

A Nursery Could Have Kept This Harlem Baby Alive

Two-Year-Old Charles Mills Fell from Window Because His Working Mother Could Find No Place for Him

By Angelo Herndon

The death of two-year-old Charles Mills who fell four flights to the ground Tuesday afternoon at 410 Lenox Ave. has caused great concern among Negro working mothers of Harlem who have to leave their children in unsafe firetraps because they are not able to send them to pre-nursery schools.

The two-year-old infant crawled from his crib while Mr. V. Smith, husband of Mrs. Addie Smith who acted as guardian for the child, was sleeping. He climbed up into the open window facing Lenox Ave., and before neighbors could notify Mr. Smith, he had fallen to the ground shattering all bones in his body.

Mrs. Smith had taken care of Charles as an act of charity because his mother, Mrs. Juanita Mills, was too poor to care for him. She goes to business school and lives with her mother and brother in a small single furnished room at 2202 Fifth Ave. Both of them live on the meagre earnings of their mother who works as a domestic servant down town.

NEEDLESS DEATH

If Mrs. Mills could have afforded to pay the paltry sum of twenty-five cents a day to some private nursery, her son would still be alive. Working mothers of Harlem are unanimous in the feeling that this unfortunate death is but an example of the great hardships of thousands of mothers who have to leave their children unattended at six and seven o'clock in the morning to work until late hours in the night.

Facilities at the WPA Pre-Nursery School at 2085 Fifth Ave., which provides free service for working mothers, are so inadequate that there is always a long waiting list of children to be placed. This nursery is the only free institution in a large community like Harlem for the poor and underprivileged children.

ONE WPA SCHOOL IN HARLEM

It is located in a dingy old-law tenement house with space for only 35 or 40 beds. Children under three years of age are not accepted, and funds are allotted by the WPA to provide salaries for the staff only. Rent, electricity and other expenses are met by a church which is sponsor of the project. It has been of such little benefit to the mothers of the community that most of them do not even know that there is such an institution where they can take their children without paying.

Of the 12 WPA Pre-Nursery Schools in the city, only one is located in Harlem. The other two nurseries, at 33 W. 133rd St. and 3 East 130th St., are private institutions which charge twenty-five cents a day for a child.

Because of limited resources, these two nurseries can only render services to a small number of working mothers. The Hope Day nursery on 133rd St. has been operating for 37 years under the joint directorship of a group of 35 Negro women who have kept it going without philanthropy or public aid.

Though only 34 children are permitted each day, they receive the best of care and treatment possible.

Mrs. Harriet D. Hays, who is in charge of the institution, said that were it not for the efforts of Negro mothers there would hardly be any place in Harlem where Negro children could receive the care and attention which their mothers are unable to give them.

Every attempt has been made, she said, to secure public assistance for the extension of the project. But, she pointed out, "the government does not seem to be interest-

ed. We tried to get some aid from the WPA but there was so much red tape and hesitation that nothing was ever done. The WPA wanted to take over and supervise our institution. They agreed to pay salaries and leave all the other bills for us to pay. We did not accept it because we were already doing a better job in running it ourselves."

The WPA program for nurseries in Harlem has been almost a total failure because the people simply don't have the means to meet the requirements demanded before it will undertake to participate in the establishment of such institutions. Banquets and dinners have been organized at the Fifth Ave. nursery where people from the community have been invited and urged to supply the means or sponsor such projects which the WPA would graciously supervise. The people are vitally interested in providing adequate care for their children, but those who need the benefits of nurseries most and who are willing and anxious to cooperate with the WPA or any other agency, are poorly paid WPA and domestic workers.

The case of Mrs. S. Brown who lives in the same house where little Charles met his death, is sufficient to emphasize the great difficulties of working Negro mothers. Her husband has been ill in the hospital for some time and she has to take her one year-old daughter to a friend's home early in the morning in time to be at work by 8 o'clock. She has to call for the child every day when she comes from work. Out of the \$40 she earns every month she has to pay \$3 a week which does not include food for the baby.

When rent and other expenses are paid, of course, there is hardly anything left for her to live on. "I tried to get my baby in the WPA nursery," she said, "but there was no room when I went there. When my husband went to the hospital I just had to find somebody who would take care of my baby."

Many of the mothers interviewed expressed a keen desire for a community wide movement which would bring together all mothers in a fight for public aid in building nurseries for the thousands of unattended children of Harlem.

Protests Force Probe of Tenn. Lynching

FBI Announces It Will Investigate Long Reign of Terror

Under pressure of a storm of indignant protests from all over the country, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, through its assistant attorney general O. John Rogge, has been forced to state in a letter to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that it will investigate the criminal lynching of Elbert Williams whose mutilated body was fished up from a river near Brownsville, Tenn., several weeks ago.

Assistant attorney general Rogge, in his letter to the NAACP, July 12, writes that "you will be glad to know that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been requested to make a thorough investigation of violations of civil liberties of Negroes in Brownsville, Tennessee."

Since the names of two bank officials, a highway commissioner and police officers were named in a report submitted a few weeks to President Roosevelt and Attorney Jackson as the leaders of the mob that lynched Williams, Negroes of Brownsville have been undergoing a constant wave of lynch terror which was unleashed against them in early June when Negroes attempted to register to vote in the 1940 Presidential elections.

Woman Dies in Fall

Mrs. Nell R. Goslin Jackson, 41, was fatally injured yesterday in a fall down the cellar steps in the home of Dr. J. W. H. Randall, Bedford Hills, Westchester, where she and her husband were visiting. Mrs. Goslin lived at 82-80 116th St., Richmond Hill, Queens.

Batista Takes Early Lead in Cuban Election

Backers See Landslide; Several Killed in Disorders

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though the presidency is the first elective office he ever has sought.

The coalition supporting the former army chief represents every shade of political opinion from the Communists on the left to former President Mario G. Menocal's Democratic Republican Party.

REACTIONARY BACKING

Grau San Martin's candidacy is supported by three major parties—his own Cuban "Revolutionary," the ABC and the Republican Action. There is a considerable rightist faction in the Grau San Martin camp.

In addition to the presidential elections, balloting for local officials and congressmen is in progress today.

The new president will be inaugurated on Oct. 10. New members of congress, provincial and municipal officers will take office September 15.

French Begin to Ban Use of Gasoline Vehicles

MARSEILLES, France, July 14 (UP).—Prefecture authorities today forbade autobus and other gasoline-driven public service transport on Sundays and holidays as part of a campaign to intensify conservation of gasoline. After July 15 only authorized motor traffic will be permitted throughout France.