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The Formulation of an Adult Dramatic Program for the Division of Recreation and Parks in Henrico County, Virginia

Sandra Bishop
Virginia Commonwealth University

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THE FORMULATION OF AN ADULT DRAMATIC PROGRAM FOR THE
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN HENRICO COUNTY, VIRGINIA

by

SANDRA COFFMAN BISHOP

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Master of Fine Arts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks established a dramatic arts program in 1974. At the time the dramatic arts program was established objectives were set for it by the Henrico Division of Recreation administration. The objectives established for the dramatic arts program by the administration were: to increase the availability of the dramatic arts in Henrico County; to create opportunities for the citizens of Henrico to participate in the dramatic arts; and to promote quality in the dramatic arts as a leisure time activity for all interested citizens of Henrico County.

At present the objectives established by the Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks, hereinafter referred to as HDRP, administration for the dramatic arts program have not been met for all interested citizens of Henrico County. As it currently exists, the dramatic arts program in Henrico County does not provide adequate opportunities for participation to those over the age of sixteen years. Since no program records exist, an estimate of youth versus adult dramatic arts programming was arbitrarily arrived at by HDRP personnel involved with the dramatic arts program in
Henrico County since its beginning in 1974. The HDRP personnel's combined estimate is that 95% of all dramatic arts programming through the HDRP has been designed for ages sixteen and below. By directing the dramatic arts program towards the younger population, the adult individual interested in drama related activities in Henrico County has not been afforded the same opportunity for participation in the dramatic arts program as those under sixteen.

It is the intention in this thesis to formulate a dramatic arts program for the citizens of Henrico, ages sixteen and above. The program set forth here will be an ideal program upon which the HDRP may base its dramatic arts program. The dramatic arts program formulated in this thesis will be designed for implementation over a five year period. This timetable will establish a course of action through which the objectives established for the dramatic arts program by the HDRP administration may be attained. The actual implementation of the adult dramatic arts program formulated in the thesis will depend on its acceptance by the HDRP administration and on the amount of support the administration is willing to allot the dramatic arts program in the form of funding and personnel.

To initiate the adult dramatic arts program in the HDRP a full scale musical production is planned. This should focus public attention on adult dramatic arts programming in Henrico County and should spark additional
public interest in the dramatic arts through visibility. The musical production will also provide some members of the community an opportunity to participate in all phases of a dramatic production while providing dramatic entertainment with no admission charge to individuals interested in attending the performances.

An evaluation of the first musical production of the adult dramatic arts program in the HDRP will be undertaken. Included in this evaluation will be an assessment by: 1) the HDRP administration, 2) the HDRP Advisory Commission, 3) an audience poll to be included in the performance program, and 4) a personal evaluation.

An evaluation of the entire dramatic arts program for adults as formulated in the thesis will also be undertaken. The evaluation of this dramatic arts program for adults will provide input and suggestions from the sources most needed to support the implementation of any dramatic arts program in the HDRP. The evaluation process will include assessments by: 1) the HDRP administration, 2) the HDRP Advisory Commission, and 3) a personal evaluation.

It is hoped that the contents of this thesis will help to provide a course of action through which the dramatic arts program may move closer to the objectives established for it by the HDRP administration. The dramatic arts program for adults, as set forth in the thesis, should create specific goals so that the HDRP may provide a
consistent direction for the development of a dramatic arts program for adults. The adult dramatic arts program as formulated in the thesis should, combined with the already established dramatic arts program for youth, form a major portion of the comprehensive cultural arts program desired by the HDRP administration in Henrico County.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE EXISTING DRAMA PROGRAM

The HDRP began a cultural arts program in September of 1974. Prior to that time the individual recreation center personnel were responsible for all arts programming at their respective centers, including the dramatic arts. These recreation center personnel had only limited knowledge of the dramatic arts, and therefore programs offered in the dramatic arts were very basic and sporadic. The dramatic arts programming offered by individual recreation centers at this time included dramatic games, basic puppetry and clown make-up.

The HDRP administration's goal is to create a recreation program that is balanced among the county-wide sports program, the individual recreation center program, the cultural arts program, and the special populations program. The special populations program includes the educable mentally retarded, the trainable mentally retarded and the physically handicapped, as well as the senior adult section of the population. The county-wide cultural arts program includes the dramatic arts, music and dance, and arts and crafts. In an effort to achieve a portion of the program goal stated by the HDRP administration a drama
specialist position was created in 1974. The drama specialist position was classified as a group worker whose job description was to provide dramatic arts programming for the existing recreation centers in Henrico County. These included eight year-round recreation center locations, and 32 summer recreation center locations. The drama specialist was also expected to fill in as a substitute center director when the need arose. The goals established specifically for the dramatic arts program were: to increase the availability of the dramatic arts in Henrico County; to create opportunities for participation in the dramatic arts; and to promote quality in the dramatic arts as a leisure time activity.

The Tenure of the First Drama Specialist

The tenure of the first drama specialist for the HDRP was three years and nine months. During this period of time job responsibilities both grew and changed. Program duties arose both within the field of the dramatic arts and outside of it. An outline and history of the dramatic arts program in Henrico County during these first few years follows. The information in this history was gathered from personnel employed by the HDRP during the time. This history is constructed from their recollections of events and because the information contained in this history is taken from the staff's personal memory some
Dramatic arts programming in the HDRP from September of 1974 to June of 1978 (the length of employment of the first drama specialist) consisted of the following categories: 1) The Roving Dramatic Arts Program, 2) Classes, 3) Contractural Performances, 4) Special Events, 5) The production of children's plays at the year-round recreation center locations, and 6) The Henrico Teen Theatre Company. A description of each of these categories follows.

The Roving Dramatic Arts Program

The Roving Dramatic Arts Program fulfilled the requirements stated by the HDRP administration in the job description of the drama specialist by providing dramatic arts programming for the eight year-round recreation center locations and the 32 summer recreation center locations. It was the first program initiated by the drama specialist in the HDRP. The Roving Dramatic Arts Program consisted of the drama specialist touring each year-round recreation-center location approximately once a week after school hours during the non-summer months, September through May. The Roving Dramatic Arts Program was designed to gain maximum participation in the dramatic arts for the youth of Henrico County at a minimal cost. Each visit by the drama specialist would entail a different program than the
previous week with each session lasting approximately one hour. The Roving Dramatic Arts Program for year-round recreation center locations included creative dramatics, storytelling, basic puppetry, and various singing and movement games.

During the fall of 1975, a full-time/part-time\(^1\) assistant to the drama specialist was hired to assist in the Roving Dramatic Arts Program at year-round recreation center locations. The Roving Dramatic Arts Program for year-round recreation center locations continued until the fall of 1977 at which time it was dropped. The reason for the discontinuation of the Roving Dramatic Arts Program could not be discovered.

With the seasonal increase from eight to 32 recreation center locations during the summer months, it was impossible for the Roving Dramatic Arts Program to provide one session per week at each location as was the case in the non-summer months. Instead, two or three different sessions were planned and these were toured to each summer recreation center location over an eight-week period. This Roving Dramatic Arts Program was conducted between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. daily. These are the hours of

\(^{1}\)Full-time/part-time is the designation given by the County of Henrico personnel office to year-round part-time positions whose work hours range from twenty to forty hours per week.
operation for the majority of the summer recreation center locations.

The number of Roving Dramatic Arts Programs as well as the number of staff assigned to each of these Roving Dramatic Arts Programs depended on the number of contracted seasonal employees assigned to the dramatic arts program during a particular summer. During the summer of 1975 there was one four-hour-per-day seasonal employee assigned to the Roving Dramatic Arts Program. One Roving Dramatic Arts Program in Story Theatre was toured to each summer recreation center location with both the drama specialist and the seasonal employee conducting the session for recreation center participants.

In addition to the drama specialist, four employees were assigned to the Roving Dramatic Arts Program in the summer of 1976. Of these four employees, one was a recreation major from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College serving an internship in the Dramatic Arts Program, two were supplied through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act commonly abbreviated as CETA, and one was a full-time employee that had been assigned to the dramatic arts program as an assistant to the drama specialist during the fall of 1975. Two different programs were conducted by the Roving Dramatic Arts staff during the summer of 1976. A session on dramatic games and clown make-up was conducted by the drama specialist and the two CETA employees. The
full-time/part-time assistant to the drama specialist and the recreation intern assigned to the Roving Dramatic Arts Program toured a second session on puppetry to each summer recreation center location.

During the summer of 1977 four employees were assigned to the Roving Dramatic Arts Program in addition to the drama specialist. These four employees consisted of the full-time/part-time assistant to the drama specialist and three contracted seasonal employees. Three different programs were conducted at each recreation center location this summer. They consisted of puppetry conducted by the full-time/part-time assistant to the drama specialist and one seasonal employee, story-telling conducted by the drama specialist and two seasonal employees, and excerpts from You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown based on the comic strip Peanuts, by Charles Shultz with book, music and lyrics by Clark Gesner. You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown was performed by the combined staff at each recreation center location. Together the three programs listed above were designed to create a balance among the established goals of the dramatic arts program.

Before the summer of 1978 the first drama specialist had terminated employment with the HDRP. The programming that summer is covered in the section on the tenure of the second drama specialist in the HDRP.
Classes

A limited number of classes were begun by the HDRP drama specialist in the fall of 1975. These classes were taught by the drama specialist and consisted of classes in tap dancing, dance movement, guitar, and an arts and crafts class called "Creative Crafts." These classes ran for eight to ten weeks with one meeting per week. In the fall of 1976, Stretch and Tone Classes were initiated by the drama specialist and taught by the full-time/part-time assistant to the drama specialist. By the fall of 1977 all classes listed above except for the Stretch and Tone Class had been taken over by part-time teaching staff or eliminated altogether. At no time were classes in drama offered.

Contractual Performances

Also, new to dramatic arts programming in the fall of 1975 was the advent of contractual performances. With limited funding and personnel, the HDRP realized the goal of increased availability to quality dramatic arts programming was not being fulfilled. Therefore, contractual performances were begun to begin to fill this need. Groups and individuals outside the HDRP were contracted to perform quality programs of greater diversity than those previously possible by the HDRP. These performances continue to the present time.
The Horizon Company, a local semi-professional, community oriented touring troupe was contracted in the fall of 1975 to do six performances of *The Doctor In Spite of Himself*, by Moliere. These performances were done at each of the six county high school auditoriums. The high school students as well as all recreation center participants were invited to attend.

Theatre IV, a professional touring children's theatre group operating out of Richmond, Virginia, presented two performances each of *Jubilee*, written by Bruce Miller and Philip Whiteway, and *Brer Rabbit*, written by Bruce Miller and suggested by the Uncle Remus stores, for the HDRP.

A magician, Tom Width, was also contracted to tour the recreation center locations in the spring of 1976. His magic show was presented annually for the next few years.

In the fall of 1976, D and G Puppets, a local puppet troupe headed by Deborah and George Hubbs, presented a show that toured each year-round recreation center location.

**Special Events**

Special events initiated by the drama specialist began in the fall of 1975 with a Christmas Caroling Program at area shopping malls and convalescent centers. Using the same method as the Roving Dramatic Arts Program, the drama specialist rehearsed Christmas carols with the children at each of the year-round recreation center locations and
performance dates were scheduled at area shopping malls, and convalescent centers. The Christmas Caroling Program was seen as creating excellent public relations and public awareness of programming as well as providing access to an enjoyable form of musical performance during the Christmas season.

Special events added during the spring of 1976, included a concert given by the New Virginians, a singing group affiliated with Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and the First Annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition sponsored by the HDRP. Other special events included concerts by the Fifth District Navy Band, a military band from the District of Columbia area, Bill Zickafoose and The Continentals, a local "big band" group specializing in the music of Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller, and a Festival of Fine Arts in the Spring of 1977. Designed to promote the opening of the new recreation center location at Belmont Park, the Festival of Fine Arts included performances by the Baroque Trio, and the Montone String Quartet, two local chamber music groups, and the Kings of Swing, a musical group of young adults who specialize in the "big band" sound. A production of Cinderella, written by Hermon Ould and performed by the Henrico Teen Theatre Company was also presented at the Festival of Fine Arts.
The Production of Children's Plays

The sporadic production of children's plays done by the children participating in the year-round, after school, recreation program was begun in the fall of 1974. Each of these plays was rehearsed at a given center for approximately two weeks. They were then performed only at that recreation center for that center's participants. Costumes and sets were simple and were done solely by the drama specialist.

The first of these children's plays was a dramatic interpretation of the story of Peter and the Wolf, by Serge Prokofiev, performed at Elizabeth R. Holladay Elementary School and Recreation Center in the fall of 1974. In the fall of 1975, Goodbye Ghosts, by Albert M. Brown was presented at R. C. Longan Elementary School and Recreation Center. The next children's play produced was Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, written by Jessie Braham White and presented at the Three Chopt Elementary School and Recreation Center. The final children's play was The Wizard of Oz, by Camilla Wolak, produced at the Laburnum Elementary School and Recreation Center in the spring of 1978.

The Henrico Teen Theatre Company

The Henrico Teen Theatre Company was formed during the summer of 1975 to provide programming for an age group that previously had no opportunity to participate in HDRP
dramatic arts events. The goals of this newly formed company were: to increase the availability of the dramatic arts; and, to create opportunities for participation in the dramatic arts for the teenagers of Henrico County. A learn-by-doing attitude was adopted and it was hoped that by providing a learning experience which was also fun, a greater desire for knowledge and excellence would be created.

The Henrico Teen Theatre Company, operating out of Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre in Henrico County, produced The Stolen Prince and Lost Princess, both one-act plays by Don Totheroh, and Hansel and Gretel, by Lillian and Robert Masters during its first summer season in 1975. Both of these productions were performed by the teenagers for the participants of the summer recreation center locations as well as the general public. All performances were held at Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre with recreation center participants being bused to that location.

In subsequent years the Henrico Teen Theatre continued to operate out of Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre each summer. Each year two productions were presented by the teens. They included Cinderella, written by Hermon Ould and The Enchanted Journey, by Christina L. White in the summer of 1976 and Frankenstein dramatized by Tim Kelley from the classic by Mary Shelley, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, by Jessie Braham White in the summer of 1977.
In addition to these summertime productions, a revival of *Hansel and Gretel* was toured to the year-round recreation center locations during the spring of 1976 and a revival of *Cinderella* was presented at the Festival of Fine Arts at Belmont Park in the spring of 1977.

To the best of my knowledge the information presented above comprises the dramatic arts program in the HDRP from September of 1974 to June of 1978. As few written records of dramatic arts programming during these years exist, this information was gathered from individuals employed by the HDRP during that time. Information was solicited from the Director of Recreation, Mr. Ellet R. McGeorge, Jr., the Assistant Director of Recreation, Mr. Charles H. Peple, the first drama specialist for the HDRP, Mrs. Eileen Crenshaw, the former assistant to the drama specialist and current music and dance specialist for the HDRP, Mrs. Nancy M. Montgomery, and Center Director Brenda Kellogg. The preceding history of the first few years of the dramatic arts program is comprised of their recollections of events, dates, and circumstances. These recollections have been compared with one another and are to the best of my knowledge correct as presented and as far as possible complete.

The Tenure of the Second Drama Specialist

Dramatic arts programming from June of 1978 to the
present has been conducted by the second drama specialist for the HDRP. Hired under a seasonal contract for the summer of 1978 and as a full-time county employee on August 2, 1978, the drama specialist position in the HDRP is currently held by myself. The drama specialist position was still classified as a group worker position in 1978; however, the job description for this position had changed since the first specialist was hired in 1974. The job description for the position of drama specialist in 1978 read as follows: to plan, supervise, and coordinate dramatic arts programming for the citizens of Henrico County through the HDRP.

The objectives established for the dramatic arts program by the HDRP administration in 1974 were set forth again as objectives for the continuing dramatic arts program.

A history of dramatic arts programming in the HDRP from June, 1978 to January, 1979 follows. The information in this history is first hand information and is complete and correct as written.

Dramatic arts programming in the HDRP from June, 1978 to January, 1979 consisted of the following categories: 1) The Roving Dramatic Arts Program, 2) Workshops, 3) Contractual Performances, 4) the Henrico Teen Theatre Company, and 5) Special Events Planning. A description of each of these categories follows.
The Roving Dramatic Arts Program

The Roving Dramatic Arts Program was continued during the summer of 1978 as in the previous summer. In addition to the drama specialist, four employees were assigned to the Roving Dramatic Arts Program for the summer of 1978. These employees included the music and dance specialist and three seasonal employees. The drama specialist and two seasonal employees toured the summer recreation center locations with a creative dramatics program and the music and dance specialist and one seasonal employee toured a program involving sock puppets to the summer recreation center locations. The entire staff was then combined to perform a vaudeville skit at each location.

The Roving Dramatic Arts Program for year-round recreation centers was reestablished on a limited basis in September of 1978. One program was scheduled to tour the year-round recreation center locations in the Fall of 1978. A play involving simple marionettes was toured to each year-round recreation center location beginning in October of 1978. After the performance of this play the recreation center participants were invited to construct their own marionettes and learn to operate them. Improvisational performances were then presented by the children for the recreation center participants who did not actively participate in the marionette program.
Workshops

The HDRP drama specialist offered a workshop in readers theatre for senior adults in October of 1978. This workshop met for four consecutive weeks with one one-hour class per week. The objective of this workshop was to present dramatic readings of some of Mark Twain's *Letters to the Earth*. These readings were presented for members of the senior adult clubs which met at Belmont Recreation Center during the fall of 1978.

The senior adult readers theatre workshop was the only workshop offered by the drama specialist between June of 1978 and January of 1979.

Contractual Performances

From June of 1978 to January of 1979, two groups were contracted to perform at the year-round recreation center locations. The first of these groups was the Brown Shoes Mime Company, a local mime troupe headed by Melvin Yeamans and Michael Frith. They performed original pieces in a one hour show at each year-round recreation center location. The second of the contractual performances offered at the year-round recreational center locations between June of 1978 and January of 1979 was a magic show by Tom Width and his assistant Lynn West. This was a one hour magic show designed specifically for the recreation center participants.
The Henrico Teen Theatre Company

The Henrico Teen Theatre Company presented two plays during the summer of 1978. *The Wizard of Oz*, by Camilla Wolak was presented in mid-July by the Henrico Teen Theatre Company and *Beauty and the Beast*, by Ellen Stuart was presented in August. Each of these plays ran for three performances and summer recreation center participants were bused to Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre where the performances were held.

Special Events Planning

There were no special events scheduled between June of 1978 and January of 1979, for which the drama specialist was responsible. However, planning for events to be held in the spring and summer of 1979 were well underway. Two of these events included the Fourth Annual Arts and Crafts Exhibit and the "June is Recreation Month" festivities.

This concludes the history of dramatic arts programming offered by the HDRP under the second drama specialist from June of 1978 to January of 1979. The above information coupled with the information supplied on the programming offered during the tenure of the first drama specialist for the HDRP gives the history of dramatic arts programming since its beginning in the fall of 1974 through January, 1979.

It is of interest to note that the creation of the
position of drama specialist in 1974 was the first position created to deal with the arts in the HDRP. A second position devoted to the arts was created in the Spring of 1978. The second position created was that of music and dance specialist for the HDRP. At the time the music and dance specialist position was created; the responsibility for concerts, performances and classes in music and dance, which had previously been assumed by the drama specialist, was turned over to the music and dance specialist. This allowed the drama specialist more time to plan and implement programs in the dramatic arts.

A third position devoted to the arts is planned by the HDRP. Along with the music and dance specialist and the drama specialist, the creation of an arts and crafts specialist position should round out the arts staff in the HDRP. The arts and crafts specialist position is currently awaiting budgetary approval. When approved, the person hired as arts and crafts specialist will assume the arts and crafts program responsibilities currently shared by the music and dance specialist and the drama specialist. This should leave both the music and dance specialist and the drama specialist more time to devote to their respective programs.
CHAPTER III

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NEED FOR EXPANDING DRAMA PROGRAM

In determining if there is a need to expand the dramatic arts program in the HDRP to include activities for those above sixteen years of age, the most current population statistics available for Henrico County will be compared with statistics available on the "typical" theatre-goer on a statewide and nationwide basis. This comparison along with an investigation of current community theatre in Henrico should determine the need for expanding dramatic activities in the HDRP.

The factors to be examined in this comparison include gender, age, education, occupation, and income. These data figures for Henrico County will be drawn from the most recent census information available and will be compared with a national study\(^1\) and a statewide study\(^2\) of

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\(^2\)Bravo Arts Education, Study of Virginia Arts Priorities (Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc., 1979), p. 3-17.
arts audiences and participants.

The most recent census information available is the 1980 preliminary census count, which gives only total population statistics. The 1980 population figure for Henrico County is 180,315. This is an increase of 25,951 since 1970, a 16.81% change. Breakdown of the 1980 census figures into gender, age, education, occupation and income are not at this time available. The 1970 census figures will be used for this breakdown. It should be noted, however, that these figures should reflect the same percentage of change as indicated by the 16.81% change in the overall population of Henrico County.

According to the statewide study of arts audiences and participants, one fourth of all Virginians are "very interested" in the arts. This would mean that over 40,000 Henrico residents are "very interested" in the arts. In the Central Virginia Region 24% of those surveyed indicated that they were "very interested" in the arts, 56% were "somewhat interested," 10% were "not interested," and 10% had no opinion.

Those "very interested" in the arts are more likely to be in the higher socio-economic levels as indicated by education, occupation, and income. Females are more interested in the arts than males. The "typical" person who is "very interested" in the arts is 43 years old, attained the educational equivalent to a junior in college, and has an
average household income of nearly $19,000. This person is slightly younger, slightly better educated, employed in a higher type of occupation, and earns slightly more money than the average Virginian.

These findings are consistent with those of the national study which states "the audience for arts is more highly educated, is of higher occupational status, and has a higher income than the population as a whole."

Both studies found those individuals with at least some years of college represented the major portion of those interested in and attending art events. Persons employed in professional and managerial positions comprised the bulk of the arts audience with 45% statewide, and 70.8% nationwide. The median income of persons interested in and attending the arts was $18,983 nationwide and $18,787 statewide.

Age comparisons, however, differ widely between the two studies. The average age for the state of Virginia was 43.3, while that of the nation was 35 for all performing arts.

Since the national and state findings are consistent with one another, with the exception of age characteristics, the national data will be used in comparison with Henrico Census information to help determine the need to expand dramatic activities. This study further breaks down information gathered about the performing arts into specific
disciplines, theatre being one of these. The statewide study does not break down the demographic information into specific disciplines and would not be of as much use in determining the specific need for drama in Henrico County.

Specifically for theatrical events, men comprise 43.5% of the audience, the median age is thirty-four. (This figure would be higher for Virginia residents). Also, 32.7% of theatre audiences have post-BA training, 58.0% are at least college graduates and 83.0% have had at least some college training. Lower on the scale are those who are high school graduates with 17.0% and less than high school graduates with 4.0%. The professional and managerial occupations account for 69.5% of theatre audiences with clerical and sales making up 19.7%. The median income, excluding outdoor drama, was $19,342, and including outdoor drama was $16,819.

This national study was completed in 1978 and included data such as time trends in gender, age, education, occupation, and income of performing arts audiences. Gathered from 1960 through 1976, the report concluded that "our data do not reveal any striking changes in the composition of the audience over the past one and one half decades." Therefore, it will be assumed for the sake of this comparison, that few, if any significant, changes in the composition of the audience have taken place from 1978 to the present.
Using 1970 census information in Henrico County there are more females than males, more people between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four with the age bracket of thirty-five to forty-four second in numbers. There are 20,029 employed in professional and managerial capacities with 24,365 in sales/clerical, and 24,467 in blue collar jobs. The median income for families in Henrico County is $11,217; however, the largest percentage of the population earns between $15,000 and $24,999 with the second largest earning between $10,000 and $14,999. Median school years completed for the population of Henrico County is 12.2.

Compared with the figures from the national study the Henrico County figures show, with the exception of income, statistics for Henrico County correspond with those for the "typical theatregoer." The median income in Henrico County is substantially less than the average theatregoer. However, according to the national study, income may be associated with arts attendance, but it is not necessarily the cause of it.

High income is correlated with having received a higher education and holding professional or managerial occupations, and evidence suggests that it is these latter factors rather than income that determine attendance. When all these factors are taken into account at the same time, education
and occupation, once controlled, predict attendance; but income does not. (#115; Gruenberg 1975)³

When data from the Henrico Census is compared with state and national data cited earlier, it is found that these figures closely match and in all probability will match more closely, than at present, when 1980 census figures are released. It will be assumed, therefore, that the percentage of Virginians, specifically those residing in Henrico County, who are "very interested" in the arts is one fourth of the overall population, as listed in the statewide study.

In the statewide study it was also found that 36% of all central Virginia residents attended live theatre performances during the past year. Of these residents 45% perceived too few live theatre amenities in their community.

Compared with Henrico population statistics the 36% of the overall population who attended live theatre performances would be over 60,000 people. Based on the 1980 Henrico Census, 45% or over 80,000 persons perceived too few live theatre amenities in their community. It would seem from the data above that there are inadequate theatrical opportunities for the people interested in theatre in Henrico County. There are currently no dinner theatres, no

³DeMaggio, Useem, Brown, Audience Studies, p. 28.
professional theatres, and few community theatres operating in Henrico County.⁴

Those community theatres which are located in Henrico County are Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre in the north central portion of Henrico County and Children's Theatre of Richmond located in the western portion of Henrico County. Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre currently produces three productions per year. The total number of performances of these productions reaches 33 per season with a seating capacity of approximately 120⁵ per performance. Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre has a total audience capacity of approximately 3,960 persons with 120 per performance. When casts and crews of these productions are included, the total reaches approximately 4,044.

Children's Theatre of Richmond produces four shows annually. According to Janet Beauchamp⁶ three of these

⁴ In the attempt to locate professional, dinner, and community theatres currently operating in the County of Henrico, several sources were consulted. The Federated Arts Council of Richmond, Richmond Department of Recreation and Parks, Children's Theatre of Richmond, and Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre were consulted. In addition the Henrico County Municipal and Public Libraries, the Richmond Public Library and the Chesapeake and Potomac telephone directory for Richmond, Virginia were consulted.

⁵ The seating capacity of Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre changes frequently because of the changing configuration of the stage for each production, according to Lynn Heath.

⁶ Janet Beauchamp is currently secretary for Children's Theatre of Richmond. She has served Children's Theatre of Richmond as a volunteer in this capacity and others for eight years.
productions are scheduled for ten performances each, with the fourth production scheduled for 23 performances. The average cast for each production is approximately 25 with a technical support staff of about ten. The majority of cast and staff are adults and total approximately 140 people per season. The Children's Theatre productions are done by adults and children for children.

The productions are performed within the Richmond City limits, and, therefore, are not applicable to statistics in Henrico County. The 140 people working on and in the Children's Theatre productions are applicable to statistics in Henrico due to the fact the majority of time devoted to a Children's Theatre of Richmond production is done at the Children's Theatre building located in western Henrico County.

Including the addition of the Children's Theatre cast and crews (140) to the Chamberlayne Actor's Theatre cast, crews, and audience (4,044), the total theatrical opportunities available to Henrico County residents is 4,184. These 4,184 theatrical opportunities are not sufficient to serve the Henrico population of over 80,000 people who perceive the need for additional live theatre. In addition a number of these residents would desire to attend or participate in theatre more than one time per year. Data about the number of times per year "very interested" people work or attend theatre was not available,
and therefore, was not included in the number of "very interested" people. Indeed, the number of people would remain constant, but the number of theatrical opportunities desired by these people would exceed the number of the people themselves.

As indicated by the audience and participation capacity of theatres in Henrico County, and the number of people "very interested" in theatre in Henrico County, there is an inadequate amount of theatrical opportunities available in Henrico County. The HDRP should attempt to increase the number of theatrical opportunities available to Henrico County residents, and thereby reduce the discrepancy between theatrical interest and opportunities available countywide.

The HDRP administration is committed to the initiation, expansion, and support of all arts activities through the HDRP including drama. This commitment to arts programming in recreation has been expressed on numerous occasions by Mr. Ellett R. McGeorge, Jr., Director of Recreation. It has been supported by the addition of a drama specialist to the recreation staff in 1974, and a music and dance specialist in 1978. Further evidence of commitment specifically to the dramatic arts program in recreation may be found in

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7Ellett R. McGeorge, Jr., interview held at the Henrico County Division of Recreation, Administrative Offices, September 17, 1979.
the initiation of and continuation of the Henrico Teen Theatre Company, the Roving Dramatic Arts Troupe, and recently in the approval of the initiation of the Henrico Theatre Company, as a pilot project for the inclusion of adults in dramatic arts activities in Henrico County.

The first production of the Henrico Theatre Company was *Li'l Abner*. At the performances of this production an audience survey designed to determine interest in continuing or expanding the dramatic arts program in recreation in Henrico County was distributed to each audience member. Out of the 84 questionnaires returned, 81 indicated that there was a need for additional dramatic arts activities sponsored by the HDRP. Based on this audience survey and the statewide study it can be assumed that the public perceives the need for additional dramatic arts activities in Henrico. There is then a need for the HDRP to formulate an expanded dramatic arts program which may be implemented when staff availability and budget permit. As there have been no dramatic arts activities offered for adults by the HDRP prior to the Henrico Theatre Company production of *Li'l Abner*, in the following chapter a model for adult dramatic arts activities to be sponsored by the HDRP will be presented.

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CHAPTER IV

AN OUTLINE OF AN ADULT DRAMA PROGRAM AND A TIMETABLE
FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAM

For the purposes of this paper it is assumed that any public recreation agency must include a diversified program in drama as part of its overall commitment to provide recreational opportunities to its constituency. The opportunity must be available to those individuals who wish to participate in dramatic activities.

Recreational arts programs have been justified in many ways. Some of the recreational values that have been attributed to the arts include stimulation of imagination, social acceptability through group activity, personal growth, and opportunity to acquire poise and self-confidence. One of the most concise, yet encompassing, descriptions of the recreational values of arts programming may be found in Recreation Today. In his section entitled "Recreational Values of the Artistic Experience," Richard G. Kraus examines the unique values of the artistic experience in programs of community or agency recreation. They are as follows:

1. The individual learns to discover himself as a person. In a world of conformity and mass expression, he is creatively involved in learning new
skills, exploring latent talents, and giving voice to ideas, sounds, shapes or movements that are his alone.

2. In a world marked by nonparticipation, in which more and more work is done by machines, and entertainment offered to us by other machines, the participant in artistic forms of recreation is making his own fun. He is a "doer," and not just a passive recipient.

3. An important value of artistic involvement is that it serves to enrich the level of cultural taste in the community or nation at large. While some may scoff at the quality or significance of "amateur" performance or imply that it has little aesthetic worth, the fact is that, through mass participation in the arts, we are building a huge audience for professional performance. This is not a matter of numbers alone; the Sunday painter is likely to be a more intelligent, sensitive, and discriminating audience than the individual who has never held a brush in his hand.

4. Finally, through artistic experience we reach a new dimension of living. We become more aware of life about us, more sensitive to beauty; the whole quality of our national culture is enhanced.¹

The preceding values attributed to the arts in recreational programs have applied to all art forms collectively. These same values, however, can be specifically applied to the art of drama in recreation.

The goal of recreational drama should be to provide the widest possible range of dramatic activities to the public. These activities should be of the highest quality possible while taking care not to exclude those individuals who are just beginning to learn about drama. It cannot be expected that a relatively new participant in dramatic activities will have developed the same amount of expertise as his more experienced counterpart. He must, however, be given the opportunity to continue participation as the emphasis of recreation is always placed on the enjoyment of learning and creating. This does not exclude quality of product, but as a part of a recreation program participants are involved because of the enjoyment they experience in dramatic activities.

Prior to 1979, there was no drama program for adults through the HDRP. In beginning an adult drama program through recreation, it was important to have an ideal or model recreational drama program on which to base the program in Henrico County. From this model recreational drama program for adults the best individual event or program could be chosen for the initiation of the new adult drama program in Henrico County.

The following is a model program for adult dramatic arts programming through public recreation. This model program has been formulated through my experience in the field of recreation and theatre, numerous recreation and theatre
source materials, and interviews with professionals in the field of recreational drama and recreation.

A Model Dramatic Arts Program for Adults

The responsibility of the HDRP to provide the widest range of dramatic activities possible is threefold. It must include 1) opportunities to learn about the dramatic arts, 2) opportunities to use skills or knowledge of the dramatic arts through the production of live theatre, and 3) opportunities for those who do not wish to directly participate in the creation of live performance the chance to witness such performances. The model program here described is, therefore, divided into three sections:


The Model

Education

Education in dramatic arts through recreation would consist first and foremost of classes in the various disciplines associated with the dramatic arts. These would be offered on an increasing skill-level basis from beginner through advanced levels as interest and participant ability demand. These classes would meet once a week for a period of eight to ten weeks. Classes would last either one or one and one-half hours. Exact length of the class, as well as time period and location, would have to be determined by the class instructor, the drama specialist, and the facility
coordinator.

The facility to be utilized for each class will be determined by the requirements of the class. Currently classroom space, set construction facilities, as well as large open areas, are available for dramatic arts classes.

Class instructors would be chosen from a list of instructors approved by the HDRP specifically trained in the material to be covered in the class. Class topics would be chosen as public interest demands, which are determined through questionnaires distributed to participants at the completion of each set of classes. Among the topics considered for classes might be the following:

- Introduction to Theatre,
- Senior Adult Drama,
- Performing,
- Directing,
- Design/Construction of Sets,
- Design/Construction of Costumes,
- Lighting Design and Practice,
- Voice for the Stage or Public Speaking,
- Movement for the Stage,
- Puppetry,
- Mime,
- Stage Combat, and
- Movie Making.

This list of topics would cover the basics of the art and would create a good foundation from which to begin to build a continuing series of classes.

There are individuals who do not want to commit themselves to an eight or ten week class, but who desire to learn about the dramatic arts. For these individuals a series of lectures or workshops would be set up on either a
bi-monthly or monthly basis as program attendance and interest demand. Guest speakers should be acquired to conduct these events. The specific location of the lectures would be determined by program requirements as in the selection of class locations mentioned earlier. Lectures or workshop topics might include condensed versions of class topics already mentioned, in addition to lectures on the History of the Theatre in Richmond, Puppetry in Virginia, Choosing a Playscript for Your Next Show, and Theatre Criticism in Richmond. This list provides a starting point from which future topics of interest may be discovered.

Dramatic arts discussion groups would also be scheduled on a regular basis of one meeting per month. These groups would be informally conducted by the drama specialist and would allow interested parties the opportunity to discuss and express their views. Areas of interest open to the discussion group would be the evaluation and discussion of productions sponsored by the HDRP, as well as any topic of concern in the arts, either locally or nationally. In addition to the learning experience of giving individuals an opportunity to become involved in critical discussions of the art, the discussion group format would allow the HDRP opportunities to better perceive specific areas of dramatic arts interest within its geographic area of concern. The discussion groups would be a learning tool for both the individual participant and the HDRP administration.
Through knowledge gained in these discussions, the HDRP may then serve the public better through more awareness of current interest in programming.

**Productions**

Through the production of live performances the HDRP gives participants an opportunity to use the skills and knowledge they have developed in the dramatic arts. These productions would, therefore, include as wide a variety as possible to accommodate all interest areas. Another goal is to provide quality entertainment to those who wish to be members of the audience. Listed below are six possible areas of production for the HDRP. These six areas would provide opportunities for productions in the most common areas of live theatrical performances. There would be:

1. A variety of production types presented by a group of interested adults in Henrico County. This group would be called the Henrico Theatre Company. It will present a diversified season of productions, including musical theatre, comedy, drama, and the classics. This company would expect to accomplish two goals. First, it would allow participants an opportunity to continue their learning process by working closely with a paid professional staff. Second, the company would expose participants to different types and periods of theatre and their varying treatments. The Henrico Theatre Company would ideally produce four major
productions from September through May, and one major production during the summer months.

2. A puppet theatre group would be formed to give those individuals interested in puppetry a chance to use and refine their art. The puppet theatre group would produce three shows yearly, one during the Fall, one in the Spring, and one during the summer months. These productions would draw heavily from children's stories and fairy tales for script materials. Other types of literature would not be excluded.

3. A mime ensemble would provide a performance outlet for creative movement and pantomime. This ensemble would create three performances per year, one each in the Fall, Spring and Summer. Performances would be comprised of original scenarios created and adapted to the medium of mime by the participants. The goal of this ensemble would be to creatively pursue and develop nonverbal forms of communication through mime and movement.

4. A new works showcase would be formulated and dedicated to the development and production of new theatrical works by area residents. Application for presentation of new works would be made to the HDRP. Upon acceptance of the application, the HDRP would assume a supportive role in the production of the new works. Areas of support that might be offered would be the use of existing facilities, equipment, costume, and administrative support services.
Limited financial support not to exceed $250.00 might also be granted. The number of new works presented each year would depend directly upon budgetary appropriations and administrative staff time. It is hoped that at least two new works per year would be produced through the new works showcase.

5. To provide adequate performance opportunities, specifically for senior adults, a senior adult showcase would be created. Types of performances might include original musical revues, talent shows, and the production of full length dramatic works. All works would be produced by the seniors under the guidance of a specialist in the field of senior adult dramatics. Two productions per year would be planned, one in the Fall and one in the Spring.

6. Special projects would be sponsored by the HDRP. These projects would be designed to offer an individual or group of individuals the opportunity to produce material of their own choice. Described earlier, the Henrico Theatre Company's production would be planned by the recreation drama specialist and consequently would not offer the person wishing to work on a particular piece in a particular capacity the opportunity to do so. By setting up a channel for special projects the HDRP would offer these opportunities to the public. Anyone wishing to initiate a special project would submit an application to the HDRP. Upon acceptance of the application, the Division would assume a supportive role
in the production of the special project. Areas of support would be the same as those listed for new works and might include the use of existing facilities, equipment, costumes, and administrative support services. Limited financial support not to exceed $250.00 might also be granted. The number of special projects presented each year would directly depend upon budgetary appropriations and administrative staff time. It is hoped that between two and four special projects be produced each year through the support of the HDRP.

Entertainment

Dramatic arts entertainment would be made available to the public through performances sponsored by the HDRP. Included would be all performances of the Henrico Theatre Company, the puppet theatre group, the mime ensemble, the new works showcase, the senior adult showcase and the special projects section supported by the HDRP.

In addition to the performances listed above, professional artists or dramatic arts groups would be contracted for special performances sponsored by the HDRP. These would allow audience members the opportunity to witness live performance by both professionals and amateurs, and would provide quality and variety.

Adding to the variety would be invitational performances done by local amateur groups. Local groups would be
invited to perform under the sponsorship of the HDRP. Both these and the contracted performances done by professionals in the field of theatre would contribute to fulfilling the goal of providing the widest range of dramatic activities possible to the public.

Trips and tours of dramatic interest would be planned and would be on the local and national level. Locally, they might include trips to area dinner theatres, the Virginia Museum Theatre, and the Virginia Center for the Performing Arts. Tours may be taken of the backstage and support facilities of area theatres for a behind-the-scene awareness of theatre. Nationally, trips or tours might include the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Wolf Trap Farm, and Broadway.

Finally, a film series would be offered for those who enjoy the dramatic art of film. This film series would be presented on a monthly or bi-monthly basis with all types of film being considered for showing. A brief commentary on the artistic qualities of the film would be presented prior to the showing for better audience awareness.

This concludes The Model Dramatic Arts Program for Adults. It is a model constructed specifically for the HDRP and, as such, any implementation of the model would directly depend upon its acceptance by the HDRP administration. In addition, budgetary support, use of existing facilities, and an increase in dramatic arts staff would be
necessary to the implementation of many of the programs outlined in this model.

A timetable for the implementation of The Model Dramatic Arts Program for Adults follows. This timetable is extended over a five year period and does not take into consideration rehearsal and performance facilities, budget, staffing, or approval of The Model by the HDRP. It is concerned solely with the implementation of the dramatic arts program model. The timetable for implementation is also a model to be used and adapted as necessary by the HDRP.

A Timetable for Implementation of the Model Dramatic Arts Program for Adults

Year 1

Year one would include:

1. The formation of the Henrico Theatre Company. During this year one production would be presented.

2. The initiation of classes on a limited basis.

Year 2

Year two would include:

1. The expansion of the Henrico Theatre Company. Two productions would be produced during this year.

2. The expansion of class offerings as public interest, attendance, and level of expertise demand.

3. The initiation of puppet theatre productions with one production being done this year.
4. The initiation of trips and tours to local areas of theatrical interest.

5. The initiation of contractual performances by professional artists or groups.

6. The initiation of dramatic arts discussion groups.

Year 3

Year three would include the initiation of:

1. The dramatic arts lecture series.

2. The senior adult showcase which would produce one production during this year.

3. Special projects of which one would be produced during this year.

4. Invitational performances by local amateur groups.

The continuation of dramatic arts discussion groups and contractual performances by professional artists or groups, and the expansion of the Henrico Theatre Company's production season from two to three productions per year, class offerings as public interest, attendance, and the level of expertise demand, puppet theatre productions from one to two productions per year, and trips and tours to include both local and national areas of theatrical interest.

Year 4

Year four would include the initiation of the mime ensemble which would produce one performance during this
year, the continuation of:

1. Puppet theatre productions.
2. Invitational performances by local amateur groups.
3. Dramatic arts discussion groups.
4. Contractual performances by professional artists or groups.
5. The dramatic arts lecture series, and the expansion of the Henrico Theatre Company's production season from three to four productions per year, class offerings as public interest, attendance, and level of expertise demand, the senior adult showcase from one production to two productions per year, and special projects from one to two per year.

Year 5

Year five would include the initiation of:

1. The new works showcase with one production during the year.
2. The film series, and the continuation of trips and tours of theatrical interest, contractual performances by professional artists or groups, the dramatic arts lecture series, the senior adult showcase, invitational performances by local amateur groups, and dramatic arts discussion groups.

The following would be expanded in year 5: the Henrico Theatre Company's production season from four to five productions per year, class offerings as public interest, attendance, and level of expertise demand, puppet theatre
productions from two to three per year, special projects from two to three per year, and the mime ensemble's productions from one to two per year.

This timetable provides a vehicle for the implementation of all programs outlined in The Model set forth for the Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks. It does not complete the full expansion of all programs. This expansion would be completed during years six and seven to include the entirety of The Model program presented here.
CHAPTER V

INITIATION OF THE ADULT DRAMA PROGRAM

The initiation of the adult drama program for the HDRP was begun in November, 1978, and culminated in May, 1979 when Li'l Abner was presented at George H. Moody Middle School. A summary of this initial program follows, and is divided into three sections. These are: 1) Organization and Administration, 2) Technical Support, and 3) Rehearsal and Performance.

Organization and Administration

The idea of formulating an adult theatre company under the sponsorship of the HDRP began with the realization that most dramatic programming in the HDRP was designed for ages sixteen and under. The initial idea gained the support of the Director and Assistant Director of Recreation, and the Henrico Theatre Company was created.

A budget for the Henrico Theatre Company's pilot project, a family musical, was submitted November 30, 1978. This budget, originally approved for $1997.50, was to expand over the course of the next few months to total almost $3400.00. The following is a copy of the original and revised budgets for the first Henrico Theatre Company musical produced May 18 and 19, 1979.
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In the pilot project of the Henrico Theatre Company, a family oriented musical comedy, *Li'l Abner*, was to be produced by the HDRP during the spring of 1979. The drama specialist would direct the production with musical direction and choreography by the music and dance specialist. Other staff, such as a scenic and lighting designer, costume designer, sound designer, and pianist, would be hired under a contractual agreement for the production. The persons hired in these positions were David McCall, as scenic and lighting designer, Becky Powell, as costume designer, and David Montgomery, Bill Ranson, and Bill Chorney, as sound designers. The pianists were Terry Buheller and Howard Lawrence. Although a stage manager was sought no one could be found; therefore, the director and musical director shared these responsibilities.

The next area of concern was to locate and schedule a space for rehearsals and performances. Since the HDRP had
no theatrical facility or unscheduled space for rehearsals and performances, the County of Henrico School System was consulted. The county high schools had, by far, the best facilities available in the school system, but, when consulted, it was found they were booked for the Spring and were unable to accommodate the Division of Recreation's request for use.

The best available space was found at George H. Moody Middle School. This school, until 1972, was known as Hermitage High School, and having been built as a high school had theatre facilities superior to most middle schools in the county school system. In addition, Moody Middle School was located in the central part of Henrico County and was easily accessible to county residents. A use-of-school request form was submitted to Moody Middle School delineating rehearsal and performance dates and times during the first week in January, 1979. Approval of the requested dates and times were received by the HDRP office on January 17, 1979.

Planning for Li'l Abner proceeded from here to auditions, a discussion of which will be included in the section on rehearsals and performances. Construction, storage and shop space also needed to be obtained. For this purpose the section of Belmont Park known as the "old pro shop" was secured. This space, though not extremely large, had adequate building and painting areas, running water, and
was not in current use. This area would, also, be used to store any scenic pieces which could be recycled for future productions.

Making the public aware of the newly formed theatre company's audition and performance dates was the next area to be addressed. Public Service Announcements outlining the audition and performance dates of *Li'l Abner* were sent to all area radio and television stations. These PSAs were requested to be run two to three weeks prior to the advertised audition dates. In addition, articles were submitted to two Richmond area newspapers, the *Richmond Times Dispatch* and the *Richmond News Leader*, for publication. Announcements were made in person at all HDRP senior adult club meetings and all Henrico Recreation Center locations. Posters and flyers were sent to all Henrico schools, libraries, and recreation center locations. Posters were, also, put on display at numerous business locations, including grocery stores, office buildings, and churches.

The media, Henrico schools, senior adult clubs, recreation centers, and various business locations were very cooperative and for the most part publicized the program as requested. Thus, word was spread in this manner.

Having made the public aware of the program, a box office procedure had to be initiated to field reservation requests and ticket sales. This procedure was designed to create a mailing list for future programs. Tickets were
printed and numbered in sequence although seats were not reserved. A reservation form was created with spaces for the name of the production, the date and time of performance at the top. The body of the form contained spaces for the ticket numbers, the patron's name, address, zip code, the cost of the ticket, if any, and a space to be checked when the ticket was obtained. Reservations were accepted over the telephone, but tickets were not picked up in advance.

**Technical Support**

Technical support for *Li'l Abner* was provided by the design staff. Production meetings were held weekly to enable the staff to coordinate ideas and designs, as well as deal with any problems which may arise. These meetings were usually held each Thursday evening prior to rehearsal.

The design staff was responsible for seeing that each technical element of the production was completed. Set construction, lighting and costume crews were assembled by the designers and assisted during the preparation phase of production. Running crews, comprised mostly of cast members, were assembled and assigned the duties of scene changes and running of individual properties. They were responsible for their own costumes during the run of the show. The light board operator was not, however, a member of the cast.

Supplies and materials needed to complete designs for
Li'l Abner were ordered through the drama specialist and the HDRP purchasing procedure. A combination of purchase orders, requisitions, and petty cash expenditures were used to purchase the needed supplies and materials. Design staff members were not allowed to individually purchase items because they were not full-time county employees. This was time consuming for the drama specialist, however, the procedure followed was in accordance with the HDRP and Henrico County policy.

Equipment needed for Li'l Abner was gathered from a variety of sources. On hand at the school were stage curtains, a lighting board, and strip and border lights. These strip and border lights were unplugged, and ellipsoidal and fresnel lighting instruments were hung in their place. These instruments were rented from Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Theatre. In addition, a pipe to be used as a light batten was purchased and hung from the auditorium ceiling for front lighting. Theatrical instruments wired directly to the electrical service had been hung in ceiling pockets when the school was constructed so electrical service to the light batten could be secured by rewiring the electrical service to accommodate pin plugs. The hanging of the light batten was necessary as the theatrical instruments used for the front lighting would not fit into the ceiling pockets.

Prior to the opening of Li'l Abner, the HDRP purchased
a major piece of equipment to be used on this production
and for future programming. This was a sound system com-
plete with a mixer/amplifier, speakers, and reel-to-reel
tape deck. All sound effects for the show were recorded
and played back over this system.

With the exception of the equipment listed above all
other items used during the production were borrowed. These
items included numerous props and hand and power tools.

Once set construction and the gathering of equipment,
tools and props were complete, items to be used for Li'l
Abner were transported to Moody Middle School. Throughout
the run of the show all moveable set pieces, costumes,
equipment and miscellaneous items had to be stored in the
wing area of the stage. This was necessary because the
school requested that the stage area be cleared for assem-
blies.

Rehearsal and Performance

Auditions for Li'l Abner were held on Friday, March
2, 1979 from 7 to 9 P.M., and Saturday, March 3, 1979 from
1 to 5 P.M. at George H. Moody Middle School. Those audi-
tioning were asked to prepare one song from a musical. An
accompanist was provided. In addition to the prepared song,
a test of vocal range and ability was done.

Cold readings from the script were part of the audi-
tion, also. Each person auditioning was asked to read nu-
merous roles with various partners chosen from others who
auditioned. This allowed the director to not only determine which character or characters the person auditioning could portray, but how the individual looked with and reacted to other potential cast members.

Casting was accomplished on the criteria of vocal ability, acting ability, physical appearance, and ability to interact with other cast members. A total of 31 people were cast to play 36 different roles. The majority of the cast had limited theatrical experience. Some cast members had never performed in a play before.

Rehearsals of *Li'l Abner* began on March 12, 1979 with read-throughs and sing-throughs taking place the previous week. A copy of the *Li'l Abner* rehearsal schedule can be found in the appendix. This was handed out to the cast members during read-through rehearsals the week of March 5, 1979. With the exception of the revisions and additions listed at the end, this schedule was followed. However, occasionally times were extended on particular scenes and reduced on others, as the need arose.

Rehearsal methods for *Li'l Abner* consisted first of individual character work. Blocking of dialogue sections and smaller musical numbers was the next step. Teaching the music and choreography for musical numbers was done simultaneously with blocking rehearsals by the musical director. This being accomplished, emphasis was shifted to continuity, in-depth characterization, and relationship to other
characters. Improvisational work on the script was not
done to a great extent due to time limitations and lack of
experience in the cast.

Technical rehearsals began with a dry technical re-
hearsal on May 9, 1979. This time was necessary to set
cues, lighting levels, and work out scene changes. Problems
discovered that night were worked out prior to the cue-to-
cue technical rehearsal on May 11, 1979. On May 12, 1979 a
full technical rehearsal was conducted with the actors now
receiving scene change and running crew assignments. There
were no major technical problems remaining after this re-
hearsal. Practice was still needed, however, for smoother
scene changes. This was accomplished during subsequent
dress rehearsals.

Costume parade was held on May 10, 1979 with the
actors continuing to wear their costumes throughout the
evening's rehearsal. This was done to discover any problems
the actors would have moving in their costumes. Changes were
made and the majority of the problems were solved prior to
dress rehearsal May 15, 1979 and were completed by or during
dress rehearsal the following evening. May 17, 1979 was
invitational dress rehearsal for key Henrico County officials,
members of the HDRP Advisory Commission, and employees of
the HDRP.

Performances of Li'l Abner were held on May 18 and
May 19, 1979 at George H. Moody Middle School auditorium
at 8:15 P.M. The total audience attendance for both performances combined was 517.
CHAPTER VI

AN EVALUATION

The evaluation of the proposed adult drama program for the HDRP was undertaken with the hope that the proposed program or an adapted version of this program would become the goal of drama programming for adults by the HDRP.

A copy of this proposed adult drama program was given to the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks, and the Central Activities Program Supervisor. Their reaction to and the evaluation of the proposed adult drama program was requested. In his response, the Director of Recreation, Mr. Ellett R. McGeorge, Jr., said the ideas presented in the proposed adult drama program were "in keeping with our (the HDRP) desire to improve our cultural arts offerings." Mr. McGeorge was impressed with the variety and scope of drama programming for adults outlined in chapter four. He was, however, concerned about funding sources for the programs outlined, as well as the timetable for implementation of these programs.

The Assistant Director of Recreation, Mr. Charles H. Peple, echoed the sentiments of the Director in his response. Mr. Peple stated the drama program outlined was ambitious, but well designed. Again, Mr. Peple was concerned about the
funding and staffing of the proposed drama program.

Ms. Karen A. Kendrick, the Central Activities Program Supervisor, reviewed the proposed adult drama program outlined in chapter four. The following comments and suggestions were made. Ms. Kendrick felt the division of the proposed adult drama program into the three sections of education, production, and entertainment, with equal emphasis on each section, provided a broad and balanced program. Ms. Kendrick was especially interested in implementing a variety of dramatic arts classes. Through these classes she felt the interest generated and the knowledge gained by the participants would increase the interest in the production and entertainment aspect of the proposed program. Classes would give the participants the opportunity to increase existing skill levels in drama. This would, in turn, raise the quality of performances in which these people participated.

Also, of special interest to Ms. Kendrick was the new works showcase. She felt the production of new works by area residents would bring a new dimension to the concept of community theatre. Not only would local people be acting, directing, and building scenery, they would be responsible for the creation of the script as well. Although Ms. Kendrick did not foresee a large audience for the new works showcase, she felt it was a very important part of the proposed program.
Another item which seemed important to Ms. Kendrick was the senior adult showcase. Having worked to set up a number of senior adult clubs in Henrico County, Ms. Kendrick has long felt there was much performing talent among senior adults. She felt the senior adult showcase would create a situation in which this talent could be used to its fullest.

In her review of the timetable, Ms. Kendrick stated that it was both appropriate and realistic. She did take exception to the number of performances per year suggested for the Henrico Theatre Company. She felt the number should be reduced from four or five to a maximum of three. Without taking into consideration facilities, budget, or staffing the timetable proposed an otherwise logical progression according to Ms. Kendrick. She felt one program built upon another and would expand as interest demanded.

Ms. Kendrick had several suggestions to help with the staffing and funding of an expanding dramatic arts program. Her thoughts were to create an internship program which could be established between local educational institutions and the HDRP. This internship program would provide some additional staff for the HDRP while exposing the intern to all aspects of creating dramatic arts programming within a Recreation and Parks environment. This would be of mutual benefit to both parties.

The location of funding for an expanding dramatic arts program during a time of fiscal budget restraints would
pose the largest problem in implementing the proposed adult drama program according to Ms. Kendrick. She indicated that private industry located in Henrico County could be approached to help support the proposed programs. In addition, a goal of the adult drama program should be to become self-sustaining; admission fees generated should be funneled directly back into the program.

This concluded Ms. Kendrick's and the HDRP administration's evaluation of the outline of an adult drama program.

Evaluations of the proposed adult drama program were requested from the HDRP Advisory Commission. Although each member was presented with a copy of the proposed program, only one response was received.

Mrs. Joy Joynt, the HDRP Advisory Commissioner from the Tuckahoe District of Henrico County, was the only responding member of the Commission. Mrs. Joynt felt the proposed adult drama program was very thorough. She particularly liked the idea of support being given to new works. Mrs. Joynt stated that she was concerned about funding for the proposed adult drama program. The overall program outlined, in Mrs. Joynt's opinion, was perhaps too "ambitious." She thought fewer performances or fewer types of performances would be more realistic.

An evaluation of Li'l Abner, the pilot project of the Henrico Theatre Company and the first portion of the proposed
adult drama program to be implemented, was also undertaken. Evaluations were requested from the HDRP administration, the HDRP Advisory Commission, and the cast and staff of _Li'1 Abner._

The HDRP administration had a very positive reaction to the Henrico Theatre Company's production of _Li'1 Abner._ Mr. Ellett R. McGeorge, Jr. felt that as the pilot project of the Henrico Theatre Company it was very successful. He "enjoyed" the show very much and hoped the HDRP would be able to continue programming in this area. The Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks, Mr. Charles H. Peple, also enjoyed the production. He felt the production was an ideal choice for the first production of the Henrico Theatre Company. It was a "fun show" for the entire family to see and had a large cast to involve as many people as possible in the pilot project.

Ms. Karen Kendrick, Central Activities Program Supervisor, had the following comments about the show.

_Li'1 Abner_ was great. I loved the way the entire theatre area was utilized during the show. The script was a wonderful combination of comedy and musical entertainment. Judging by their reaction the audience enjoyed the show as much as I did. For a first effort in musical comedy by the Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks and the Henrico Theatre Company, I feel the production of _Li'1 Abner_ was a tremendous success.

The only member of the HDRP Advisory Commission to
respond to the request for evaluation of *Li'l Abner* was Mrs. Joy Joynt. She felt *Li'l Abner* was a good choice for the first production. Mrs. Joynt thought it was a "fun show" and felt that the audience really got involved and enjoyed the production. Mrs. Joynt hoped to see more productions sponsored by the HDRP in the future.

Evaluations of *Li'l Abner* by the cast and staff of the show were very positive. These evaluations were similar in nature and were most concisely stated by Mrs. Judy Marston, who portrayed the character of Moonbeam McSwine in the show. Mrs. Marston stated,

> First of all I think *Li'l Abner* was a wise choice for a production for the first time. It was a fun type play, entertaining, and was informal enough that we (the actors) could be good without being "real" poised and sophisticated and professional. It (*Li'l Abner*) combined a lot of things, good music, funny roles, serious roles, and imaginative costumes, and gave a good feeling for what can be done with future plays.

> I think the county (Henrico) was receptive in that attendance at the shows was good and the audiences were relatively responsive. I think this shows there is definitely a need for more plays in the county of this kind.

> I hope the Henrico Theatre Company will have a lot more plays, at least two a year. I hope to help with them, in the future and at least I intend to attend them all. I think this play (*Li'l Abner*), the final product, was very good and that the organization and leadership was good also . . . especially for the very first performance by the Henrico Theatre Company and I look forward to each production being even better.
Negative statements were made by cast and staff about the length of rehearsals, rehearsal and performance space, and scenic construction facilities. All, however, felt that the good points of Li'1 Abner outweighed the negative ones. All hoped future productions by the Henrico Theatre Company would be planned.

In addition to evaluations of the production by the administration, the Advisory Commission, and the cast and the staff, an audience poll was conducted to determine public reaction to the show. Eighty-four responses were received. Of these 84 responses 72 had favorable comments about Li'1 Abner and hoped to see future productions done by the Henrico Theatre Company.

Of the favorable responses to the audience poll for Li'1 Abner several had specific comments. The most frequent comments were that the show was a bit too long for the hard wooden seats in the auditorium, there was not enough publicity prior to the show dates, and the singing at times was drowned out by the orchestra.

This concludes the evaluation of Li'1 Abner by the HDRP administration, the HDRP Advisory Commission, and the Li'1 Abner cast, staff, and audience.

A personal evaluation of the proposed adult drama program for the Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks and Li'1 Abner, the first project of the adult drama program to be implemented, follows.
The Model Dramatic Arts Program for Adults proposed in chapter four is ambitious for a division of Recreation and Parks. It is, however, a complete program balanced among the three areas of education, production, and entertainment. Each of the three areas represented includes a wide range of activities and opportunities to provide variety and spark interest.

The three areas of the proposed adult drama program should foster interest and build upon each other to create further interest. This interest, once established, will provide the impetus for continuing expansion and implementation of the proposed adult drama program.

The timetable set forth in chapter four for the implementation of the proposed adult drama program is provided solely as a guide to be adapted as necessary. The implementation of this program by the HDRP will depend upon its acceptance by the HDRP, the available staff, the facilities, the funding, and the amount of public interest in the program.

In initiating an adult drama program for the HDRP, the best project, in my judgment, was the production of a musical comedy. Participants in this program would be learning about theatre by doing it, and at the same time creating entertainment for the audience.

The pilot project approved by the HDRP was the musical comedy Li'l Abner. As the initial production of the
APPENDIX

LI' L ABNER
Rehearsal Schedule

This rehearsal schedule has been set up to accommodate the conflicts of as many cast members as possible. If you have previously indicated that you would have difficulty attending at a particular time, you will not be expected. However, you will be responsible for what you may have missed: for blocking, check with the Stage Manager; for choreography, check with another cast member. If you are uncertain about whether you will be needed in a particular scene, please check with the Stage Manager.

All rehearsals are planned for the auditorium or chorus room of Moody Middle School. If, due to school activities, it is necessary for us to move to another location, you will be notified well in advance. Rehearsals will begin promptly at the time indicated. Please plan to be here five to ten minutes early and bring a pencil with you.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSIC/CHOREOGRAPHY</th>
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<td>March 12 7:30-8:30 &quot;It's a Typical Day&quot;</td>
<td>8:30-9:30 Act 1 Scene 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:15 &quot;Rag Off'n The Bush&quot;</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
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May 15  6:30  Call  Dress/Tech Rehearsal
           7:30  Curtain
May 16  6:30  Call  Dress/Tech Rehearsal
           7:30  Curtain
May 17  6:30  Call  Invitational Dress Rehearsal
           8:15  Curtain
May 18
&
May 19  8:15  Curtain - Show Dates

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act I

Scene 1  Girl  Husbands  Unemployment Man
         Old Lady  Wives  Lonesome Polecat
         Man  Dogpatchers  Hairless Joe
         Romeo Scragg  Moonbeam  Earthquake
         Clemintine Scragg  Sam  Daisy
         Pappy  Mammy  Abner
         Cecky  Mayor
         Sandy
         Tom Pappas

Scene 2  Mammy  Daisy
         Pappy  Earthquake
         Abner  Sam

Scene 3  Abner
         Daisy  Husbands

Scene 4  Abner
         Earthquake
         Mayor  Dr. Finsdale
         Scarlett  Govt. Man
         Sam  Moonbeam
         Hairless Joe  Dogpatchers

Scene 5  14 Dogpatchers
         Daisy
         Abner

Scene 6  Dr. Finsdale  Earthquake  Gov't. Man
         Colonel  Wives  Mayor
         Sam  Daisy
         Pappy  Hairless Joe
         Mammy  Abner
         Moonbeam  Lone. Pole Cat
         Available  Husbands
         Stupefyin  Dogpatchers
Scene 7 on tape -- commentators
President
Abner
Sam

Scene 8 Gen. Bullmoose Appassionata
Phogbound Abner
Secretaries

Scene 9 Mammy Available Clemintine Scragg
Pappy Daisy Moonbeam

Scene 10 Dogpatchers Mayor Available
Mammy Wives Daisy
Pappy Sam Scarlett

Scene 11 Available Stupefyin Appassionata
Daisy Phogbound Fleagle
Gen. Bullmoose Moonbeam

Scene 12 Race Contestants Available Stupefyin
Appassionata Mammy
Mayor Daisy Pappy
Stupefyin Abner Bullmoose

Race-Contestants:
Romeo
Clemintine
Moonbeam
Secretaries
Lonesome Pole Cat
Hairless Joe
Gov't Man
Dave Montgomery

Act II

Scene 1 Dr. Finsdale Dr. Schleifetz Softwick-State
Dr. Smithborn Husbands Dept.
Dr. Krogemeyer Abner

Scene 2 Daisy Wives Pappy
Sam Mammy 1 couple

Scene 3 Secretaries Abner Mammy
Appassionata Fleagle Pappy
Phogbound Daisy Moonbeam & Romeo
Bullmoose Earthquake
Scene 4
Maid
Bullmoose
Fleagle
Secretaries

Scene 5
Ball Guests
Appassionata
Abner
Dogpatchers
Policeman
Bullmoose
Maid
Colonel
Earthquake
Mammy
Pappy
Daisy
Sam
Fleagle
Hairless Joe
Lonesome Cat
Wives
Secretaries
Phogbound

Scene 6
Cut

Scene 7
Wives
Husband
Dr. Finsdale
Dr. Smithborn
Dr. Krogemeyer
Dr. Schleifetz
Colonel
Mammy
Abner
Pappy
Daisy
Earthquake

Scene 8
Dogpatchers (all)
Colonel
Earthquake
Mammy
Abner
Pappy
Husbands
Wives
Sam
Romeo Scagg
Daisy
Dr. Finsdale
Clementine Scagg

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

Scene 1
"It's A Typical Day"
Husbands, Wives, Romeo & Clementine Scagg,
Lonesome Polecat, Hairless Joe, Moonbeam,
Marryin' Sam, Earthquake, Daisy Mae, Mammy,
Pappy, Abner, Mayor, Scarlett

Scene 3
"If I Had My Druthers"
Abner, Husbands, Dave, Romeo
Reprise - Daisy

Scene 4
"Jubilation T. Cornpone"
Scraggs, Earthquake, Mayor, Scarlett, Husbands,
Wives, Sam, Moonbeam, Available, Polecat,
Hairless Joe
Encore - Same

"Rag Off'n The Bush"
Phogbound, Wives, Husbands, Scraggs, Mayor,
Scarlett, Sam, Moonbeam, Available, Polecat,
Hairless, Daisy, Mammy, Pappy, Abner, Earthquake
Scene 5  "Namely You"
       Abner, Daisy

Scene 6  "Unnecessary Town"
       Abner, Daisy, Moonbeam, Available, Mammy,
       Pappy, Mayor, Husbands, Wives, Sam, Scarlett

Scene 8  "What's Good For General Bullmoose"
       Secretaries (Cecky, Gayle, Margaret)

Scene 10 "There's Room Enough For Us"
       Sam, Mammy, Pappy, Wives, Scarlett, Moonbeam,
       Mayor, Available

       "The Country's In the Very Best of Hands"
       Abner, Sam, Moonbeam, Mayor, Mammy, Pappy,
       Wives, Scarlett, Available
       Encore - Same

Act II

Scene 1  "O Happy Day"
       Finsdale, Smithborn, Krogmeyer, Schleifitz

Scene 2  "Past My Prime"
       Daisy, Sam

Scene 3  "Love In A Home"
       Daisy, Abner

Scene 4  "Progress Is The Root Of All Evil"
       Bullmoose

Scene 7  "Put 'Em Back"
       Wives

Scene 8  "Matrimonial Stomp"
       Sam, Daisy, Earthquake, Wives, Mayor, Scraggs,
       Mammy, Moonbeam, Available, Pole Cat, Hairless,
       Scarlett

       Reprise "Put 'Em Back"
       Wives, previously mentioned parties

       "Jubilation T. Cornpone" - Finale
       Dogpatch, et. al.

DANCE SEQUENCES

Rag Off'n The Bush (1-4)
       Wives, Moonbeam, Clem Scraggs, Scarlett, Daisy, Mammy,
Husbands, Available, Romeo Scraggs, Sam, Abner, Pappy, Earthquake, Mayor, Pole Cat, Hairless

Sadie Hawkins Ball (1-12)
Appassionata, Stupefyin, Daisy, Moonbeam, secretary/scientist, Mammy, Clem Scragg, Abner, Evil Eye, Bullmoose, Earthquake, Pappy, Sam, Mayor, Available, Pole Cat, Hairless, Romeo Scragg, Gov't. Man

Society Dance (11-5)
Cecky, Gayle, Margaret, Appassionata, Phogbound, Finsdale, Bullmoose, Abner

SCHEDULE ADDITIONS

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<td>I-5</td>
<td>7:30 - 8:30</td>
<td>Abner &amp; Daisy ONLY</td>
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<td>II-3</td>
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April 16 Rehearsal to be held at Belmont Park. (The old Hermitage Country Club) 7:30 - 10:00

April 21 Cancelled

April 22 Full Cast Rehearsal - 1 P.M. to 6 P.M. This rehearsal is a must because we rarely have the entire cast together. If everyone is on time and ready to work, the rehearsal will hopefully end long before 6 P.M. Your cooperation is essential.

May 5 Cast rehearsal at Belmont Park
Run of entire show - 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Again, this rehearsal is essential.

Revisions - Schedule

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Add these people to these scenes:
Act I  Scene I - Ceeky
Gayle Sandy
Tom McGranahan
Scarlett
Melissa
Available
Stupefyin

Scene 4 - Daisy
Moonbeam
Wives
Husbands
Romeo
Clemintine
Scarlett

Scene 6 - Romeo
Clementine

Scene 10 - Romeo
Clementine
Hairless Joe
Polecat

Act II  Scene 3 - Sam

Scene 8 - Polecat
Hairless
Moonbeam
Mayor
Available
Stupefyin
Scarlett & everyone else in show
for curtain call
SOURCES CONSULTED


Boelt, Clemons E.  Department of Parks and Recreation, Richmond, Virginia.  Interview, 10 October 1979.


