Youth Violence Prevention: What’s Dueling Got to Do with It?

Subtitle: Evidence that Violence Is Preventable!

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A Public Health Concern for 23+ Years

• Why interpersonal violence became a public health concern
  – Magnitude of the problem
  – Characteristics of violence
  – Contact health professionals have w/victims and perpetrators
  – Application of public health strategies to understanding and preventing it
International comparisons of homicide rate per 100,000 population (males, aged 15-24) in the years 1986 or 1987
Murder Is No Accident: 
The Boston Violence Prevention Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Violence Prevention Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Friends for Life-PSA Campaign Ad Council of Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>WEATOC Teen Theatre Group adds Violence Prevention to it Repertoire</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>South Boston Boys and Girls Club - Friends for Life Clubs and Violence Prevention Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents Published for Distribution</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Gang Peace</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Teens Against Gang Violence</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Mayor’s Safe Neighborhood Initiative</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Ten Point Coalition</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>WBZ TV Stop the Violence Campaign</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Community Policing in Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Louis D. Brown Peace Curriculum</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Cease Fire</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Strike Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Teen Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Cease Fire</td>
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Source: Boston Police Department
Sugar and Spice and No Longer Nice: The Third Wave

- The first wave – urban poor communities (mostly males)
- The second wave - suburban/rural/small town school violence
- The third wave – girls and young women
- Is there a fourth wave? – younger children and violence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny-theft</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curfew/loitering</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaways</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MY PLEDGE FOR PEACE

I will treat others the way I would like to be treated.

I will respect the diversity of all people. Sometimes we see the same differences on the outside, but it is the person we are on the inside that counts.

I will use a peaceful language. Thinking, and realizing that I can instead I can help me have a peaceful attitude to do so.

I will have a positive attitude. Thinking, and realizing that I can instead help me have a peaceful attitude to do so.

My Pledge for Peace Card
Peace begins with me!
What’s Dueling Got to Do with It?

Derrick Cordy,
Dina Johnson,
Sava Amelash
and Deborah Prothrow-Stith
American Dueling
Definitions

• **Dueling**: A prearranged, formal combat fought with weapons between two persons in the presence of witnesses, usually to settle a quarrel or point of honor.

• **Youth Violence**: The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, exerted by or against children, adolescents or young adults, ages 10–29, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

Timeline

- 16th Century – Dueling documented in Europe
- 1620 – First American duel documented and only a handful noted until 1760
- 1640 – Race based ban – no free Mullatoes, Negroes or Indians could own guns
- 1718, 1728 – Duels in Boston - laws passed - punishment - sit in the gallows
- 1775 – 1783 American Revolutionary War
- 1775 – VA – can’t hold an office if you duel
- 1778 – Generals in the “new” US army dueled
- 1802 – NC
- 1804 - former Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Vice-President Aaron Burr duel
- 1809 – TN
- 1810 – VA – Anti-dueling Act – made “fighting words’ libel, an offense
- 1815 – Illinois
- 1816 – GA
- 1819 – AL
- 1822 – Miss.
- 1822- SC elected Governor John Lyde Wilson, a dueler and author of the Code
- 1832 – Law in FL – offense to call a man a coward for refusing a duel
Timeline

- 1838 - The Code of Honor, or Rules for the Government of Principals and second in Dueling printed
- 1839 – Miss. Includes attending surgeons in the list of those who can be charged
- 1842 – the only person convicted under NY anti-dueling law - two years and pardoned
- 1844 – GA Supreme Court race-based gun laws are upheld because – not citizens
- 1858 – Miss. Granted amnesty to 15 duelers
- 1860 – CA interpretation of a law indicates that killing in a duel is NOT murder
- 1861 – 1865 – Civil War
- 1866 – Kentucky’s last duel
- 1880 – Challenged “gentleman Senator Mahone – simply refused to fight
- 1990 – New Mexico State vs. Romero – last reported case with charges of dueling
Bloody Island
Similarities to Explore

- Gender
- Rules, Totems and Culture
  - Codes of Honor
  - Codes of Silence
  - Role of “Seconds”
- Alternative to the usual process of justice
- Role of Witnesses
- Illegality – multiple approaches
- Employment status
- Precipitating Event - History of disagreement/feud
- Social Norms – Something to prove
  - Valued principles more than his life
  - Valued gang-family more than his life
- Consequences of Not Dueling – refusal proved you were not worthy of loyalty
- Role of the Media
Social Norms to Explore

• Going to Court to defend against libel was a sign of cowardice and weakness – telling the teacher makes you a wimp
• About “small” things
• Anti-violence movement and anti-dueling
• Social norms trumped laws
• Prove a man of honor – prove you are not a wimp
• Need an honorable “out” – football and banned from office/piety (not newly discovered piety)
TO THE PUBLIC.

The object of this placard is to inform the Public that Gen. Leigh Read has declined giving to me an apology for the insult offered me at St. Marks, on the 5th inst. That he has also refused to me that satisfaction, which as an honorable man, (refusing to apologise,) he was bound to give. I therefore pronounce him a Coward and a Scoundrel.

WILLIAM TRADEWELL.

Tallahassee, Oct. 26, 1839.
Number of Newspapers in the United States
Clay-Randolph Duel

Although dueling was illegal in Virginia, Secretary of State Henry Clay challenged U.S. Senator John Randolph of Roanoke. Clay called Randolph out to defend his honor after Randolph insulted him in a speech on the Senate floor. Randolph confided to Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri that he had no intention of hurting Clay, who was married and had a child. The duel took place on 8 April 1826 a half mile north at Pimmit Run. Both first shots missed their intended targets. Clay’s second shot also missed, and Randolph raised his pistol and fired it in the air. The duel then ended, and the unhurt adversaries met each other halfway and shook hands.
Pledge For Peace

1. I am true to the oath I have just taken.
2. I am kind to others and work to make them happy.
3. I am honest and will tell the truth.
4. I am diligent and will work hard.
5. I am fair and will treat others the same way I want to be treated.
6. I am grateful for the many gifts God has given me.
7. I am proud of my country.
8. I am a good student and will work hard in school.
9. I am a good citizen and will do my part to make the world a better place.
10. I am thankful for my family and friends.

I will try my best to be all these things.
Some Noteworthy Differences

- Temporal – antebellum and 21st century
- Prearranged vs “random”
- Two vs more people
- Level of empathy (legally and culturally) for those engaged in murder
- Race
- Gender (Emerging Female Violence)
How many Duels were there? How Common a Practice was It?

Jack K. Williams, *Dueling in the Old South*:

In Mississippi in the 1840s, duels were said to be "as plenty as blackberries."

Fox Butterfield, *All God’s Children: The Boskett Family*:

An “undercount” yields a rate in Edgefield, SC from 1844-1858 of 18/100,000 per year with a 1991 Louisiana rate of 17.4/100,000

Harriet Martineau, famous authoress and traveler, wrote:

"It is understood that in New Orleans there were fought, in 1834, more duels than there are days in the year, fifteen in one Sunday morning; that in 1835, there were 102 duels fought in that city between the 1st of January and the end of April and no notice is taken of shooting in a quarrel..."
Some Data Sources for Antebellum Violence

• 1880 – H. V. Redfield – used newspaper accounts and calculated in 1878 three Southern States (SC, KY, TX) had rates of 12 - 28/100,000. That year MA had a rate and VT and NH (rural like the South) had only one murder. SC had 128 actual duels. NY’s rate was 3-7/100,000 throughout the 1800s.

• Coroner records – e.g. 65 murders in Edgefield, SC (town of 24,000 Blacks and Whites) between 1844-185800 (rate of 18/100,000) – murders were all whites – not sure the denominator

• The Political Grave Yard – a website listing politicians and their cause of death (including dueling).

• The Militant South (1800-1861) – John Hope Franklin

• Carnival of Blood: Dueling, Lynching, and Murder in South Carolina, (1880-1920) John Hammond Moore

• Notes on Duels and Dueling (written 1855) – Lorenzo Sabine


• Famous American Duels, with Some Account of the Causes that Led up to Them and the Men Engaged. 1966. Seitz.
“Cordy” U.S. Dueling Data Base

- 280 Duels and Challenges
- 279 Caucasian Male Duels + 1 Caucasian Female Duel (Hall-Hurley) + Zero Minorities (African-American or Otherwise)
- 37 participants thus far we have been able to calculate the age (and we are currently working to calculate ages of the remaining duelers based on congressional records and birth certificates)
- 201 with the year of Duels and Challenges
- 135 Duels that we know the location thus far (132 in US+ 2 Duels occurred by Americans overseas+ 1 Challenge was sent by an American to a Frenchmen)

Current plans are to use a “Wikipedia” approach to collecting and accessing information on duels in United States
Database

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Number of Duels per Decade

![Bar chart showing the number of duels per decade from 1600 to 1899. The chart has X-axis representing the decades from 1600-1799 to 1850-1859 with bars indicating the number of duels in each decade. The Y-axis is unlabeled but likely represents the number of duels. The chart shows a peak in the 1850-1859 decade with a significant number of duels.]

- 1600-1799: Very low number of duels
- 1800-1809: Increased number of duels
- 1810-1819: Further increase in duels
- 1820-1829: Moderate number of duels
- 1830-1839: Moderate to high number of duels
- 1840-1849: Significant increase in duels
- 1850-1859: Peak with the highest number of duels
- 1860-1869: Significant drop in duels
- 1870-1879: Few duels
- 1880-1889: Very few duels
- 1890-1899: Very low number of duels
Age of Principals (n=37)
Proposed Research Agenda

• Expand our research team to include anthropologists, historians and journalists
• Complete to the extent possible the information on the 280 duels currently in the Cordy Data Base
• Create a Duels and Challenges Data Base that is a compilation of multiple sources (history books, census data, death certificates, newspapers, dissertations, family records, etc.) – Wikipedia Approach
  – Electronic Data base
  – Selected/qualified users are able to input data
  – Wide spread access
• Understand any implications for contemporary youth violence prevention that are inherent in the successful end of dueling
• Understand the Role of Violence in Society
What Can Be Learned from the End of Dueling?

• Laws not directly responsible for ending dueling
• Culture and Social norms seemed more important
• Massachusetts – duelist were treated like suicides
• Most effective law might have been that a dueler could not run for office – though the practice of granting amnesty consistently mitigated any impact.
• Role of Wars: Revolutionary War and the Civil War
• Litigation became an honorable way to resolve issues of libel and other offenses
Hamilton’s Pros and Cons

Cons
• Wife and Children
• Deeply in debt
• Bore Burr no ill-will
• Illegal in NY
• Condemned by Christianity

Pros
• Pressing necessity not to decline the call
• Cost him political support
• Essential to his ability to be useful in the future
It is a permanent and universal interest of mankind that men should not kill each other; but the particular and momentary interest of a nation or class may in certain cases make homicide excusable or even honorable. Honor is nothing but this particular rule, based on a particular state of society, by means of which a people distributes praise or blame.—Alexis de Tocqueville
Thank You
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