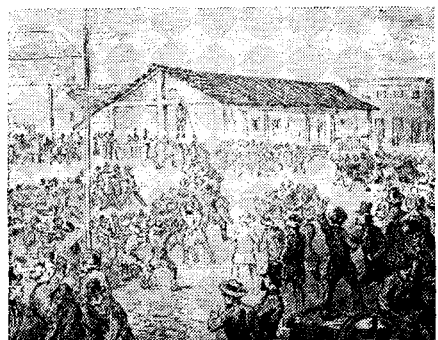


"In the last analysis, the Chief built and chose well." The far-flung empire had troubles which have by no means been resolved to this day.

What sort of man emerges from all this careful study, this recital of odd facts, the search for inscrutable motives? We see an alert, daring journalistic gambler who could be a vicious enemy and often an uncertain ally. He was at times a dirty in-fighter but capable of much generosity. He had a type of sly humor, but he was not a humorous man. He drank little liquor in his whole life, and if he had one really close friend, except perhaps Marion Davies, it does not appear on the record. His voice was weak, almost falsetto, and ludicrous in a man of such bulk. Mr. Winkler admires The Chief's prose style. It is true that he could turn out exceedingly strong editorials—more effective, better phrased, perhaps, than the editorials of any of the gifted pike-bearers who ever worked for him. But when he attempted other discourses (witness his long essays written for his papers in his declining years) he was coy, heavy-handed, and sometimes a little silly. But what a rabble-rousing editorial the old boy could produce when the spirit was on him!

When Hearst died the more thoughtful editorial writers on the other papers tried to assay his career and his character and the verdict was yes and no and on the other hand. Mr. Winkler improves little upon this verdict. In the main, though he is not blind to the unethical, the insincere, and the downright repellent traits, Mr. Winkler clearly has much admiration for Hearst—the sort of admiration that a dashing reporter has for an even more dashing Chief.

There are many omissions. One would have welcomed something about the sad anti-vivisection crusade which engrossed Hearst during his last years. There are a few errors—it was William J. (Fingy) Connors (not Connors), Sam Untermyer (not Untermyer), and Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey (not Joseph D. Bailey). However, these are relatively minor points. Mr. Winkler gives us, if not definitive biography or cosmic appraisal, a gaudy, star-spangled show.



—From "Vigilante Justice."

## Their Own Hands

*"Vigilante Justice," by Alan Valentine (Reynal. 173 pp. \$3.50), gives an account of the activities of the two self-appointed committees that brought order to San Francisco during the lawless Fifties of the last century. Oscar Lewis, who reviews it here, is the author of "California Heritage" and many other books about Americana.*

By Oscar Lewis

**I**N the history of the American frontier instances are by no means lacking where groups of citizens, dissatisfied with the way the laws were being administered by the regularly constituted officials, took matters into their own hands and, having rounded up the trouble-makers, meted out punishment to their ringleaders—often at the end of a rope.

Perhaps the best known of these extra-legal cleanup campaigns, and surely among the most significant, both as regards the extent of their operations and the firm but orderly manner in which they were conducted, were the two vigilante committees of early-day San Francisco, the first formed in 1851 and the second five years later.

The forces that brought these organizations into being stemmed from the peculiar nature of the city's beginnings. The gold discoveries of 1848 had drawn to these then remote shores adventurers from every corner of the world, and in such numbers that within a few months the sleepy village was transformed into a camp numbering many thousands, the majority living in tents or rough board shacks and finding their only entertainment in the cluster of gambling establishments that had sprung up about the old plaza.

Here was an environment conducive to excesses of many kinds, with the restraints common to older communities conspicuous by their absence, and with every man—for the early town was almost womanless—free to follow his own inclinations. The result, naturally enough, was that lawlessness and violence were the order of the day, with both the persons and property of peaceable citizens at the mercy of bands of hoodlums who day and night roamed the streets virtually unmolested.

This state of affairs was naturally deplored by the law-abiding residents and at length, in the summer of 1851, a group of citizens banded together and took the law into their own hands. What brought this, the first of the vigi-

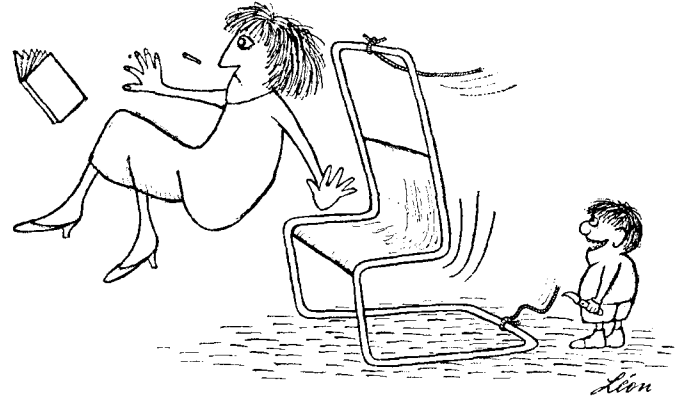
lance committees, into being was a particularly vehement outbreak of robbery, arson, and murder which the regularly elected authorities were either unable or unwilling to put down.

Hundreds of residents enrolled in the organization; malefactors were rounded up and brought before its tribunal where, after having been given, scrupulously fair trials, punishment was both swift and sure. Four men were sentenced to death and hanged; others were banished from the city, and still others, aboard ships newly arrived in the harbor, were refused permission to disembark. Then, a semblance of order having been established, the committee disbanded.

**T**HE circumstances that brought about its revival in 1856 was the slaying of editor James King of William, who in the columns of his *Evening Bulletin* had been waging an unrelenting warfare both on the town's criminal element and on the laxness of its law enforcement agencies. This time the committee did a far more thorough job than its predecessor, not only bringing to book King's assailant and several others, but constituting itself the supreme authority of the city in all matters pertaining to the public safety, all this in the face of violent opposition on the part of the duly constituted officials, both municipal and state.

Again the organization conducted its operations with a scrupulous regard for orderly procedure, giving those brought before it fair and impartial hearings and, having rendered its verdicts—whether for acquittal, banishment or, in two instances, hanging—promptly carrying them out. Largely because of the manifest fairness of its proceedings the Committee had through its brief career the support of an overwhelming majority of the citizens.

"Vigilante Justice" admirably tells the story of these drastic measures taken by early-day San Francisco to purge their city of lawlessness and corruption. Alan Valentine has obviously examined with care the by now means inconsiderable literature on the subject, including not only contemporary accounts but the later recollections of participants or observers among the latter being such well-known figures of Civil War days as William Tecumseh Sherman and David G. Farragut. It makes a highly readable chronicle, and one that demonstrates again the calibre of men who had a hand in bringing order out of the confusion and lawlessness of numerous outpost communities on the Western frontier.



## Bad Boys and Good Schools

**"How to Get Better Schools,"** by **David B. Dreiman** (Harper, 267 pp. \$3.50), is a handbook and guide based upon the five years' experience of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools. Fred M. Hechinger, education editor of the New York Herald Tribune, reviews it below.

By Fred M. Hechinger

A PROFESSOR in Indiana asked his graduate class to define "better schools." One student replied: "2 West 45th Street." This is the New York address of the headquarters of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools. It has come to be an address to remember. Few organizations have achieved success in so little time.

Now the work of the Commission has been captured in a singularly successful book which is not a recording out a dramatization of past and current history. David B. Dreiman's "How to Get Better Schools" does a number of things, each of them important to American education and to all those interested in the public schools: It shows how dramatic and how exciting the local school problems can be; it tells what the National Citizens Commission has done about them; it offers a working guide for practically every future situation that may arise in anybody's community. If you expect to do something about your schools, this is the book to read first.

Mr. Dreiman has not simply written a book about an organization. In the first part of his book he offers five thumbnail sketches of communities and their problems. Each is a sociological study and each, therefore, demonstrates that it is no longer possible to understand the sociology of a town or city without understanding the schools.

There is Corning, N. Y., with its semi-rural school dilemma; Minneapolis, with its internal conflicts which had to be straightened out before the schools could hope to get a fair break; New Canaan, Conn., which had a citizen committee that was so thorough, devoted, and honest that it caused a tempest in the educators' kettle before it started everybody on the way to reform and better schools; Houston, Texas, with its Minute Women and ultra-conservative pressures which had to be brought under control before the schools could deal with the issues of modernity without being considered subversive; and, finally and perhaps most unusual, Bellevue, Wash., a town created by a bridge, which may be on the way to showing how a first-rate school system can be planned cooperatively.

Don't think I shall tell you how any of those chapters come out. The fun of reading them is in not knowing—although I can tell you that some of them haven't quite "come out" yet. This will give you a chance to place bets on the future.

More important, it permits you to think of your local situation. Yours would be a rare community if it had not at some point experienced the reaction of New Canaan's educators when the citizens criticized poor teaching. "Welcomed by educators when their support focused on more money and buildings," reports Mr. Dreiman, "the Citizens School Council was suddenly relegated once more to the lowly position of laymen." But there was a happy ending. Educators and citizens had learned a valuable lesson.

Mr. Dreiman's concise sketches lead to Part Two which tells the story of the Commission. Some day in the future the country will realize that the Commission's work—and Roy Larsen's leadership as its chairman—has been one of the crucial achievements of postwar America. Keep in mind, as

the book points out, that a child might be born into a school district that spends \$1,055 on his education—or into another one that offers only \$19.

In the face of such conditions and in the knowledge that democracy will stand or fall with its public schools, James B. Conant, then president of Harvard, persuaded Mr. Larsen to create the Commission. When it got started in 1949, it looked all across the country and could find only seventeen local citizens committees to work with. Now that it is about to terminate its present phase of operations, it knows that there are about 10,000 such groups. The majority of states have since formed state committees which have already taken over much of the national group's work.

A research office, headed by Henry Toy, Jr., the commission's executive director, has sent out 700,000 pieces of information. A good deal of this information is condensed in Part Three of this book—about the most extensive "How-to-do-it" literature on public education. From "How to organize for local action" to the ways of winning a campaign—all the various steps are outlined.

Roy Larsen has written a foreword which, by explaining honestly why he got involved in the public school business, tells a good deal of the kind of Americana that people from other countries and Minute Women from Texas find so hard to understand. "This is not the time to change our minds about universal education," says Mr. Larsen, who would not be where and what he is today except for the American public school. "This is the time to reaffirm that commitment."

Somewhere in the book Mr. Dreiman describes one town's all-citizen effort: "It was something like trying to reform the bad boy by putting him in charge of the Sunday School class." That's Americana, too, and there are worse ways of running the show.