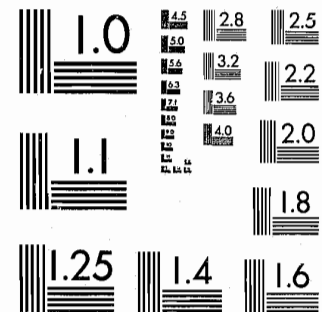


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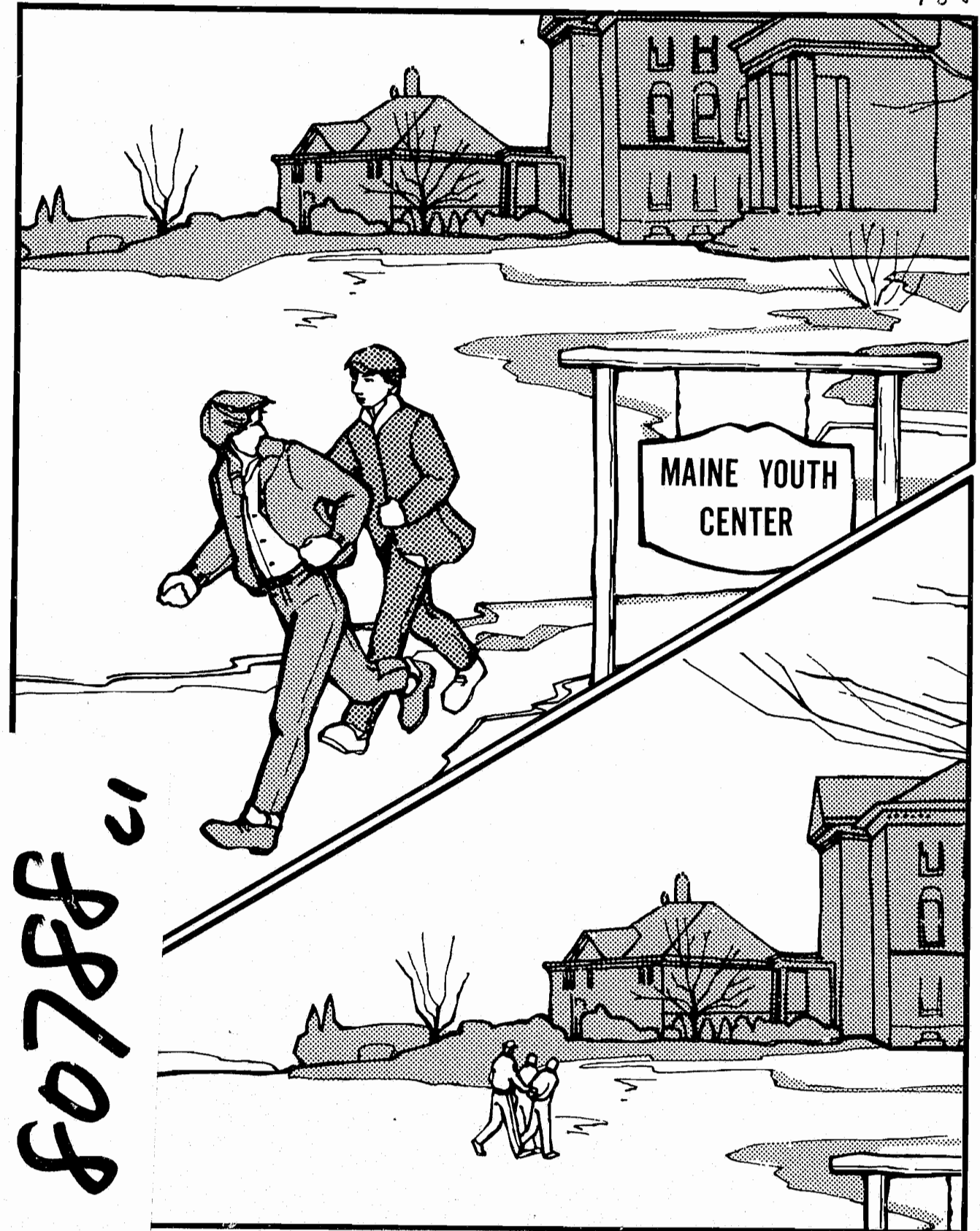
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ABSCONDING from the MAINE YOUTH CENTER

✓
Absconding From The Maine Youth Center
Incidents and Trends
July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980

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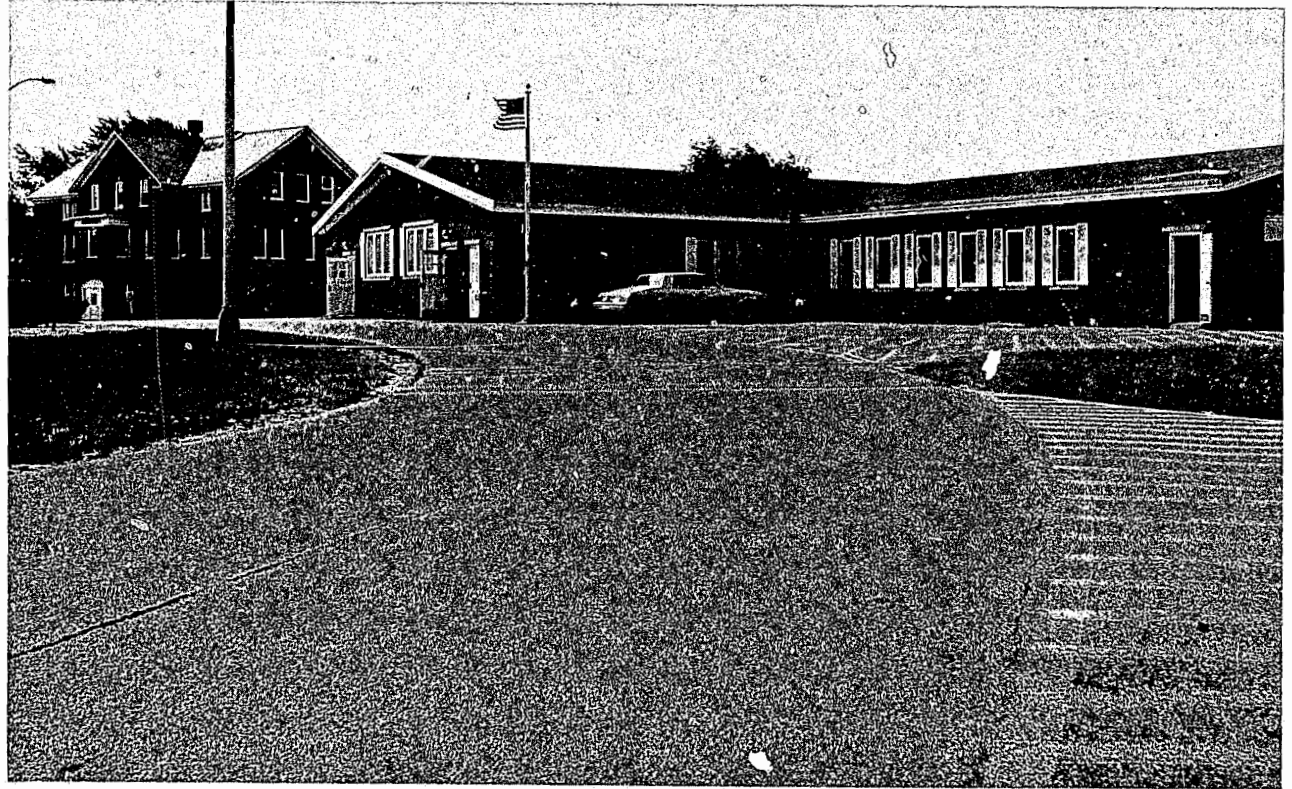


Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Preface	iii
Nature of the Maine Youth Center	1
Methodology	6
Part I Basic Data on Absconding From The Maine Youth Center - July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980	8
Summary and Conclusions for Basic Data on Absconding	42
Part II Basic Data on Returns from Absconding - July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980	47
Bibliography	69

Table of Figures
Part I Base Data on Absconding

Figure Number	Title	Page
1	Average Daily Population for Each Month - July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980	9
2	Average Daily Population for Each Month - July, 1977 to June, 1980 (Graph)	11
3	Total Abscondings for Each Month - July, 1977 to June, 1980 and Range of Difference Over Three Years	13
4	Total Monthly Absconding - July, 1977 to June, 1980	15
5	Average Daily Population and Total Absconding for Each Month - July, 1977 to June, 1978 (Graph)	16
6	Average Daily Population and Total Absconding for Each Month - July, 1978 to June, 1979 (Graph)	17
7	Average Daily Population and Total Absconding for Each Month - July, 1979 to June, 1980 (Graph)	18
8	Table of Monthly Single and Group Abscondings 1977-78	20
9	Table of Monthly Single and Group Abscondings 1978-79	21
10	Table of Monthly Single and Group Abscondings 1979-80	22
11	Monthly Comparison of Single and Group Absconding Incidents 1977-78 (Graph)	25
12	Monthly Comparison of Single and Group Absconding Incidents 1978-79 (Graph)	26
13	Monthly Comparison of Single and Group Absconding Incidents 1979-80 (Graph)	27
14	Table of Annual Absconding by Individuals 1977-1980	29

Figure Number	Title	Page
15	Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1977-78	32
16	Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1978-79	33
17	Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1979-80	34
18	Comparative Table for One Year - 1978-79 - Time of Day of Absconding, Maine Youth Center - Youth Center at Topeka	37
19	Daily Absconding Totals - Day of Week July, 1977 to June, 1980	39-41
20	Community Absent Without Leave Infractions	43
21	Summary Table : Absconding	45

Part II Base Data on Returns

1	Average Number Absent from Custody Without Leave	48
2	Apprehensions of Absconders from the Maine Youth Center - A Comparison of Time Out of Custody, July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980 (In Percentages)	50-51
3	Methods of Return or Apprehension of Absconders - A Comparison, July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980 (In Percentages)	55
4	Apprehension of Absconders by Contiguous Law Enforcement Agencies (In Percentages)	57

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Preface

This study is an action-research study sponsored by Teacher Corps, a national youth advocacy agency. The study is one response to the common experience of tension between program/treatment considerations and custody/security considerations that exist in most correctional institutions and facilities. A dynamic response to tension can release the pent up energy through useful channels. A lack of research regarding breaches of security at the Maine Youth Center has resulted in a static, rumor-oriented response.

Since the Maine Youth Center is a minimum security institution, with no walls, fences or guards, and since freedom of mobility is a desire inherent in most youth, the tendency to run away, or abscond, from the institution is an ever-present reality. The initial purpose of this study will be to deal with this reality not by encouraging a more secure setting but by seeking sound information that clarifies the institution's record: How often did absconding occur? When did it occur? Under what documented conditions? What trends seem to emerge? A serious effort to answer these and other questions about absconding is essential to maintain effective treatment in juvenile corrections.

The Youth Center (for boys) at Topeka, Kansas identifies the major problems created when youth run away from correctional facilities.

Such an act constitutes:

- A. A potential danger to both the student and to society.
- B. A serious interruption in the student's treatment program.
- C. A poor prognostic sign for the student's failure adjustment both in the institution and after his release.
- D. A felony offense under Kansas law if done more than once.
- E. A serious public relations problem for the institution.

(Letter from the Youth Center at Topeka, January, 1980)

Authorities at the Maine Youth Center would concur with all but D. above. A similar law did exist in Maine but has recently been rescinded.

While it may seem strange, especially to the reader without experience in correctional employment, most authorities in juvenile corrections today believe that such mandated programs must operate as much as possible without walls and fences, locks and keys. In a British study, a director of psychological services sums up this belief.

The importance of better understanding of absconding, with the twin aims of maximizing the population of open institutions and of minimizing the occurrence of absconding, scarcely needs to be stressed.

(G. R. Twiselton in Laycock, 1977, P. iii)

The ultimate purpose of this study, then, is not to encourage more secure provisions at the Maine Youth Center but to inform staff, administration and committed students about matters related to absconding that they should be familiar with and to begin to analyze the data presented to seek ways to use the information.

One further explanation is in order at this point. A statement from one recent American study of absconding clearly identifies a position that the writers of this paper have taken and that has directed our research at the Center.

Considering the most recently published British and American findings on studies of absconding together, the overwhelming generalization which emerges is that there is no static relationship between a youth's personal characteristics and absconding. Rather, the relationship between absconding and personal characteristics will vary depending on the program and its organizational structure.

(Chase, 1973)

Nothing of any substance has been provided to contradict this theory or to prove validity of assuming that there exists a classic "runaway prone" personality type. A study of absconding from borstals (more secure correctional facilities for British offenders, ages 18 to 21) gives credence to our position and clear direction. "The demonstration that environmental variables are almost certainly more important than individual variables offers possibilities for action."

(Laycock, 1977, P. iii)

This study is written for correctional personnel in particular and for professionals concerned with youth advocacy in general. Much of the subject matter presented in this study may seem foreign or, at best, unclear to those inexperienced in corrections. The writers have attempted to keep this dual audience in mind when choosing what to include or exclude as well as how best to explain correctional terms and procedures. It is extremely important that such a dual audience be reached; otherwise, correctional programs, while mandated by public laws, become self serving and perpetuating complexes. Without the interest of the public, such institutions, regardless of their successes within, cannot effectively reintegrate their charges.

The major responsibility facing juvenile correctional institutions is the responsibility to take custody of and effectively reintegrate in due time recalcitrant youth. Street et. al. (1966) have stated: "General disfavor and local criticism generate strong pressure to emphasize custodial functions. Coping with public opinion and controlling relations with the environment become compelling tasks for the administrators. Questions of boundary-crossing by inmates tend to be critical, so that officials generally exercise cautious control of these events. Such tendencies heighten the isolation of the institution, further reducing opportunities for more expansive relations involving the gradual reintegration of the inmates in the community." (P.12)

The overall purpose of this study is to convey the best documented information available at one juvenile correctional institution interwoven with the best documented information from the literature on the subject of absconding and its effects on reintegration programs, or vice versa, in juvenile corrections.

In this study, Part I will convey the results of the data on the experience of absconding from the Maine Youth Center and Part II the results of data on returning to the Maine Youth Center.

Nature of the Maine Youth Center

The Maine Youth Center is located in the city of South Portland, Maine, adjacent to Portland, the largest city in the state. The combined population of this urban area is approximately 100,000 to 110,000. The Center campus, though developed in an urban area alongside the area jetport, is a rural setting not unlike a small town prep school. Its population is drawn from the entire state of roughly 900,000 citizens.

The 300 acre site houses an average 200 students, 10% of which are female, all of which are committed by the District Courts or (approximately 7 or 8%) held for a later court appearance. The legal age range of committal is 11 to 18 years and the average age is 16.

There are presently nine resident cottages on the campus. The chart on the next page provides a rough sketch of the cottage residence breakdown. In the chart, "regular cottage" means a residential treatment unit that houses most of the male offenders who exhibit no outstanding security, mental or emotional problem characteristics. The cottage for young offenders is a "regular" cottage that contains the younger or less physically/emotionally mature individuals. The special treatment cottage is reserved for those male students who are mentally unstable to a noticeable degree and require a more intensified treatment program. The security cottage maintains male students who have exhibited an inability to function in the regular cottage programs either because of persistent and continuous misbehavior or a persistent tendency to run away. The security cottage is a program-within-a-program. Present policy is to keep a boy committed there for at least six weeks of "dead time," time that does not count toward release, under closer scrutiny and care. The object is to help to develop and improve skills to function in the open program. The hold-for-court cottage presently houses male offenders who are waiting court disposition and may or may not be committed to the Center. In addition to the permanent residential units for males, there are two facilities that hold them for short time periods: An intensive care unit for incorrigibles and an infirmary. The one female cottage contains all committed or held-for-court girls regardless of age or personal characteristics or needs. These very difficult conditions, because of which many regular or normal female students are subject to restrictions not required for them, will hopefully be relieved sometime in 1981.

The Center is appropriately referred to as a "minimum security institution." The expression means that there are not (or few) perimeter security measures, such as walls or fences; that perimeter and internal areas are not subject to organized and/or constant surveillance, such as by guards; and that "security," i.e. keeping committed youth at the Center until officially released, is the responsibility of all in the institution.

Residential Units at The Maine Youth Center

Number of Type	Program	Population Range	Age Range	Age and Type of building
4 Regular Cottages	Open	30-35	14-18	Old 3-story
1 Regular Cottage for Young/Immature Students	Open	20-24	11-14	Newer 1-story
1 Special Treatment Cottage	Closed	10-12	11-18	Newer 1-story
1 Security Cottage	Closed	6-16	11-18	Newer 1-story
1 Hold-for-Court Cottage	Closed	20-24	11-18	Newer 1-story
1 Female Cottage	Semi-open, Closed	20-24	11-18	Newer 1-story

While the topography of the campus affords some difficulty for would-be absconders, it is no serious obstacle. At the back side of the campus a tidal river extends the entire length. Few have crossed it at low or high tide levels, summer or winter. Extending along the north side boundary are land and runways for the international jetport. Here, too, few have tread in attempts to abscond. Much open space remains for the would-be absconder.

Though the Center is an open or minimum security institution, there is not an open-door policy or atmosphere here. There are several serious consequences suffered by most who abscond. Also, though the decision to stay or run is ultimately up to the individual student, there are normal and consistent precautions.

The typical absconder, when apprehended, will suffer the following consequences which all newly committed students soon become aware of:

- 1.) Immediate seclusion in an intensive care unit, which contains thirteen secure units, for 72 hours;
- 2.) One month automatically added to the offender's length of stay at the Center;
- 3.) An automatic drop in the offenders Center status which causes a loss of privileges;
- 4.) Six weeks of restriction from any off grounds trip or leaves of absence;
- 5.) Liability of committal to a medium security cottage which is always locked for a minimum of six weeks of "dead time," time that will not count toward the release of the offending individual;
- 6.) Peer pressure which results from the policy that any cottage which has had no runaways between home-leaves will be allowed an extra day's leave at the next leave period.

Although the Center is "minimally secured," all staff are obligated to be alert to signs that any student is "out of place" or possibly attempting to abscond. In such cases any staff member would be expected either to intervene or to report the circumstances to the control (information and switchboard) unit.

There are many internal security measures, most of which are imposed to indicate to committed students that their presence and movement is being monitored. A few of the routines, for example, are that individuals and/or groups move on grounds only after a phone call has been placed between sending and receiving locations (cottage to school, etc.), and, after a reasonable time period for travel is allowed, the student(s) must appear at his or her destination. Also, there are periodic counts conducted throughout the day in cottages and various program sites as another form of checking. Certain cottages are "closed" and, therefore, always locked. In closed cottages the freedom to move in and especially out is more closely monitored. These measures and other similar ones serve to discourage absconding as well as to provide for more immediate responses to attempted or successful abscondings by the control unit.

The Center is the only juvenile correctional facility in the state. It must accept, within limits of its capacity, all court committed youth, male or female, from the ages of 11 to 18. Since July 1, 1978, all youth who are committed must be guilty of quite serious offenses (no "status offenders" or "children in need of supervision" may be committed*).

In addition, specifically, the law reads that

A commitment to the Department of Mental Health and Corrections, including a commitment to The Maine Youth Center... shall be for an indeterminate period not to extend beyond the juvenile's 18th birthday unless the court expressly further limits or extends the indeterminate commitment, provided that the court shall not limit the commitment to less than one year nor extend the commitment beyond a juvenile's 21st birthday.

(15 MRSA, Section 3316)

* Prior to 1978 youth were quite frequently committed to the Center for such status offenses as "incorrigibility" or "in danger of falling into vice" and less frequently because they were children of the streets with no adult available or capable of supervising them.

For the limited time of this study, July 1977 to June 1980, the "indeterminate period" that committed students remained at the Center was usually six to seven months.

Methodology

In order to identify incidents and trends of absconding from the Maine Youth Center it was necessary to set a specific time period to be studied. A thirty-six month time period, July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980, was selected.

The document used to gather base data on absconding for this time period was an institutional "morning report" which contains the record of all significant daily incidents occurring at the Center as well as general population data. The control unit prepares this report Monday through Friday, excepting holidays. A recording of the significant daily incidents is completed from notes taken as incidents occur and are reported to control from within the Center or without (State Police or family calls). Noteworthy incidents which occur on weekends or holidays are combined, separately by date, on a summation morning report the day after the weekend or holiday.

Basic information on absconding derived from the morning reports was recorded on file cards, more than 1500 cards for the three year period studied. The essential data that was available and recorded on each card was the date, time of day, name of individual absconder, his or her resident cottage, whether the absconding was a single or group infraction, and, when available, the specific on-grounds location from which the absconding began. Each absconding was followed up to determine and record on the same card the best available apprehension or return data; date, time, location, and whether the apprehension or return was voluntary (self, parents, etc.) or involuntary (staff, local or state police, etc.). One such card was completed for each individual absconding from July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980.

A search of the literature was conducted on abscondings and related studies for juvenile correctional institutions. Standard procedures were used including computer searches through the following systems: The National Criminal Justice Research Service, Psychological Abstracts and Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC).

The resulting information from the morning report was compiled and analyzed in order to refine the information on the frequency of the rate of absconding from the Maine Youth Center as well as how many times individuals absconded during that time period. The information obtained through the literature review served as a guide in determining procedures and format of this study.

Part I

Basic Data on Absconding at The Maine Youth Center

July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980

Definition: For the purposes of this study, "absconding," or in correctional language, AWOL - absent without official leave, means any attempted or successful act of running away from the custody of the Maine Youth Center, regardless of distance achieved or time away from official custody. The term absconding does not apply, as it does in many institutions, to breaches of custody committed while a student was on an approved leave status in the community.

Figure 1 gives a monthly breakdown of the population in residence at the Center for the 36 months identified. Computations reveal an average daily population of 202 students over the three years. An estimated maximum holding capacity, the maximum number which can be fed, clothed and kept in a custodial sense at cottage living times such as meals and bed time, of the Center for residential living would be 235 students. Final averages for each of the years in Figure 1 indicate that population declined: Year 1 (1977-78)-214, Year 2 (1978-79)-202 and Year 3 (1979-80)-190. A review of monthly population changes shows, in Years 1 and 3, a population trend which is consistent with the Center's intake experience and release policy. Population is generally low in July and August because many students are released at the end of the school term in late June and because committals to the Center tend to be lower during these months. High to low ranges for each of these years (Year 1-71) and Year 2-65) are, therefore, normal. Year 2, on the other hand, shows a relatively meagre high to low range of 23. Also in Year 2 the average daily population figures for July and August

FIGURE 1
Average Daily Population and Range of Difference over 3 Years for Each Month July 1977 to June 1980

	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
1977-78	175	189	189	209	205	209	229	231	244	227	246	211
1978-79	204	204	205	212	213	201	197	190	205	200	202	192
1979-80	160	175	187	187	191	171	181	186	210	198	213	225
Range of Difference over 3 years	44	29	18	25	22	38	48	45	39	29	44	33
Annual ADP '77-'78	214	High to Low Range										
		71										
Annual ADP '78-'79	202	23										
Annual ADP '79-'80	190	65										
ADP 7/77 to 6/80	202	86										

(204 and 204) were higher than the annual average for that year (202). And a final inconsistency - in Year 2 the high and low months were November and February respectively.*

Figure 2 shows, in graphic form, the typical population imbalance which occurred in fiscal years 1 and 3 and the untypical population balance of Year 2. The graph also shows clearly that, in Year 1, resident population at the Center between December of 1977 and May of 1978 either peaked to holding capacity of 235 (January, February and April) or burst beyond that point (March and May). The only other month which approached holding capacity during the three years was June of 1980.

Considering the population data given in Figures 1 and 2, one might logically expect that, if there is any clear relationship between density of population and absconding, trends of high population at the Center would coincide with, or immediately precede, similar trends of high absconding rate. Figure 3 gives total abscondings by month for the three year period. A breakdown of the total 1137 abscondings for the entire three years reveals dramatic reductions from Year 1 to 2 and, particularly, from Year 2 to 3. In 1977-78 there were 549 abscondings, in 1978-79 399, and in 1979-80 only 189. Though the purpose of this monograph is to present data on absconding that is refined and appropriately matched with variables coincident with the abscondings, it is clearly evident that the reduction of absconding between Year 1 and Year 3 both in number (360) and in percentage (66%) is exceptionally high. Monthly figures show higher absconding during warm months and lower during cold months (November to February) as would be expected.

* It may be only coincidence that in July of 1978 implementation of a new juvenile code began. Two features of the code were the aforementioned elimination of Maine Youth Center committals for "status offenses" and the institution of "court intake workers," whose major duty is to divert youngsters who committed minor offenses away from the criminal justice system.

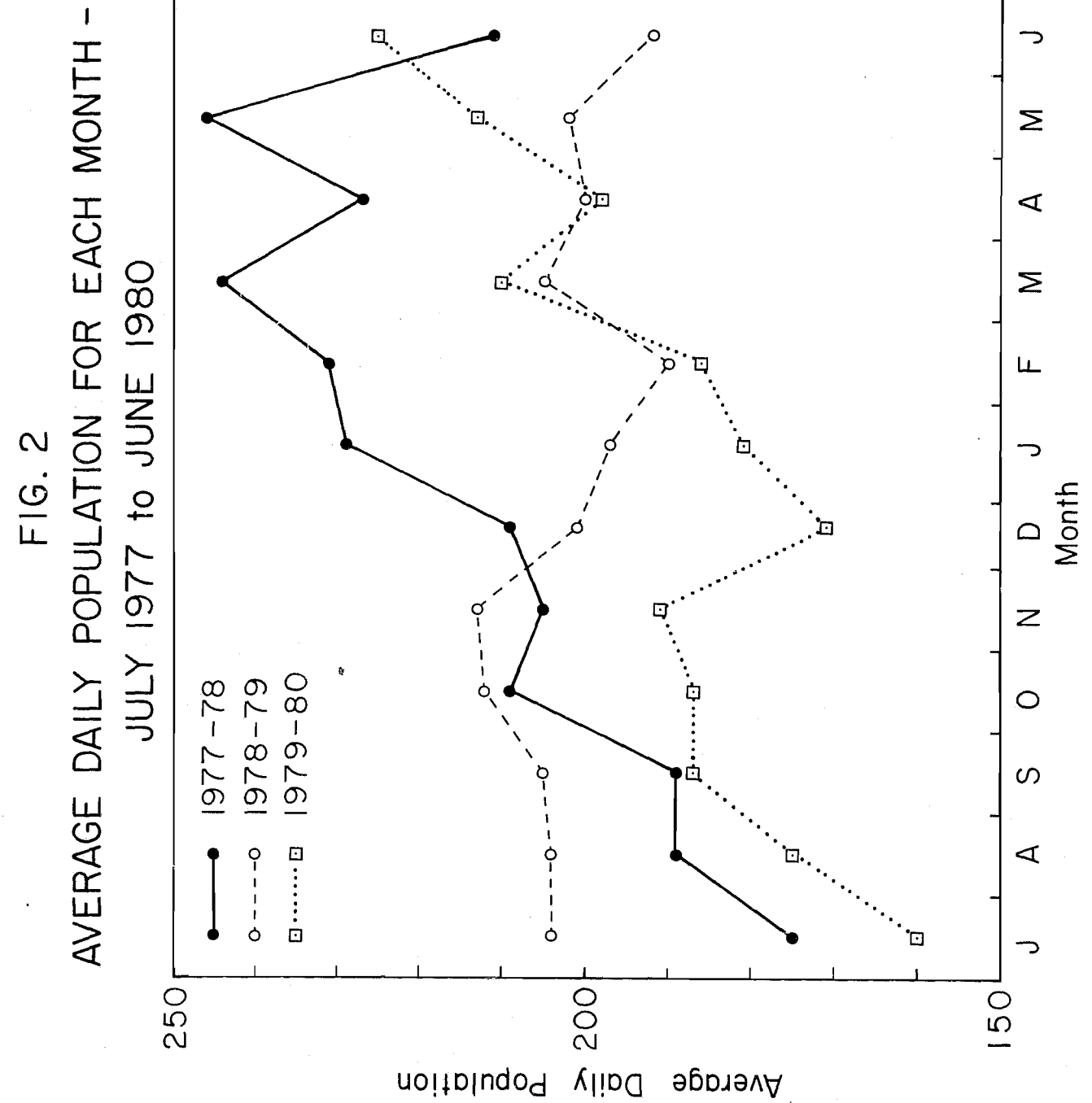


Figure 1 and 3 can be used to plot a comparison between population density and rate of absconding. One logical approach would seem to be to plot a sequence of several months of high population with incidence of monthly absconding one month later, assuming that the effect of population density on absconding, if any, would be a slightly delayed effect. One such plotting is portrayed below for the three highest successive population months of 1978.

Population	January 229(+20)	February 231(+2)	March 244(+13)
Absconding	February 21(-11)	March 43(+22)	April 34(-10)

Though population was up by 20 from December to January, absconding was down by 11 from January to February. From January to February population rose slightly (+2), while absconding increased substantially (+22) from February to March. Again, population rose from February to March and this time above "holding capacity" (+13 to a total of 244 or 9 above holding capacity). Absconding decreased from March to April by 10 abscondings. Relationship between density of population and absconding appears to be insignificant whether plotted in this manner or balanced month to month.

FIGURE 3.

Total Abscondings and Range of Difference over 3 Years for Each Month - July 1977-June 1980

	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
1977-78	44	67	64	61	32	39	32	21	43	33	49	64
1978-79	55	54	58	49	28	30	13	19	42	17	16	18
1979-80	14	28	17	13	15	6	17	15	17	15	16	16
Range of Difference Over 3 Years	39	39	49	50	19	30	19	7	30	19	32	47
Total Absconding 1977-78	549	High to Low Range 46										
Total Absconding 1978-79	399	45										
Total Absconding 1979-80	189	22										
Total Absconding 7/77 to 6/80	1137	61										

Figure 4 depicts absconding trends for each of the three years on a graph. Most noticeable from this perspective also is the distinction between the relatively high planes of Years 1 and 2 and the low and nearly even plane in Year 3. The trends of absconding from month to month in Years 1 and 2 are similarly erratic. Closer observation also shows that the dramatic reduction in absconding at the Center began in April of 1979 and remained constantly lower through the end of the study period, June 1980. In the first two years the pattern was a reasonable one. During the cool months absconding tapered off and then plummeted from October through February. But notice the almost symbolic line from March to April of 1979. It points to a trend that deviates only once in the next 14 months. Also, there were substantial reductions between August and October, November and February, and March and June of Years 1 and 2. What brought about such reductions during these periods and more particularly, the dramatic reductions in absconding during the last 14 months?

Figures 5 to 7 seem to offer conclusive evidence that population density is not the answer. Each of the three graphs, which compare population and absconding trends for the three year period, is made up of two scales on the vertical axis: the scale on the left shows population data and begins at the base figure of 150; the scale on the right shows absconding data and begins at the base figure of zero. A zero based scale for both types of data would have been difficult to construct. More importantly, the dual scales provide a comparative value at each vertical interval which allows a true comparison of lines. The graphs do not seem to indicate a very strong relationship between absconding and density of population. If one looks at the peak months for the first year (77/78), striking contrasts are apparent. The peak population months for that year were March (244) and May (246) with high average populations in the months of January (229), February (231) and April (227). The peak months of absconding for the same year

FIG. 4
TOTAL MONTHLY ABSCONDING INCIDENTS
JULY 1977 to JUNE 1980

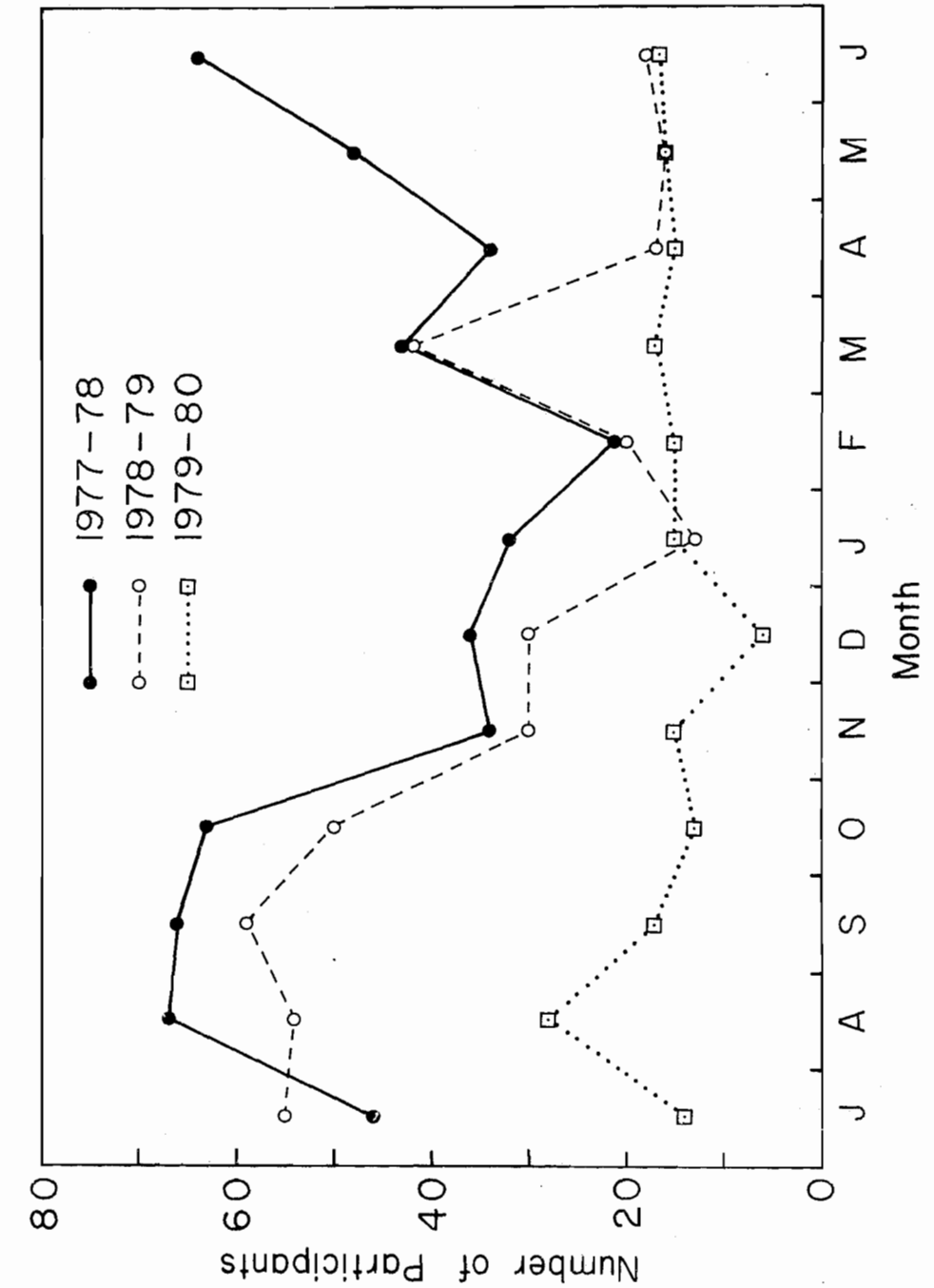


FIG. 5
 AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION AND TOTAL ABSCONDING FOR
 EACH MONTH - JULY 1977 to JUNE 1978

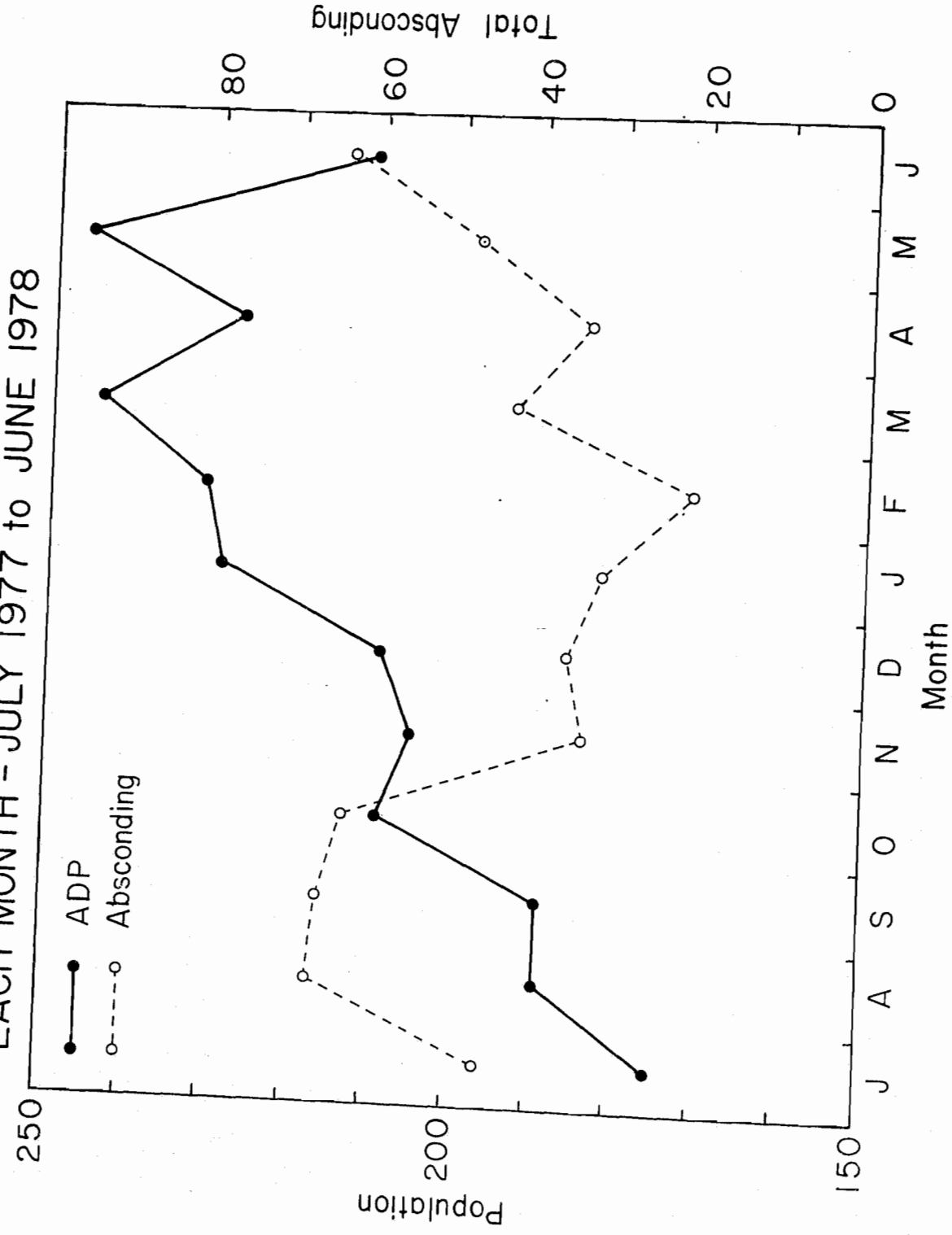


FIG. 6
 AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION AND TOTAL ABSCONDING FOR
 EACH MONTH - JULY 1978 to JUNE 1979

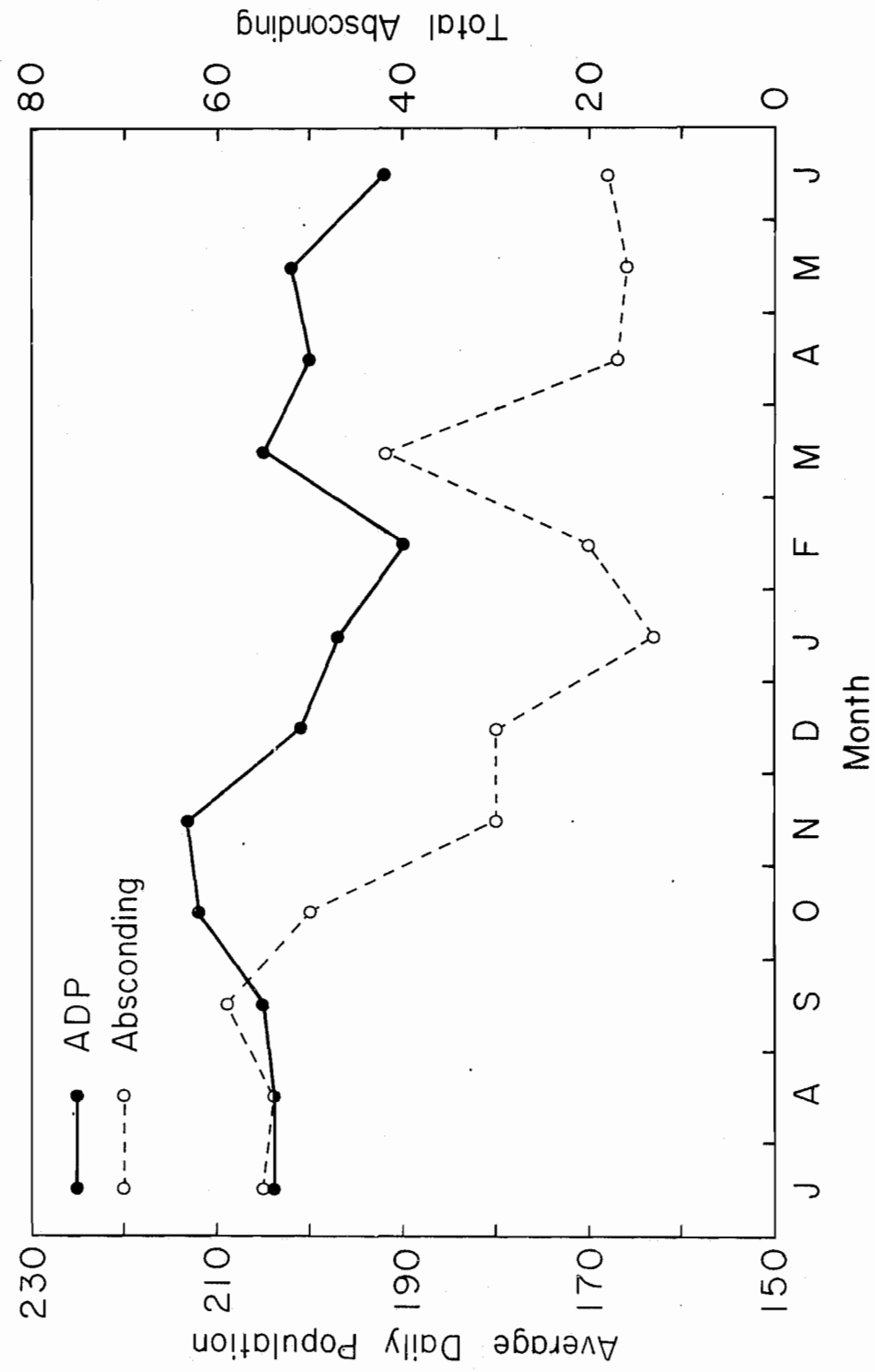
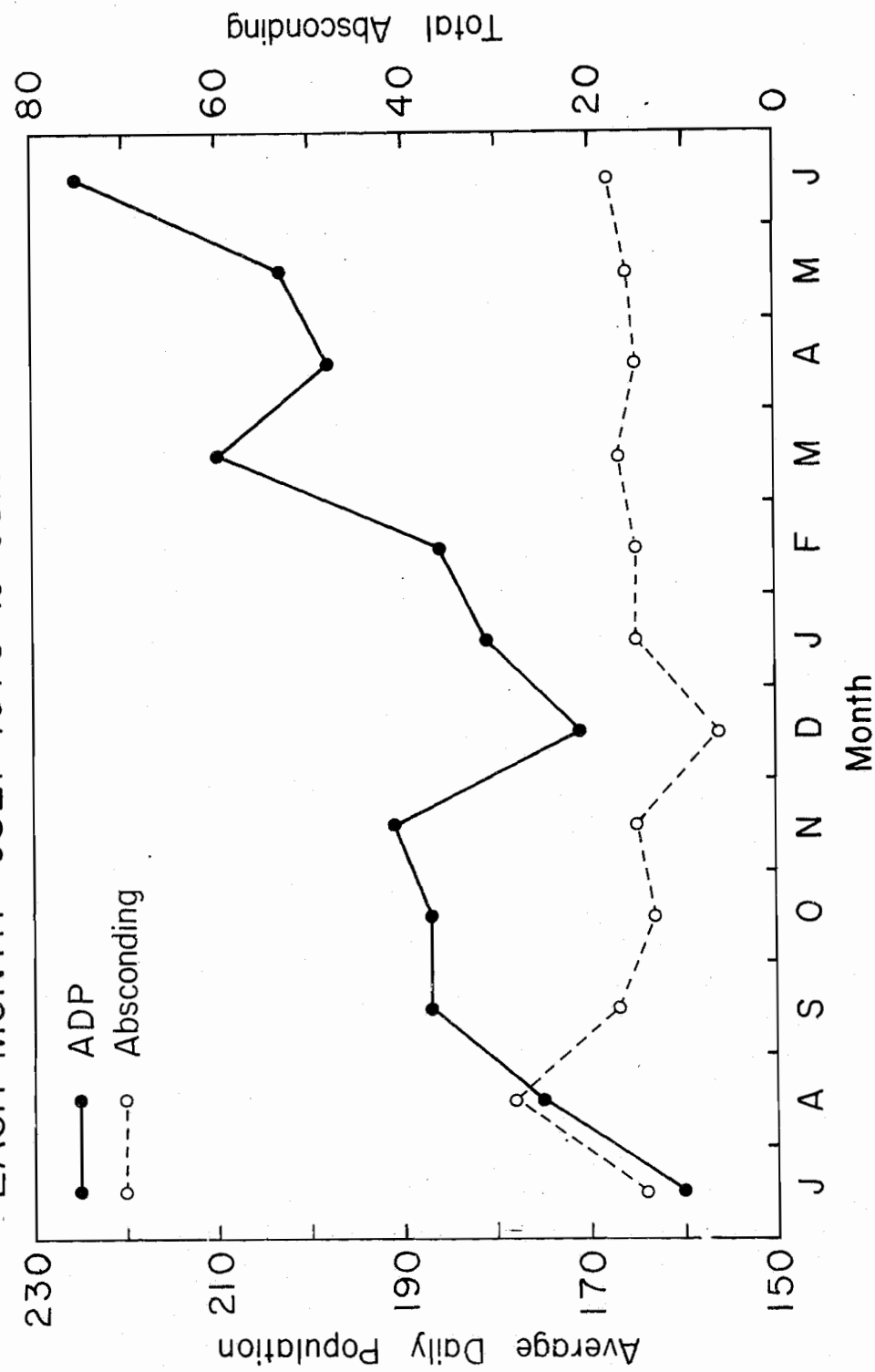


FIG. 7
 AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION AND TOTAL ABSCONDING FOR
 EACH MONTH - JULY 1979 to JUNE 1980



were August (67), September (64) and October (61) of '77 and June (64) of '78. In the second year the peak population months were October (212) and November (213) of '78; the peak months of absconding were July (55), August (54) and September (58) of '78; October (49) was also high. In most cases it appears that, as population rose, absconding actually declined, both at sharp rates. In the third year, 79/80, the peak population months were March (210), May (213) and June (225). May (198) was fairly high. There was only one outstanding month for absconding in the same year - August (28) was the peak month. Such contrasts would indicate that the experience at the Maine Youth Center for the three years of our study, as presented in the tables and graphs, would not suggest a meaningful relationship between density of population and numbers of abscondings. There is still the possibility of some broad sort of delayed effect between these variables, but such a connection would be difficult to identify. It seems clear that the Center experienced no direct relationship. Apparently there are a number of more important internal conditions affecting absconding than population density.

There are several major variables among basic considerations on absconding. One analytical approach is to determine how many absconders run away alone as opposed to how many run away as part of a group. If group abscondings are high one might infer that clients tend to remain aloof from staff, perhaps are encouraged to do so, and conspire to run away. Figures 8, 9 and 10 give data regarding this distinction on a monthly basis for the three years. There are further breakdowns into various group sizes which might prove meaningful.

An analysis of the highlights presented in these figures shows different perspectives on the reduction of absconding during the three years. One

FIGURE 8

Table of Monthly Single and Multiple Abscondings 1977-78

	1977			1978					Annual Total 77-78				
	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.		March	April	May	June
1 * Single Incidents Absconding	16	17	17	21	17	18	10	4	13	12	18	10	173
2 * Total Multiple Absconding	13	18	16	17	7	9	10	8	12	9	14	23	156
3 Group of Two - Frequency	12	11	9	13	6	7	9	7	8	7	11	18	118
4 Group of Three - Frequency	0	4	4	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	3	4	23
5 Group of Four - Frequency	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	11
6 Group of Five - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Group of Six - Frequency	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
8 Group of Seven - Frequency	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9 Group of Eight - Frequency	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10 * Total Participants in Multiple Absconding	28	50	47	40	15	21	22	17	30	21	31	54	376
11 * Total Single and Multiple Participants (Lines 1 & 10)	44	67	64	61	32	39	32	21	43	33	49	64	549

* In these figures "Single Absconding Incidents" means, as the label implies, incidents when individuals absconded alone. "Total Multiple Absconding Incidents" means the total number of times that two or more students absconded together. "Total Participants in Multiple Abscondings" means the total number of individuals involved in group incidents. "Total Single and Multiple Participants" is another way of expressing "Total Abscondings."

FIGURE 9

Table of Monthly Single and Multiple Abscondings 1978-79

	1978			1979					Annual Total 78-79				
	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.		March	April	May	June
1 Single Absconding Incidents	15	13	14	13	6	5	8	2	5	3	6	6	96
2 Total Multiple Absconding Incidents	18	14	19	13	8	9	2	6	15	7	5	6	122
3 Group of Two - Frequency	15	7	16	7	5	6	1	5	10	7	5	6	90
4 Group of Three - Frequency	2	4	2	4	1	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	20
5 Group of Four - Frequency	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
6 Group of Five - Frequency	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
7 Group of Six - Frequency	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8 Group of Seven - Frequency	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
9 Group of Eight - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 Total Participants in Multiple Absconding	40	41	44	36	22	25	5	17	37	14	10	12	303
11 Total Single and Multiple Participants (Lines 1 & 10)	55	54	58	49	28	30	13	19	42	17	16	18	399

FIGURE 10

Table of Monthly Single and Multiple Abscondings 1979-80

	1979			1980					Annual Total 79-80				
	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.		March	April	May	June
1 Single Absconding Incidents	3	8	8	7	3	0	7	6	8	7	10	9	76
2 Total Multiple Absconding Incidents	5	8	3	3	6	3	5	3	4	4	2	3	49
3 Group of Two - Frequency	4	5	1	3	6	3	5	1	3	4	0	2	37
4 Group of Three - Frequency	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	9
5 Group of Four - Frequency	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
6 Group of Five - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Group of Six - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 Group of Seven - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Group of Eight - Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 Total Participants in Multiple Absconding	11	20	9	6	12	6	10	9	9	8	6	7	113
11 Total Single & Multiple Participants (Lines 1 & 10)	14	28	17	13	15	6	17	15	17	15	16	16	189

significant finding between Years 1 and 2 is the decrease in single abscondings (individuals who absconded alone) of 77. The effect in sheer numbers is more noticeable between Year 2 and Year 3. The following reductions occurred between June of 1979 and June of 1980: Total abscondings minus 210 (better than a 50% reduction); group incidents (number of times 2 or more absconded together) minus 73, or minus 190 participants.

Two person abscondings proved to be the type that most commonly occurred - other than those who absconded alone-by a large majority. Of the 1,137 cases of absconding during the three years, 490 were participants in group - two absconding incidents. The third year (79/80) figures show that this type of absconding was reduced to 15% of the three-year total, which was an important reason why Year 3 is so much lower. It seems likely that certain conditions in the institution supported the group - two pattern particularly. An intensified investigation of this one finding should be useful if it points to effective causes of the reduction in Year 3.

These tables also illustrate an experience at the Maine Youth Center which was contradictory to an impression on absconding expressed in "The Anatomy of Escape," (Hildebrand 1969:63). In that study Hildebrand declared that "escape is a solitary experience." Data in Figures 8, 9 and 10 show that: 1.) in 1977/78 there were 173 incidents of absconding by individuals and 156 incidents involving groups, 2.) in 1978/79 there were 96 incidents by individuals and 122 by groups, and 3.) in 1979/80, 76 incidents by individuals and 49 by groups. The cumulative totals for each category are: solitary abscondings - 345, group abscondings (number of participants) - 792. Also, in all the high absconding months of the study, the relationship between single and multiple is skewed toward the multiple incident. The high month for each year, for example, shows the following relationships - August of '77, 17 single and 50 multiple participants; September of '78, 14 single and 44 multiple; August of '79, 8 single and 20 multiple.

Laycock (1977:43) offers a distinction which Hildebrand did not consider and which does agree with the Maine Youth Center's results presented in this monograph. The Laycock study of British borstals suggests that, "Although there were more incidents in open compared with closed borstals, there were also significantly more group abscondings from open institutions. Obviously a reduction in the porportion of group abscondings, even if it were not accompanied by a reduction in the number of incidents, would reduce the total number of absconders." The data shows that group reduction was the backbone of the Center's success in the dramatic reduction over the three years.

The graphic illustrations in Figures 11 to 13 offer several variations of further interest. On these graphs the values given on the vertical scale represent numbers of incidents, and not participants, for both single and group categories.

If one scans the three graphs, it becomes apparent that single incidents dominated in Year 1, multiple incidents dominated in Year 2, and single incidents ruled in Year 3.

By invoking what must be a common principle for comparing graph lines, that when the two lines intersect or diverge there has occurred a change in trend, we notice that the trend toward single or group infractions changed 5 times in '77/'78, 6 times in '78/'79 and 3 times in '79/'80. Also, the degrees of incline or decline of peak and valley periods in Year 1 are moderate, in Year 2, sharp and in Year 3, quite smoothed out.

FIG. 11
MONTHLY COMPARISON OF SINGLE AND MULTIPLE
ABSCONDING INCIDENTS 1977-78

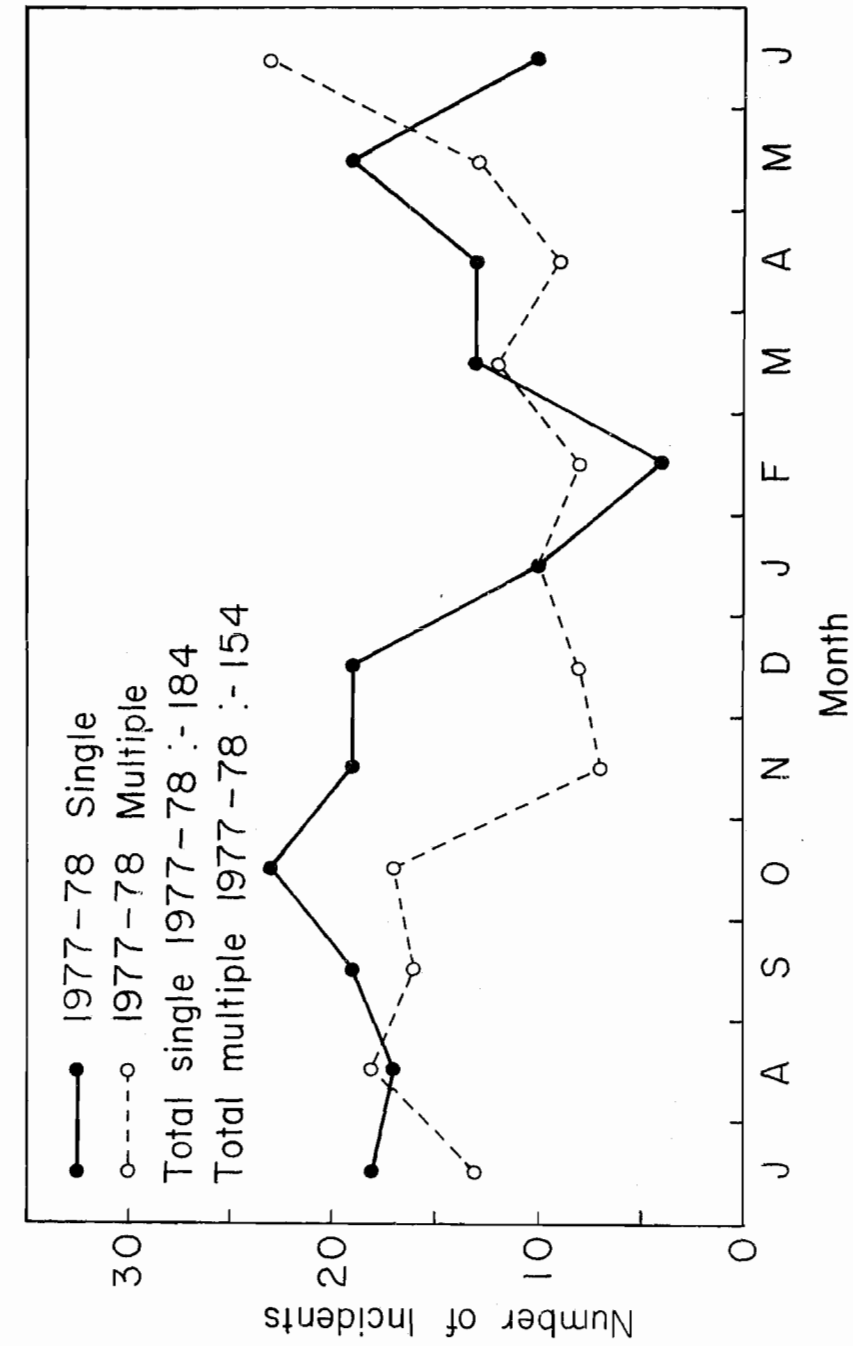


FIG. 12
MONTHLY COMPARISON OF SINGLE AND MULTIPLE
ABSCONDING INCIDENTS 1978-79

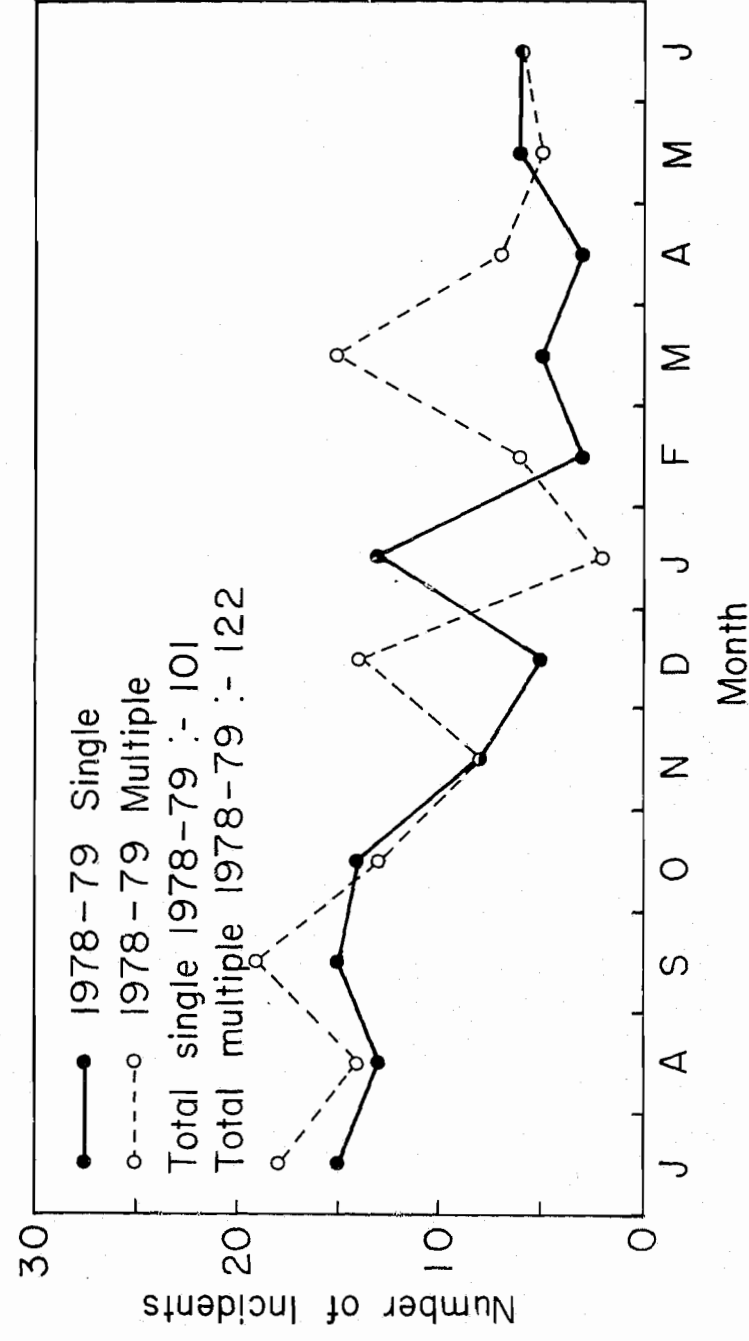
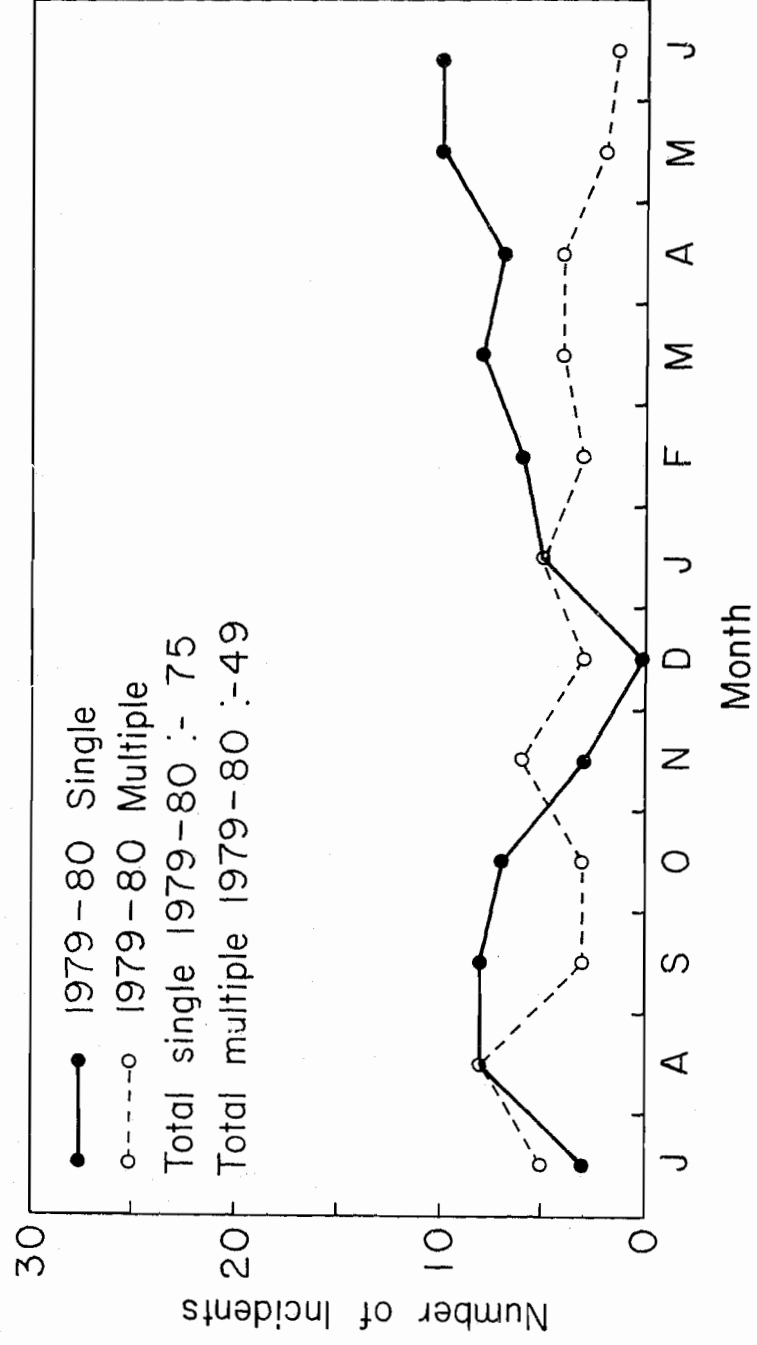


FIG. 13
MONTHLY COMPARISON OF SINGLE AND MULTIPLE
ABSCONDING INCIDENTS 1979-80



Annual Absconding by Individuals

The second major data collection focusing on an aspect of absconding exclusively is a study of the number of times that individuals absconded on an annual basis with separate consideration for a 3-year summary. This section of the study is the only one that addresses the subject of relationship between individuals and absconding. Though better understanding of environment as it may influence absconding rate is the primary concern of this study, a data base to serve such a purpose must include the distinction between individuals who abscond only once and those who abscond more than once. The purpose in presenting this data is not to probe the personalities of "AWOL-prone" youth, but to determine the institutional experience over the time period regarding this distinction.*

It should be made clear that the data in Figure 14 for each year is subject to overlapping since committals and releases are not effected on a pre-determined time line. Many of the individuals who absconded in Year 1 may also have absconded in Year 2 and, in some cases, Year 3. Since this part of the study is of a limited longitudinal nature (3 years), the data from Years 1 to 3 is mutually inclusive rather than exclusive. For instance, in 1977/78 there were 133 individuals who absconded only once. In 1978/79 there were 126 individuals who absconded only once, but some of the 133 may have absconded in a previous or later year and some of the 126 may also have absconded in a previous or later year. The point is that the data tells more about the annual institutional experience than about individuals.

* Among matters of important data on individual absconders, two which we lack stand out as serious obstacles to a more complete investigation. They are the factors of age of each absconder and the committal, recommittal and release dates of each absconder during the period studied.

FIGURE 14
Table of Annual Abscondings by Individuals

		1977 - 80											
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Twelve			
1977-78	133	61	28	22	8	7	2	1	1	1			
1978-79	126	54	27	12	5	1	0	1	1	0			
1979-80	89	21	8	2	1	2	1	0	0	0			
* Three-Year Totals	258	96	65	30	24	16	5	6	**	1			
Total Individuals Who Absconded:											Three-Year Totals Cont.		
1977-78	263										Nine	2	
1978-79	226										Ten	1	
1979-80	124										Eleven	1	
* Three-Year Totals	507										Thirteen	1	
											Fourteen	1	

* These figures were not tallied by adding the totals for each year, but by reviewing all absconding incidents over the 3 year period since some absconders may be included in the totals for 2 or all 3 years.

The annual figures do show that the Maine Youth Center experienced problems of absconding with both the "one-time-in-a-year" phenomenon as well as the "more-than-one-time." In Year 1, of 263 individuals who absconded at least once, approximately one-half (133) absconded only once. In that year 130 absconded more than once. Of the 130, 111 absconded 2 to 4 times. So, these 111 violators accounted for 294 of the total 549 participants for that year. While this information, and similar data in Years 2 and 3, puts the total 1137 in a different perspective, it still indicates that the Center's experience with absconding during this time period involved many individuals. Our results do not support the finding of other institutions that a relatively few individuals create a chronic problem with absconding.* The data in this table also indicates that, in Year 1, 7% (19) of the total individuals who absconded (263) committed 21% (116) of the abscondings for that year (549). That was the worst year for chronic abscondings by relatively few individuals.

A more nearly complete picture of individual absconding may be seen using the three year totals. (See footnote to Figure 14) It must be admitted here also that some of the total 507 individuals who absconded at least once in the time period may have absconded prior to July 1, 1977, or may abscond again after June 30, 1980. A conservative estimate would be that for 60% of the 507 individuals the data is all inclusive. Results of computing mean averages for the 3 year column were as follows: of the total 507 individuals who absconded, 11% (58) accounted for 33% (377) of the total 1,137 abscondings. During this study the 5 or more absconding cutoff for the three years has been maintained but, lacking dates of committals or recommittals of repeat absconders, it is not possible

* A chronic absconder is one who absconds at the slightest provocation when given the opportunity. The cutoff point between the mild to serious problem and the chronic problem is determined to be at the level 5 or more abscondings in a year.

to establish valid standards of "chronic absconding" for the three-year period.

One New England institution for juveniles has stated that their data shows that a relatively few individuals do create the serious problem with absconding. "Many of our students experiment with the phenomena of AWOL. But the real problem seems to lie with those individuals who go AWOL repeatedly. A relatively small part of our population are multiple runaways but they do account for a large percentage of the total AWOL rate." (Statement Paper on AWOLS, Director of Research, New Hampshire Youth Development Center, 1980). The more data from the Maine Youth Center that is accumulated and analyzed, the more strongly the case develops to support British findings that a sociological/environmental approach to understanding and alleviating the problem of absconding is the more expedient and productive approach.

Time of Day of Absconding

From an institutional point of view, particularly, an awareness of when abscondings occur is essential to maintain appropriate security measures, even at minimum security institutions. Figures 15, 16 and 17 depict the frequencies of absconding incidents at various daily time periods during the three years. Each time period represents a phase of the institution's daily schedule for Monday through Friday. Weekend programming has been minimal and has fluctuated over the three years. Any noticeable difference in incidence of absconding on weekends might be attributable, in part, to the reduction of structured activities. The same time structure was used for all seven days.

FIGURE 15

Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1977-1978

	1978												TOTAL 1977 - 1978
	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	
12:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.	3%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	5%	0%		5%	0%	0%	1%
7:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.	25%	28%	29%	18%	23%	19%	10%	16%	24%	9%	19%	30.3%	22%
12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	35%	26%	34%	37%	34%	59%	45%	42%	28%	22%	25%	30.3%	34%
5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.	31%	40%	34%	40%	27%	22%	40%	42%	40%	59%	44%	30.3%	37%
9:00 P.M. to 12:00 A.M.	6%	3%	3%	2.5%	8%	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%	12%	9.1%	5%
Unknown	0%	3%	0%	2.5%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		1%
Total Incidents	29	35	33	38	24	27	20	12	25	21	32	33	329

FIGURE 16

Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1978-1979

	1979												Total 1978-1979
	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	
12:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
7:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.	9%	18.5%	18%	15%	12.5%	14.5%	30%	11.1%	15%	10%	9%	12.5%	15%
12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	27%	15%	35%	15%	25%	14.5%	20%	11.1%	20%	30%	46%	12.5%	23%
5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.	52%	48%	35%	55%	37.5%	57%	40%	33 1/3%	60%	60%	36%	75%	49%
9:00 P.M. to 12:00 A.M.	9%	18.5%	12%	11%	12.5%	7%	10%	11.1%	0%	0%	9%	0%	9%
Unknown	3%	0%	0%	4%	12.5%	7%	0%	33 1/3%	5%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Total Incidents	33	27	33	26	14	14	10	8	20	10	11	12	218

FIGURE 17
Absconding - Time of Day - Monthly Percentages 1979-1980

	TOTAL												
	1979 July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	1979-1980
12:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
7:00 to 12:00 P.M.	37.5%	13%	27.3%	10%	33.3%	33 1/3%	10%	56%	8.3%	0%	37%	38%	23%
12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	37.5%	44%	27.3%	20%	33.3%	66 2/3%	20%	34%	33.4%	58.4%	27%	23%	34%
5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.	12.5%	31%	18.1%	50%	22.2%	0%	50%	11%	50%	33.3%	27%	31%	31%
9:00 P.M. to 12:00 A.M.	12.5%	6%	27.3%	20%	11.2%	0%	20%	0%	8.3%	8.3%	9%	8%	11%
Unknown	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total Incidents	8	16	11	10	9	3	12	9	12	11	12	12	125

In broad terms there are three time periods: "program" from 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., "leisure time" from 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., and "sleep" from 9:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. The "program" period was divided into A.M. and P.M. segments. Although both periods involved students in a variety of activities, including school, work assignments and individual treatment services, it is important to determine whether or not patterns would emerge regarding absconding activity in the earlier or later hours of the day. The 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. period is self-explanatory ("leisure time") but, it is non-program time to the extent that institution-wide activity is limited, though specific cottage routines (group meetings, gym calls, etc.) may occur. The split times for the "sleep" period distinguish those later hours (9:00 P.M. to 12:00 P.M.) when some cottages may still be active ("late-ups") and when many of the older students are still energetic and more inclined to abscond.

The use of percentages in the tabular breakdown allows for a truer comparison of the five time periods over the three years since the numbers decreased radically, especially in Year 3. Even though the total abscondings for Year 3 are significantly fewer than the other years, has there been a tendency to abscond more often during any particular time period(?)*

The table for Year 1 shows an immediate trend that would seem logical. Committed students tend to abscond during the "active" portions of each day. In 1977/78, 93% of the total abscondings occurred from 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. The pattern alters slightly in the second and third years: in 1978/79, 87% absconded from 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. (4% were unknown as to absconding time);

* All figures represent the number of absconding incidents for each time period, regardless of numbers of participants.

in 1979/80, 88% during the active part of the day. The time periods, from 9:00 P.M. to 12:00 A.M. and from 12:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M. show very low rates of absconding. This result is not surprising since the "active" (7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.) time periods afford better opportunities to abscond. Most of the student population is moving to and from programs which are set up on an individual schedule - similar to the movement of a city business district - during these hours. During the late evening to early morning hours, student movement outside cottages is at a minimum and cottage security tightens up.

From an annual perspective, the 1978/79 data deviates noticeably, as it did with population figures, from the others. Particularly in the major time blocks, Year 2 varies quite noticeably - 7:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., differences of 7% and 8%; 12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., differences of 11% either way; and 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. differences of 12% and 18%. The rate of 49% of all abscondings in Year 2 during the 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. time period stands out as the most active absconding time period of the entire study. Like Year 1, Year 2 shows a line of progression from fewer abscondings in the early hours, to an afternoon increase, to an early evening acceleration. In Year 2 the progressive stages are distinct (15%, 23%, 49%) at each later stage.

In each of the years the bulk of the infractions occurred in the third and fourth time periods (12:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.): 1977/78 - 71%, 1978/79 - 72% and 1979/80 - 65%. The further breakdown shows that afternoon incidents were noticeably higher than morning (34% to 22%, 23% to 15%, and 34% to 23%) in each year. Also the afternoon (daylight) abscondings nearly matched the evening (darkness) infractions with the exception of Year 2 (34% to 37%, 23% to 49%, and 34% to 31%). Further inquiry is warranted by these discoveries.

One juvenile institution, the Youth Center in Topeka, made available some data on absconding in time periods quite similar to those at MYC. In 1978/79, abscondings occurred at Topeka, Kansas and South Portland, Maine as follows in Figure 18.

FIGURE 18
Time of Day of Absconding

Maine Youth Center (N=399)		Youth Center at Topeka (N=154)	
Midnight to 7:00 A.M.	- 0%	Midnight to 8:00 A.M.	- 32%
7:00 A.M. to Noon	- 15%	8:00 A.M. to Noon	- 12%
Noon to 5:00 P.M.	- 23%	Noon to 4:00 P.M.	- 16%
5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.	- 49%	4:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.	- 27%
9:00 P.M. to Midnight	- 9%	8:00 P.M. to Midnight	- 19%
Unknown	- 4%		

Assuming that this data is somewhat typical of the Kansas experience, it is clear that their time of day rate is much different from MYC's. Comparing the two basic time segments (active/inactive), Kansas had an absconding rate of 51% during the "inactive" time periods 8:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. Maine, on the other hand, had a rate of 9% for the same year (and a three year rate of 8 1/3%) between 9:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M. During the "active" time periods, Kansas experienced less than half (49%) of its total abscondings, while MYC experienced 87% for that year (89% overall). Such contrasts, admittedly insufficient to draw broad conclusions, do seem to suggest that environmental differences (such as tighter security at MYC during late hours) probably are major contributing factors in the difference. Additional information on time of day from studies

done in California (Hildebrand, 1969) and England, (Tizard, et. al. 1975) suggest that absconding tends to occur most frequently in darkness. Although the time period for most absconding at the Maine Youth Center was the 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. period, it accounted for only 39% of the total incidents over the three years, which would not support the darkness theory very strongly.

In conclusion, the basic data on absconding during specified time periods at the Center suggest:

1. No monthly or seasonal trends related to time periods.
2. A general progression of increased absconding from the beginning to the end of the "active" day.
3. A marked tendency to abscond between Noon and 9:00 P.M.

Absconding Incidence by Day of Week

The day of the week in which abscondings most frequently occur is a meaningful possibility, important enough to isolate. Figure 19 will clearly show that the three year experience at the Maine Youth Center does not indicate a trend of any consistency. Selecting the high and low day for each year, the data shows:

1977/78,	High - Monday, 91 abscondings
	Low - Tuesday, 70 abscondings, Saturday, 70 abscondings
1978/79,	High - Sunday, 84 abscondings
	Low - Tuesday, 44 abscondings
1979/80,	High - Monday, 43 abscondings
	Low - Sunday, 19 abscondings

FIGURE 19
DAILY ABSCONDINGS TOTALS
Day of Week

July, 1977 to June, 1978

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
1977								
July	6	8	5	8	2	4	11	44
Aug.	14	17	5	11	3	8	8	67
Sept.	20	10	2	7	17	6	2	64
Oct.	16	12	12	5	5	7	4	61
Nov.	1	1	1	4	7	10	9	32
Dec.	10	8 (56)	7 (32)	5 (40)	5 (39)	10 (45)	4 (38)	39
1978								
Jan.	1	6	3	9	1	7	5	32
Feb.	0	1	6	2	2	4	6	21
Mar.	2	6	6	7	7	14	1	43
Apr.	3	5	5	7	6	1	6	33
May	5	3	7	8	12	6	8	49
June	9	14 (35)	11 (38)	5 (38)	10 (38)	9 (41)	6 (32)	64

FIGURE 19 (Continued)

DAILY ABSCONDINGS TOTALS

Day of Week

July, 1978 to June, 1979

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
1978								
July	23	2	6	8	8	3	5	55
Aug.	8	21	6	9	6	4	0	54
Sept.	10	13	6	9	2	8	10	58
Oct.	6	11	6	2	5	13	6	49
Nov.	9	3	0	4	9	3	0	28
Dec.	7 (63)	3 (53)	2 (26)	2 (34)	5 (35)	7 (38)	4 (25)	30

1979								
Jan.	1	2	6	0	3	1	0	13
Feb.	7	0	2	0	5	1	4	19
Mar.	4	9	3	5	5	4	12	42
Apr.	4	0	4	1	1	1	6	17
May	5	0	1	5	2	0	3	16
June	0 (21)	3 (14)	2 (18)	4 (15)	2 (18)	4 (11)	3 (28)	18

FIGURE 19 (Continued)

DAILY ABSCONDINGS TOTALS

Day of Week

July, 1979 to June, 1980

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
1979								
July	0	1	2	2	3	2	4	14
Aug.	1	7	7	1	8	0	4	28
Sept.	6	4	3	1	0	2	1	17
Oct.	1	2	1	6	2	0	1	13
Nov.	0	4	2	1	1	1	6	15
Dec.	0 (8)	2 (20)	2 (17)	0 (11)	2 (16)	0 (5)	0 (16)	6

1980								
Jan.	0	6	0	2	2	6	1	17
Feb.	0	5	8	2	0	0	0	15
Mar.	1	6	0	2	1	4	3	17
Apr.	1	3	3	0	2	2	4	15
May	4	2	3	2	3	2	0	16
June	5 (11)	1 (23)	4 (18)	2 (10)	1 (9)	2 (16)	1 (9)	16

Though Monday is the high absconding day for two of the three years and Tuesday is the low day for two of the three years, the margins of difference throughout the table led us to our conclusion - no consistent trend. The three year totals add further strength. Monday was the highest day for absconding (201 instances or 20%), Sunday was next (180 or 16%), and the remaining five days hover around 13% - including Tuesday.

The Youth Center at Topeka experienced similar results in data developed for 1978/79. In that year, of the 154 incidents of abscondings that occurred, the high days were Sunday (29), Wednesday (24), Thursday (29) and Saturday (25). There were 19, 15 and 13 incidents on each of the other days, respectively. The weekday/weekend sort of theory, or some variation, would not seem to apply as this data shows.

Abscondings as Community Infractions

Two other types of infractions are violations of custody and both occur while the student is in the community either on an absent with temporary leave status or an absent without leave on entrustment status. These violations are sometimes included with absconding figures (Kansas, for instance) and usually result in consequences similar to those for a boundary absconding. Figure 20 summarizes the data included in Morning Reports at the Center for the three years.

FIGURE 20

Community Absent from Leave and Absent Without Lead Infractions

Semiannual Period and Yearly Totals	Absent From Leave	Absent Without Leave
7/77 - 12/77	17	9
1/78 - 6/78	<u>25</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals - Year One	42	13
7/78 - 12/78	26	9
1/79 - 6/79	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>
Totals - Year Two	41	18
7/79 - 12/79	28	11
1/80 - 6/80	<u>35</u>	<u>15</u>
Totals - Year Three	63	26

Summary and Conclusion for Basic Data on Absconding

In summary, the data shows that on the average in Year 1 the absconding rate was 1.50 or 15 abscondings every ten days; in Year 2 the absconding rate was 1.09 or 11 abscondings every 10 days; in Year 3 the absconding rate was 0.52 or 5 every 10 days. The average absconding rate per day over the three years was approximately 1.

The composite table which follows, Figure 21, completes the inventory. All of the data included has been presented already with one exception. The column at the extreme right (Absconding Risk Average) represents the index of individuals at risk by absconding. It is computed by determining the true population for a given year, all of whom might abscond, first. This was accomplished by adding the average daily population for the first month of each year to the total new committals for that year. This population figure is divided into the number representing total individuals who absconded once or more during that year.*

The three year figure for Absconding Risk Average was computed by adding new committals for the three years to the average daily population for July 1977 and dividing this result into the total number of individuals who absconded one or more times over the three years. The institutional rate per day and individual risk for each student are complementary methods of monitoring the interaction between the institution and its programs and services and the committed student who is exposed to them. The complete table will be a helpful device for quick reference in future studies and in monitoring present experiences with absconding. (Please see Figure 21 on the following page)

FIGURE 21
Summary Table; Absconding

Year	New Committals	Average Daily Population	Average Daily Absconding	Total Abscondings	No. of Absconders	Absconding Risk Average
1977/78	266	214	1.50	549	263	0.63
1978/79	253	202	1.09	399	226	0.51
1979/80	268	190	0.52	189	124	0.29
3 years	787	202	1.04	1137	507	0.54

The relative meaning of our base data on absconding is uncertain, particularly the high abscondings for Years 1 and 2. Comparative information, though sparse, from the Kansas institution and from the Rhode Island Institution for juvenile offenders was made available.

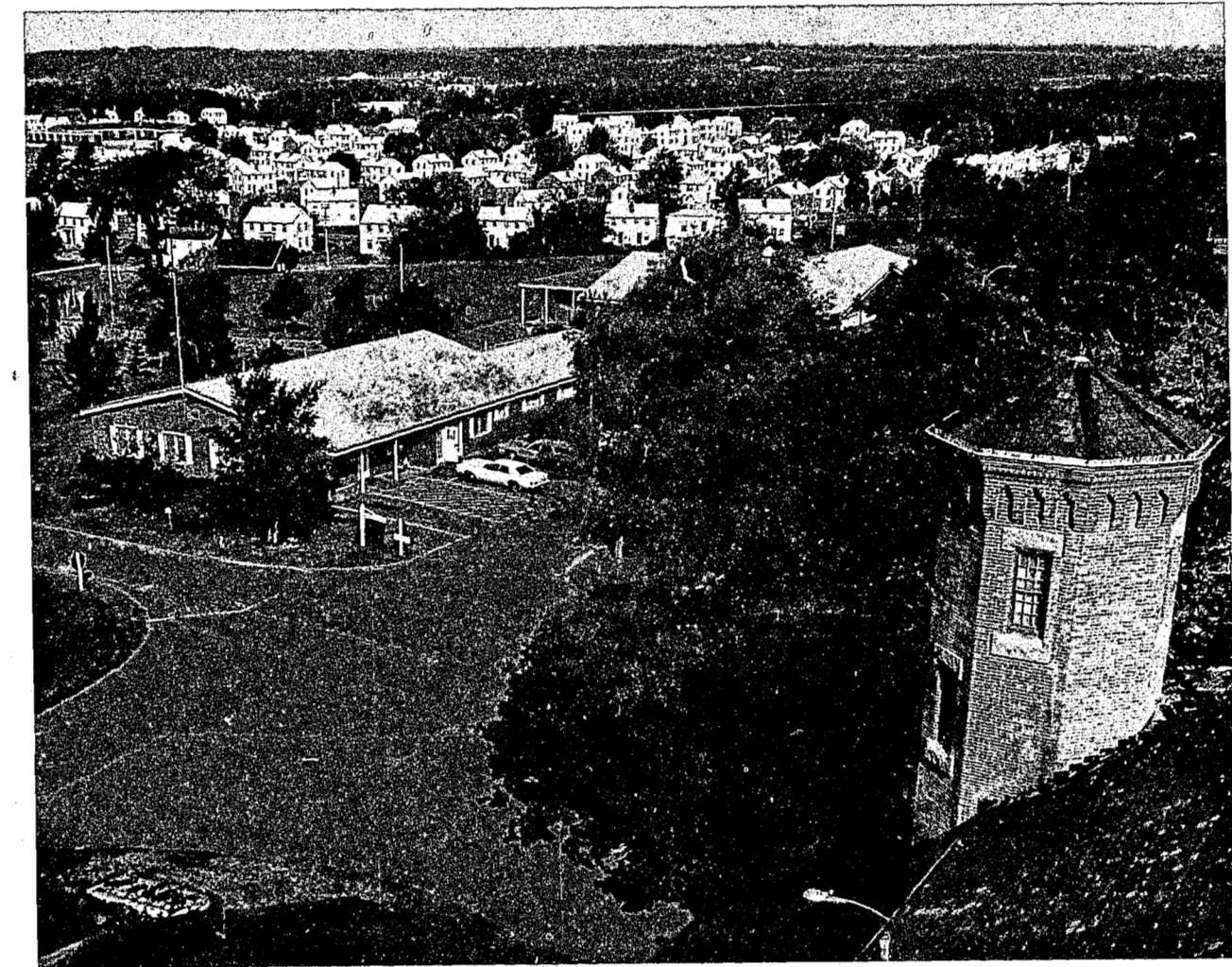
The Rhode Island Training School for Boys and Girls is a smaller facility than the Maine Youth Center. It housed an approximate average 75 offenders in 1977/78. That year the total abscondings were 292. The number committed to the institution for that year was a surprisingly high figure of 432. (Rhode Island 1978)

The Youth Center at Topeka has many similarities to our institution with respect to legal requirements and population. Two important differences are the average length of stay (10.5 months) and the minimum age for committal (13 to 18) compared to 11 to 18 at MYC. In response to a brief questionnaire, Kansas authorities offered the following information for two years which coincide with our study period: 1977/78, 216 abscondings by 149 boys; 1978/79, 116 abscondings by 119 boys. At the Maine Youth Center is the total number of abscondings (1137) for the size of the institution (app. 200) with a usual length of stay of 6 to 7

months appalling, rather high, average or below average? The question is extremely difficult to answer with precision since so many factors may contribute to different rates of absconding in different institutions and programs. Let it suffice to say that the data presented in this study indicates that Years 1 (549 abscondings) and 2 (399) were far from satisfactory, and that Year 3 (189), which still amounts to 1 runaway every two days, leaves something in the way of improvement to be desired.

On the other hand, the dramatic reduction in abscondings that took place over the three year period is significant. Further studies to discover some of the effects that encouraged the improvement are needed. The results of these studies should offer to administration, staff and students the kind of understanding about absconding that will enable the institution to constantly improve upon its goals by implementing effective programs and services to youth at risk.

A recommendation resulting from this study on absconding would be to revise the documentation process on absconding to include date of birth and date of committal or recommittal.



Part II

Basic Data on Returns from Absconding at the Maine Youth Center

July 1, 1977 - June 30 1980

Definition: For the purpose of this study, returns may mean an involuntary or a voluntary return to custody.

Figure 1, Average Number Absent from Custody Without Leave, shows the average number of students that had absconded and were still out of custody at the end of each day. Another way of expressing this is that, in each month of the study, an average number per day ranging from 3 to 22 committed students were in violation of the only penalty under the law: the loss of freedom.

On an annual basis it is clear that there is a reduction in time out of custody just as there was a reduction in absconding. But the reduction here, especially in Year 2 is not marked as it was with absconding. Absconding was reduced between Year 1 and 2 by 150: 549-399, a reduction of 38%. The Average Number Absent Without Leave was reduced by .10: 13.5-13.4, a reduction of 0.7%. The point here is, though absconding was reduced significantly between July of 1977 and June of 1979, in the July 1977 to June 1979 period absconders were not so quickly apprehended or returned. Figure 3 of Part I shows that in Year 2 only one month (July) had a higher number of abscondings than the corresponding month of Year 1 - 55 to 44. All other months of Year 2 show reductions in abscondings. A similar comparison for the data in Figure 1 shows that in 7 different months the Average Number Absent was higher in Year 2 than in Year 1. The Average Number Absent beginning in May of 1979 does follow the trend of low absconding from that point to the end of Year 3.

As Figure 1 shows, the Average Number Absent for the three years was 10.8- an average 11 students were not in custody, and therefore at risk themselves as well as potential problems to the community.

FIGURE 1
Average Number Absent from Custody
Without Leave 7/77 - 6/80

	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
1977-78	15	19	18	21	17	14	12	10	7	7	9	13
1978-79	16	22	20	20	18	15	13	9	10	10	5	4
1979-80	5	6	6	6	8	6	6	6	4	5	5	3
A.N.A. - '77-78	13.5											
A.N.A- '78-'79	13.4											
A.N.A'79-'80	5.5											
A.N.A. '77-6/80	10.8											

Figure 2 condenses the information regarding length of time that absconders were not in legal custody of either the Center or some law enforcement agency. The data is presented in a cumulative pattern for the three years in semi-annual and annual segments. The three-year totals are given in the last column.

The time frames chosen (0-15 minutes, etc.) for this table were determined by two essential considerations. The first three time blocks were identified because the institution staff is usually in pursuit of absconders for roughly 3 hours. Zero to fifteen minute apprehensions would usually be "attempted AWOLS." The remaining time frames were selected mainly because the data tended to cluster around these time periods. Although the 2-11-day frame reflects a high percentage in total, the researchers, in preliminary review of the data, perceived that no consistent cumulative pattern emerged with a further breakdown.

A look at the first six month's data (the heaviest 6 month period for abscondings of the study period) in the first column, shows the following results. Within 15 minutes, 17.9% of those who absconded from July to December of 1977 were apprehended or returned. In the next 45 minutes, another 15% were apprehended or returned for a cumulative total of 32.9% in custody within the first hour. An additional 4.8% were apprehended or returned in the next two hours for a total apprehension or return figure of 37.7% of the total 312 absconders within 3 hours.

Nearly one-half (47.3%) of the absconders were in custody either at the Center or at a community jail or detention center within 12 hours. Within one day of their absconding, an average of 62% of the runaways were in custody. Nearly all (93.3%) were in custody within 30 days. All were ultimately accounted for. These highlights reflect the general pattern of results for each of the 6-month segments. They indicate the conclusion that the majority

Figure 2

Apprehensions of Absconders From The Maine Youth Center
Time Out of Custody, July 1, 1977

	7-12/77	1-6/78	Year 1	7-12/'78	1-6/'79	Year 2
0 - 15 Minutes	17.9 17.9	14.9 14.9	16.6 16.6	13.0 13.0	13.7 13.7	13.3 13.3
16 Minutes to 1 hour	15.0 32.9	12.0 26.9	13.7 30.3	11.2 24.2	5.3 19.0	9.3 22.6
1 hour to 3 hours	4.8 37.7	15.8 42.7	9.7 40.0	12.6 36.8	10.7 29.7	12.0 34.6
3 hours to 12 hours	9.6 47.3	14.9 57.6	11.9 51.9	6.3 43.1	7.6 37.3	6.8 41.4
12 hours to 1 day	14.7 62.0	12.4 70.0	13.7 65.6	13.4 56.5	16.8 54.1	14.5 55.9
1 to 2 days	8.9 70.9	5.8 75.8	7.6 73.2	5.9 62.4	6.9 61.0	6.3 62.2
2 to 11 days	13.9 84.8	10.2 86.0	12.3 85.5	20.3 82.7	27.5 88.5	23.0 85.2
11 to 30 days	8.5 93.3	9.5 95.5	8.9 94.4	9.3 92.0	3.8 92.3	7.6 92.8
31 to 60 days	1.9 95.2	2.1 97.6	1.9 96.3	2.3 94.3	0.8 93.1	1.8 94.6
Over 60 days	4.8 100.0	2.4 100.0	3.7 100.0	5.7 100.0	6.9 100.0	5.4 100.0
Number of Returns	307	239	546	274	124	398

* Percentages were used in this table (and in Figures 3 and 4) to offer a meaningful relative comparison of time segments for the three years of the study.

Figure 2

- A Comparison of
to June 30, 1980. (In Percentages*)

	7-12/'79	1-6/'80	Year 3	3 Year Ave.
Within 15 minutes	3.3 3.3	13.5 13.5	8.6 8.6	14.2 14.2
Within 1 hour	15.5 18.8	13.5 27.0	14.5 23.1	12.3 26.5
Within 3 hours	10.0 28.8	3.1 30.1	6.4 29.5	10.0 36.5
Within 12 hours	5.5 34.3	5.2 35.3	5.4 34.9	9.0 45.5
Within 1 day	27.7 62.0	17.7 53.0	22.6 57.5	15.4 60.9
Within 2 days	8.9 70.9	14.6 67.6	11.8 69.3	7.8 68.7
Within 11 days	17.6 88.5	21.8 89.4	19.9 89.2	17.2 85.9
Within 30 days	4.4 92.9	9.4 98.8	7.1 96.3	8.2 94.1
Within 60 days	1.1 94.0	0.0 98.8	0.5 96.8	1.6 95.7
	6.0 100.0	1.2 100.0	3.2 100.0	4.3 100.0
	94	97	191	1135

of absconders are not free in the community for long and that those few who are eventually returned to custody, most likely worse off than when they left.

The six-month breakdowns over the life of the study reveal consistent patterns within the identified cumulative stages with few exceptions. The exceptions, or inconsistencies, are apparent in the table in the shaded triangles in only six of the possible sixty frames. Most noticeable among them is the extremely low percentage of apprehensions during the July to December 1979 period for the 0-15 minute range. Only 3.3% were apprehended or returned then in comparison to the 3-year average of 14.2%. Such a low rate of immediate apprehension suggests that certain security practices and procedures must have been quite different from the usual for that time period or that the absconders were much more cunning in their acts of absconding than usual. Four of the six inconsistencies are within the 3 hour apprehension period. All four are quite noticeable differences from the average apprehensions for the respective time periods (1 in the 0-15 minute, 1 in the 16 minute to 1 hour and 2 in the 1 to 3 hour time periods).

In summary, the 3 Year Average column clearly shows that absconders from the Maine Youth Center were always apprehended, usually in a short period of time from an institutional or law enforcement point of view. The 3 year figures show that 14.2% were apprehended or returned within 15 minutes and another 12.3% in the next 45 minutes for a total of 26.5% within the first hour. Another 10% were apprehended or returned in the next two hours - cumulative total, 36.5% for 3 hours. In the first 12 hours the figure increased to 45.5% and to 60.9% apprehended or returned by the end of the first day. Within 30 days of their absconding, 94.1% (1069 of 1133 abscondings) were in custody. The remaining 5.9% were at large more than sixty days for the most part.

This small percentage of absconders who were at large for more than 2 months numbered 48 during the 3 year period. The following is a breakdown of this total.

Year 1 (1977/78) N = 18

Range of days out of custody 63 to 697

Average days out of custody 173

Year 2 (1978/79) N = 24

Range of days out of custody 60 to 243

Average days out of custody 95

Year 3 (1979/80) N = 6

Range of days out of custody 66 to 161

Average days out of custody 113

Although only 48 of a possible 1137 abscondings involved participants at large for long periods of time, the experiences for those participants threatened the safety of the community as well as the safety and rehabilitation of the offender. It is reasonable to suggest that youth at large in violation of the law may tend to break the law again. Such youth are also vulnerable to abuse by those in the community who might offer the absconder shelter but usually at some price. This issue, a concern for perspectives on absconding other than institutional or law enforcement successes with apprehension, will be expanded upon in the latter part of this study.

Method of Returns or Apprehensions

When a committed student absconds from a correctional facility and is at large for more than a few hours, certain experiences will probably be out of order in their lives until they are back in custody and later released legitimately. What exactly these experiences might be is open to conjecture and quite difficult to discover and rely upon. It is clear that additional crime occurs on occasion and that the youngster is in a vulnerable position while at large. It is not clear

how serious either of these problems might have been for the absconders identified. More extensive interviews of absconders from the Maine Youth Center, particularly of those out for long periods of time, would add some valuable information - though subjective - toward a more complete understanding of absconding.

The data does show that absconders return to the Youth Center by either involuntary or voluntary means and that the involuntary ways far exceed the voluntary.

Figure 3 presents a breakdown of Methods of Returns or Apprehensions in a semiannual table of comparison. The 3-year average column at the bottom of the table shows that the great majority of absconders at large are apprehended either by law enforcement agencies (52%) or by staff of the Maine Youth Center (37%), a combined figure of 89%. Of the total 1133 abscondings for which specific data was available, 1,011 were involuntarily apprehended. Of that 1,011, 591 were apprehended by law enforcement agencies and 420 by Center staff. The remaining 11% (or 125 abscondings) returned (usually to the Center, sometimes to a community police agency) either because their parents convinced or coerced them to do so (4%-45) or because they decided to turn themselves in (7%-80).

Obviously, then, most of the absconders required law enforcement intervention. Relatively few were willing to return voluntarily. Is a 37% immediate apprehension figure adequate for the Center, considering minimum security, staffing patterns, and other factors? Continual monitoring of this sort of data for a longer period here as well as further attempts to compare with other minimum security institutions should be pursued to develop standards of efficient security.

Figure 3

Methods of Return or Apprehension of Absconders
A Comparison, July, 1977 to June 30, 1980 (In Percentages)

	By Staff	By Law Enforcement	Turn-in (Self)	Turn-in ¹ (Parent)	N =
7-12/'77	40	48	5	7	307
1-6/'78	42	50	5	3	239
Year 1	41	49	5	5	546
7-12/'78	37	51	9	5	274
1-6/'79	26	62	11	1	124
Year 2	34	54	10	2	398
7-12/'79	30	63	3.5	3.5	94
1-6/'80	31	55	5	9	97
Year 3	31	59	4	6	191
3 Year Average	37	52	7	4	1135

¹ "Parent" as used here might have been mother, father, grandparent, foster parent, guardian or extended family member (e.g. uncle).

Scanning Figure 3, one notices that one time period for apprehensions by Staff,* January to June of 1979, dropped 11% from the previous six month period and was 11% below the 3-year average as well. One reasonable explanation could be that in November of 1978, a policy change regarding pursuit of absconders by staff was implemented by the administration. The intent of this change was to reduce the number of staff as well as the time spent in pursuit. Assuming that fewer staff did pursue for shorter time periods, one would logically conclude that staff apprehensions would decline shortly after the change was implemented, as they in fact did.

Another noticeable item that needs emphasis is that staff apprehensions were highest in Year 1 when absconding was highest (Year 1-549 abscondings, Year 2-399, Year 3-189). The apprehension rate by staff in 1977/78 was 41%. Frequent absconding along with institutional policies that more heavily concentrated on apprehension (using extra staff for extended period of time) would tend to maintain higher security awareness resulting in more apprehensions by staff.

In summary, it is apparent that law enforcement agencies apprehend the greatest percentage of absconders and that relatively small percentages of absconders later turn themselves in or are returned by "parents."

Apprehension by Contiguous Law Enforcement Agencies

Figure 4 offers data supplementary to Figure 3. The Maine Youth Center, located in South Portland, Cumberland County, is surrounded by four communities:

* Since the institutional security staff have the first opportunity to apprehend absconders, their rate of success is considered to be the controlling factor (percentage). The other three areas would increase or decrease according to institutional success.

Figure 4

Apprehension of Absconders by Contiguous Law Enforcement Agencies (In Percentages)

July 1, 1977 to June 30, 1980

	SPPD *	PPD	CEPD	Sc.PD	WPD	CCSO	St. Pol.	Total Cont. LEA	** N =
7-12/77	11.8	12.5	0	4.2	2.1	0.7	1.4	32.7	144
1-6/78	17.2	15.5	0.8	0.8	2.5	1.6	0	38.4	122
Year 1	14.5	14	0.4	2.5	2.3	1.2	0.7	35.6	266
7-12/78	4.3	15	0	3.7	6.5	3.6	0	33.1	138
1-6/79	7.2	15.9	0	3.6	11	3.6	2.4	37.7	82
Year 2	2.8	15.5	0	3.7	8.8	3.6	1.2	35.6	220
7-12/79	3.7	16.7	1.9	1.9	3.7	0	0	27.9	54
1-6/80	3.5	21.8	0	3.6	5.5	3.6	0	38.1	55
Year 3	3.7	19.3	1	2.8	4.6	1.8	0	33.2	109
3-Year Average	7	16.3	0.5	3	5.2	2.2	0.6	34.8	595

* SPPD = South Portland Police Dept.
 PPD = Portland Police Dept.
 CEPD = Cape Elizabeth Police Dept.
 SC.PD = Scarborough Police Dept.
 WPD = Westbrook Police Dept.
 CCSO = Cumberland County Sheriff's Office
 St.Pol. = State Police (in contig. area)

** N = Total apprehended by all law enforcement agencies in Maine and outside the state. Therefore, between July and December of 1977, the contiguous agencies in this Figure apprehended 47 absconders, since all percentages in this figure are portions of the total (595 - 100%) apprehended by law enforcement only and not portions of the total 1135 apprehended during the 3 years.

Portland, Westbrook, Scarborough, and Cape Elizabeth. Three of these communities, the exception being Portland, range from suburban to rural (populations of 5,000 to 15,000 people). Portland's population is approximately 70,000 and South Portland somewhat less than half that size. This contiguous area is contained within a ten mile radius of the Center.

Figure 4 gives percentage figures of apprehensions by law enforcement agencies for the three years on semiannual and annual bases within the contiguous area. Included are the recorded apprehensions by the Maine State Police or by the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department which occurred within the contiguous area.

The 3-year average, across the bottom line of the table, indicate that one of the seven agencies, the Portland Police Department, clearly stands out. An apprehension rate of 16.3% of all law enforcement agency pickups is by far the highest. Apprehensions by the South Portland and Westbrook police are noticeably high. The others are relatively insignificant. The total apprehensions by contiguous law enforcement agencies of 34.8% was that high mainly because the Portland figure is nearly half of the total.

If one reviews the six month time segments for the three agencies identified as noticeable, two show fluctuation (South Portland and Westbrook) and the third (Portland), a gradual increase. Change in apprehension rate is most apparent for the South Portland Police Department. The range of difference for that agency is 16 percentage points (17.2% for January to June of 1978 to 1.2% for January to June of 1979). The rate for South Portland decreased dramatically after the first year of the study and rose only slightly in Year 3. Although the figure contains data of a limited longitudinal nature (3 years), it would be logical to suggest that more than coincidence was at work to effect such a lowered apprehension rate by South Portland after the first year. The Westbrook Police Department rate fluctuated most, though the range was not so significant as that of South Portland's

from 11% for January to June of 1979 to 2.1% for July to December of 1977), a range of 8.9%. The rate for the Portland Police Department steadily rose, with one minor exception, in each succeeding six month segment.

A total apprehension rate for the three years of 34.8% represents an actual figure of 207 apprehensions by contiguous law enforcement agencies. If one adds the number apprehended by staff of the Youth Center (420), the total is 627 apprehensions within a ten mile radius of the Center, or 55% of the 1133 abscondings accounted for in this manner. An additional 450 (39%) were apprehended in the State but outside the contiguous area.

Relatively few absconders (59 or 6% of the total) were apprehended outside the state. The following listing indicates that, of the twenty-one states involved in the 59 apprehensions, 24 were caught in New England and 13 in two other key states. The remaining 22 were scattered throughout the country.

I. Apprehended in New England States

New Hampshire	9
Massachusetts	7
Connecticut	5
Rhode Island	2
Vermont	1

II. Apprehended in Other States Numbering More Than Two

Florida	8
New York	5

Though only 59 individuals, from a total of 1137 abscondings, were apprehended out of the state, the cost of returning these individuals, which is a burden of the state to which the absconder is returned, is an important factor for consideration by appropriate authorities.

Focus on Absconders in the Community

More pertinent to the concerns of this study is the fact that the 59 individuals who were apprehended out of state, as well as others who did not get far from the Center, were in jeopardy and were possible threats to others in the Community. This problem is well recognized statutorily by the formulation of an interstate compact agreed upon by all states except Alaska and Arkansas:

Findings and Purposes - Article I

The contracting states solemnly agree:

The juveniles who are not under proper supervision and control, or who have absconded, escaped or run away, are likely to endanger their own health, morals and welfare, and the health, morals and welfare of others. The cooperation of the states party to this compact is therefore necessary to provide for the welfare and protection of juveniles and of the public with respect to:

1. Cooperative supervision. Cooperative supervision of delinquent juveniles on probation or parole;
2. Return of delinquent juveniles. The return, from one state to another, of delinquent juveniles who have escaped or absconded;
3. Return of non-delinquent juveniles. The return, from one state to another, of non-delinquent juveniles who have run away from home;
and
4. Additional measures undertaken cooperatively. Additional measures for the protection of juveniles and of the public, which any 2 or more of the party states may find desirable

to undertake cooperatively. In carrying out this compact the party states shall be guided by the non-criminal, reformatory and protective policies which guide their laws concerning delinquent, neglected or dependent juveniles generally. It shall be the policy of the states party to this compact to cooperate and observe their respective responsibilities for the prompt return and acceptance of juveniles and delinquent juveniles who become subject to this compact. This compact shall be reasonably and liberally construed to accomplish the foregoing purposes.

(MRSA Title 34, Chapter 9 Uniform Interstate Compact on Juveniles, Section 18)

The Interstate Compact, though it recognizes the dangers inherent in circumstances when juveniles "are not under proper supervision and control," does not seem to address a procedure for expeditious return of an absconder to the custody of the institution from which he/she absconded. Time limitations for the return of an absconding juvenile apprehended within the State of Maine show a marked contrast with limitations for those apprehended out of state. The Maine Juvenile Code states:

When any child committed to the Center and placed on entrustment, or who has absented himself or herself from the Center, without leave, is taken into custody for the purpose of return to the Center by any officer or employee of the Center at the direction of the superintendent, or by any law enforcement officer at the request of the superintendent, and because of the child's distance from the Center at the time of being taken into custody it becomes necessary to detain the child overnight, any such child may

be temporarily detained in a county jail under this section and shall be returned to the Center on the next day after being taken into custody, except in the case of unsafe traveling conditions, and then return to the Center shall be effected at the earliest possible time.

(Title 15, Maine Juvenile Code, Section 2716)

The point is that the Maine law requires return of absconders to the custody of the Maine Youth Center within a reasonable time limitation ("prompt") to maintain concern for proper separation of juveniles from adult offenders in county jails ("non-criminal, reformatory and protective policies which guide their laws concerning delinquent juveniles"). The Interstate Compact, on the other hand, makes no reference to the type of detention facility but allows detention in any facility for up to 90 days or more within the state, outside of Maine, in which he or she might be detained:

Upon reasonable information that a person is a delinquent juvenile who has absconded while on probation or parole, or escaped from an institution or agency vested with his legal custody or supervision in any state party to this compact, such person may be taken into custody in any other state to this compact, without a requisition. In such event, he must be taken forthwith before a judge of the appropriate court, who may appoint counsel or guardian ad litem for such person and who shall determine, after a hearing, whether sufficient cause shall exist to hold the person subject to the order of the court for such a time, not exceeding 90 days, as will enable his detention under a detention order issued on a requisition pursuant to this article. (Title 34, Chapter 9, Section 185)

The Compact states that the absconder will be held in custody until a hearing is called "forthwith." This would seem to allow an unlimited time period before the judicial hearing to determine "whether sufficient cause shall exist to hold the person subject to the order of the court." The total time an absconder from the Center might be held out of state in an adult facility would include this hold for court hearing time plus the time the court may order ("not exceeding 90 days") before return to the Maine Youth Center is effected. While this part of the statute is protective of the public, it does not appear to effectively "provide for the welfare and protection of juveniles...with respect to:....

Return of delinquent juveniles." It seems reasonable, to the researchers, that the distance, as well as time of day, an absconder might be from the Center when apprehended would be an important factor in determining how soon he or she should be returned. But, in fact, present laws in the Maine Juvenile Code and in the Uniform Interstate Compact on Juveniles could, on the one hand, demand that an absconder apprehended in the northernmost part of Maine, more than 300 miles, must be returned "the next day;" whereas, on the other hand, an absconder apprehended across the border in New Hampshire, some 50 miles distant, need not be returned for more than 90 days. Youth in custody for extended periods in adult facilities out of state might not be better off, might perhaps be worse off, than if they remained out of custody. This potential condition existed for 48 individuals in the 3 year period. Clear documentation of the actual time between apprehensions out of state and return to the Center was not available.

Considering sheer numbers of absconders, the out of state problem was far from the most serious for absconders at large. It is clear that the public, at least, was protected in those instances.

The data in Figures 2, 3 and 4 seem to speak well for the security obligation of the Maine Youth Center and supportive law enforcement agencies outside the Center. The retrieval of all absconders within the time limits by staff and police is impressive and must be conveyed to potential absconders, in effect, to all charges of the Center. But if one looks at the data in Figure 2, Time Out of Custody, from a reverse perspective, so to speak, or a client perspective (youngsters at risk in the community), one reacts differently. While an absconder is at large, there is a fair chance that he or she will further violate the law, sometimes merely to survive as a fugitive. Legal procurement of the necessities alone could become quite difficult.

The following remarks from a recent study, The Runaways (Brenton, 1978), though specifically in reference to "unfamiliar cities," and to the larger city may very well apply to Maine communities as well.

Today kids who run away to unfamiliar cities find it harder to survive than they did a few years ago. The economic situation makes people less generous. Fear of crime makes people less willing to help strangers, even very young ones (especially young ones, possibly, given the recent spate of publicity about the hard-core crimes and brutalities committed by minors). So panhandling isn't as easy as it once was (though girls do much better at it than boys). Hospitality is far less readily extended; offers to crash come much less frequently.... (P. 48-49)

Says Cheryl Steinbuch, a social worker at Manhattan's The Door, "The sixties are over, the days of the crash pads are gone. It used to be you could come to New York

City and somehow, by grapevine, by underground, you could find a commune to crash in for two weeks until you felt like moving on or until you got a job. But these places are becoming fewer and fewer.... There are just less freedom and more restrictions. People are not trusting people as much as they did in the sixties.

(P. 62)

Though Brenton's findings reflect back only several years, the continuing deterioration of economic conditions since the later '70's would, if anything, have brought about even less opportunity to "crash."

Among the many, three major considerations would significantly affect the well-being of youth at large: how familiar or unfamiliar the surroundings may be in which the absconder finds himself or herself; how friendly or hostile that environment might be to the absconder's needs and desires and how long the absconder is out of custody. Brenton's findings suggest that youth who found themselves in unfamiliar or hostile surroundings would tend to be confused, and perhaps frightened or angered reactively. Of these three important conditions which affect absconders in the community, only how long absconders from the Maine Youth Center were out of custody could be documented. It would be logical to expect that some unfortunate experiences for the absconders, as well as for the community, occurred. For instance, although as Brenton found, girls do better at "panhandling," they are also more vulnerable than boys, according to the director of the girls' unit at the Maine Youth Center.

The data in Figure 2 shows that a high percentage of absconders were out of custody for extended periods sufficient in length to put themselves and the community at risk. Any absconder at large for more than one day (extended time to get necessary food and shelter as well as to satisfy personal desires for pleasure) could be in jeopardy as well as be a potential problem for the community. By computing the data presented in Figure 2 one discovers that the numbers of absconders out of custody for extended periods during the three years of the study were as follows:

Over 60 days - 48

30 to 60 days - 93

2 to 11 days - 286

1 to 2 days - 89

The total number of absconders out of custody and "at risk" by this standard was 535 absconders. Obviously not all of these 535 absconders were necessarily at risk and, concomitantly, not all who returned within one day avoided risk. The essential point is that the longer a juvenile remains at large, the greater the risk of harm to him or herself as well as to the public.

It has already been made clear that the success of the Maine Youth Center security staff and supportive law enforcement agencies in apprehending absconders seems to be respectable. There is a need on the part of absconders apprehended and returned to be understood regarding their experiences while at large. In addition to the knowledge of how long an absconder is out of custody, attempts to discover something about the experiences absconders may have had with environment, conditions and people while they were out, might prove valuable in the treatment of these absconders as well as others and in the education of all youth committed to the Center. In their study, Locking Up Children (Millham et. al. 1978) British researchers give much emphasis to

the care and consideration they would recommend be shown by institutional authorities regarding absconders while at large and most importantly when they are returned to the institution.

If running does start, it would be wise to treat the behavior as a serious issue and the return must be carefully negotiated. The reception must be in the hands of someone the child knows, must exclude the police, and the institution must be welcoming and concerned. It would be wise to accept reversed charge telephone calls, to keep the kettle on and look pleased when the absconders come back. The child must be guarded against a tirade of reproaches and staff should make sure that in informal areas the child has not lost too much. If he is to be censured, it must seem by him to be legitimate, expressing concern rather than venting institutional wrath at organizational disruption. The aim must be to avoid the whole syndrome of secondary deviance - when the absconding lable becomes more of a problem than the initial anxiety that prompted the running.

(P. 87)

In Part I of this study a listing of the usual consequences of absconding from the Maine Youth Center was presented. Further analysis of the data presented here as it relates to treatment of the absconder-client and to tentative changes in security treatment at the Center should be pursued in a study probing relationships between programs at the Center and absconding.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from the data given in this Chapter at present. One, that all absconders from the Maine Youth Center are

eventually reclaimed to custody within what would seem to be reasonable time limits. And, two, many of the absconders were out of custody for a period of time which was probably harmful to a higher than desirable number as well as to much of the public. Within the institution one must focus on considerations to improve upon treatment of absconders.

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