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THE CHATTANOOGA TIMES:

## News Lookout

By MARTIN OCHS

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**T**HERE are some fathers who badly need this advice. Bonny Oaks School now is owed more than \$6,200 in overdue support payments from parents with children at Bonny Oaks. The figure never has been so high.

The monthly payments were fixed by court officials. They are based on the individual's ability to pay and most of those concerned are able to pay. A member of the Bonny Oaks board remarked yesterday that on weekends many an expensive automobile is to be seen at the school, and some of those undoubtedly belong to those who are delinquent in support payments.

Those in arrears are comparatively few. But aside from showing sheer callousness to one's own little children, this \$6,200 is right out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Some way must be found to fix the responsibility legally and proceed to do something about delinquent parents.

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**B**ONNY OAKS is not a place for delinquent children. About this may be some misconception.

There are many misconceptions about the term, "juvenile delinquency" and Family Service Highlights, publication of the Family Service Association of America, has a current article listing some of them.

Eleanor T. Glueck, author of the article, conducted a 10-year inquiry in which a comparison was made of 500 true delinquents as against 500 non-delinquent children. One of her interesting findings was that emotional illness occurred in 49 per cent of the delinquents but in 56 per cent of the non-delinquents.

Another fallacy, she maintains, is that working mothers are major contributors to juvenile crime. One-fifth of the mothers both of the delinquent and the non-delinquents were continuously employed.

Other discoveries were that delinquents were not any more: Physically unhealthy, affected by glandular disturbances, members of large families, members of small families, members of "foreign" families, small of stature or victims of "Momism."

Or, we presume, of "Popism."

### BONNY OAKS CHARTER MUST BE CHANGED

Bonny Oaks has not been a correctional institution for many years. Some of its boys and girls may seem somewhat unmanageable at times but, as lots of parents say, which boys and girls aren't?

The school, under the outstanding direction of Supt. Malcolm Adamson, may now be the county's most popular institution. It is the recipient of more warmly felt and unsolicited generosity from private citizens and clubs—like the Civitans—than any other place of its kind we can think of.

A visiting committee composed of Mrs. James Abshire, Mrs. Ben Seessel and Mrs. Will Shepherd, loyal members of the advisory board, reported yesterday that there was "definitely an attractive and non-institutional atmosphere," despite a need for paint on two dormitories.

The public unquestionably, in large part, has taken Bonny Oaks to its heart. But through the years the "reform school" stigma has persisted. Frequently, with inconceivable cruelty, persons will call and inquire, obviously for the benefit of recalcitrant children standing nearby, whether "you will take Jimmy and set him straight."

It is therefore interesting to note that Bonny Oaks and several other institutions over the state operate under a charter referring to them as reform or industrial schools.

Bonny Oaks was in fact created

under an act passed on April 17, 1895, calling for "a system of reformatory institutions for youthful persons." A resolution by the Hamilton County Court had urged such a step on behalf of "neglected, evil-disposed, vicious or incorrigible youths of both sexes," and the "reformation, employment, instruction and education" of such persons.

This year the long-needed move to change the charter of Bonny Oaks, in order to set forth clearly its character as a school and not a penal colony, will likely be made. The Bonny Oaks board yesterday named itself as a committee to study the change, and State Senator Ben Cash, who met with the board at lunch, has expressed a willingness to seek modification of the general act in the Legislature. The action is in order and we are confident it will be done.

As far back as 1911 the board unanimously voted to change the name from "The Hamilton County Reform or Industrial School" to "Bonny Oaks School." But so far as known the county court never formalized the change and the old charter remains.

A proposal also has been made to change the name of "Bonny Oaks" itself, which comes from the Jersey property known as Bonnie Oaks before the school was located there. But there are those many, too, who love the name as it is. At any rate, the question is up for discussion.

Any misconception about Bonny Oaks of course is dispelled quickly by a visit to the excellently cared-for (but still affection-craving) children there. However, any lingering doubts, in any corner of the public mind, should be removed about this prize institution.