

# HEDLEY S. DIMOCK

HIS LIFE AND ITS MEANING

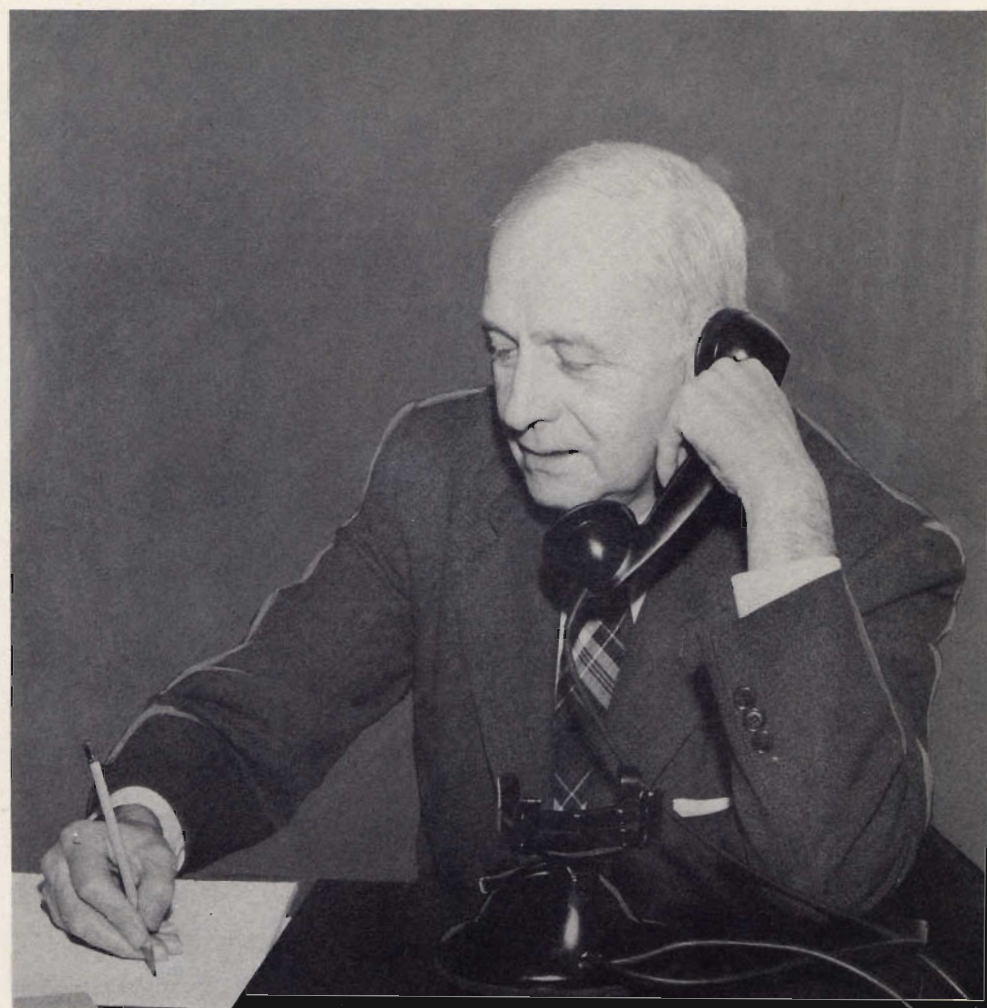
1891-1958

ADAPTED FROM A BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

BY

HIS STAFF COLLEAGUES OF THE YMCA  
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## DIMENSIONS OF THE LIFE OF HEDLEY S. DIMOCK

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## THE CALL TO REMEMBRANCE OF HEDLEY S. DIMOCK

Let us join our hearts in affection and grateful celebration of a good and triumphant life, in the resilient, buoyant mood and spirit so characteristic of Hedley Dimock.

Let us thank and praise God for his life, work and influence, realizing that rarely have we had the privilege of contemplating so rich a mind and spirit.

We are humbly aware that we cannot possibly do justice to the many dimensions and full quality of his life. But we have all been blessed by him and each of us in our own way will enter into this period ready for Hedley's living spirit to be more deeply etched upon us as we contemplate his life as a whole.

And as our hearts are lifted to God in each other's presence we are mindful of the host of men and women, not here today, whose lives have been touched by Hedley. Close colleagues who passed on before him: Taylor Statten, Rolland Schloerb, Edwin Aubrey, Edward Jenkins, Jay Urice and a host more. And many alive who could they be here would add immeasurably to our service: hundreds of former colleagues in camp, colleges and YMCA, and literally thousands of former students.

Those of us on the staff of the YMCA of San Francisco were especially privileged to have the stimulation and companionship of his last, ripe years. Because of that privilege and our love for him we assemble on what would have been his 68th birthday to remember him joyfully and gratefully.

### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: YOUTH AND EDUCATION

Hedley S. Dimock was born in Nova Scotia, Canada, on February 11, 1891. After a brief time in Boston, as a boy, his family moved to the north country of Saskatchewan to homestead land. Homestead land was free land, in the wilderness, away from towns, railroads and even roads. In order to gain title to the property the family was required to live on the land the year around, to build a home, to clear a certain amount of the land each year, and to till the soil. Adding to the difficulties of doing this, were the months of bitter, sub-zero weather and a heavy annual snowfall.

As a boy Hedley must have had a man-sized job to do. Yet there is beauty and closeness to reality in the wilderness. There is the feeling of achievement which comes from enduring the severest hardships which nature can impose, and of triumphing over them. This pioneering spirit

showed clearly in the style of Hedley's life, and it had a marked effect upon his teachings.

When Eustace Haydon first met Hedley he was driving a laundry truck in Saskatchewan. In 1916 he joined a Canadian Light Infantry Regiment, the "Princess Pats," and went to France. His war record was good enough to have been written up in Canadian papers. During a night raid he was badly wounded by a hand grenade. In the long hospital siege which followed he re-thought his whole position about war and relations among peoples which thereafter made the world his community and all men his brothers.

After the war Hedley entered the University of Saskatchewan, and graduated in 1920. He began his YMCA career in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and served in Winnipeg, Manitoba and in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Nineteen hundred twenty-two was a big year. On August 17th he married Marguerite Gardiner of Regina, Saskatchewan, who was to be his life-long companion and mother to Dorothy, Hedley, Jr. and Christine. In the fall the newlyweds went to Chicago where they both entered the University of Chicago. Hedley received his M.A. there in 1925, his B.D. in 1926, and his Ph.D. in 1926: Dr. Haydon writes that he was an outstanding student and that the examining committee for his Ph.D. regretted that the university had abolished grades, otherwise he would have been given "summa cum laude."

In 1926-27 he was an instructor in psychology and education at Carlton College in Minnesota and in 1927 began his career at George Williams College as Professor of Religious Education.

The rise in a decade from homesteader to scholar, from soldier to religious educator, from small town YMCA boys' worker to Dean of YMCA Professional Educators seems incredible but came as no surprise to friends who knew Hedley intimately.

#### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: TEACHER AND DEAN

Hedley Dimock came to George Williams College at the beginning of Dr. Edward Jenkins' presidency. Together they formed a team of unusually high-level intellectual leadership. As Hedley said at Dr. Jenkins' memorial service, "Hardly had the din of inauguration died down before the faculty was zestfully at work re-thinking the nature of the professional functions for which they were training and the educational philosophy of the college." Hedley never ceased to probe energetically the

bearing of growing resources of social science, religious education and research upon the functions of the institutions working with youth and the corresponding educational policies of the College.

As a consequence, Hedley Dimock and George Williams College in the Thirties pioneered much in informal education, religious education, methods of supervision, group measurement, group work and camping.

While Hedley's mark upon the College through a quarter of a century was profound and nationally significant, his personal influence upon thousands of students during that period is the most meaningful product of an amazingly productive life. He was a challenge to the best minds. He had penetrating insight about students, their abilities, weaknesses, problems and potentials. His irritations were always against shoddy work, mediocrity and lack of clarity; never were they against persons. Students who were appointed to the "Dimock reader" portfolio were doubly privileged. To read critically reams of term papers required understanding of the essence of the professor's lecturing. And to expect concise viewpoints, tight paragraphs and integrated chapters benefitted readers because Dean Dimock was their tutor.

High points of his leadership at the College were registered with students at Homecoming, Fall Orientation or Senior-Faculty Retreat. Not a few of these talks ended with the lines taken from the motto over the stage of the Goodman Theater:

"You, yourself, must set fire to the faggots you have brought."

This was the key to his educational philosophy and method: the responsibility for learning is that of the learner; the responsibility for your life is yours; the good life must be achieved; it cannot be given. He frequently referred to his role in class or conference as pump-priming. Remember him saying, "Even if the water you put in is warm and muddy, with some elbow grease, a flow of cool and crystal clear water comes up." Hedley inspired many people. He primed many pumps. He opened the way for others to experience the adventure of creative living.

#### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: SOCIAL SCIENTIST\*

Hedley Dimock was one of a group of social scientists who, thirty years ago, engaged in studies and experiments that led to radically new views about aims and methods in the work of organizations engaged in religious and character education. Old assumptions about leadership,

\*Written by L. K. Hall, January 10, 1959.

curriculum, discipline, the testing of results, were sharply challenged. For YMCA's, churches and other organizations to accommodate their practices in group work, camping, counselling, leadership training and supervision, membership recruiting, to the new insights, called for changes that often alarmed and disturbed those accustomed to traditional methods. To them, Hedley sometimes seemed to be an iconoclast. As time went on, however, it became clear that he was probably the one among the social scientists who best understood the organizations involved, who had had most first-hand experience in their work, and who shared most fully their long-range concerns.

He deserves to be remembered as a bridge-builder between science and practice, finding within the on-going work of character and religious education problems needing to be looked at scientifically, defining these problems, setting up experiments, and making studies, not in detached laboratories, but within the actual practice of camping, scouting, YMCA boys' work, and church schools. He analyzed the results and helped recast practices in the light of new knowledge. From the wider fields of social science he selected what was relevant, and in his teaching, in his writing for professional journals, in his innumerable addresses before professional and volunteer groups, he interpreted these things and suggested their applications.

The challenge he thus brought to many hundreds of youth leaders was to put facts in place of guesswork, tested procedures in place of rule-of-thumb methods, honest appraisal, even when it hurt, in place of wishful thinking.

His warm and gay personality overcame aloofness and led many persons to find happy and satisfying adventure in their efforts to analyze and rebuild what they were doing. The mood he engendered is illustrated by a remark Maude Royden once made: "When I die," she said, "and my heart is examined, I hope that at its center will be found these words, 'Put your brains into your religion'." That is exactly what Hedley wanted to be true of all of us. He set the example. He showed us how to do it.

In attacking the problem of a better understanding of adolescent behavior, he broke past the focus on developmental psychology and showed the definitive role of the widening circles of social contacts, as a youngster grows toward adulthood. Before the word "sociometry" was in common use, he invented and used sociometric techniques which revealed

the differing dynamics among groups of young people organized in different ways and in different settings. From this came a flood of light on why some things work and other things don't work. An element of predictability—which is the genius of science—was added to our work from that source. *Rediscovering the Adolescent* was more than a record of things learned about youth. It was a record of new methods of discovery that have become almost commonplace among all thoughtful leaders of youth today.

Hedley's influence on camping, which had become encrusted with a rigid mass of formula, was greater than in any other field. Taylor Statten, owner and director of Camp Ahmek, opened the way for five years of experiment in which Hedley and his highly competent colleague, Charles Hendry, analyzed every aspect of camping: leadership, program, administration, training, evaluation. The total life of the camp was reconstructed step-by-step in the process. *Camping and Character*, the record of this study, is probably the most influential single book on camping yet written.

The recruiting, training and supervision of volunteer leaders in group work called for another notable series of inquiries. Many of the conventional methods were seen to be useless, some even harmful or dangerous. Those methods which are effective in the light of group work aims and objectives were identified, and this knowledge guides us today.

It was fitting that Hedley's distinguished career should reach its summit with his leadership in redesigning the San Francisco YMCA program. Here is a superb demonstration of social science as the handmaiden of character and religious education.

An adequate appreciation of Hedley's work must note that he was as much prophet as he was scientist. There is a true sense in which he was controlled by "wishful thinking." His eyes were always on the far goals. He never cared to be the pure scientist, detached from the scene in which human effort works out its dreams. In every human life, in every human situation he saw potential values that he cared for with all his heart. It was in behalf of these that he worked. The vision of the "beloved community" lured him on. The way toward it was not by means of the dedicated heart, but by eyes that see clearly and minds that think surely. He put motives and knowledge together. In him we had one of the most precious of human achievements: scientist and prophet in one.



## HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AGENT

Hedley was such a warm, friendly person that it is not easy to think of him in the more formal light of an institutional change agent. Yet in its finest sense this is what he was. Hedley did not make an impact upon agencies. Rather he had the unusual knack of getting into the life stream of the organizations with which he was related and making his contribution from within. The evidence of this is abundant.

Few people have left their mark upon camping as had Hedley S. Dimock. The previous section written by Dr. L. K. Hall comments upon the significance of that contribution. The Camping Institutes at George Williams College in Chicago through the Thirties, with the resulting series of monographs, made an impact upon camping practice in the midwest which was revolutionary. His leadership in the American Camping Association was without peer. His development of camp standards and his tireless effort to bring them into functional reality constitute a contribution by one man without parallel in other institutions.

During the span of his professional life Hedley made lasting contributions to many agencies—among them the Boy Scouts of America, Jewish Community Centers, public <sup>recreation</sup> relations, and a variety of church organizations. As the National Director of USO Program and Headquarters Services during World War II he brought focus and enrichment to this organization and its program for the Armed Services personnel.

Perhaps Hedley's most significant role was as change agent in the YMCA. Through such memorable ABWS meetings as Blue Ridge 1932 and Geneva 1936, through the Professional Educational Committee, through the Conference on the Association Profession and through A.O.S. Conferences, Hedley made his mark. Giving freely of himself and his time, he made a substantial contribution to the YMCA movement through local staff and A.O.S. consultations. The steady stream of Hedley's students coming out of George Williams College have multiplied this contribution to the local Association many times.

To the staff of the YMCA of San Francisco, Hedley's latter years seem like the fruition of his prior training and experience. The man who wrote *Rediscovering the Adolescent* returned to an early love with the San Francisco Y. Here Hedley worked in many ways at various levels to bring about the change to which he and the Association were dedicated. We remember him as a friendly colleague sitting across a desk, as a contributing and stimulating member of branch staffs, as resource, stimula-

tor and inspiration at the level of Community Branch Staff Committee and other inter-branch committees. And, of course, we would recall the magnitude of his contribution as co-planner, architect and engineer to the YMCA of San Francisco as it has tried to change habitual ways of work acquired over a century. His formulation, as set forth in the "Guides," is a monumental achievement in itself. *Designing Education In Values* is more than a book which Hedley co-authored. For him, I think, and perhaps for us, it was a milestone on the road to a better tomorrow.

In St. Paul's Church in London lies the body of its great architect, Christopher Wren. The tablet over his tomb reads, "If thou seek his monument, look about thee."

Let him who seeks Hedley's monument look not to marble and stained glass but to the life-flow of the organizations with which he was identified and in the lives of men and youth who knew him along the way.

#### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: FRIEND AND COMPANION

Those who were privileged to work with Hedley know of his capacity for sociability and warm friendship. He worked hard but he was always ready for fun and relaxation. His way of life always included sports: football at Saskatoon; track, in which he was an outstanding mile runner in Canada; handball and golf at the College; canoe trips at Ahmek. In his desk, after his death, we found the cumulative bowling scores of the last year of his life.

How he enjoyed parties! As the host in his own home or as the life of the party in other homes, he contributed warmly to sociability and fun. And what poetry he could compose for gifts at birthday or Christmas parties! During his last Christmas Hedley was Santa Claus fully rigged up in costume and whiskers for the children at the Y-Wives' party.

He was always a good companion and included Marguerite in his pleasures. They were a great couple to include in any party. Trips in the car to Yosemite, or to the Gold Rush towns, to Carmel, or across the country, were a delight, and those who were privileged to accompany him remember the verses he would make up and put to music.

While he will be most widely remembered for his work, to his colleagues Hedley will be remembered equally for his buoyancy of spirit, his quick and ever-ready humor, and his capacity for fun.

## HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: A SUMMARY TRIBUTE

### Some Notes Concerning a Very Dear Friend\*

Homesteading left its mark on Hedley Dimock: indeed one might say that the qualities of the homesteader were built into his very character structure. His frame was deceptively rugged and his capacity for physical endurance, whether in chopping firewood, portaging a canoe, fighting in the front lines or playing a strenuous game of handball, quite remarkable. Conditioned by austerity and schooled in frugality and hard work, he carried on in this spirit to the end. He felt most at home when engaged in tough, demanding tasks requiring extreme ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Hedley Dimock's mind was restless, disciplined and productive. He was in essence critical-minded but basically constructive, always probing beneath the surface, questioning untested assumptions, seeking out the true facts. His central aim in life seemed to be to construct a solid theoretical and research base upon which to erect sound program policy in the field of work with youth. To trace the sequence of his wide and varied connections with youth leaders and youth services and the ever-expanding reach of his mind better to understand how to meet the needs of youth, is to follow a dedicated spirit in search of a generic philosophy of religion, a functional social psychology and a problem-centered liberalism.

In his personal relationships, whether with colleagues, students or friends, Hedley Dimock combined sensitivity and kindness with frankness and severity. He respected intellectual integrity. He abhorred slovenly, irresponsible behavior. He enjoyed life and laughter and took delight in sharing humorous stories. Everything he did and every relationship he entered into was with serious intent. He was tenaciously loyal to his friends. However busy he was he seemed always to have time for banter, for companionship and for thoughtfulness. Time scheduled for relaxation was as zealously guarded as time for teaching. For years he worked in his study at home regularly, evening after evening, until one and two and later in the morning.

Hedley Dimock was a prodigious worker. He identified areas which he thought required systematic analysis and development, as in organized camping, religious education, adolescent behavior, supervision, group education for values, etc., and he set himself a rigorous program of

\*Written by C. E. Hendry from Benares, India, January 27, 1959.

research and production. Typically he enlisted collaboration and he shared the credit as well as the arduous labor involved, generously and graciously with his associates. He sought to serve not only the YMCA, to which he was deeply devoted, but all persons, professional and non-professional, engaged in functions similar to the YMCA, in the somewhat ill-defined field of informal education, cutting across education, social work and recreation.

### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: SPIRIT OVER BODY

It was in the last years that we saw a rare demonstration of spirit over body. We witnessed and were partners in Hedley's two-and-a-half-year struggle with illness, surgery and declining physical powers. Few men would continue their life course after the first radical operation in February, 1956, bringing with it necessary adjustments in living habits. How he fought back to resume his dedicated mission! And when the second bout with the surgeon seemed to doom him to the impossibility of recovery he surprised the doctors by opening his summer office at the Peninsula Y in those few precious afternoon hours when he was free from medical routine.

Such steadfastness of purpose, discipline, continuation of work and contribution, resilience of spirit, unflinching intellectual integrity and characteristic integration have left an indelible mark on those of us who were his companions.

His poise, cheerfulness and dedication to his ideal when he knew death was near will always be an inspiration to those who loved him. His spirit truly transcended and triumphed over his broken and worn out body.

### HEDLEY S. DIMOCK: HIS HERITAGE

Hedley Dimock has left us. Much went with him in his going, much from his many intimate friends, from his former students, from his YMCA of San Francisco colleagues, from professional education, and from the YMCA movement.

How some of us wish we might see him again: constructing creative synthesis out of discussion; distributing brilliant documentation at the beginning of a meeting; taking meticulous notes; generously and creatively criticizing a friend's manuscript, doing far more than editing English, actually evaluating ideas and putting his finger on illogic, bad or-

ganization, or loose assumptions. We remember quickening thought and fortifying values.

But he also left much with us. He left with us his devotion to work for higher values; his objective, scholarly, systematic and factual way of work; his high standards of excellence and his critical disrespect of mediocre and pedestrian work; his discontent with rule-by-thumb methods; his blend of the scientific temper and the religious spirit; and his warmth of personality and respect for persons. For these Hedley Dimock will always be an inspiring symbol for us.

We have the heritage of what he was, and did, and aspired to, and part of that rubbed off on us and is in us. And he left with us the spirit and the goal.

He was fond of quoting John Bunyan, Mr. Valiant for Truth,

“My sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it.”