

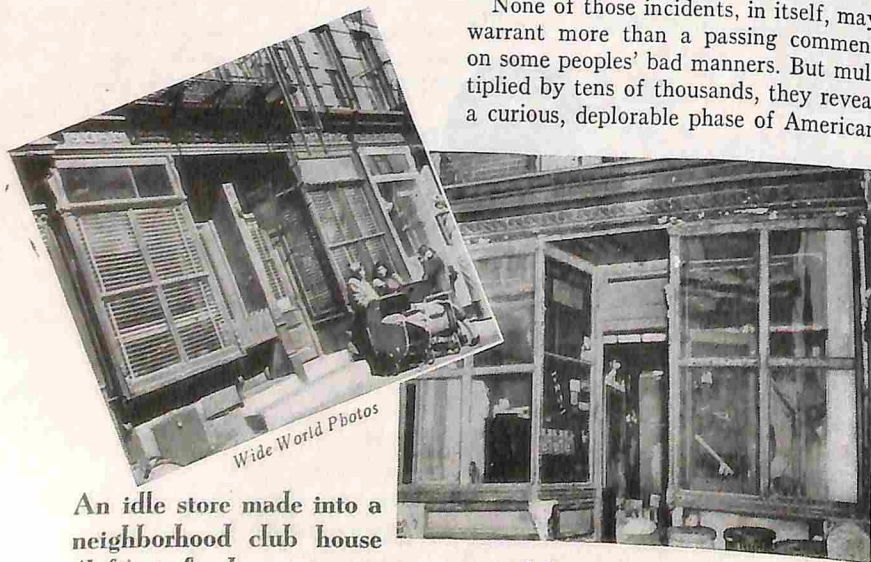
ELSIE A. PARRY

Courtesy of the New York City Department of Parks

Need We Be Vandals?

SCENE 1: A lumbering steam roller smoothing fresh asphalt on a street repair job. A small girl steps deliberately on the soft surface and starts to gouge out heel marks. As the roller approaches and the driver shouts, she steps back, not too hurriedly. Then, as it passes, she renews her attack, ignoring the man's exasperated protests. Her mother, who has watched complacently, gives the driver an indignant look, calls, "Come along, Mary," and the two walk away. . . . SCENE 2: In a certain high school, at the opening of a term, a classroom is supplied with fifty brand new typewriters and fabricoid covers. Less than two months later, not a single cover in good condition can be found; they have been, literally, cut to ribbons by the teen age boys who are being taught how to type. Not one machine has escaped damage at their destructive hands, and three already need factory rebuilding. . . . SCENE 3: A fine, lakeside fruit farm in upper New York State. For some years automobile parties were permitted to picnic without charge on a bluff above the water. Now the area is securely fenced. "Had to do it," the owner explains. "People took my fruit, tore up my trees for firewood, started brush fires, broke bottles on the beach, left rubbish and garbage all over the place."

None of those incidents, in itself, may warrant more than a passing comment on some peoples' bad manners. But multiplied by tens of thousands, they reveal a curious, deplorable phase of American



Wide World Photos
An idle store made into a neighborhood club house

(left) is far less a temptation to vandalism than it is while vacant

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