done with participants in the study group process. Participants did not focus on

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[351]Myles Horton, "Myles Horton's Views on Learning in the Social Environment," ed. Gary Conti and Robert Fellenz, Social Environment and Adult Learning (Bozeman, Montana: Center for Adult Learning Research, 1990), 14.

[352]Shor and Freire, 98.

[353]Ibid., 99.

individual achievement or growth but talked about what they had done as the collective "we."

> Amidst a group that experienced incredible personal growth, it was a topic that was always superseded by caretaker roles, community action, learning for fun, tackling new problems with enthusiasm and enjoying the camaraderie of their group. Assessing personal development was difficult because they were not cognizant of it.[354]

Individuals were vital to the total group process because each contributed a unique and personal part to the total experience. During certain stages in the ten-week study group process, individuals reported gaining a new awareness of their community, state and nation. When involved in the community research, they developed strong group loyalties, developed new skills, enhanced the skills and abilities they already had, and developed a commitment to the community and to community problem-solving. Community research helped the participants to develop a foundation of knowledge about their community's history and values. The group process allowed participants to try out new skills in conflict management, discussion, and research; to share acquired skills; to develop community and state networks; to identify resources in the community, state, and nation; to try new roles in the group; and to build confidence to carry out community action. People who worked actively in a group reported they had fun and satisfaction in putting it altogether. Though they took pride in individual accomplishment, they found something spiritual and satisfying in

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[354]Janice Counter, Lynn Paul, Gary Conti, "Conrad, Montana: A Community of Memories," ed. Gary Conti and Bob Fellenz, Cultural Influences on Adult Learning (Bozeman, Montana: Center for Adult Learning Research, 1990), 5.

sharing success of a job well done with others who were a part of the process. The satisfaction built friendship bonds, loyalty, and commitment.

Individual growth came from being involved in the community action.

> We helped prepare the ground for them to grow and we help people learn, they can learn from each other that they're stronger. Individualism is enhanced by being part of a group . . . . Instead of telling people they should go alone, they should be competitive, they should . . . compete with their fellow man, we say work together, and you'll be a better person.[355]

The pageants, the programs, and the planning that resulted from the Montana Study gave the participating citizens a new understanding of their civic responsibilities. Cultural activities were a way to cultivate the spirit. Music, community drama, story telling, dancing, art, crafts, poetry, and writing were important for "cultivating the spirit and the soul."[356] The cultural activities mirror the culture of the people. They helped build on the traditions and the values of the group who shared them.

Implications for Adult Education and Community Development

The Montana Study worked when the staff believed in the capability of people to translate their experiences and reality into community action. It provided an incentive to help people learn about their

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[355]Bill Moyer, "Bill Moyer's Journal: An Interview with Myles Horton," ed. Gary Conti and Bob Fellenz, Social Environment and Adult Learning (Bozeman, Montana: Center For Adult Learning, 1990), 3-4.

[356]Ibid.

community, developing new skills in resource identification, sharing skills and knowledge with fellow participants, and building a community problem-solving process.

The Montana Study served as a catalyst for community action and development in Libby and Conrad. It brought a divergent group together while the research process and ensuing discussion fostered participation, learning, peer teaching, and group cohesion. Identification of valued community history and traditions seemed to create three group traits important to the evolution of the group toward community action. These were that the groups made a commitment to their community, had control over the course of the action the community was taking, and believed change was not a threat but a challenge to new and better possibilities for the communities.

The argument remains whether or not projects similar to the Montana Study could be successful. With only one community impacted by long-term development, one could argue that this type of study was far from successful. The Montana Study does not appear to have fit into the philosophical premises of our United States culture of rugged individualism. Yet, if one studies closely our United States history, our democracy is based on the assumption of people working together for the common good. Looking back at the work of De Tocqueville, one observes a country in 1831 which worked on the premise of community. De Tocqueville observed a spirit--different attitudes and values--in the American people.

> He wrote of the practical nature of Americans and of their propensity to band together into community organizations to solve problems. Such an approach was conducive to survival

> on the frontier. This type of cooperation fostered the egalitarianism that formed the foundation of Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy.[357]

As adult educators move into a new century and millennium, they need to look at the problems of our nation, our world, and our people. In developing new programs or creating a new adult education agenda, it may be helpful to learn from the different Montana Study groups. Looking back at past failures and successes can help build better understandings of who we are, where we have been, what we have done or have not done, and where we hope to go as adult educators.

For the study groups to be successful in terms of community action, the leadership needed to come from within the groups. Adult educators often are most comfortable directing the learning process. But adult educators need to understand that part of the process is development of leadership skills and abilities within the group. Community action and development seems to depend on the involvement of participants in the total group process including the leadership process. The role of the educator is to enhance not to control the process.

Looking at projects similar to the Montana Study, adult educators should consider the problems the Montana Study faced. The Montana Study was an innovative idea. But the staff was not able to accomplish the goals and objectives because the staff was too small to carry out the scope of the project. The Montana Study did not have the staff to give the study group process a fair trial.

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[357]Counter, Paul, and Conti, 6.

When adult educators look for funding of a project, they should consider whether there will be a sound base for continued support to give a project a reasonable trial. Often there is a mistaken assumption that if research projects are successful, a solid funding base will follow. The situation surrounding the Montana Study shows this does not always follow. The Montana Study was given half-hearted support from the university system. The commitment to the project was not long-termed and was susceptible to political manipulation.

In considering similar projects, adult educators should consider whether the time allocated is sufficient for carrying out the project. In the case of the Montana Study, three years was too short a time to organize and to test the study group process adapted from other cultures.

It is recommended that the Montana Study be replicated in other rural and urban areas of the United States to see if the process is viable for today's society. Closer examination of the developmental phases of the study group and community research process could be done. Trying the process with Native American groups should be encouraged as the process in the Montana Study might well be compatible with the cooperative traditions of that culture. Closer examination of the processes would help educators better understand the learning adults do in such situation.

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