Foster children's attitudes toward foster care

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http://hdl.handle.net/2144/18595

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FOSTER CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES
TOWARD FOSTER CARE

A thesis

Submitted by
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(A.B., Clark University, 1948)
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Social Service
1961
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for the Selection of Sample</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Selection of Sample</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FOSTER CARE READINGS AND RESEARCH</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation Trauma and Problems</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Home Adjustment Problems</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of Separation and Rejection</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of Closeness</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing His Own Identity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of Long-Term Foster Care</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care Research</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE DIVISION OF CHILD GUARDIANSHIP</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Adjustment</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Work Adjustment</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE FOSTER CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP TRIAD</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Relationship</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Parent-Child Relationship</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker-Child Relationship</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. MONEY SYMBOLS AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material and Emotional Well Being</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. THE FOSTER CHILD'S FEELINGS, FANTASIES AND FEARS</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Image</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Toward Being &quot;On the State&quot;</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Toward Getting &quot;Off the State&quot;</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: SCHEDULES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Background Information</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Foster Parent-Child Relationship</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Parent-Child Relationship</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Social Worker-Child Relationship</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Community-Child Relationship</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. LETTER SENT TO INTERVIEWEES</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Background Factors of Sample</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Multiple Physical, Personality, Social and Neglect Factors Which Resulted in Foster Care of the Children</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Families Which Were Known to Social Agencies, Public and Private Institutions and the Courts at the Time of Placement</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Placement Factors</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Educational, Vocational and Social Achievement</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Formulation of the Problem

This study was stimulated by the writer's experiences as a social worker in the Worcester Office of the Massachusetts Division of Child Guardianship. After almost six years of observations and impressions derived from working with foster children, she felt there was a need for a more detailed study of placement from the foster child's point of view. A good deal has been written in books, pamphlets, journals and unpublished materials from the viewpoint of the foster child and his separation and adjustment problems but most of this literature is based on the secondary experiences and clinical observations of social workers and other professional people working in the field of child welfare rather than on the first-hand subjective experiences and attitudes of the foster child. The writer feels that much can be gained from asking the foster child to speak for himself.

Many research studies including several master's theses have utilized the case study in attempting to evaluate the reasons for the success or failure of foster care or the adjustment of foster children by studying the children in placement. At the time this study was formulated, the only known research in this field based primarily on the direct interview method were the Theis and the Roe and Burks studies which were focused on the adult adjustment of former foster children. While the writer's research was in progress, Weinstein's findings dealing with the self-image of the foster child based on interviews with foster children
of varying ages was published.

The writer's viewpoint in the present study is different from any of the above-mentioned studies in that the focus is primarily on the subjective foster care experiences while in care of a sample of former foster children who were interviewed after discharge from care. However, there are some overlapping areas of content between this thesis and the three above-mentioned studies, particularly in the areas of attitudes and relationships between foster children and foster parents and the foster child's self-image.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study, which is descriptive and exploratory in nature, was to evaluate the positive and negative experiences of former foster children placed in foster homes in the Worcester District of the Massachusetts Division of Child Guardianship. The emphasis throughout the thesis was on the subjective experiences of the sample studied since the writer felt that the feelings, attitudes and opinions of the foster children were as real to them and are as important to the social worker as the more objective "facts" of their lives. The study also attempted to explore the possibility that there are some common problems and experiences which are shared by all foster children.

The scope of this study was very broad and covered a number of major areas of the foster children's lives. The four major areas which were delineated for analysis were: (1) the community adjustment of the foster

See CHAPTER II for details concerning these research studies and major findings.
children, particularly their school and work adjustments and their social relationships with peers; (2) the foster children's relationships with their own parents, foster parents and social workers; (3) the relationship between the children's foster home adjustment, attitudes toward foster care and emotional maturity and their attitudes toward money and material goods; and (4) the foster children's self-image and their feelings about being "on the State" and getting "off the State."

It is hoped that the data and conclusions which derived from this study will be useful in improving services to foster children, foster parents and own parents in the future. It is also hoped that the writer's findings will stimulate and suggest further research on this or similar subjects.

Criteria for the Selection of Sample

Although the foster child will reveal many of his feelings and attitudes to his foster parents and social workers, while he is still in placement he is apt to be guarded in stating his fears, complaints and views freely. There may be several reasons for this. The foster child may basically feel that he cannot trust adults because of past family or present foster home experiences and may feel that what he might say will not be kept confidential. He may also fear that complete frankness on his part, particularly if he reveals anything negative, will bring him punishment or reprimand from his parents, foster parents, or social worker and might affect his relationship with them.

Many foster parents also might feel threatened by a study of any foster child who is currently living with them and their anxiety may be projected onto the foster child. In addition, the child in placement may
be too emotionally involved and immature to sort out his feelings in any understandable manner and to evaluate his experiences, and interviewing him may lead to further confusion and problems in his placement.

For these reasons, the writer decided that (1) only foster children who had been discharged from care would be studied as she felt that (2) children who were self-supporting, self-directing and on their own would be more candid in what they revealed. Because the writer has been particularly interested in the identity problems of the children in long-term foster care—the adolescents—she decided to include (3) only those children who had been in foster care at least during their adolescent years, (4) who were discharged at the end of their teens, and (5) who at the time of discharge had not gone back to live with their own families. (6) A minimum of three years in placement was felt by the writer to be necessary to reveal the problems of long-term foster care and to give the foster children sufficient experience upon which to base their attitudes and opinions.

The writer also felt that children who were in foster care during late adolescence and (7) who were discharged within the last three years should have a better memory for subjective and objective events than those who were discharged from care several years ago or those who were in care when they were young children but who have since returned to their own homes. Time has a way of dulling and distorting memories. And since both boys and girls are placed in the agency's foster homes, the writer felt that (8) both sexes should be included in the sample.

Scope and Selection of Sample

It was arbitrarily decided at the outset that approximately ten cases,
possibly five boys and five girls, might be a sufficient sample for the purposes and time limitations of this study. The final sample ultimately consisted of nine cases, six girls and three boys. To select this number, the discharge files of the DCG, Worcester Office, were searched for cases discharged during the two and a half year period from July 1, 1957, to December 31, 1959. This particular period was arbitrarily chosen so that the sample might include children who were very recently discharged and those who had been on their own for a year or two. The final sample included two who were discharged in 1957, three who were discharged in 1958 and four who were discharged in 1959.

In addition to those cases which were immediately eliminated because they did not meet the criteria which were set up, the writer also discarded any cases which had been under her supervision while she was employed as a social worker in the agency since she felt that those foster children might be reluctant to speak frankly about their foster home experiences, particularly in regard to their relationship with their social worker.

Even after the above exclusions were made, more cases were potentially available than could be used. It was therefore decided on the basis of the availability of the case records and of foster children for interviews to reduce the number of possible cases to the desired size of sample by eliminating further those children whose case records were sent to other district offices or those children who were currently living beyond a ten mile radius of Worcester. This process brought the number of cases which met the criteria and which were supposedly available for interviews to twelve. One young man eliminated himself by refusing to be interviewed.
The writer herself eliminated one young woman because of her serious speech and hearing difficulties and severe personality disturbance, thus leaving ten possible interviewees.

When one of the young men on the list failed to keep the interview appointments which were set up, even though he signified that he was willing to be a part of the study, the writer decided to use only the nine cases which remained. All the young men and women interviewed were most cooperative and shared their experiences freely, suggesting perhaps that there is a need for these former foster children to "get things off their chest" to some interested person. In no case did an interviewee seem disturbed by the experience.

Method of Study

Pertinent literature, theses and other unpublished material as well as previous research studies on foster care were reviewed to formulate the general problem and the nature of the present study. The writer also drew upon her experiences as a social worker and upon the suggestions of other social workers and supervisors in the field of child welfare to compile the areas of interest and questions in the Schedules, which can be found in the Appendix.

Focused interviews and a review of the case records were the two sources of data used. The case records were initially examined for face sheet information and family histories, first to determine whether the cases would meet the criteria for the study and then to compile the desired information for the analysis of the sample, using Schedule I. At first it was decided that the interviews would be the main source of data, but after they were completed the writer felt that a review of the case
records would further clarify the adjustment problems of the children studied and would aid in the interpretation of the interview data. Therefore, each child's case record was read carefully and notes were recorded in answer to the questions on the Interview Schedules.

A letter was sent to each prospective interviewee and followed up by a telephone call to set up an appointment. (See Appendix for letter.) The purpose of the study was explained to each interviewee and the confidentiality and anonymity of the replies were stressed. A few friendly questions of a general nature were used at first to establish rapport and these were followed by more detailed interviewing, using the Schedules.

The interviewing was flexible but structured. Both factual data and attitudes and feelings were sought. Each interviewee was encouraged to talk freely about his foster care experience by the use of open-end questions. The questions asked would sometimes be altered to fit the circumstances of the person being interviewed and those which did not apply were eliminated. Where the meaning of a response was not clear, further comments, questions or encouragement to explain or illustrate would be made by the writer. Where the interviewee did not spontaneously cover the particular data needed, specific questions would be asked to be sure all the areas were covered and to provide a basis for comparison of the nine interviews.

Limitations

There are several limitations. Since the sample is small, any conclusions drawn apply to the sample studied rather than to the foster child population as a whole. The sample of the male foster children studied was half the size of the sample of female foster children so that no worth-
while comparison could be made between the two sexes. Any research using direct interviewing depending upon memory as a method of study is subject to bias since there may be some distortion in the way the foster child as an adult sees and recalls his foster childhood and the way he actually experienced it. In addition, the verbal behavior as given in response to the researcher's inquiries may not necessarily reflect the interviewee's private attitudes and feelings. However, the writer feels that this particular sample of foster children were most frank and willing to give their viewpoints and feels that they gave by and large a true picture of their foster home experiences.

Any bias or distortion that was present tended to be corrected by the review of the case records. But the use of records also entails further limitations such as occasional incomplete recording which prevents the research worker from getting an accurate picture of the foster child and of the social worker's case work.
CHAPTER II
FOSTER CARE READINGS AND RESEARCH

Although foster care for neglected, rejected children was once considered a panacea and unfortunate children were being "rescued" from vice, degradation and harmful parents, today child welfare workers in this country consider removal of children from their own homes and placement with foster families a temporary method of child care and, at best, an inadequate substitute for the child's own home and parents. "We recognize today that every child who must leave his own home and live away from his own family suffers a profound emotional and social disturbance for which he can never be altogether compensated."¹

No matter how neglectful, cruel or rejecting his parents are, "to be unwanted by one's own family is one of the cruelest and most devastating blows that can befall a human being, and placement to the child is the final, irrevocable proof of that rejection."² It is no wonder that the child clings desperately to the only parents and security he has known and faces the future with blind terror and panic.

Ner Littner sees the placed child as having four tasks to perform in his adjustment to his new status as foster child: (1) mastering the feelings aroused by the actual separation from his own parents; (2) mastering


his feelings about being placed with new parent figures; (3) dealing with
the threat of separation of any kind from these parents; and (4) mastering
the threat of closeness to them. In addition, the child has the problem
of learning new attitudes and behavior and of establishing his own identity.

The separation of a child from his parent is merely a geographical
one. "He has to take the parent with him into placement, emotionally if
not bodily, until he is able to let him go and ready to use a therapeutic
substitute for the lost parent." The caseworker needs to help both the
child and the parent to come to terms with the separation; otherwise all
of her best efforts to give the child a constructive experience will be
undermined.

Separation Trauma and Problems

No matter what the realistic reason for the separation, the child
consciously or unconsciously is overcome with an overwhelming feeling of
abandonment with elements of loss, rejection, humiliation, complete in-
significance, worthlessness and helplessness.

The child reacts to his sense of abandonment and of helplessness
with a feeling of anger at the parent he feels has deserted him
. . . he tries to deny this with the exact opposite feeling -
that he is totally responsible for the abandonment. As an at-
tempted self-reassurance against his inner feelings of helplessness
and insignificance, the child blames himself for all the inci-
dents leading up to the separation. It is as though he is de-
claring that it is not true that he is a helpless, unimportant
pawn - actually he is the important one, completely responsible
for everything that has happened. This self-blame also helps him

3 Ner Littner, Some Traumatic Effects of Separation, p. 7.
4 Jeanne C. Pollock, "The Meaning of Parents to the Placed
deny his anger at his parents. He is the one who is bad, not they.  

Since he feels he is "bad," he also feels he deserves punishment and regards his removal from his own home as such. He expects retaliation for his intense feeling of anger toward his parents, both from his parents and foster parents. This fear of punishment is intensified in some children by an unconscious wish to get themselves hurt in an effort to achieve reconciliation with and forgiveness by their parents. It may also represent on the part of some children an attempt to prevent a more drastic punishment by themselves bringing on a lesser one. The child's unconscious wish behind this masochistic tendency is for the parent to take him back and to give him love and sympathy which he craves. Likewise, if the child is already hurt, no parent (natural or foster) would inflict further punishment on him.

The child's reaction to the trauma of separation and placement will depend in part upon his phase of physical and emotional development. The young infant will react physiologically to the loss with crying, loss of appetite and sleep, and apathy. At the height of the toddler's dependency, when needs and relationship are met by his mother, depression is common as well as regression in walking, toilet training or speech. Aggression and guilt feelings will also be noticed in children of this age as well as in older children. When the child reaches the oedipal phase of psychosexual development, his reaction to separation will be in terms of his

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5 N. Littner, op. cit., p. 8.

6 Ibid., p. 9.
oedipal conflicts and fantasies.

In addition, the newly-placed child usually displays fear and anxiety. If the shock of the placement is too painful for the child to bear, it is repressed and covered over by an expression of acceptance, spurious cheerfulness, apathy or withdrawal. Any placement worker has seen the child who chatters gaily about superficial subjects, the one who is eager to please and over-obedient, and the one who falls asleep on his way to the foster home because the pain of separation causes him too much anguish. The perceptive placement worker knows that all is not well.

The child who has had a warm and secure relationship with his parents before the separation occurs and the child whose parents maintain a close relationship with him during placement will probably experience less emotional upset and personality scars than the child who has never known parental affection and stability or whose relationship with his parents was abruptly terminated with placement.

Foster Home Adjustment Problems

Any adult who has felt the pangs of loneliness upon being thrust into a new environment away from loved ones can imagine with what great fright and confusion a child, with less experience and intellect, views his strange surroundings. The child's whole system of orientation and security is gone; he is thrown into a world of chaos and despair. He does

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8 Ner Littner, op. cit., p. 5.
not know where his bed or bureau is. His favorite toys are left behind. His mother is not there to comfort or even to scold him. The new routines of living, the new people and the new house seem equally strange and confusing, so in an attempt to comfort himself, he clings to any object such as a doll, bottle or coat that reminds him of his past life and security. 

The child tries to cope with his new situation by recreating his original home atmosphere in his new home and repeating behavior he once learned from his parents. "This behavior - whether it be soiling, acting out, provocativeness, or pseudo-maturity - was once completely realistic in the context in which it was learned in his original home. However, in his new home, his behavior is unrealistic." The child who can perceive the difference between these new parents and his own parents will be able to learn more mature ways of getting along with them and satisfying his own needs.

**Threat of Separation and Rejection**

Child welfare workers often notice the fearfulness with which the child clings to his new foster parents and does not dare to let them out of his sight lest he again be abandoned as he was by his own parents. In addition, the foster child often initially reacts to his caseworker with fear, distrust and anger since he perceives her as the person who removed him from his parents. Therefore, he may be especially sensitive to any experience that for him implies a threat of separation and replacement from his new parents.

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9 Buxbaum, op. cit., p. 13.

10 Ner Littner, op. cit., p. 18.
Such precipitating threats as their going away on vacation or to the hospital, or a new child coming into the home to live, or another child leaving the home may be external situations that awaken his anxiety about possible loss of his new parents.11

In an effort to make the child behave, the foster parents may unwittingly provoke this separation anxiety by threatening the child with removal. Also any change of caseworker reactivates his feelings of rejection and awakens the repressed traumatic experience of his original abandonment. One way the child can defend himself against this additional loss is to keep his emotional distance from his caseworker.

Fearing possible rejection from these new parents, the child takes steps to "woo them" during the usual four to six week "honeymoon period" when the child seems to adapt himself easily to routines and shows no inner tensions.12 As he begins to feel more secure in his new home, he needs to test his foster parents to see if he belongs and to see if they truly can be trusted to keep him. He needs to know that they will accept him when he is "naughty" as well as when he is "nice."

He can sometimes master his fear of abandonment and punishment by being the one who does the hurting through antagonizing the foster parents. By so doing he not only expresses his anger at his parents and foster parents but tests them in the process. "Some children try to master their anxiety about what they expect the new parents will do to them by actively precipitating the thing they fear most." They often act out to bring

11 Ibid., p. 12.
about their own rejection and replacement, thereby feeling that they are
the "strong ones."\textsuperscript{13} Since the only possible reasons in the child's mind
for his mother's leaving him is either that she is bad or that he is bad,
the child will be alternately very good or very bad according to his fan-
tasies.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Threat of Closeness}

As the child reaches out to form a relationship with his foster
parents which he so badly needs and wants, he reacts to this emotional
closeness with anxiety stemming from his previous experience of rejection
by his own parents whom he once dared love. He fears if he loves again,
he will be replaced. All his original separation feelings and fears are
again mobilized and in addition loving his new parents implies disloyalty
to the old.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Establishing His Own Identity}

Only when the child is able to live free from the fear of losing his
home again, only when he can be himself instead of a carbon copy of his
foster parents' ideal child image, can he establish an identity of his
own. Only then can he develop a character of his own and work through his
feelings of love, jealousy and competition in the oedipal phase. If there
are too many changes or replacements, he has little chance of making an
adequate heterosexual identification.

\textsuperscript{13} Ner Littner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 16-17.

\textsuperscript{14} Buxbaum, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{15} Ner Littner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.
Children who are moved more than once from place to place cannot develop characters of their own. They can only react first to one person and then to another; they will show characteristics of the person who "has no backbone," who is a "turn-coat." They are the ones who have not learned how to love; they do not trust anybody. They can only survive by a process of adaptation by which they change character with the environment, like chameleons change their colors. They are unhappy children who develop into unhappy adults.\(^{16}\)

Frequent replacement sets in motion whatever pathological processes are operating and takes its toll in the child's ego functioning. Unable to trust adults, the child shows a lack of responsiveness to others, denies the need for dependency and love relationships, and exhibits a shallowness of affect. He is unable to express constructively the hostile, sexual, dependent, and other impulses which have been excessively heightened by psychic and physical deprivation. He fails to identify positively with community and family values. The child's self-image is profoundly altered and he sees himself as a damaged, worthless, inferior being, or, defensively as an omnipotent, powerful, magical person. He often shows retardation in learning and motor activity with possible malfunctioning in specific areas.\(^{17}\)

All placed children are faced with the conflict of divided loyalties toward own parents and foster parents whether the parents visit or not. In fact, the influence of the parent who ceases to visit is often more deleterious than the parent who has kept up a relationship with his child. This is borne out by case histories of youngsters who during

\(^{16}\)Buxbaum, op. cit., p. 13.

their childhood made a "good adjustment" to foster care only to identify with the worst in their parents when they became adolescents. The influence of the absent or hidden parent is apparently stronger than the more stable parent who loved and nurtured the child or who kept up a relationship after placement. Why is this so? Jolowicz says:

... the child continues to maintain some kind of relationship to his parents long after separation has taken place. This relationship may be one that exists entirely in the child's inner life, with no counterpart in reality. It may be built upon fantasy that is both rose-tinted and poignant, on unexpressed hopes, or unfulfilled yearnings. Whatever these feelings are, part of their power over the child's behavior comes from the fact that they are hidden.18

Since oftentimes neither the foster parents nor the caseworker talks to the child about his parents, he can only assume that there is something terribly wrong with his parents and that he should not love them. On the other hand when the natural parents are criticized by others, the child often forgets his own resentment toward them and defends them out of a sense of loyalty. Since one way to get a loved person for whom a child yearns is to become like that person, at adolescence the girl becomes "boy crazy" and promiscuous like her mother and the boy takes to liquor like his father.19

The foster adolescent's rebellion against his foster parents, though following a normal pattern of gaining independence from parental figures, often is more extreme and an attempt to displace his resentment for not having his own parents or of not knowing about them. For this reason

19 Ibid., p. 5.
Caseworkers today understand the importance of encouraging the child to express his ambivalence about his parents, to keep portraits and other reminders of home and parents in a prominent place, and to keep the memory of the parents alive. Even if the parent is dead, or committed for life to a hospital for the criminally insane, or if on his own volition he is completely out of the life of the child placed in a boarding home . . . the social worker must take the initiative in talking to the child about what kind of people he came from, who they were, what they were like, and what the circumstances of their lives were that led to their placing their child.20

Problems of Long-Term Foster Care

In a study of foster children who had been in care for five years or longer, it was found that the problem of long-term care is primarily the problem of unwanted teen-age children.

Confused about their own identity and parentage, about their relationship to the agency and to the succession of workers and foster parents who have passed in and out of their lives, they present problems which now can be seen as primarily the result of placement . . . These are the children who, arrived at adolescence, are likely to draw back, loath to give up the security of their dependence; or else to rush toward self-support and from being "on the Welfare" into a premature independence for which they are unequipped.22

In a nation-wide survey of foster children in large and small communities, emotional disturbance was associated more with replacement than with length of time in care.23

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20 Ibid., p. 7.
Basic research is needed as to what best insures the emotional health of a child who is going to be in long-term foster care. . . Identifying the motivation that makes of parents good foster parents and then seeking out such families can do much to reduce the numbers of replacements in foster care . . .\textsuperscript{24}

In community after community it was clear from the data in the study that unless children move out of care within the first year to year and a half, the likelihood of their ever returning to their parents sharply decreases. This points out that early diagnosis and clear planning are necessary. However, more than 70 per cent of the fathers and mothers either had no or had erratic relationships with the child-care agencies involved. The research findings also indicated that parental ties are weakest where the child is placed in foster care in a location removed from the parents' place of residence.\textsuperscript{25}

**Foster Care Research**

Despite the many problems and pitfalls that foster children are heir to, on the whole these placed children have enough resiliency to weather the emotional storms and the majority of them are able to form positive relationships with foster parents and to make satisfactory foster home and adult adjustments. This seems to be the general conclusion of some studies that have been made of foster children in care and of the adult adjustment of former foster children. However, this does not mean that emotional scars are lacking, but rather that in spite of them, most children have turned out well.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 390.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 390-393.
Theis in a study of 910 young adults who were formerly placed in foster homes by the State Charities Aid Association of New York found that about 60 per cent of the children had satisfactory relationships with their foster parents, deriving satisfaction and confidence from them, and formed ties that were firm and lasting. In some cases they could hardly be distinguished from the natural relationship of parent and child. 

Another 25 per cent found the foster relationship temporarily satisfactory, i.e., both foster children and foster parents were reasonably satisfied with each other, but in many instances the children's loyalty to their own parents prevented a deeper attachment. Another 15 per cent found in the foster home relationship nothing permanent or satisfactory. Of the children placed under five, slightly more than 90 per cent found the foster relationship satisfactory; of the group placed after age five, only 40 per cent had a satisfactory relationship with their foster parents.

Although 80 per cent of the adult children in the study had come from very poor family backgrounds, 77 per cent were regarded as capable persons who had good standards; 11 per cent were considered "harmless" - neither

26 Sophie Van Senden Theis, How Foster Children Turn Out, p. 69.

27 Ibid., p. 70.

28 Ibid., p. 72.

29 Ibid., p. 118.
an asset nor a liability to society; while 12 per cent were found to be "at odds with society" or needing protection or training.  

Rogers confirms Theis' findings and points out that the better results attained from early placement show that the young child not only has less fixed personality patterns but is not as emotionally tied to his parents and former home, making him freer to respond to his foster parents as his own. The older child, though removed from his family, still keeps his emotional ties, whether positive or negative, to his own family and can only rarely find the security and affection which he needs in a foster home.

In a comparative study of foster children from four parent groups: (1) alcoholic, (2) psychotic, (3) alcoholic-psychotic, and (4) normal, Roe and Burks found that the children of the normal parentage group, who had more material and emotional advantages than the other groups, were much more satisfied with their upbringing and consequently showed more affection for their foster parents. It was found that the present attitude of the children toward their foster parents was primarily based on the children's early experience of affection or lack of it from their foster parents.

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30 Ibid., pp. 161-162.
31 Carl A. Rogers, Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child, pp. 86-87.
32 Anne Roe and Barbara Burks, Adult Adjustment of Foster Children of Alcoholic and Psychotic Parentage and the Influence of the Foster Home, p. 82.
One outstanding finding was that one-third of the foster fathers and foster mothers now disapprove of or dislike the children they brought up and feel that the experience has brought them more trouble and unpleasantness than rewards. There was a close correspondence between the attitudes of foster parents toward their foster children and foster children toward their foster parents. But in spite of poor heredity, mistreatment in the early years, and poor foster homes in some cases, most of these children turned out well.

In a study of 35 children under the care of the Memphis Children's Bureau for five years or longer, 23, or roughly two-thirds, were found to be making a good adjustment in foster care, ten were making only a fair adjustment and two were making a poor adjustment. These figures agree with the Theis and Roe and Burks findings. Of the 23 making a good adjustment, all had either Excellent or Good attitudes or feelings toward their boarding mothers and fathers and other members of the boarding family as well as toward school and community. The Fair or Poor attitudes of this group were usually around members of their own families, other children in the community and their own self-evaluation.

Of the ten children who were making a Fair adjustment, only six had positive feelings toward their boarding mothers and only three appeared to relate themselves positively to the boarding fathers. The majority of these children's inner feelings were rated as Fair or Poor.

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33 Ibid., p. 77
34 Ibid., p. 78.
35 Weissman, op. cit., p. 6.
Many of the children in this study had feelings of ambivalence or hostility toward their own parents despite the death or long absence of the parent or parents. Of the group who were permanently separated from their own parents, those few who had developed a healthy indifference toward them appeared to find more satisfaction in substitute family life than those who had feelings of hostility, ambivalence or even love for one or both parents. 36

Muller in a study of twelve foster homes found five patterns of identifications: (1) mutual primary identifications similar to those between parents and their own children; (2) mutual strong foster familial identifications while maintaining contact with relatives; (3) semi-professional attitudes, not unlike those between caseworker and client, with varying degrees of reciprocal affection; (4) mutually casual, impersonal but congenial relationships without establishment of familial identifications; and (5) rejective and prejudicial attitudes of foster parents with varying reactions from the foster children. 37

Of the twelve foster homes studied, it was found that ten foster fathers, or 83 per cent, felt that the experience of caring for foster children was satisfactory and pleasurable. Muller also found that only six foster families accepted the child's relatives with understanding and cordiality, the other six rejecting the natural parents. 38

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36 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
37 Margaret Gretchen Muller, "A Study of Twelve Foster Homes with Special Emphasis on Relationships Between the Family Group and the Foster Child," pp. 8-10.
38 Ibid., p. 106.
worthy was the finding that in seven of the twelve foster homes the foster mothers were the dominating and outstanding personalities. In the experience of the writer, this mother dominance seems to be characteristic of many foster families.

Weinstein's research involving interviews with 61 children in foster care under the supervision of the Chicago Child Care Society does not completely agree with the Memphis study. He views the child's predominant family identification as an integral part of the child's notion of who he is and an important factor in his well-being in placement. He outlines three major identification patterns: (1) with natural parents, (2) with foster parents, and (3) mixed identifications in which the child has not resolved the issue of who he is. He found:

On the average, children who identify predominantly with their natural parents have the highest well-being ratings of any group in the study. Ratings of well-being of children who identify predominantly with the foster parent or who have mixed identifications were significantly lower. However, . . . children whose natural parents visit them regularly but who also tend to identify with their foster parents get along much better than children . . . whose parents do not visit them. Such children appear to have structured the situation as involving a choice and have made one.\(^{40}\)

Weinstein's data also suggests that continuing contact with the natural parents is important for the child's adjustment in placement and has an ameliorative effect on the otherwise detrimental consequences of long-term foster care. He also found that adequate conceptions of the meaning of foster status and of the agency's role in the placement

\(^{39}\)Ibid., p. 105.


\(^{41}\)Ibid.
situation are important for the child's well-being. "Children whose identification is predominantly with their natural parents tend to have a clearer understanding of the placement situation than children with either mixed or foster parent identifications."^{42}

\[^{42}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 42.}\]
CHAPTER III
THE DIVISION OF CHILD GUARDIANSHIP

History

The Division of Child Guardianship, Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare, historically traces its roots to the year 1635 when a fatherless boy was placed by public indenture to serve a widow for fourteen years, thus establishing the principle of public care for children.¹ Some years later the state assumed responsibility for the care of the unsettled poor or "state paupers," indiscriminately throwing together children with adult criminals, insane and feebleminded in almshouses.² Children who were able and suitable were often "bound out" to relieve the state of expense and care.

By 1863 the Legislature brought together the various services providing care for the dependent under the Massachusetts Board of State Charities with the underlying philosophy that family care of children was far superior and met children's individual needs better than congregate care in its institutions.³ The Board through the appointment of "friendly visitors" recognized the importance of treating children individually, of investigating homes prior to indenture, of maintaining children's contacts

²Walter A. Friedlander, Introduction to Social Welfare, p. 84.
³Ibid., p. 102.
with their parents, and of keeping records. The practice of placing children in families, even paying board for them, progressed under the Board of State Charities and its successor, the Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity, so that by 1895 all state wards were placed in families and the former state institution was closed. 5

Work with adults and children was separated with the creation of the Division of State Minor Wards in 1898, and its policies and procedures formed the basic structure of the present Division of Child Guardianship (DCG). 6 About 1907 the principle of discretionary admission of dependent children was recognized because of the growing cost of state care of children. Other community resources were explored before children were accepted for care and the state began to seek support for children in its custody from relatives and places of legal settlement. 7 A short time later the definitions of dependent, neglected and delinquent children eligible for foster care were fixed. 8

In 1919 the Division of State Minor Wards was renamed the Division of Child Guardianship. 9 During the first two decades, caseloads were often

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4 Rachel Blair Greene, "The Division of Child Guardianship in the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare," pp. 11-12.
5 Ibid., p. 20
6 Ibid., p. 43.
7 Ibid.;
8 Ibid., p. 53.
9 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
as high as 130 to 180 children, supervision was practically non-existent, the Division's work was carried on from dark, dank, centralized basement headquarters in Boston, and lack of well-defined policies resulted in much variation in practice throughout the state. Intensive and extensive case work was not possible under such conditions.

During those early years when foster care was seen as a panacea, many children were literally "lost" to their families because of the philosophy that the children needed to be "protected" from their neglectful parents. From the beginning, infants were seen to have special needs. To insure proper mothering, special infant boarding homes were set up from which the children were removed at the age of three to homes for older children. With present-day knowledge of the traumatic effects of removal from parents and substitute parents, such practices would now be severely frowned upon.

Since that time progressive changes in philosophy and practice have been achieved. Lowered caseloads have been the result of increased and better-trained staff; better use of family and community resources; a well-defined intake policy; and emphasis on case work with families and on parental responsibility. In addition, the establishment of the Youth Service Board as a separate agency in 1948 relieved the Division of any further responsibility for delinquent children.

As a result fewer children are facing long-term foster care today and

10 Conference with Charles C. Gentile, present Child Welfare Supervisor, Worcester District Office, DOG.

11 Greene, op. cit., p. 121.
increasingly more children are returned to their families and relatives or are adopted. Decentralization into six district offices; new child welfare legislation; improved, uniform standards and practices; better supervision; more dynamic recording; and more adequate personnel practices have resulted in improved services to children.

**Philosophy**

The following statement of philosophy shows the tremendous growth of the Division since its early beginnings:

All children have the same fundamental need to be cared for and nurtured in an atmosphere of love and security. A child's fundamental needs are normally more fittingly and properly met in his own home by his own family. When a child is removed from his own home, he suffers a profound loss socially and emotionally, one for which he can never be fully compensated. A child is, therefore, accepted for foster care by the Department only after careful study indicates that this service is essential to fulfill the child's needs. Placement is then geared to the plan most conducive to the child's ultimate security - return to his own home whenever possible, early consideration of adoption if rehabilitation of the family is not feasible, or long-term foster care utilizing the capacities of the parents to whatever extent is possible in effecting constructive plans for the child.  

**Functions**

The broad 1954 child welfare law gives authority to provide needed care but also limits the agency's services to children. The preamble of this omnibus child welfare law reads as follows:

It is . . . the policy of this commonwealth to direct its efforts, first, to the strengthening and encouragement of family life for the protection and care of children; to assist and encourage the use by any family of all available resources to this end; and to provide substitute care of children only when the family itself or the resources available to the family are unable to provide the

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necessary care and protection to insure the rights of any child to sound health and normal physical, mental and spiritual development.

The purpose of this chapter is to insure that the children of the commonwealth are protected against the harmful effects resulting from the absence, inability, inadequacy, or destructive behavior of parents or parent substitutes, and to assure good substitute parental care in the event of the absence, temporary or permanent inability or unfitness of parents to provide care and protection for their children.\(^{13}\)

Under Section 23 of the 1954 Law, the Department of Public Welfare through the Division of Child Guardianship has responsibility to (a) provide foster care for children up to the age of 21 upon dependent voluntary application of the parent, guardian or child; (b) to accept voluntary surrender of custody of children under 21 for purpose of adoption; (c) to seek and accept with discretion temporary or permanent guardianship of any child under 21 due to death, unavailability or incapacity of the parent or guardian or on consent; (d) to provide foster care to children committed to the Department as neglected by the juvenile courts; and (e) to give temporary care to abandoned children under 14 and to search for parent or guardian.\(^{14}\)

Although the main function of the Division is to provide foster care or group care to those children who need it, it also has responsibility for licensing independent foster boarding homes, for investigating independent adoptions, for preparing adoptions for DOG children who are available for adoption, and for licensing of foster care agencies and institutions. The Division also offers other special services: (1) consultation

\(^{13}\)Massachusetts Acts of 1954, Ch. 119, Sec. 1, as extracted in 1956 Manual of Laws, Department of Public Welfare, pp. 59-60.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 64-65.
to communities on child welfare problems, (2) services to families and children in independent foster care, (3) counsel and service to probate courts, and (4) inter-state services for children who do not have legal residence in Massachusetts.

Practices

In dependent intake, the child welfare worker meets the family and prepares the child for being placed in a foster home before the actual day of placement. In neglect cases in which the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children investigates the family situation, it notifies the Division of a pending court hearing and the two agencies work closely together. Ideally this advance notice should be given in sufficient time to allow the Division social worker to meet and work with the family and children concerned, but in actual practice the notification usually merely alerts the social worker to be present at court on the prescribed day. Whenever possible, a solution other than placement is worked out with parents and relatives. Sometimes the Division or other cooperating agencies give the family support of a case work or financial, health, or housekeeping nature to keep the family together and to prevent placement.

On the day of placement, the child is brought to a reception home where he is given a bath by the reception home mother and a physical examination by the Division pediatrician. He may be placed in a permanent foster home on the same day if a home which meets his needs is available. He may otherwise remain in the reception home or may be placed in a temporary home if a suitable permanent foster home is not immediately available or if further study of the child is deemed best before the type of
home needed can be ascertained.

On the day the child is taken into care or shortly afterwards, he is given a complete outfit of clothing, according to prescribed needs for the sex and age of the child. The clothing is bought in local stores and the child, as far as is possible, is given a choice in the selection. Foster parents purchase supplementary clothing periodically or as needed according to a replacement clothing allowance which varies with the child's age and sex.

Regular physical and dental examinations and immunization are prescribed according to the age of the child. Foster families are encouraged to use their family physician and dentist to give the foster child a feeling of oneness with the foster family. Private medical and dental specialists and clinics in teaching hospitals as well as psychiatric clinics and agencies are used to give the child the best possible medical, dental and psychiatric care.

The Division encourages foster parents to give the child an allowance according to his age and needs. Special items such as music lessons and bicycles can sometimes be provided by the agency, if not provided by the natural or foster parents, when there is a good case work reason for the activity and the expense. The natural parents are expected to support their children in care according to financial ability.

Foster children who work part time are encouraged to save part of their earnings, and if their income is sufficient, they are expected to clothe themselves and provide their own spending money. In a few cases where children earn sufficient wages to pay their board and still have a reasonable amount left over for their other needs, they are expected to
pay full or partial board according to circumstances. Individual needs of
the children are taken into consideration. For instance, the child who
anticipates going on to college is encouraged to save for that purpose and
is given as much help as possible to achieve his educational goals.

Parents are encouraged to visit regularly but are required to get a
visiting permit from the social worker unless a mutual plan of visiting
has been set up by the foster parent and the social worker. The permit
system gives the Division some control over visiting and a record of
parental interest and gives the foster family some protection from un-
authorized or unannounced visiting. The Division is becoming more "ag­
gressive" in its case work with parents and tries to set realistic limits
for the parents to make a permanent plan for the child. Whether the goal
is return home or release of the child for adoption, the Division hopes to
prevent long-term foster care.

One social worker is designated to work with the family and, as far
as is possible, one social worker has responsibility for all or most of
the children in a family group when they are placed in more than one fos­
ter home. This is an attempt to integrate the family work and to facili­
tate more frequent visiting among siblings to keep the children from be­
coming "lost to each other" as sometimes happened in the past. Siblings
are placed together whenever possible, but when there are four to ten
children from one family to be placed, finding a large enough foster home
is next to impossible. And often the children are so deprived that they
need more individual care which they can only get if the family is split
up.

By policy the social worker is required to visit all children under
three years of age once a month and all children over three years once every three months. This is a minimum requirement and often the contacts with the child and the foster parents are more frequent according to the child's and foster family's problems and adjustment. In addition, the social worker is required to see the child alone at least twice a year and is required to make two annual school visits each year for the school-age child.
CHAPTER IV
A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE

As will be noted from the background factors presented in TABLE 1, the nine cases used in this study consisted of six girls and three boys. All were white; five were Protestant and four Catholic. Six were legitimate and three illegitimate, one being the illegitimate child of a married mother. The children came from large and small families that ranged from no siblings to as many as seven. Six of the children were adjudicated neglected by the courts whereas three came into placement as dependent children in need of care and protection.

TABLE 1
BACKGROUND FACTORS OF SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
<th>Number of Siblings</th>
<th>Legal Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>Illeg.*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>Illeg.*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Prot.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>Leg.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>Illeg.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Illegitimate child of married mother

A quick perusal of TABLES 2 and 3 will show that for the most part the children came from "hard core" or "multiple problem" families with marginal standards of living whose parents had been in crisis situations...
and financial difficulty for years before the neglect was brought to the attention of the courts.

We can assume that there may have been additional gross delinquencies and weaknesses on the part of the parents which did not come to the attention of the courts or agencies involved or which were not recorded in the case histories. TABLE 2 only takes into account those factors which led to family breakdown up to the time that the children came into care. Since they were placed there have been some deaths, marriages, institutionalization, and frequent non-support and desertion of parents.

If we examine TABLE 2, we will notice that in all cases but two some type of immorality on the part of the parents was a contributing factor to the neglect or dependency of the children. And in the case of Betty, where no adult immorality was known, her father sanctioned immoral relations between an older sister and her boyfriend, resulting in the sister's illegitimate pregnancy. Also in this family a brother had incestuous relations with Betty and another sister.

Mental deficiency of parents was cited in the records of four of the children, but only two parents, the mothers of Stephen and Gerald, were sufficiently deficient as to require custodial care. The other two parents were of borderline intelligence. There are no other major outstanding factors.

Perhaps the most damaged children in terms of pathology, sordid home conditions and gross neglect before coming into care were Martha and Sandra. Martha was singled out to be beaten by her mother and was so malnourished that she was stunted physically, mentally and emotionally. She was terrified of her mother. She and her older sister were fathered by
TABLE 2
MULTIPLE PHYSICAL, PERSONALITY, SOCIAL AND NEGLECT FACTORS WHICH RESULTED IN FOSTER CARE OF THE CHILDREN*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Ruth</th>
<th>Elaine</th>
<th>Betty</th>
<th>Martha</th>
<th>Joan</th>
<th>Howard</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Gerald</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immorality of parents:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adultery</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigamy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promiscuity</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parental problems:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other major illness</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental deficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desertion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Divorce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annulment</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Poor supervision</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Filthy housekeeping</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe malnutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor physical care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistreatment of child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex delinquencies</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Legend:
F - Father
M - Mother
X - All the children in the family
C - Child in foster care, excluding siblings
S - Sibling(s)
another man; yet the other children in the family were said to have been given adequate care and were not abused by the mother.

Sandra was subjected to a long neglect history with an immoral and alcoholic mother; an alcoholic step-father; a period of care by a male hermit of questionable character who lived in a "shack;" inadequate food; unclean housekeeping and physical care; divorce and change of custody; and frequent shunting around. In addition, her mother was sent to prison for bigamy, made promises to the children she would not keep, and visited infrequently. Her father later deserted. It is no wonder that Sandra had difficulty in trusting and in adjusting to her foster homes.

Betty and Joan seemed to have had an adequate family life and care before the deaths of their mothers; at least there is no record of neglect or inadequate care up to that time. Both fathers attempted to keep their families together, the former hiring a housekeeper and the latter placing his children to board. However, both were inadequate to properly supervise the children and provide for their needs. Joan's father, in particular, was unstable with a history of mental illness.

Ruth and Elaine were spared from the gross parental inadequacy that some of the children were subjected to. Although Ruth's father married her mother without benefit of divorce from his previous wife and fathered children by different women, he had little direct influence on his children since he was in the Coast Guard and away from home a good deal of the time. However, the frequent moves the family made were a hardship. When her mother became mentally ill, he showed no interest in making provisions for his children and consequently they came into care.

Shortly after her birth, Elaine was brought to a priest by her mother.
and was placed in an orphanage for young children. She was later transferred to a home for older children and when she again reached maximum age, she was placed "on the State." Until then, she believed that her mother had died. Two attempts had been made to place her for adoption and both times she was returned to the orphanage. In spite of this she appeared to be happy with the nuns and was reluctant to be placed in foster care.

Both Gerald and Stephen were placed young and thus avoided prolonged damage by inadequate parents. Gerald was placed at 17 days; therefore he was not subject to the influence of a mentally retarded and promiscuous mother. Although Stephen was removed from his parents when he was nine months old, the poor emotional and physical mothering he received during that first year seems to have been irreversible. Excellent foster home care and affection from a set of devoted parents could not completely eradicate the damage that was done during his infancy. Not only was his mother mentally deficient but his father was seriously ill with tuberculosis to which the children were exposed.

In spite of the poor physical care given the children, the lack of supervision, the poor housekeeping standards, the mother's drinking and immorality, and the father's desertion, Howard has always held that his life in his own home was far superior to life in his foster homes. This points out that superior physical standards and foster parents' sincere interest in the placed children do not adequately compensate for the emotional ties to parents that are severed by placement.

If we examine the children adjudicated neglected in TABLE 3, we see that with the exception of Martha's parents, several social, health and
TABLE 3

FAMILIES WHICH WERE KNOWN TO SOCIAL AGENCIES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND THE COURTS AT THE TIME OF PLACEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Resources</th>
<th>Ruth</th>
<th>Elaine</th>
<th>Sandra</th>
<th>Betty</th>
<th>Martha</th>
<th>Joan</th>
<th>Howard</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Gerald</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Agencies:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPCC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Service</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's agencies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feebleminded schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental hospitals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphanages &amp; group homes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neglect charges (parents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprisoned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect charges (children)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other criminal charges</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprisoned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Welfare agencies and organizations were involved with these families in an effort to improve family stability and prevent placement. Six of the families were known to public welfare agencies, attesting to the fact that personal inadequacy, immaturity, dependency, and delinquent "acting out" often go hand in hand. Although six of the children were committed as
neglected children, only one parent was found guilty of neglect. The courts apparently recognized that most of the parents were not culpable because of mental or physical illness, retardation, and general lack of ability or background that would enable them to be adequate parents.

Not only does the child's emotional health which results from his family life experiences before coming into care affect his foster home adjustment but the state of his physical health also plays an important part in his ability to cope with his new life. With the exception of two of the children - Elaine and Stephen - all had good physical health.

Before being placed by the DCG, Elaine had plastic surgery for a harelip with which she was born and was left with a scar. She frequently had to make a hundred mile round trip for orthodontia and speech therapy. In addition, she had ear, eye, feet, menstrual and acne problems. In spite of these numerous physical problems and some physical unattractiveness, she was regarded as "pretty" because of her outgoing personality, friendliness and lack of complaining.

As a youngster, Stephen's poor muscle coordination resulted in his tendency to fall easily and his occasional hospitalization for broken bones. This incoordination also affected his ability to handle his school work, prevented him from participating in games and sports with other youngsters with any skill and competency and hence affected his social adjustment. In addition, he was found to have secondary hemophilia, rheumatic fever and very poor teeth. Fortunately, during his adolescence his general health improved considerably.

If we glance at TABLE 4, we will see that the age of placement ranged from under one year (2 cases) to age 12 (1 case). Three of the children
TABLE 4
PLACEMENT FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age When Placed</th>
<th>Age When Discharged</th>
<th>Number of years in Care</th>
<th>Number of years in Last Foster Home</th>
<th>Number of Foster Homes*</th>
<th>Number of Social Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>9 mos.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>17 days</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Permanent foster homes, as distinguished from reception homes or temporary homes.

were placed in infancy or early childhood, but more than half of the children (5 cases) were placed during latency. The three placed before school age - Martha, Stephen and Gerald - seemed to form the closest ties to their foster parents. Since these children had no or very little contact with their natural parents during placement and their foster parents had no children of their own, or none living at home, these placements were more "semi-adoptive" in nature. The children who were placed at an older age seemed to have established their identity with their natural parents so that they could not as easily accept substitute parents, even though their relationship with their own parents in some cases was negative.

This was the case even though many of these children who were placed during their school years also had childless foster parents and had no or
little contact with their own families. Therefore, this study confirms
the Theis' and Rogers' finding that children placed young derive more se-
curity and affection from their foster homes than children placed during
latency or adolescence.

All the children were discharged between the ages of 17 and 21, but
almost half (4 cases) were discharged at age 19, this being the median
and the mean average. Only one was discharged as young as age 17 and one
as old as age 21, which seems to be typical of the foster child population
as a whole.

The children were in care from 7 to 20 years, an average of a little
over 12½ years. Two of the children had but one permanent foster home
placement. Four of the children had two foster home placements and only
one had more than three. The average number of foster homes per child
was 2½. Elaine, who earned her board, room and spending money by working
in a Catholic nursery for more than a year, was the only child who had
any placement other than foster homes since coming into care.

The number of social workers per child varied from one (2 cases) to
ten (2 cases), making an average of 4.4 social workers per child. Almost
half (4 cases) had four social workers. These statistics do not include
placement workers or workers who might have substituted for the regular
visitors during absence or illness.

At first glance it would seem that Stephen and Gerald fared the worst
in terms of the turnover of social workers since both boys had ten each.
However, they were in care the longest, 20 and 19 years respectively.
Both boys were fortunate enough to have had one male social worker during
their last four years of placement. Howard had one worker during the last
three years of his placement. When the boys were younger, they had consistent contact with some of their social workers from three to six years.

The girls in general had longer contact with any given social worker than the boys. Betty and Joan had a relationship with one worker for nine and ten years respectively, their total number of years in care. Ruth and Sandra had contact with one social worker during their last seven years of placement. Elaine and Martha knew their last social worker for five and four and one-half years respectively before discharge; Martha previously had contact with her first social worker for nine years.

We see from the above analysis that in spite of some turnover of staff these children did have some fairly long-term relationships with their social workers, particularly during their adolescent years.

If we examine TABLE 5, we will notice that all but two graduated from high school, two had education beyond high school, one on a college level, while two failed to graduate from high school. Gerald did not seem to have the academic ability to make the grade while Joan failed to graduate, not from any lack of ability, but because of emotional and adjustment problems she was having at the time.

All but Sandra were employed at the time of the interviews and she had been working as an office clerk until she was laid off. Three of the girls held positions in offices and the other three held jobs that were skilled (dressmaker), semi-professional (licensed practical nurse) or unskilled and part-time (store clerk). The three young men held jobs of a semi-skilled nature in factories.
TABLE 5
EDUCATIONAL, VOCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Last Grade Completed</th>
<th>Present Occupation</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Present Living Arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Own apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dressmaker</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Home for business girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Boarding with widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>L.P.N.&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Home for business girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Student and store clerk</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Adoption home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Office clerk</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Foster home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Assembler</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Own apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Machine operator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Foster home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Foster relative's home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Completed 15 months of practical nurses' training beyond high school (licensed practical nurse).

<sup>b</sup> Completed junior year in college

At the time of the interviews only one person, Howard, was married but two girls were engaged. Since then Joan has married. The TABLE, however, presents the social data which were compiled shortly after all the interviews were completed.
Four of the children, two girls and two boys, remained with their foster parents or went to live with relatives of foster parents. Martha's foster home later became an adoption home. She, Stephen and Gerald were the children who seemed to have formed the closest ties to foster parents. Gerald moved into the home of a granddaughter of foster parents because his need for independence was not recognized by his foster parents but has kept up contact with his foster parents. Joan left her foster home and lived in an apartment for a while. When she was able to work out her conflicts, she moved back into her foster home.

One single girl and one married young man had their own apartments, the girl sharing hers with another business girl. Two of the girls went to live in a Catholic boarding home for business girls and one found a home with a widow.
CHAPTER V
COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT

Historically, the family has been the basis of the social order and not only gives the child emotional and economic security but status within the familial group and within the larger community as well. Just as social stigma often attaches to the American child of divorced parents or to the adopted child, to be a foster child in this country is also to be "different" from the average child who is brought up in his own home and by his own parents in a closely-knit biological, psychological and sociological unit. The difference between the child's and foster family's surnames exaggerates this difference and alerts the community to the fact that the foster child does not truly belong to the parents with whom he is living.

This chapter is concerned with the foster child's participation in community life, particularly his school adjustment and his social and work adjustment as they relate to his being in placement. Emphasis is being placed on the foster child's subjective experiences as the writer feels that these are as valid or even more valid than the objective facts and are a unique contribution of this study. Other factors, which were either not touched upon by the respondents in their answers or were beyond the scope of this study also have a bearing on the foster child's community adjustment. Among these may be the child's innate and inherited personality and temperamental traits and physical and intellectual endowment; family relationships and socialization processes before placement; the child's current relationships in and out of the foster home; own
parents', foster parents', and community attitudes toward placement and foster children; foster parents' status in the community; and community values. Complicating this analysis is the change in foster homes and communities experienced by some of the children who were replaced.

How did these foster children get along at school with their teachers and classmates? What effect, if any, did living with foster families have on their grades, their participation in school and community activities and their making and keeping friends? How popular were these foster children? These are the types of questions which the writer has attempted to answer in this section of the study.

**School Adjustment**

School adjustment and achievement varied from poor to excellent from child to child and within the same foster child, often reflecting the general well-being and adjustment of the foster child at a given time.

Gerald and Stephen had the poorest intellectual endowment and the poorest academic achievement of any of the group. Gerald, who seemed reasonably secure and well-adjusted in his two foster home placements, was intellectually and socially immature and restless in school. As a young boy he presented some behavior problems in the classroom and in junior high frequently was sent to the principal's office for reprimand. In his teens he found school work more difficult, lost interest in it, put forth little effort, and was belligerent toward teachers. When he quit school at 16 and started to work, his outlook and attitude improved.

Stephen, who spent 18 years in his last foster home placement and who was treated as an own child by two childless foster parents, was always an extremely immature, over-affectionate nervous child who also
had poor physical coordination. He couldn't concentrate well and repeated grades, but due to the encouragement and acceptance by his foster parents, he completed high school at age 21 and was able to get along with teachers and students. Were it not for the patience and devotion of his foster parents, this child might have been replaced several times, might have left school at the legal age, or might have been placed in a state school.

Howard, who had three foster home placements, was for the most part well-liked, well-behaved and well-adjusted in his first and last foster homes in which he spent a total of ten years. In grade school he was alternately a good and excellent student and presented no problems in conduct or effort. As an adolescent, the underlying bitterness which he felt toward the Division for having taken him away from his neglectful mother whom he tended to idealize crept through and made him moody and lose interest in studying. In spite of his having little initiative and a goal of just getting by in his studies, he did make the Honor Roll once, just missed it another time and graduated from high school. Howard felt keenly the loss of never having known his own parents while growing up in foster care. He said, "If I were with my own parents, I would have someone to push me on, someone to care about my good marks. Having foster parents isn't the same as having your own parents interested in you."

In speaking of his social worker who encouraged him to do well in school and who tried to interest him in higher education, Howard said: "I figured Mr. L. pushed me into getting better grades because it was his job. I didn't feel he was sincere and was really interested in me."

Joan and Sandra both did very well scholastically while in grade
school but their achievement fell down during their high school years. Here the similarity ends. Until she reached her teens, Joan, who had but one foster home placement, was an excellent and well-behaved student with much self-confidence, friends, ability and poise. When she entered high school and underwent a stormy adjustment in her foster home, her attitude in school completely changed. She wouldn't study, skipped school, failed some of her subjects, was expelled from three schools, and left high school in her third year. Her foster parents paid her tuition to a business school but after a few weeks she truanted again and never completed the semester. An older sister who always took the limelight for excellent scholarship and unusual popularity and social skills might have made Joan feel less adequate though she appeared to have equal ability and attention. Joan felt being in a foster home made no difference in her school adjustment but her adolescent rebellion could well have been intensified by her foster status.

Sandra, who had six permanent foster home placements, was unable to adjust to her first five foster homes and the pattern of behavior was always the same: uncooperativeness, untruthfulness, resentment, moodiness, and uncleanness. The child's ties were with her own mother and her resentment against the agency for removing her from her mother whom she denied was neglectful interfered with her accepting substitute parents. In her sixth foster home she began to relate to her foster mother and to build up her own self-esteem. In spite of these many moves and poor foster home adjustment, she was usually cooperative in grade school and did good work though she daydreamed and withdrew from peers. Although she had a better foster home adjustment in high school, her disposition
and achievement became poor and she was habitually tardy and absent, but from time to time she tried to put forth more effort. It would seem her fears about finishing school and becoming self-supporting and independent accounted in part for her poor achievement in high school. Sandra felt being a foster child and having others find out about it prevented her from taking the initiative in making friends in school.

Ruth, who had four foster home placements as a youngster, seemed happy and well-adjusted until she was moved from her first foster home whereupon she became mistrustful and introverted. She was well-behaved in school and did average work for the most part until she got into high school when she became critical of her teachers. Gradually she made a better school adjustment, put more effort into her school work and finally made the National Honor Society and the Honor Roll. Upon graduation from high school she received the highest award in the Commercial Division. She was more content in her last foster home placement, a home she had chosen herself. In spite of encouragement to go on to college, she preferred to work in order to effect an earlier discharge from the agency toward which she had felt a great deal of bitterness throughout her placement.

Elaine, an illegitimate child who came to foster home placement from a Catholic orphanage when she was 12, had two foster home placements and an interim placement in a Catholic nursery where she worked part time. Despite many physical problems and severe maternal rejection and overprotective and somewhat rejecting foster mothers, she had an indomitable spirit which helped carry her through many difficult situations. She found the work in grade school hard and planned seriously for her future
by enrolling in the trade high school because she realized her academic ability was not sufficient for her to succeed in an academic high school. She was well-behaved and cooperative in school, made an excellent adjustment, achieved good grades in high school and was most highly regarded by the high school principal. Elaine felt having been a foster child made no difference in her school adjustment.

Betty and Martha were the only two in the group who had educational training beyond high school. Betty completed a practical nurses' training course and is happily employed in that capacity today. Martha is in her junior year in a teachers' college and is looking forward to becoming an elementary school teacher.

Betty, who had two foster home placements, one lasting only five months and the other eight years, was an unhappy, obese girl who tended to dominate her younger sisters. Her work in elementary school was fair but she made remarkable improvement in the trade school she attended. She was rated highly by her teachers, was recommended for choice part-time and summer jobs in her trade specialty, and upon graduation was offered a coveted scholarship for training as a hotel housekeeper. This she turned down in order to become a practical nurse.

Betty's remarkable improvement in scholastic achievement and outlook seemed to be related to her close friendship with a woman teacher in town for whom she did housework part time. Betty regarded this woman as a mother substitute and was given much encouragement and support by her. Like Howard, she felt little incentive to try hard when she was in the lower grades but luckily later on found the encouragement she needed to succeed. Betty felt the fact that some "other state kids" were disci-
pline problems influenced the attitude of the teacher toward all foster children in the class, but in general she felt her school adjustment did not suffer because she was a foster child. She is most grateful for having had the opportunity to acquire the training she needed to prepare herself for the nursing profession and feels if she had remained in her own home she would have left school early and would now be working in a factory like an older brother and sister.

Martha, who had suffered severely as a young child from physical abuse and malnutrition in her own home, had but one permanent foster home placement and was adopted by her foster parents when she became 18. During her pre-school years she seemed slow but her retardation seemed more emotional and social than intellectual. In grammar school she did good work but in high school, where she found her studies more difficult, she only managed to get fair grades. Her behavior and attitude in school have always been good. Martha felt her having grown up in a foster home did affect her school life. She resented being compared to another foster girl who lived in the home and who achieved higher grades. She also felt her foster mother’s method of disciplining /In the last minute refusing to let the girls take part in a school activity/ kept her from going out for the school play and other activities because the teachers would question whether they could rely on her to be present.

Discussion

As one would expect, any child who is undergoing emotional problems has less energy to expend on tasks such as school work. We note that four of the children - Howard, Joan, Betty and Ruth - did less well in academic achievement and showed some personality or behavior problems in
school when their foster home adjustment problems were most critical. When their life adjustment ran more smoothly, a better school performance was achieved. The only seeming exception to this was Sandra who did better in school during her grade school years when she had more difficulty in adjusting to foster care. During adolescence, when for the first time she began to form a more positive relationship with a foster mother, her school achievement and attitude toward school grew worse.

This is not a paradox when one realizes that it is not unusual for the latency-age child to conform, only to have his pent-up feelings given expression during adolescence when some rebellion is normal. In Sandra's case, she was still unsure of her foster status as a result of many replacements, she was beginning to come to grips with her mother's rejection of her and was beginning to see her mother more realistically. In addition, she doubted her own adequacy and her ability to eventually cope with her own problems and living as an adult.

Four of the children - Ruth, Elaine, Betty and Howard - did quite well academically in high school and Martha did well enough to get into college. Only two did not graduate from high school and one of these - Joan - completed her third year. Stephen's and Gerald's poor school adjustment seemed to be due largely to their poor intellectual endowment and their social and emotional immaturity. It would appear that the warm support and interest they received from their foster parents, particularly in the case of Stephen, were instrumental in the level of school achievement they were able to attain, particularly Stephen's graduation from high school.

Although the writer and the individual social workers concerned felt
that the school adjustment of these children quite often reflected the foster home situation and the children's emotional problems, most of the children themselves felt that their foster status did not adversely affect their school adjustment, particularly in regard to scholastic achievement. The exceptions were Howard and Betty, who felt a lack of interest on the part of their foster parents in their school work and a restriction in social activity, and Ruth and Sandra, who felt socially inadequate. Martha also felt that her foster parents curtailed her participation in extracurricular activities, which was the case.

Elaine and Betty felt that they were privileged as a result of being in foster care in that they probably achieved a higher level of education than they might have achieved had they stayed with their own families. It is also doubtful whether Martha, who was severely rejected and mistreated by her own mother, would have been able to fulfill her intellectual potential and to go on to college had she not been taken away from her parents by the court.

Social and Work Adjustment

Like school achievement and adjustment, the boys' and girls' social adjustment ran the gamut from the retiring and shy individual to the extremely popular one. Accounting for these differences were many factors including: personality and physical attributes; opportunities for or restrictions concerning social contact and activities; material benefits or limitations such as clothing and money which serve as symbols of status; and inner attitudes of esteem or worthlessness. Likewise, their work patterns varied from part-time jobs by which they earned spending money to full-time employment and self-support while in foster care.
Stephen, who was perhaps the most immature of the group socially and emotionally, made a borderline social adjustment. As a young child his lack of muscle coordination and immaturity made it difficult for him to compete with and to be accepted by other children. He was always shy but got along well with others, at least superficially, and was encouraged to bring his few friends home. Most of his social life centered around family activities and trips although as a youngster he belonged to the Boys' Club for a short while and joined the National Guard when in high school. As a teen-ager, he would brag about his masculinity, particularly in regard to girls, but in reality was frightened of heterosexual relationships. In spite of his social immaturity, he showed a sense of responsibility by holding several part-time jobs while in high school, working in food markets and for the local newspaper.

Sandra and Ruth were regarded as friendly and responsive, socializing well with others their age when they were first placed, but as problems in relationships with their foster parents developed, they began to have difficulty in making or keeping friends. Sandra's five foster home placements, frequently in different towns, made her social and foster home adjustment more difficult. Ruth, fortunately, remained in the same town and school at the time of her second replacement.

Sandra seemed to be allowed the normal childhood activities in most of her six foster homes but in one home she felt unusually restricted and was threatened with the loss of her only activities, choir on Sunday or a visit to the foster mother's daughter's house on Saturday, if she misbehaved. It was in this home also that she received many admonitions not to play ball in school because of the scuffing of shoes which would ensue.
In her last foster home, Sandra blossomed a little in her social activity with the encouragement of her foster mother and became more active in Girl Scouts, an art museum, Rainbow Girls and in church activities. She also worked part time in some department stores during the latter part of high school.

Bringing friends home was encouraged in some foster homes and discouraged in others, according to Sandra. "I never got to know many kids long enough to invite them. I didn't have many friends," she said. She was regarded as shy, reserved and "standoffish" in her approach to others. She described how being a foster child affected her ability to make friends:

I avoided kids to avoid answering questions about myself and background. You're afraid of people thinking you're one of those "state kids" because you don't live with your parents. There is the feeling that there must be something wrong with you. A lot of mothers will tell their kids not to play with "state kids." That would make me feel "lousy" and would make me feel bitter toward the kids' mothers. I never bothered anybody unless they bothered with me first. They had to make friends with me.

Ruth, who also did not mix in well with young people her age, had trouble keeping friends as she was quite argumentative with them. She was embarrassed to bring friends home, though she was encouraged to do so, because introducing them to her foster parents would entail the problem of revealing or denying her foster status and would make her feel uncomfortable. As a young teen-ager, she spent a good deal of free time at home in solitary hobbies but later took more interest in school and community activities. She was quite active in the young people's group at church and also taught Sunday School. During the last two years of high school she started to attend dances and dated occasionally.
Ruth worked one summer as an office clerk and had a part-time secretarial job during the latter part of her high school course which limited her participation in outside activities.

The emotional and social distance Ruth kept from people stemmed partly from the stigma she felt was attached to being a foster child. Like Sandra, she tended to withdraw until others sought her out. She said:

You didn't want to mingle with children for fear they would find out too much. You were alone. You wouldn't enter into things until asked. You didn't get to know other kids. They would get to know you. You had a feeling of not being accepted, of not being as good as the other kids. Once a friendship started and you felt accepted, it was okay. The other kids were always willing to help you; they didn't look down on you.

Gerald as a youngster was immature mentally and socially and at first had difficulty in learning how to play with children. As he grew up he became better accepted by boys in his age group but as he reached his teens, he began to associate with less desirable boys with whom he once got into trouble for stealing. He was encouraged to bring his friends home and did, but his association with undesirable boys during his teenage years was discouraged. He was an altar boy in church and played basketball and football in school. Other than this, he did not take part in any organized activities. His teenage recreational interests centered around sports, the movies and roller skating. He had no particular interest in girls. He had a paper route as a young boy and when in his teens worked one summer as a painter before he quit school.

Howard, Betty and Martha felt restricted in their social life as a result of being in foster home placement. In Martha's case, there was curtailment of normal social activity by her foster parents, a situation
which fortunately was later remedied by great effort on the part of the social worker. Howard's and Betty's feeling of restriction were not wholly related to the amount of freedom they were given to participate socially in the community but derived from other feelings and conditions of foster home living.

Howard, who always lived in rural farm foster homes, was a friendly, good-natured youngster who made friends easily and played well with others. His main extra-curricular interest was sports, particularly baseball, and he played on the school teams. When he became a teen-ager he became moody and felt he received less advantages than the own children in his foster family. He complained that he was asked to come in by a certain hour at night, that he was not allowed to use the family car although the own son was, and that his foster parents did not anticipate his needs and offer to give him transportation to school or town activities. He wanted to find a part-time job but felt this was impossible because of the transportation problems, which were realistic ones. He finally managed to get a full-time factory job which he combined with full-time attendance at school and with his earnings bought his own car and paid his board. When he thus became self-sufficient, his attitude improved and he seemed happier and easier to get along with.

Howard always idealized city life and found the slower pace of rural life unexciting. He always felt bitter about being taken away from his mother and the freedom and activity of the city. Children were welcome in his foster homes but "the nearest house was two miles away so the kids would seldom come," he said. He summed up his feelings about living in the country and in foster homes in this way:
Wei never went anywhere. We never went visiting much. We never were near stores to spend money. We would occasionally take a bus and go to the movies. We always found things to keep ourselves occupied though - sling shots, arrows, etc. - and we would build things. I never went to a dance or anything because I never had the clothes to wear. If their son wanted to go, they [foster parents] would furnish transportation and I could go along. I never asked for a ride. Their own son would tell them he was going to an activity. I didn't feel I had the right to tell them. I wasn't their own. I was afraid of their saying, "No." If it was their own son or daughter, they would have arranged transportation.

The real basis for his dissatisfaction with country life was the intense hurt and deprivation he experienced in living apart from his own parents. His bitterness stemmed from the fact that he never had contact with his own parents after placement and felt this as a great loss. He also felt unjustly removed from his parents and always felt mistrustful of adults after being told at the time he was committed to the DOG that placement was temporary and that he would return to his parents in a few weeks. In spite of his intense feelings about being isolated from city life as a child, today he lives in the country with his wife and two children and he believes a rural setting is the best place to bring up youngsters.

Betty, who had been the favorite of her father and had been used to much freedom before coming into care, found it hard to adjust to any curtailment of that freedom by her foster mother and to a new routine of living. She was basically friendly but her unhappiness, her weight problem and the strict limitations which her foster mother imposed on her social activity hampered the development of friendships. She wanted to join the Rainbow Girls but said her foster mother told her, "They don't take state wards in." However, she belonged to the Girl Scouts, took
part in church activities and was given Red Cross swimming instructions. She could attend movies with her girl friends once a week but needed to be home by 10:30 or 11:00 p.m., could watch television at a neighbor's house several times a week, and occasionally went to a drive-in movie with neighbors. She could not attend school activities which would end late.

Betty's idea of freedom was to be allowed to go uptown afternoons and evenings and to walk the streets and to hang around doorways. Denial of this privilege caused some resentment. As she became older she was given a little more freedom, took a more active part in the activities she was allowed, and became a secretary and conference delegate of her church youth group. She also worked part time since the age of 12 as a mother's helper for a school teacher in town and later had other jobs related to her trade school training in food preparation which helped immeasurably to increase her feelings of self-esteem. Betty's reactions to her restrictions were as follows:

I knew my foster mother was doing it to protect me but I felt deprived. My sisters and I were different; we couldn't have friends come to the house. Our foster mother didn't want any kids around. My foster mother always had the attitude my friends were no good. There was nothing for me to do; there were no friends around. I could get money to go to the movies but never had extra money for popcorn, etc. I felt nobody liked me.

She said that when parents would tell their children not to bother with "those kids on the state, I would go home crying. I would wish I weren't born, weren't here."

Martha was also considered to have a friendly, nice disposition and made friends at school though she was immature socially and was limited by her foster parents from having a more well-rounded social life. Her
foster mother, who was childless and who had been brought up in an orphanage and thereby had no experience of normal family life herself, placed well-meaning restrictions on the activities of Martha and her foster sister as the only method of child-rearing she knew. The foster mother's fear of losing Martha to her own parents and through her growing up played a part in her keeping Martha dependent.

Martha took piano lessons but for years had few interests and saw hardly any friends outside of school. She hardly ever attended movies or took part in school activities. When she did something wrong, the usual punishment was to have an activity withdrawn at the last minute and this usually involved Martha's responsibility to her friends at school. As a result she lost friendships and felt unable to participate in activities because she couldn't count on her own reliability.

Through the social worker's persistent efforts, Martha was gradually emancipated from her near social isolation and began to act more like a normal teen-ager, began to go to school dances, to go visiting and downtown with friends without her foster mother accompanying her, and was allowed to attend an occasional overnight pajama party in the homes of friends. From age 16 on, Martha held part-time jobs in a supermarket and a doughnut shop in order to finance her college education.

Elaine and Joan were the most popular of the group. Elaine was allowed a normal range of social activities although one foster mother resented her preferring activities with young people to foster family activities and tended to restrict her and another foster sister from going to dances and other social affairs. Elaine enjoyed sewing and spent a good deal of spare time with this hobby but did go bowling and to CYO social
activities. She was given ballroom dancing lessons and started to date when she was 17.

Elaine has always been well-accepted by others, has always had a nice sense of humor and was chosen senior class secretary and class representative in spite of a speech defect which resulted from a harelip condition which was improved with surgery. She also was a school librarian and played volley ball and other sports. She worked for extra spending money by baby sitting and also worked at the Catholic nursery where she lived for more than a year between her first and second foster homes. She is presently engaged to be married. Elaine felt being a foster child in no way hampered her social adjustment.

Joan had the largest range of activities and freedom to participate in social functions of any of the group interviewed. She also was the most popular as she had much poise, self-assurance and encouragement from foster parents. She was perhaps given the most material advantages, and like Elaine, Martha, Stephen and Gerald, had childless foster parents. She was given dancing lessons, birthday parties, trips to the beach and to camp, etc. She attended a settlement house once a week, belonged to the Girl Scouts and a swimming team, and was active in church groups. She also worked part time in a hospital and later for a specialty shop while going to high school.

Later, when her adjustment in her foster home was most precarious and disturbing, she gave up church attendance and many of her outside interests and left her foster home to live on her own. She has since gone back to her foster home and feels closer to her foster parents now that she has been able to resolve her feelings of conflicting loyalty by
"rejecting" her father and viewing more realistically his instability and disinterest in making a home for her. She is planning marriage in the near future. Joan felt that being a foster child did not restrict her in forming friendships and at times was an advantage in that she derived a bit of sympathy because of her foster status and was given "a special break" in getting jobs because of the many people her foster parents knew.

Discussion

Not only the personality pattern of each child but the amount of freedom allowed the child by the foster parents and the social worker and the encouragement given the child to form friendships accounted for the difference in socialization which we find in the group of children studied. Important also is the location of the foster home and the activities offered in the community.

None in the group was isolated. Most of the foster children were encouraged to take part in activities and to make friends, the exception being Martha particularly and to a lesser extent Betty and Sandra. All of the children worked at least part time and some worked full time as students. As would be expected, the children varied in the number of activities they participated in, in their ability to make and keep friends and in their popularity.

Four of the children - Elaine, Joan, Gerald and Stephen - did not feel hampered in their social activities by reason of their being foster children. Joan was the most social and Elaine was equally popular but enjoyed home and handwork more than Joan and was content to participate less in outside activities. Gerald's and Stephen's limited social involvement and activity seems to be primarily due to personality and
intellectual factors rather than to any lack of encouragement or opportunity for socialization.

Five of the foster children - Howard, Betty, Sandra, Ruth and Martha - felt some restriction in their social activity as a result of their being in placement. It must be pointed out that there was sometimes a discrepancy between the social workers' estimates of what constituted normal childhood or adolescent social activity and the children's opinions and feelings.

Although the location of foster homes tended to isolate him somewhat, Howard's feelings of restriction was largely due to internalized feelings of deprivation rather than to any unusual curtailment of his activity by his foster parents. Out of her concern that her foster children turn out well, Betty's foster mother didn't encourage outside friendships and limited activities to well-sponsored and supervised ones. She was apparently oblivious to the little material "extras" that would have helped this deprived girl gain social acceptance from her peers.

Ruth and Sandra, who because of prior experiences tended to isolate themselves emotionally from people, felt that their fear of having their foster status revealed affected their making friends and participating in more activities. They also felt that limited spending money hindered their social activity. Martha, whose foster mother was very rigid as a result of her own childhood deprivations, had the severest restrictions of all, but fortunately through the insistence of her social worker, she was gradually allowed a more normal social life.
CHAPTER VI
THE FOSTER CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP TRIAD

Like most children, the average foster child has before placement but one set of parents or at least a single parent or authority figure on whom to depend. After placement, he finds himself having a relationship with three groups of adults - his own parents, his foster parents and his social worker - all of whom have some special role in caring for him. Even when there is cooperation between the three parties concerned, the foster child is often unsure of "which" adult does "what" for him and "which" adult has the ultimate authority for his welfare. Quite often there is a lack of agreement between the three adults, particularly between the social worker and the child's own parent or the child's own parent and the foster parent; and when the adults thus work at cross purposes, the foster child is apt to be lost in a sea of confusion and is likely to suffer.

The foster child, in addition, does not know how much confidentiality he can expect from the three sets of adults, and if his past relationships with adults have been poor, he may not be able to trust anyone. On the other hand, the child may attempt to manipulate one adult against another. When one of the parties is missing, such as when the natural parents fail to keep up their contact with the child or when visits are sporadic, the child's relationship with his foster parents may temporarily run more smoothly; yet, on the other hand, the foster child may idealize the absent parent and fail to settle down in his foster home. The balance of power may again be upset when the natural parents resume contact with the child.
This chapter will focus on the foster child and his relationship with his own parents, his foster parents and his social worker.

Parent-Child Relationship

This section will deal with the influence of the natural parents on the foster home adjustment of the children studied. Areas of special interest are: the frequency or absence of contact between the foster children and their parents; the knowledge or lack of knowledge that the foster children had concerning their family backgrounds; the social worker's responsibility or lack of responsibility in helping the foster children get a realistic picture of their parents through contact or discussion; and the kinds of attitudes, relationships, and experiences that the foster children had with their parents. Emphasis will also be placed on the kinds of problems that developed as a result of the foster children having two sets of parents with whom to relate.

Contact with Parents

Most of the foster children had very little contact with their parents since coming into care. Four children - Howard, Gerald, Elaine and Ruth - had no personal contact with either parent since they were placed. Howard and Gerald wanted to know their parents; Howard was particularly distressed because he felt the agency denied him contact with his parents and Gerald's natural desire to know his parents was held in abeyance until the time of his discharge when his social worker felt he would be mature enough to know the facts. Elaine, who knew she was illegitimate, also had a strong desire to know her mother. Although the social worker made great efforts to arrange visits, her mother rejected her and refused to see her though they did correspond. Ruth's father disappeared and
took no responsibility for the children while her mother was hospitalized for paranoid schizophrenia. Although Ruth was encouraged to visit her mother at the state hospital, she resisted doing so.

Three others - Stephen, Sandra and Martha - had very limited contact with their parents. Both of Stephen’s parents were institutionalized, his father for tuberculosis and his mother for severe mental retardation. His father died when he was 11 and his mother when he was 20. The only contact Stephen had was initiated by his foster parents who took him to see his mother once or twice a year. Other than that, the only contact he had with his mother was a yearly Christmas card from her. Sandra’s mother, who served time in a reformatory, corresponded with Sandra and her sisters on the average of once a month for a while. She visited the girls most infrequently and her broken promises about visiting upset Sandra. Her father’s whereabouts were unknown.

Martha first heard from her parents when she was 11½ at which time her mother sent her a birthday card in care of the agency. Shortly before this contact her social worker had located her parents through great effort and had encouraged them to get to know their daughter in placement. Martha was fearful of and resistant to having contact with her parents, was taken to visit them twice by her social worker, stayed for a holiday weekend once, and once had her sister spend a few days with her. Other than that, her contact consisted of an occasional letter and Christmas card.

Betty and Joan had the most frequent contact of the group. Betty saw her father who visited her in her foster home about once every three or four months and less often later on. She looked forward to his visit-
going and occasionally went to visit him or other relatives. Joan had the most frequent contact of all. She saw her father on the average of twice a month and sometimes weekly. He visited her in her foster home and frequently was invited for dinner. At other times, Joan and her sister met him down town or visited him at the state hospital when he was a patient there.

Only three of the parents voluntarily had any contact with their children, while two other parents had limited contact upon encouragement of the agency. None of the parents had kept up their contact with the agency and there was only limited contact initiated by the agency with three families.

Knowledge of Family Background

Just as the contact the children had with their parents while in care varied from frequent contact in a few cases to none at all in several instances, so the children had different degrees of information concerning their family situations while they grew up in foster care.

Five foster children - Betty, Howard, Ruth, Stephen and Gerald - knew little or nothing about their family backgrounds while in care. Betty did keep in contact with her father about three or four times a year and had some vague idea of his current life situation. She said her social worker never introduced a discussion of her family background and the reasons for her coming into care and Betty herself said she never asked about this because she felt she herself would find out what she wanted to know when she was discharged. She felt, "The State didn't want us to see our family [siblings] who were not living in foster homes."

Although Howard had no contact with his parents after being taken
into care, he did have occasional contact with an older brother and sister who lived with an aunt. He said his sister told him about his mother and her situation when he was 18 but he did not know whether she was supposed to reveal this information. Howard had a strong desire to know his parents but was afraid to ask questions and "to learn the truth. I was afraid someone might tell me my parents were 'no good' although no one ever said this to me," he said. He added, "I never knew for sure where or when I was born but I never asked." According to the case record, there was never any discussion between the social worker and Howard about his family.

Ruth, like Howard, was afraid of knowing her parents, particularly her mother whom she knew was confined in a mental hospital. She felt she knew "nothing" about her family but apparently could not face knowing her background for a long time. When she was 15 she asked her social worker questions about her family background and childhood and the circumstances of her coming into care. The social worker answered all her questions and supplied the information she desired.

Stephen merely knew that his father had tuberculosis and had only the barest information about his mother's whereabouts which he gained from occasional visiting or correspondence. His attitude was, "They [parents] didn't want to know us, so I didn't want to know them. They only lived 39 miles away but never came to visit us." He apparently did not question his social workers about his family situation according to the case record and the social workers did not stimulate his interest in knowing about his parents and early childhood. Stephen seemed content to blot out his previous family history and to accept his foster parents as
his family.

Gerald said he knew nothing about his family background. He did show some curiosity about knowing who he was but when he asked his social worker about his family and their circumstances and the reasons for his coming into care, he said he was told that he would learn about it when he was 21 or when he was discharged. According to the case record, there was no discussion of family background with Gerald until after his discharge. At that time Gerald went to the agency and was given some information in general terms about how he happened to come into DCG care. He was particularly interested in information concerning the address of his half brother whom he had recently "discovered." He showed only slight interest in learning about his mother. Gerald's curiosity about his parents did not seem to be a driving force in his personality and the lack of information about his parentage did not seem to adversely affect his foster home adjustment as he seemed to identify strongly with his foster parents.

Four of the foster children - Joan, Sandra, Martha and Elaine - knew a good deal about their family situations while growing up. Joan and Sandra had contact with their parents early and Joan had continuous contact while in placement. Both girls, therefore, were acquainted with their parents' circumstances from the beginning although there was some difficulty in working out their feelings and conflicts. Martha and Elaine only knew about their family backgrounds when they became adolescents - Martha, when she was required to meet her own family in order to help her decide whether she wished to be adopted and Elaine, when she came into DCG care.

Although Joan knew that her mother was dead and her father mentally ill, she apparently did not discuss her family situation with her social
worker as nothing was recorded to that effect. It would seem that she needed the social worker's help in this area as many of her problems in foster home adjustment seemed to stem from her conflict over divided loyalty between her own parents and her foster parents. Sandra learned a good deal about her early life, perhaps in distorted form, from her mother who visited her regularly for a period and who corresponded with her while she was in prison. This information was often upsetting to Sandra and reactivated her identification conflicts. She occasionally talked to her social worker about her mother and at these times the social worker would answer her questions and give her the information she wanted. When she was 19 she needed again to go over the family history and the social worker repeated the process of supplying her with an understanding of her family problems and the reasons for her coming into care.

Martha learned about her background and family through frequent discussion with her social worker and enforced visiting with her family and her occasional correspondence with them. She had throughout the years needed to deny her own family because of the traumatic experience of being abused and neglected by them. In addition, she was very fearful of being taken away from her foster parents by her own parents so was fearful of initiating any discussion of them with the social worker.

Elaine had been told by the nuns in the orphanage that her mother was dead. When she came into care she learned from her social worker that her mother was living, had married and had a nice home but was not able to take her to live with her because of a pre-marital agreement made to her husband. Elaine and her social worker discussed her parentage and her mother's situation very frankly and Elaine felt very grateful for her
worker's help in getting to know her mother, if not personally, at least through the worker and through letters.

**Attitudes Toward Parents**

The attitudes that the foster children had toward their parents could be classified into three categories: (1) Primarily Indifferent - not much strong feeling of either a positive or negative nature and primary identification with the child's foster parents, in most cases; (2) Primarily Ambivalent - with elements of strong positive and negative feelings and mixed or confused identification; and (3) Primarily Positive - a feeling of affection for and identification with the child's own parent or parents. It is difficult to place the foster children into any prescribed categories because at a given point in their development and in working out their conflicts they might be placed in another. However, these ratings characterize the foster children's over-all attitudes toward their parents during the majority of their years in placement.

Four of the foster children - Gerald, Stephen, Martha and Ruth - had Indifferent attitudes toward their parents. All except Ruth felt their foster parents were their "real parents," since they were the ones that they had grown to know and who took care of their needs. Just where Ruth's identification lay was hard to ascertain. She did not relate well to her foster parents and her social workers although she formed a somewhat closer relationship to them toward the end of her placement. Although she was concerned about her mother's health, she was fearful about visiting her at the state hospital.

Stephen had some feelings of rejection by his natural parents and some degree of negative feeling toward them but it did not appear to be
very marked. When he was 11 and his father died, he appeared quite unconcerned regarding the death. Likewise, when he was 20 and attended the funeral of his mother and brother who died in a fire, he could show no emotion and felt his mother and brother were almost complete strangers to him. He declined invitations to visit the homes of relatives at that time since he felt they did not offer him hospitality or a home when he was younger and therefore felt justified in rejecting them when he was almost self-sufficient.

Martha did show some mild curiosity about knowing her mother when the social worker stimulated a reunion between her and her family; yet her fears of meeting them and being taken away from her foster parents were very intense. When first learning of her mother's interest in her she said, "I don't know why my mother would be interested in me now or why I should be interested in her; after all, she didn't want me during all these years." Her social worker later explained to her that her mother was fearful of contacting her because of alleged statements by a local public welfare worker that she would never be allowed to have contact with Martha again. By the time she was 17 both parents and Martha had lost interest in seeing one another and Martha had come to the decision that her ties to her foster parents were stronger.

Three of the foster children – Sandra, Joan and Elaine– showed Ambivalent attitudes toward their parents. Because Sandra's ties were with her own mother and she was unable to assess realistically her mother's shortcomings, she was unable to accept substitute foster parents during most of the years she was in placement. It was only as she began to resolve her conflicts around being placed "on the State" and ceased to
idealize and excuse her mother that she came to terms with the necessity of her placement and could begin to relate to her last foster mother. Until she resolved these feelings, she alternately felt affection and anger toward her mother and suffered from her mother's broken promises and rejection.

In her attempt to identify with her mother and to see her as "acceptable" and "good", she was hindered in her desire to identify with her own family by one of her foster mothers who refused to let her have certain trinkets belonging to her mother. Sandra had told her social worker that her foster mother would become irritated when she inquired about these things and claimed that this same foster mother harshly criticized her mother which Sandra resented. She also reported that this foster mother would threaten her and her sister with the possibility of their going to the Reformatory some day "like your mother."

Joan alternated between deep loyalty and affection for her father and rejection of him. She would sometimes be reproached by her older sister for not showing more devotion to her father, and at other times her foster mother questioned how she could feel so proud of a father who did so little for her. For several years Joan tended to idealize her father and at the same time to devaluate her foster father. Her father visited the home weekly or bi-monthly, on the whole was well-accepted by the foster parents, and was frequently included in foster family activities. He treated Joan to movies and "treats" when he was out of the state hospital. Later Joan's bitterness toward her father grew as she learned that his promises of making a home for her were empty ones. She resented her father's refusal to release her for adoption by her foster parents. At the
time of her discharge, she had not reached the stage of maturity to accept her father as a person who was incapable of taking responsibility for her because of his own personality problems.

Elaine was eager to learn about and to meet her mother when she found out she was still living. The social worker made repeated attempts to arrange a reunion but her mother reneged and made all sorts of excuses for not meeting Elaine. Elaine was saddened by her mother's rejection of her but was accepting of the fact that she could not visit her mother in her mother's home. She held out the hope that some day they would meet. In spite of repeated rejection from her mother, Elaine had a great deal of positive feeling for her mother, defended her and appreciated knowing her through her social worker and correspondence. Elaine has always had the quality of being frank and "open" with people and in some of her letters to her mother, she was critical of her for having left the Catholic faith when she married and for not writing to her more often. Her mother retaliated by sending her "scolding" letters in return, thus affecting the establishment of a positive relationship which Elaine so much wanted.

When her mother very seldom answered Elaine's frequent letters, the girl finally resorted to occasional "polite" contact with her mother through Christmas cards and other holiday greetings.

Two of the foster children - Betty and Howard - had for the most part Positive attitudes toward their parents. Betty felt her father was "coldly accepted" when he occasionally visited her in her foster home. She had always been her father's favorite and hoped she would return to live with him though she knew she never would. In general she felt that her father did all he could for his children. She felt he never got over
the shock of her mother's death and excused his less frequent contact with
her and her sisters in later years on his "growing away into a little world
of his own."

Howard's fantasy about the superiority of his parents and childhood
before placement over his foster home situation could not be checked by
reality testing since he had no contact with his parents after coming into
care. His ties to his own mother, based on memory and idealization, pre­
vented him from forming closer ties to his foster parents. He blamed "the
State" and "the people who squealed" to the MSPCC for his being taken away
from his mother. He showed little interest in knowing his father since he
had deserted when he was quite young and later died. Even at the time of
his discharge, he had not come to grips with the facts of his background.
The writer feels that had the social worker helped Howard to deal with his
own family and the reasons for his coming into care, he might have gone
through his foster experience with less bitterness.

Problems with Dual Parentage

Some of the foster children felt that their having two sets of parents
\textit{[foster and natural]} led to certain problems and conflicts while others
felt that no particular problems resulted. Sometimes the social workers
saw difficulties where none existed in the minds of the foster children.
Five children - Gerald, Stephen, Ruth, Betty and Sandra - felt there were
no particular problems as a result of having two sets of parents, while
four - Martha, Elaine, Joan and Howard - encountered some difficulties as
a result of having more than one set of parents.

The three girls had some conflict around their relationship to their
foster parents and their own parents, and Howard, though not as conscious
of his conflict, had somewhat similar problems. Martha did not want to hurt her parents nor her foster parents who later adopted her. She wanted to satisfy her curiosity about her own family but knew how threatening it was to her and to her foster parents who tended to discourage any contact with her family. Elaine found that her relationship to her foster mother shifted and became less personal when she learned she had a mother of her own. Her foster mother's insistence that she consider her as "mother" only intensified the conflict and resulted in Elaine's defending her mother and identifying more closely with her against her foster mother.

Joan felt "you can only have one family at a time." When her loyalty was with her father, she tended to "play him against my foster parents" and felt that she did not face up to her responsibilities in her foster home at times because she felt that her father would "make things right" and defend her poor behavior. She also felt she had to be tactful with both sets of parents; for instance, she said, "I could never refer to my foster home as my home when with my father," and "I could never really talk about how I felt my home in many ways was superior to my foster home when I was with my foster parents." Howard saw his problems as resulting from the absence of contact with his own parents. He felt the lack of parental support in his activities, both from the standpoint of interest in him and from the standpoint of financial help when he needed it most, particularly at the time of his marriage when he was setting up his own home.

At least two of the foster children - Sandra and Betty - were reported to have "acted up" and to have become saucy and sullen after visits from their parents. Sandra's "upsets" often resulted in her being replaced. It would seem that Joan, too, had a similar feeling of not needing
to conform to the rules set down by her foster parents at the times her father visited.

**Discussion**

As a group these children had very little contact with their own parents and very little information about their family backgrounds and the reasons for placement. There were, of course, exceptions to this. Joan was the only child who had frequent contact with her parent but four of the foster children had no contact at all after placement.

Five of the foster children had little or no knowledge of their parentage while four had considerable knowledge which was gained either by direct contact with their parents, by discussions with their social workers, or by both. Four of the children did discuss their parents and backgrounds with their social workers whereas five foster children did not receive this kind of help from their social workers. One of these, Gerald, asked specifically for knowledge of his parents and it is unfortunate that his questions were "shelved" until he was discharged and equally unfortunate that Howard's "unasked" questions could not have been anticipated by his social worker and dealt with. Whatever the reason for the reluctance of the four who hesitated to ask for family information - whether it was fear, a feeling of disloyalty to foster parents, a lack of frequent-enough contact with their social workers, an unawareness that the social worker could be helpful in this way etc., there was evidence that some of these children wanted to know more about their family situations and could have made a better foster home adjustment if their identity problems had been better worked out.

It is interesting to note that the two social workers who did discuss
parents and backgrounds with the foster children were both women; none of the male social workers either seemed to answer the children's asked or unasked questions directly or took initiative in finding the children's "lost parents" as the women did.

The attitudes that the children had toward their parents were classified into three categories - Indifferent, Ambivalent and Positive - with respective foster family, mixed or own parent identifications. Three of the four children who had Indifferent attitudes and foster family identifications were the ones who felt more "at home" and were generally more satisfied with their foster family life than the others. Four factors seem to account for this: their pre-school age placements; infrequent or no replacements; childless foster parents; and little or no contact with their own parents.

The five children who had either Ambivalent or Positive attitudes toward their parents were placed at a later age and either had difficulty in working out their conflicts concerning their parents or felt deprived and idealized their own previous home life. Some of the parents of these children visited and others did not. The majority of these foster parents were also childless and two in fact were widows. However, neither of the above two factors seemed to make any difference in the satisfaction or the adjustment of the foster children. Although the children were not without any foster family gratifications, they were not able to derive a feeling of "belonging" as did the children with Indifferent attitudes.

The foster children were aware of some problems that did develop as a result of their parents visiting and these usually concerned the rivalry between own parents and foster parents for the affection of the children.
or the children's problems in working out their identity. Where the parents did not visit, the children usually were not aware of any problems with parents as the conflicts then were repressed and there was no overt interference in the daily lives of the foster children.

Foster Parent-Child Relationship

This section is concerned with the degree of foster family identification and integration that the foster children were able to achieve and the extent to which their foster home life approximated "normal" family living. Of particular interest are: the gradations of feeling of "belonging" that the foster children had; the children's concepts of their foster parents' attitudes toward them and of the reasons for their being boarded; the measure of freedom or caution with which the foster parents brought up their foster children; the frequency of threats of removal for misbehavior; the kinds of foster family activities, chores and discipline that the children experienced; the roles that the foster fathers and mothers played in the upbringing of the foster children; and the level of communication between foster parents and foster children.

Security and Acceptance Gradations

Most of the foster children seemed to achieve at least a partial feeling of "belonging" in their foster homes but a feeling of complete security was usually lacking. Only two - Gerald and Stephen, the two boys who had been first placed under the age of 1 - said they felt "at home" without any qualification. Martha also basically felt that she was accepted and loved by her foster parents who later adopted her, but there were times when she doubted this, particularly when she was denied some pleasure.

Four of the foster children - Joan, Betty, Howard and Ruth - felt to
some degree "at home" with their foster parents but were not as close to these parents as they would have liked to have been. Joan said, "Although I was more than a boarder, I never felt completely a part of the family because I had another family." Betty said, "I did think of my foster mother as a mother and I felt somewhat close to her at times but she was rather formal and I couldn't really talk to her." Howard said, "In my last home I felt a part of the family but not quite as accepted as their own children. In the other homes I felt like a boarder." Ruth said:

I wanted to get closer but didn't dare. If you were assured this was going to be your home until you grew up, then you'd be able to give more of yourself. And if foster parents would share their experiences and family problems with you, you'd feel closer.

Only two - Elaine, who had been brought up in institutions until her adolescence, and Sandra, who had six foster homes - felt as if they never really belonged to their foster families. Elaine said, "The nuns were my only family. Homes didn't agree with me. I don't feel I belong in any home unless it's my own." Sandra, however, felt a great deal of affection for her last foster mother.

In most cases the foster children's evaluation of their foster parents' attitudes toward them accurately reflected the social workers' evaluation. Only three of the foster children - Elaine, Gerald and Stephen - unequivocally thought they were liked by their foster parents. Elaine, however, felt her foster mother was too affectionate and said, "I didn't like the lovey-dovey business as I hadn't been used to it and particularly felt my foster mother was insincere in her affection when she had just met me." Gerald and Stephen were placed as babies so could more easily accept their foster parents' affection and Stephen, in fact, never seemed satiated.
The other six foster children either had ambivalent feelings as to whether they were liked or accepted or they had varying experiences in different foster homes. Betty felt her foster mother "had a jealous attitude toward us, would say we were spoiled [by the State] and would tell us we didn't appreciate what she did for us." Howard also said his foster parents told him how lucky he was to have a home but he said, "I didn't feel they were putting themselves out for me."

Concepts of Motivation for Boarding Children

What were the foster children's thoughts concerning their foster parents' reasons for boarding them? Five of the children - Gerald, Martha, Ruth, Stephen and Joan - felt their foster parents' motivation was altruistic and gave such reasons as: "wanting to help children;" "they like kids;" "they couldn't have any children of their own;" and "sympathy for children." Three of the foster children - Betty, Sandra and Elaine - had mixed concepts of foster parents' altruism and personal gain. Betty and Sandra felt one of their foster parents wanted "a girl to help with the work" and Betty also added "they wanted foster kids for the money." But both girls also cited non-personal motivation, namely, "they wanted to help unfortunate children and wanted something new to think about."

Elaine thought both her foster parents had mixed motivation. She felt her first foster mother "wanted to show the community how good she was for status but maybe deep down she wanted to be good." She felt her second foster mother boarded her "because she liked me but she was also interested in the board money." Howard was the only one who believed his foster parents boarded children solely for personal gain. He thought his foster parents boarded him "to make money" and to provide "companionship
for their own children."

The relationship between the children's foster status and the freedom or caution with which foster parents brought them up was also studied. Five foster children - Elaine, Joan, Gerald, Stephen and Howard - felt their foster parents were as relaxed with their upbringing as most parents are while four - Ruth, Betty, Sandra and Martha - felt their foster status caused their foster parents to use more caution in bringing them up. This often limited the amount of freedom the children were allowed. Three of the girls believed their foster parents felt the agency would hold them responsible and to blame if anything happened to the foster children.

**Threat of Removal**

Another area of inquiry was the frequency with which the foster children were threatened with removal if they did not behave. All nine foster children lived with the expectation that they might be taken away from their foster parents since all but two - Martha and Joan - did experience at least one replacement and some had more than one. All of the foster children, with the exception of Howard, were given actual threats by one or more of their foster parents that unless they improved in their behavior they would be moved. Sometimes these threats were "idle" ones and foster parents had no intention of asking to have the foster children removed but some foster parents did report the misbehavior of the children to their social workers or actually considered having them moved.

The foster children's reactions to these threats were mostly those of fear. There was also crying; anger; resentment; distrust of adults; a temporary improvement in behavior; and an "I don't care attitude"
accompanied by boldness. Worse yet, there was a feeling of insecurity, a
cleavage between the foster parents and the foster children, and an inten-
sification of feelings of "not belonging" to their foster families.

Foster Family Activity Sharing

The extent to which the foster children and their foster families
worked and played together varied from frequent family activity to limited
comradeship, but the majority of the foster children shared in foster fami-
ly fun, at least to some extent. The activities most often mentioned were
picnics, family get-togethers, trips, vacations, visiting, fishing, hiking
and swimming. Some foster parents helped the children with their homework
and some of the children enjoyed helping their foster parents with do-
meric or farm chores.

Five of the foster children - Martha, Joan, Stephen, Howard and
Gerald - felt included in and satisfied with foster family activities.
Three of the foster children - Elaine, Sandra and Ruth - said their play-
ing and having fun with their foster families was limited but there were
occasional outings to the beach, weddings, and riding in the car. Ruth
and Sandra were the only children who sometimes did not accompany their
foster parents on their vacations. During the two-week periods Ruth was
placed in another foster home. She was apprehensive about being replaced
but after a few days adjusted and enjoyed her temporary foster family.
Sandra and the other children in her foster home were cared for by a fos-
ter relative in the foster home, did not mind a bit and in fact felt "you
could get away with more when your foster parents weren't there." With
her other foster families Sandra did share in the family vacations.

Betty hardly did anything with her foster mother but she did manage
activities with neighborhood parents and friends and went on trips and to beaches with the family for whom she did housework part time. Her sisters, however, were sometimes taken shopping and to other places by the foster mother and Betty often felt left out.

Chores

As a group the foster children had the usual childhood chores - making their beds, dishes, dusting, and animal and gardening chores for those who lived on farms. The children worked along with the other children and the foster parents, and with the exception of Betty, none of the children felt exploited or overworked by foster parents or felt he was required to do more than the average child who lives in his own home. Betty complained that she worked six hours a day during the summer and also had heavy household chores during the fall when she lived on a farm for about six months. Later the foster home was closed. In her second foster home where her foster mother took the major responsibility for housework, Betty felt she had the normal number of chores.

The only other complaint was voiced by Martha who felt she should not have had to do the dusting and dishes before she went to school. The girl also had to make her own breakfast and get herself off to school. Sandra, though she had no realistic complaint, explained how she needed to feel "used and abused" when she said:

We didn't have excessive chores but we wanted to play. Other kids in the neighborhood said they didn't have to do any chores. We wanted to believe it. You want to pity yourself a lot, want to believe that kids in their own homes are treated better.

Discipline

As a rule the foster children were disciplined by the usual methods -
taking away activities and privileges, which was the most common; sending the children to bed or to their rooms; staying home for a specified period of time, etc. A few of the children reported being occasionally spanked or slapped; only Sandra mentioned it as the major method of punishment when she was younger. All the children reported they were disciplined in the same manner as other foster children and own children. None felt abused or mistreated although some of the children sometimes questioned whether they deserved a punishment.

Five of the children - Betty, Elaine, Gerald, Stephen and Howard - thought the discipline was fair and sufficient. Joan felt her foster parents were not firm enough and felt they should have enforced the restrictions they imposed upon her. Two others - Sandra and Martha - felt that the punishment at times was too harsh. In one foster home Sandra complained that she and her sister were sent to bed early or were threatened with the loss of their few privileges if they arrived home from school just a few minutes late. However, in other foster homes Sandra felt the discipline was fair.

Martha's foster mother kept a check list of duties not performed by Martha and anything over ten checks meant that the girl would be punished by being deprived of some activity, usually at the last minute. Martha felt this method of punishment was unwise and unfair as it resulted in severed friendships or embarrassed explanations. Being sent to her room or occasional slapping was also used with Martha.

The foster mothers played a dominant role in disciplining the foster children and in making decisions. Eight of the foster children said that their foster mothers did most or all of the disciplining. Stephen added
that although his foster mother did most of the disciplining, his foster father took over this task when he was home. Six of the foster children said that their foster mothers made most or all of the decisions in the home. Only three - Gerald, Stephen and Ruth - said that decisions were shared by both foster mother and father. Gerald explained that his foster father made decisions concerning matters outside the home and his foster mother concerning matters inside the home. Ruth said that although both foster parents made decisions, "the man was apt to sit back more."

Communication with Foster Parents

The foster mothers not only took more responsibility for making decisions and handling the discipline of their foster children but were more often confided in by the children than the foster fathers. Seven of the foster children - Martha, Joan, Elaine, Sandra, Betty, Gerald and Howard - most often went to their foster mothers with any problems they faced rather than to their foster fathers. Two - Stephen and Ruth - said they would go to either foster parent with their troubles.

There were various reasons given for not feeling as free to confide in the foster fathers. Elaine said she didn't have anything in common with her foster father although she said "he was nice." Martha felt her foster father would start an argument if she asked his opinion. Joan said her foster father was away a lot because of his job and he would also "go into long dissertations" on a subject if she asked him something. Sandra said her foster mother was jealous of her foster father getting close to Sandra and wanted her to be completely confidential to her alone.

Six of the foster children - Elaine, Betty, Martha, Joan, Ruth and Howard - did not feel free to confide their innermost thoughts and shared
mostly neutral subjects or surface thoughts about more personal, intimate concerns with their foster parents. They could not discuss personal problems and sex, and with the exception of Martha and Joan, could not discuss their own parents and family. Subjects most often discussed, if any, were school, health, friends, and vocations. Sandra, until she was placed in her sixth foster home, also was reluctant to bring any problems she had to foster parents and said she never talked to anyone unless she had to. But in her last foster home she claimed she discussed everything with her foster mother - when she was in the mood. Only Stephen said he felt free enough to discuss anything and Gerald said he could discuss anything but sex.

Several major reasons were given to account for the problems in communication between the foster children and their foster parents. Most common was the children's feeling that their foster parents were not very interested or would not understand. Also mentioned frequently were a lack of closeness to their foster parents; a lack of trust in adults with the accompanying fear that their sharing of personal thoughts might be used against the foster children; their fear of appearing "silly" or "odd" upon revealing themselves; and less often, their foster parents' reluctance to discuss certain subjects, such as sex or prejudicial matters.

Discussion

By and large it would appear that most of the foster children felt themselves to be a part of their foster families, were treated as family members and shared in activities. However, except for Gerald and Stephen and perhaps Martha, there was always some feeling of aloofness, of not having equal status with other family members or of not being completely
accepted by foster parents.

There may be several factors accounting for this. The possibility of being moved was always a realistic factor if not an actual fear or threat since all of the children had been removed from their own homes and seven of the children had been replaced at least once. Eight of the foster children were at some time or other threatened with being moved from their foster homes if they did not behave. Thus even the children who felt most secure were thus threatened. Often these threats were groundless and were used as a last resort to control the children but in the youngster's minds the threats meant rejection, were considered poor discipline, and brought about a lack of trust.

There were in addition other factors which made for "togetherness" of foster parents and foster children or its absence. These were: the foster parents' motivation for boarding; the freedom or caution with which they carried out their parental roles; the inclusion or exclusion of foster children in family activities and chores; and the ways of handling discipline. More than half of the children felt their foster parents boarded them for benevolent reasons; felt they were as relaxed in their upbringing as most parents are; felt included in family activities; and thought the discipline was fair and sufficient. Almost all felt the chores they were required to do were fair and those expected of most children. Thus, the foster children seemed to have on the whole a family life which simulated "normal" family living.

One of the apparent differences between these foster families studied and the average American family was the frequency of maternal domination in the areas of decision-making, disciplining, problem solving, and counsel-
ing of the foster children. Also apparent was the barrier in communica-
tion between the foster children and their foster parents. Two main rea-
sons for this came to mind. The foster children often developed a pat-
tern of not trusting or of warding off emotional closeness as a defensive
pattern of behavior. Also it is not unusual for teen-age children to
share their innermost secrets with peers and to be guarded with their
parents and other adults.

Social Worker-Child Relationship

This section will examine the relationship between the foster children
and their social workers, the nature of the relationship, its depth and en-
durance, the foster children's concepts of the social worker's visiting
role, and the level of communication that existed between the foster chil-
dren and their social workers.

By and large the social workers visited the children at least quarter-
ly, the minimum set by agency policy, and some of the children and foster
parents were seen more often than that. There was more variation in how
often the children were seen alone but usually the agency policy which pre-
scribes at least semi-annual private interviews was usually adhered to.
When special problems cropped up, the children were seen more often.

Recommendations Concerning Visiting

Most of the foster children had some suggestions to make in regard to
their contact with social workers. Only three of the foster children -
Stephen, Martha and Elaine - felt that they saw their social workers often
enough or had enough privacy. The other six foster children said they
would have preferred some changes in the frequency of visiting or the
place where they were seen alone. Betty, Joan and Sandra would have pre-
ferred to have seen their social workers alone more often - Betty, once every three months; Joan, once a month; but Sandra gave no specific frequency. She said, "I would have liked to have seen my social worker more often but I seldom trusted anyone. When I did and revealed something that got back to the foster mother, I wouldn't trust again." Betty felt she needed the social worker's help in expressing her feelings and felt the social worker should come more often "to see whether you're happy."

Three of the foster children had recommendations as to where the child should or should not be seen. Ruth and Joan felt they could have no real privacy when interviewed in their foster homes. Ruth said, "If my worker could have taken me out of hearing distance of my foster home, maybe I would have talked more." Joan suggested, "Maybe you could go for a ride or for coffee. In the house you can't discuss things without fear of being overheard. And this way, you'd get to know each other better."

Howard preferred not being seen at school because "the kids get to know your business." Four others - Ruth, Joan, Martha and Sandra - shared this preference, and Ruth's feeling, "You don't want to be different," or Sandra's view, "It's embarrassing when other kids ask you who you were talking to," was also shared by the other children. All five preferred to keep their foster status hidden. Three of the foster children - Stephen, Elaine and Gerald - who were seen alone at school occasionally, were not bothered by their social workers interviewing them at school. Betty, who had never been seen alone at school, thought she would not have been embarrassed since she said everyone knew that she was a state ward anyway.

Although more than half did not wish to be seen at school, six of the foster children without qualification said they did not mind the social
worker visiting school and inquiring about their scholastic and social progress. Two - Joan and Sandra - had some qualifications to make. Joan was not opposed to the worker looking at her records but was afraid that other students would overhear her name and learn she was a foster child. Sandra was afraid that her truanting would come to the attention of the social worker. Ruth was the only one who was basically opposed to the idea of the social worker making periodic visits to school as she felt the workers were "trying to find out how bad you were."

Concepts of Social Worker's Job

All of the foster children thought the social worker's job was to find out how the children got along in their foster homes, particularly in their relationships and in their behavior. Joan was the only one to mention, in addition, the social worker's concern for the physical standards of the home and the physical care given to the children.

Four of the foster children - Elaine, Joan, Martha and Gerald - regarded their social workers' periodic visits positively, i.e., they felt their social workers came "to see if we were happy or satisfied," "to see if there were any problems," and to find out "how we were doing." Ruth was the only one who saw the social worker's role primarily in a negative light. She felt the workers were coming "to check up on me, to see if I did anything wrong. I felt my foster mother was collecting things I did wrong to tell the worker," she said.

Two of the children - Betty and Sandra - had both positive and negative feelings concerning their workers' visits to the foster home. Betty felt the worker visited "to see if we were satisfied and if we were behaving. But I had that uncertain feeling and wondered if she were coming
to see if my foster mother was going to give us up." Sandra said:

I figured they wanted to know how you were getting along - good or bad. My reaction sometimes would be, 'What did I do wrong?' I never knew whether they were interested in us kids or whether they were just doing their duty. Now I feel they are really interested.

Two of the children - Stephen and Gerald - seemed to have neutral feelings about their social workers' visits, showing neither positive nor negative feelings. Howard, like Sandra, felt the worker's visiting was routine and felt there was no sincere interest shown in the children.

Attitudes Toward Social Workers

All the foster children felt they got along fairly well with their social workers, at least on a superficial level. In most cases their relationships were pleasantly polite and avoided overt conflict but sometimes there was a lack of trust and confidence in the workers; an avoidance of them, or some negative feelings beneath the veneer of cordiality.

Elaine was the only child who had a close, trusting relationship with her social worker whom she had known for four years. She had had monthly contact with this worker for some time due to the necessity of picking up bus tickets at the office for her frequent orthodontia appointments. She learned of the existence and circumstances of her mother through this worker which helped cement the relationship.

Stephen and Gerald basically had positive feelings toward their social workers but were quiet and shy in their relationships. Betty was ambivalent in her relationship with her one social worker, alternately feeling close and trusting and non-trusting and trying to avoid contact with her at times. She said she lost trust when she once discussed something in confidence and said "it got back to my foster mother." There
were times, however, when she of her own accord called on the social worker.

Three of the children - Sandra, Ruth and Joan - kept their emotional distance from their social workers and never formed a close relationship because of lack of trust or lack of sufficient contact. Sandra said:

I didn’t consider my visitor as a friend. I felt I might make a liar out of my foster mother if I said something which didn’t agree with what my foster mother said. I was afraid to go to her. I didn’t know whether to trust her.

However, the case record showed that Sandra at times was quite frank with the social worker she had known for seven years, did confide in her some, and formed a closer relationship with her toward the end of her placement.

Like Sandra, Ruth near the end of her placement was able to trust and confide in her social worker a little more. However, she said:

I kept my distance. I’d say hello and good-bye and would avoid seeing my visitor if I could. The workers tried to be nice and to get acquainted with us. But they made you feel funny. They’d talk to your foster parents first and then they would see you and beat around the bush and talk in general terms, which was worthless. I had a grudge against the State and felt my visitor was part of it because she moved me from my first foster home.

Joan felt her visitor was a stranger and said, "I never saw her enough to form a close relationship." She never therefore was able to discuss topics that were of concern to her but on the surface was an easy conversationalist.

Martha and Howard had negative feelings toward their social workers. Martha was friendly with her visitors and liked her first social worker. She felt the worker she had during her teens was "too pushy, was always telling me what to do, and went into things too far if I brought up something." Thus she felt unable to confide in her. She felt nervous when
she visited and feared that she might move her from her foster home since
the worker felt she did not have enough freedom.

Howard felt bitter toward social workers from the very beginning. As
a youngster he seemed friendly with the workers but as an adolescent he
was very difficult to reach. He took on an attitude of pleasant passive
resistance and never volunteered anything on his own.

On the whole the social workers were well-liked. Seven of the foster
children spoke in positive terms of their social workers with "nice" and
"friendly" being the most frequent descriptive terms. Elaine also added,
"a sense of humor and an ability to put you at ease" as being important
traits which her social worker had and Joan thought in addition "never
getting angry with me" as helping the relationship along. Only two -
Betty and Howard - could think of no qualities they liked in their social
workers.

Only three children - Martha, Gerald and Howard - had any complaints
or dislikes in regard to their social workers. Martha's complaints have
already been discussed. Gerald felt he was being checked up on by one
worker when the worker repeatedly asked him the same questions every time
he visited. Gerald felt resentful and thought the worker could have made
positive suggestions to him rather than giving him a lot of "don'ts."
Howard's original complaint was that he felt deceived by his social worker
when first placed as he had been given the impression he would return to
his parents in two weeks' time but he never saw his parents again. He
indirectly stated he felt neglected when his social worker was too busy
to watch him play in games at school and also felt his social worker
could have taken him to ball games more often.
Communication with Social Workers

Just as the foster children had difficulty in revealing their more personal thoughts to foster parents, the majority also hesitated to confide in their social workers. Only Elaine felt free enough to discuss anything, including personal subjects, with her social worker. All the others refrained from revealing their more personal or intimate concerns but felt freer to discuss less threatening subjects such as school, vocations, health, etc. Most of the children did not discuss their own parents and family, their feelings about being foster children or problems in their foster families. Invariably most of the children let their social workers initiate what subjects would be discussed and some of them said they would merely answer the questions they were asked. Where the foster children brought up topics for discussion, they were usually general and non-personal.

Discussion

Although as a group the social workers were well-liked with little exception, the relationships that most of the children established with them were shallow. Elaine was the only person who was able to establish a close, trusting relationship with her social worker and her frequent contact with her worker might have played a part in this. Three of the children cited lack of sufficient contact and three lack of privacy as hindering the establishment of a closer bond between them and their workers. However, this is only part of the story. Many of the foster children had a basic lack of trust in adults. In many cases they wanted a closer relationship with their social workers but were unable to permit themselves to trust. Since their social workers also had contact with
the foster parents, some of the children questioned how confidential their relationship with the social workers would be.

In spite of the superficiality of the relationships established, most of the children thought their social workers were interested in their welfare although a few had ambivalent feelings about their social workers' visits. Only one child regarded these visits in a negative light entirely and felt the school visits were also made as a check on her "bad behavior." Two-thirds of the children felt it was all right for their social workers to make periodic inquiry about their school progress if they did it confidentially but being interviewed at school by the social workers was frowned upon by almost half of the children because they felt it revealed their foster status to other students. A few children while they were in placement felt that their workers came to visit because it was their job and not because they were particularly interested in the children.
CHAPTER VII
MONEY SYMBOLS AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Since people of various ages ascribe different emotional meaning to money, we need to examine the impact that money or lack of it has on the foster child, his attitude toward accepting money from substitute parents as compared with earning his own, and the degree to which the foster child becomes dependent or self-sufficient as a result of his having been publicly supported. We know that the little child often equates the receiving of money and other material gifts with love and the withholding of them as rejection. How does the foster child, who often has known little security and affection in his own home and who often functions at an emotional level beneath that of his chronological age, value material things?

Material and Emotional Well-Being

This chapter will assess the material well-being of the foster children and will explore the emotional implications of money and money goods for these children. But first, we need to ascertain how these foster children fared in regard to spending money and material possessions. All the children in the sample had some spending money but the amount given and the frequency varied from the giving of a regular allowance to occasional spending money given for specific purposes such as movies, candy, etc.

Five of the foster children - Joan, Elaine, Gerald, Stephen and Martha - felt their spending money was sufficient to cover their needs and did not hinder or restrict their social life. Joan, Elaine and Gerald, who had no feeling of money deprivation, got a regular allowance when they
were not earning sufficient money of their own. Joan was quite demanding of her foster parents and received material gifts beyond her allowance but also was able to accept limitations. She could spend her money as she wished. When she left high school and moved from her foster home, she became self-supporting but occasionally visited her foster home and enjoyed a meal with her foster parents.

Elaine had a regular allowance for chores she did around the house and could ask for more money if she needed it but seldom did. Her material needs were few and she always had the feeling that she did not deserve all the agency was doing for her and had the desire to be as independent as possible. She also could spend her money as she wished. When she worked and became self-supporting, she managed her money well and built up a nice savings account.

Gerald got a regular allowance which he felt was quite generous and got additional money when he did chores around the house. He also could control the spending of his money. He felt he had as much money as other children and said, "I could go to movies, do other things and wasn't left out of things because of money. If I wanted more money, I'd ask for more." When he started to become self-supporting, his foster mother encouraged him to save but he had difficulty in accomplishing this in addition to paying his board.

Stephen did not get a specified allowance and preferred to get spending money as he needed it because "When you spend your allowance, you don't get any more." He also had no feeling of having insufficient money for his desires and thought he and his brother "got more money than the other kids in the neighborhood." When he made sufficient money working...
part time, the social worker expected him to buy his own clothes. Stephen apparently did this without resentment but his foster mother thought it unfair. When he began to work he was unable to save any money and found it difficult to know where his money went.

Martha got a small allowance for doing chores. She accepted her foster mother's frugal habits and followed a budget carefully planned for her. She later rebelled against her foster parents' control in handling her money, especially when she earned her own, but to keep peace in the family she would end up following her foster mother's dictates. She was aware of the amount of her clothing allowance and sometimes felt resentful when her foster parents would explain that they could not afford to give her more, particularly when these foster parents had often spoken of wanting to adopt her. She has continued to allow her foster mother to plan her expenses with her and to bank most of the money she earns for her college expenses but more and more often it is becoming a source of argument. Martha not only pays her own board but her tuition, books, clothing and medical expenses and wants to prove that she can more than fulfill her foster parents' financial expectations of her and can be self-sufficient.

Four of the foster children - Sandra, Betty, Ruth and Howard - felt deprived materially in varying degrees and felt the lack of sufficient money or material goods interfered with their social adjustment and feelings of worth. Sandra, who was replaced several times, usually had allowances that she could spend as she wished although sometimes foster parents urged or required some saving. The money was given her for regular chores and in one home it was taken away for misbehavior. Sandra felt that being a foster child did affect her social adjustment. She explained:
I didn't always have money to do things. I hated to ask for money. I don't know why except that I always wanted to be independent. I had the feeling I didn't have as much as the other kids so would not feel as well accepted by others.

Indeed, she "lost" some of her belongings as she moved from home to home but the feeling of deprivation and poverty which she spoke of was more of an emotional nature and revealed her feeling of being unworthy and unloved. Money to Sandra had a lot of emotional meaning. Starved emotionally, she "usually blew it at once. I always feel good when I spend money," she explained. As a result, she still finds that spending money gives her emotional satisfaction and that saving money is a problem for her.

Betty was placed at age 10 and started earning some of her own spending money when she was 12. Her father occasionally gave her a money gift and her foster mother gave her some money for the movies, usually once a week. She did have some feeling of being different from her friends because she did not have additional pocket money to buy pop corn or other goodies when she went to the movies. She also had a clothes problem due to her out-size and felt that her clothing allowance did not afford her enough clothes to compete socially with others her age.

Yet she was ambivalent about asking her foster mother or social worker for a larger allowance as needed, alternately feeling herself deserving of more and non-deserving. Fortunately, she was able to add to her wardrobe with her own earnings which she managed well and with which she also paid for her recreation and all her incidental expenses at school. She tended to be a little selfish as far as sharing some of her money with her younger sisters. When she first became self-supporting,
she did not find it too easy to budget for all her expenses.

Ruth never had an allowance but got small sums of money occasionally but infrequently. When her older sister worked, her foster mother persuaded her to give Ruth a weekly allowance and later Ruth earned her own money by part-time work. She felt the lack of money kept her from participating in activities and when she started to work and earn her own money, her time for outside activities was limited. She said:

I helped with the school dance and did things where I didn't need money. I was in soft ball until I found out I needed insurance. She knew the DSG would cover any injury but rather than explain this and point out her difference from other students, she withdrew from the activity. You also need transportation if you are to join in on activities. In my second foster home, they had no car.

Although she would never ask for money, she felt:

Material things would give you more satisfaction and would help you join in with the crowd. You're always missing things with your friends. Occasionally there is a nickel left over, but you have no way of getting money for presents to celebrate family birthdays. But sometimes your foster parents would give you a dollar to buy a present.

Again we see a case where an emotionally deprived child feels the lack of money more keenly than the child who has some degree of security and feeling of acceptance in his foster home. The idea of going to work and earning money appealed to Ruth more than a chance to have a college education and her working helped her to "grow up." Even though she strongly desired to move out on her own, she remained with her foster parents for a year or so after her discharge in order to save for a car and an apartment, realizing that it would cost her more to live outside the foster home.

Howard never had a regular allowance, was reluctant to ask for money
and usually preferred to earn his own. He amply described his feelings of unworthiness and of not belonging when he said:

I never liked to ask for money. I felt I was getting something for nothing. I didn't like to accept something for nothing. I'd rather go without. I wanted to be independent and on my own. I had the feeling I didn't deserve something free. It never bothered me to ask my brother and sister for things, though.

Even though he protested that he did not want to accept things "for free," he questioned whether he was given sufficient clothing according to the amount the Division allowed and complained that:

Foster parents never tell kids what they're allowed. I never got a suit. I hardly ever got a brand new jacket. It always seemed like I never had clothes. I never wore a tie and hardly ever wore a white shirt. The other kids wore shirts and suits. I never cared.

Thus, we see his ambivalence about material things and comforts and his ambivalence about his own self-worth. He felt deprived but quickly denied this to ease the hurt. Again, his deprivation stemmed from deeper feelings of desertion by his parents and the emotional distance of his substitute parents; yet he could not tolerate close relationship with them. When Howard started to work full time and was able to buy a car and pay his own board, he achieved an air of independence which helped him to feel more satisfied with his life and foster status.

Howard was the only child who felt that he was a second-rate member of his foster family as far as material benefits were concerned. He felt he never had anything of great value which the foster parents' own children might envy or want to borrow. He said:

I never had anything of my own or at least as good as theirs. It was their cows, their toys. I'd have to ask permission to use their things. When I did get anything like a bike or a rifle, it was second-hand. Theirs were new. They/the own children/ would never want to use my things because they were never as good as theirs.
Howard not only felt inferior as a person but felt he had inferior belongings.

Discussion

The attitudes that these foster children had toward spending money and material goods seemed to correspond very closely to their attitudes toward foster care. Five children who were given allowances or spending money felt no particular deprivation whereas four of the foster children definitely expressed feelings of material or social deprivation. Even though it is possible that there was some realistic basis for the "deprived" children feeling less well off than the other children, the writer feels that the felt deprivation was as much emotional as material.

The five children who felt that their spending money met their needs were Joan, Elaine, Gerald, Stephen and Martha. These were the children who felt most content and accepted in their foster homes, more readily accepted placement as necessary, and seemed able to handle more positively any feelings of deprivation that they had. The "deprived" group - Ruth, Sandra, Betty and Howard - seemed to be the most emotionally damaged, were the ones who were least able to trust, and the most bitter of the group. All four seemed to identify with and idealize their parents, felt they were unjustly taken away from them, and in general had a harder time accepting substitute parents.

Except for Howard, who felt discrimination on the basis of his being a foster child, all of the other children felt they were treated fairly and squarely with other foster children, siblings and own children. However, the majority of the group lived with childless foster parents or with those whose children had grown up so the problem of
giving preferential treatment to own children was often not an issue.

One of the themes that runs through this analysis is the reluctance to accept and ask for money and the ambivalence concerning material wants. Only three – Gerald, Stephen and Joan – mentioned that they could accept money freely from foster parents. Gerald and Stephen were placed when quite young and felt "at home" in their foster settings while Joan, whose placement was necessary because of the death and illness of her parents, had more self-esteem than the average foster child who feels stigmatized by neglectful parents. We can conjecture that the other children did not feel themselves as worthy of consideration and benevolence and did not consider themselves as sharing members of the family on an equal basis with other family members. Elaine summed up this feeling of unworthiness succinctly when she said, "My own mother didn't want me. Why should I be a burden on anyone else?"

The ambivalence becomes apparent when we notice the feelings of deprivation and the material comparisons between the foster children and other children while, on the other hand, we see the reluctance to accept money or gifts from foster parents and the denial, under the guise of wanting to be independent, that these things are wanted or expected. The dependency needs become apparent, however, by the fact that these children could accept money and gifts more readily from relatives.

Is it possible that these children, who so desperately seek love and attention from foster parents but who at the same time cannot tolerate emotional closeness to them, show the same ambivalence toward money, the child's symbol of love? It would seem likely. It is also possible that the accepting of material things means to the foster child that he is
accepting affection with its ever-present threat of rejection. This could make the adolescent feel more helpless and weak, feelings which foster home placement already engender in him, at a time when he is struggling for adequacy.

Most of the foster children preferred to earn their own spending money and all of them did work at least part time during their adolescence, thereby improving their material welfare, their social status and in many cases their self-esteem. Thus, there were no outward signs of "dependency" feelings, i.e., no attitude that "the world owes me a living." Two of the children - Martha and Stephen - had some feeling that they were being discriminated against somewhat for being required by the Division to buy their own clothes when their part-time income was sufficient but this attitude seemed to come from the foster parents themselves and was due, in part, to an enforcement of agency policy. Howard's foster parents thought it unfair that he be expected to pay his board before financing a car of his own. Other than that, the children wanted to pay their own way. This could be regarded as a sign of maturity but, on the other hand, their desire for independence could be seen as a reaction formation against their unmet dependency needs. Through the purchase and consumption of goods they could derive vicarious emotional gratification and a feeling of power and well-being.

Some of the children did approach their financial independence with fear and doubt. Sandra was unsure of her status in her foster homes, thought she was suitable for only menial work, and showed little initiative in finding a job. Her foster mother seemed to protect her, and only after encouragement and firmness from her social worker did she become
self-supporting. Elaine, though she had a very good relationship with her social worker and a sense of trust, nevertheless became anxious as she neared high school graduation that she would not be able to find a job right away and worried about being cast into the adult world without any guarantee of support. Her fear was unfounded as far as agency policy was concerned for she was assured she would be taken care of until she found a job or until age 21, if necessary.

Betty, who had budgeted her part-time earnings well, nevertheless wondered if she would be able to make ends meet when she was entirely on her own. Although Gerald felt fairly secure in his foster home, he wondered whether he would still be living there when he became self-supporting, questioning whether his foster home and foster parents offered the security of an own home. The writer has seen cases of adolescents who would make a poor school or social adjustment, even to the point of acting out in the community, in order to prolong their period of dependency and to continue controls. Often these children were the very ones who were most anxious to get "off the State."

None of the parents of the foster children studied contributed toward their support while they were in care. The parents were emotionally unstable, were physically ill, were incarcerated in penal institutions, were disinterested in their children, or had deserted. Feldman speaks of the negative effects of such non-support on the foster child's self-image:

Since to "pay one's own way" is an important value in our society, the child who is aware that his parents are not providing for his support may be burdened with feelings of guilt, worthlessness, inadequacy, and resentment ... The child removed from his natur-
al parents thinks of the money they spend on him as the measure of his affectional ties to his own family.¹

Thus we can understand the foster child's desire to "pay his own way" when his own parents fail to support him. Some of the foster children did receive occasional sums of money from their parents but the majority of them received very little or none at all. It would be expected that many of them would feel deprived. "In our American culture, money is equated with security, love, and achievement. Its absence is equated with deprivation."²

²Ibid., p. 42.
CHAPTER VIII
THE FOSTER CHILD'S FEELINGS, FANTASIES AND FEARS

The foster child's self-evaluation and satisfaction with his foster status depends on several factors such as the attitude of the foster parents and the community toward foster children and their parents; the parents' acceptance or non-acceptance of placement; the foster child's feelings of adequacy or inadequacy built up through his prior experiences of living with his own family; and his positive or negative foster home experiences.

When he reaches adolescence, even the reasonably secure foster child may feel unaccepted by other teen-agers because he is "different" from them by reason of his living with unrelated parents. As he begins to struggle with his own identity, his renewed oedipal conflict, and his social relationships, particularly his heterosexual strivings, he needs the emotional support of the peer group as well as understanding from his foster parents. In addition, he needs to come to terms with his own family and background in formulating "who he is." Unfortunately, not many foster children reach adolescence with any great degree of security or self-esteem and "being on the State" implies a social inferiority which the foster adolescent is apt to magnify.

This chapter will evaluate the foster children's self-image and the degree of stigma which they felt with respect to their relationships with other children and their participation in school and community life. Then the foster children's attitudes, both positive and negative, toward being "on the State" and getting "off the State" will be analyzed.
Self-Image

Most of the children accepted their foster status as necessary and as "something you get used to," although some struggled against it or tended to deny it. Problems and feelings of stigma often arose in social relationships, particularly in explaining to acquaintances their living with parents other than their own.

Stephen, who lived 17 years in his last foster home, was the only one who felt there was no problem at all, explained his living with foster parents on the basis of his father having tuberculosis, did not feel ashamed of the fact that he was a foster child, and did not seem to feel very different from other children. His emotional tie to his foster parents seemed to be very close and he showed very little interest in his parents since in essence he felt they "rejected" him by their disinterest. He, however, did not have many friends so may not have had to cope with the problem of explaining his living arrangement as much as the other children did.

Gerald also felt fairly secure with his two sets of foster parents but would "feel funny, out of place, and not as good as other kids" when friends or acquaintances asked him about his parents. Betty claimed, "It never bothered my sisters and me too much since everybody knew Mrs. L. was taking care of us. We just accepted it." But being a foster child did make her feel different in social acceptance and activities.

The other children expressed varying degrees of shame, fear, embarrassment, self-deprecation, avoidance, isolation, projection and denial. Four foster children - Ruth, Sandra, Joan and Howard - felt embarrassed when questioned by other youngsters about their living arrangements. Ruth
would tell people that the parents she was living with were good friends rather than foster parents, tending to deny her status, and ignored as best she could any further questions. She stated:

I did everything to hide the fact. I always clammed up when everybody talked about state wards and in school felt like cringing right under the desk when we were called state wards. I felt different.

When Sandra's foster parents tried to explain to others how they happened to take care of her and referred to her and the other foster children as "poor little children we're trying to help," Sandra said:

You'd feel like crawling into a hole. When the kids at school refer to your name being different, you feel inferior and hate the world. If your parents are dead, you have an excuse to live with other parents. I never tried to get along with anyone. The more people you know the more questions they ask.

Joan had mixed feelings about living in a foster home. She said:

For the first three years, I felt nothing special. Later on I was embarrassed. I would tell my close friends but not mere acquaintances. People think foster kids come from horrible neglect homes. I felt ashamed. Sometimes I liked the distinction of having a name which was different from my foster parents. I was from a different family which I was proud of and I thought my family and home life were better.

Howard felt the embarrassment came from being eventually forced to tell others upon questioning that he was a "state child." He said:

Most people look down upon state kids. If there is trouble, they/the state children/are blamed because a few state kids have made bad names. I never did like living with anybody/strangers/. I didn't want to leave my mother and father.

Elaine, who was illegitimate and had the knack for turning adversity into advantage and felt her foster home experience had prepared her well for life, said:

I wasn't concerned about having a different name from that of my foster parents. I don't consider myself as having a name. My only real name will be my married name. I tell people my last
name isn't important. I didn't tell anybody that I was a state ward until I found out if they liked me. I wanted to be liked for myself. I didn't want any sympathy. I didn't want them to like me because they were sorry for me. You have your pride. I would talk it over with other state wards but not until I was asked.

Martha was haunted by the fear that her foster status would "leak out" and she would lose her friends and be treated as a social outcast. She continually denied that the neighbors and students knew that she was a boarded child. As a young child she was so severely malnourished and abused in her own home that she seemed retarded at first and oblivious to her foster status. Perhaps denial was necessary to blot out the unpleasant past.

For years she used the name of her foster parents in school until the social worker insisted that her proper name be recorded on the school records. Her childless foster parents were possessive of her, wanted to adopt her but at the same time wanted the financial remuneration of boarding parents. They encouraged her identification with them and were immensely threatened when the social worker "resurrected" her parents and made mandatory some visiting between Martha and her parents over the protests of her foster parents. It was felt that Martha needed to establish her identity and come to grips with her status as a foster child if she were to live with her decision to become adopted by her foster parents but Martha was able to express and act out some of her pent-up resentment toward her parents, to establish a good relationship with a sister, to develop a more positive attitude toward her own parents and to reaffirm her loyalty to her foster parents.

Martha's way of coping with her foster status was to avoid the issue
whenever possible, to profess ignorance of why she had two names and to imply that the questioner was mistaken in believing she was a foster child. She said:

In the fifth grade another state child came up to me saying, 'You're like me.' I said I didn't understand and luckily she moved away. The other kids dropped the subject. Then nothing happened until the sixth grade. I told my social worker I wanted to be called by my foster parents' name. When the teacher one day called me by my true name, I wouldn't answer to it. When the kids later asked me how it was that I had two names, I told them I didn't know. Again in high school the kids had an argument about foster children. Some kids were for them and some against. When they asked me my opinion, I said I was neutral.

When she was young Martha, like many other foster children, thought the social worker was just a family visitor and although she knew that she was not living with her own parents, her foster status was rarely questioned by outsiders and made no real impact upon her until her parents sent her a birthday card in care of the district office when she was 12. She described the fear with which she approached the office as she was aware that efforts were being made to locate her family. She said, "It hit me like a bomb. I got word from Miss U. to come to the office. I was worried, wondered what did I do and had a fear of being taken away."

When Martha was in high school she felt that her foster mother's strictness exposed her as a foster child because some of her friends questioned an own mother being as strict. The social worker worked intensely with Martha concerning her feelings about being a foster child but the girl found it difficult to accept the fact that most people knew about it and Martha was convinced that if they did know they would drop their friendship with her. It was only when she got to college that she was able to disclose to her close friends that she had been a foster child.
and was adopted.

Discussion

An analysis of this section reveals that all but Stephen reacted with sensitivity, ranging from a slight to a marked degree, to their foster status which branded them as "different" from other youngsters. During the adolescent years when the need to identify with the peer group is strongest, some of the foster children went to great lengths to keep their foster status a secret, some denied it, and others cut themselves off from social contacts in order to avoid the shame and embarrassment of being found out. For some to be found out would be to incur social ostracism or sympathy and a condescending attitude and this always implies an inferior status in the person who is the object of charity and pity. The children were aware that society judged their parents as inferior and bad and wanted to be evaluated as persons in their own right; however, the need to identify with and protect even the most neglectful parent was strong in many of the children and resulted in a confusing self-image.

Most of the children felt they were second-class citizens by reason of their not living with their own parents. From whence does this stigma come? First of all, society sets up the family as the primary social unit and any deviation from this is seen as "less desirable." Some comes from the "like father like son" inheritable concept of badness. As there were no outstanding incidents of disapproval or ostracism by the community in the lives of these foster children, we can suppose that much of the unworthiness and badness which these children felt were a result of their own inner attitudes. These inferiority feelings are strengthened when foster parents are less generous with privileges and material things
than they or most other parents are with their own children. Foster parents who do not accept the child's own parents are also rejecting the foster child since the foster child is biologically and emotionally a "chip off the old block." If the foster parents openly state or imply that the child's own parents are bad, and if in a moment of anger the foster child is admonished or reproved for being like his bad parent, this idea of badness is further ingrained in the child. Or, if on the other hand, the subject of the child's own parents is hushed up and not discussed openly and with sympathy and objectivity by foster parents or social worker, then the foster child assumes that indeed his parents must be bad since mentioning them is taboo.

Attitudes Toward Being "On the State"

Aside from the social stigma which these foster children were aware of, what were some of their other feelings about being "on the State?" Did these foster children see their experiences as being essentially positive or negative?

Three of the children - Gerald, Stephen and Elaine - in general felt they were well taken care of and were fortunate to be provided for "by the State." They held this attitude both during placement and after discharge. Any minor irritations did not overshadow their basic feeling that "the State" and foster parents did their best by them. Stephen very tersely stated, "I have no feeling against the State and being on it didn't bother me at all." Upon discharge, he was grateful that the Division was willing to underwrite the expense of his dental care since he knew he was responsible for the poor condition of his teeth. Gerald said of his foster home experience, "They [foster parents and social workers] were all
right to me on it. It's a good thing they help kids."

Elaine who had been brought up by Catholic nuns felt:

I thought it was wonderful I was taken care of. I felt I was one of the lucky ones. I was well-dressed and thought a clothing allotment was wonderful. She had been used to hand-me-downs in the orphanage. I had everything I'd want. The State was nice but what did I do to deserve it?

For Martha, the positive elements outweighed any negative feelings she had. She was very loyal to her elderly foster parents despite the rigid restrictions her foster parents imposed upon her activities. However, when restrictions became too extreme, she felt dissatisfied and questioned whether her foster parents really cared for her and whether they would have treated a child of their own as severely.

Four of the foster children - Sandra, Betty, Ruth and Howard - suffered pangs of inferiority feelings rather acutely during their placement but all of them improved in their self-esteem as they reached late adolescence. Sandra said, "I felt inferior and thought everyone was better than I until I met Aunt L. [Her last foster mother.] She talked me out of it and convinced me that you are what you make of yourself." Betty, too, was helped to form a better opinion of herself by the woman she "adopted" as her substitute foster mother, and her teachers' high opinion of her also helped to boost her morale. Ruth's part-time work provided her with income and a chance to compete on a material basis with others, and Howard also felt more adequate when he became self-supporting.

These same four children also felt "cheated" out of life and felt they missed their childhood as a result of their being in placement. Ruth felt that she was restricted in the amount of freedom she was allowed and in a material way as well. In expressing how she felt about being
"on the State," she said:

I was very much against it. Other kids were free to do as they pleased. I could have done more if I had more money. I always felt I was being watched. The foster parents in my first home told the school cafeteria workers to watch out that the foster kids ate their meals. We felt singled out. We weren't allowed to leave the farm except to go to the school library on Saturday.

Sandra also felt this deprivation mostly in terms of material lacks but there were emotional components as well, particularly the loss of parental care and love. She said:

I used to resent kids with rich parents. I had the feeling I didn't want to get close to people and also had the feeling I couldn't stay in one place very long. I never had, so I figured I never would. I felt different - not having any parents. I felt resentful toward my parents but for a long time before this idealized her mother. When mothers are sick or dead they can't take care of their children but when they're living, what's your excuse? Even when you're on your own, you have the feeling that you've missed something.

Betty admitted she felt sorry for herself for lacking material comforts and love. Now that she is discharged she is searching for her lost childhood but finds that what she is looking for is still elusive. She remembered:

You wish you could have more jewelry, could wear lipstick and powder, etc.. You feel you are different materially and need love, lack love. I'm always saying, 'What did I miss?' Now I'm trying to find out. I just can't find it. I do things now - roller skating, dancing, etc. - and wonder if teen-agers do these things.

Howard felt most unhappy of any of the group about being "on the State," yet until adolescence he appeared fairly content and held back his resentment. He always felt less fortunate in the acquisition of material goods and in the granting of privileges, felt restrained in his behavior and also felt he could not take license with his foster parents and siblings as a child in his own home could. Concerning being "on the
Staten his remarked:

I wish I was never on it. Just a lousy life! Ruined! I couldn't stand living in the country. There was no excitement for me. I never had what other kids had - freedom. I never had privileges. I'm always used to having someone tell me what to do. I never felt I could tell my foster parents. I always had to ask. I'd get mad but wouldn't show it. I wouldn't want them to have the satisfaction. Foster parents were like teachers. They watched over you. I never wanted to get close to them or them to me. I used to hate missing friends, people, places and parents.

Some months after discharge when added maturity made a more objective evaluation possible, Sandra, Betty and Howard were able to view their foster home experiences in a more positive light. Sandra and Betty felt the Division had helped them gain some self-understanding, prepare for life and achieve their present vocational status. Sandra stated:

The State has been a lot of help. I would never have gotten any place with my mother. I got a lot of training in my foster homes. Moving around gives you a lot of background for life. With background, you can make something of yourself. You feel responsible for all the trouble they [foster parents] went to bringing you up. I know now I have a lot of people who are interested in me but didn't realize it while I was "on the State."

Betty also felt some gratitude toward the agency. She said:

I felt I was kind of lucky to be "on the State," when I think back to the life my sister led. She didn't have any chance for education. I didn't have to go to work. When I was a teen-ager, my sister wanted me to go and live with her. I wanted to then, but now I am just as well pleased that I didn't go home.

Howard, though still remaining somewhat bitter about his foster home experience, was able to acknowledge that two of the three pairs of foster parents did take an interest in him and that he felt a part of the family in his last foster home, although he still felt a little less accepted than the foster parents' own children. Like Sandra, he tried to look at his experience philosophically and to salvage the positive elements.
He said:

It gives you a broader outlook; you learn the hard way. You're yourself. You've had nothing to do with the past. It makes you want to give your kids a good life.

Attitudes Toward Getting "Off the State"

Just as living apart from one's own family is a normal desire of the late adolescent and young adult, so the foster child often looks forward to the day when he can get "off the State." The foster child usually has been less fortunate in his preparation for adulthood and responsibility than the average child living with his own family. What then were the foster children's attitudes and feelings toward discharge? All of the children were pleased to be "off the State." Most of them seemed to show a healthy spurt toward independence and adulthood. None wanted to escape from an intolerable situation although there were some negative responses.

Wanting to take responsibility for oneself and to earn one's own living was a common response. Betty's summation, "You have the satisfaction of knowing you've finally reached a point where you know you've made something of yourself through the help of the State," and Sandra's statement, "I liked the idea of being self-supporting knowing you'd be doing something for yourself," were typical replies.

Ruth, Betty, Joan and Sandra saw discharge as a release from adult restrictions and supervision and an opportunity to be a little more self-indulgent and "to do as I pleased," not untypical adolescent desires. Even though Joan had a good deal of freedom in her foster home, she nevertheless "felt confined while being 'on the State.'" The agency never hampered us actually but there was the feeling of not being free." Sandra said, "You feel you've got a record a mile long when you know a record
has been kept of you." She felt guilty about her difficult behavior in some of her foster homes and to have her "badness" recorded for posterity was a painful thought.

Gerald and Martha wanted to be discharged from care, in the one case to establish a relationship and in the other case to sever a relationship. Gerald said he looked forward to being discharged because "I was told I wouldn't be able to know my family till I got 'off the State.' So I wanted to get off." Upon his discharge he did pay a visit to the District Office of the agency to get information about his family situation and the whereabouts of his parents and siblings. What a pity he did not get this kind of information while he was still in care! Martha said she was glad to get away from her social worker whom she felt was too intimate and inquisitive. This social worker had forced Martha to face her position as a foster child and to establish her identity with her own parents and this had been a painful experience for her.

Discussion

An analysis of the attitudes of these foster children toward being "on and off the State" reveals that three - Gerald, Stephen and Elaine - were fairly content and felt fortunate while under care and after discharge to be given substitute homes. While almost all suffered from some stigma, loss, and lowered self-esteem, four - Sandra, Betty, Ruth and Howard - had decided inferiority feelings as a result of being in placement and while under care felt cheated, restricted and deprived, socially, emotionally and materially. Of these, three had more positive feelings toward the agency and its care after they were discharged and cited the help they had received to develop their capacities and achieve their
educational goals.

Discharge from care was seen primarily in a positive way. The common desire to be self-supporting and to avoid prolonged or chronic dependence seems to be a healthy sign. Independence was also seen as an increase in self-respect and an end to the shame and embarrassment which financial and emotional dependence on unrelated adults had fostered. Discharge was also regarded as a release from the bonds of adult controls and authority and the felt, if not actual, hampering restrictions of the agency. Upon discharge, the foster children saw their chance to be private, anonymous, self-directing citizens whose lives would no longer be an "open book."
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis proposed to make a descriptive and exploratory study of six girls and three boys, now discharged from care, who were formerly placed in foster homes under the supervision of the Worcester District Office of the Division of Child Guardianship, Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare. Through focused interviews and a review of the case records, emphasis was placed on the subjective experiences of the children, both positive and negative, in four major areas: (1) their community adjustment; (2) their relationships with their own parents, foster parents and social workers; (3) their emotional maturity and material well-being; and (4) their self-image and attitudes toward agency care and discharge.

An analysis of the sample revealed that six of the children came from "hard core" or "multiple problem" families and had been subjected to neglect situations including immorality for a number of years before they were committed to the agency as neglected. Only three came into care as dependent children.

Before coming into care, many of the children through affectional deprivation, neglect or immaturity of their parents had already established patterns of shallow affect in responsiveness to others. Long-term foster care, which ranged from seven to twenty years, and for some children, changes of social workers and foster homes, only intensified the children's insecurity and lack of trust in adults.

Actually, the children on the whole had fewer foster home replacements and social workers than one might expect in view of the many years
they spent in care. One child had five replacements but the remaining half had but one, and two, in addition, had none. Two children had ten social workers each but most of the other children had four, and two children had but one. Some of the children had continuous contact with one social worker from six to ten years.

Academically the children seemed to do as well in school as one would expect from any sampling of the general population. Achievement varied from good to poor; four did very well in high school and only two failed to graduate. In general it would appear that intellectual endowment and individual personality patterns seemed to account for the differences that were found rather than the children's foster upbringing.

Most of the children felt that their foster status had no bearing on their school achievement. Only two felt they lacked incentive to do well in school because they felt their foster parents took insufficient interest in their studies. There was hardly any mention of teacher or pupil prejudice against state wards or any indication that their school life was much different from other children except for the semi-annual visits of their social workers to check on their progress. For some children also there were interviews with their social workers at school. Four of the children frowned on this practice.

As would be expected, the children's behavior and academic progress at school reflected their emotional well-being, for when there were problems in personality or in foster home adjustment, minor behavior problems or lowered achievement in school usually resulted. The writer feels that their foster status might have had an important effect on some of the children. Because they did not have the security of living with their own
parents and of relying on their foster parents for continued support, some of them were motivated to do their best in high school in order to survive as well as possible in the adult world upon their discharge.

The foster status of the children seemed to have a direct bearing on their social adjustment, at least in some cases, although individual health, personality and environmental factors also affected the socialization pattern of the children. Although no child seemed to be a social isolate, there was wide variation in the popularity and social activities of the children studied. Four of the children did not feel restricted in their life outside the foster home. The other five did feel cut off in varying degrees from social and extra-curricular school activities.

The restrictions were either realistic and externally-imposed curtailment of activities by foster parents or self-imposed limitations by some of the children who, because of feelings of social stigma, isolated themselves from people socially and emotionally. Some of the more "deprived" children felt restricted in their social participation because of transportation problems or because of limited or lack of spending money and inability to compete with other children on a material basis. Although there probably was a realistic basis for this in some cases as there were actual clothing budgets and limitations to the pocket money which foster parents could afford, there likewise seemed to be in many cases an underlying emotional deprivation that caused the children to exaggerate their need for material possessions. It is important for any child, particularly the teen-ager, to dress and act like his peers; however, any material or social differences seem to be felt even more keenly by the foster child.
Four of the children said their foster mothers were over-cautious in bringing them up and attributed this to their foster status. These foster parents felt that the agency would hold them accountable for any accident or disaster that might befall the children and therefore tended to restrict the activities of their foster children more than they would ordinarily. The writer has on occasion noted this kind of hampering fear and believes that this feeling of culpability needs to be handled realistically with these foster parents so as to enable them to relax more with their foster children.

Unlike the child who lives with his own parents, the foster child has the task of forming relationships with three sets of adults: his own parents, his foster parents and his social workers. He often finds himself in conflict, particularly in trying to satisfy and relate to both his natural parents and his substitute parents. He may vacillate in his loyalty to them from time to time or may look to his social worker for emotional support, particularly if he has had a sustaining relationship with one visitor for a period of time.

With few exceptions the foster children had very little contact with their parents since coming into care. Only one child had at least semi-monthly contact; one had quarterly contact; three had very limited contact; and four had none at all. We may speculate on some reasons for this. Six of the children came into care as neglected children. Their parents, therefore, were the more immature and unstable mothers and fathers of the group, and because the children were removed from them by legal means, they no doubt regarded themselves as parental failures who had no further responsibility for their children. Also, because they
believed the children "were taken away from them by the State," which, of course, was erroneous, there was less chance of their forming a positive relationship with the agency than if the parents themselves had made a decision to place their children.

This is borne out by the fact that none of the parents had any regular or voluntary contact with the agency and only three of the parents initiated any personal contact with their children. Only one of these three was a "neglected" child and the visiting of that parent was sporadic at best.

Not only did the foster children have very little contact with their parents but as a group they had very little knowledge about their family backgrounds and the reasons for their placement. Four of the children had, it would seem, substantial knowledge about their family backgrounds and the reasons for their being placed "on the State." The other five children had little or no knowledge of their parents or the exact circumstances which precipitated their coming into care.

As far as can be determined, only two social workers, both women, discussed at length with four of the children their parents and backgrounds in order to help them work out their problems and conflicts. Four children did not feel free enough to broach the subject with their workers or showed little interest and the fifth did seek information but his questions were put aside by the social worker until his discharge. It is entirely possible that a number of other social workers might also have talked to the children about their families and the reasons for coming into care, at least to some extent, but did not include this activity in their case recording.
Why so little discussion centered around the children's parents or was not recorded is not known. The writer can only speculate on possible reasons for this. It may be that some of the social workers were not themselves convinced of the importance of the children knowing about their heritage; or if they were aware of the children's need to accept and understand their backgrounds, they may have felt the need to "protect" the children from their sordid pasts until they were felt mature enough to understand. Or because of infrequent interviews with the children alone due to time pressures, they might not have had the opportunity to work intensively with the children in this area.

The writer feels that family background information needs to be tailored to the child's level of understanding and repeated as often as necessary when the child seems ready to hear of it. Since it is usually the policy for social workers to give foster parents only scanty background information about children in order to "protect" the parents, the foster parents therefore would not be in a position in most cases to answer the children's inquiries about their parents. As often happens, however, the foster children frequently "tell all," including the most intimate details of their parents' shortcomings and, in addition, their parents in visiting the foster homes often reveal their foibles and transgressions to the sympathetic ears of the foster parents.

Since it would seem unlikely that case loads would ever be cut sufficiently to allow the caseworker weekly or semi-monthly visits alone to each child in care, the writer wonders whether some foster parents, after proper selection and counseling on how to handle the children's questions and with due emphasis on confidentiality, could not be considered semi-
professional members of the social work staff and be given sufficient back­
ground information to help their foster children when they inquire about
their parentage. Of course, such information would have to be used with
discretion and just enough details given to create an understanding of the
children's backgrounds.

The writer is aware that risks are involved and such information
could result in the foster parents' rejecting the child's own parents and
in turn the foster child. However, this is an area of work which seems
to need more emphasis, and whether it is mainly a task of the social work­
er or could be relegated to the foster parents is open to question. It
seems certainly true that if neither foster parents nor social workers
are willing or able to discuss these things with the foster children, the
children will be led to believe that it is because their parents are so
very bad that no one dares to talk about them, and hence they must be
bad, too.

The writer attempted to classify the foster children's relationship
and identification patterns and established three primary categories of
attitudes toward parents and identification: (1) Indifferent - in which
neither strong positive nor negative feelings were apparent and identifi­
cation was usually with the foster parents; (2) Ambivalent - in which
strong feelings, both positive and negative, were seen accompanied by
mixed or confused identification; and (3) Positive - in which a feeling
of affection for and identification with the own parents were noted.

Three of the four children who seemed to have Indifferent attitudes
toward their parents were placed in infancy or before they entered school
and had very limited or no contact with parents since placement. In
addition, three of the foster families had no children of their own, thereby making it easier for these children to take over the role of own children. Although the number of children involved is too small to make an adequate comparison, the writer's findings seem to agree with Rogers' results that children placed early are more apt to respond to foster care and to accept the foster parents as their own than children who are placed at a later age and have already established emotional ties to their parents.¹

The three children who seemed to show Ambivalent attitudes toward their parents were placed during latency and two of these had distinct memories of their own parents. All three were working out their parental conflicts in placement and had difficulty in accepting substitute parents until they resolved their ambivalence and were able to face much more realistically the necessity for placement.

The two children who seemed primarily to have a Positive attitude toward their parents were also placed during latency. One had occasional contact with her father and the other had no contact with either parent after coming into care. His identification with his mother was sustained by memory and idealization and his repressed anger at her for the original abandonment and failure to keep contact with him was displaced "on the State" and on foster parents.

From an analysis of the above three types of parental attitudes and identifications, it would seem that the children who had developed Indif-

¹ Rogers, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
ferent attitudes toward their parents and accepted their existence without overt affection or rejection appeared to find more satisfaction in their foster home life than those who had feelings of ambivalence, hostility or love for one or both parents. These findings agree with the Weissman results.

In most respects the family living which the foster children had with their foster parents resembled the typical American childhood. More than half the children felt included in family activities, had the usual childhood chores, and were subjected to the same kinds of discipline as are most children. Only occasionally did a child feel that the discipline or chores were harsh or rigid and only one child felt excluded from a normal share of family fun.

However, there was one noteworthy finding in the upbringing of these foster children and that was the frequency with which the mothers in the foster families took over the tasks of decision-making, discipline, and confidante, or advisor. Out of a sample of nine, six of the children reported their foster mothers made most or all of the decisions, eight said their foster mothers did most or all of the disciplining, and seven said their foster mothers were more often confided in than were the foster fathers. One would not expect such a high percentage of maternal domination in the population of families as a whole.

This finding agrees with the Muller study and with some other studies

\(^2\)Weissman, op. cit., p. 6.

\(^3\)Muller, op. cit., p. 105.
of foster families. The writer had also observed from her experiences as a child welfare worker that the foster fathers were apt to be more passive than fathers in general and very often took a "back seat" in the rearing of the foster children. What effect this maternal domination and male passivity would have on the personality development of the foster children would be a subject for another study, but one would think that there would be some problems in identification and some confusion in their concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Usually the original decision to board foster children is made by the foster mother. Very often a husband will go along with his wife's idea, feeling she is the one who is going to have the burden of the extra work. However, the writer feels that the foster fathers also need to take an active part in bringing up the foster children and need to be encouraged to take a "fatherly" role with them.

Being a foster child is tenuous at best since there is no legal contract binding the foster children and foster parents to one another, as in adoption. There is always the possibility of death or illness in the foster family or other unforeseen circumstances which could result in the removal of the children through no fault of their own. This study pointed out that there was always a certain amount of insecurity felt by the foster children, even among those who felt most "at home" in their foster homes and had been placed very young. Those who had had more than one foster home always expected they could be replaced again.

Eight of the children reported that they were at some time or another, and some quite often, threatened with removal from their foster homes if they did not improve in their behavior. Even though these threats were
intended to make the children conform and were usually used only when other disciplinary methods failed, the fact that they often were "idle" threats did not reduce the harmful effects. The children as a result lost respect for and trust in their foster parents, became fearful and angry, and felt a certain amount of rejection and unfairness since parents could not threaten their own children in this way. This finding would suggest that social workers need to help foster parents to be aware of the harmful effects of the disciplinary threat, particularly the threat of removal.

The majority of the foster children had some feeling of "belonging" to their foster families but only the two who had been placed under a year of age felt completely and unequivocally a part of their foster families. The others were sometimes unsure of their acceptance and two felt they would never really belong anywhere but in their own homes.

Only three felt without qualification that they were well-liked by their foster parents; the rest felt their foster parents were ambivalent in their attitudes toward them. Usually when they were threatened with removal or were deprived of some activity or material want, they equated this with rejection. The majority of the children felt their foster parents boarded them for altruistic reasons or for a combination of gainful and benevolent reasons. Money as a reason for boarding the children was mentioned only three times out of twenty-two sets of foster parents.

The problems which did arise as a result of there being two sets of parents in the picture were mainly those which stemmed from rivalry between the foster parents and own parents for the affection of the children or confusion in the child's mind as to his identity and to whom he owed
his primary loyalty. There were occasional incidents of the children "acting up" and being difficult to handle after parents visited. There were occasional disparaging remarks made by unthinking foster parents about the children's natural parents and sometimes a lack of understanding on the part of the foster parents of how the children could idealize their rejecting or non-supporting parents.

Two-thirds of the children said they were not close enough in their relationship with their foster parents to confide their deeper problems and thoughts. They were more communicative in discussing non-personal subjects such as school, friends, health or vocations. Only two of the children felt free to discuss almost anything with their foster parents.

Behind this difficulty in communication lay a basic lack of trust in adults as shown in the various reasons the children gave for not revealing more of themselves: a feeling that the foster parents would not understand or were not interested; a fear that their intimate unburdening of feelings would be used against them; a fear of being "silly," etc.

In a recent nation-wide survey of parent-child relationships and how teen-agers feel about their parents, 62 per cent of the girls and 56 per cent of the boys said they confided in their parents. However, only 22 per cent of the boys and 41 per cent of the girls discussed their dates with their mothers, and while 37 per cent of the girls talked over their dates with their fathers, 44 per cent, or almost half, of the boys did not discuss dates with either parent. Fifty-three per cent said they discussed sex with their parents. If we can take these statistics at face

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value, it would appear that there was a greater barrier between these foster children and their foster parents than between the average teen-ager and his parents. However, the writer would suspect that there are matters which even the most "confidential" adolescent does not disclose to any adult.

Although all the foster children maintained pleasant, superficial contacts with their social workers, the same lack of trust permeated most of the relationships and the majority of the children refrained from discussing their more intimate concerns with their workers. They were able to discuss the same kinds of less threatening subjects that they could talk over with their foster parents but they usually let the social workers "carry the ball of conversation." Only one child had complete confidence in her social worker and discussed things openly with her.

As a group the social workers were well-liked and only occasionally did a foster child make a complaint. Almost half the children regarded their social workers' visits positively, i.e., they felt the workers had their welfare at heart and were not threatened by their visiting. The others had mixed or neutral feelings. Six of the children suggested that more frequent visits or a meeting place out of earshot of the foster home would help establish a closer bond between social worker and foster child.

Although there were occasional personality or behavior traits which a child disliked in a worker, by and large many of the children felt the difficulty in the relationship, when there was one, was often their own inability to trust. There was also the feeling that the social worker could not be the friend of the foster parent and the child as well and thus the children often felt that what they revealed would not be held
confidential.

The writer feels that until case loads are lowered enabling workers to see the foster children privately on a much more frequent basis, the foster children will not be able to straighten out some of the "emotional tangles" in their lives and achieve maximum benefit from their foster home placements. If more staff were available, it might be expedient, in selected cases at least, to provide a worker for the adolescent and another worker for the foster parent as is often the plan in other social agencies. This arrangement might enable the child to feel more trust and confidence in the social worker.

This study pointed out clearly the "emotional bookkeeping" with its "debits" and "credits" with which some of the foster children regarded their material welfare and their deprivations. Not only did half of the children equate restrictions, loss of privileges or denial of material wants with loss of love and non-acceptance as persons, but on the other hand, they were often reluctant to accept the love or money which were offered them. It is not uncommon for the young child to equate affection and gifts but the maturing child knows that realistic denial of some of his wants does not mean that he is less loved. But does the foster child know, or better still, does he feel this? His emotions many times will not let him differentiate between the two concepts.

All the children had some money or allowance. Five, or more than half of the children studied, felt no particular deprivation, either materially or socially. These included the three children who were placed as pre-schoolers and who in general were the most content and satisfied with their foster homes, the child who had been brought up in an orphanage
and had been accustomed to less material benefits than most children, and
the child whose foster parents were perhaps the most generous with gifts
and privileges. The other four, who identified with and idealized their
parents and who felt unjustly removed from their own homes, felt deprived
materially, socially, or both. They were the most emotionally damaged of
the group. Only three children could accept money from foster parents
freely, attesting to the fact that the majority of them were not able to
share in foster family life and wealth to this extent.

All the children had either part-time work or full-time jobs while
they were still in school and thus were able to increase their material
possessions and at the same time improve their self-esteem and socializa-
tion by their earnings. To "pay their own way" made them feel less help-
less and more adequate. There were no signs that these foster children
grew "dependent upon Welfare" because of their foster care experiences
and all had a mature attitude toward self-support. However, behind this
facade of pseudo-maturity was the inability of most of the children to be
emotionally dependent on other people.

The writer feels that when foster parents make a decision to board
children they should also make a pledge to themselves to give equal ad-
vantages and material benefits to the foster children as they give to their
own children. Too often the foster child ends up with less expensive gifts
or envies the dancing lessons or other special activities given to the fos-
ter parents' own child which the agency budget does not provide for. This
discrimination between the foster parents' own children and foster chil-
dren only intensifies the foster children's basic feelings of unworthiness.
The majority of the children in this study were placed in childless foster
homes, and thus this feeling of discrimination was mentioned by only one child.

That there is a stigma attached to being a foster child was brought out by this study. Since there was only occasional reference by the foster children to prejudicial or disparaging remarks made by people in the community, it would seem that a good deal of the stigma came from their internalized feelings of inferiority, shame and fear. However, such feelings are based on community and cultural values which place a premium on living with one's own family and coming from a good family background.

Only one child felt no embarrassment over being a foster child. The others showed sensitivity of varying degrees. Some went to great lengths to keep their foster status hidden, some denied it and others isolated themselves from social contacts. The writer feels that helping the foster children with their feelings and problems of their foster status is something which social workers and foster parents need to be more concerned with. The majority of the children did not discuss these feelings and problems with either their social workers or their foster parents. For some children to do so, it would have implied dissatisfaction with their foster home life.

Because of their felt "social inferiority" as foster children, all the children looked forward to their discharge and their new independence. They wanted more self-direction, more self-indulgence and the feeling of satisfaction that comes from "making something of yourself" and from "being self-supporting."

While four of the foster children felt grateful and fortunate and were generally satisfied during placement and after discharge, there were
noticeable differences between the attitudes that some of the children had while they were "on the State" and after getting "off the State." Four felt very deprived and "cheated out of life" and felt in general that "life was against us" while they were in care, but three of these same children upon discharge and upon reflection felt that they had gained some self-understanding and had received good training and home life, an opportunity for education and some sincere interest from foster parents and social workers.

In summary, these foster children were given good care and a semblance of "normal" family life by interested foster parents and turned out to be self-supporting and productive young adults if measured by society's yardstick of adequate adult adjustment. All appeared to have made a good community adjustment, all were working except one who was out of work temporarily, two had gone on to higher education, one was married and two were contemplating marriage in the near future. As far as is known, none had been in trouble with the law.

However, looking beneath the surface, the emotional scars can be found in the area of shallow inter-personal relationships. The search for the warmth and stability of one's own family was the aching void in most of the children's lives and was a "profound emotional and social disturbance" which superior physical and material surroundings and substitute parents could never fully compensate.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE I

Background Information

1. Sex
2. Legitimacy
3. Marital status
4. Religion
5. Birthdate
6. Present age
7. Legal section
8. Age when placed
9. Age when discharged
10. Reason for discharge
11. Education - last grade completed
12. Present occupation
13. Present living arrangements
14. Composition of child's own family
15. Family background and situation
16. Number of permanent foster home placements
17. Length of foster home placement(s)
18. Family composition of foster home(s)
19. Any other types of placement(s)
20. Number of social workers
21. Contact with parents while in care
22. Contact with sibling(s) while in care
23. Contact with parents since discharge
24. Contact with sibling(s) since discharge
25. Contact with foster parents since discharge
26. Contact with social worker(s) since discharge
27. General level of adjustment
APPENDIX A  
SCHEDULE II  

Foster Parent-Child Relationship  

1. How did you get along in your foster home(s)?  
   a. With your foster parents?  
   b. With foster parents' own children?  
   c. With your own sister(s) and brother(s), if placed together?  

2. Did you and your foster family or families do things together such as going on vacations and visiting, hobbies, homework, etc?  

3. Did your foster parents take an interest in your activities: your school work, your grades, your hobbies, your friends, etc?  

4. How did your foster parents discipline you?  
   a. As compared with any other children, including their own, in the foster home?  

5. Which of your foster parents made most of the decisions, handled the discipline, etc., in the family?  

6. What household chores or responsibilities were expected of you as a foster child?  
   a. As compared with any other children, including foster parents' own children, in the home?  
   b. Did you work along with your foster family?  
   c. Were there any problems in regard to your chores?  

7. Did you have an allowance? If so, how much? How was this handled?  

8. Could you bring your friends to your foster home? Did you?  

9. What do you think were your foster parents' reasons for boarding you and other foster children?  

10. How did you fit into your foster family?  

11. Do you feel your foster parents were relaxed or unusually cautious in bringing you up? Explain.
12. Did you have any fear that you would be moved from your foster home(s) if you did not conform or behave as expected?
   a. If so, did this fear affect the way you felt or acted?
   b. Were there any actual threats or talk about your being moved?

13. What kinds of things did you feel free to talk over with your foster mother(s)?
   a. personal problems? b. health? c. friends? d. sex?
   e. dating? f. religion? g. school? h. vocations?
   i. your own parents and family? j. your foster status?
   k. your problems in getting along in your foster family?

14. What kinds of things did you feel free to talk over with your foster father(s)?
   a. personal problems? b. health? c. friends? d. sex?
   e. dating? f. religion? g. school? h. vocations?
   i. your own parents and family? j. your foster status?
   k. your problems in getting along in your foster family?

15. If you couldn't or didn't discuss any of these concerns with your foster parents, why was this so?
   a. In whom did you confide?

16. What did you like and dislike about your foster mother(s)?

17. What did you like and dislike about your foster father(s)?

18. What are your feelings about your foster parents now?
   a. What were your feelings about them while you were in care?

19. What do you think were your foster parents' feelings toward you?

20. What were some of the good or pleasant experiences that you had while in foster care?

21. What were some of the unpleasant experiences or difficulties you had while in foster care?

22. Do you feel that your foster home(s) and foster parents were a good, adequate or poor choice for you? Explain.
   a. If you could have chosen your own foster home and foster parents, what would you have preferred?
   b. Would you have made any changes?
23. Would you have preferred to live in a group home? Why or why not?
24. Do you think you would like to become a foster parent? Explain.
25. If you did become a foster parent, how would you treat the children under your care?
26. If you had children of your own, how would you bring them up?
27. What in your foster home experience stands out in your mind?
APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE III

Parent-Child Relationship

1. What do you remember about your own home and leaving it to go "on the State?"
   a. How were you prepared for this move?

2. What were your feelings toward your parents when you left them to go "on the State" and while you were living in your foster home(s)?

3. What were your parents' attitude toward you while you were growing up in foster care?

4. How did your foster parents treat your parents and relatives when they visited you in your foster home(s)?

5. What did you know about your parents' situation and the reasons for your coming into care?
   a. How did you learn of this?

6. Did you hope that you would one day return to your own parents?
   a. Did you expect you would? Explain.

7. Were there any problems in having two sets of parents: your own parents and your foster parents? Explain.

8. What kind of life do you think you would have had if you had remained with your own parents?

9. What are your present feelings toward your parents and their way of life?
APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE IV

Social Worker-Child Relationship

1. How often did your visitor(s) come to see your foster parents?
2. How often did your visitor(s) see you alone? Where?
3. Would you have preferred any changes in this visiting procedure? If so, what? Why?
4. Why did you think your visitor(s) came to see you and your foster parents?
   a. Did your idea about the purpose or reasons change as you grew older? If so, how?
5. How did you get along with your visitor(s)?
6. How did your foster parents get along with your visitor(s)?
7. What did you like and dislike about your visitor(s)?
8. What kinds of things did you feel free to talk over with your visitor(s)?
   a. personal problems? b. health? c. friends? d. sex?
   e. dating? f. religion? g. school? h. vocations?
   i. your own parents and family? j. your foster status?
   k. your problems in getting along in your foster family?
   l. other problems in the foster family?
9. If you couldn't or didn't discuss any of the above with your visitor(s), why was this so?
10. Were there any ways in which your visitor(s) had been helpful to you while you were "on the State?"
   a. Were there any ways in which your visitor(s) could have been more helpful to you? If so, how?
11. How did you feel about your visitor(s) making school visits to check on your progress and adjustment? Explain.
12. Did your visitor(s) see you alone at school? If so, how did you feel about this?
APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE V

Community-Child Relationship

1. What activities - clubs, organizations, jobs, etc. - did you participate in?

2. How did you feel about having a different name from that of your foster parents?
   a. Did any problems result because of this difference? If so, what? How did you handle them?

3. What was the attitude of the people of your city or town (including teachers in school) toward foster children and toward you in particular?
   a. Did you have any unhappy experiences as a result of being a foster child? If so, what?

4. Did being a foster child have anything to do with:
   a. How you got along at school?
   b. How you got along with friends and people in general?
   c. How you felt about yourself then and now?
   d. In taking part in activities?

5. How did you feel about being "on the State?"

6. How did you feel about getting "off the State?"
   a. At the time you were discharged?
   b. At the present time?
APPENDIX B
LETTER SENT TO INTERVIEWEES

Dear ______________:

I hope to be talking to you as part of a study I am making for my Master's Degree at the Boston University School of Social Work of what foster home care meant to the young people who grew up away from their own homes. The purpose is to learn first-hand from you and other former foster children your reactions and thinking, both pro and con, in order to enable the Division of Child Guardianship to improve its services to children who are now living in foster homes or who will need foster care in the future.

Won't you be thinking over your experiences and feelings in regard to your foster homes, your social workers and your living apart from your own family? What I learn from you and the other former foster children will be kept confidential and all names will be disguised when I write my final report or thesis. I hope to learn whether there are some common experiences and problems that foster children share and in general what are the strengths and weaknesses of the foster home program.

I will be telephoning you soon to arrange an interview at a time which will be convenient. In the event that you are not in when I call, I can be reached at my home, PL _____, in the evening.

I shall look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely yours,
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