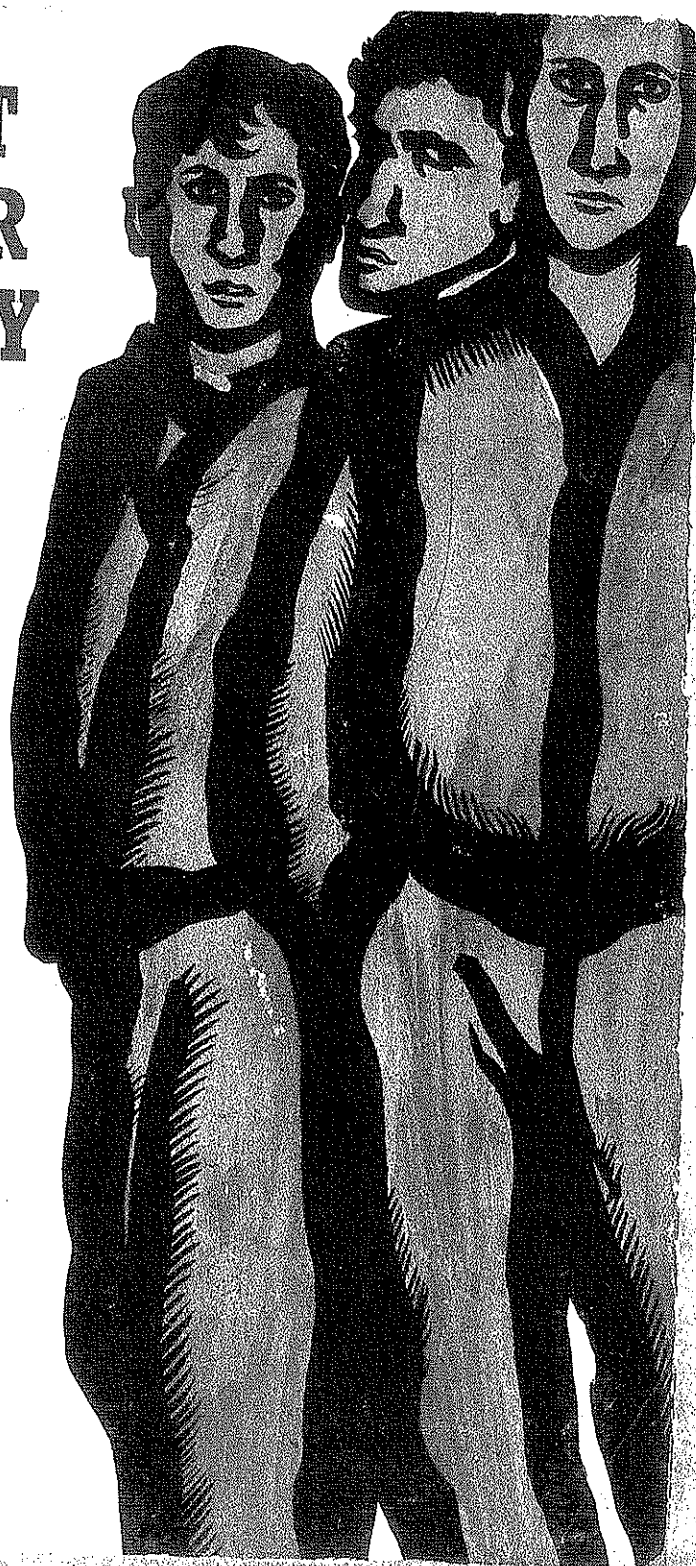


# STREET CORNER SOCIETY

WILLIAM  
FOOTE  
WHYTE

The study  
of a slum society  
which has become  
a sociological classic



## CHAPTER I

### DOC AND HIS BOYS

#### 1. THE MEMBERS OF THE GANG

**T**HE Nortons were Doc's gang. The group was brought together primarily by Doc, and it was built around Doc. When Doc was growing up, there was a kids' gang on Norton Street for every significant difference in age. There was a gang that averaged about three years older than Doc; there was Doc's gang, which included Nutsy, Danny, and a number of others; there was a group about three years younger, which included Joe Dodge and Frank Bonelli; and there was a still younger group, to which Carl and Tommy belonged.

Since the Nortons, as I knew them, grew out of these earlier groupings, some historical background is necessary. The story of the evolution of the Nortons can best be told as Doc's story.

Doc was born on Norton Street in 1908. His mother and father, who came from the province of Abruzzi, were the first non-Genoese Italians to settle on the street. In a large family, Doc was the youngest child and his mother's favorite. His father died when he was a small boy. When he was three years old, infantile paralysis shriveled his left arm so that it could never again be normal, but by constant exercise he managed to develop it until he was able to use it for all but heavy work.

Doc spoke of his early years in this way:

When I was a little boy, I used to dress very neatly. I always used to have a clean suit on, and when I sat down on the doorstep my mother told me always to sit on a newspaper. . . . Other mothers would tell their sons, "Look at the way Dicky dresses. Why can't you be like Dicky?" It's only natural that they didn't like me—until I showed them they'd have to respect me. . . .

I was about twelve when I had my first fight. I had a brother two years older than me. He got in an argument with a kid my size. He said to me, "He's too small for me, you fight him." At first I didn't want to, but finally I fought him. And I beat him up. . . . After that I began to think maybe I was pretty good.

Nutsy was the head of our gang once. I was his lieutenant. He was bigger than me, and he had walloped me different times before I finally walloped him. When he walloped me, there weren't many people around, so I didn't mind, but the one time he broke his promise that he wouldn't hit me, there was a big crowd around. I was a proud kid. I couldn't let him get away with that. . . . You see, I was wrestling him, and I had him down. I said, "If I let you up, will you promise not to hit me?" He promised, but when I let him up and turned away, he cracked me on the nose, and I got a bloody nose. I went after him, and I was beating him up when the big fellows stopped us. . . . Next day I saw him leaning up against the wall. I went up to him and said, "I'll kill you," and I let him have one. He didn't fight back. He knew I was his master. And that got around. So after that I was the leader, and he was my lieutenant. . . . That was when I was thirteen or fourteen. . . . Nutsy was a cocky kid before I beat him up. . . . After that, he seemed to lose his pride. I would talk to him and try to get him to buck up.

After I walloped him, I told the boys what to do. They listened to me. If they didn't, I walloped them. I walloped every kid in my gang at some time. We had one Sicilian kid on my street. When I walloped him, he told his father and the father came out looking for me. I hid up on a roof, and Nutsy told me when the father had gone. When I saw the kid next, I walloped him again—for telling his father on me. . . . But I wasn't such a tough kid, Bill. I was always sorry after I walloped them.

They had faith in me, Bill. That's why I had to do some of these things. If one of our kids had gotten beaten up on some other street, I would go down there with him. Two or three of our boys would follow, not to help fight—just to watch. I would ask the kid, "Which one hit you?" He would point out the fellow, and I would wallop him. Then I would tell him, "Don't hit this kid any more, see!"

I was a tiger when I was a kid. I wasn't afraid of anybody. Most kids when they fight just push each other around, but I had a knockout punch in my right. I had the power. I could only use that one hand except for blocking but that commanded even more respect. They said, "What couldn't he do if he had two good hands?" And they thought the right was stronger because of it—maybe it was. . . . It wasn't just the punch. I was the one who always thought of the things to do. I was the one with half a brain.

Doc was always sensitive about his arm, and he would not permit anyone to make allowances for his disability. He spent many hours at home shadow-boxing to develop speed and co-ordination.

Doc's most serious challenge came from Tony Fontana. As he told me:

Tony was in my gang when we were kids together. He was a good fighter. When he entered the ring as an amateur, he started off winning three fights by knockouts. When he turned pro, he was still knocking them out. . . . At that time I was the leader of the gang. I was the tough guy. But he began to get fresh with me. One night he began pushing me around and talking

big. I listened to him. I thought, "He must be tough. All those knockouts have got to mean something." So after a while I said, "I'm going up to bed." I got undressed and went to bed, but I couldn't sleep. I put on my clothes and came down again. I said, "Say that to me again!" He did and I let him have it—pow! . . . But he wouldn't fight me. Why? Prestige, I suppose. Later we had it out with gloves on the playground. He was too good for me, Bill. I stayed with him, but he was too tough. . . . Could he hit!

Doc told me these things only when I questioned him, and always, when he had finished telling about an incident in which he had "flattened" some rival, he would half-apologize and say that he really wasn't so much, that he could hardly understand how such things had happened.

Every now and then there was a clash with some other gang, and a "rally" resulted:

Once a couple of fellows in our gang tried to make a couple of girls on Main Street. The boy friends of these girls chased our fellows back to Norton Street. Then we got together and chased the boy friends back to where they came from. They turned around and got all Garden Street, Swift Street, and Main Street to go after us. . . . It usually started this way. Some kid would get beaten up by one of our boys. Then he would go back to his street and get his gang. They would come over to our street, and we would rally them.

This time they carried banana stalks and milk bottles. We were armed. We used to hide our weapons in cellars so that we would have them ready in case of an emergency. But there were fifty of these fellows and only sixteen of us so we retreated into doorways and cellars to wait for them to cool off. . . . They hung around there for a while, doing nothing, until I gave the signal to come out. Then we charged on them. I swung a banana stalk around me. I swung it through all the way to Main Street, and then I was behind the enemy lines, so I had to swing it back again. . . . They used to have cement flowerpots standing up around the playground. We knocked them down. They would have killed anybody they hit, but we didn't want to hit anybody. We only wanted to scare them. . . . After a while, things quieted down, and they went away.

I don't remember that we ever really lost a rally. Don't get the idea that we never ran away. We ran sometimes. We ran like hell. They would come over to our street and charge us. We might scatter, up roofs, down cellars, anywhere. We'd get our ammunition there. Then they would go back to the other end of the street and give us a chance to get together again. We would come out one after another—they would never charge us until we were all out there and ready. Then we would charge them—we had a good charge. They might break up, and then we would go back to our end of the street and wait for them to get together again. . . . It always ended up by us chasing them back to their street. We didn't rally them there. We never went looking for trouble. We only rallied on our own street, but we always won there.

You know, the Nortons were a finer bunch. We were the best street in Cornerville. We didn't lush [steal from a drunk] or get in crap games. Sometimes we stole into shows free, but what do you expect? . . . The Tylers were a tougher bunch. They'd steal, and they organized crap games. We used to rally the Tylers. After a while it died down, and later the Tylers and the Nortons merged. Their champion fighter was Johnny DiCausa, and their champion runner was Mike Torre. I was champion everything for our gang. When we got together, I had to race Mike around the block. They timed us. He made it in 26 seconds. Then I ran it. When I came down the street, I could hear them yelling, "Come on, Doc, come on, Doc!" I made it in 26 seconds too. So nothing was settled. They used to argue, "Johnny can lick him." "No, Doc can lick him." And we would look each other over, but we didn't fight. I guess we respected each other. . . . Johnny went into the ring later, and he did pretty well. Mike was a champion runner on St. Patrick's College track team.

We didn't have many rallies between gangs. There was a lot of mutual respect. . . .

We didn't go out to kill them. We didn't want to hurt anybody. It was just fun. . . . I don't remember that anybody ever got hit on the head with a bottle. Maybe on the leg or in the back, but not on the head. The only time anybody ever got hurt was when Charlie got that tin can in his eye. We were rallying the King Streets on the playground. We charged, and Charlie got ahead of us. When he got into King Street, somebody threw this can, and the open end caught him right in the eye. The rally stopped. They were scared when they saw blood coming from his eye. . . . We took Charlie home. I remember him screaming while the doctor worked on his eye. That made an impression on us. It never occurred to us before that somebody might be permanently injured in a rally. . . . After that, there weren't any more rallies. I don't remember ever seeing one after that. . . . And, then, we were getting older, around seventeen or eighteen. And I got going with the bigger fellows and didn't see my boys so much. They accepted me as one of them. That was a great honor. But when I didn't see my boys so much any more, our gang broke up.

At two stages in his career Doc participated in the activities of the Norton Street Settlement House. According to his story:

I used to go into the settlement when I was a small boy, but then I broke away. I went back in on account of the Sunset Dramatic Club. They were the pet club in there. They had been giving plays for a long time, and they had a lot of prestige. Lou Danaro used to tell me how hard it was to act and how much training you needed. Danny tried to steam me up to go in there and show them up. He had a lot of faith in me. He'll back me up in anything that requires brains. Danny and I got together, and we figured how I would get into that club. You had to have a unanimous vote. Some of the members knew me, and some of them didn't, but I managed to get around, and I was voted in. After a while I had the lead in a couple of their big plays, and all the boys from the corner came in to see them.

At that time we had two members of each club on the house council. I

represented the Sunsets, and I was president of the council one year. I was very active then, and we raised money for a new amplifier for the house.

About that time, Tom Marino's crowd came in. They called themselves "the Corner Bums." There were a hundred of them, and I think they came in because they didn't have any place to meet at that time. They had it in for the Sunsets because the Sunsets were the pet club of the social workers. We could do anything we wanted to in that place. . . . One time Joe Cardio went into Tom Marino's store to get some cream for the club's coffee. When they told him they didn't have any, he snapped his fingers and stamped his foot and said, "Aw, shucks!" All the boys were around, and, when they heard that, they couldn't get over it. They called the Sunsets the Cream Puffs from then on. I used to argue with them about it. At that time I used to hang around that corner as much as anywhere, and I fitted with the Corner Bums, so they would call us "the Cream Puffs—with one exception." I told them there were plenty of exceptions, but I couldn't make them change. . . .

When the Bums got in there, they wanted to run the place. They started buying up votes so they could elect the president to the house council. They took girls out and bought them sodas. They really had a big campaign. Miss Baldwin wanted me to run for president again, because she thought I had done a good job, but I refused to run. The Sunsets put up Ted Riccio, and the Bums put up Fred Mantia. Ted was snowed under, but after the election they told me that if I had run again, they wouldn't have put up anybody to oppose me. . . .

The Bums were really out to tip the joint. They had no respect for the social workers. I heard Guy Polletti talking to Mr. Ramsay in the hall one day. He was really obscene. Ramsay had to take it. What could he do? . . . Then they were always calling up the police station and telling them, "There's a riot in the Norton Street Settlement. Send the riot squad down right away." A couple of cops would come down and joke with the boys, because they were good friends, but it looked bad for the settlement. . . . One night the Bums put on a cabaret party, and they spiked the punch. They had two bowls of punch, one for the social workers and one for the party. But a couple of the girls got drunk, and Miss Baldwin found out about that other punch bowl. She started an argument, and Guy Polletti told her to get out. He called her a ———. I saw her going down the stairs crying. . . .

That was pretty bad. At that time I was Kid Galahad, and I took it upon myself to defend the settlement. They were all in Marino's store one night when I went in to argue with them. There was Guy Polletti—he was a heavyweight fighter. There was Fred Mantia—he was a light-heavyweight, and he had done pretty well in the ring. They were all talking, but I interrupted them. I said, "Wait a minute, listen to me!" And then I gave it to them. They argued back, and they had a good argument. They had plenty to say about the social workers. "They're a bunch of snobs." "They're high-toned." "Who do they think they are in there that they're better than us?" They had a good argument there, and I couldn't answer that. But I said, "After all, the place does some good. In a crowded district like

this, we need rooms to meet in." . . . And they had chased plenty of people out of the settlement by acting so tough. I told them that the mothers had faith in the place, they thought it was a safe place for their daughters, and now the Bums were ruining that reputation. I told Fred, "You're only tough because nobody else in there is tough."

"Oh, no," he says, "I'm tough wherever I am."

I said, "If Terry Giovanni was in there you wouldn't be so tough." He didn't like that because Terry had knocked him out plenty of times. Well, the windup was that he agreed to apologize to Miss Baldwin. . . .

About that time they got into another argument. In those days there was a mixed week end at the settlement camp at the beginning and end of each camp season. It was the biggest social event of the season, and the fellows and girls looked forward to those week ends from one year to the next. They were well chaperoned, and if there were ever any sexual affairs out there, I never heard of them. It was just good clean fun. But this time some of the Bums had had something to drink. Jesse Alluni was a real nice boy and not tough at all, but he couldn't hold his liquor. He came into the kitchen that night when Baldwin was in there and asked for a cup of coffee. She told him he was drunk and she made him go to bed. . . . After that one incident, the camp was closed to men. Ever since that, it has been only a girls' camp except for the small boys. The fellows were steamed up about losing the camp, and they protested to Mr. Bacon [the headworker]. They sent around a petition, and they wanted to appeal to the board, but Mr. Bacon wouldn't let them. After a while, the excitement died down, and nothing was done. . . .

About this time, the Sunsets broke up. They had been in the settlement ten or twelve years, and some of the fellows were getting married, so that had something to do with it, but I'm sure it was partly pressure from the Bums that drove them out of the settlement. When the Bums went after them, they wilted. I called them quitters and tried to make them keep the club going, but it broke up anyway.

After the Sunsets quit, the Bums got a clubroom outside and didn't come into the settlement any more. I don't think they were officially kicked out. They quit before they were thrown out. When Tom Marino entered politics, the name of the club didn't sound so nice, so they changed it to the Taylor A.C. after Ellen Taylor. She was a social worker that was loved and revered by all the other social workers. That name is funny when you think about the times the Bums used to have in the settlement.

Since the Bums dropped out, there has never been another crowd like them in the settlement. And that year they had their own man president of the house council was the last year that there was a house council. . . .

When the Sunsets and the Corner Bums dropped out, I wasn't in the settlement any more myself.

Doc found school work easy. He read widely both at school and in the branch library. After the third year of high school, he left to take a job with a stained-glass firm. Art work had always been

a major interest, and he did so well with the firm that he was promised rapid advancement. But then the depression came, the business failed, and Doc was unemployed. At first he went about aggressively looking for a job and continued his art work at home, but, when all his efforts brought no results, he stopped looking for work and even lost interest in art.

Doc lived with his sister and brother-in-law, so that he had food and shelter, but he hated to impose upon them. With the start of the federal relief program, he was able to go to work on the W.P.A., but, as a single man without dependents, he could not count upon steady employment. Between working days and in the long layoff periods, he spent nearly all his time on the street corner.

Danny was his closest friend. As Doc told me:

Danny lived on Stone Street near Norton. I remember now the day when he came over to our street, when he was a small kid. He was a greaser—spoke broken English. The fellows made fun of him, but I liked the kid from the start. I told him to come along with our gang and do the things we did. He stuck with us.

When the kids' gang broke up, Doc and Danny remained together, though they were not often seen on Norton Street.

Danny left school after the eighth grade to take a factory job. He supplemented his earnings there by organizing a crap game in the washroom, and, in between jobs, he worked wherever there was labor trouble, for either side—"whoever pays me." Danny was powerfully built and well equipped by experience to fight in labor wars, but he did not relish this work. He fought for the money that was in it. In all my time in Cornerville, I never heard of Danny picking a fight with anyone.

With the passage of new labor legislation and government action against strike-breaking agencies, one of Danny's sources of income dried up. He had to fall back upon a crap game that he conducted in partnership with Mike Giovanni and Mike's brother, Terry.

Mike had been the leader of his kids' gang on King Street. He also had left school early for a factory job and was active wherever labor battles were being fought. Unlike Danny, he worked

for only one side—the union. As he explained: “Unionism is like a religion. You have those beliefs, and you have to stick to them.” In the last years of prohibition, factory work in his line became scarce, and Mike supported himself by running a crap game and a small speakeasy. He did not like the crap game, nor was it very profitable, for he refused the business of those who especially could not afford to lose. He thought he had “the right connections” to provide protection for the speakeasy, but police raids forced him out of business. He opened a lunchroom, but that also proved unprofitable, since too much of the business was on a credit basis. While the lunchroom operated, it provided a social center for Mike and his friends. Danny was a frequent visitor, and Doc spent some of his time there.

Long John, a young man from another part of Cornerville, took to hanging with Mike’s crowd. He had been hanging with a particularly tough gang up to the time that his older brother was sentenced to life-imprisonment for murder. Prodded by his mother, Long John began to worry about his own future. Danny and Mike advised him to break away from his former associates and hang with them. For some time they took care of his spending money and let him earn small sums by serving as watchman (looking out for the police) in their crap game. Then he got himself a factory job which provided sporadic employment throughout the year.

When Doc’s kids’ gang broke up, Nutsy was the only member who continued to spend all his spare time on Norton Street. Since he took up with the younger boys, Doc and Danny called him “the King of the Kids.” Frank Bonelli became particularly attached to Nutsy. Joe Marco, known as Joe Dodge, was a good friend of both men. Carl and Tommy, who had belonged to a still younger group, now accepted Nutsy’s leadership. Alec had gone to school with a younger brother of Joe Dodge, and he first took to hanging on Norton Street in order to be with Joe.

At this time Nutsy was a part-time postal employee, Frank was trying to get started in professional baseball, and Joe had a highly paid but seasonal job in a quarry. Carl and Tommy both had steady factory jobs, and Alec had seasonal employment in the market district.

Besides Mike’s crowd and Nutsy’s boys, there were three other men who went to make up the Nortons as I knew them. Angelo Cucci, Fred Mackey (Macaluso), and Lou Danaro were all closely attached to Doc. Some years earlier, Fred’s uncle had opened a grocery store on Norton Street and had placed Fred in charge part of the time. One day Danny got the boys to play a practical joke on him. They lined up in front of the counter and demanded protection money. Fred was panic-stricken until Doc took pity on him and explained the situation. Fred was so relieved that he looked upon Doc as his benefactor and frequently sought his company, even after the store had been sold.

For several years Lou Danaro had worked for Mr. Bacon, the headworker of the Norton Street Settlement, and had even lived in the house. The corner boys thought that he considered himself above them, and they would have nothing to do with him. Doc knew Lou’s cousin very well. The cousins did not get along; Doc thought that was too bad, so, when he went out with Lou’s cousin, he insisted that they get Lou to join them. In that way he struck up a friendship with Lou. When Lou finally broke with Mr. Bacon and moved out of the settlement, his friendship with Doc made it possible for him to be accepted on the street corner.

Fred and Lou both lived in the suburbs, but they drove into Eastern City for their part-time jobs and into Cornerville to join Doc and his friends.

When Doc first met him, Angelo was exceedingly shy and had no friends. He spent most of his time at home practicing the violin, which he hoped some day to play in a concert orchestra. When Doc accepted him as a friend, it was possible for Angelo to join the corner boys.

Close friendship ties already existed between certain of the men, but the Nortons, as an organization, did not begin to function until the early spring of 1937. It was at that time that Doc returned to the corner. Nutsy, Frank, Joe, Alec, Carl, and Tommy had a great respect for Doc and gathered around him. Angelo, Fred, and Lou followed Doc in making the corner their headquarters. Danny and Mike were drawn to Norton Street by their friendship for Doc and by the location of their crap game, right next to “the corner.” Long John followed Danny and Mike.

The men became accustomed to acting together. They were also tied to one another by mutual obligations. In their experiences together there were innumerable occasions when one man would feel called upon to help another, and the man who was aided would want to return the favor. Strong group loyalties were supported by these reciprocal activities.

There were distinctions in rank among the Nortons. Doc, Danny, and Mike held the top positions. They were older than any others except Nutsy. They possessed a greater capacity for social movement. While the followers were restricted to the narrow sphere of one corner, Doc, Danny, and Mike had friends in many other groups and were well known and respected throughout a large part of Cornerville. It was one of their functions to accompany the follower when he had to move outside of his customary social sphere and needed such support. The leadership three were also respected for their intelligence and powers of self-expression. Doc in particular was noted for his skill in argument. On the infrequent occasions when he did become involved, he was usually able to outmaneuver his opponent without humiliating him. I never saw the leadership three exert their authority through physical force, but their past fighting reputations tended to support their positions.

Doc was the leader of the gang. The Nortons had been Doc's gang when they had been boys, and, although the membership had changed, they were still thought to be Doc's gang. The crap game and its social obligations prevented Danny and Mike from spending as much time with the Nortons as did Doc. They were not so intimate with the followers, and they expected him to lead.

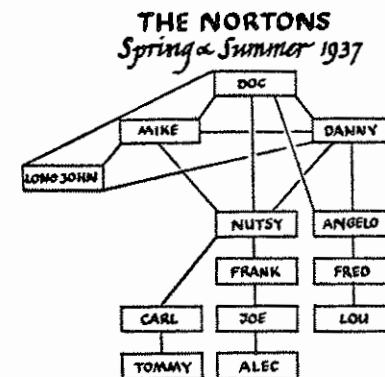
Long John was in an anomalous position. Though he was five years younger than Doc, his friendship with the three top men gave him a superior standing. As Doc explained:

It's because we've always catered to Long John. When we go somewhere, we ask Long John to go with us. We come up to him and slap him on the back. We give him so much attention that the rest of the fellows have to respect him.

Nevertheless, he had little authority over the followers. At this time he was accustomed to gamble away his week's earnings in the crap game, and this was thrown up against him.

There is an important social distinction between those who hold crap games and those who play in them. The game-holders enjoy something of the standing of businessmen; the "shooters" are thought to be suckers. The Nortons as a group considered themselves above the crap-shooters' level, and at this time Long John was trying unsuccessfully to break away from the game.

In the spring of 1937 Nutsy was recognized informally as the superior of Frank, Joe, and Alec, but his relations with a girl had



□ Corner boy

— Line of influence

*Positions of boxes indicate relative status*

already begun to damage his standing. A corner boy is not expected to be chaste, but it is beneath him to marry a girl who is "no good." Nutsy was going so steadily with this girl that marriage seemed a distinct possibility, and, reacting to the criticism of his friends, he gradually withdrew from the gang. He did not again play a prominent role in the Nortons until toward the end of my stay in Cornerville, but in the spring and summer of 1937 he was still a man of moderate importance.

As the story gets under way, Doc was twenty-nine; Mike, twenty-nine; Danny, twenty-seven; Long John, twenty-four; Nutsy, twenty-nine; Frank, twenty-three; Joe, twenty-four; Alec, twenty-one; Angelo, twenty-five; Fred, twenty-five; Lou, twenty-four;

Carl, twenty-one; and Tommy, twenty. The accompanying chart presents a picture of the relations between the men as they appeared at this time. For purposes of shorthand designation, I shall refer to the top four men as the "leaders" and to the others as the "followers." If the special characteristics of Long John are borne in mind, this should not be confusing.

## 2. BOWLING AND SOCIAL RANKING

One evening in October, 1937, Doc scheduled a bowling match against the Italian Community Club, which was composed largely of college men who held their meetings every two weeks in the Norton Street Settlement House. The club was designed to be an organization of well-educated and superior men, although Doc was a member, and Angelo, Lou, and Fred of the Nortons had been voted in upon his recommendation. The other Nortons felt that the club was "high-toned," and around the corner it was known as the "Boys' Junior League." They were a little flattered that members of their group could mix with such a club, but their opinion was formed largely from the personalities of Chick Morelli, the president, and Tony Cardio, another prominent member, both of whom they considered snobbish and conceited. Consequently, the Nortons took this match very seriously.

Doc was captain of the Nortons. He selected Long John, Frank, Joe, and Tommy for his team. Danny and Mike were not bowling in this period. Chick and Tony led the Community Club team.

Feeling ran high. The Nortons shouted at the club bowlers and made all sorts of noises to upset their concentration. The club members were in high spirits when they gained an early lead but had little to say as the Nortons pulled ahead to win by a wide margin.

After the match I asked Frank and Joe if there was any team that they would have been more eager to beat. They said that if they could pick out their favorite victims, they would choose Chick Morelli, Tony Cardio, Joe Cardio (Tony's brother), Mario Testa, and Hector Marto. These last three had all belonged to the Sunset Dramatic Club.

Frank and Joe said that they had nothing against the other three men on the Community Club team but that the boys had

been anxious to beat that team in order to put Chick and Tony "in their places." Significantly, Frank and Joe did not select their favorite victims on the basis of bowling ability. The five were good bowlers, but that was not the deciding factor in the choice. It was their social positions and ambitions that were the objects of attack, and it was that which made victory over the Community Club so satisfying.

Lou Danaro and Fred Mackey had cheered for the club. Although they were club members, the boys felt that this did not excuse them. Danny said: "You're a couple of traitors—Benedict Arnolds. . . . You're with the boys—and then you go against them. . . . Go on, I don't want your support."

Fred and Lou fell between the two groups and therefore had to face this problem of divided allegiance. Doc's position on the corner was so definitely established that no one even considered the possibility of his choosing to bowl for the Community Club against the Nortons.

This was the only match between the two teams that ever took place. The corner boys were satisfied with their victory, and the club did not seek a return match. Tony Cardio objected to the way in which the Nortons had tried to upset the concentration of his team and said it was no fun to bowl against such poor sports. There were, however, clashes with individual members of the club. One night in November, Doc, Frank Bonelli, Joe Dodge, and I were bowling when Chick Morelli and Lou Danaro came in together. We agreed to have two three-man teams, and Chick and Doc chose sides. Chick chose Lou and me. The match was fairly even at first, but Doc put his team far ahead with a brilliant third string. Toward the end of this string, Chick was sitting next to Joe Dodge and mumbling at him, "You're a lousy bum. . . . You're a no-good bowler."

Joe said nothing until Chick had repeated his remarks several times. Then Joe got up and fired back at Chick, "You're a conceited ——! I feel like taking a wallop at you. I never knew anybody was as conceited as you. . . . You're a conceited ——!"

Doc stood between them to prevent a fight. Chick said nothing, and Doc managed to get the six of us quietly into the elevator.



Joe was not satisfied, and he said to me in a loud voice: "Somebody is going to straighten him out some day. Somebody will have to wallop him to knock some of that conceit out of him."

When we were outside the building, Lou walked away with Chick, and the rest of us went into Jennings' Cafeteria for "coffee-ands." We discussed Chick:

DOC: It's lucky you didn't hit him. They'd be after you for manslaughter. You're too strong for the kid.

JOE: All right. But when somebody's too tough for me, I don't fool around. . . . He shouldn't fool around me. . . . If he's gonna say them things, he should smile when he says them. But I think he really meant it.

DOC: The poor guy, so many fellows want to wallop him—and he knows it.

FRANK: I liked him all right until the other night. We went to the Metropolitan Ballroom. . . . He didn't mingle in at all. He just lay down on a couch like he wanted to be petted. He wasn't sociable at all.

After driving Chick home, Lou joined us in Jennings'. He said that Chick felt very bad about the incident and didn't know what it was that made people want to hit him. Lou added: "I know he didn't mean it that way. He's really a swell kid when you get to know him. There's only one thing I don't like about him." Then he told about a time when Chick had started an argument with a dance-hall attendant on some technicality involved in the regulations of the hall. Lou commented: "He was just trying to show how intelligent he was."

A few days later, when Joe's anger had subsided, Doc persuaded him to apologize.

Doc did not defend Chick for friendship's sake. Nor was it because they worked together in the Community Club. In the club Doc led a faction generally hostile to Chick, and he himself was often critical of the manner in which Chick sought to run the organization. But Doc had friends in both groups. He did not like to see the groups at odds with each other. Though friendship between the Nortons and Chick was impossible, it was Doc's function to see that diplomatic relations were maintained.

The Community Club match served to arouse enthusiasm for bowling among the Nortons. Previously the boys had bowled sporadically and often in other groups, but now for the first time bowling became a regular part of their social routine. Long John,

Alec, Joe Dodge, and Frank Bonelli bowled several nights a week throughout the winter. Others bowled on frequent occasions, and all the bowlers appeared at the alleys at least one night a week.

A high score at candlepins requires several spares or strikes. Since a strike rarely occurs except when the first ball hits the kingpin properly within a fraction of an inch, and none of the boys had such precise aim, strikes were considered matters of luck, although a good bowler was expected to score them more often than a poor one. A bowler was judged according to his ability to get spares, to "pick" the pins that remained on the alley after his first ball.

There are many mental hazards connected with bowling. In any sport there are critical moments when a player needs the steadiest nerves if he is to "come through"; but, in those that involve team play and fairly continuous action, the player can sometimes lose himself in the heat of the contest and get by the critical points before he has a chance to "tighten up." If he is competing on a five-man team, the bowler must wait a long time for his turn at the alleys, and he has plenty of time to brood over his mistakes. When a man is facing ten pins, he can throw the ball quite casually. But when only one pin remains standing, and his opponents are shouting, "He can't pick it," the pressure is on, and there is a tendency to "tighten up" and lose control.

When a bowler is confident that he can make a difficult shot, the chances are that he will make it or come exceedingly close. When he is not confident, he will miss. A bowler is confident because he has made similar shots in the past and is accustomed to making good scores. But that is not all. He is also confident because his fellows, whether for him or against him, believe that he can make the shot. If they do not believe in him, the bowler has their adverse opinion as well as his own uncertainty to fight against. When that is said, it becomes necessary to consider a man's relation to his fellows in examining his bowling record.

In the winter and spring of 1937-38 bowling was the most significant social activity for the Nortons. Saturday night's intraclique and individual matches became the climax of the week's events. During the week the boys discussed what had happened the previous Saturday night and what would happen on the com-

ing Saturday night. A man's performance was subject to continual evaluation and criticism. There was, therefore, a close connection between a man's bowling and his position in the group.

The team used against the Community Club had consisted of two men (Doc and Long John) who ranked high and three men (Joe Dodge, Frank Bonelli, and Tommy) who had a low standing. When bowling became a fixed group activity, the Nortons' team evolved along different lines. Danny joined the Saturday-night crowd and rapidly made a place for himself. He performed very well and picked Doc as his favorite opponent. There was a good-natured rivalry between them. In individual competition Danny usually won, although his average in the group matches was no better than that of Doc's. After the Community Club match, when Doc selected a team to represent the Nortons against other corner gangs and clubs, he chose Danny, Long John, and himself, leaving two vacancies on the five-man team. At this time, Mike, who had never been a good bowler, was just beginning to bowl regularly and had not established his reputation. Significantly enough, the vacancies were not filled from the ranks of the clique. On Saturday nights the boys had been bowling with Chris Teludo, Nutsy's older cousin, and Mark Ciampa, a man who associated with them only at the bowling alleys. Both men were popular and were first-class bowlers. They were chosen by Doc, with the agreement of Danny and Long John, to bowl for the Nortons. It was only when a member of the regular team was absent that one of the followers in the clique was called in, and on such occasions he never distinguished himself.

The followers were not content with being substitutes. They claimed that they had not been given an opportunity to prove their ability. One Saturday night in February, 1938, Mike organized an intraclique match. His team was made up of Chris Teludo, Doc, Long John, himself, and me. Danny was sick at the time, and I was put in to substitute for him. Frank, Alec, Joe, Lou, and Tommy made up the other team. Interest in this match was more intense than in the ordinary "choose-up" matches, but the followers bowled poorly and never had a chance.

After this one encounter the followers were recognized as the

second team and never again challenged the team of Doc, Danny, Long John, Mark, and Chris. Instead, they took to individual efforts to better their positions.

On his athletic ability alone, Frank should have been an excellent bowler. His ball-playing had won him positions on semiprofessional teams and a promise—though unfulfilled—of a job on a minor-league team. And it was not lack of practice that held him back, for, along with Alec and Joe Dodge, he bowled more frequently than Doc, Danny, or Mike. During the winter of 1937-38 Frank occupied a particularly subordinate position in the group. He spent his time with Alec in the pastry shop owned by Alec's uncle, and, since he had little employment throughout the winter, he became dependent upon Alec for a large part of the expenses of his participation in group activities. Frank fell to the bottom of the group. His financial dependence preyed upon his mind. While he sometimes bowled well, he was never a serious threat to break into the first team.

Some events of June, 1937, cast additional light upon Frank's position. Mike organized a baseball team of some of the Nortons to play against a younger group of Norton Street corner boys. On the basis of his record, Frank was considered the best player on either team, yet he made a miserable showing. He said to me: "I can't seem to play ball when I'm playing with fellows I know, like that bunch. I do much better when I'm playing for the Stanley A.C. against some team in Dexter, Westland, or out of town." Accustomed to filling an inferior position, Frank was unable to star even in his favorite sport when he was competing against members of his own group.

One evening I heard Alec boasting to Long John that the way he was bowling he could take on every man on the first team and lick them all. Long John dismissed the challenge with these words: "You think you could beat us, but, under pressure, you die!"

Alec objected vehemently, yet he recognized the prevailing group opinion of his bowling. He made the highest single score of the season, and he frequently excelled during the week when he bowled with Frank, Long John, Joe Dodge, and me, but on Satur-

day nights, when the group was all assembled, his performance was quite different. Shortly after this conversation Alec had several chances to prove himself, but each time it was "an off night," and he failed.

Carl, Joe, Lou, and Fred were never good enough to gain any recognition. Tommy was recognized as a first-class bowler, but he did most of his bowling with a younger group.

One of the best guides to the bowling standing of the members was furnished by a match held toward the end of April, 1938. Doc had an idea that we should climax the season with an individual competition among the members of the clique. He persuaded the owner of the alleys to contribute ten dollars in prize money to be divided among the three highest scorers. It was decided that only those who had bowled regularly should be eligible, and on this basis Lou, Fred, and Tommy were eliminated.

Interest in this contest ran high. The probable performances of the various bowlers were widely discussed. Doc, Danny, and Long John each listed his predictions. They were unanimous in conceding the first five places to themselves, Mark Ciampa, and Chris Teludo, although they differed in predicting the order among the first five. The next two positions were generally conceded to Mike and to me. All the ratings gave Joe Dodge last position, and Alec, Frank, and Carl were ranked close to the bottom.

The followers made no such lists, but Alec let it be known that he intended to show the boys something. Joe Dodge was annoyed to discover that he was the unanimous choice to finish last and argued that he was going to win.

When Chris Teludo did not appear for the match, the field was narrowed to ten. After the first four boxes, Alec was leading by several pins. He turned to Doc and said, "I'm out to get you boys tonight." But then he began to miss, and, as mistake followed mistake, he stopped trying. Between turns, he went out for drinks, so that he became flushed and unsteady on his feet. He threw the ball carelessly, pretending that he was not interested in the competition. His collapse was sudden and complete; in the space of a few boxes he dropped from first to last place.

The bowlers finished in the following order:

- |              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| 1. Whyte     | 6. Joe   |
| 2. Danny     | 7. Mark  |
| 3. Doc       | 8. Carl  |
| 4. Long John | 9. Frank |
| 5. Mike      | 10. Alec |

There were only two upsets in the contest, according to the predictions made by Doc, Danny, and Long John: Mark bowled very poorly and I won. However, it is important to note that neither Mark nor I fitted neatly into either part of the clique. Mark associated with the boys only at the bowling alleys and had no recognized status in the group. Although I was on good terms with all the boys, I was closer to the leaders than to the followers, since Doc was my particular friend. If Mark and I are left out of consideration, the performances were almost exactly what the leaders expected and the followers feared they would be. Danny, Doc, Long John, and Mike were bunched together at the top. Joe Dodge did better than was expected of him, but even he could not break through the solid ranks of the leadership.

Several days later Doc and Long John discussed the match with me.

LONG JOHN: I only wanted to be sure that Alec or Joe Dodge didn't win. That wouldn't have been right.

Doc: That's right. We didn't want to make it tough for you, because we all liked you, and the other fellows did too. If somebody had tried to make it tough for you, we would have protected you. . . . If Joe Dodge or Alec had been out in front, it would have been different. We would have talked them out of it. We would have made plenty of noise. We would have been really vicious. . . .

I asked Doc what would have happened if Alec or Joe had won.

They wouldn't have known how to take it. That's why we were out to beat them. If they had won, there would have been a lot of noise. Plenty of arguments. We would have called it lucky—things like that. We would have tried to get them in another match and then ruin them. We would have to put them in their places.

Every corner boy expects to be heckled as he bowls, but the heckling can take various forms. While I had moved ahead as early as the end of the second string, I was subjected only to good-

natured kidding. The leaders watched me with mingled surprise and amusement; in a very real sense, I was permitted to win.

Even so, my victory required certain adjustments. I was hailed jocularly as "the Champ" or even as "the Cheese Champ." Rather than accept this designation, I pressed my claim for recognition. Doc arranged to have me bowl a match against Long John. If I won, I should have the right to challenge Doc or Danny. The four of us went to the alleys together. Urged on by Doc and Danny, Long John won a decisive victory. I made no further challenges.

Alec was only temporarily crushed by his defeat. For a few days he was not seen on the corner, but then he returned and sought to re-establish himself. When the boys went bowling, he challenged Long John to an individual match and defeated him. Alec began to talk once more. Again he challenged Long John to a match, and again he defeated him. When bowling was resumed in the fall, Long John became Alec's favorite opponent, and for some time Alec nearly always came out ahead. He gloated. Long John explained: "He seems to have the Indian sign on me." And that is the way these incidents were interpreted by others—simply as a queer quirk of the game.

It is significant that, in making his challenge, Alec selected Long John instead of Doc, Danny, or Mike. It was not that Long John's bowling ability was uncertain. His average was about the same as that of Doc or Danny and better than that of Mike. As a member of the top group but not a leader in his own right, it was his social position that was vulnerable.

When Long John and Alec acted outside the group situation, it became possible for Alec to win. Long John was still considered the dependable man in a team match, and that was more important in relation to a man's standing in the group. Nevertheless, the leaders felt that Alec should not be defeating Long John and tried to reverse the situation. As Doc told me:

Alec isn't so aggressive these days. I steamed up at the way he was going after Long John, and I blasted him. . . . Then I talked to Long John. John is an introvert. He broods over things, and sometimes he feels inferior. He can't be aggressive like Alec, and when Alec tells him how he can always beat him, Long John gets to think that Alec is the better bowler. . . . I talked to

him. I made him see that he should bowl better than Alec. I persuaded him that he was really the better bowler. . . . Now you watch them the next time out. I'll bet Long John will ruin him.

The next time Long John did defeat Alec. He was not able to do it every time, but they became so evenly matched that Alec lost interest in such competition.

The records of the season 1937-38 show a very close correspondence between social position and bowling performance. This developed because bowling became the primary social activity of the group. It became the main vehicle whereby the individual could maintain, gain, or lose prestige.

Bowling scores did not fall automatically into this pattern. There were certain customary ways of behaving which exerted pressure upon the individuals. Chief among these were the manner of choosing sides and the verbal attacks the members directed against one another.

Generally, two men chose sides in order to divide the group into two five-man teams. The choosers were often, but not always, among the best bowlers. If they were evenly matched, two poor bowlers frequently did the choosing, but in all cases the process was essentially the same. Each one tried to select the best bowler among those who were still unchosen. When more than ten men were present, choice was limited to the first ten to arrive, so that even a poor bowler would be chosen if he came early. It was the order of choice which was important. Sides were chosen several times each Saturday night, and in this way a man was constantly reminded of the value placed upon his ability by his fellows and of the sort of performance expected of him.

Of course, personal preferences entered into the selection of bowlers, but if a man chose a team of poor bowlers just because they were his closest friends, he pleased no one, least of all his team mates. It was the custom among the Nortons to have the losing team pay for the string bowled by the winners. As a rule, this small stake did not play an important role in the bowling, but no one liked to pay without the compensating enjoyment of a closely contested string. For this reason the selections by good bowlers or by poor bowlers coincided very closely. It became gen-

erally understood which men should be among the first chosen in order to make for an interesting match.

When Doc, Danny, Long John, or Mike bowled on opposing sides, they kidded one another good-naturedly. Good scores were expected of them, and bad scores were accounted for by bad luck or temporary lapses of form. When a follower threatened to better his position, the remarks took quite a different form. The boys shouted at him that he was lucky, that he was "bowling over his head." The effort was made to persuade him that he should not be bowling as well as he was, that a good performance was abnormal for him. This type of verbal attack was very important in keeping the members "in their places." It was used particularly by the followers so that, in effect, they were trying to keep one another down. While Long John, one of the most frequent targets for such attacks, responded in kind, Doc, Danny, and Mike seldom used this weapon. However, the leaders would have met a real threat on the part of Alec or Joe by such psychological pressures.

The origination of group action is another factor in the situation. The Community Club match really inaugurated bowling as a group activity, and that match was arranged by Doc. Group activities are originated by the men with highest standing in the group, and it is natural for a man to encourage an activity in which he excels and discourage one in which he does not excel. However, this cannot explain Mike's performance, for he had never bowled well before Saturday night at the alleys became a fixture for the Nortons.

The standing of the men in the eyes of other groups also contributed toward maintaining social differentiation within the group. In the season of 1938-39 Doc began keeping the scores of each man every Saturday night so that the Nortons' team could be selected strictly according to the averages of the bowlers, and there could be no accusation of favoritism. One afternoon when we were talking about bowling performances, I asked Doc and Danny what would happen if five members of the second team should make better averages than the first team bowlers. Would they then become the first team? Danny said:

Suppose they did beat us, and the San Marcos would come up and want a match with us. We'd tell them, those fellows are really the first team, but the San Marcos would say, "We don't want to bowl them, we want to bowl you." We would say, "All right, you want to bowl Doc's team?" and we would bowl them.

Doc added:

I want you to understand, Bill, we're conducting this according to democratic principles. It's the others who won't let us be democratic.

### 3. THE NORTONS AND THE APHRODITE CLUB

In March, 1938, the Nortons made the acquaintance of the Aphrodite Club girls. The club had a dozen members, most of them attractive, all of them well dressed, who met once a week in the Norton Street Settlement House with one of the social workers. The girls went to plays, held socials, and each year saved up their dues for a trip to some point of interest.

In the winter of 1937-38 the Italian Community Club and the Aphrodite Club had become very friendly. They met in the settlement house on the same evening and sometimes gave their social activities together. The girls had a great respect for education and were anxious to make a good impression on the Community Club boys, although they thought some of them conceited. The men found the girls attractive, but some of the leading figures in the Community Club were anxious to make contacts with girls from the Italian Junior League and thus leave the Aphrodite girls and Cornerville behind them in their social contacts. While individual members were still mildly interested in some of the girls, by March the two clubs were slowly drifting apart.

Doc, Angelo, Lou, and Fred knew the girls through being members of the Community Club, but up to this time the Nortons as a whole had no social contacts with the Aphrodite Club. To all outward appearances their attitude was hostile. In June, 1937, I heard them discussing Carrie, one of the most attractive of the Aphrodite girls:

NUTSY: She's a good-looking girl, but I don't like her.

FRANK: If you took three hours to make up your face, you'd be good-looking too.

LONG JOHN: She has tough pins [legs]. Did you ever notice the pins on her? That's why she always wears such low dresses.

JOE DODGE: She goes for anybody with a little money. She likes you if you have a car. I like to drive by her in my car and stick my nose in the air. . . . She's just an alley cat.

Except for the four men who belonged to the Community Club, the Nortons almost never set foot inside the settlement house. The girls moved in a different social orbit, and the Nortons considered them "high-toned" and conceited. Still, they could not help finding them attractive.

As Doc told me:

They had admired the girls for a long time, and they were always after me to fix it up with them. . . . Friday night the Community Club was going bowling after the meeting. They wanted me to go with them, but I stalled them off. I said I would be down in a little while. . . . Then I rounded up these boys [the Nortons] and told them we were going to bowl the girls. . . . I think the Aphrodite Club expected they were going to bowl with the Community Club. If I had asked them to bowl with this bunch, they would probably have refused because it's a tougher bunch. . . . But I just brought them down here and we bowled.

The evening was a great success. The two groups bowled together again on Saturday night, and on both occasions the howling was followed by "coffee-and's" at Jennings'.

Alec discussed this beginning with me: "Before, we thought they were high-hat, and I guess they thought we were a bunch of rowdies. . . . Now I think they like our clique. We're cutting out the Community Club."

Members of the two groups saw one another almost every night for a period of several weeks. This brought about important changes in the social life of the Nortons.

One night, only four days after the first bowling match, I was surprised to find Alec, Joe Dodge, Tommy, and Long John playing cards at a table in the game room of the Norton Street Settlement House. Doc was at a table by himself, reading a magazine. I sat down with him to demand an explanation. He told me that the boys had wanted to go bowling but that he had not, so he told them to come into the settlement house and promised to get some of the girls to play cards with them. The girls were not in the house at the time, but, once inside, the boys played among themselves.

Except for Danny and Mike, the Nortons began coming into the settlement house almost every night to play cards by themselves or with the girls. Sometimes, when they were standing on the corner, the girls invited them to come in.

The social workers made no effort to keep the Nortons in the settlement. Miss Halloran, who was in charge of the game room, tried to treat them like the younger boys and girls in her charge. Corner boys are quick to notice the slightest sign of condescension, and Miss Halloran's attitude was painfully apparent. For several days the boys seemed to be obsessed with the task of denouncing Miss Halloran to one another in the strongest language they could command.

Long John, who had traveled the greatest social distance to go into the house, was the first one to drop out. After one particularly unpleasant encounter with Miss Halloran, he told the boys that he would never go in again. Two days later I was standing on the corner with him when it began to rain. Not knowing of his resolution, I suggested that we go into the settlement. He agreed, but, as he opened the door, we met Joe Dodge, who laughed at him and said, "I thought you weren't going to come in here any more."

Long John was embarrassed. We went out into the rain again, and he remarked thoughtfully, "I think that everybody that goes in there thinks they're a little better than the next fellow."

Two weeks after their first evening in the game room, all the Nortons had deserted the settlement.

From the beginning the boys took their activities with the girls very seriously. When they went bowling for the second time, Alec brought along a box of candy from his uncle's shop. The following Saturday he brought a large supply of pastry.

Doc told the boys that the Alluni sisters and their cousins had a summer camp on a lake some miles from the city. If the boys became friendly with the girls, they might be invited to spend the day in the country sometime during the summer. The possibility of taking the girls away from the Community Club was another inducement.

In a short time the Nortons did supersede the Community

Club, but victory was achieved only by default. Tony Cardio was infatuated with Helen, the most attractive of the girls, but the other club members lost interest in the Aphrodite Club. However, since Tony was considered one of the two most conceited members, the Nortons could get almost a full measure of satisfaction from defeating him.

A week after the first meeting of the two groups, I asked Alec what he thought the association with the girls had done to the Nortons. He said: "The boys get along better. There aren't so many squabbles any more." At this time the Aphrodite girls and the Nortons met en masse. Alec commented:

If I went out with them a few times, I could tell which one I liked. . . . But you start going with one girl, and you find you're going with a dead-head. It's tough. What are you gonna do? When they're all in a crowd, it's hard to shift around.

The boys had to proceed carefully. They could pay attention to Helen as much as they liked, because she was the prize of them all, but pairing-off with any of the others required a cautious preliminary survey of the situation.

A week later the first step in this direction was taken. Joe Dodge, Long John, Frank Bonelli, and I were standing on the corner. Angelo Cucci encountered Alec farther down the street and told him that he had just seen three of the Aphrodite girls on their way to Jennings'. They had remarked that it would be a nice evening for a ride but that they did not believe that Joe Dodge owned the big car the boys all talked about. Alec walked up to us and took Joe aside. Joe then left us and walked across the playground to King Street. Frank, who had been watching attentively, turned to me and asked if I wanted to walk down to Jennings' with him. I said that I thought it was too early. Frank started off alone. Alec asked me if I wanted to walk to Jennings' with him. Long John said, "You ain't bulling us. Why don't you tell the truth and say you're goin' for a ride?"

I asked Long John if he wanted to walk down with us. He refused but said that I should go.

As Alec and I walked down Main Street, he said that we were to meet Joe Dodge in his car, drive to Jennings', and take out the

girls. "But now Frank has started down to Jennings'. . . . He shouldn't do that." There were two reasons for excluding Frank: he was shy with girls and he had no money to entertain them.

We went into Jennings' to talk to the three girls. One of them had to be home early, but she urged that the other two go. I persuaded Joe and Alec to leave me behind. By this time Frank had come in and sat down at a table by himself. As Joe and Alec went out with the girls, I joined Frank. A few minutes later Long John and Nutsy came in and joined us. Long John asked, "What's the matter, Bill? Did they double-cross you?" I explained what had happened, but he said he did not like the way they had acted.

Frank and Alec had been the best of friends and had spent long hours together in the pastry shop. Now Alec became more friendly with Joe Dodge, and they began taking the girls out in Joe's father's car. Frank said to me:

Let them go out with the girls. They've pulled a few fast ones. They say they're going to do a certain thing, and then you find them with the girls. They've done things that I would never do. . . . It's hard enough to make a friend. A girl you can meet any time. . . . It takes years to make a real friend.

The rift between Alec and Frank widened rapidly. Easter was the rush time at Alec's uncle's pastry shop, and Alec had promised to give Frank some of the extra work at this time. Frank said that Alec simply decided not to give it to him. Alec said that he went to get Frank, but Frank was very gruff and unpleasant so he refused to bother with him. In any case, Frank did not get this much-needed work, and he was bitter about it. Frank and Alec told their stories to Doc at different times. Alec complained that Frank was being ungrateful after he had done so much for him. Frank complained that Alec had been double-crossing him over the girls. Doc listened sympathetically but was unable to smooth things over. Joe Dodge's car and the Aphrodite girls had created too wide a gulf between them.

The activities of Alec and Joe made them unpopular with all the other Nortons—except Carl and Tommy, who had cars. They

continued to hang on the corner, but for some time they were simply tolerated.

One Saturday night the Nortons were bowling with the girls. Ten men who had been members of the Sunset Dramatic Club were bowling on two adjoining alleys.

Danny and Mike came in late, sat by themselves, refused all invitations to bowl, and watched the proceedings with evident disgust. Danny told me: "I don't like to bowl with the girls. There's no competition. . . . Then, when you get a touch hit, you can't say nothing. You got to watch what you say."

Toward the end of the evening, Mike called Doc aside. He pointed to the Sunsets and said, "We used to call them the Cream Puffs, but now, compared to you, they're the Lumberjacks."

Doc laughed. Mike gave Danny a penny and Danny gave it to Doc, saying, "Toss this up. See if you're a man. Heads, you're a man. Tails, you ain't."

Doc took this good-naturedly. But then Danny called over Mario Testa of the Sunsets and told him to tell Doc that the Cream Puffs had now become the Lumberjacks. Mario laughed. Doc became angry. Danny said to him, "I'll spot you 20 pins and I'll beat you. I spot all the girls 20 pins."

Doc accepted the challenge. Danny bowled 104 against Doc's 84 and enjoyed himself thoroughly. Doc said he did not mind being beaten by 20 pins; the next time he might beat Danny by 20 pins. Nor did he mind being kidded about bowling with the girls. He said he became angry only when Danny brought the Sunsets into the argument. While he had once belonged to their club, he took pride in his position with the Nortons, and he was sensitive about anything that would make them appear in an unfavorable light compared with the Sunsets.

At Jennings', after the bowling, Doc left the girls and sat with Danny. Danny agreed that it had been a mistake to bring the Sunsets into the argument, and he apologized. Doc said that he did not want Mike and Danny to be left out of the bowling any more than they did.

On the following afternoon Danny and Mike stood on the corner telling Frank, Long John, and me what they thought about

our association with the Aphrodite girls. Danny wanted to know what we were getting out of it.

If you want to go places with them, you got to have money, and none of yuz have got a dime, so forget about it.

Alec says to me, "I'll lay them all."

I tells him, "You won't lay a one of them, and I'll bet money on it. If you lay one of them girls, you'll marry her. That's the only way you'll ever lay one of them."

Long John said that he never had cared much for bowling with the girls in the first place. Frank said that he had enjoyed it at first but that now all the fun was gone out of it. Mike said that he and Danny would form a "grievance committee" and would readmit some of us to membership in the Cornerville Bears (this being the name of a championship baseball team on which he had once played) if we would swear not to bowl with the girls any more. Frank made his promise. Long John jokingly said that he would never apply for membership, and Danny said that Long John would get back only over his dead body.

Mark Ciampa came along and took Frank for a ride in his car with Joe Dodge and Carl. Lou Danaro drove up, and Danny, Mike, Long John, and I climbed into his car, picked up Doc at his house, and drove out to Crighton, where we stopped at the bowling alleys. Danny and Doc chose sides. Doc chose Lou and Mike; Danny chose Long John and me. But then Mike objected. He wanted to be on Danny's side to defend the honor of the Cornerville Bears. I changed sides with Mike, and then Doc, Lou, and I took two out of three strings from Danny, Mike, and Long John, largely due to the fine bowling of Doc, who finished well ahead of Danny and thus felt that he had gained his revenge for the humiliation of the previous evening. When the match was over, Doc asked if we were all readmitted to the Bears. Mike said that we were. In a spirit of good fellowship, we drove back to Cornerville.

Later, Doc discussed these developments with me:

I enjoyed bowling with the girls at first. I hoped that Mike and Danny would fall in. When they didn't, I didn't enjoy it so much any more. . . . I knew they didn't like it. They said to me, "It isn't right. The girls are taking all the alleys." . . . You might say that there was a little clash between us



about bowling with the girls, but you saw how it worked out. It wasn't really serious. We got together again right away.

Saturday night became men's night once more as the bowling season drew to a close. Social relations with the Aphrodite girls continued for some months but on a curtailed scale. The girls' summer camp was the main attraction which maintained interest after the peak of the group activities had passed. The boys drove out to the camp several times during July and August.

Alec was always boasting about his prowess with the women. Doc paid little attention to him, but the other boys felt that something should be done to put him in his place. One night in April they were kidding Alec, when, as Doc says, Alec challenged him:

"If you're such a great lover, I challenge you to show your stuff!"

I said, "Alec, I might not be as handsome as you are, and I don't have all the hair that you have, but I can outbull you any day."

Alec says, "No! No!"

"Well," I said, "I'm older now and I don't want to take a girl away from a man just to show I can do it."

But then Danny says, "Doc, I think you're slipping."

*Maroni!* When Danny says that, I must do something. He only said it to steam me up, but I said, "All right, Danny, I pick Helen. Saturday night. You watch." . . . Alec wasn't there to see it Saturday night. That was too bad. We were bowling one floor below the girls. I went up to see Helen, and I asked her to come down. I had something to tell her. In a few minutes she came down—by herself. She sat next to me all the evening, the only girl among all those fellows. Danny was impressed. Later he told me, "Doc, you're still the great lover."

Since Alec was not present, he remained unimpressed and continued to boast. A month later Danny was again urging Doc to put Alec in his place. First, Doc lectured him upon the objectionable character of his boasting. When this had no effect, he asked: "Which one of those girls do you really fit with?" Alec said he fitted best with Mildred.

"All right, you take her out twice more, so you can fit with her real good, and then I'll take her away from you."

Alec protested that it could not be done. Later Doc commented to me:

I didn't think I could do it, but I said it anyway. I was all steamed up. . . . After, Alec called me aside, and he told me he loved Mildred and wanted to marry her, so I should lay off. . . . I said, "All right, Alec, I just wanted

to hear you say that." . . . I don't think he really loves her, but that's the screwy code around here. If he says he loves her, I have to leave her alone.

Since Alec was more active with the girls than anyone except Joe Dodge, it required the intervention of the leader to put him in his place. Several months later he proposed to Mildred, and, when she refused him, he lost interest in the Aphrodite girls. A year later he married another girl.

When Doc took up Alec's first challenge and began to "bull" Helen, he realized that he was running some risks. It would have been easy to fall in love with her, and Doc had no money or job on which to get married.

When the girls saw Doc with Helen, the combination seemed natural. Dorothy, one of Helen's closest friends, often remarked that they were such an attractive couple. In April, Helen was sick. As Danny told the story:

Dorothy is always hinting about flowers. She says a couple of times to Doc, "Helen is sick. Why don't you send her flowers?" . . . That steamed me up. She's stupid. Don't she know that Doc can't afford to send flowers? . . . Last night me and Long John decided we should send her some flowers in Doc's name. He tried to tell us not to do it, but this morning we went down to Vanderwater, the florist on Silverton Street. . . . He had orchids, three for \$15—that was too expensive. We got roses; we told him it was not for a sweetheart, it was for a sick friend. So he suggests tear roses. We paid \$5 for a dozen tear roses. . . . We could get six dozen roses around here for that price, but if we sent the flowers from one of these florists they would have some greaser knock on the door to deliver them. Vanderwater has a nice truck, and they send a delivery boy around with a green uniform. . . . But what things we couldn't do with that \$5.

Doc greeted this gesture with mixed emotions. He realized that it had helped his standing, but it would make Helen think that he was serious. Finally, he told Dorothy and Helen that the boys had done it in his behalf.

Shortly after that, when the fellows were in Jennings', one of the girls was kidding Doc about his reputation as the great lover and claiming that he was afraid to go out with her. As he told the story:

Those kids get my goat. They're innocent, and they want to act as if they knew it all. . . . All right, I said I would go out with her. But she said, "First you must come to my party."

I asked her, "Who's going to be there?"

"Tony Cardio, Chick Morelli, and Angelo Cucci," she says.

"Who else?"

"Nobody else."

That steamed me up. Danny, Long John, and Frank were at the same table with me, and she didn't invite them. . . . I told her, "No, I'm going some place that night."

She says, "That's not true. You just don't want to come."

"All right," I said, "I don't want to come."

And she steamed up. When she went back to her table, I turned to the boys. They were very depressed. I told them, "Pay no attention to it, she's stupid. She's tactless."

Though he was unable to protect his boys from such a social slight, Doc at least showed that his interests were with them.

Association with the Aphrodite girls, combined with the bowling activity, brought about important changes in the life of Long John. In the spring of 1937 he was gambling away all his money in crap games. In the fall of 1937 he began to cut down on his gambling, and by winter he had given it up entirely. In the spring I said to him that it must have taken a lot of will-power to stay away from the crap game for so long. He shrugged his shoulders. "You know what really kept me away this winter? Bowling!"

Long John's attitude toward women began to change as he drifted away from the crap game and began associating with the Aphrodite girls. Whenever he stopped to think of it, he resented their attitude of social superiority, but at other times he found it very pleasant to be with them. Although he never thought seriously of marrying one of them, he said to me: "If I could just find some girl that I could really fall in love with, I would get married tomorrow. . . . I really mean that."

In a short space of time Long John had moved from a tough corner to the more respectable corner of Norton Street, from the crap game to the bowling alleys, from the alleys into the company of a select group of girls, and, with them, even into the settlement house for a brief period. As Doc commented, "it was a metamorphosis."

The Nortons and the Aphrodite girls were brought together by Doc. When Danny and Mike wanted to break them apart, they concentrated particularly upon Doc. Two of the followers could

have been left out without changing the group very much, but Danny and Mike held such important positions that the Nortons could not have continued to be the Nortons without them. Furthermore, they were Doc's closest friends, and; whenever he had to choose between them and the others, he chose them. Bowling with the girls had threatened to split the Nortons, and Danny and Mike acted upon Doc to re-establish the unity of the group. By fall the two groups had drifted apart so that one could hear the Nortons expressing the same attitudes toward the girls that they had held before becoming acquainted. Only Alec, Joe Dodge, and Fred Mackey chose, in effect, to remain with the girls, and their relationship to the Nortons became rather tenuous. Joe and Fred eventually married into the group.

Association with the girls was, like bowling, a means of gaining, maintaining, or losing prestige in the group. As in bowling, Alec had to be kept in his place. It was essential to the smooth functioning of the group that the prestige gradations be informally recognized and maintained.

#### 4. DOC'S POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

To the casual observer the corner gang seems to go on for years without change, but actually changes are always taking place; and, as the men grow out of their twenties, the gang itself tends to disintegrate. Some of the members marry and have children. Even if they continue to hang on the corner, their interests are no longer confined to that social area. With marriage, some move out of Cornerville; and, even when they return to spend time with the boys, they are not the active members they once were. In this period of life the corner boy is expected to "settle down" and find the job that will support him and his family in future years. He becomes a different fellow, and his gang either falls apart or is included in some larger club organization.

Doc was now thirty and had to make some decision about his future. He had had no steady job since the stained-glass plant had failed. He had no other specialized training. His intelligence, popularity, and skill in handling the corner boys seemed naturally adapted to a political career, and many of his friends had urged

him to run for office. Mike Giovanni was particularly insistent. He once said to me:

You know, there is some people that can't do things themselves, but they can get other people to do it for them. Maybe I am like that. There is something lacking in me, but I can see it in others.

In the spring of 1937 Doc discussed his position with me:

I told Mike to forget about the politics. . . . He said, "You can't do that. I've been going around getting all these names. I been buzzing everybody." I told him to forget it. . . . I can't do it without a job. Do you know how it feels not to have any money in your kick? Not to know where the next dollar is coming from? I hope you never experience that. I went through it once; I can't go through it again. . . . But what can I do, Bill? I'm a so-so artist. If I was in the art racket, I wouldn't hire me. What else could I do? Maybe I should try for a civil service job, but I would get bored there in an office all day. . . . But if I run, I've got to have a job—any job. . . . I shouldn't be staying here. My sister takes care of me, and my brother-in-law is a good egg, but that is no good for them. Sometimes they want to love up, and they can't because I'm around. . . . I should be off by myself. I should be thinking of getting married. If I had a job, it's likely that I would. I don't go for this stuff—the girls expect me to give them that line, so I do. And I'm egotist enough so I like to know when they fall for me. . . . But then I drop them. . . . What can I offer to a girl? I'll never get married unless I've got a good job. I'm not that dumb. . . . I shouldn't be around here at all.

When the boys urged him to run for office, Doc would say to me, "Pay no attention to that, Bill. They just want to have somebody to cheer for."

A year later Doc's personal situation was not improved, yet he yielded to the insistence of his friends and agreed to run for representative in the state legislature.

The political campaign only increased Doc's problems. Now, more than ever, he felt that he must get a job. He was sensitive about his lack of formal education, and unemployment was an added burden. He needed money for the campaign, and he did not want people to say that he was running for office just to get himself a job.

From time to time in the spring of 1938 he heard from the sister who lived in Dedfield that W.P.A. project supervisors had intimated that they could find him a place on the rolls if he still needed a job. If Doc got on the W.P.A. in Dedfield, he could not

make Cornerville his official residence, and he would be ruled out of the campaign. He once told me that he could not hold out any longer, that he had decided to make every effort to get on the Dedfield W.P.A. Later he said that he had not gone to see anyone in Dedfield because he could not disappoint the people who wanted him to run.

His Cornerville sister was thinking of moving to Dedfield. Her two youngest boys were learning the tough language of the streets and were becoming hard to manage; she wanted to get them out of Cornerville. If she moved, Doc would have to move with her, and she asked what this would do to his political ambitions. He lied to her that he was no longer interested in politics. Since she could not find what she wanted in Dedfield, the move was postponed, and Doc remained in Cornerville.

Doc believed that he would be able to get on the Eastern City W.P.A. if he asked certain local politicians to intercede for him, but the price for such an appointment would have been his withdrawal from the contest. Therefore, he made application by himself. As a single man without dependents, he knew that his chances were small, and he was not surprised when nothing came of this effort.

Mrs. Mallory, a vocational guidance worker at the Norton Street Settlement, became interested in Doc and arranged a month's work in a well-known stained-glass concern, his wages of \$10 a week to be paid by the settlement house. Doc went to work with enthusiasm and hoped to win himself a permanent job. At the end of the month the head of the concern complimented him on his work and said that if he could continue for another month and get additional experience, at the expense of the settlement, they might perhaps be able to hire him. Mrs. Mallory suggested that this be done, but Mr. Bacon said, "We've done enough for Doc." While other needy cases demanded attention, he felt that Doc should not be supported unless there was a definite promise that a job would result. No promise was made, and the project was dropped. The month's work resulted only in bitter disappointment for Doc.

Mr. Bacon offered him a chance to teach stained-glass work in

the settlement house one night a week during the spring and summer for \$2.00 a class. Mrs. Mallory hoped to get him private school classes in the fall. Mr. Bacon thought that the evening class would give Doc a chance to show his initiative. Doc told Mrs. Mallory that he would not have the peace of mind to work on such a class until he had a real job and some security. She asked him to thank Mr. Bacon for the offer, and he said that he would. He never did. He knew that Mr. Bacon considered him shiftless and lazy. Sometimes he was tempted to go in and argue with Mr. Bacon. He did not, but at least he tried to avoid any move that might subordinate him to the social worker.

Mr. Smith, headworker of the Cornerville Settlement House, was interested in developing a recreation project outlined by Mr. Kendall, his boys' worker. He hoped to get funds to open recreation centers in vacant stores so as to reach the corner boys who would not come into the settlement house. I proposed that Doc should have the job of directing one of the centers and brought the two men together. I had hoped that Doc would make a favorable impression, but he had very little to say. When, in response to my persuasion, Doc went to see Mr. Smith again, he only stayed to say that he liked the recreation-center idea but could do nothing unless he found some means of immediate support. Mr. Smith was puzzled by Doc's attitude. I questioned Doc, and he explained that in the midst of the first meeting he had had a sudden attack of dizziness and that it was all that he could do to conceal it from us. At an earlier period, when faced by severe financial worries, he had the same trouble. He could not be in a room full of people without having a dizzy spell. When he had to go to a party, he would tell Angelo to come in ten minutes later and say that he was wanted on the corner. Then he would excuse himself and escape.

Even if he made a good impression on Mr. Smith, the project could not be launched until the fall, so it offered him no immediate prospect of support. Doc said to me:

Bill, that's all a good idea. It should be done. . . . And if I had some money to live on, I would do that work for nothing. But now I can't even

think about it. I have to have some security first. I need a job, any job—a definite job, right now! . . . After that I can think about other things.

Meanwhile Doc's campaign got under way. Mike appointed himself campaign manager and went about his job with infectious enthusiasm. The main activity of the late spring and summer months of a campaign year is "talking it up" for the candidate. His closest friends go from corner to corner to let the boys know that their champion is "in the fight." Mike was known as a first-class "vote hustler," and his preliminary work was effective. He interested the members of his union. The leaders of a Welpport club of Doc's *paesani* pledged their support. The leader of one Cornerville political club promised his support. A number of corner boys who were influential in their own Cornerville groups came to Doc and pledged themselves to his cause. Doc did nothing. Mike was continually pressing him to get into action, to "form a committee, draw up a platform, organize a dance to raise some money, get things rolling."

Finally, Mike became disgusted with Doc and said to him, "You got a beautiful chance to win this fight, but I'll tell you to your kisser—you're lazy."

Since the voters could make two choices in the contest and Representative Mike Kelly was sure to be re-elected, Doc needed to be the strongest Italian candidate in order to have a chance of winning. This would have been too much to expect in his first campaign. Still, he was considered a powerful candidate. Friends of one of the leading Italian candidates, in urging Doc to withdraw, predicted that he would not get more than fifteen hundred votes. In such a contest a thousand votes are enough to make a man an important political figure.

One day late in July, without consulting anybody, Doc withdrew from the contest. When I asked why he had done so, he said, "Too many in it, Bill. There were thirty-two candidates." But then he admitted that this was not the real reason.

The more there were in the fight, the better it was for me. . . . It was the social demands that were too much for me. When I'm down at Jennings' with the boys, somebody comes up to me and wants me to buy a ticket for something. I'm batted out, so I have to refuse. That happens all the time,

Bill. . . . As a politician, I'm supposed to go to dances and meetings, and I can't go because I haven't got the money. Fellows come up to me and ask for cards with my name on them and stickers and signs. I can't give them any. . . . You can't be that way in politics. They hold it against you. If you don't buy their ticket, they call you a cheap bastard. They cut you up behind your back. . . . I worried about it. Many nights I walked the floor until three or four in the morning. That was too much, Bill. . . . It was tough getting out. The *paesani* in Welpport were all steamed up. So many people had pledged their support to me. And I never asked anybody for his support. Not once! They all came to me. Now that it's all over, I think I could have won. I really think so. . . . Next time I won't get in the fight unless I have \$200 in my pocket. But this was really the time for me. In two years—who knows what will happen? . . . Well, it was fun while I was in there.

In his earlier years Doc had moved freely through Cornerville and outlying districts, gathering a following wherever he went. Popularity and influence had come to him without effort on his part. The years of unemployment had sapped his confidence and steadily narrowed his sphere of social activity. As he told me:

It wasn't until a little while before you came down here that I began hanging on Norton Street again. Now I don't go anywhere else. I'm always on that corner. I'm too disgusted with myself to go any place else.

To become successful in politics, the corner boy must be able to go out from his own gang and continually widen his sphere of social influence. He must be able to meet new groups and participate in their activities. Doc was moving in precisely the opposite direction, and he knew it. His self-confidence was not completely gone. He was sure that if he had a steady job he could reverse the trend of his life. Then he would have money to spend, and he could do the things that were expected of him when he participated in group activities. When he gave up hope of getting a job, he saw that his own path split off from the path of the successful politician in an ever widening gap. Since he could not travel both roads at once, he took the only way out.

The news of Doc's withdrawal hit the Nortons with devastating effect. Mike was terribly upset. When he made Doc his champion, he was carried away by his own enthusiasm. Now his faith was shaken. Doc was still his close friend, but he began to talk about his shortcomings as he never had before. Doc was a fine

fellow—that was understood—but he just did not have the push to be successful, and allowances had to be made for his lack of spirit. Mike was a "hustler." He had what Doc lacked. Doc was no longer Mike's leader.

The impact of Doc's action upon other corners was no less disturbing. When a corner-boy leader mobilizes his friends and arouses their enthusiasm in the support of a candidate and then the candidate suddenly withdraws, the group suffers a serious let-down. The leader has committed his group to the wrong man, and his prestige suffers. The candidate is suspected of having sold out his friends, of having made a bargain with another politician whereby he capitalizes upon their support in order to gain some material advantage.

Doc's position was strong enough so that he could have demanded something from rival politicians who were interested in his withdrawal, but, when he withdrew, he did so unconditionally and independently. There were the inevitable rumors, but, since no one could prove anything against Doc, his reputation was not destroyed.

At the height of his campaign Doc was the leader of a growing army of supporters. When he withdrew, there was a general realignment. The corners where he had been strong turned to other candidates. Even the boys of his own clique took an active part in the campaign of another candidate, Tom Marino, the boss of the Taylor Club. When both Tom and Doc had been in the contest, it was informally recognized that members of the two groups would vote for both men. When Doc dropped out, Tom became the biggest man on the street, and Doc became just "one of the boys."

In other years Doc had taken a leading role in political discussions among the Nortons. As this election approached, he was conspicuously silent. He was not leading anybody. He was just hanging around. Much of the time he was not even with his own group. For hours on end he sat by himself in the back of Stefani's dimly lighted barbershop.

## 5. DISINTEGRATION

If this were a work of fiction, the story would now be finished. Doc, who was once so active, had withdrawn from his boys, and, without his leadership, the Nortons began to disintegrate. However, life went on for Doc and for his friends, and certain things happened to them which illustrate the nature of their personal relations.

Danny and Mike withdrew from active participation in the group. A growing interest in horse-race betting made the crap game unprofitable. In the fall of 1938 Danny found a job with Spongi, a Cornerville racketeer who ran a horse room and held a crap game that catered to much bigger customers than had participated in the playground game. Danny's job kept him busy at Spongi's all afternoon and evening. He was no longer able to hang on the corner.

The end of the crap game dissolved one of Mike's main ties with Norton Street. For a while he worked on W.P.A., but then he was laid off, and he spent his time canvassing the city for odd jobs. Since he had little spending money, he was seldom able to bowl with the boys.

When some of the boys are broke, group activities can continue as long as there are some who can cover expenses for the others. When there is no money among the members, many activities must come to a standstill. That was the situation facing the Nortons in the fall of 1938. There was little that they could do except hang on the corner, and few were left to do that. Carl and Tommy spent most of their time with a younger group. Lou and Fred did not come into Cornerville as often as before. Alec was concentrating his attention upon his future wife. Nutsy again began to spend his time on Norton Street, and his cousin, Chris Teludo, who had always bowled with the gang, was occasionally with him. Of the original thirteen members, only Nutsy, Long John, Frank, Joe Dodge, and Angelo remained.

The Cornerville Settlement House received a grant to finance its recreation center project for six months. Mr. Smith had been planning to hire trained social workers, but he agreed to experiment by placing Doc in charge of one of the three centers. One

of the workers at the Norton Street Settlement had spoken well of Doc in response to Mr. Smith's inquiries. When Mr. Bacon heard of Doc's appointment, he commented: "He's not the sort of man that I would choose for that job."

Starting early in January, 1939, Doc was busy at his center every afternoon and evening until ten o'clock, except on Sundays. This made it impossible for him to hang on the corner. The remaining Nortons responded by spending some of their time in the center, but this changed the nature of their activities.

Doc's new job helped to restore his self-confidence. Mr. Smith said that Doc had been so lackadaisical in the preliminary work of opening the centers that he had been afraid he would not do a good job. When the center opened, Doc put his heart into the work. He became completely dependable, and in a short time he had everything running smoothly. The first two days he had some trouble with stealing, but before the first week was over the stolen articles had been returned, and after that the stealing problem took quite a different turn. The young boys contributed to the center things which they claimed they had found or which had been given to them, but which Doc suspected they had stolen. Whatever the origin, these contributions indicated that the boys accepted the center as their own.

Doc's background gave him important advantages over the social workers. While he did not know the young boys in the area of his center, he knew some of their older brothers, cousins, or parents. He could also call upon his friends to help him. For a time, Mike Giovanni held a weekly boxing class in the center. Doc's experience also enabled him to size up each corner-boy group after brief observation. On the night after the opening of the center he could already point out to me the membership of each corner gang, name its hangout, and tell who led the group. He gave the leaders recognition by making them responsible for acting in matters involving their groups. He had no serious disciplinary problems. In a short time his center was organized to run itself and Doc simply was present to adjudicate disputes, to answer questions, and to give advice.

One of the two social workers had such difficulties with broken

windows, stealing, and general unruliness that he was forced to close his center within a few weeks of its opening. The second managed with great difficulty to keep going for the six months, but it is doubtful whether he would have been able to do so without the assistance of Doc. Doc knew some of the older corner boys who hung near that center. The young boys respected them as "tough guys." Doc persuaded them to go inside and play cards in a quiet way so as to set a good example. The social worker admitted that this had been very helpful. At other times, Frank, Joe, and Long John went to the center to break up fights and help maintain order.

Everyone concerned with the project recognized that Doc's center was the only real success of the three. However, the job provided no permanent solution to his problems. When the six months' period was past, the project could not be refinanced, and Doc was again unemployed. Although Mr. Smith said he would like to help him to get a job, he did not think of him in connection with his regular program. That summer, as in summers past, the settlement camp for Cornerville boys hired exclusively college men from outside the district for its counselors.

While Doc was working in the recreation center, he continued to see Danny when both of them were through work for the evening. When Doc's job was over, he began hanging in Spongi's with Danny. When his business declined, Spongi no longer had a steady job for Danny, but he liked his company and took care of many of his personal expenses. Within a short time Spongi and Doc became close friends, and Spongi always wanted Doc with him wherever he went.

Some of the Nortons spent time in Spongi's, but they did not recognize it as their hangout. A new group grew up upon the Norton Street corner. Angelo, Nutsy, Frank, Joe, Phil Principio, and Paul DiMatia were hanging together. Phil and Paul were both college graduates who had been members of the Italian Community Club but had shifted their allegiance to the corner boys. They were particularly close to Angelo, and he was the leader of the gang, with Nutsy second in command.

The breakup of the Nortons involved considerable shifting of

individual social positions. Doc told me about his relations with Spongi:

Spongi decides what's to be done. Naturally. It's his place, and he has a lot of the boys around to do his bidding. But he can't order me around. . . . Sometimes, just to steam me up, Danny tells Spongi to send me on an errand. Spongi comes up to me, and he laughs before he even says anything, it seems so funny to him. He tries to give me a quarter, and he says, "Ho-ho-ho, Doc, go out and buy me something."

I tell him, "Go out yourself." He laughs. He thinks it's a hell of a joke. . . . I tell him he can't buy me.

He says, "I haven't offered you a Buick yet." Of course, a Buick is a big thing. He says the only trouble is that I haven't been offered enough. I tell him he couldn't buy me for a million dollars. . . . He knows there are things I won't do. I don't have anything to do with his business.

While Doc prided himself on maintaining his independence, he was no longer a leader.

Long John divided his time between Spongi's and the Norton Street corner. The realignment left him in a vulnerable position. There were two groups that hung around Spongi's "joint": the inner circle and the hangers-on. Spongi included his brother, Danny, Doc, and two others in the inner circle. When he went for "coffee-and's," for a drive, or to the movies, he would invite them to accompany him. He did not include Long John in his invitations, so Long John was excluded from the inner circle. Without the support of Doc, Danny, and Mike, he had no standing among the boys who remained on Norton Street, and he did not know where to go.

The course of bowling activity showed clearly what was happening to the Nortons. In the season of 1937-38 the boys went to the alleys every Saturday shortly after eight o'clock and bowled one string after another until midnight closing time. In the season of 1938-39 the bowling did not get under way until nine or later, there were long pauses between strings, and the evening came to an end around eleven. Instead of ten men bowling and others waiting their turn, only six or eight appeared at the alleys. Doc's recreation center kept him busy until ten o'clock, and Danny and Mike seldom came. Several of the boys commented to me that all the fun seemed to have gone out of bowling.

The following year the alleys were again crowded, but there

were so many new men bowling that the group did not seem to be the Nortons any more. Doc once commented:

Rico and Chick Morelli are never with us except at the alleys. . . . I had an argument with Chick up at the alleys one night. He had the right all on his side, but I talked very unctuously and finally I made him apologize for what he said. Of course, the boys were all with me. . . . He said that we were a clique, that we played favorites. Of course, that's right; we are a clique. But, still, I got him to say that we weren't.

Danny was up at the alleys that night we bowled the San Marcos. I asked them if they wanted to bowl the first team or my team. They said, "Your team," so I told Danny, "If you want to bowl, you're in." He said he didn't want to. He had been sick, and he didn't feel well enough. So we didn't have to put Rico or Chick out on account of him. But now Danny and Mike both want to bowl, and I want to bowl with them. With me, bowling isn't just a sport. It makes a lot of difference who I bowl with. I want to bowl with my friends. So I told Danny and Mike to come up this Saturday and look over the situation. If there's no room for them, they'll go on the next alleys or upstairs. And I told them, "If you do that, you've got me." I'll go with them, and whoever wants to follow us can come. In that way it will really be our team again.

Since Danny and Mike did not appear on the following Saturday or regularly thereafter, the decisive break did not take place. The boys continued to bowl in a miscellaneous group.

In October, 1939, Doc said to me: "Nutsy is staging a comeback. Danny and I haven't been around much recently, and he's been trying to take over. He's steaming up the boys to challenge us bowling." Nutsy got Frank, Carl, and Tommy to bowl against Doc, Danny, Chris, and Long John. Doc's team won the first match by a very narrow margin, Nutsy repeated his challenge, and his team evened the score. Nutsy's boys were satisfied; no play-off was scheduled.

In these two matches Nutsy gave a remarkable performance. Before this he had bowled very infrequently and was considered a poor bowler. In the first match he bowled well; in the second match he left all competitors far behind. He also led the cheering. He was constantly yelling encouragement to his team and badgering his opponents. From time to time, he shouted, "Who is the best bowler you ever seen?"

His team mates shouted back at him, "Nutsy!"

Several times Danny jokingly joined in the refrain. When the

second match was over, Nutsy said to me, "Wasn't I an inspiring leader, Bill?"

The following Saturday, Nutsy delivered an individual challenge to his cousin, Chris Teludo, who was then considered the best bowler among the Nortons. Chris won, but Nutsy repeated his challenge and beat him the next two strings.

When Doc, Long John, Chris, Chick, and Rico bowled a match against the San Marcos, which they lost by a single pin, Nutsy and Frank deserted them to bowl on adjoining alleys. The team members felt that Nutsy's yelling would have caused the San Marcos to lose enough pins to change defeat into victory, and Long John said to Frank: "You fellows are poor sports. Yuz run away when we need yuz to cheer."

Frank answered: "Why should we cheer for you when we want to bowl? Who are you—the boss?"

While the Nortons were one group, the second team never had a chance against the first team. When the group split into two, Doc, Danny, and Mike could no longer keep the followers in their places. Nutsy had a chance to seize the leadership among his group of bowlers, and, in spite of lack of practice, he came through with a performance that corresponded with his new position.

While Nutsy rose, Long John fell. As early as the spring of 1939 it was evident that Long John was slipping. His bowling declined, and in the individual prize competition closing that season he finished next to last. The first part of the 1939-40 season brought no improvement. In the matches against Nutsy's team, Long John bowled very poorly. Doc and Danny would say to him, "Well, it looks like you're not the man you used to be. This year maybe you won't be good enough to make the first team."

These remarks were made in a joking manner, but they were symptomatic of the changes in personal relations that had taken place. As if they sensed Long John's defenseless position, Nutsy's team members redoubled their verbal attacks upon him. They had always attacked him more than they attacked Doc, Danny, or Mike, but now, under Nutsy's leadership, they subjected him to an unrelenting barrage that was calculated to destroy his self-



confidence. When he was bowling so poorly, there was little that Long John could say to defend himself.

One afternoon Doc came to consult me about Long John. He had confided to Doc that he had not slept well for several weeks. As Doc said:

I talked it over with him. . . . Whenever he gets half-asleep and the sheet comes up over his face, he wakes up thinking he's dead. . . . I told him, "John, it must be something that happened to you when you were a kid. Maybe sometime when you were playing, somebody threw a coat over you, and you thought you were smothering." But he couldn't think of any case like that. I had him think some more about when he was a kid, and finally he got it. It was when he was about eight years old. He was very sick with pneumonia, and the doctor told his mother that he was dead. They pulled the sheet up over his face. When he came to, he heard his mother screaming and his relatives crying because he was dead. Then he moved a little, and they saw him move and pulled the sheet back, and everybody rejoiced, but that must have made a deep impression on John's mind. When he told me that story, I explained to him how foolish it was for him to let a thing like that bother him. . . .

I told Doc I thought more than that was needed in order to effect a cure. I suggested that he might be able to dispel Long John's anxieties if he took him into Spongi's inner circle and if he and Danny began to defend Long John's bowling and encourage him when the others attacked him. Doc was doubtful but agreed to see what could be done. Within a short time he had fitted Long John into Spongi's inner circle. As he explained:

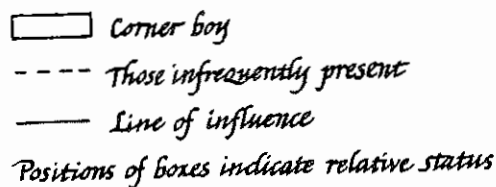
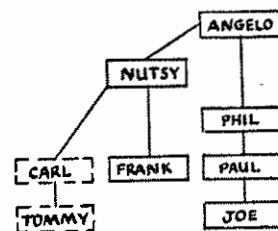
I didn't say anything to Spongi, but I already fitted with him. I just made a lot of noise about Long John. If he wasn't around, I would ask the boys where he was. When he came in, I would say to him, "Here's Long John, the dirty bum," and I would ask him where he had been. I gave him so much attention that he moved in there right away. Spongi began asking him to go places with us. Now even when I'm not around John is right in there.

At the same time Doc and Danny began to support him at the bowling alleys. Long John's bowling began to improve. In a short time he was bowling as well as he had in the season of 1937-38. In the individual competition that climaxed the 1939-40 season, he won the first prize. He never again consulted Doc about his nightmares.

The structure of the new group that grew up on Norton Street can be represented in the manner shown in the accompanying chart.

Since Angelo did not bowl, Nutsy could assume the leadership at the bowling alleys. When the boys were on the corner, he could not compete with Angelo. Carl and Tommy followed him at the alleys, but they spent little time on the corner. Frank was the only one who was personally attached to Nutsy. Phil and Paul had become close friends of Angelo through their membership in the Italian Community Club, and Joe also attached himself to Angelo.

### ANGELO'S BOYS



The strength of Angelo's position on the corner depended in part upon his activities in the Cornerville Dramatic Club, to which Nutsy did not belong. In the late winter of 1939 the boys had been urging Doc to find a clubroom for his boys in order to keep the Nortons together. While he was conferring with Mr. Smith upon the recreation center project he asked if his boys might have a clubroom in the Cornerville House. Mr. Smith offered the best room in the house for one night each week. Doc got Angelo, Joe, Frank, and Long John, some of the Aphrodite girls, and some other men and girls and founded the Cornerville Dramatic Club. After that he was too busy with his recreation job to be able to attend meetings, but he placed his confidence in Angelo, who came to him for advice on matters of club policy and took the

lead in meetings whenever Doc was not present. This strengthened Angelo's position on the street corner.

Doc explained to me how things were done when Angelo was with the boys:

One night last week I stopped in at Stefani's on the way to a party. That whole clique was in the barbershop. I asked Angelo, "What are you doing tonight?"

He said, "I don't know, just hanging around, I guess."

I asked him to come to the party with me. He said he couldn't, somebody had already asked him and he had said he was busy. . . . Then I turned to Phil and asked him what he was doing, and he said, "I don't know. Whatever the boys do." And then he looked at Angelo. I asked Paul, and he gave me the same answer. One by one I asked Joe, Nutsy, and Frank, and they all said exactly the same thing: "I don't know. Whatever the boys do." . . . And "the boys" meant Angelo. . . . I said, "All right, I'll see you later." . . . Later we went down to Jennings', and that clique was already there at a table in the back. I sat with the fellows I came with. That's only right. But after a while Angelo came over and sat next to me. He had something he wanted to tell me. I guess he planned to come over for just a few minutes, but he stayed too long. Paul pulled over a chair, and then Phil came over. One by one, they all came over until the six of them were with us. They had to pull up another table to sit next to us. . . . Now suppose Paul had had something to say to me. He could have come over and stayed as long as he wanted to, and, as long as Angelo did not come over, none of those other fellows would have moved.

Suppose the five of them are in Stefani's one night, and Angelo hasn't showed up. Phil might say, "Let's go up [to] a show." Nutsy will say, "All right, but let's wait for Angelo." So they wait. If he doesn't show up after a while, they go looking for him. They go up to his house and try to find him. It's only after waiting for him that they feel free to go without him. Waiting for Angelo is like a duty. . . .

Suppose they find him and ask him to go to a show. If he says, "All right," they go; but if he says, "No," they don't go.

Sometimes Frank and Nutsy talk against Angelo. Frank says to me, "He's a bull-slinger. He tells me to wait for him, and I have to wait an hour before he shows up. Me, if I'm five minutes late, they go without me." . . . Nutsy says, "Last night Angelo told me to meet him at Jennings' at 10:30. I waited till twelve and he didn't show up!" . . . The night Nutsy was talking about, Angelo was with me. . . . They cut up Angelo to me, and they just hope that I'll agree with them. If I said they were right, I don't know what would happen. But I said, "No, Angelo is a good kid."

No, Angelo doesn't know he's their leader. If you told him that, he'd be ruined. He wouldn't know what to do.

I asked what would happen if Doc came upon the five of them without Angelo and asked them to go somewhere.

They would have to find Angelo first. It's like a duty. You see, I'm not really a part of that clique now. I haven't been with them enough. They won't do anything unless it's all right with Angelo. . . . Angelo and I are good friends. He always asks me what I'm doing, and I know that if I told him to come with me, he would.

The other night I saw Nutsy, Frank, Phil, and Joe Dodge on the corner. They were waiting for Angelo, and then they were going for a walk. I went up the street, and I met Angelo coming down. I said to him—not because I wanted to show I was a leader but because I wanted him to do it—I said, "Angelo, wait for me on the corner and then we'll go up to the Metropolitan Hotel together. . . ." When I got back, they were all waiting for me. We started out together, and after we had gone a few blocks, Phil asked where we were going. I said that Angelo and I were going up to the Metropolitan. Phil said to Angelo that they had been waiting all night for him, and now he was going to leave them. I told Angelo I didn't want to take him away from the boys. He could stay with them if he wanted to. But he came with me. They left us at the corner of ——— Street. I looked back to see which way they went. They split up. Frank and Nutsy started one way. Phil and Joe went the other way.

It's Angelo that's holding that clique together now. If he went away for a month, they would break up.

In the early spring of 1941 Angelo was still leading the boys. While they often expressed dissatisfaction with his decisions, they always followed him. Doc had not been around the corner much, and Angelo felt so secure that he did not take the trouble to seek him out to consult him about plans for the group or the club. Then one night Doc appeared at a meeting of the Dramatic Club. Angelo proposed a certain line of action. Doc thought Angelo's idea was foolish, and he said so. When Doc led the opposition, Angelo's followers deserted him, and he was overridden. Angelo found it difficult to adjust to the new situation. He dropped out of the Dramatic Club. For a time he would not speak to Doc. He hoped that the boys would take his side, but they supported Doc and talked freely against Angelo. Doc defended Angelo. After a while Angelo returned to the club and made up with Doc, so that their relationship became much as it had been before Angelo became the leader of the boys on the corner. When Angelo's power in the club was destroyed, he also lost his hold upon the corner. There was no longer a leader to hold the boys together, and the last remnants of Doc's gang disappeared from Norton Street.