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# A ten year follow-up of twenty-two Aid to Dependent Children families in which the incapacitated father lived in the home

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A TEN YEAR FOLLOW-UP OF TWENTY-TWO AID TO  
DEPENDENT CHILDREN FAMILIES IN WHICH AN  
INCAPACITATED FATHER LIVED IN THE HOME

A Thesis

Submitted by

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(A.B., Brown University, 1937)

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

1952

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The major purpose underlying the Aid to Dependent Children program is to make it possible for a dependent child to receive the care of his own family. There is also the goal to have the family setting a normal one, or as near normal as possible. Yet the conditions of eligibility enumerated in Title IV of the Social Security Act almost make impossible the ideal of a normal family situation. The eligible child is one who "has been deprived of parental support or care by reason for the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental disability of a parent. . ."<sup>1</sup> and these requirements preclude a family setting considered as ideal in our society where the child has two natural parents, the father as the breadwinner, and the mother as the homemaker.

There is, however, a type of family unit possible under the Aid to Dependent Children program which most closely approximates the average family. This unit is comprised of a father who is incapacitated and living in the home, the mother and one or more dependent children. It is with such a group of "incapacitated father" families that this study deals, and the experience of twenty-two families who received aid to

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<sup>1</sup> Social Security Act, 1935 Title IV, Sec. 406 (a).

dependent children ten years ago will be examined.

Background of the Study. The possibility and feasibility of the present study arose from the following circumstances. When the writer was employed by the Division of Public Assistance in Rhode Island Department of Social Welfare in 1941 and assigned to District IV in the City of Providence, he had included in his caseload, among other forms of assistance, only those aid to dependent children families in which an incapacitated father lived in the household. The Public Assistance Division had several reasons for making this special project assignment. Heretofore, a male social worker had never carried an aid to dependent children caseload in Rhode Island, and under its predecessor, the Mothers Aid Program, only women workers were employed. It was also felt that a male worker would be in a better position to give supportive help to the incapacitated father. At the time it was felt that these fathers were neglected in many instances. The father in relinquishing his role as breadwinner because of his inability to work, did not always at the same time give up his place as head of the household, although it did seem as if all activity was directed toward this latter end. Invariably, interviews were held with the mother and planning centered around the household and care of the children. The assistance check was made out to the mother, her name headed the case record, and all correspondence regarding the family was addressed to her.

Eileen Blackey succinctly described this viewpoint.

Our ADC program is so entrenched in the matriarchal pattern that the father's self-respect is threatened when his wife becomes the head of the family on the agency's books. Even where agencies find it possible to give the grant to the father, it still carries with it a suggestion of feminine priority. One of our major case work problems in these families is that of helping the father to retain his position as economic head.<sup>2</sup>

The writer had responsibility for this specialized caseload for one year starting in June 1941 and assignment of such families was district-wide. All incapacitated father families were initially transferred to the writer, and newly accepted families during the year were also transferred. Conversely, when there was no longer an incapacitated father in the home because of death or absence for any reason, the family was assigned to another worker in the district. Starting out with seventeen families on June 1, 1941, the number increased to a total of twenty-two families by September of the same year and, although there were a number of removals from the caseload because assistance was discontinued or the father was no longer in the home, the total count of different families was never greater than twenty-two. This control insured inclusion of every aid to dependent children family in District IV, Providence, in which an incapacitated father lived in the home who received assistance for any length of time during the year June 1, 1941 to June 1, 1942.

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<sup>2</sup> Eileen Blackey, "Case Work Services in an ADC Program," The Family, July, 1942, p. 189.

It is not the intent to describe the writer's experience with this caseload during the year 1941-1942, but the background has been presented to show the origin of the families on which this study is based. It might be pertinent to mention that as a result of this early project a precedent had been established and now social workers of both sexes are assigned aid to dependent children families in the Division of Public Assistance. Carrying out a recommendation also made at that time, the assistance checks are now made out in the name of the father or mother depending upon the social desirability in each individual situation.

Purpose of the Study. It is the purpose of this study to describe the former and present status of twenty-two aid to dependent children families who had these factors in common: 1) they received assistance during part or all of the year June 1, 1941 to June 1, 1942, 2) an incapacitated father lived in the home with his wife and children, and 3) they all lived within the boundaries of District IV, Providence, during 1941 to 1942. As a result of follow-up it will be possible to learn the experience of these families ten years later with special emphasis on the current status of the children in these families. There will be an attempt to evaluate the present educational, employment, and marital adjustment of the children.

Questions Proposed. How effective has public assistance service been in promoting the independence of the families? What factors were present in those families requiring aid to dependent children for a short time compared to those who received assistance for a long duration? What is the attitude of the family toward receiving aid to dependent children? What is the effect of assistance on children of working age toward going to work? Is there much pressure for them to leave school at the age of sixteen to seek employment, even though assistance may be continued up to the eighteenth birthday if the child is regularly attending school? How do families who were former aid to dependent children recipients but who have not received public assistance for a number of years feel about discussing their former experiences and present circumstances?

Sources of Data. One of the main sources of information about the families was the case records in the district offices. Because there had been a redistricting of the five Providence public assistance districts in 1942, and several families had moved while receiving assistance, the case records were distributed among three district offices in Providence and one outside Providence. The Master File located at the Central Office was useful in ascertaining the assistance status of the family during the past ten years, the latest available address, and the district in which the case record was located.

Another important source to bring the material up-to-date for all the families was the home visit the writer made to each family whose assistance had been discontinued for some time in the past.

Method of Procedure. A schedule<sup>3</sup> was prepared and information for this obtained from the case record where possible. In those instances where a home visit was required, a letter<sup>4</sup> was sent to the family informing them of the writer's purpose in making the call. Information obtained during the visit was added to the schedule. The 1951 Providence City Directory proved most helpful in obtaining current addresses of some families who had had no contact with the Division of Public Assistance for several years.

Limitations to the Study. The decision to study all aid to dependent children families having incapacitated fathers in the home within a single district and within a certain year interval imposed certain limitations in the quantity and quality of data available. Some records were very brief in those situations where the total duration of assistance was short. In many instances the record concerned itself mainly with factual material regarding continuing eligibility for financial aid, and there was much less emphasis upon the emotions and attitudes of family members. There is also a difference in

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3 See Appendix A.

4 See Appendix B.

evaluating a family's experience over a ten year span when one can use a fairly complete case record which covers this interval as compared to the information obtained from a relatively short interview about what a family went through in the past seven or eight years. For these reasons the major emphasis will be upon the description of the families as they were ten years ago and their present situation.

Definition of the Study Period. Although a few of the families first started receiving Aid to Dependent Children from June 1941 to June 1942, the majority had received this form of assistance for varying periods of time prior to June 1941 and many had had other types of aid such as general assistance, WPA, etc. Therefore, the study period is defined as starting June 1, 1941 and ending June 1, 1951 and is concerned only with the aid to dependent children form of assistance received during this decade. This study also will be primarily concerned with the children who were included in the payment at some time during June 1941 to June 1942.

The terminal date of June 1, 1951 provides a full ten years for the seventeen families active on June 1, 1941 and at the most only three months short of ten years for the five families who started receiving assistance shortly after June 1, 1941.

## CHAPTER II

THE AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN  
PROGRAM AND THE INCAPACITATED FATHER

A very brief background of the development of aid to dependent children in this country will be presented in this chapter with special reference to the provisions in Rhode Island which relate to the incapacitated father in the home.

Predecessors to Aid to Dependent Children.

Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. It is the great molding force of mind and of character. Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons.<sup>1</sup>

This statement emanating from the Conference on Care of Dependent Children in 1909 (the first of the decennial White House Conferences) highlighted a trend in child welfare which started at the beginning of this century. The principles set forth that financial necessity of itself should not deprive a child of the values of growing up in his own family. The 1909 Conference provided the impetus for the assistance programs known as Mothers' Aid which were subsequently established in almost all the states. Illinois passed the first Mothers' Aid law in 1911 while Rhode Island enacted Mothers' Aid legislation in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Emma O. Lundberg, "Child Welfare," Social Work Year Book, 1947, p. 93.

2 Rhode Island Public Laws, 1923, Ch. 455.

As the name implied, the Mothers' Aid program in Rhode Island was designed primarily for the mothers of dependent children who were fourteen and under or under sixteen and still attending school. The mothers were widows or wives of husbands who were totally incapacitated by chronic illness or insanity, or serving a long-term prison sentence. The "fitness" of the mother with regard to her ability to bring up her children was also investigated.

Ward has pointed out the following.

Fathers who were incapacitated were considered only if they were incapacitated in a hospital -- either a tuberculosis sanatorium or a mental hospital. Little was said of the incapacitated man in his own house, and as late as 1936 a report of the care of such men confined in hospitals was given, but no mention was made of them in connection with their own families.<sup>3</sup>

Social Security Act. The federal Social Security Act passed by Congress in 1935 included in Title IV many of the provisions which were in effect in the Mothers' Aid laws of several states.

The term "dependent child" means a child under the age of sixteen, or under the age of eighteen if attending school, who has been deprived of parental support or care by the reason of the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity of a parent, and who is living with his father, mother . . . in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Ward, A Study of the Effects of Social Security Legislation on the Aid to Dependent Children Program in the State of Rhode Island, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Social Security Act, 1935, Title IV, s. 406 (a)

This act also provided for federal participation in the money payments to recipients of Old Age Assistance, and Aid to the Blind as well as Aid to Dependent Children.

The Aid to Dependent Children plan in Rhode Island was approved by the Social Security Board in 1937 and payments under the new program became effective retroactive to January 1, 1937.

The Rhode Island Aid to Dependent Children Program. The present program in Rhode Island is administered under the authority of the Public Assistance Act of 1944 which is within the limitations imposed by the Social Security Act.

The purpose of Aid to Dependent Children is stated in the Rhode Island Public Assistance Service Manual.

The purpose of aid to dependent children is two-fold; to make it possible for the child to remain in or to return to the custody and care of his parents or relatives who have a natural responsibility, bond of affection and concern about his well-being; and to enable the child's unmet needs to be supplied.<sup>5</sup>

The same manual also defines the incapacity of a parent.

If either parent is incapacitated the child may be included within the scope of the program. Incapacity is defined as follows: mental or physical incapacity, full or partial disablement, temporary or permanent disability . . .

The incapacity can be incapacity in the home, or

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<sup>5</sup> R. I. Public Assistance Service Manual, Ch. III, s. 302, p. 1.

a condition requiring hospitalization. It can mean partial disablement, and it can be a supplementary payment made because the parent is not able to work to the maximum. It can be temporary disability necessitating a payment over a very short time or permanent disablement. Workers must use all resources in the family, and in the community toward the rehabilitation of the incapacitated parent toward his social objective of a happy and profitable life, and help him to participate to the fullest in all family planning and activity.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that in the excerpt quoted above the word "parent" is used in all instances, and the incapacity defined refers to either the father or mother. Studies have shown, however, that the incapacity of the father, as a cause of dependency in Aid to Dependent Children, is by far numerically greater than the incapacity of the mother. Alling and Leisy<sup>7</sup> in reporting on a study conducted by the Bureau of Public Assistance in 1948 which included sample data from all the states, showed that 23 per cent of the families had incapacitated fathers in the home while 7 per cent of the mothers were incapacitated. They go on to say that although the status of the mother contributed to the child's dependency, it was doubtful if many families would have received assistance only on account of this if the fathers had been able to furnish support. They state that the number of families in which aid

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6 Ibid., Ch. III, Sec. 302.3, p. 1.

7 Elizabeth Alling and Agnes Leisy, "Aid to Dependent Children in a Postwar Year," Social Security Bulletin, August, 1950, p. 7.

was received solely because of the mother's status of death, incapacity or absence, represented less than 2 per cent of all the families.

A word about the inclusion of the incapacitated father in the payment might be in order at this point. Prior to 1942, the father, although supplying the eligibility status, was not included in the aid to dependent children payment when the mother was also present, and his needs were usually met through assistance from the public welfare department in the city or town where the family resided. In January 1942 the program expanded by permitting fathers to be included in the assistance payment, along with the mothers. However, federal funds for matching purposes were provided only for the children, and it was not until 1950 that the Social Security Act was amended whereby ". . . the Federal Government will participate financially to include a \$27 amount with respect to a parent . . . caring for the child."<sup>8</sup> This provision now enables all the family members, who come under the definition of child or parent to receive a share of Federal funds, but when both parents are present, the father must still receive state funds entirely, unless he is eligible for Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Disabled, or has income from another source.

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<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Public Assistance, Public Assistance Goals 1951, p. 8.

Studies of Aid to Dependent Children. In the fifteen years that the Aid to Dependent Children program has been in effect, there have been many studies on the effectiveness of this program. Few of these have been in the nature of "follow-up" or the longitudinal approach, while none, to the writer's knowledge, have utilized the follow-up method only for those families which had an incapacitated father in the home.

The State of North Carolina conducted a study in 1948 to determine what progress the children in aid to dependent children families had made in the six-year period 1942 to 1948. This study was based upon a sample of 918 families who received assistance in 1942 and was primarily statistical in nature.<sup>9</sup> Another study conducted for the American Public Welfare Association by the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina, has enlisted the cooperation of various state public welfare agencies, and was based upon a sample of aid to dependent children families whose assistance was discontinued during a month in 1950. The results of this latter study, also quantitative in its emphasis, have not yet been published.

A number of authors have written on the role of the incapacitated father in the family. Osborn has said:

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<sup>9</sup> Ruth Lindquist and Margaret Woodson, Families Receiving Aid to Dependent Children in North Carolina.

Whenever the father is physically and mentally able to participate in the family plan, he should be included. Not only does this result in better knowledge and understanding of the father's and therefore the family's problems . . . but it also tends to enhance the status of the father in the home.<sup>10</sup>

Gertrude Johnson of Minnesota has pointed out that though the incapacitated father in that state was eligible to receive the payment, out of 225 families where the father was in the home, only thirteen fathers actually received the payment or 5 per cent of those in families where this was possible. She feels that the father "has been shunted off and ignored by the program that aims to protect the interests, well-being, and happiness of his children."<sup>11</sup>

The Place of the Father in the Family. Psychoanalytic teaching has emphasized the role of the father in the family circle especially with regard to the successful resolution of the oedipal conflict by the children of both sexes. Wolf has written that "Fathers are necessary for the best development of children, not just as providers, but also because they are essential contributors to the child's sound emotional growth!"<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mildred E. Osborn, "Are the Fathers Forgotten?" The Family, January, 1942, p. 302.

<sup>11</sup> Gertrude Johnson, "Let's Pay More Attention to the Disabled ADC Father," Minnesota Welfare, November, 1947, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Anna W. M. Wolf, The Parents' Manual, p. 216.

In a new book by English and Foster there is demonstrated the part the father can play through the various phases of the child's growth from infancy to adulthood. They also write in their forward:

Plainly this nation needs father in the armchair at the head of the table again, carving the roast, disciplining the children, keeping the peace, settling disputes . . . serving as an example for sons to emulate and daughters to seek in husbands of their own.<sup>13</sup>

Although offering some enticing possibilities, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to show the value of the father's presence on the future adjustment of his children. Such a study would entail a much larger sampling of families, and would also require a control group, carefully matched, in which there was no father present. Nevertheless, it is interesting to speculate to what extent the father, though incapacitated, exerted a beneficial influence.

An investigation along this line was undertaken by Willoughby who compared two groups of aid to dependent children, matched for age, school, and sex. One group had an incapacitated father in the home while the other was fatherless, and the variables investigated were intelligence quotients, school marks, health ratings, and discipline ratings. It was found that the group of children who had an incapacitated

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<sup>13</sup> O. S. English and C. J. Foster, Fathers Are Parents, Too, p. xi.

father in the home had significantly higher scores in the four aspects studied. The explanation offered is pertinent to the present study and is quoted.

The clear effect of the father's presence on discipline seems to be the same phenomenon that results in the familiar higher crime rate in broken homes; it is traditional to ascribe it to the father's superior policemen-ship, but perhaps a little more in harmony with modern concepts of emotional dynamics to suppose that the fatherless child is lonely, discouraged, and without a model on which his character can fashion itself. It has often been observed in psychoanalytical studies that some pretty unprepossessing fathers can exert a surprisingly stabilizing effect on their children; whatever the effect is, it appears to depend chiefly on the fact of being a father and only secondarily on the kind of father one is.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Raymond R. Willoughby, "The Degree of Underprivilege in Dependent Children. Part II: The Role of the Father," Rhode Island Welfare, April, 1942, p. 9.

CHAPTER III  
THE FAMILIES IN 1941

By assembling and analyzing the data contained in the case records it is possible to reconstruct a picture of the twenty-two families who received aid to dependent children between June 1941 and June 1942 in District IV, Providence. District IV, one of the five Public Assistance districts in Area III (Providence, R. I.) in 1941 encompassed that neighborhood of the city known as Federal Hill, a compact, congested section lying to the west of downtown Providence, and whose population was predominantly of Italian descent.

These twenty-two families were all in financial need to a greater or lesser extent because of the illness or disability of the father which prevented him from obtaining employment.

The Parents

Nativity and Marital History. Five fathers and fourteen mothers were born in the United States, sixteen fathers and eight mothers were born in Italy, and the birthplace of one father was Armenia.

For sixteen of the mothers and fathers their marriage was the first. Four men and two women had been married previously. Of these prior unions, two were broken by divorce and four by the death of a spouse. One father was married twice before

and his first two wives had died.

As previously mentioned, special note is taken of the children. The total number of children included in the assistance payment was eighty-two although there were ninety children in the homes, the eight being older than sixteen and employed, or older than eighteen years of age. In addition there were nine older children living away from home. These figures do not include ten children by previous marriages. Of this group, four fathers had seven children and two mothers had three children.

Age. All ages have been computed as of January 1, 1942, a point approximately midway in the year June 1, 1941 to June 1, 1942. On this basis it was found that the median age of the fathers was forty-five years and the mothers' median age was forty years, or five years younger. The youngest father was thirty-five and the oldest seventy-one whereas the age range for the mothers was twenty-seven to forty-seven years. In no instance was the mother older than the father and the range of their differences in ages is quite large; from the same age (or no difference) to a difference of twenty-five years.

Incapacities. Two of the fathers incapacitated because of advanced age were over sixty-five and were receiving old age assistance. Two were aid to the blind recipients. The others were supported principally by general assistance, and later were included in the aid to dependent children payment. Some,

however, were assisted financially by pensions or by children over sixteen who were employed.

It may be seen from Table I that tuberculosis and other pulmonary disorders accounted for a little less than half the fathers' disabilities.

TABLE I.  
 FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF INCAPACITY OF  
 FATHERS IN DISTRICT IV, JUNE, 1941.

Incapacity	Number of Fathers	Per cent
Tuberculosis and other pulmonary disorders	10	45.6
Cardiac conditions	2	9.1
Mental disorders	2	9.1
Advanced age	2	9.1
Blindness	2	9.1
Ulcers	1	4.5
Loss of limb	1	4.5
Arthritis	1	4.5
Nephritis	<u>1</u>	<u>4.5</u>
Total	22	100.0

Although Table I is based on the major cause of incapacity, five of the fathers had multiple disabilities. Examples are a father who had a cardiac condition and epilepsy, another had nephritis and diabetes, while still another was diagnosed as psychotic in addition to having tuberculosis.

Five of the twenty-two mothers presented health problems, though not as disabling as the fathers, were present nevertheless. Three women had cardiac conditions, one was diabetic, and two others suffered from ulcers and arthritis respectively.

In considering the various incapacities it is useful to know the time of onset. The median year of onset for the twenty-two fathers was in 1937. The marriage date between the

incapacitated father and his wife can be compared with the onset of his incapacity. The earliest marriage took place in 1917 and the latest in 1937, the median year being 1924. The average of the intervals between marriage and onset of incapacity, however, was 10.8 years. In only two instances was the date of marriage subsequent to the onset of the incapacity.

Former Occupations and Educational Level. The occupations of the men had been unskilled or semi-skilled, and not one of the twenty-two had been a professional worker. Four were laborers and four were factory workers (semi-skilled). A variety of vocations is represented, and a few examples are baker, painter, blacksmith, dishwasher, cobbler, truck driver, and tailor.

The educational background of the fathers was very limited, four having no record of any formal schooling. The rest reached various grades at the elementary and grammar school levels. Only one father had attained the second year in high school.

The work experience of the mothers is significant because she might have found employment when her children grew older and her services were not so urgently needed in the home. Of the twenty-two mothers, all that had any employment experience had been mill or jewelry workers. Eleven had worked only before their marriage, seven worked before and after marriage, and four had no employment experience at all.

The Children

The eighty-two dependent children who were included in the assistance payment during all or part of the year June 1941 to June 1942 are distributed by age and sex in Table II.

TABLE II.

AGE OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN AID TO DEPENDENT  
CHILDREN FAMILIES BY SEX, JUNE 1941.

Age	Total	Boys	Girls
1 year*	4	2	2
2 years	3	2	1
3	5	3	2
4	3	1	2
5	6	4	2
6	4	1	3
7	5	3	2
8	5	2	3
9	6	3	3
10	4	2	2
11	9	5	4
12	5	4	1
13	7	2	5
14	5	4	1
15	6	2	4
16	2	1	1
17	3	1	3
Total children	82	41	41

\*Read as one and over but under two years of age, etc.  
Ages computed as of January 1, 1942.

By coincidence there happened to be an equal division of sex: forty-one boys and forty-one girls. There is a fairly even frequency of children at all the age groups, the largest

number, nine, at eleven years of age. All the children were attending school except for those of preschool age. Four of the five children sixteen and seventeen years of age were girls.

The statistics in this chapter have described the family members, their characteristics with regard to age, sex, incapacity, education, marital history, nativity and other aspects. A quantitative analysis fails, however, to portray the extent of the problems a family faces when the father can no longer support his family because illness or disability has struck.

The incapacitated father merits consideration. Formerly the breadwinner he was no longer able to provide his wife and children with the necessities of life. Dependent upon public assistance, and forced into idleness, he found time heavy on his hands. A review of the case record material of ten years ago indicated that the majority of the incapacitated fathers spent their time reading, taking walks, sometimes helping with the housework or going on errands. A few of the more severely disabled were confined to bed. One father, disabled by a leg amputation and a severe cardiac complication, (which a medical report indicated would result in a very short life expectancy) busied himself by making paper novelties at the Bureau for the Handicapped. Several of the fathers attended to their health needs by regular attendance at hospital clinics. Most found solace in the companionship of wife and children, and looked

forward to the time when their offspring would grow to maturity and become self-supporting.

The mothers also had their problems. Busy with the care of small children and a multitude of household tasks, they frequently had the additional burden of caring for their invalid husband's needs. Making both ends meet on a limited public assistance budget often taxed their ingenuity. The discouragement caused by the inability to meet adequately the basic items of food, shelter, and clothing was intensified by the inability to lighten the burden with the little "extras" that help so much to alleviate the drabness of subsistence living.

There were some additional sources of help which aided the families in 1941. The WPA clothing projects provided certain clothing to the families without charge. The Food Stamp Plan, devised to absorb the surplus agricultural commodities, were utilized by many of the families. The annual Santa Claus Fund conducted by a local newspaper assured toys for the younger children at Christmas.

The children, especially the older boys and girls attending school, were conscious of the economic pressure under which the family strained. Free public recreation was necessarily substituted for that which had to be purchased. Community clubs and settlement houses were an invaluable aid in preparing the children for social living. Yet there was much

pressure to go to work at the first available opportunity. For many, the reality of a regular pay check seemed more advantageous than continuance in school, and the future opportunities that extended education would bring.

Despite the problems, the pressures, and tensions, the fact remains that Aid to Dependent Children was the means by which these families were kept together. When all resources were exhausted, when relatives and friends tired of helping out, public assistance remained the last line of defense.

What the future held in store for the twenty-two families is the subject of the remainder of this thesis.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE FAMILIES TEN YEARS LATER

The years from 1941 to 1951 were momentous for the Nation and the World. The start of this decade marked the end of the Great Depression and saw the start of World War II with its accompanying full employment. Post-war readjustment followed with alternating prosperity and recession, and the decade ended with the Korean crisis and its threat to world peace. Ten years would ordinarily bring changes in family patterns, but such changes were accelerated under the impact of war and its effect. Young men were called into military service, tempting jobs beckoned the youngster who just passed the compulsory age of school attendance, the handicapped and unskilled found a market for their services, and women entered industry in unprecedented numbers.

How did the twenty-two aid to dependent children families fare during this decade? How many and in what way did they achieve financial independence? What factors made for the continuous dependence of some? What progress did the children in these families make? The answers to these and other questions are the substance of this chapter.

The Family Units in June 1951. A total of eleven parents died between June 1941 and June 1951. Nine fathers and two mothers passed away; thus exactly half the twenty-two families lost

either a father or mother during the decade. One child met accidental death.

Death was not alone the cause of changes in size of family groups. Marriage and opportunity for employment elsewhere as well as service in the armed forces also reduced the size of some family units. In June 1951, one mother lived alone, and nine mothers lived with their remaining children.

All the children had left the homes of two couples, while both parents in eight families still maintained homes for their children ranging in number from one to five.

One widower continued to live with his two children, and another with his four. One mother obtained a divorce, and another remarried.

In only one family did births after 1941 increase the size of the family group.

Financial Status of the Family Units in June 1951. Of the twenty-two family units whose composition is described above, fourteen were self-supporting in June 1951 while eight, or about one-third, were dependent upon public assistance.

For the purpose of studying the questions mentioned in Chapter I the families have been divided into three groups based upon their economic dependence or independence and length of time Aid to Dependent Children was received.

- Group I (seven families) Self-supporting -- duration less than two and one-half years.
- Group II (seven families) Self-supporting -- duration more than two and one-half years.
- Group III (eight families) Dependent upon some form of public assistance.

The shortest duration was noted for one family in Group I which received aid for one and one-half months. Two families in Group III had received Aid to Dependent Children continuously for the full ten years of the study period and beyond, while another family received assistance continuously until June 1, 1951 at which time assistance was discontinued. Table III is pertinent to the consideration of length of time aid was received.

TABLE III.

LENGTH OF TIME AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN WAS RECEIVED BY THE TWENTY-TWO FAMILIES, JUNE 1941 to JUNE 1951.

Duration	No. of Families
10 years	3
9-10	2
8-9	1
7-8	1
6-7	1
5-6	2
4-5	1
3-4	3
2-3	2
1-2	4
Under 1	4
Total families	22

Factors in Economic Dependence and Independence. To learn what factors were involved in maintaining the dependency status of the families in Group III as compared to the current self-sufficiency of Groups I and II, the eight families in Group III are very briefly summarized.

1. Mrs. A, widowed, is unable to work due to a cardiac condition and lives alone. Her one child, a son, is married, and unable to support her. She is now receiving general assistance.

2. Of Mr. and Mrs. N's three children, one died, one is incarcerated, and the third, a seventeen year old daughter, is employed. Although Mr. N worked for eight years during the study period, his condition became worse and he had to give up employment in May 1950. Mrs. N is incapacitated by leg ulcers. General assistance supplements the daughter's earnings.

3. Mrs. H. moved to a nearby state with her two young children shortly after the death of her husband. She receives aid to dependent children from that state, and both children still attend school.

4. Mrs. O, widowed, has one son attending school, and two older employed sons at home. A daughter married and moved away. Aid to Dependent Children was received until June 1, 1951 when the second son obtained employment. The three older children completed high school.

5. Mrs. G is a widow with two dependent children. Aid to Dependent Children is still received to supplement the earnings of an older son in the home. Mrs. G has had several operations and is in poor health.

6. Mr. E, blind and a widower, has two dependent children in school and two sons attend college. Three forms of assistance are being received in this home. Aid to the Blind for Mr. E, Aid to Dependent Children for the two younger sons, and general assistance supplementation for the two boys at college.

7. Mrs. T, a widow in poor health (bronchitis) has two dependent children. A third child, also in poor health, is employed part-time, and Aid to Dependent Children, along with her earnings, support the family.

8. Mr. U, incapacitated, with a wife also in poor health, (chronic cervicitis) now has five dependent children. A daughter married and left home. Three of the five children were born after June 1941.

An analysis shows that of the eight families in Group III, the death of a father or mother occurred in six families. Five of the seven remaining mothers are incapacitated because of illness or disability. In two families all the children in the home are under sixteen, and in two others the children graduated from high school with continuation of education at the college level in one of the families. In three of the

families, aid was needed to supplement the earnings of one older child for the total support of the unit. Only one family in Group III, the N's, had been intermittently independent prior to June 1951.

The families in Groups I and II had a correspondingly smaller proportion of parents' deaths. A mother or father died in five of the fourteen self-supporting families. Only two of the remaining thirteen mothers were incapacitated. The health of five fathers had improved to such an extent that four were working full time and one part-time to support their families. Two mothers were fully employed and self-supporting, while seven families were supported by the now-older, fully-employed children ranging in number from one to three a family.

The ages of the children in Groups I and II are considerably older than Group III. In eight of the fourteen families, all the children are over sixteen, the children in five families are both over and under sixteen with the former predominating, while in only one family are all the children under sixteen.

Briefly stated, the factors which seem to be involved in determining the economic dependence or independence of former aid to dependent children families are these. Death of the mother or father and incapacity of the remaining parent, as well as younger ages of the children, predominated in the dependent group.

In Group III, in contrast to Groups I and II, the children are considerably younger, and in those instances where older children are present, continuation of schooling for them well beyond the age of sixteen had been planned. The Group III older, employed children were too few in number to support their families completely.

Factors Involved in Long and Short Duration of Assistance.

To answer the questions as to why some families were in need of Aid to Dependent Children for a relatively long time while others had a fairly brief duration of assistance, a comparison of Groups I and II is in order. Each of these groups contain seven families, and the criterion of two and one-half years as dividing the long from the short term families was arbitrarily used.

In Group I only one parent, a father, died, while deaths of four parents (three fathers and one mother) were recorded for the Group II families.

There was also a difference between the groups as to the family members who were supporting the units in June 1951. In Group I, five of the seven families were maintained by the full employment of a parent (three fathers and two mothers) and in the remaining two families, a single child supported one unit, while income from property and pension kept the other financially independent.

On the other hand, the long-term families in Group II were

supported by the children in six families, and by the father in the seventh.

There is another characteristic that differentiates the two economically independent groups and that is the total number of dependent children in the families ten years ago. In June 1941, the seven families in Group I had twenty children, while the same number of families in Group II had thirty-seven children or almost twice the number. It follows that the Group II children were younger than Group I, and being more numerous, would eventually become the breadwinners for their families. It also accounts for the long duration of assistance in Group II, principally because a longer time elapsed before these children reached the age of employability.

A review of the factors which seem to have a determining role as to the length of time the families received assistance indicates that fewer deaths of parents are involved in the short-term families. The parents, rather than the children, provide the support for the Group I families. The long duration families in Group II consisted of many more children, who later assumed the responsibility of supporting their families.

The factors that have been enumerated in considering why some families became financially self-supporting and others did not, as well as the length of time the assistance was needed for different families, have been concerned with mortality

and health of the parents, size of family, ages of children, and other similar characteristics. Also important in a determination of the effectiveness of Aid to Dependent Children are the emotional factors involved in the receipt of assistance. The importance of Aid to Dependent Children to the families, and how some families utilized it to move forward to independence, as well as the attitudes which seemed to block others, are illustrated in the case presentations given in Chapter V. Pressures on Children to Leave School at Sixteen. The problem of children leaving school after the compulsory attendance age of sixteen is reached is one that affects the general population and is not limited to children in assistance families. It is well known to school authorities and others that in times of economic prosperity when jobs are plentiful, high school enrollments drop, especially at the upper grades. In times of depression the high school population rises.

The boys and girls in the Aid to Dependent Children families not only had the prospect of a job awaiting them during most of the past decade, but also had the pressures of a limited family income. Many children yielded to the temptation of a job whose educational requirements were not too exacting, and a chance to aid their parents and younger brothers and sisters.

Although financial pressures predominated as the cause of children leaving school at sixteen, other reasons could have

been lack of interest in continuing with education, poor health, and, in a few instances, desire to enlist in the armed services at a young age.

There can be removed from consideration those families in which the children remained under sixteen during the study period, and the families whose children all continued through high school graduation or beyond.

The sixteen families in which some or all the children left school at age sixteen included three families in which one child had graduated from high school while the other siblings left school at sixteen.

It is difficult to determine the reasons why all the children left school at sixteen. In several instances the case record does not give this information except to establish the fact that the child was not attending school. In other instances the children left school during the time the family was not on assistance and the information is unobtainable. Yet, in several case situations, the parent has frankly stated that he desired the child to obtain work in order to assist the family financially.

In seven of the sixteen families there is evidence from the case record that parental influence was a factor in the child leaving school at sixteen. In seven others there is no definite information available on this subject, but from the family's economic circumstances at the time the particular

child turned sixteen, it is presumed that some pressures to leave school were likely. In two families, the reasons are definitely unknown.

Three boys enlisted in the armed services when they turned seventeen. One girl married at the age of sixteen.

Some typical parental attitudes extracted from the case records are given below.

6/42 John is undecided as to whether he will return to school in the Fall. Mrs. A wondered if it would be the best thing for John to leave school when he reaches sixteen and get a job. She agreed with the worker that the longer he did stay on in school, the better his chances for advancement later on.  
10/42 John did not return to school.

No further indication is given as to the reason for his not returning, but apparently current employment possibilities won out over the advantages of further education.

Mrs. C said that since Barbara planned to marry next year she felt that it would be just as well if Barbara left school and obtained employment to help out the family.

Mrs. G stated that she hoped Anna would be able to get some work because she needed many clothes which she would be able to buy if she could earn money.

A different attitude was expressed by Mr. K.

Mr. K remarked that he wants Carole to continue school even after she turns sixteen. He said that Carole liked school and he would like to have her graduate from high school.

It is significant that Carole did graduate high school in contrast to her older brother and sister who left at sixteen. Apparently their employment eased the financial pressure so

that Carole saw her way clear to complete her education.

The area of school attendance at age sixteen and after is one in which the worker might participate more actively. Discussion with the older children and the parents could result in planning to continue school after the age of sixteen is reached if the child's interest and capacity indicates that such continuance is desirable.

The Attitudes of Former Public Assistance Recipients. One phase of this project included visits to those families for whom current information was unobtainable from case records because Aid to Dependent Children had been discontinued some time ago. The purpose of these visits was twofold: to obtain the data concerning the parents and children and to ascertain the family's attitude about public assistance.

A review of the twenty-two families showed that home visits were required in eleven situations. After verifying the present addresses by checking with the Providence City Directory, letters were mailed to the families. It was possible to visit all the families for which up-to-date data were needed with the exception of one family that moved to another state six years ago. The basic information about this family was obtained from a collateral source.

It was the writer's impression that the families, without exception, accepted the follow-up interview and spoke willingly about their experiences from the time they were last known

to the agency. Present at the time of the home visit were the mothers in six families, the fathers in three families, and both parents in two families. These informants related the pertinent facts about their children -- when they married, record of service in the armed forces, educational attainment, and present employment. A frequent occurrence was the display of wedding pictures and photographs of sons in military uniform when their children were discussed.

In several instances it seemed that the parents welcomed the opportunity to speak to a former worker, and in no situation was there refusal to supply needed information in this interview which was essentially voluntary on the part of the informants.

There were numerous evidences of improved economic circumstances. Telephones and television sets were frequently observed. But more important than the material acquisitions was the spirit of independence and assurance which a self-supporting status seemed to engender.

The attitudes expressed about the importance of aid to dependent children to them were varied although one theme predominated. This was that when the father was ill and unable to work, and the children were very young, public assistance maintained them, and kept the family together until change of circumstance made them self-supporting again.

The attitudes expressed by seven of the eleven families

are given in the case illustrations in Chapter V. The remaining four are now presented. Mr. S was the only parent who expressed an adverse attitude.

Mr. S seemed eager to converse and talk about his children, four of whom had married, and the remaining single son was serving in the Army. When asked his opinion of Aid to Dependent Children, he said, "They had a nerve just giving me nine dollars a month for a family with five children."

The hostility shown by Mr. S must be tempered by the knowledge, and his awareness also, that the small assistance payment was made because the two older children, then single and employed, were contributing toward the support of the household. Assistance was discontinued after one and one-half months when Mrs. K found employment.

Mr. M's attitude toward public assistance was so outspoken and extreme, it seemed as if it were, in a sense, a reaction formation.

Mr. M said that he was proud to have been on Aid to Dependent Children. He was proud that his family kept together, and was proud that his children can now support his wife and himself. It was a good program and he was not ashamed of anything. Mrs. M was somewhat more restrained in her expression. She related that only the other day when speaking to her oldest daughter, they agreed that they seemed to have more things ten years ago when prices were low, than today when much more income could not go so far because of the high cost of living.

Mrs. A could give only the basic information regarding her family because of language difficulty, and her attitude could not be ascertained.

The R family involved a situation where rehabilitation of

the father was possible, and the children were able to continue with their education.

Mr. R had suffered a brain damage due to a head injury resulting from a tire explosion. Aid to Dependent Children was received by the R's from January 1941 until August 1943 at which time Mr. R's condition had improved to such an extent that he took a position in a jewelry company, and has been employed there continuously to the present time. The oldest of their four sons, Paul, had gone to the University of Rhode Island and had distinguished himself with high scholastic honors. He graduated in June 1951 and obtained a job with a nationally known electrical firm as a mechanical engineer.

Another son, Alfred, graduated from high school and obtained a job in the same jewelry firm in which his father was employed. The two younger sons are still attending school, one in the tenth grade of high school, and the other in junior high. Mrs. R felt that the family had been through a lot, and Aid to Dependent Children was a big help during their time of stress which she called a "bad period," but now things have been going along quite well for the family. She pointed out that Paul was enabled to complete college largely through the influence and financial aid of her brother-in-law, the boy's uncle, who died recently.

In addition to obtaining an expression from the former Aid to Dependent Children recipients as to their attitude toward public assistance, this home visit phase of the project was of value in another way. It showed that it was possible to locate families who were last known to the agency up to ten years ago. On the basis of the results obtained from this study there is indication that former assistance recipients do accept a voluntary interview situation, and will cooperate in giving the information asked for.

The technique of the follow-up study might well be utilized in more social service research. This investigation has touched upon only a few questions asked about the Aid to Dependent Children program, and there are many other phases of this form of assistance which might be studied profitably by the longitudinal method. Questions about other forms of assistance might well be answered by this approach.

#### The Children Ten Years Later

A span of ten years is a somewhat short period to assess the progress made by a group of children all under eighteen years of age in 1941. Nevertheless, a resume of some of their characteristics as of June 1951 will indicate what they have achieved so far.

Ages of the Children. The data presented here are for eighty-one children since one boy died in an auto accident in 1950. Table II in Chapter III will give the ages of the children in 1951 by adding ten years to each age interval. Thus, it is found that there are a total of twenty-one children under sixteen and sixty children sixteen years and over. The sixty consist of twenty-eight boys and thirty-two girls.

School Attainment. A total of thirty-one children were still attending school in June 1951. Since twenty-one of these were under sixteen years of age, this means that ten children who were in school were sixteen years and over. Included in this figure are two boys attending college.

The number of children who left school at age sixteen was thirty-nine while those who left at age seventeen were all girls -- six in number. Five children graduated from high school, and one successfully completed college.

Marital Status. Twenty-four of those in the older group were married by June 1951 of which seven were boys and seventeen were girls. Thus, exactly one-fourth of the boys and more than half of the girls over sixteen years of age were married.

The offspring of the total married group totalled twenty-two. Hence, there was an average of approximately one child for each married couple. All of the seven young married men were fully employed and supporting their families. Only one of the married women was reported working along with her husband.

Employment Status. Of the unmarried girls not attending school, six were employed in jewelry concerns and two in other jobs. Three were temporarily unemployed, and the whereabouts of one was unknown.

There were twenty-one boys not attending school. Fifteen of this number were employed full time at such occupations as truck driver, jewelry worker, plasterer, machinist, shipping clerk, and mechanical engineer. Four young men were currently serving in the armed forces, one was temporarily unemployed, and one was in prison.

Almost all the boys available for work were employed, while comparatively few of the girls who were not housewives

were unemployed. Undoubtedly, lack of advanced education had limited most of the young men and women to unskilled and semi-skilled occupations.

Military Service. In light of the fact that none of the boys were eligible for the draft in World War II, it is noteworthy that three enlisted for wartime service in the Navy when they became seventeen. In June 1951, four other boys were serving with the Armed Forces: three in the Army and one in the Air Force.

## CHAPTER V

## CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

The impact of economic need and the receiving of public assistance can be a very constructive process for some people. For others it may tend to prolong dependency. The eight families described in this chapter were selected from the three groups designated in Chapter IV to illustrate what Aid to Dependent Children has meant in certain individual situations. There are four families from Group I (financially independent, short duration), two families from Group II (financially independent, long duration), and two families from Group III (dependent upon public assistance). The device of comparing two families will be utilized as a means of showing how some persons seemed to be helped in achieving independence while others were not.

## Group I

Mr. J, 35 in 1941, had worked as a warehouse clerk from 1927 to 1935 when he was forced to give up employment because of his failing vision. He was aided by various sources, and soon learned to read Braille. Employed as a Braille instructor on a WPA project until it terminated in May 1941, he applied for Aid to the Blind and Aid to Dependent Children in June of that year. The unit consisted of Mr. J, his wife, and two children, John 8, and Mary 5.

During the initial interview, Mr. J. expressed his feelings concerning relief. He had always given the impression to outsiders that he was still working on WPA and did not want anyone to know that he was applying for assistance. Mrs. J also remarked how difficult it was for her and what a hard time she had having a blind husband. In addition, she

said, when her friends find out that she is on "relief" they will not visit her.

Mr. J, in a later interview, said he was not interested in making handicraft articles for the Bureau for the Blind. He argued "Why should blind people make floor mats when customers could buy manufactured ones in the store of equal or better quality at a much cheaper price?"

Financial assistance was the only service given this family. Early in 1942, Mr. J earned some casual income as a substitute vending stand operator, and in April 1942 he received regular employment as a vending stand operator for the Bureau for the Blind, and assistance was discontinued in May 1942.

A home visit in January 1952 revealed that Mr. J had been employed continuously and was self-supporting since his assistance was discontinued nine years ago. However, seven months ago, he was forced to go on part-time work because of a heart condition, and when his illness started, his wife obtained employment as a mill worker. Mary is now a sophomore in high school, while John is a senior and will graduate high school in June.

Mr. J said that financially Aid to Dependent Children had been a big help in tiding him over until he got another job. He said that he always liked to be independent, and would rather work "than be under someone's jurisdiction."

From the brief summary presented above it may be seen that Mr. J is an ambitious, aggressive individual who has not allowed the handicap of blindness to interfere with his goal of financial and personal independence. His willingness and ability to learn Braille proved to be the source of his earnings until his employment terminated. He and his wife looked upon the receipt of public assistance as a stigma, and both resisted the idea of dependency to a great extent. Mrs. J,

furthermore, projected some of the guilt she had over acceding to her dependency wishes, by self-pity because of having a blind husband.

Mr. J's aggressive tendencies displayed themselves during the time he received assistance. He obtained temporary work, and finally succeeded in getting a full time job. He rejected the idea of making handicraft articles probably because it represented to him an emphasis on his particular disability.

That both husband and wife are aggressive individuals is borne out by their history after assistance was discontinued. Mr. J continued working, and when forced to curtail his activities, Mrs. J found employment in a mill. She could not have done this ten years ago because her children were very young and her services in the home were required.

The factor that made for short-term assistance was the strong determination of Mr. J to retain his essentially masculine role as wage earner, and this resulted in employment. The two children are continuing through high school, and there is no pressure on them to interrupt their educational plans.

Mr. J's attitude toward assistance is that it is useful as a stop-gap measure, and for him Aid to Dependent Children represented a temporary support between periods of unemployment. He could not bear to face it as a continued measure, since this would place him in a position of dependency which he abhors.

## Group III

Mr. E, age 46 in 1942, had been blind since 1938. Up to that time he had been employed as a laborer on highway construction work. Aid to Dependent Children had been received since November 1940, and in June 1941 Mr. E was receiving Aid to the Blind while his wife and four children, ranging in age from two to twelve, were included in the dependent children program.

Mr. E told of how discouraged he has been and how he often thought he would take the lives of himself and his family. Mrs. E corroborated this statement saying that for a few weeks she had to watch him very closely. Mr. E continued to show much anxiety. He spoke in a steady stream of conversation seldom permitting his wife or the social worker to interrupt. He thought he had been treated unfairly when receiving aid before and remarked on how he hated to accept relief and dreaded his oncoming blindness.

Mrs. E had a slight cardiac condition. She spoke mostly about herself and her children. She proudly showed the worker their excellent school report cards. It was apparent that Mrs. E was the dominant member of the household, and it was she who complained a great deal about the inadequacy of the payment.

The worker discussed the various problems which the family had, and which centered mostly about budgeting. Considerable supportive work was done with Mr. E, and the worker arranged medical treatment for Mrs. E who had a gall bladder condition in addition to her cardiac disability.

A year later in 1942 conditions were about the same. Mr. E was engaged in making fireplace brushes for the Bureau for the Blind. Mrs. E stressed the achievements of her sons and good school progress. Mr. E said that he tries to act happy but at times he cannot hold out any longer and becomes very dependent.

In July 1943 the worker discussed with Mr. E the possibility of employment since he had shown much ability in the work the Bureau had sent him, and he

was referred to a placement bureau. Mr. E did not go and was highly resistant to the idea saying the "whole thing is a merry-go-round." At this time Mrs. E expressed her impatience with her husband, feeling that he was monopolizing the time of her sons by using them as guides. There was no record of the worker discussing with Mr. E his real feelings about his refusal to consider employment.

In the middle of 1943 an attempt was made by the Bureau for the Blind to obtain employment for Mr. E in an industrial firm, but this plan failed. In recounting his experience to the worker, Mr. E remarked that he was able to follow the directions and do the work up to a certain point. This was when he had to take his hands off the article he was working on. He told the foreman he couldn't work, and insisted he did his best under the circumstances. Again, there is only the recounting of Mr. E's experience with no activity indicated on the worker's part.

In January 1944 the two older boys obtained paper routes. They both achieved high school honors and perfect attendance. Carl, the eldest, turned sixteen and planned to continue with school. About this time, the Bureau for the Blind noted that Mr. E was becoming too dependent upon that agency's services.

In March 1946 Mrs. E was hospitalized, and died the same month.

When Carl turned seventeen, Mr. E consulted the worker about his son's continuing in school, and the worker discussed educational plans stressing the value of a higher education.

After his wife's death, neighbors and relatives assisted with the housework. Mr. E expressed himself as completely at a loss as a result of his wife's death. Worker activity consisted of allowing Mr. E to verbalize his feelings by speaking about the funeral details and the meaning to him of his loss.

Another conference with the Bureau for the Blind in July 1947 revealed that Mr. E was one of their most skillful workers and possessed remarkable finger

dexterity. However, Mr. E refused to take the steps that would qualify him to take full time employment. These steps included having a general medical and eye examination. The rehabilitation counselor felt that progress was arrested at this point and that a change in attitude was needed. The record fails to show any steps taken toward this goal.

Assistance continued, and the household functions were carried on with Mr. E assuming the role of housewife. He wore his wife's aprons, and performed the household chores, and, at one time, it was noted, he proudly told the worker how clean he could scrub a table top.

During the next four years, the four sons continued on in school, with the two older sons entering college with the aid of scholarship funds, and supplemental assistance from General Assistance only for food and clothing. Aid to Dependent Children still assists the two younger boys in school, while Mr. E is in receipt of Aid to the Blind.

To understand what is involved in this case situation, we must evaluate the personalities of Mr. and Mrs. E. Mrs. E was the dominant figure in this family, upon whom Mr. E leaned heavily. Mrs. E resented bitterly her husband's incapacity and his relinquishing the breadwinner role. She diverted her feelings from her husband on to her sons, and took extraordinary pride in their school achievements, had hopes for their educational future, and looked to them for future support. Mr. E, on the other hand, was presumably a very passive-dependent individual before his incapacity, and his blindness served to strengthen these tendencies. His expression of death wishes for himself and his family showed an extremely disorganized state. He also had much ambivalence toward the receiving of assistance, on the one hand saying how much he

hated to be dependent upon public aid, and yet never making an effort to become self-supporting.

Despite the fact that he acquired considerable finger dexterity and skill in making handicraft articles at home, he never could take the relatively simple steps of a medical and eye examination which would qualify him to take full time employment. With the strong passive-dependent attitudes shown by Mr. E, it is no wonder that he failed when he was given a try-out in an industrial plant, and it is likely that he would refuse any job referral, and resist other attempts to place him in employment, which is in direct opposition to his emotional needs.

His assumption of the household functions, even to wearing his wife's aprons,, shows how he has identified himself with his deceased spouse, and rejects a masculine role as head of the household. He is extremely dependent upon his sons, and the services of various social agencies, and the giving of such services has seemed to strengthen his dependent situation and attitude.

The worker's role throughout the time the E family has been on assistance has been supportive for Mr. E by allowing him to express his anxiety feelings, and his ambivalence. Active steps which might have made Mr. E able to go out and seek employment would have included insight into the reasons for his dependent behavior. It is recognized that such

therapy is beyond the scope of the public assistance agency, but referral to another agency for psychotherapy may have resulted in a more favorable outcome. Whether or not Mr. E's emotional problems were too deep seated to benefit from treatment is problematical, and continued dependence upon public aid may have been the only recourse. Nevertheless, an understanding of the dynamics involved would have explained much of Mr. E's resistance to employment.

Discussion. The families of Mr. J and Mr. E had many elements in common. Both fathers were of comparable ages, both were blind, and they lost their sight in adulthood. Yet the attitudes of these men are highly different. Mr. J looked upon public assistance as a temporary expedient and even while receiving aid was bending every effort to become reemployed. He is a highly aggressive individual who looked upon aid as a stop-gap measure, and utilized it as a step toward regaining independence. Mr. E showed much anxiety throughout the period, which resulted from ambivalent feelings of aggression versus dependency. His conflict heightened when his wife died because there was now pressure for him to take on a more responsible role in the family and assume a more mature position in the household. He acceded to his passive-dependency wishes, and was unable to seek employment. He adopted the feminine, dependent role in the household, and this again resulted in emotional tension. His attitude toward Aid to Dependent Children

is one of reliance for economic support. Aid in the case of Mr. E has not helped him to move forward.

In both families there was good planning for the educational future of the children, and all will graduate from high school. When the factors are considered that made for the longer duration of assistance for Mr. E, the attendance at college of the two sons must be considered. Had they left school at sixteen, and found employment, assistance would have ceased many years earlier. From the long point of view, and in the light of their excellent school records, the decision to enter college seemed the wisest move, and will probably bring about economic self-sufficiency for the family in the near future.

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#### Group I

Mr. D, 45 in 1941, became ill with a lung abscess in 1936. He continued to work as a laborer on WPA projects until his condition became worse. Early in 1941 he was hospitalized but was discharged in March of 1941. Aid to Dependent Children started May 1941 for Mrs. D and the two dependent children -- Arthur 14, and Mary 11. Calvin, 16, had just left school and was looking for work. The family owned the house in which they lived.

In June 1941 Mr. D presented a very pitiful appearance. Bedridden, and excessively thin, he appeared to be in the terminal stages of his illness. He died in August 1941.

In September of the same year Calvin obtained employment in a jewelry shop. Mrs. D complained that since the death of her husband, her children became very unruly and she was having trouble disciplining them. She also complained of not feeling well, and that she

lost considerable weight since the death of her husband. Although recording the complaints, the worker gave no indication of discussing the problems centering around the children, nor of referral to another agency.

In April 1942, Mrs. D notified the agency that she was working. She explained that she took a job in a jewelry concern and was earning \$15 weekly. She did this because Calvin was reluctant to give her any money. Calvin felt that he had to pay back debts he had incurred, and threatened to leave home if his mother nagged him about this. The relatively small assistance payment (because of some income from the house and the share of Calvin's earnings) was discontinued in May 1942.

A home visit in January 1952 found Mrs. D in good health and still living in the same home which she owned. The unit now was Mrs. D and youngest son Arthur. The two older children had married and were living in their own homes. Mrs. D had continued working until Arthur left school at 16 and obtained employment.

Mary also left school at sixteen and worked so that all three children contributed to the support of the family for a time. Mary married in 1950 at the age of nineteen.

Calvin served in the Army and was a prisoner-of-war for fourteen months. He married in April 1951. Arthur served in the Navy for eighteen months, and is presently employed in a Civil Service laborer's job at a local Naval Depot.

Mrs. D stated that her married children visit her often and she is under no financial stress. She felt that Aid to Dependent Children was a "good thing even though she didn't get much."

Mrs. D presents the picture of a woman who was forced into a new role in her family as a result of her husband's death. The lack of discipline on the part of her children, and Calvin's unwillingness to contribute his expected share of the earnings, forced upon her the necessity of assuming her late husband's

position as head of the family. Undoubtedly this caused considerable resentment, and her attitude might well have been expressed thus -- you are expecting me to be the father as well as the mother in this family. Having no alternative, and being unwilling to force the issue over Calvin's pay for fear of antagonizing him, she overruled her dependency wishes and went to work herself. She worked until her youngest child obtained employment, and then, with sufficient income from all the children, she gave up employment and once more resumed the maternal role while her children were the providers.

Her attitude toward assistance, though favorable, stressed the insufficiency of the payment, which, of course, was relatively small because the share of the son's earnings and the property income had been computed in the budget. Aid to Dependent Children served to support her family while she was needed in the home to care for her bedridden husband, and after his death, she had to assume his place and become self-supporting.

All the children left school at sixteen and found employment. One can see the pressure to leave school in this family, and the desire of the children to relieve their mother of the necessity of working.

### Group III

Mr. O, tubercular, was 53 in 1941, and Aid to Dependent Children had been received in the family since September 1938 for his wife and four children whose ages at the start of the study period were

Valerie 17, Paul 14, Harold 9, and Timothy 8. Mr. O had been a cobbler but was forced to give up his trade when his illness occurred in 1934.

In June 1941 Mrs. O expressed her fears about her husband's illness. She felt that the tuberculosis might be spread to herself and her children, and accordingly used separate dishes for Mr. O, washed his clothes separately, and had him occupy a separate bedroom. She discussed her children with great interest and pride. Although Valerie was 17, she had continued on in high school with a commercial course. She also gave an excellent account of her three sons' progress in school and the excellent reports they had received.

Mr. O was very withdrawn and seclusive. He coughed almost continuously and desired that his wife carry on all contacts with the social worker. He was fearful of spreading disease to others, and said that he had thought many times of shooting himself because it was not any use to live any longer. The worker's efforts were along the line of allowing Mr. O to vent his feelings, and later on tried to interest Mr. O in undertaking occupational therapy at the Bureau for the Handicapped.

The worker also planned with Valerie along vocational lines. Referral was made for NYA work while at school. Immediately after her graduation, she obtained employment, and as a result, a decrease in the assistance payment was possible.

In 1943 Mr. O began attending the Bureau for the Handicapped. The purpose was to increase his work habits, and no pay for Mr. O was involved. He still expressed his despondency and felt nervous when the worker called.

Paul graduated from high school in June 1946 and later started to work. Mrs. O previously related that Paul had said that when he finished school and went to work, the family will have no more worries. Mr. O died May 1948, and Valerie married in September 1948 and left the family unit.

In 1950, Harold, who was then a senior in high school, and an excellent student, planned to go to college. Timothy was studying the machinist's trade at school. Mrs. O came into the office in

April 1951, very elated, saying that she had been offered a job at a nearby box factory and would not need assistance any longer. Aid to Dependent Children was discontinued as of June 1, 1951. Although the final entry in the case record was toward the end of the study period, the writer made a home visit to ascertain if Harold had gone on to college.

Mrs. O revealed that she never did go to work. The day she was to leave for work she took very ill, and Harold said to her "Don't worry, Mother. I'll work and you stay home." After graduation Harold obtained a position as a shipping clerk and is still working at the same job. Thus, Paul and Harold now support their mother and Timothy who is still in school.

Mrs. O was anxious to relate her experiences. She made a point of the fact that her husband died of pneumonia and not tuberculosis. She expressed gratitude for Aid to Dependent Children and thought it was "wonderful". She felt that her sons were loyal to her, will not permit her to do any unnecessary work, and as she put it, "the only thing she is doing is the cooking and keeping the house for them."

On the surface Mrs. O is a possessive, dependent person, yet there is considerable hostility beneath the dependency. She felt very bitter about her husband's handicap, and let him know it. She has utilized her children as a substitute for her husband, and has in a very subtle way made many demands upon them.

Her voluntary attempt to obtain employment just at the time Harold was to graduate high school and was planning for college leads to some interesting speculation. Was this a genuine attempt to become self-supporting, or perhaps an unconscious effort to deflect Harold from his plans so that he could help support the family? In any event both sons have now assumed the paternal role and feel an obligation to support

their mother.

Mrs. O also bears considerable guilt in the area of her husband. She stresses the point that he did not die of tuberculosis. In her wanting to talk at considerable length about her past experiences, and explain how difficult her life had been, she reveals her rejection of her husband while he was living. During the latter part of the period, when her children were older, instead of directing her aggressive impulses toward seeking employment, she utilized those impulses to hold her children close to her, and made them feel an undying obligation to her, even at the expense of their own future.

One can readily understand Mr. O's death wish and feelings of despondency. He was rejected by his wife and children, and saw the latter taking over his rightful place as head of the household. He probably even looked upon public aid as usurping his role as a supporting father. His work at the Bureau for the Handicapped may have helped him somewhat.

The factors which made this situation of long duration were the younger ages of the children, their completion of high school, and Mrs. O's reluctance to obtain employment.

Discussion. The common elements in families D and O were the death of the husband and the support of the mother by the children when they became of working age. However, Mrs. D presented a contrast to Mrs. O in her behavior pattern. One obtained employment after her husband's death when faced with economic

pressure, and the possibility of estranging her son, while the other continued her pattern of dependency and relied upon her children for support.

Because of Mr. D's death shortly after the start of the study period, not much is known of his previous position in the household; but in the instance of Mr. O, it is shown that he was relegated to a minor role; literally an outcast and "untouchable" in his own household. This undoubtedly caused the sons in the family to assume the paternal role and feel the obligation to support their mother.

With respect to pressure for leaving school, it is of interest to observe that in both the D and O families pressure was in evidence, yet at different levels. In the D family the children left school at age sixteen, while in the O family the three older children graduated from high school. This factor alone would account for differences in duration of assistance.

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#### Group I

Mr. K, who was 55 in 1941, had arthritis and cerebral spinal lues. He and his family had been receiving Soldiers' Welfare for a number of years prior to the time the family was accepted for Aid to Dependent Children in January 1941. There were three dependent children: Frances 16, Carole 14, and Charles 12. Another son, Arthur 17, had left school the previous year and in June 1941 was working in a shoe shine parlor. Mr. K owned half interest in the house in which they lived.

Mr. K, of slight build and quite talkative, spoke English with some difficulty, but understood it well in contrast to his wife who understood no English. He spoke at length about his arthritis and how he spent his time walking outdoors, and how in previous years, he used to plant a vegetable garden. He seemed well adjusted and content, and definitely was the dominant parent. He spoke philosophically about his incapacity, saying "We have to make the best of it. What can we do?" No particular problems were presented and worker activity was primarily concerned with determination of resources and need.

Frances failed to return to school in September 1941 and obtained employment in a jewelry firm. The prior term she had indicated plans to continue with school, but there is nothing the record contains to show reason for her change in plans. The income from Arthur's and Frances' employment resulted in discontinuance of assistance in November 1941.

A home visit in January 1952 found Mr. and Mrs. K living in the third floor attic of their home. Mr. K, as was the case ten years ago, acted as the spokesman, and told of his family's experience during the past decade. Both daughters had married five years ago, and up to the time of their marriage had been working and helping support their parents. Carole, unlike her sister, completed high school.

Mr. K, assisted by his children in the intervening years, had purchased the other half interest in their home, and at present he and his wife are supported by rental from the two tenements as well as a veteran's pension of \$72 monthly for total disability.

Arthur and Charles saw army service in World War II and both subsequently married. Charles reenlisted in the Air Force several months ago and is now on active duty. For his first tour of duty he had volunteered at the age of seventeen, having left school at sixteen.

Mr. and Mrs. K seemed satisfied. They care for Frances' child while she and her husband work during the day. Mr. K makes much of his veteran

status, and described in detail the hospitalization he recently had at the local Veterans Administration hospital. Mr. K felt that Aid to Dependent Children "kept his family going". He said that he had felt ashamed to receive public assistance, and is glad that he and his wife get along by themselves now, and "do not have to get any help from the kids".

Despite Mr. K's assertion of independence, he is actually a very dependent person, who had given up hope many years ago, and has sought recourse in his illness as a justification for his dependency needs. The veteran's pension which he receives further enhances his position as a disabled veteran and in his own eyes assuages any guilt feelings he may have ever being in a dependent role. Since the start of his illness he has been in a dependent role, first receiving aid from Soldiers' Welfare and then Aid to Dependent Children. Although the latter was short in duration, the reason for discontinuance was the employment of two children. All that Mr. K did was to shift from public aid to aid from his children to meet his dependency needs. Mr. K was fortunate in so far as his resources were concerned. Home ownership provided shelter for him in addition to income from rentals, which when added to his total disability pension, was sufficient to meet the support of both his wife and himself. It is significant that it was the financial aid from the children which enabled Mr. K to purchase his home.

We have no picture in the case record of Mrs. K which is probably due to the worker's difficulty in communicating with her.

The two sons in the family served in the Army during the War, and one of them volunteered for the Korean conflict. All four children are married, and had made good vocational adjustments. It is presumed that there was pressure exerted upon the two older children to obtain employment, the third Carole, completed high school, while the youngest left school to enlist.

#### Group II

Mr. I, tubercular, was 49 in 1941. In June of the same year his wife and five dependent children, all girls, received Aid to Dependent Children. An older son, Ferdinand, 19, was studying in a seminary away from home. The names and ages of the daughters were Marjorie 17, Jennie 13, Olive 11, Angeline 9, and Grace 7.

The first impression one obtained of this family was that of a happy and congenial group. Mr. I seemed to have adapted himself well to the situation. He did not seem discouraged, but felt the greatest concern for the future well being of his children. Mr. I assisted with the housework, helped care for the children, and there was every indication that both husband and wife shared the responsibility of bringing up the family.

Continued observation revealed that the home was quite rigorous in the matter of discipline. The parents placed a great deal of emphasis on protection of the daughters by not allowing them to go out or live their own lives.

In September 1941, Marjorie did not return to school but obtained a job. Her parents had exerted pressure for her to work by telling her that it was necessary to have more income because of rising prices, and outfitting the family with clothes was expensive. In September Ferdinand returned home from the seminary because he thought he would be drafted. Through the worker, referral was made to the employment service and Ferdinand obtained a job in a button factory.

In 1943 Marjorie left home without any warning, and her parents were exceedingly worried since she did not inform them of her whereabouts. In May 1944 Ferdinand was drafted and later the family received an army allotment. There was family pressure for Jennie to leave school at sixteen and find employment and the same excuse was given as for Marjorie -- not enough family income. Ferdinand served in the Army six months and received a medical discharge.

In December 1944 public assistance was discontinued because the three older children were employed (Marjorie had returned home in a little less than a year) and the family has been self-supporting since that time.

A home visit in January 1952 revealed that the family unit had dwindled to Mr. and Mrs. I, Ferdinand, and Grace. Ferdinand is now the sole support of the family, and has assumed the paternal role, literally making all the decisions, and supplanting his father. He is unmarried and works in a jewelry firm. Grace, the youngest child, now seventeen, is in the tenth grade and is a good student.

The other four daughters are all married and live away from home. Marjorie married in 1945 and Jennie in 1948. These two sisters are married, coincidentally, to truck drivers and live in Connecticut. Olive left school at sixteen and married in 1950. Angeline also discontinued her formal education at the age of sixteen. Both Angeline and Olive live in Providence.

Mr. and Mrs. I present the same complaining attitude they did ten years ago. They told how they struggled with the high cost of living, and now must scrimp and save to get along on Ferdinand's wages. After the son's discharge, he purchased a house in which the family now live.

The parents, and Ferdinand especially, have no kind words for the daughters who married and left the home. They felt they should have continued to aid the family. They refer to certain of the sons-in-law as "bums" and it is evident that family ties between the parents and married children are strained.

Both Mr. and Mrs. I seem to exhibit the same emotional makeup and attitudes, and one can observe the effect these

have had upon the children. Under a rigid, authoritarian discipline, the daughters found the home unbearable, and at the first opportunity sought to escape its influence. The daughters, with one exception, left school when they turned sixteen and found employment, and all married at an early age. The fact that one daughter ran away from home and did not tell her family of her whereabouts gives a clue as to the emotional turmoil that prevailed at that time. The strict, parental overprotection, an Old World cultural pattern, as well as a possible disguise for the hostile, rejecting attitudes of the parents, has now resulted in the breaking of family ties.

Ferdinand, the oldest child and only son, was frankly favored by his parents, and he is at the present time the sole support of the family. Mr. I in his dependent role has renounced his position as head of the family to Ferdinand. This has resulted in a disgruntled family unit, with parents resentful over having to depend solely on their son's earnings, and the son unhappy over the large responsibility placed on his shoulders.

Casework services consisted of referral for employment, and consultation with regard to school problems -- all on an environmental level. There was no attempt that was indicated in the record to discuss with the parents the deleterious effect their attitude was having on the children, although such attitudes and effects were noted. The factor determining

the length of assistance was the employment of the children when they left school.

Discussion. The common elements presented in the K and I family are very striking and are listed below.

1. Both parents are still living and are of comparable ages.
2. Neither parent sought employment.
3. All sons in both families saw military service.
4. Assistance was discontinued when the children left school at sixteen and found employment.
5. The youngest daughter in each family completed or will complete high school.
6. The families now own their own homes.

The similarities now end; the differences can be laid at the door of the parental attitudes. Although both fathers are very dependent and sought justification for their dependency in their incapacities, the K family had a permissive attitude toward their children, and now that the children have grown and are married, the parents find much happiness in their children's progress. There are strong family ties.

In the I family the very strict and rigid discipline in the household resulted in much unhappiness for the daughters. One girl ran away from home, only to return a year later and get married. Three other daughters urged by the parents to leave school at sixteen and find employment to add to the family income, apparently sought refuge in marriage as an escape from a restrictive family life. Mr. and Mrs. I, in transferring their dependence from Aid to Dependent Children to their children, maintained the same demanding attitudes as before, the

only difference being the source of the income.

The burden of supporting his parents and remaining sister has fallen upon the only son who is quite resentful toward his married sisters. The family complains about their lot in life, and the hardships they have to undergo.

For both the I and K families, Aid to Dependent Children served as a temporary interval in a continuous pattern of dependency. That is, when no longer eligible for aid, the children supported their parents. Both families would in all likelihood be receiving another form of assistance if not for private resources and pension in one family, and employment of a child in another.

These two families have been presented to show how different attitudes toward the children have had far reaching results. It is interesting to note that the youngest daughter in each family has or will have completed high school, and the only logical explanation can be that the older children bore the brunt of the family's financial responsibility making it easier for the younger sibling to complete her educational objective.

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#### Group I

Mr. F, tubercular, was 45 in 1941, and had two older children, John 21, who lived with his grandmother, and Madeline who earned a very small sum each week by doing housework. Mrs. F and the four dependent children were receiving Aid to Dependent Children in June 1941. They were Joan and Beatrice 15 (twins),

Elaine 13, and Victoria 11. Mr. F was incapacitated in 1937 and at that time was institutionalized in the State Sanatorium for one year.

Mrs. F presented a very pleasant appearance, spoke about her problems, and told the worker what a hard time she had in making both ends meet. She told the worker how she tried to prevent her husband from becoming despondent. There was a small tomato patch in the back yard which Mr. F had planted. She emphasized Mr. F's role in the family saying that all decisions were left up to him.

Mr. F appeared younger than his age and showed much optimism. He seldom complained, nor did he refer to his health. Mr. F at the outset of the study period was receiving \$5 weekly from his son John. Despite Mrs. F's assertions, it was apparent that she was the dominant parent, did most of the talking and planning, and controlled the family's affairs.

Services to this family, in addition to the money payment, included arrangements to care for medical needs, and providing surplus clothing. In June 1942 a medical report indicated that Mr. F had improved to such an extent that he was now able to do light work. The situation was explained to the family and Mr. F remarked that he would like to get a job now that he was feeling better, and had in mind something like night watchman's work which would not be too strenuous. Assistance was discontinued in July 1942.

When the writer visited the home in January 1952, Mrs. F spoke about the experiences of her family during the past nine years. In the Fall of 1942 the twins, Joan and Beatrice, then sixteen, did not return to school but obtained employment and assisted the family. An allotment from John in the service also helped out. Mr. F started to work in 1945 as a "service man" in a local rubber plant and has been employed there continuously. His health has improved considerably, and he is now the sole support of the family consisting of himself, Mrs. F, and Victoria who is now fifteen and in 11B at high school.

John served four years in the Army and is now married. Madeline married in December 1942 and lives with her husband and three children in Louisiana. The twins

married in 1947, and both had helped support the family up to the time of their marriage.

Elaine left school at sixteen and started working. Now she is married and has two children. Victoria, the only child still at home, is taking a commercial course, and looks forward to high school graduation.

Mrs. F indicated that close family ties exist and her married children visit her often. She refers to her experience while on assistance as "a hard struggle, but it turned out all right in the end." She felt that the social workers treated her nicely, and recalled in particular the sheets and pillow cases the surplus clothing plan provided for her.

Aid to Dependent Children for the F family was a temporary expedient, supporting and holding the family together until they could become self-supporting. Mr. F's improved health was the major factor in keeping the family financially independent. Financial support by the daughters who went to work after leaving school supplanted public aid until Mr. F received employment in 1945.

During Mr. F's illness his family was influential in keeping up his spirits, and maintaining his role as head of the family, despite the fact that Mrs. F was in reality the dominant parent. He still could not give in to his dependency wishes, and could not remain dependent upon the support of his daughters. His aggressiveness caused him to obtain employment, and remain employed, so that he could once more assume the entire support of his family, and thus enable his daughters to marry without feeling any sense of obligation to the family on their part.

Other than medical and budgetary problems, no additional services seemed required for what seemed to be a harmonious family group. Mrs. F in expressing her gratitude, emphasized the difficult struggle it had been, and in reality was saying that although Aid to Dependent Children kept the family together when they could see no other alternative, the family looked forward to the time when they could become economically self-sufficient, and the rehabilitation of Mr. F fortunately helped achieve this goal.

Victoria, the youngest child, is of high school age at a time when economic pressures are not so great, and unlike her sisters, can see her way clear to complete her high school education and has a definite vocational goal in sight.

#### Group II

Mr. V was 37 in 1941. He had bronchiectasis and pleurisy, a condition which started in 1936. A barber by trade, he gave up his work when he became ill. In January 1941 the family started receiving Aid to Dependent Children. The ages of the children were Agnes 13, Jane 11, Myrtle 10, Fred 5, and Beatrice 3.

Mr. V suffered a great deal from his illness and was miserable most of the time. He had lost considerable weight and was down to 120 pounds. Mrs. V was a woman who complained most of the time. Her complaints centered largely about the inadequacy of the assistance payments. She was very possessive, and although there seemed to be a cooperative spirit between husband and wife, it was Mrs. V who did all the talking and planning for the family.

In April 1942 Mrs. V requested an increase in payment because her husband needed a special diet. She also requested money for needed additional

clothing. Services centered about helping Mrs. V with her budgeting, planning with Mr. V for medical treatment, and making camping arrangements for the children.

During an interview in 1943 the attitude expressed by Mr. V was in contrast to his wife's. Mr. V stated "He thanked God we are getting as much as we are." He felt that things could be a lot worse, and they shouldn't complain, but feel very thankful. Mrs. V noted that Agnes 15, helped a great deal with her housework.

In April 1944 Mr. V's condition improved somewhat, and he took a job for Saturdays working at a barber shop earning \$3 for the day. In June of the same year, Agnes 16, announced that she did not plan to return to school, and obtained a job as a factory worker. Although Mr. V's small earnings, and Agnes' contribution resulted in a large decrease in the payment, the family still continued on assistance.

In 1945 there was a little difficulty concerning how much Agnes should contribute. Mrs. V felt that she should give more than she was contributing, but this matter soon cleared itself. In August 1946 Jane, who just turned sixteen, left school, and obtained a job in a jewelry factory. Mrs. V came to the office to notify that both daughters were now working, Mr. V was earning a little more in his part-time barbering, and assistance was no longer needed. Accordingly, aid was discontinued September 1946.

A home visit in January 1952 revealed that the status of the family was exactly the same as it was ten years ago with this exception: three of the children were now working. The family still lived in the same rented tenement, none of the children had married, and Mrs. V still retained her complaining attitude despite her own admission that the support from three working daughters, and her husband's part-time earnings were more than sufficient for the family's needs. She bemoaned the high cost of living, and stated how difficult it was to get along these days.

Agnes, Jane, and Myrtle (who left school at seventeen) are now employed in clerical and factory jobs, while Fred and Beatrice, both under sixteen, attend school.

Mrs. V made much of the fact that she voluntarily requested discontinuance of assistance. She did not feel many people would be honest enough to do this. She thought that "Aid to Dependent Children was a good thing, but you didn't get enough money to live on." Myrtle, the youngest of the three employed daughters, has become engaged, but there are no definite marriage plans as yet.

Mrs. V is an aggressive, hostile woman who is extremely possessive, and fearful of losing her position in the family. She has actually used her children to serve her own ends. Although Mrs. V is in good health, and presents a youthful appearance, seeming much younger than her forty-five years, she has imposed upon her daughters the task of doing all the housework, washing the family's clothes, in addition to having them contribute their earnings through employment. One can almost sense that she shows hostility toward her children. She has impressed upon them the necessity of love and devotion to their parents, and their obligation to support. The daughters, as they grew older, represented a threat to Mrs. V's unconscious narcissism, by their youth, and the possibility that their marriage would remove them from the family, thrusting the responsibility of support upon her. In her self-centeredness, she cannot contemplate that she should go to work (although her children are older and she is in good health), and thus has kept her children very close to her in a very possessive manner. Although the oldest daughters are still young (twenty to twenty-three) their remaining unmarried is unique for the cultural setting in which they live, and even

is in contrast to the marital history of the daughters represented in the present study. Mrs. V looks to her children as a source of income, and does not encourage thoughts of marriage.

Although outwardly aggressive and forceful, she seeks dependency. Her constant complaining is a guise for her hostility and resentment. The stress she places upon her own honesty in reporting the employment of her daughters and requesting discontinuance of assistance, as well as her attitude that most other people are dishonest, gives us a clue as to her attitude toward others. She is suspicious and being able only to receive, and not give, she ascribes these same feelings toward other people.

Mr. V, overwhelmed by his wife's dominance, and yet not sharing her complaining attitude, has done his best toward supporting the family within the limitations imposed by his health. He has worked as a barber on a part-time basis, and gradually has increased his working capacity.

Despite sufficient income, the improved health of Mr. V, and the good health of the rest of her family, Mrs. V is unhappy and resentful. Whether or not the daughters can resist the mother's dominance and emancipate themselves from the family remains to be seen.

Aid to Dependent Children for this family proved to be a temporary arrangement until the children reached employable

age, and the father's health improved. Pressure by the mother for the two older daughters to leave school at the age of sixteen was in evidence.

Discussion. The V and F families make an interesting comparison for similarities and differences. In both families the health of the fathers improved so that employment was obtained; one on a full time, the other on a part time basis. Both mothers remained home and cared for the children. The two families presented the appearance of family solidarity, and the fathers were respected persons in the household, although the mothers were the dominant personalities.

The difference in mothers' attitudes was outstanding. Mrs. F could accept aid when it was needed and looked upon it as a temporary measure. The children in her family helped support after leaving school, yet felt free to marry and leave home. Public assistance was looked upon as a necessary means of achieving independence.

On the other hand, Mrs. V, by her constant complaining, gave evidence of much anxiety and guilt over receiving assistance. Her very possessive and domineering attitude has resulted in keeping her family intact over the years. Even though economically independent, she still finds fault with the family income in relation to high prices. She is still emotionally dependent in a hostile way, and is anxious that she may have to reapply for assistance if her children should lose their jobs.

The factor that influenced the differing duration of assistance in both families was the ages of the children and their employment. Pressure to leave school early was noted in both families, and the employment of both fathers helped improve their status in the family circle.

The improved health of both fathers was a factor in the ultimate discontinuance of assistance, and undoubtedly had a beneficial effect upon the attitudes of the other members of the family.

CHAPTER VI  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study has described a group of twenty-two Aid to Dependent Children families in which an incapacitated father lived in the home. It has examined the economic status of these families after a ten year period. The investigation was conducted by means of reviewing case records and making home visits, and the questions raised centered around factors in the economic dependence or independence of the families, pressures on the children to leave school, and the attitudes of the former assistance recipients toward the public aid they had received.

The "incapacitated-father-in-the-home" aid to dependent children family approximates in its components the so-called average family in our culture, and as such merits study with regard to the effectiveness of this assistance program.

In 1941 the twenty-two fathers were incapacitated by various physical or mental conditions, but tuberculosis or other pulmonary disorders accounted for the largest number, ten or forty-five per cent. The fathers' median age was forty-five years and the median age of the mothers was forty. Most of the marriages between the mother and father took place prior to the onset of the father's incapacity.

The occupations of the men were all unskilled or semi-skilled and their education had advanced seldom beyond the

elementary school level. A total of eighty-two dependent children with an equal division of boys and girls was present in the twenty-two families. Their ages were distributed fairly evenly among all the age groups from one through seventeen years with the largest number, nine children, at the eleven year level.

In 1951, or ten years later, the size of the family units had dwindled because of death, marriage of children, employment elsewhere, and service in the armed forces. The most striking fact was that eleven parents died during the decade (nine fathers and two mothers) causing the loss of a parent in exactly 50 per cent of the twenty-two families. There were no children remaining in homes of three families, while there were fewer children left in most of the remaining family units.

For the purpose of answering the questions raised in this study the families were divided into three groups according to whether they were still supported by public assistance at the time of the study, and the duration of assistance (long or short) for the self-supporting families.

To determine what factors were responsible for the current dependence in Group III, this dependent group was compared to Groups I and II (independent) and it was found that six parents had passed away in the eight Group III families as compared to the five deaths in the fourteen independent families. The majority of the Group III mothers were incapacitated by illness

or disability as compared with a minority in Groups I and II. In three of the eight dependent families, all the children continued or planned continuation through high school graduation.

The factors that made for a family's continued dependence or independence were many and varied, and it is difficult to make any broad generalizations. However, from the present findings it seems that the following circumstances were present in a greater proportion of the dependent than the self-supporting families: death of one parent and/or incapacity of the other, younger children, education for the children well beyond the age of sixteen, too few older employed children to support their families completely by their earnings.

Next in consideration was the reason why seven of the families received assistance for less than two and one-half years while seven were on Aid to Dependent Children for periods longer than this duration. The death of a parent, here, also was more common among the long term families. The short duration families were supported primarily by the parents whereas the former dependent children provided the support in the long duration families. The families who required assistance for a relatively long time had almost twice as many dependent children as the short term families ten years ago, they were younger and hence it took longer before they were able to seek employment.

The case records and interviews were reviewed for a determination of the extent to which pressure had been exerted on

the children to leave school at age sixteen. For six families this was not a problem because all the children were under sixteen or had gone on with high school beyond sixteen. In the remaining sixteen families it was found that parental pressure was definitely exerted in seven situations, whereas pressure was presumed in seven others. Thus, in the majority of families there were forces at work urging the child to leave school early. Not only parental influence, but also a good economic climate with job opportunities influenced the child's decision. The worker might play a more important role in planning with the child and his family when the problem of continuation of school arises. With employers demanding increasingly higher educational standards, the child with only the minimum schooling will find himself at a disadvantage and limited as to his job opportunities.

Next under consideration were the attitudes expressed by former aid to dependent children recipients. The writer visited eleven homes and in every instance found the parents willing to discuss their present situation and supply current information regarding their children. Their attitude toward public assistance, and receiving it in the past, was expressed in many ways, although practically all the informants agreed that it tided them over a rough spot in their lives. More important than the specific attitudes expressed, it seemed to the writer, was the fact that all the families accepted the

interview cooperatively and there was no refusal or resistance. The follow-up technique lends itself readily to social service research and should be employed more frequently. It is admittedly time consuming, but the results seem to warrant the effort.

Not forgetting the children in the study, a brief summary was presented of the progress of the eighty-two dependent children ten years later. One child had died, and a total of twenty-one were attending school in June 1951. One-quarter of the boys and half the girls over sixteen years of age had married. They averaged one child per family. Practically all the boys and most of the girls available for work were employed although their jobs were mostly of the unskilled or semi-skilled variety. A total of seven young men had served or were currently serving in the armed forces.

Eight case illustrations selected from the three family groups were presented to show how Aid to Dependent Children helped some families move forward to their goals of financial independence, while others retained their dependence because of external factors or other reasons. The illustrations also covered the subjects of the general questions. They also support the conclusion that the incapacity of a father of itself does not determine the pattern of a family's development. It is rather the constellation of personality factors in all the family members which determine how the unit will meet a

particular situation. It is important that the public assistance worker be cognizant of these factors for such understanding throws light on the dynamics involved in each individual situation.

The Aid to Dependent Children program merits the best in case work services that can be offered. The dependent child of today is the adult of tomorrow, and every possible help toward his proper development while in the formative years will bring future returns.

Approved:

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Dean

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## APPENDIX A.

## SCHEDULE

Case name \_\_\_\_\_ Case No. \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

A.D.C. Payments

<u>Opened</u>	<u>Closed</u>	<u>Initial Payment and revisions</u>	<u>Reasons for Opening and Closing</u>
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1st  
2nd  
etc.

<u>Characteristics of Parents</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Comments</u>
-----------------------------------	---------------	---------------	-----------------

1. Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Date of Death
4. Nature of Incapacity
5. Date of onset "
6. Usual Occupation
7. Employment in June, 1951
8. Date of Marriage
9. Marital History (1st, 2nd)

Characteristics of Children (included in A.D.C. payment in 1941-42)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Comments</u>
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1  
2  
3  
4  
etc.

## APPENDIX A (CONT'D).

1. Was family dependent upon public assistance in June 1951? What type?  
What factors brought about this dependence?  
How were the self-supporting families maintained?  
What factors brought about financial independence for the family?
2. Was family, if self-supporting, on aid to dependent children for more than 2-1/2 years? Factors that made for long or short duration?
3. How many children left school at age sixteen during study period? Evidence of pressures upon them to leave school?
4. Attitude of family toward public assistance as expressed during home visit? From case record?



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
40 FOUNTAIN STREET  
PROVIDENCE 3,

Date

Mrs. -----  
Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Mrs. -----:

You may remember that ten years ago I was your social worker for Aid to Dependent Children. I am not a social worker now, but I am still with the Social Welfare Department in a different job.

We would like to know how you and your children are getting along now, because it has been some time since we heard from you. We are interested in knowing how the family is feeling, and how your children are doing at school or at work. Such information will help us to serve better the families who now get Aid to Dependent Children.

I should like to make a short visit to your home to talk with you, and will come on -----.

I look forward to meeting you again.

Sincerely yours,

Signature