Trends in case work concepts and practice in regard to the value of adoption home placement of children born out of wedlock-based on materials furnished by the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society

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Boston University
TRENDS IN CASE WORK CONCEPTS AND PRACTICE IN REGARD TO THE VALUE OF ADOPTION HOME PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK - BASED ON MATERIALS FURNISHED BY THE RHODE ISLAND CHILDREN'S FRIEND SOCIETY

A Thesis

Submitted by
Annie Myrtle Heal
(A.B., Boston University, 1927)
(S.T.B. Boston University, 1933)

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Social Service

1950
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would like to express here, my feelings of gratitude toward the members of the faculty of Boston University School of Social Work and the staff members of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society and of the Children's Friend and Service who have been so patient with my "multivalent" reactions toward the writing of this thesis.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The process of the adoption of a child when carried on by a casework agency involves the interplay of four units: the natural parents, the child, the adoptive parents, and the agency. There is also a constant use by the agency of the skills and knowledge of practitioners in the field of medicine and psychology. The whole service is carried on with an acute awareness that it is done within the framework of the law and action by the proper court is necessary before the matter can be concluded. The services reach a wider cross-section of the community than do most casework services. Most adoptive parents, once the objective of their contact is achieved, are less reluctant to make known to others their use of the service. Beyond these contacts, more and more interest is being stimulated in the general public by a constantly growing number of articles concerning adoption in popular magazines. These widespread contacts create a situation which makes adoption service a particularly good area in which to demonstrate the value and methods of casework. It also places upon the service a need for self-evaluation.

Children's agencies emphasize that adoption is primarily a type of child placement involving the same problems found in all placement, the separation of the child from the natural parents and the joining of him to a foster family to the degree necessary to
satisfy the need of the child. What makes it different from other placements is the degree of the separation and the degree of the joining. The separation becomes a permanent surrender of all rights and responsibilities, through an agency, to an unknown family. The joining becomes permanent assumption of all rights and responsibilities to a degree that it excludes the natural parents and eventually the agency. The whole process loses strength and may threaten the security of any of those involved if any step is slighted or is not competently handled. In order to do this, there must be both knowledge of what is involved and skill in dealing with it.

Since casework, in common with much other human activity, is apt to proceed by a series of actions and reactions, a historical review ought to aid us in evaluating current procedures and in projecting what might be of value in the future. This study will consider development and change in casework, concepts in regard to the value and usefulness of adoption to a child born out of wedlock, the methods of working with the mother of the child, the degree of responsibility which the agency is willing to assume and any shifts that these might be in the area in which responsibility was taken. The material used will be limited to selected records of mothers with children born out of wedlock known to the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society during and between the years 1929 and 1948, annual reports of this agency, and periodical and other literature known to have been available to the staff during that period.
The Rhode Island Children's Friend Society was the successor to the Providence Children's Friend Society. That agency was founded in the year 1835 and incorporated, with rather broad powers, one year later. From then until November, 1926, it maintained an institution in Providence, Rhode Island. It, at first, limited its benefactions to children who were in "a state of orphanage" or equally destitute, over whom the agency could gain full control. Eventually temporary service was given to children. Children were placed in domestic service, agricultural labor or trades when the Board of Managers considered them to be ready. Occasionally, the heads of households in which they had been placed adopted them into their own families. After nearly a century of service, it was decided to close the institution and use some other means for serving the children than using it as a home. It was thought that by the employment of trained, professional caseworkers and the placement of the children in foster homes, the value and the breadth of its service could be increased. The casework staff began its work in October, 1926.

The following is a statement of purpose of the agency taken from the 110th Annual Report for the year 1945. This is about as broad and as detailed a statement regarding purpose as the writer found in any material published by the agency during the period studied, 1929-1948.
... Except for instances of willful neglect and abuse of children we offer assistance and counsel to all who come to us with any problem affecting children. Whenever possible, we try to adjust the situation so that children may remain in their own homes and family group.

Where the home is not suitable for the child or has been broken by death, illness, divorce, we provide foster homes, selected to give the care and affection not available for the child otherwise. Children placed in foster homes include children whose parents are dead, separated, divorced, needing a substitute home life, ill children needing special convalescent care, especially those referred by the State Children's Cardiac Program; children referred by the Juvenile Court or Child Guidance Clinic, whose behavior indicates inability to adjust in their own homes; children of unmarried mothers placed pending adoption or until the mother can establish a home.¹

During the 1930's, the program of the agency, like that of similar agencies throughout the country was affected by the economic depression. All were forced into clearer thinking in regard to the distinctions between public and private responsibilities in social relief. The 1940's, the war years, brought continued clarification of the responsibilities of private and public agencies, and made new demands upon children's agencies growing out of warborne ills to children, with further threats to an adequate foster home program caused by an increasing housing shortage. In 1949, the agency merged with the Rhode Island Child Service, the major protective agency in the state which also carried on a small placement service for a part of Rhode Island not served by the Rhode Island Children's Friend

¹ Agency Annual Report for the year 1945
Society. These placement services were not combined until January, 1950. It is so that part of the activity of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, where casework service was given, that we turn for our case material, fully aware that there were external pressures as well as internal ones seriously affecting its programs.

First, there will be presented the method for selecting the cases to be studied, with a summary of some of the characteristics of the mothers in each group. The two succeeding chapters will treat each decade separately, with subdivisions in each devoted to the contemporary professional literature, the annual reports of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, and the casework practiced by that agency.
CHAPTER II

SELECTION OF CASES TO BE STUDIED
AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOTHERS INVOLVED

The placement for adoption, following the introduction of casework into the service of the agency was made in 1929. Between that time and the close of the year 1949 there were 147 children discharged by the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society as having been adopted. Until recently children placed for adoption were not distinguished in the agency statistical reports until the point of discharge. Between 1929 and 1934, there was no discernible policy in regard to the length of the placement in the adoptive home prior to the filing of the petition. Following 1934, the placements were made usually a full year prior to the filing of the petition and granting of the decree. Therefore, Table I, page , showing the discharges made by adoption in the years 1929-1939 represents approximately the placements made in the years 1929-1938. Likewise, Table II, on page , giving the numbers of children discharged as adopted in the years, 1940-1949, represent those children placed for adoption in the years 1939-1948. Table I and Table II represent the breakdown of the total number according to the marital status of the parent at the time of the birth of the child, the status of the child's birth and the type of home used for the adoption placement, and by whom the placement was made.
TABLE I

DISTRIBUTIONS OF ALL CASES DISCHARGED BY RHODE ISLAND CHILDREN'S FRIEND SOCIETY, IN THE PERIOD 1929-1939, BECAUSE THE CHILD WAS ADOPTED, ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS, STATUS OF BIRTH, AND TYPE OF PLACEMENT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Discharged by Adoption</th>
<th>Marital Status of Parent</th>
<th>Status of Birth in Regard to Wedlock</th>
<th>Adoption Agency</th>
<th>Arranged by Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SM DWU</td>
<td>In Out U</td>
<td>A.H.B.H.R.H.</td>
<td>A.H.B.H.R.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend
- S - Single
- M - Married
- D - Divorced
- W - Widowed
- U - Unknown
- A.H. - Adoptive Home
- B.H. - Boarding Home
- R.H. - Relative's Home

---

a. Adoption arranged by relative, friend, or professional advisor of family other than caseworker.
### TABLE II

Distributions of all cases discharged by Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, in the period 1940-1949, because the child was adopted, according to marital status of parents, status of birth, and type of placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yearly Totals</th>
<th>Marital Status of Parent</th>
<th>Status of Birth in Regard to Wedlock</th>
<th>Adoption Arranged by Agency</th>
<th>Adoption Arranged by Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 2 - - -</td>
<td>1 6 1 b</td>
<td>6 2 - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 1 - - -</td>
<td>- 7 - 4 2</td>
<td>- - 1 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - - 1</td>
<td>1 1 - 1 1</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 1 2 2</td>
<td>3 10 - 7 c 1</td>
<td>1 a 1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 a - 1</td>
<td>- 6 - 4 -</td>
<td>1 a - 1 e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2 2 2</td>
<td>1 1 5 - 7 1</td>
<td>2 - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 4 - -</td>
<td>1 11 - 14</td>
<td>- - 1 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 8 - 1</td>
<td>- 15 - 14</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 8 1 1 1</td>
<td>1 17 1 19</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 5 5 1</td>
<td>1 32 31 1 e</td>
<td>1 e - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td>72 31 11 6 1</td>
<td>9 110 2 97 10</td>
<td>6 2 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend
- S - Single
- M - Married
- D - Divorced
- W - Widowed
- U - Unknown
- A.H. - Adoptive Home
- B.H. - Boarding Home
- R.H. - Relative's Home

a. Adoption arranged by relative, friend, or professional advisor of family other than caseworker.

b. Adolescent placed at board by adoptive parents who were contemplating divorce. Child wished to be adopted by boarding parents. He initiated movement.

c. One supervised for an out-of-state agency.
d. One was legitimatized by marriage of parents after birth.
f. Agency was asked to give supervision after the placement was made.
g. An older child who was placed in a boarding home selected as one which might become her adoptive home.

An examination of these tables shows the shifts in activity by the agency in the field of adoption. The latter part of the second decade shows a marked increase in the number placed and in the kind of responsibility that the agency took for placement. The placement of babies, under the care of the agency, through arrangements made by relatives or other interested persons, practically disappears. The practice of using boarding homes as adoptive homes almost disappears, which indicates that the agency was responsibly selecting homes specifically for adoption. Those referred for supervision at the time of placement in the adoptive home were referred by the Juvenile Court, a lawyer, a physician, and an adoptive home.

It was decided to limit the study to those cases where the children were born out of wedlock and where the agency assumed responsibility for the placement and participated in the planning. This included not only situations where the agency used an especially prepared adoptive home but also those where a boarding home was used as the adoptive home, either as the plan of the agency or with its assent. It did not include those where the arrangements were made independently by the mother and the
boarding parents either without the agency's knowledge or against its advice. Two children, one from each decade, were excluded because the mother's husbands participated in the care of the child in such a way that the surrender seemed more like that of a child born within wedlock. During the total period there were 106 adoptions arranged by the agency involving children born out of wedlock. Sixteen were in the decade of 1929-1938 and ninety were in the second decade from 1939-1948. Table III and Table IV on page , show the breakdown of these groups according to year, marital status of mother at time of birth and the type home used by the agency in the adoption placement. Since the group placed in 1929-1938 contained only sixteen cases for a period of ten years, it was decided that this should be used in entirety.
### TABLE III

**TOTAL CASES OF CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK AND PLACED FOR ADOPTION BY AGENCY DURING 1929-1938**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Placement</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Marital Status of Mother</th>
<th>Type of Home Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S M D W</td>
<td>A.H. E.H. R.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - - - -</td>
<td>2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 - - - -</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - - - -</td>
<td>1 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - - - -</td>
<td>1 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- - - -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 - - - -</td>
<td>4 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - - - -</td>
<td>2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - - - -</td>
<td>1 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15 1 - -</td>
<td>10 5 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV

**TOTAL CASES OF CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK AND PLACED FOR ADOPTION BY AGENCY DURING 1939-1948**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Placement</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Marital Status of Mother</th>
<th>Type of Home Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S M D W</td>
<td>A.H. E.H. R.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 - - - -</td>
<td>7 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - - - -</td>
<td>3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 1 - - -</td>
<td>2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 - - - -</td>
<td>4 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 1 - - -</td>
<td>4 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
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<td>2 -</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 4 - - -</td>
<td>8 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5 6 - 1</td>
<td>12 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7 6 2 1</td>
<td>16 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20 4 4 -</td>
<td>28 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>58 23 7 2</td>
<td>86 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE V
SAMPLE STUDIED - IDENTICAL WITH TABLE III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Placement</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Marital Status of Mother</th>
<th>Type of Home Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE VI
SAMPLE STUDIED - SELECTED FROM TABLE IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Marital Status of Mother</th>
<th>Type of Home Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total b</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Every case of the original group.

b. Every third case of the original group except in year 1948 when every sixth case of original number was selected.
In order to obtain a sample of the second group which would be comparable in size and distribution over the ten year period, the cases were arranged chronologically according to the date when the adoption placement was made. In those cases where a boarding home became an adoptive home, the date when the agency and the adoptive parents agreed that the agency should cease to make payment for the board of the child was considered the date of the adoptive placement. However, this process selected ten cases from the year 1948. This would have been a third of all cases in this ten year period. It was not conceivable that any study of trends would be vitiated by the elimination of some of these; therefore, for this year every sixth case was selected. This process selected a sample of twenty-five cases from the years 1939-1948, and contained at least one case from each year.

The mothers of both groups were very much alike in regard to age, although the second group was slightly older than the first. The mean age of the group studied from the years 1929-1938 was 23.3 years and from the years 1939-1948 was 23.8 years, at the time of conception. The distribution according to five year age spans can be seen in Table VII. There was not much difference.
TABLE VII

AGE OF MOTHERS AT TIME OF CONCEPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the size of the families into which the mothers of each group were born -

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF SIBLINGS IN FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Siblings*</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>unk.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Count includes mothers.

In the matter of education, the group in the second decade seemed to have been somewhat more. However, the compulsory school age was somewhat higher when this group was attending school and many of them had been in school during the depression of the 1930's when lack of job opportunities served to keep many people in school for a longer period than was customary for their group. Only one person in the entire forty-one was known to have failed to complete at least the sixth grade.
There was considerable difference between the occupational activities of the representatives of the two decades. The major difference was in the variety rather than in the amount of skill or training required for the jobs. During the first period at least ten did housework at sometime, five had worked as salesgirls, two had worked in laundries, two were in school, at least one had worked at such jobs as these—addressing envelopes, baby-sitting, canvassing. One had been a burler, another a jewelry worker, one at one time owned her own business, another attempted bookkeeping, advertising and publicity. During the second period, one mother was never employed, one kept house for her own family. Only one had ever been employed as a domestic, although several had been or were in service occupations in hotels, restaurants, or institutions. Several were or had been in textile manufacturing, including doffing, sewing and weaving. Several were at sometime employed in war plants, as packers, polishers,
precision workers, and in a testing laboratory. Office work employed five, two were in the Women's Army Corps, one was a truck driver, one a maternity nurse (not the nursing school student) and one a laundry worker. The employment mobility of the individuals of both groups varied greatly, spreading from one who changed jobs five times in one year to one who had worked in the same plant for twenty-one years. The latter was distinctly an exception to the general pattern.

In regard to the place of birth, there were seven in Group I born in Rhode Island and in Group II sixteen were born there, that is, almost a half of the first group and well over a half of the second group. Six of the first group and three of the second were born in neighboring Massachusetts. Of the remaining three in Group I, two were born in Europe and one was born in Maine. Of Group II, one each was born in Maine, Vermont, Virginia, Ohio, and Michigan. Of those in Group I who were born outside of Rhode Island, two came here to seek employment, one was sent here to a sister by the maternity home where her baby was born, and one came into the state with her family, while she was in her late teens. Similarly, in Group II, of those born outside of the state, two came here as a result of their marriage, and one came during her pregnancy hoping to arrange for the placement of her baby here. It can be seen that most of the mothers were either born within the limited geographical area of Rhode Island or were there during their school years. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that only about one third of either group had made independent living
arrangements for themselves and that three of those who had returned to live with parents after the birth of the child.

TABLE I
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF MOTHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother living with:</th>
<th>GROUP I</th>
<th>GROUP II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both of her parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Arrangement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the reasons given for surrendering the child, inability to support ranked high. It was sometimes recognized by the mother from the beginning but more frequently was one of the real factors made evident to both worker and mother by the boarding home placement.

During the second decade little factual evidence concerning the mother's own social contacts is recorded. In the first decade, this was recorded by the case workers. In spite of the fact that so many of them were still in the vicinity where they had grown up, few of them seemed to have close friends or close associates outside of their families. However, in both of the groups social stigma for themselves in the community was an important factor in the surrender. Of even stronger force seemed to be the attitude of the family toward the mother or concern for the reputation of the family in the community.
These latter was a decisive factor in all but six of the cases studied. In these, the evidence indicated that the mother was extremely limited in forming meaningful relationships. In three of them, the only relationship with strength seemed to be that to the father of the child.
CHAPTER III
THE LITERATURE AND PRACTICE OF 1929-1938

1. LITERATURE

The literature that was available to the agency workers was examined. Since the study was concerned with developments within casework services, the selection of writings used by the worker was limited to that which came from within the social casework field. All of these were professional publications, The Family, its successor, The Journal of Social Casework, Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, The Bulletin of the Child Welfare League of America, and other publications of the Child Welfare League of America. In reporting on this, the writer will try to follow trends.

In the earlier part of this period there was a tendency to look to social environment for the causative factors of illegitimate parenthood.

"Not infrequently she comes from a home where there is poverty, misunderstanding between parents, and a generally poor social environment." 1 "Any casework with unmarried mothers is a remedial measure for a situation already arisen through community lacks. In a given caseload of forty-three, twenty were found to come from an area in Cleveland where overcrowding prevails and where there were no organized community resources such as settlements, literary clubs, church clubs, and decent commercialized forms of recreation." 2 Blended with this was the belief that an understanding of the sexual function and some sort of activity affording sublimation would be the most effective


methods for helping the mother to a more accepted form of adjustment. The question is raised, "Was the girl interested in a sexual outlet because she had no other in the community?" In discussing the role of the caseworker in an institution for unmarried mothers, we find, "The worker is then faced with the task of giving the girl herself insight into the causes which have led to her misconduct, by making her understand more clearly her sex life and at the same time giving the girl an outlet for her sexual urge through a constructive channel."

There was a reaction against the practice of an earlier period when the child born out of wedlock remained in an institution when his mother returned to the community.

"As long as institutions continue to encourage the release of the child from the unmarried mother, we shall not only bear the burden of the care of the child for fifteen or sixteen years but we shall be guilty of depriving that child of the care and love of a mother which are so necessary for its proper growth and development." This apparently arose from a recognition of the failure of institutions to give particularized care to the baby. The alternative to this seemed to be to encourage the mother to keep her own baby, for in this same article we find approval of the plans being made at the time to keep babies and mothers together in the maternity homes for

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3 Ibid.
4 op. cit.
5 Ibid.
three months. This was thought to be beneficial, not only to the baby, because of the opportunity for breast feeding but also to the mother, for "During these months her love for the child grows and she welcomes the plan which will make it possible to keep her baby with her." 6 This author so firmly believed in breast feeding she suggested that the commissioner of health might use his powers to issue an ordinance requiring that a child be nursed for at least three months. A part of this concern for the child arose apparently from observation of the high death rate among babies born out of wedlock. It was felt that it was "the fact of having individualized care that helps a baby. Someone must be particularly and consistently and continually interested in order to keep alive in a child the will to live." 7

Although the difficulties and social liabilities facing unmarried parents and their children were acknowledged, the positive aspects of parenthood were given a great deal of emphasis. Catherine Mathews reinforced her belief in the benefits of the natural family for the child born out of wedlock by quoting the Milford Conference Report on Social Case Work: Generic and Specific. "In taking a long range view of the child's life, the children's worker emphasizes the protection afforded by the reestablishment of the child's parental and family relationships." She says that "this applies with special force to the children born out of wedlock." 8 This positive attitude toward

7 Ibid.
the possibilities of the relationships involved in parenthood is more definitely stated by Charlotte Henry.

Its (the child’s) potentialities for giving happiness to its mother are the same as if it were legitimate and the girl’s own attitude toward it will determine to a large extent whether she will realize on these potentialities. She cannot escape the fact that the child's social status may be a handicap both to it and to her, but the mother-child relationship may be both happy and constructive even outside of marriage.9

The writers in these early 1930’s sensed a change and growth in the pattern and type of casework done with this particular group of clients. In the article just quoted, we read:

"Gradually there came a right-about-face in the program for unmarried mothers. The child, in being immediately deprived of his mother, did not have a fair start in life; and the mother, in giving up her child, was certainly not deterred from continuing down the primrose path. Therefore, the remedy was to keep the mother and child together at any cost. This seems to us now a more human ideal, although the application of it may have proved rather Spartan treatment in some cases.

"It has become apparent, however, in the last few years that the problem was not so simple that it could be solved by applying one universal rule or remedy ... The emphasis is less and less upon a solution and more and more upon the adjustment of the individuals concerned." 10

In writing of the changing emphasis, Mary Frances Smith implied that the "audience" witnessed an overlapping in progress with the old and the new being carried on at the same time. She described how the social worker appeared to different parts of the watching community in this way. "To one group she is a baby snatcher, forcing the

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
resourceless mother to give up her child. To another she is a stern disciplinarian, punishing the mother by making her keep a baby in whom she has no real interest."

This same writer felt that it was "a more valid criticism, that the unfortunate girl who comes into the hands of a social agency is put through a grilling process which leaves her helpless and at the mercy of someone else's supposedly superior knowledge." It cannot be known just what the writer had in mind when she spoke of a "grilling." We know that we usually move into new things with awkwardness. The "grilling" may have been a sign of growth, even though it, itself, seemed to be bad. While the emphasis was upon a social problem and an overall solution was sought, there was no need to know much about the individual. It was when the realization that the unmarried mother's "experience of maternity could be honestly evaluated only in terms of their personalities and their total experience," that there was a purposeful use in knowing about their relationships, experiences, desires and needs.

The contacts of the caseworker were by no means limited to those between the caseworker and the mother or the caseworker and the child, for it was felt that we could "never treat the baby in isolation ... we recognize very soon that there are persons

12 Ibid.
13 Charlotte Henry, op. cit.
within the mother's life and environment who can interpret the situation and we seek contact with these persons."  

In contrast to this, toward the middle of the nineteenth century, there is a shift in the roles taken by the mother and the caseworker. There is a new emphasis upon the right of the mother for self-determination. "In the last analysis, of course, it is the girl herself who has to do the remodeling. The maternity home, the casework agency, can only offer her the opportunity and give her understanding and moral support."  

Again,  

"there was a growing appreciation . . . that a working relationship with the mother which gave her time, confidence, freedom from criticism, no need for defence and an opportunity to get from the caseworker whatever type of help she most needed, produced the elements for satisfactorily working through a situation as sermonizing and coercion had never done."  

Lest we think that this field lagged behind other fields of casework, compare this with the writing of Gordon Hamilton in 1937.  

"The client is, perhaps, more ready to ask for help with his inner problems as he realizes that the caseworker is not going to threaten, approve, rescue, or overwhelm. . . . Caseworkers have moved from intolerance of certain forms of conduct to tolerance, and finally toward understanding, which is neither tolerance or intolerance. In working through to attitudes that are neither moralistic, nor coercive, the worker must first be able to understand himself. . . . It (casework ideal) constantly moves away from patterns of authority, dependency and manipulation  

14 Catherine Mathews, op. cit.  
15 Charlotte Henry, op. cit.  
16 Mary Frances Smith, op. cit.
and finds its values again and again in the full consent and participation of client in their treatment."

Ora Pendleton's discussion of agency responsibility in adoption, which appeared in the November issue of The Family in 1938, is fairly consistent with contemporary thinking in this field. In the earlier articles studied, foster parenthood had not been seriously considered as a choice for the unmarried mother or as a valid source for the individual care that a child needed for proper growth and development. When a permanent foster home was mentioned as a possibility, there was a sense of extreme caution because of the seriousness of an inevocable decision. In Ora Pendleton's discussion, we find proposed the use of limits of time and finance as casework tools. "Working around these two problems, the agency and the parent face the real problem of ultimate responsibility for the child." The proper use of a boarding home is described as giving "the mother an opportunity to know both the pain and freedom of separation and it may also help her to recognize the child as a person apart from herself with a life of his own." It is suggested that, once the mother has made up her mind to surrender her child for adoption, a difference comes into her relationship to the

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
agency and the caseworker; "she (the mother) can contribute something that may help in planning a surer, safer future for her child. If the mother feels this, she may be able to use her feeling to give useful information that she could not bring herself to reveal when her concern was centered on her own problem." 

Toward the end of the 1930's, there was protest against the attempts to identify unmarried parenthood with married parenthood and thereby to deny "to these particularly unhappy people some of the most painful factors of their problem." 

Mary S. Brisley, writing in the same year as Ora Pendleton, called attention to the fact that there were appearing changes in the social pattern in that "only rarely nowadays does she (the unmarried mother) allow herself even the comfort of putting the entire blame on the man." She protested that pregnancy for the unmarried woman was "robbed of practically every aesthetic aspect." Further she said, "the whole agonizing question of the baby's future status, as well as her own, is one which the married woman is usually completely spared."

During the larger part of this period, there is repeated reference to the fact that the caseworker should be alert to the need

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21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.
for repeated evaluation and study of practice and techniques.

2. AGENCY REPORTS

The Rhode Island Children's Friend Society published an annual report. This served as a means of conveying to its supporters the ways in which it served the community and also gave statements of purpose, accounts of policy, interpretation of its service, or pointed out community lacks in service to children. Copies of all the reports published from 1927 - 1949 were available to the writer. Very little space was given to service for children born out of wedlock in the 1930's or the years just preceding them.

Prior to closing the Tobey Street Home, the institutions maintained by the Society for the care of children, there was a survey made of the family status of the sixty-five then in the home. This survey did not report one child as being born out of wedlock. There is nothing to tell whether this was by accident or policy but at least the new foster home program did not inherit a program containing activity in the field which is the concern of this paper.

An early publicity pamphlet, apparently published in the late 1920's said, "The work of the Children's Friend Society today is to find desirable foster homes and to assist the foster parents in caring for the children." Some of the basis on which cases would be

selected for service is indicated by the suggestion, "tell us of deserving cases" but there is no definition of "deserving." A report in 1923 gave five reasons for children being placed in foster homes. The fact that the mother was unmarried was one of them. We do not know whether it was an accident or design that it was given last. This same report stressed the fact that "Parents or relatives are urged to visit their children once a week at least. They do not lose control of their children merely by placing them in the care of the Society." 26

In 1933, when the causes for referral were ranked in order of their frequency, illegitimacy was third. There were eighty-six children who were born out of wedlock, referred by their mothers for foster home care, yet only one such child was surrendered for adoption that year. The report of that same year contained this statement of the agency's concept of the unmarried mother's problem.

The unmarried mother's problem is most complex. Certainly, she must have a home for her baby and work for herself. But besides these realities, she must face the community which still takes a punitive attitude towards the unmarried mother, while assuming a much less harsh attitude towards the father. Upon the mother falls the whole burden of a mistake that was not hers alone. Many people will not employ her. Often her own parents turn against her because of the

"shame" she has brought upon them. Often, if they reluctantly allow her to return home, they refuse to accept her child and she must make a difficult decision - shall she keep her child and face a hostile world, breaking with her own parents, or shall she give her child in adoption.

A case story illustrative of the service to an unmarried mother was included in this account. There was no evaluation given but its inclusion in the report suggests that it had a significance in regard to one of the purposes of the report; that is, it was either representative of the work done or interpretative of the kind of work the agency desired to do for unmarried mothers, or it was felt that this kind of service was desired by unmarried mothers.

Her parents were divorced when she was very young and she had grown up unwanted by either. When her own baby, Betty Ann, was born, the neighbors tried to take the child away from her. Joyce (the mother) fought against this because her baby represented the family which she had always wanted. Finally, Joyce secured a job in a mill where she earned a very small wage. She asked Children's Friend Society to give Betty Ann the security of a foster home. Weekly Joyce visited Betty Ann and was very happy over her steady growth and well-being. The Children's Friend Society recognized Joyce's need for a
family and helped her find a domestic position where she lived in a happy home atmosphere she had never before known. Three years have passed. Joyce is preparing her "hope chest." Next fall she will be married and Betty Ann will return to her mother who wants and loves her. Her new father plans to adopt her legally. 27

27 Ibid.
3. PRACTICE

At first reading, the records of the late 1920's and early 1930's, like the literature, seems so different that it is difficult to think of it as related to the thinking and practice that follows. The first four placements made by the agency which were studied illustrate these differences. On further study, the relationship to what follows seems clearer. These four cases will be summarized briefly to orient the reader and give a base to that which followed afterward.

Case I.

The mother was sixteen years old. The maternal grandfather had died nine years before. The grandmother supported herself and her children by running a rooming house. The mother had been sent to a religious private school when grandmother had decided she was being spoiled by the attentions of the roomers. At the time of the conception, the mother had been at home for some time. It was stated that the alleged father, a considerably older man occupied rooms in the family boarding house and that his mother lived with him. It was disclosed later that he was the husband of the grandmother and his mother was her business partner. The mother had been sent to New York City for her confinement. The child had been born in a maternity home conducted by religieuse. The mother, although she had returned, was not seen at all until after several interviews with the grandmother. The alleged father expressed a willingness to place the child at board and support him. The worker advised the grandmother to allow the alleged father to do this, using an independent boarding home, on the basis that if the alleged father abandoned it, the agency would be better able to assume care. The reason why this should be was obscure, especially in view of the fact that the home selected was out of the state. The grandmother, from the beginning, wished to have the child placed for adoption. Later the grandmother began proposing that she divorce the alleged father so that he would be free to marry the mother and "give the baby a name". For a time this seemed agreeable to everyone, although the worker commented that the mother was so immature that she
could not be expected to have ideas on the subject herself. Three months later, she commented that the mother seemed to see into the situation better than the grandmother did. After the alleged father moved away in preparation for the divorce, he began not only to assume responsibility for the baby but began to assume exclusive rights. This created considerable hostility toward him on the part of the other relatives. The worker advised that legal action be taken and pointed out that all connection between the alleged father, maternal grandmother, and mother should be broken. The worker took a very active part in informing the police, arranging for the grandmother to meet the probation officer and in locating the alleged father so that he could be available for arrest. The alleged father was sentenced. The baby was removed to an agency foster home. The mother and grandmother were not allowed to visit since they had suggested that the baby be adopted. When the baby was a year and a half old, the financial terms with the boarding home were changed, as they had asked to adopt the child about six months before. The petition was not heard for three and a half years. The mother's signature on the petition had been taken the year before it was filed.

This case was accepted at first on the grounds that the child was illegitimate and the maternal grandmother was asking that a boarding home be found for him. The agency accepted responsibility for supervision and planning with the "cooperation" of the relatives. The caseworker urged the use of an independent boarding home, one and selected and paid for by the relatives. There was a great deal of activity on the part of the caseworker, although one felt little real relationship between her and the individuals involved. Her actual contacts with the mother were fewer than with many others in the situation.

The most striking factor in the case was the way in which the worker allowed herself to be used by others as an intermediary and also used others as her intermediary. She asked the family physician to
use his influence upon the family and urge the grandmother to follow her advice. She acquiesced in the planning that would "give the baby a name" but she seemed to be much more interested in obtaining legal record of alleged father's admission of paternity and a money settlement made which would help the mother keep her baby. She first consulted a probation officer for advice without conferring with the family. Later, when the plans for the marriage failed, she conferred with the chief of police in regard to handling the matter. She made arrangements for the grandmother to confer with him. She aided in obtaining information in regard to the alleged father's first wife when it was suspected that he was a bigamist.

Attention was paid to the mother's developmental and achievement history but no apparent use was made of it. The worker visited the private school where the girl had attended. Although told that the girl was intelligent but dreamy, this was not related to the fact that during the early contacts, the mother seemed to be immature and then later, when the situation began to evolve toward a solution seemed to have insight into the situation. It is not apparent either that this knowledge was used in the adoption placement, for the child was adopted by the boarding parents and there is no direct evidence that they had been originally selected for permanent parents.

The case worker showed an interest in furthering the mother's interest gaining an education in nursing and made suggestions in regard to schools for practical nursing and possible means for being at least partially self-supporting.
When first known to the agency, the mother was twenty-eight years old. The child was already five years old. The mother was one of six siblings, only two of whom had married. They all lived in the parental home. For five years after the grandfather's death, the household had been maintained and it had included the mother and the child. The placement was requested at the point where the grandmother had been committed to the State Hospital for Mental Disease and the family was closing their home. The agency helped arrange a mutual placement for mother and child in the family of a great aunt. About a year later, there was a second referral to the agency when death caused a change in this home. The child was placed in an agency boarding home. The mother made independent living arrangements. She continued to keep a close contact with the child for a time. It was learned that she was associating with a number of men and becoming the object of gossip. Her comment to this was "What have I to lose". One of her married sisters, who struck the worker as being cold, was approached to interest herself in the mother, but she refused. She felt that the mother had confided in her family about her pregnancy, they could have put her away somewhere and have avoided publicity for themselves. She felt that the family "had done well to allow her to remain at home and not thrown it up to her". Later, members of the family said that they did not argue with the mother because, if they did, she stayed away and they liked to see her. When the mother failed to pay board and to visit the baby, the worker visited her family. The aunt, who had displayed such disfavor, decided to adopt the child. This was approved by the other relatives. The worker discussed the desirability of the plan with the boarding mother. The natural mother signed the petition but there is no evidence that the caseworker participated in this. There was less than two months between the time that this plan was proposed and the granting of the petition. The adoptive parents were planning to move out of the state.

This mother and child came to the agency first in 1927 and came the second time in 1928. As in Case I, there was a good deal of activity on the part of the caseworker but not much of it was directly with the mother. A fairly full history of the mother and her family
was obtained but from relatives or others. Her employer was seen not only in regard to her work but also in regard to her social contacts. The mother's reaction to her sexual contacts was discussed with her in a sympathetic fashion and there was real concern when her later conduct became a matter of gossip.

Case III

This mother came to the office of the agency early in 1927, asking placement for her two and a half year old child. The mother herself had been boarded with different relatives since her father died when she was only a year old. She and the alleged father had lived together as man and wife but separated soon after the baby's birth. The agency's recorded plan at the time the case was accepted was to obtain a "working home" where the mother could keep her baby. The mother apparently offered no objection to this plan but did say that she did not wish to go on to a farm. Nevertheless, the first job that was found was on a farm. No record appears of any effort to help the mother accept this, and the placement was ended very abruptly by the mother a few days later. The mother did select housework jobs when she found her own jobs but never was able to take the baby, and changed jobs frequently. At the end of the year, she left the state with a man who was known to the agency. A year later, the agency learned that the man had returned to the state briefly but the mother had remained in Pennsylvania.

A few months later, the worker spoke with the boarding mother about the possibility of the boarding parents adopting the child. The foster mother apparently had not thought or planned for this because she agreed to discuss this with the boarding father. The plan was not discussed with the mother's relatives, although there was contact with them. The idea of adoption was not embraced either wholeheartedly or at once by the boarding parents. They were both fond of her. They asked for another physical examination. The boarding mother's sister who lived nearby did not like the child. This gave the boarding mother some misgivings. She was also somewhat in awe of this sister and hesitated to raise her own opinion against that of the sister. After the family agreed to carry out the plans for adoption, the foster mother was ill enough for the child to be removed from the home temporarily. When the
petition was filed, the action was advertised by the court but no serious effort was made to locate the mother. The adoptive parents were fearful that some of the child's relatives might appear at the hearing.

One's curiosity is aroused by the evident pressure on the part of the agency to have this adopted at a period when adoption was not a publicized part of its program. It should be observed that the worker suggests adoption to the only family who knows the child. The responsibility for the decision would, therefore, be largely theirs. They would be accepting a child whom they had known and had evaluated on a personal basis. The impetus, however, seems to spring from another source. The worker records, "If she were not such an attractive child, the agency would turn her over to the state. We could carry the responsibility longer if we had some help from the foster parents." Obviously there was some stigma attached to commitment to the state. The "help" wished from the foster parents would be to give the child care without remuneration from the agency. The fact that adoption was suggested rather than a free home indicates that there was some recognition of the child's right to status. Again, the fact that the mother no longer supported the child, moved the agency toward the decision to arrange for the adoption of the child. Her acceptance of other domestic employment but rejection of situations where she could have her baby with her followed by a rather thoroughgoing disinterest in the child after the placement raises questions regarding her readiness for motherhood. Efforts were made to interest her in the child and to have her give the child personal care. Adoption was not
discussed with her.

Case IV

Here the mother was foreign born. The child was referred to the agency by the public children's service. In its licensing capacity it had found this child in an unlicensed home. The boarding parents were refusing to apply for a license. The mother shifted from mill work to boarding house owner or manager. There seemed to be considerable question in regard to her relationships to men boarders. The mother took the initiative into her own hands and came to the office to see the worker after the agency had been active for two months. She seemed anxious, so the worker wrote, to have the child removed from the home to an agency home. She also "seemed", again the worker's word, worried and wondered why the agency had not been in touch with her before. In this interview, neither the reason for referral nor plans for the child were discussed. A brief history of the mother was taken, which included questioning regarding venereal disease. The mother paid board for the child for almost a year. She married a widower who was paying for the support of two of his own children, who were with relatives, through the court. She expressed a desire to have all of the children with them. However, at the time, her husband was unemployed and she had to work to contribute what she could to the support of them all. When commitment of her child to the public agency was offered to her, since she was unable to support, she said that she preferred to have the child in a foster home. However, when adoption of the child was proposed, she thought the matter over and then decided she would prefer the commitment and then she and her husband could take the child home later. In spite of this, the child was placed for adoption. The agency obtained custodial rights and then placed the child.

This referral presented a situation which had protective as well as placement problems in it. The child had been placed in an unlicensed boarding home and there was question about the fitness of the mother's home. Throughout the record, this dual activity continues. There is a good deal of authority exerted by the case worker, a type of investigation is carried on, and the mother is given almost no
rights as far as her child is concerned. In this, the agency was apparently acting in a manner which was accepted in the community, because the court and its officers concurred in the adoption.

The case was referred, without the mother's knowledge; her employer, physician, the chief of police, and another police officer, and the Lying-in Hospital social worker were seen before the mother. It was felt advisable to have the child remain in a foster home rather than to return to her mother, the reason given for this being that the mother had no experience in taking care of a child and was an active case of gonorrhea. This latter was not substantiated by clinic examination. When the mother talked about the child's return to her, her husband's probation officer was consulted and he said that the child could not be returned without his consent. This man was again consulted when the agency was involved in the final planning. He said that the couple had lived in a questionable neighborhood in Providence. The worker had visited this home and had commented upon the care that the couple had expended upon their own quarters. At the moment, the family had moved to a cottage in the country. The probation officer said that he would be willing to testify that this was an unfit home, although he could not substantiate his charges, some of which were concrete, because he had not visited. There was an effort made to have the mother sign a release. She came to the office but her obvious ambivalence regarding the matter was shown by an unwillingness to sign the release without her husband; then she would miss appointments without explanation. She did not appear at the court hearing.
In 1931, there began to be evident in the case records the belief that the primary object in working with the mother of a child born out of wedlock was to preserve for him or her the "natural" ties to the natural mother. The goal of the first planning was to encourage the love of the mother toward her child. In a record whose activity was concurrent with the cases given above, one can read as a part of the worker's and agency case committee's decision that, with a mother who definitely asked for adoption, the first object should be "to instill feeling of responsibility and affection in mother toward her child" by use of a mutual home and then by the mother participating in the responsibility. This mother betrayed her extreme guilt in many ways. She refused to visit the child, except when impelled to by the worker and then was almost violent in her demonstration of affection. She selected housework jobs making extremely heavy demands upon her and also accepted much lower salaries than she could have commanded. She refused to make social contacts. When the child was almost a year old, a psychiatrist told the worker that if the mother were forced to keep the child, she might develop a psychosis. The agency relieved some of its pressure for acceptance but hopefully delayed the decision for another year.

In 1932, in the situation of a seventeen year old schoolgirl who had shown a complete detachment from the child even at birth of the child, remarking that now that "the accident had happened there was no need of mourning" and where the entire family, grandparents, mother and uncle were completely club and organization oriented, with very little
feeling of family tie, the worker hopefully planned for the child in the family. She said that the agency had endeavored to arouse interest of grandparents and mother in child with a view of his being taken into the home in the not too distant future. Further, "the mother has a man friend said to be of fine character and ideals who readily forgave her lapse. He is greatly interested in the child. There seems to be little doubt he will marry mother and take the child. Every effort should be made to foster the above plan". When payments for board were no longer available, the grandparents proposed the adoption by the boarding parents. The agency urged that the boarding parents consider the matter carefully before assenting and suggested that a paternal history should be available before agreeing upon adoption.

In 1935, a baby was placed with this idea: "if the mother does not become fond" then adoption should be considered later. The mother was confronted with the fact that the alleged father seemed to have more feeling for the child than she. She was asked if she were going to visit. She countered by asking if it were required. She was told it would seem more natural if she did. In another, active at this time, where mother and grandmother had rearranged their living at considerable cost to keep the birth hidden from friends and grandfather, it was decided to "board the child indefinitely" with effort being made to have the mother visit and know him, so she might become interested in him and keep him rather than place him for adoption. In another, "very likely there will be no possibility of returning this child to his family and adoption will have to be considered". The mother was not accepted for
supervision because "there seemed no use in attempting to work with her and her family to establish the child there".

In 1937, there seemed to be a sudden change in attitude toward adoption. In this situation, the mother told the worker that she had always hated babies and would strangle hers if she could. No effort was made to deal with this attitude. Plans were carried on toward adoption. There was apparently a friendly relationship between the worker and the mother, because she continued to write in a chatty way to the worker for a year after placement. Another situation, where adoption was readily accepted as the preferred solution, was in the family of a divorced mother. There is acceptance given the idea that the presence of two legitimate children and an illegitimate child in the same household would produce inequalities of status, which would be bad for all concerned.

During this decade, there were several attempts made to secure housework jobs for mothers where they could have their babies with them. In some of the others, this was a part of the recorded planning but was not carried out because of real resistance on the part of the mother. However, if the mother showed any interest in improving her educational status, the caseworker showed interest immediately, making suggestions and giving encouragement. With a single exception, in Case IV, where there was some thought of protecting the child, there was a determined effort made to encourage the mother to keep her child or the wish expressed that she could be brought to desire it until 1937. It is
implied that this was considered a service of the agency, for in one situation where both grandmother and child were persistent in their wish to have the child adopted. Their doctor was told of the agency's service. He said that he wished he had known. He feared that he was responsible for the family's attitude, because he had thought that adoption would be the only possibility.

There were real efforts made to obtain histories. There were efforts made to see or contact the alleged fathers. Sometimes historical data was obtained from them but more frequently the purpose seemed to be to help the alleged father assume his responsibility in helping to support the child. As time went on, less was made of the legal machinery and more was done on the voluntary level. The effort to see the alleged father was sometimes offered to the mother as a service by the agency but at other times was made without her knowledge and even against her expressed wish. Her rights in the child were preserved, however, in that the alleged father was not told of the child's whereabouts if the mother did not wish it. The historical material was factual. It was not recorded in a diagnostic manner. There is almost no evidence that it was used directly by the caseworker. There is no recorded evidence that it was shared with the adoptive parents. In several cases, the mother was seen one or more times by a psychiatrist during the progress of the case and a resume of the history was given to the psychiatric clinic. The psychiatric clinics were apparently diagnostic in nature as reports were made to the agency in regard to the timing of the adoption placement, or its possible effect upon the mother, or the
probable adoptability of the mother's child.

Toward the end of the period, the trend seemed to be to obtain more of the desired information from the mother. The actual taking of the surrender seemed to be an automatic conclusion to the contact. There is very little indication that the worker gave the mother much in the way of understanding or help in regard to her emotional reactions to this. It was taken, usually, after the mother had either consciously, by vocal persistence, or unconsciously by failure, to live up to agreements, forced the decision.
CHAPTER IV
THE LITERATURE AND PRACTICE OF 1939-1948

1. LITERATURE

In reviewing the literature for the second period, 1939-1948, one is aware that the questioning of procedure and concept that was going on in the first period was still continuing. It was, however, more pointed and was kept more in the present. There was less simple reaction to the past and more criticism of the factual present. There was a strengthened insistence upon treating the mother as an individual and a recognition of the unique place that the child held in this particular service.

One effort to be factual took the form of a type of stock-taking which resulted in the conclusion that placement agencies were not being really active in the field of adoption placements. As one writer put it, "Adoptions most decidedly are in the 'growing pain' stage. The percentage of independently placed children is still 75-80% of all placements."¹ In February, 1939, the Bulletin of the Child Welfare League of America carried an editorial label "Adoption - A Challenge"². The editorial writer had apparently been stimulated by the Children's Bureau's estimated that 16,000 children were placed for adoption annually in the United States to cull from the last available reports

of its agency members, the part that they shared in this activity. The figures were for the year 1937. Only ninety-five of its 168 member agencies report any completed adoptions in that year. The total number of placements for all these agencies was 1434. Of these, one agency alone had made 355 placements. The next, in order, placed eighty-five, seventy-five, sixty and fifty. From these figures it was apparent that adoption placements were a very minor part of the work of qualified placement agencies. Mary S. Brisley, speaking on Parent-Child Relationship in Unmarried Parenthood at the National Conference on Social Work in this same year, 1939, calls attention to the discrepancy between speech and practice. She reminded her hearers, "We still frequently speak as though the issue is between the placing of the child for adoption and its remaining with its mother; where as we know that in reality comparatively few dependent children are really adopted, the majority being placed in foster homes or institutions."3

We find a conviction that unmarried parenthood is not the same as married parenthood. In the paper quoted just above, the writer emphasized the inherent insecurity in the relationships between the child and the mother, the child and the father, and the mother and the father that is not solved even when the couple enter into a desired marriage subsequent to the child's conception. She contrasts the way in which society continues to give a mother and baby privacy under

the protection of the husband and father when a home has been established. But when the child is born out of wedlock, usually someone other than the parents enters in and produces a separation between the mother and the baby; the grandmother, the nursing home matron, the boarding mother.

In the 1940's, we have more attention paid to the role that the child played in establishing contact with the mother and in helping her to be realistic in her planning. The "mother's problems attacked or at least explored through her normal maternal interest in the future of her child" is suggested. Again it is stated,

"We cannot consider service for the mother apart from service for the child." 5 "If we operate on the accepted casework tenet that we can only communicate with or reach our client at the point of the client's anxiety or concern, how can we hope to make contact with the unmarried mother in any other way than around her present anxiety, which is always bound up with her relationship to her child. Even her concern for her family is tied up to this relationship to the child." 6

The whole matter of relationships began to play a more important role both in helping and in understanding the mother. Some of the writing on this particular matter is questioning, some of it rather dogmatic.

4 Mary S. Brisley, Ibid.


6 Ibid.
"We must ... try to understand the character organization of these girls, and also ... to examine more carefully their relationships to other people, particularly to the key people in their lives. We found that this group of our clients who had suffered the severest deprivations in their relations with their own parents found it most difficult to work out any kind of comfortable social adjustment for themselves or for their babies." 7

Leontine R. Young, in an article in The Family for December, 1945, discussed the effect of parental relationship upon the girl and her reaction to her own parenthood. Where the girl had been used to the domination of her mother, she said that

"without exception she was overly dependent upon her mother and both resented and embraced that dependency. ... None of these girls had enjoyed a happy relationship with the men. Only the rare girl spoke of him as an individual and as a person who had any meaning to her." 8 Also, this writer felt "a striking similarity between the girl's relationship to her father and her relation to the father of her baby." 9

Even here there appears a recurring consideration of the differences between married parenthood and unmarried parenthood in that in the former child-bearing is in part motivated by the desire to achieve the last step in emancipation but in the latter the mother's situation prevents her from using it in this normal fashion. 10

8 Leontine R. Young, "Personality Patterns in Unmarried Mothers", The Family, December, 1945.
9 Ibid.
that a knowledge of these relationships was important in the use of the casework relationship, for in this relationship the unmarried mother might be establishing her first constructive relationship with an adult.

Along with this concern about understanding relationships and personality patterns, there was some self-examination as to what the caseworker should bring to the relationship between herself and her client.

"The caseworker should try to understand, and use in treatment, knowledge of the precipitating factor in the pregnancy, underlying behavior patterns and conflicts, and the social, economic, and cultural setting from which the girl has come and to which she is returning." 11

In addition to all of this, this particular writer felt that the worker frequently became a parent substitute, that this was necessary as the unmarried mother, particularly in the early period of shock over what had happened to her, had a real need to be dependent. It was felt that the service could be enriched by specialization, at least for a time, in meeting the needs of these particular clients. 12 There was responsibility placed upon the agency and the worker to know the caseworker herself. "An agency has a real responsibility to select workers who are free of moral judgment." 13 The worker should be aware of her own feelings and needs in order to "seek to understand the


13 Ibid.
feelings of the unmarried mother and to acknowledge their reality without imposing her own values or meeting her own needs." 14

Scattered throughout the period are indications that there was very real respect for the mother's right to make her own decision. In 1941, we read that the casework job is

"to help the mother of the illegitimate child to free herself as much as she can from the projections and pressures of others, to set up a casework procedure and through which she can find her own way out, her own answer to her dilemma." 15

In 1942, it is stated in this way: "Constructive plans are most likely to result when the client has the opportunity to work out her own plans and has the wish to do so. In considering her plans, she should know the possibilities and resources available." 16 The same writer continues, "The caseworker does not try to save the girl from facing her real problem, rather she gives her an opportunity to use her strength in working out a plan that she herself can accept and be responsible for." 17

In 1945, much the same thing was being said, "the objective of the caseworker in an adoption agency ... is to help the client to face a situation and make a decision about it." 18 By 1946, we began to see some tendency to qualify this laissez-faire handling of the mother. It was not inconsistent with what had been said before; indeed, it could

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15 Julia Ann Bishop, Adoption Practice, Child Welfare League of America, 1941, "Adoption Decision and the Unmarried Mother".

16 Emma C. Blethen, op. cit.

17 Ibid.

be found within all of these earlier statements if they were interpreted as meaning that the mother had freedom within the casework situation set up and used by the caseworker to help the mother in her own activity.

Dorothy Hutchinson commented:

"It is frequently said that we allow and encourage the unmarried mother to make her own decision in regard to giving up or to keeping her baby and that we do not want to 'influence' her one way or the other. One questions the realism and common sense of these ideas if applied in wholesale fashion to any large number of unmarried mothers... the majority of these mothers are unable, if not incapable, of making their own decisions without skilled casework service." 19

Early in the 1940's, when we found writers pointing out the differences between married and unmarried parenthood, there were frequent mentions of the ways in which the environment affected the relationship involved and even the hostility which the parents met in their environment. It was not until the end of this decade that there was a recognition of the real part that the reaction of the persons important to the mother, and other social and economic pressures must play in her decision, in regard to her own future and that of her child who had been born out of wedlock. Frances Scherz, after listing the factors which the caseworker should understand, said that the social, economic and cultural setting from which the girl came "should perhaps be emphasized because our experience has shown that caseworkers frequently focus their interest in the emotional elements of the conflict without

giving sufficient recognition to environmental forces which may have an
equal degree of impact on the decision the unmarried mother makes." 20
Writing in 1947, Leontine R. Young repeated this idea in more than one
connection in a single article. In speaking of the help caseworkers
can give to an unmarried mother in making a decision in regard to her
baby, she says, "We must always keep in focus the dual reality of the
individual girl's own psychology and the reality of her external life
situation;" 21 and again, "It is not kindness to encourage a girl in
a decision that we know and that fundamentally she knows, however much
she may seek to deny it, is impractical in a practical and real world." 22
She reinforces this with the assertion that the "solution of the
problem must conform to the reality of the world in which we live or
it is no solution." 23

Here and there throughout the 1940's, the thought that there was
usually a somewhat neurotic need in the situation when an unmarried
mother decided to keep her baby, the presentation of this idea gained
force as the period progressed. There is a much more positive swing
toward the belief that for most children born out of wedlock and, there-
fore, for their mothers, a total surrender in adoption held forth the
greatest possibilities of future adjustment.

In the article just quoted, we find a thoroughgoing expression

20 Leontine R. Young, "The Unmarried Mother's Decision About Her
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
of this idea.

"Throughout this article," the author writes "I have emphasized adoption as a solution rather than a boarding home placement or even the mother's keeping the baby with her, not because of any theoretical belief that an unmarried mother should surrender her baby but because observation of the facts has imposed this conclusion. In my experience the majority of unmarried mothers are not strong, mature, well adjusted people, and the truth is that only such a person can assume and carry out responsibility for an out-of-wedlock child without serious damage to both herself and the child. Unless given unusually favorable circumstances in the form of family support, financial security, and personal adequacy, the girl finds herself in a situation that is at best a highly precarious one for her and an almost certainly tragic one for the baby. Most unmarried mothers have neither favorable circumstances nor personal maturity and their plans for keeping the baby are built upon fantasies growing out of neurotic and hence unfulfillable demands." 24

The writer goes on to insist that when a baby was released to a worker by the mother through a well-established relationship built on a real understanding of the mother and her circumstances and a genuine desire to help, the real result is different by reason of the difference in process from the result when the worker took a baby from the mother in an action motivated by an attempt to punish.

2. AGENCY REPORTS

In the agency's annual report for 1939, we find this estimate of the core of the agency's service:

24 Ibid.
"The placement of children in foster homes (that is boarding homes) is perhaps the outstanding service of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society. Most of the agency funds and the caseworker's time are used in maintaining children in foster homes. The other services given to children have developed for the most part either in an attempt to remove the necessity for placement or to make certain that the values derived from placement are continued after the child's return to his own home." 25

Specifically, in regard to the service to an unmarried mother, we were told that

"she receives understanding help from our skilled caseworkers in planning for herself and her baby, often before the child is born. Later the illegitimate child and his mother are aided in facing those difficult problems which they inevitably must meet in any community." 26

This report also noted that

"In recent years there has been growing interest in adoptions. Applications for children increase every year. Also the community is showing considerable interest in the protection of the adopted child. From time we know children whose mothers are unwilling or unable to keep them. Certain requirements must be fulfilled. These are careful observation and examination by pediatrician and psychiatrist, and a study of the child's background, to determine intelligence and potentialities. If these are all satisfactory, he is placed with the parents most suitable for him. Adopting parents are studied as carefully as is the child." 27

In the reports of the next two years, there is practically no change in the statements given in regard to these services. In the report for the year 1943, the essence of the statements continue to be

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
about the same but instead of referring to help for the "unmarried mother", the service is referred to as one for "unmarried parents".

"Those young men and young women, who, in the excitement and uncertainty of these times face the problem of unmarried parenthood." 28 Adoption placement is referred to as being the result of a mother being unable or unwilling to furnish a permanent home.

The following year, however, there seems to be an awareness that the question of to surrender or not to surrender one's child involved something more than either willingness or ability to keep him or to make a home. The report carries an implication that the caseworker can contribute something from her experience that would be helpful and ought to be considered in making the decision. Guidance in planning for the baby of parents who are not married calls for much skill and understanding. It is a difficult step to help reach a decision whether to keep the child in his own family circle or to place him in a foster home, with a plan for adoption when he is ready. Keeping a child with his unmarried mother often brings hardship and later behavior difficulties, as we have learned from long experience through dealing with older children of such parenthood. 29

In the report for the ensuing year, 1945, the major emphasis is given to a discussion of the agency's concepts in the whole field of

28 Annual Report Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, Year 1943.

29 Annual Report Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, Year 1944.
adoption as they affect the child, the natural parents and the adoptive parents. The role of the agency in the surrender of the child is portrayed in this fashion;

"The parent most likely to consider relinquishing a child is an unmarried mother. To such a mother, our agency offers a means of caring for her baby until she has been able to plan for the future. To her, a professional social worker is a person who can help her understand her own conflicting feelings toward herself, her baby, and her environment. We place the baby in a boarding home where he is given affectionate care and watchful oversight until a permanent plan for his future is agreed upon." 30

In the report for the year 1947, there is comment upon the shift in ages of the children with whom the agency is involved. In 1939, in a total caseload of 268 children, 106 were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years, and 28 were below two years of age. In 1947, in a total caseload of 234 children, forty-six were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, and fifty-seven children were below two years of age. This is significant in a study of trends in adoption service since it is more usual to find interest in adoption developing around a service to younger children.

In 1948, the case illustration chosen to typify the agency's service to unmarried mothers was one where the mother was assisted in arranging for the placement of her baby in adoption. The social worker's task was described in this fashion:

30 Annual Report Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, Year 1945.
"to help her (the unmarried mother) understand her feelings about her relationship with the child's father, the guilt and defiance she felt in relation to her own family, and her very mixed feelings toward this unwanted child. She had to be helped toward sharing responsibilities with the agency while the child was in boarding care, and then to release the child for adoption with an understanding of why she was doing this, and what an 'own' home would mean to the baby." 31

31 Annual Report Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, Year 1948.
3. PRACTICE

When the presence of an out-of-wedlock child threatened either established marriage or a mother's relationship to legitimate children, there seems to have been acceptance, on the part of this agency, of adoption placement as the preferred solution of the problems arising. This problem first appeared among the cases studied in 1937 and was present through the remainder of the time studied. This thinking was carried a logical step further, for in 1939 we find a caseworker discussing "the dangers of a forced marriage" with a mother.

During the years 1939-1948, there was an increasing readiness on the part of the agency to make use of adoption placement as part of service to both the unmarried mother and her child. The first placement, in this period, was made in a home selected by the child's maternal grandparents but the caseworker investigated (her own word) its suitability. Through 1944, there was some reluctance to accept the full responsibility for suggesting a child to an adoptive family if the agency did not know the full family history of the child or if there was some question about the inheritance that was known. In 1942, where it was felt that the mother's "depression" would be alleviated by a permanent place it was agreed, as a part of the planning, that if the boarding family "fully understood the limits of the child they should be allowed to adopt". This was a family who had grown children and who had not suggested interest in adoption up to this time. In the first cases, where adoption placement was recorded as a part of the early planning in the cases, there appears the qualification, "if considered
adoptable". There appears no definition of the term. In 1939, one child was said to have been suitable for adoption because his parents were young and intelligent. At this same time and a year or two later, it is stated that it was difficult to place a child without information regarding the alleged father. In another instance, the mother was told that the agency "would not permit" an adoption unless much more were known about all of the members of the family. This was a case where the caseworker had had opportunity to meet several members of the family. This attitude changed rapidly, however, because in 1944, a premature child was accepted for pre-adoption planning on the basis of the mother's rejection of the child. In this instance, the mother claimed that the pregnancy was the result of an assault by an unknown person. After one effort to interest the maternal grandmother in adopting the child, the agency apparently accepted the responsibility for finding a home which would accept this child on a permanent basis.

In the second decade studied, there seemed to be more overlapping and differences in practice than there had been in the first. This may have been due to a greater number of cases involving more caseworkers and some lag in transmitting or accepting change of concept or policy. In 1942, we find a caseworker explaining to a mother's sister the "usual arrangement of foster home (boarding home) placement, during which the child is studied for adoption placement and mother is given every opportunity in which to make certain that this is what she really wishes". The caseworker also spoke of the need for psychological examination and the reason for obtaining a complete maternal history and the importance
of also trying to secure the same information regarding the alleged father. It was thought that while it was worthwhile to establish paternity, it was greatly preferred to do this on a voluntary basis. The sister was told also that it was necessary to see the mother before any arrangements could be made. This seems to have been the broad basis on which most of the casework activity rested but variety of interpretation brought about a variety of method.

In the early part of this period, we find one instance when there was a good deal of activity on the part of the worker in unearthing material regarding the alleged father, using some of the methods employed earlier. He was alleged to have been an army veteran; the caseworker wrote to military and veteran's organizations with whom he might have served. She also made detailed inquiries concerning him from a personal friend of her own who had been a fellow employee. It was stated that the cause for the inquiries was not disclosed. This activity apparently had a dual motivation to furnish background material for the child and also to serve the rather dependent mother who desired information in regard to the alleged father and who was reluctant to accept his disappearance as a fact. The only vestige of this sort of activity that continued was an occasional instance where the caseworker would obtain the school record of the mother or the alleged father without discussing its procurement with the persons involved. Later, when it was necessary to obtain war records or other information to establish or disprove paternity, either they were obtained from the alleged father directly or through the mother. Suggestions might be made as to the simplest method
of obtaining them but the caseworker did not enter into the activity further.

There was a difference, growing difference, in the way in which the caseworker's purpose in working with the client was regarded. In 1942, as a part of the early planning, we find that it was planned to make "an effort to establish a better relationship with the mother to help her work through her plans". Even when the mother was a minor, the caseworker insisted that the mother's desire should be of primary concern and that her chief contact should be with her. In this same year, one mother applied to have her baby boarded by the agency for a few months, until her friend moved to a larger apartment and could take the baby with her. It was found that the mother had not told her mother of the baby's existence. The friend was known by the mother's mother. The baby's mother was also dominated by her mother, who was very demanding of her for both financial assistance and companionship. Here, the plan was "to see mother regularly and help her to face her situation realistically; to make a socially accepted and therefore more satisfying adjustment and a constructive plan for child." There was an increasing use of the mother's own statements or conduct to make clearer to her, her feelings in regard to the child. For example, in one instance the baby under the care of the agency was apparently rejected by the mother but yet she could not proceed in plans for adoption. In relating to the worker a conversation with a man who had proposed marriage to her, she said that she had told him about the child who was with her own family. When she acknowledged that she had not told of the child in the care of the
agency, the worker asked her to consider if this meant she already thought of him as not being a part of the family.

There was a variety of ways in which money was used by the agency during this period. At first, there was a slackening of the pressure on the mother for board payments. At one time, it was mentioned that the caseworker did not wish to press a certain mother for payment for fear she might be driven into accepting money from the boarding parents and allowing them to adopt the child. By 1947, payments for the child were being consciously used by the worker to help the mother to realize what her real situation was in regard to the child. She was being asked to consider her ability to accept responsibility for her child or her desire to maintain her relationship to the child in the light of the she had accomplished here. Real inability to maintain full support of her child was not considered as the proper basis for surrendering a child for adoption. The resources of public assistance were pointed out to the mother. There was much fuller acceptance of the role of the public agency than had been seen earlier. During this period, use of public resources was sometimes recorded as one of the possibilities to be considered in planning. There was some planning toward using time limits in stimulating real planning but these were not rigidly kept.

There was less rigidity in the requirements of the agency. The baby was available to the mother for visiting but she was assured that this was her right and if she did not wish to exercise it, she was not forced to do so either by regulation or implied censure. Family history was still obtained but recorded, at least, in a much less formal fashion.
The agency accepted the mother's decision in regard to seeing the alleged father. More and more, dependence was placed on the mother for voluntarily cooperating with the agency in regard to planning for the baby. More emphasis was placed upon the needs of the baby. In some instances, this resulted in gaps in the relationship between the worker and the mother, as the mother would not be seen for long periods at a time.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

The stimulus for this study came originally from questions regarding the underlying causes for the recent increase in the volume of service given by the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society in the area of adoption placements. This paper, as stated in the introduction, is limited to a study of questions regarding the development and change in casework concepts in regard to adoption placements. What were and are now considered the values of adoption to the child? What changes have there been in methods of working with the mother? How has the degree of responsibility taken by the agency varied? In what areas were these shifts found? Further limits are imposed by the arbitrary limits placed upon the literature used, the fact that annual reports serve purposes other than that of impersonally stating policy, and recording is usually regarded as such a chore that casework performance frequently is more effective and purposeful than the recording of it shows.

In the first five or six years covered by this study, there was concern in both the areas of theory and practice regarding a baby's need for individualized care. The literature advocated the maintaining of the person to person contact of the mother and child, particularly in the case of the child born out of wedlock. Repeated references in the records to plans for enhancing the mother's interest in her child or to awaken this interest where it did not exist is evidence that the caseworker in practice also considered this to be desired. In the
literature, recent or current experiences with institutional care was strong enough so that apparently the possibility of obtaining this individualized care through a foster mother, acting either as a temporary or permanent substitute, was not considered. This same factor may have been at work in the agency because its boarding home program was less than a year old when the first of the cases studied was referred for service.

In 1938, Ora Pendleton speaks of the mother sharing in planning a safer, surer future for her child, once she has made a decision to surrender the child for adoption. It was just prior to this that the records of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society show that a caseworker concurred with a mother's request for adoption when she expressed extreme rejection of the child. The agency consistently preferred adoption when the moral conditions in the mother's home were considered objectionable. It also encouraged consideration of adoption as a possible solution when a difference in legal status existed among the children of the mother. The illegitimate child in a family of legitimate children would probably be classified as a baby "whose existence is too great a source of conflict in his own family", one of the groups for whom Julia Ann Bishop, writing in 1941, advocated adoption.

In 1944, the agency in its annual report refers to the fact that its experience has taught it that to keep a child born out of wedlock with his unmarried mother often results in an unsatisfactory adjustment for him. In 1947, Leontine Young bases her assumption that an out-of-wedlock child should be placed for adoption for his own good, on her
observation of unmarried mothers and their development and reactions. In the realm of practice one of the agency's caseworker, in formulating her plan for working with a mother who was making an unrealistic plan for her keeping her child, spoke of helping her make a "socially accepted and, therefore, more satisfying adjustment and a constructive plan for her child". This particular situation took a long period to bring it to a conclusion but the caseworker's activity indicated that she regarded adoption as the constructive thing for this child.

During the years 1929-1938, there is comparatively little in the literature reviewed in regard to adoption. Ora Pendleton's *Agency Responsibility in Adoption* is an outstanding exception. The few references to it show some reluctance to assume responsibility for such permanent planning. There is some of the same reluctance toward it implied in the way in which the agency moved into adoption placements.

There was a fairly rigid plan laid down in about the beginning of the 1930's as basic requirements. A family history was recorded in definite pattern. It was necessary to know both the mother and the alleged father. Psychiatric and psychological examinations for the mothers were considered a must. Unless all of these met a high standard, which apparently was rarely attained, the agency's responsibility in placement was reduced by using the boarding home, which was in a position to evaluate the child from its own experience, as the adoptive home. This gradually changed until, during the latter part of the 1940's, children were being accepted for adoption placement where the father was unknown to the mother and where the child did not meet exacting standards of
development. The casework was deciding, according to individual situations, what consultative resources should be used for the mother. The agency was taking the responsibility in making the decision as to which individually selected adoptive home should be asked to consider the acceptance of a particular child.

In the direct work with the mother, neither the early literature nor the practice were willing to rely entirely upon the products of the interacting relationship between the mother and the caseworker. It was felt that there were others who knew the mother and could help interpret her and her situation. Contact with others who knew of various phases of the situation were sought both with and without the mother's assent. Gradually this changed. The literature began to advocate the establishment of a casework situation, making conscious use of the relationship between caseworker and the mother before we find these terms used with self-consciousness in this agency's recording. Along with the use of casework relationship as the chief tool came a greater consciousness of the need to observe the mother's right to self-determination. In recognizing this, the caseworker made more use of what the mother had to contribute, herself, to the necessary pool of common knowledge of the situation and placed more responsibility upon the mother for cooperating in the planning for the child. The mother made her own arrangements for furnishing the caseworker with the background information that was necessary for an effective placement.

Toward the end of the 1940's, the literature began to ask that the caseworker add to the protection for the child a certain kind of
authority. It was felt that the mother should not be allowed so much unguided freedom but that the caseworker had a responsibility to inter-ject into the process her own knowledge of real life situations and to help the mother in using this. In the case recording, one sees a recognition of the need to help the mother face and recognize the environmental realities. However, as the mother was allowed more self-determination in the relationship, there is less recorded evidence of knowledge and concern for the forces which led to her need for the agency. It would seem that this was the effect of an over correction. There had been a period in the late 1930's and early 1940's when there was considerable preoccupation regarding the psychological causes for unmarried parenthood. There is not much evidence of this in the cases studied but the literature suggests that it occupied a large place in the theoretical thinking. The evidence of the case records shows that social and economic pressures are nearly always thwarting realities in the relationship between the unmarried mother and her out-of-wedlock child, so it is necessary to take into account these external factors. However, it would seem that it is only fair to all concerned that the caseworker should understand the internal pressures which brought the mother into the situation, if the surrender of the child is to be made on a basis which is secure and helpful for all of those involved.

Approved

[Signature]

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