SOME FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN

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SOME FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the adoption of children arose in my own life when my husband and I decided to adopt a child. We were bewildered in that we knew not how to go about it. Except for an occasional short article in a magazine, there seemed to be little literature on the subject, except on certain phases of the problem. We wanted information that would help us from the time we first began to consider adopting a child until we had selected the child and had it safely in our home, as well as such as would help us solve the problems that were bound to arise afterward. We were compelled to rely in large measure upon the hazardous trial and error method.

Many childless couples have come to us seeking advice and aid in securing children for adoption. They wanted to find the answers to many questions before embarking upon this perilous undertaking.

This study is made from a practical standpoint. Nothing technical is included, so all who read may understand. I shall endeavor to answer some of the questions that may arise in the minds of prospective parents as they
consider the adoption of a child. There are many questions that will not be answered because the problems involved are so broad and take in so many angles that it is impossible to consider them all. The central problem itself begins when prospective adoptive parents first consider adopting a child.

There has always been an interest in the subject of the adoption of children, and there is every reason to believe that such interest will increase and become of greater importance. There is evidence that the strain of our difficult, complicated, and in a great measure discordant modern life has affected adversely the fertility of highly sensitive persons. The sanction of birth control has resulted in many instances in postponing conception until the age of fertility has passed. At this time there is a flood of interest in adoption that expresses itself through many channels -- magazines, newspapers, books, motion pictures, and radio. It would seem to be difficult for any couple, even if they have children, to see the motion picture, "Blossoms in the Dust," without wanting to adopt a child.

The theater management in every town where this picture was shown honored all adoptive mothers by sending them free passes to the show.

Formerly, prejudice against so-called illegitimate children prevented many couples from adopting a child. That condition exists now very little, if at all. Enlightened
people now realize that the saying of marriage vows by the true parents has nothing to do with the desirability of the child. His potentialities are sealed at conception and are unknowable, however the parents mated. Since most of the children for adoption are classified in this group, the lessening of the prejudice against them has stimulated adoption very considerably.

The growing dissatisfaction with institutional care of children has promoted adoption. When it is possible, the true parents or guardians are urged to place children for adoption so they can have normal home lives and the love and care they are rightfully entitled to receive.

As a result of the present war there will be an increasing number of orphans and dependent children who will be available for adoption. Some of them will be adopted not for love but from a sense of duty. There may be many misplaced children, which fact will hamper the progress that has been made in adoption practices in the last decade. Much care and thought must be used in placing these casualties of the war so that the standards of placement will not be lowered to such an extent that emphasis will revert to institutional care. Calm deliberation must never be sacrificed in order to facilitate the placing of increased numbers of children.

A changing community attitude toward the adopted child has been brought about by the increased interest in adoption.
In spite of the fact that the present vogue for adoption brings problems which must be met, the community attitude indicates a fundamental appreciation of the rightness and strength of the family created from widely varying strains. It insures a welcoming warmth by the community as a whole that reacts as an undercurrent of support for both the child and the parents in this new relationship. Stories by adopting parents, stories by grown-up adopted children, and stories written for adopted children have done much to nurture this feeling. Perhaps the popularity of adoption today, besides reflecting the attitude of our present culture toward children, indicates the kind of society which this country is attempting to maintain for coming generations.

Perhaps the term "adoption" needs to be clarified. Everyone has an idea what it means, but the following is a definition contained in a bulletin from the Children's Bureau:

Adoption is an assumption of guardianship by a court, followed by a transfer of guardianship to a foster parent. It is a means of creating the legal relations of parent and child between a child deprived of the care and protection of his own parents and the person wishing to take the child into his own home. It involves the severance of relationships existing between blood kindred and the voluntary assumption of parental obligation through a legal process.¹

¹United States Children's Bureau, Adoption of Children, Publication No. 148, p. 1.
Adoption is, of course, a very drastic process except in the case of very young children; and it requires much time, thought, patience, and understanding to see that no harm is done to the child who has been so transplanted.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF ADOPTION

The first and elemental social organization is the family. To be complete it must contain both parents and children. The elementary process of child-placing was found in the original tribal conditions of primitive races. The tribe was simply an enlarged family. All its members were in some degree related. Children who, by the misfortune of war, the chase, or disease, lost their parents, were simply included in the family group of relatives. When the family became the unit of social life, the adoption of children began. The custom, instituted by primitive peoples, has been continued by those of widely different psychological, social, and religious outlook, until today the practice is a part of the culture of almost every civilized nation. It is founded on natural instincts and enduring social conditions, if its universal acceptance can be used as a yardstick. The collection of individual tribes into alliances and the creation of walled cities for defense led to the breaking down of tribal barriers and loss of tribal responsibility for dependent children.
Among people who still use ancestor worship as their form of religion, adoption is considered of prime importance. And in the very earliest social life, the rites of adoption included weird and grotesque simulation of birth.

Two methods of adoption practiced by American Indians were baptism and blood transfusions, after either of which the child was literally to be of the same blood as his adopter. For them there was no repugnance toward adoption, because they realized that for their own survival they must cherish their young.

The Babylonians were concerned primarily with protecting the property rights of those who had adopted children. The Code of Hammurabi contains the oldest known laws (2,000 B.C.) relating to women and children. It provides for the adoption of illegitimate children and those children whose parents gave up all claim to them. The foster parent was required to teach the child whatever trade he was engaged in.

We are told that in Biblical times Lot was adopted by Abraham, and that Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Legal adoption was practiced by the Jews about 3,500 years ago. At that time in Greece and Rome unwanted infants were exposed; however, some were rescued for slavery. Some of the most progressive work for dependent children in America today is being done by Jewish agencies. Doubtless the ancient Hebrews who practiced adoption were
influenced to do so by the admonitions of Jesus concerning little children.

It must be kept in mind that the "two chief reasons for adoption in antiquity were extension of power and provision for continuance of the rite of the family cult."\textsuperscript{1} It was very necessary that male children be supplied in order that the tribe might survive. Adoption and concubinage were the accepted means. Brooks says:

Among peoples whose religion or philosophy included ancestor worship, heirs were needed not only to swell the fighting force and for economic reasons but also for sacrificial offerings for the repose of the spirits of the forefathers.\textsuperscript{2}

Under Roman law, adoption was practiced only to save a family line from extinction. The religious element predominated in the old Hindu and Chinese laws. There was no adoption of girls since succession was provided only through male descendants. The adopted son was not on the same footing as a natural son, but rather had the status of an illegitimate child.

Thus far there is clearly observable the family emphasis rather than the child emphasis in adoption. This is related to the general philosophy that sees the individual as existing primarily for the state, rather than the state existing for the individual.

\textsuperscript{1}Lee M. Brooks, Adventuring in Adoption, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 96.
In the course of time, the old laws were modified by the influence of Jewish ideas and Christianity. Their severity was somewhat lessened and the people had a more humane, a more kindly method of caring for dependent children.

Adoption almost went out of existence during the institutional period when the monastic orders fostered hospitals and orphanages.

During the European wars there were a great number of dependent children who were placed in institutions. In the nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic decree of 1811, under which the French people boarded out dependent children, there was a revival of individual home care for orphans. Many took advantage of the easy way provided by the church for taking care of babies. Revolving baskets were arranged so that the baby could be placed in a basket on the outside of a building and received on the inside without anyone being able to see the person bringing the baby. Many of such children would never have been brought to the church if their identity had been disclosed.

As a result of the loss of the lives of men in wars, Germany has had a great number of dependent children; they were placed in institutions only long enough for the authorities to be able to find suitable homes for them.

Although adoption has long been unofficially practiced in England, it was not legalized until 1926. After the
first world war two societies came into existence and were organized for the purpose of arranging for adoption of children.

The development of systematized child-placing in America began with the founding of the "Children's Aid Society of New York" in the middle of the nineteenth century. Since that time there have been many other organizations, but they are now affiliated under the name of the National Children's Home and Welfare Association.

The early efforts at child-placing were individualistic and well-meaning, based upon the immediate relief of distress, but with little in the way of a comprehensive program. Our present ideal of service is community responsibility for the welfare of all dependent children.

Formerly the success of a state children's home society was measured by the number of children received and adopted. Many homes now place fewer children because at the present time we have trained social workers who have found ways for many children to be left with their natural parents; and, too, there is more scientific selection of children for adoption.

In the White House Conference called by President Roosevelt in 1909, there was adopted a platform that led the way to the coordination and integration of work for dependent children. These are some of the conclusions:
Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. It is the great moulding force of mind and character. As to children who for sufficient reasons must be removed from their own homes, it is desirable that, if normal in mind and body and not requiring special training, they should be cared for in families wherever possible. The carefully selected foster home is for the normal child the best substitute for the natural home. Such homes should be selected by a most careful process of investigation, carried on by skilled agents through personal investigation and with due regard to the religious faith of the child. After children are placed in homes, adequate visitation -- with careful consideration of the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual training and development of each child on the part of the responsible home-finding agency -- is essential.  

The Children's Bureau was formed as a result of this conference. It is acclaimed as the first public agency in the world to consider as a whole the conditions, problems, and welfare of childhood.

President Wilson requested the Children's Bureau to call a second conference in 1919. This conference reaffirmed the conclusions of the first one, and added that examination of the child's health, mentality, character, and family history and circumstances should be made before placement.

President Hoover called a third conference in 1930. This conference reiterated the need for scientific placement in foster homes, especially when adoption is a likely outcome.

\(^3\text{Tbid.}, \text{p. 105.}\)
Proper care in a home is a child's birthright and this is the responsibility of the community and the nation -- such is the marked trend in belief and practice today.

Another shift in emphasis has to do with seeing the whole child in perspective and in relation to his setting: health, leisure, home, labor, and special abilities or handicaps.

When the Children's Bureau was founded, a great stride had been taken in regard to the protection of children. It has helped to integrate varied child welfare agencies, to raise their standards, and to give them dignity and prestige. By research, collection and analysis of facts, and reporting these facts, they have cooperated with state and private organizations. It has put the dependent child in his proper place, not as something peculiar and set apart, but as one of many problems arising out of our social conditions, to be solved by consideration and skill. One of the most recent ventures by the Bureau is a study of foster home placement and adoption (1939).

Since records concerning adoptions are usually kept secret, it is impossible to know definitely the extent of adoption in the United States. In urban areas the percentage of adopted children is estimated at about thirty per 100,000, and the percentage is less in rural areas.

The depression and now the second world war have retarded our progress in research and care of children, but
the American people have been awakened and will surely go forward.

The all-inclusive folkway of mankind has been its generalized regard for the young of the species. The course of human survival has ever depended upon the care of children. Any civilization has its own day, and as tested by historic times can be measured in terms of high or low degree by the way it has treated its children.\(^4\)

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 110.
CHAPTER III

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ADOPTION

Most writers agree that an adoptive parent is able to look objectively at himself and the child and the problems which arise. From the first, his relations to the child have been more voluntary and conscious, subjected more to analysis and thought. His ego is not so immediately hurt when he finds his child unworthy. He is in a position to learn that this is a problem demanding thought rather than emotion and intelligent experiment rather than punishment. Especially is this true when the child is first placed in the home, but as time passes there is a tendency to look less objectively at the child.

Strange as it may seem, an adopted child usually has a better chance than the average natural child. He goes to a home that desperately and genuinely wants children. With all the advocacy of birth control and planned families, the fact remains that the most truly planned families anywhere are the families of adopted children. Parents who adopt children have not been rushed hurriedly into parenthood. They have usually thought about it for years. They want a normal home life so much that they are willing to
take the child of someone else and bring it up as their own. They are parents by gift and temperament, never parents by chance.)

Adoptive parents are able to go to many agencies if necessary in order to secure just the type of child that they want. This is one of the distinct advantages that they alone may have, as natural parents must take any type of child that is born to them. They may have looked forward to a son, and then a daughter is born and there may much disappointment; and case histories show that in some instances a daughter has been made unhappy when she learns that she has been a disappointment from the first. This cannot happen to an adopted child, since he knows that he was wanted, as there was nothing compulsory about his placement.

In practically all cases the adoptive parents are assured of a normal child if the child is secured from a licensed and competent agency which has all mental and physical tests made before the child is offered for adoption. One may not be certain that the adopted child will have a perfect heredity; but neither can a natural child be assured of that. Indeed, if all natural parents looked up their complete family history, they might find undesirable traits among some of their ancestors. And a family with a clean heredity for generations may, without warning, produce a defective or a ne'er-do-well who happens to have
shuffled into his makeup a deal of the undesirable qual-
ties of his ancestors. Does an expectant mother know that her child will be normal? She can only hope. On the other hand, the normality of a three-months-old child waiting for adoption can be ascertained to a certain point at least. Just what his intelligence quotient will be cannot be de-
termined; but the agency-candidate for adoption has escaped the feeble-mindedness that so often comes from child-birth injuries, since a child several months old would have al-
ready revealed this deficiency. The foster parent does not appear on the scene until someone else has run the hazards of childbearing.

No real prospective parent worries very much about the hereditary factors which she will bequeath to her unborn child, but all prospective adoptive parents give anxious thought to the hereditary equipment of the child they ex-
pect to adopt. They wonder how they can know what factors and traits of heredity will influence the baby they are get-
ting and if they are taking a tremendous risk in not know-
ing. We do not know even with ourselves just which traits are inherited and which are environmental. So many adopted children act like their adopted parents that traits that were once considered inherited are now known to be merely imitations or products of environment.

With an adopted child one is compelled to take the re-
mote hereditary background on faith; this is also true with
an own child. Indeed, there are not so many hazards with the adopted child if the procedure is carried out in an intelligent manner and advantage is taken of all tests.

Some sociologists believe that when we become wholly civilized, people will be required to get a permit to become parents as they now get a permit to marry. They will have to be able to give assurance that they possess some knowledge of how to bring up a child and that they are financially able to care for it. They must be able to pass a rigid mental and physical examination before they will be allowed to become parents. Those who do not fulfill these requirements and who yet bring a child into the world will be considered criminals.

Another advantage that adoptive parents have over natural parents is that they can enjoy the baby from the first day it enters their home.) The mother who has just borne a child is too weak to love and care for her baby. Her body is depleted by long months of pregnancy and long hours of labor. Some natural mothers insist that one cannot love a baby at first -- that it takes time for this feeling to grow. This may be true of natural mothers who are in a weakened condition, but adoptive mothers are rested, full of vitality, and at the peak of physical power, and are in a position to give all of themselves to this new enterprise of loving and caring for the baby from the beginning.)
Many mothers who go through pregnancy and childbirth never again have good health. Others regain fairly normal health by long periods of rest or perhaps an operation. There is much discomfort and anxiety suffered by the natural mother which the adopting mother never has to endure. The adopted baby is already adjusted to his schedule and diet. It is not necessary to experiment with formulas to find a suitable one. When it is necessary to make such experiments, the baby is often cross or ill, keeping himself and the family awake at night, thus disrupting the household and interfering with the efficiency of all.

The natural parents must meet the extra heavy expense for professional and hospital services. There is very little expense for the adoptive parents when the child is secured, since all the examinations and tests are made for the child before he is offered for adoption.

Fortunate indeed are the adoptive parents who can go to the agency and secure a normal child of their own selection at the very time they want it and when they themselves are in the best of health. Then the conditions are ideal, if the proper precautions have been taken by both the parents and the agency, for a happy, well-adjusted family to begin really to live.

The following is a letter written by an aged adoptive father, giving his views of adoption:
Dear friends: I am sorry I can't help you financially, but I do want to give you a real story. Forty-two years ago I was a prosperous business man in a small town in Ohio. My wife and I were very fond of children but the doctor told us my wife could never have a child.

We were heartbroken. One Sunday a representative of your home occupied the pulpit of the First M. E. Church to which we belonged. He told us that the Rev. Cooper, who was the Superintendent of your home, would be in our church the next Sunday with a party of orphans to be placed in good homes.

The next Sunday my wife and I went to the hotel to see them before church services. We arrived while they were at breakfast. We walked around the tables where they were eating. At one table a nurse had a two-year-old curly-headed girl. We stopped to look at her and as soon as she saw us she put out her little arms to me. I took her up, kissed her, and then and there we decided that we wanted her as our own.

We contacted Rev. Cooper and told him our wishes. He said that he would have to look us up, which he did, and we were given the dear little girl. We gave her a good education. After her graduation we sent her to Wesleyan University, then a trip around the world.

She grew up to be a beautiful young woman, married a fine man, and now they have two fine sons, eighteen and twenty years old.

Twelve years ago my wife passed away. Then the depression took everything I had. A year ago I had a stroke which paralyzed my left side.

But thank God for that dear little girl. They have taken me into their home and are trying to make my last days comfortable. Our friends used to say to us how fortunate she was to get such a good home. We have said how fortunate we were to have her sent to us to make us so happy.

I wanted in some way to show my appreciation and had hoped some day to be able to contribute in a financial way, but I am too old now to get back on my feet. God bless you in your work is my daily prayer.1

One mother who has two adopted boys takes the position that it is almost impossible to rear adopted children normally,

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as the attitude of the community is not conducive to normal development. She says:

We have lived in our neighborhood a long time and everyone knows the boys came to us from an institution. Nearly every time they went out at first they were questioned how we treated them, and whether they remembered their own fathers and mothers. Even now, they are asked such questions. Much unsought advice is thrust upon me by mothers of "little terrors," and a great deal of thought is devoted to me by persons who give no apparent thought to the raising of their own children. Parents whose children are more often accidental than desired rave to me about the terrible force of heredity, and the uncertainty of how the children are going to "turn out." That children are without parents seems to be considered an indication they are naturally bad and fore-ordained to be vicious . . .

It has been proved to me to be an almost impossible task to raise an adopted child in a normal manner. If they are dirty, the neighbors call them neglected. If they are kept clean, I am depriving them of the natural rights of children. If they obey promptly, they are abused; if they do not obey, they are hopelessly spoiled for all time. Then, there are those dear, well-intentioned who focus their curious eyes on the children, drop their voices to a funeral pitch and say (always within hearing of the boys): "Poor little motherless babies; isn't it a pity?" -- and give them sundry coins.²

The neighborhood that this mother was describing is not typical of most neighborhoods today. Her article was written ten years ago, and attitudes toward adopted children have changed very much during that time. Adoption of children is now so prevalent that there is not much wonder or curiosity attached to it by the community. There is a growing tendency to take the child as a separate personality

and he is judged by what he is and does rather than what his ancestors might have been and done. The old idea of passing the sins of the fathers down to the sons has not completely disappeared, especially among the older people, but a comparison of the literature which appeared on the subject just a few years ago with the articles one sees today will reveal the fact that such ideas are gradually disappearing. A more enlightened and sympathetic attitude is taking their place.

The advantages for the adopted child are seen in every phase of his life. In cases of illegitimacy he has been placed on an equality with the natural child as soon as the adoption proceedings are completed. It is almost an impossibility for an unmarried mother to keep her child without causing untold misery to him and to herself. Relatively few of them attempt to flout the mores and the attitudes of society by keeping their children.

In the following case history an illustration is given of an unmarried mother who desperately loved her baby but who gave it up in order to promote the happiness and protection of the child:

All my life I wanted a baby. My whole aim in childhood was to grow up to have my own baby and to bring him up as I was not brought up. I was brought up in an institution and I am the product of that institution. Now I realize that I have no right to bring up this child myself, and I do not intend that he be placed even in a boarding home. The things I longed for in my childhood and did not have, everything
that this child should have and could not have if brought up by me, in a home or in an institution, he has a right to have and can have if placed with loving adopting parents. 3

This mother with clear insight realized that she could not give her baby the things to which he was entitled. The institution of adoption was a real advantage to her and to her child.

We often hear the quotation, "There are no illegitimate children; there are only illegitimate parents"; but nevertheless the child is regarded by society as illegitimate until legally adopted. The term "illegitimate" is being taken from the birth records of such children by legislation and by changing the attitude of the public regarding them; but no amount of legislation or sentimentality will change the status of an illegitimate child who is brought up as such. It is encouraging to know that attitudes concerning illegitimacy are not as harsh as they were in Puritan times, but in many communities the old Puritan ideas still prevail. Illegitimate births have not been retarded in spite of higher education, contraceptive information, economic depression, and social reforms. And it is believed that one reason that society cannot give the illegitimate child the same recognition as a child born in wedlock is the fear of causing a grave social danger.

It must be remembered that social custom is always stronger than the law, and it is impossible by means of legislation to erase the inequalities which the child suffers. Society must not only protect individuals, but it must also protect the institution of marriage which it has developed; therefore it is incompatible with the interests of the legal family to place a child of illegitimate birth on an equality with a child born in wedlock.

When a child is placed for adoption by a competent agency, he has a better than normal chance for physical development, because the agency does not place a child where there is not assurance of sufficient food, clothing, and shelter for his every need.

Adopted children who are talented are given the opportunity for developing their talents because their foster parents are in a position to give them the necessary training and education. A superior child who is likely to be able to do creative work is not given to parents who evidence no interest in or ability to promote the child's artistic attainments. And it is not at all unusual to see a natural child who is gifted but who is not able to develop his talent because his parents are unable to assist him.

The adopted child has a sense of security and a feeling of being loved and appreciated which an institutionalized child never has. This is very essential for a well-adjusted child. And a feeling of insecurity may lead to
all sorts of undesirable habits in childhood which may be carried over into adult life. There is the normal home life that is of the utmost importance to a child, which he might not enjoy were he not adopted. It may be unjust to some children that they are compelled to live with their natural parents who are unable to provide the home life that they are entitled to.

A case history given by Gallagher shows how adoption solves the problem of a normal home life and security for the illegitimate child:

And like all mothers the world over, married or otherwise, I was determined to keep my son. He was mine, mine! My blood was in his veins, the strong, fine blood of many generations of strong, fine people. . . . Society? Fiddlesticks! We would fool society, he and I. When I had borne him and was strong once more, we would move to a distant city. Mrs. Somebodyorother, poor little widow, and her baby boy. Society and its rules and taboos could go hang. My baby and I would hoax society. . . . But after that week the arguments of my family began to take toll. Breaking your father's heart, killing your mother, ruining your life. And at last, the attack upon my one vulnerable spot -- the baby. . . .

Then one day I saw a man and woman coming out of an adoption nursery with their new baby. A man and a woman as full of love and wonder at this new life as though they had conceived it. Perhaps they did not think of the other mother who had given up that baby, nor of the heartache and pain that had made that baby theirs, but I found myself wishing that the other mother could have seen the proud look on the man's face and the tremulous, happy lips of the woman as she thanked the child-placing agency.

When that baby is four or fourteen or forty he can look steadily at the world and smile because a woman he knew nothing of had bartered her happiness for the safety of her baby.
And when my time came I too gave up my son.
Somewhere in this world his soul will march on
because of adoption. Somewhere, thanks to adoption,
two loving hearts are overjoyed by him, two voices
are saying deeply and proudly, "our son." My bar-
gain made with fate, I go on also with the bittersweet
peace that my son has a mother and a father
who are giving him love and care, and a mother who
gave him her greatest gift -- security.  

(Although there are many things that can be listed in
favor of adoption, nevertheless there are some disadvantages
which must be faced seriously and squarely if we are to
present an unbiased report on this subject.) It is often
the case that a child is taken into the home when he is too
young for adequate physical and mental tests to have been
made. More progressive agencies are raising the age re-
quirement of a child before it can be placed for adoption,
in order to protect both parent and child. Many parents
have insisted upon keeping a child to whom they have become
attached, even though it is discovered that the baby ought
to be in an institution.

Some adopting agencies appear indifferent as to the
traits which the child may inherently possess. Some adopt-
ing parents appear to be disappointed if their child is not
of superior ability, even though he may be entirely normal.
It is, of course, very important that they be satisfied
with the child's mental endowment, in so far as it can be
ascertained, before they take him for adoption.

Babies who are taken for adoption while yet too young

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., pp. 150-151.
for adequate examinations to be made are usually secured from sources other than licensed homes or agencies. Physicians sometimes place babies with relatives or friends when the mother does not survive the ordeal of childbirth. And when the mother in the case is unmarried, the child is often hurriedly disposed of to conceal the mother's shame. Relatives of small children usually feel it to be their duty to adopt them, regardless of family inheritance.

There are yet a few "door-step" babies who are placed for adoption entirely too young. But this practice is gradually disappearing and in most instances the baby is carried to an agency where it is cared for and properly examined before it is allowed to be adopted.

There may, of course, be inherited diseases which the child may develop. This chance exists when nothing is known about the child's ancestry. But some adopting parents seem to believe that the less they actually know about a child and its ancestry, the more it will seem to be their own.

There is always a chance to take, as Dorothy Thompson says: "No one who is not willing to take some chance should adopt a child. But no one who is not willing to take some chances should have a child of her own."5

There will always be a possibility that the true parents may find where the child is located and try to visit

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5Dorothy Thompson, "Fit for Adoption," Ladies' Home Journal, LVI (May, 1939), 4.
it or to make trouble in other ways. This is more likely to happen where friends, physicians, or homes with haphazard methods have placed the child than it is where the child is placed by a modern, scientific, and progressive child-placing agency.

When an adopted child's true parents learn of its whereabouts, this knowledge almost invariably leads to complications of the gravest character. (Their natural and irrepressible interest in a child they have brought into the world, blood of their blood and flesh of their flesh, will often cause them, even with the purest of motives, to make investigations as to the child's situation, which interest in the child, if it becomes known to the adoptive parents, always leads to hostility. And when the activities of the natural parents go beyond merely the desire to know whether the child is doing well, such as attempting to visit the child, it is imperative that the adoptive parents resort to firm methods to prevent such an unfortunate occurrence.) In one instance a couple took a baby girl because her parents said they were not financially able to care for her. The families were well acquainted, but the adopting couple refused to take the child until the natural parents agreed to remove to a distant city. There was no attempt made by the natural parents to see the girl until she was about seventeen and ready to graduate from high school. They made a long trip to the locality where
the girl lived, and then called the adoptive mother over the telephone and asked that they be allowed to visit in her home. The adoptive mother pointed out to them that the girl was leading a normal, happy, well-adjusted life, never inquired about her natural parents, and appeared to be unconcerned about them; and they were politely but firmly requested to return home without seeing the girl, which they finally agreed to do. This girl married two years after her graduation, and is now very happy in her own home, with a good husband and an adorable baby.

Aside from the fact that the natural parents might want to take their child back, it is never best for the child to know them. Its affections should not be divided; its attitude toward its adoptive parents might change; its sense of security might be gone.

A case history is given which shows the harm that can be done to adoptive parents and child when the natural parent attempts to communicate with the child:

Much publicity recently has been given the efforts of a mother to recover her child, now thirteen years old, and happily adopted. The mother was sixteen when the baby was born. It was promptly placed with a family where it now remains. The mother had not been fairly or fully advised concerning the surrender of her child to others. When she later discovered that it would not be returned to her, she began an extensive search, and after many years located the little girl she had surrendered as a baby. She sought through court action to recover the custody of the child; her request was not granted, but her interference at this time has caused both family and child unspeakable anguish.6

6C. V. Williams, "Before You Adopt a Child," Hygeia, II (July, 1924), 423.
The adopted child may feel that there is a difference between his status and that of a natural child, even though he may be able to conceal this feeling. Especially is this true if great care is not taken to inform him in the right way about his true status. Even when a child is adopted in his infancy, and has no recollection of his former home, he is very likely to wonder about his natural parents and what his life might have been with them. If he is not told about his adoption as early as it would be possible for him to understand, the shock will inevitably be great. It sometimes leaves a permanent scar, and his relations with his adoptive parents may never again be the same. When this happens, although there may be no visible evidence of the struggle of his emotions, his inner life may be seriously affected. At times his imagination may lead him to think that he would have been happier had he not been transplanted. So long as his life brings him all the satisfactions that a child needs, he may be able to live in the present and the future; but if he encounters serious obstacles to his happiness, such as a consciousness that he is not satisfactory to his adoptive parents, he may develop attitudes or complexes that will interfere in a marked way with his happiness as well as that of his parents.

Parents are sometimes led to do too much for their adopted child in an effort to make him feel that they love him as much as his natural parents could. They will be
over-anxious to convince him that they are doing their part. And they want to satisfy themselves that the child is as well off with them as he would be with any other couple. And certainly it would be a tragedy for them to know that the child believed a mistake had been made when he was given to them. The position of adoptive parents is somewhat like that of a stepmother who knows that she is doing right by her stepchildren, but who is tempted to overdo in order to convince the children and everybody concerned that she is doing right by them.

When a child is separated by death from his mother, he may in an hour experience a transition from a feeling of extreme security to one of insecurity. Again, a child may be kept too long by an agency before he is placed with adoptive parents, thus losing his stability and his sense of security before finding a home. Often a child is torn from a home because of the separation of his parents, and sometimes he may be placed in an institution or carried from pillar to post by unfriendly relatives or even strangers. Such conditions leave deep scars. The child may try to hide his feelings by becoming over-aggressive, or he may become over-sensitive and seek refuge in seclusion.

Wise and sympathetic handling of the child by the adopting parents will in many cases enable the child to overcome these handicaps, but there is always the risk that the child's personality may be permanently affected. In
order to help him attain the feeling of security that he has lost or never had, he must be given the things he has lacked for normal development. But to stabilize a drifting world for another human being is a difficult task for anyone under the most favorable conditions. The older the child when adopted, the more difficult it becomes to accomplish this task. And prospective adoptive parents should fully realize the tremendous responsibility of such an undertaking before embarking upon it.

If at the time of adoption the child is old enough to remember his natural parents, no one can ever completely take their place in his affections. Even if his recollection of them is very dim, they are idealized, and the tenderest and most understanding of substitute parents can hardly gain a foothold. This is a difficult situation for parents and child, and is, of course, one disadvantage that natural parents never have to contend with. It is one that requires patience, understanding, and love.

There are instances of such abnormal curiosity on the part of adopted children that they spend much time and money in an effort to locate their natural parents. And much of their time is consumed with worrying over what may become of the parents, or why they gave up their children. Such worries have been known to result in suicide. Such extreme attitudes may in part be caused by lack of affection, a feeling of insecurity, some great emotional problem,
or a lack of proper training in mental and emotional poise. Of course, older children, who remember something of their former lives, are more inclined to investigate than are those who are taken in infancy and have never known any other home. Although these extreme cases seldom arise, parents must be alert to see that conditions are not allowed to develop which might tempt the child to pursue such an unwise course. The child who goes so far as to bring his problem into court usually has had some poor advice. Unhappiness will almost inevitably be the result. One of the most interesting writers on the subject of the adoption of children is Martha Vansant, who was herself an adopted child. In pointing out some of the dangers for the child, she says:

The danger that threatens the adopted child is not his uncertain heredity, his obscure background, or his doubtful legitimacy, but the fact that his foster parents take him ready-made, and expect him to grow and evolve according to specifications which they set down as definitely as they select his sex or the color of his hair. . . . There is no parent, whether a foster parent or a flesh-and-blood one, who has not plans and hopes for his offspring; but I sometimes think that the period of gestation, with its waiting uncertainties and anxieties, puts into flesh-and-blood parents a lot of healthy doubt and sensible resignation, not merely with physical attributes of their unborn child, but with his other endowments as well. If the infant is your own, you have had months in which to anticipate his many unknown qualities, and you are better prepared to accept him and them for better or for worse. But the child which you get out of an institution you are likely to take for better only; it is already made and born when you take it; you find it
healthy, of the proper sex and complexion, and with what appears to be the proper sort of disposition to fit in with yours and cause happiness all around.  

Some adoptive parents there are who try to make the child's individuality fit into their preconceived ideas of what it should be. This effort often gives the child a feeling of frustration. This is very likely to happen when the child is strong-willed. Parents may lead and direct, but they can never force a child into a definite personality.

Vansant continues:

When anyone takes an adopted child, generally he wonders this, Will he love me? It is simple enough to find ways to make it do so. They will be kind and considerate and pet and spoil the child. They do not tell the child it is adopted as they fear it will cease to love them. They seek to bind their children to them by sentimental and insecure bonds. As the children grow up and the spoiling becomes a burden, and unpleasant or unexpected tendencies begin to appear, the parents allow themselves to lapse from their maudlin affection and come down on the unsuspecting youngsters with a cold, heavy-handedness; and the youngsters discover that other parents are not generally so harsh toward childish faults, nor were they in the beginning so sweet for no reason at all. When they start this sort of comparison their confidence is already being destroyed.

Flesh and blood parents start out with a far more important conjecture regarding their children than any insane, Will he love me? They may question themselves instead: Will I know how to bring him up to his best advantage? . . . If he disappoints them they will do their utmost to be philosophic about it.  

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8Ibid., p. 217.
She also says that everything will be splendid for adopted children if they do all right and have no bad habits, but if they disappoint their parents they will be subjected to taunts to the effect that they are not their own children and that they cannot be responsible for their failure; that the whole thing was an experiment that did not work out satisfactorily.

Before one has finished reading Vansant's article it is easy to see that the author has herself had an unfortunate experience, and that she was herself a misplaced child. Her judgment is warped by her own experience in being adopted. She quite naturally believes certain things about adoption and looks about to find cases to bolster her already formed opinions. She says that she was related to her adoptive parents and was taken, not because of love, but because they felt it a duty. There were several natural children in the family, and the writer always felt that they were better treated than she.

The critical attitude of friends is sometimes considered a disadvantage to adoption. One adoptive mother told me that one of her best friends came in and looked the baby over and said, "Now tell me all about the baby." This new baby was the chief topic of conversation in their crowd, and she wanted to be the first to know so she could tell everyone else. Of course, she did not find out all about the baby. (People should use discretion and not ask intimate
questions which, if answered fully, might later affect the happiness of many people. Another question was, "Do you know who this child's mother and father are?" The adoptive mother answered, "Yes; you are looking at the mother now." This mother did not want to be rude, but she meant to put a stop to personal questions. She tries to answer all questions in some way to satisfy the questioner, regardless of the exact truth, and she feels no pangs of conscience when she does not give all the facts when her friends ask impertinent questions. ---Adoptive parents are just as sensitive as natural parents, and just as proud of their children, and they resent any prying into the affairs of their children.

Many excellent and otherwise sensible people are very thoughtless in speaking of adopted children. The same mother who is quoted above told me that one woman who has recently located in her community said to her in the presence of her ten-year-old girl, "I didn't know until today that she is not yours." The mother's reply was, "Yes, but she is my child." The woman came to her senses and the subject was dropped.

(Attitudes of the community toward adoption are changing for the better, but it would appear that human nature itself will have to change before criticism and curiosity will cease to hurt this great institution.)
Adoption is an adventure which involves tolerance and sacrifice, and it has all the possibilities of success and failure, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and joy and sadness. There are advantages and disadvantages; but it would seem that the known advantages far outweigh any disadvantages that may arise.
CHAPTER IV

SELF-ANALYSIS OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Love for one's children is for most parents a feeling as deep and natural as the urge to breathe. If no children are born to a couple, they will almost invariably consider adopting a child. But it is very important that prospective adoptive parents carefully analyze their motives and come to a rational decision as to their own worthiness.

There is a new conception of parenthood today. Physical birth, flesh and blood connection, have ceased to be the important factors in our newer vision of the parent's job. Bringing up a child, not bearing it, is what counts; how much security you can give it, how much stability and confidence, how much physical vigor, how many creative interests, how much ability to stand on its own feet, loving a child because he is flesh of your flesh is not all-important, but how effective and intelligent is your love in equipping him for life. Love, ignorant and blind, may hamper his development and ruin his happiness. The test of the value of parental affection lies not in the fact of blood relationship but in the kind of child it rears.¹

Parenthood is for all who realize its true meaning. But conscientious couples will hesitate before accepting the supreme joy and privilege of adopting a child. They will want to know whether they are capable of being good

and intelligent parents, and whether a child whom they should rear would be likely to have the surroundings necessary for the highest development of which it might be capable."

Only a few years ago it was not uncommon for people to take older boys and girls for the profit they might derive from their labor. Such practices are now almost impossible, for well-organized and conducted agencies have established standards and methods of selection and supervision which have practically eliminated this possibility.

Some may be influenced in their decision to adopt a child by unacknowledged or unrealized motives, but these motives are not necessarily base. Motives should not be classified as noble or base, selfish or unselfish, for behind any given action or attitude may exist a mingling of many different motives and a desire for satisfaction of one sort or another.

Many people will want to adopt a child to secure self-fulfillment as an object of devotion, or for response that they have failed to obtain elsewhere.

Always present to form at least a part of the motive that causes a childless couple to adopt a child is the natural desire to be parents. These powers, these abilities, are to be used, and if no children are born to us, we begin to think of other children to take their place. The more fully we can use our dominant powers and abilities, the happier and more harmonious will be our lives.
This may appear to some to be a self-regarding desire, but if an individual took a foster child without hope of finding satisfaction in the experience, he would be too selfless to be human.

When a couple come to an agency seeking to adopt a child, they usually say that they dearly love children, but from various causes have been deprived of them that seeing the happiness of their friends with their children makes them want some of their own. During the conversation the social worker will try to analyze their motives, and decide whether they will truly love a child, whether they would allow him to be independent and fight his own battles, or whether they would be over-protective. The interviewer may know more about their real motives than do the applicants themselves, and so long as she feels that they could develop into good parents and be able to offer the child a good home, she does not attach too much importance to a self-regarding attitude or motive.

Even before the present psychological era set us all to challenging our own motives, social workers never accepted without question the statements made by applicants for foster children as to just why they wanted a child. They knew that many different forces combine to influence prospective adopting parents, which are difficult correctly to interpret and express. The values for a child in any home depend largely upon the qualities of heart and head of
those who will care for him -- their understanding of child nature and of this particular child, their interest in him and in finding ways to help him, their willingness to forego some of their cherished anticipated satisfactions if need be and make all plans for him contingent upon his slowly emerging nature and needs.

Not only do the motives directly related to the desire for a child require careful examination and analysis; but there are also invariably certain fundamental attitudes and beliefs in the personality of the prospective parents which it is well to consider carefully. Some of these attitudes and beliefs may tend to promote the well-being of the child, and others may be equally honest and yet work injustices to the adopted child.

Parental love is, ideally, the nearest approach to true altruism that may be found in human relations. It is not demanding or unduly possessive. Its greatest satisfactions should not be in the pleasure of receiving love, respect, and gratitude, but in happiness derived from and through the well-being of another. This is the only sound basis for constructive parenthood, and should be sought no less earnestly in adoptive homes than in natural family groups.

Parents must ask themselves this question: "Are we prepared to enjoy each passing phase of babyhood, childhood, and youth to the full, help him to enjoy or leave him free to enjoy, as he goes, all the normal satisfactions of his
age, and never hold him back or try to force him into a mold, however much we might grieve to lose our personal hold on him, or however much we would like for him to follow plans more in harmony with our own plans and interests."

This is a very searching question, but adoption should be a soberly considered step and not an emotional impulse, either on the part of those desirous of adopting or those who help to fulfill this desire.

The mother should not entertain fixed notions as to how she wants her child to look, behave, and do in school. Some prospective adoptive mothers see an attractive child and imagine that they want a child who will look and act as that child does. Perhaps a mother wants a child who can learn to play the piano or to paint beautiful pictures. If she does have any preconceived notions of this sort, she may attempt to mold the child as she would have him be, thus crushing him as an individual, or making a second-rate musician or artist out of probably a great scientist or a good shoe salesman. Children should be allowed to experiment with many things in order to find their own interests and capacities, and parents should aid and assist them, even though it is all quite different from the things they had fondly hoped would appeal to the children.

The day-dreaming of a prospective mother about a future with her youngster may revolve chiefly around pretty clothes and pride in appearance and affection; but she
should be more interested in the development of young minds and be prepared to enjoy the unexpected out-croppings of tastes and points of view of the child.

Whatever may be the real motives that prompt a couple to adopt a child, they can never be clearly defined and analyzed. They may be mixtures of emotions, conscious planning, self-interest, and sometimes altruism. But it is extremely doubtful whether altruism is ever a very compelling motive. It may appear to be so, but human nature is not such that people often take a child solely for the purpose of helping it. It is the pleasure that they expect to derive from the experience that impells them to take the step.

Adoptive parents frequently hear their friends say: "I do think you are the most unselfish people in the world to take someone's child and work and plan for it. Surely there will be stars in your crowns for such sacrifice."

The adoptive parents know that they are the ones who are fortunate and can be truly thankful that the little stranger has come to make his home with them. A few months ago two couples, each of whom had two adopted children, were having dinner with a childless couple. All the families were in moderate but comfortable circumstances, and were able to provide for children. The conversation naturally turned to the youngsters, and the host and hostess warmly and sincerely praised the others for their generosity and unselfishness in assuming the responsibility
of rearing an adopted family. The parents were amused at
the innocence of the childless couple, and frankly told
them so, pointing out that they had adopted their children
simply because they wanted them, and that they had been re-
paid a thousandfold for any sacrifices that they had made.
The evident sincerity of the parents seemed to make a deep
impression upon the host and hostess. Before many days they
were seriously considering the possibility of acquiring a
family through adoption; and at this time they have made a
good start, for they have a fine baby boy who is the center
of their unearthly happiness.

People adopt children not so much because they want to
do something for the children, but because of what they
want the children to do for them. The desire for a richer
and fuller life underlies the impulse to adopt a child.
Life is indeed lacking and empty if children are not in-
cluded in the scheme of things. The wife adores babies and
feels that her home is incomplete; her husband shares this
feeling. They enjoy the babies of relatives and friends,
and playing with these youngsters from time to time only
makes them wish more ardently that they had one at home so
that they could devote to him their time and themselves.

Practical experience with children, as well as an emo-
tional interest in them, is to be desired in prospective
adoptive parents. Parents who are interested in children
as growing minds and developing personalities will do a
better job of rearing them than those who feel toward them as they do toward playthings. Some mothers seem to think of their children as something to take up their leisure time, or as something they can take out and show off among their friends. One who sincerely feels that she has something to learn is much more promising material out of which to make a parent than one who is certain that she knows all there is to know about rearing children, or even has any fixed ideas which she is not prepared to change when necessary. Experience always begets confidence, and confidence is quite an asset in dealing with children; but prospective adoptive parents need not be unduly concerned, and hesitate to apply for a child, because they have not had any experience with children. It is said of natural mothers that "the directions come with the child," but in reality the directions come because there is a need for knowing how to care for the child. By the time an application is made for a child, the applicants should be beginning to learn the essentials of child care. A reliable agency does not place a child very soon after the application is made, and the mother usually has time to learn something of the duties of motherhood. True motherhood comes from long practice. Indeed, the consensus of opinion seems to be that those who become parents by adoption are on the whole just as well-fitted to care for children as are those to whom children are born.
While it is, of course, desirable, it is less essential for the adopting father to have experience with children than it is for the mother; but it is highly desirable that he have an affectionate interest in the foster child, and that he should not object to being interrupted in his ordinary pursuits by the newcomer. The father should realize that he is serving as a model of what a man should be to his young son, and as an interpreter and standard-setter for all males to his young daughter.

In order for the child to have security, the financial ability of the foster parents must be considered. That the prospective parents have sufficient income to support the child is a necessary requirement for obtaining a child from all properly regulated agencies, and the parents themselves will give some thought to it. This is especially important when older children are adopted, since they have already been uprooted from a home broken by death, discord, or poverty. The child's need will be largely emotional, yet it must be met in part by material means. But considerable wealth is never thought to be an advantage in foster parents. Those of moderate means are believed to offer the best chance for happiness and well-rounded living. In a home of great wealth, the child may not have the close companionship and understanding with his parents which is altogether desirable. There should, of course, be an income sufficiently steady and adequate for normal needs, so that there will
never be any discussion of serious money matters before the child; should this unfortunately occur, the child would likely feel that he is a burden to the family and this feeling might lead to personality disintegration.

The question of financial security must be considered before adoption, not only for the child's benefit, but for that of the parents as well. It is possible for the parents to form attitudes toward the child that may cause him to be unhappy, especially if he has not come up to their expectations, and if they have not been able to adjust themselves to the type of child which he actually is. In cases of this kind, some of their disappointment might have been erased if financial problems had not arisen. The pinch of financial matters may cause the parents to think of what they are doing for the child as a sacrifice; and if they realize that they are spending their money on a child who is not satisfactory, the child will inevitably learn of this feeling. And any such realization on the child's part will lead to serious complications. Resentment may arise between parents and child, and a barrier may be built up between them that can never be removed.

And there is always the possibility that financial security at the time of adoption may be lost through misfortune in later years. This is a chance that all parents must take. Prospective adoptive parents must ask themselves how they would react in a situation of this kind; they
should know whether they have the sound character and intelligence to meet such a contingency without disastrous consequences. And when one parent becomes disabled or dies, the other must assume all responsibility for supporting the family. So the mother must realize that in time she may be the sole bread-winner, and in addition have the responsibility of planning, unaided, all the details of the child's life, of caring for him during illness, and of constantly taking the place of both parents. She must think of the emotional problems that are likely to arise from the child's lack of the balancing factor of a father's influence. If she has some of the so-called masculine qualities and is well adjusted, the venture may be successful. But the child should have contact with men, and if the mother has brothers or other male relatives who will enter into the child's life, the situation will be more favorable.

Sometimes a child is adopted because his adopting parents desire an heir to inherit the family name and fortune. This is usually considered to be a sufficiently worthy motive; and if the parents possess other favorable characteristics, the chance that the child will find happiness and grow into a useful life might be considered excellent.

Individuals come into a family by birth, by marriage, or by adoption. Distinctive traditions of each family are passed on to younger members of that family. Each member
makes his contribution for better or for worse to the family tradition. The attributes typical of his foster family are as likely to be acquired by the adopted child as by a natural child. He will prove to be an effective carrier of social inheritance. Even the older child who can recall his former home life seems to react about as strongly to formative processes as the younger child. He will try diligently to conform to family standards, and he will take much pride in being a member of a worthy family. Most adopted children think of their foster parents as truly their own.

While adoptive parents must not expect their foster children to possess the family features, nevertheless they frequently absorb the characteristics and habits of the father or mother to such an extent that they may seem to resemble them in appearance as well. It is not at all unusual for people who do not know that a child is adopted to say to his parents: "I would know that child belongs to you, for he looks so much like you."

(The "Smith nose" or the "Jones chin" may not be seen in the features of the child, who is expected to carry on the family name and traditions, but parents must content themselves with the knowledge that they are able to instill in the child much more important and much nobler family characteristics, such as truthfulness, fair dealing, honesty, and dependability. Truthfully it can be said that the
adopted child acquires and transmits family traditions as well as the natural child.

Another angle to be considered in taking a child to carry on the family traditions is the attitude of other members of that family and of close relatives. Ordinarily it probably is not wise for prospective foster parents to consult relatives before taking such a momentous step in which the responsibility is mostly their own. However, if the child is expected to carry great family responsibility, conditions must not be unfriendly or perhaps even hostile toward him. An illustration of the bad effects of the hostility of relatives is shown in the instance of a child being placed with a family by friends and not by a childplacing agency; the child was not welcomed into the family group by a foster uncle; through the advice of this uncle, the parents never legally adopted this child. He assumed the family name and has some feeling of security, but he perhaps feels that his parents regret that they ever took him. At any rate, his situation is such that he does not have the security of a real home since his relationship to his family has no legal binding. His reactions have led to untruthfulness and occasional attempts to run away. He has all the physical necessities of life, and his parents feel perhaps that they are doing much for him; but the child could do without some of the material things if he could have more mental and emotional stability.
Some couples no doubt resolve to adopt a child largely because they want to have someone upon whom they can rely in later life. When this is the case, the prospective adoptive parents have usually failed to realize that they are alone and may need assistance in old age until they are past the age when they ought to adopt a child. It is not fair to the child to take him when the parents are not likely to be able to cope with situations that are expected to arise, or may burden him with their responsibilities.

Adoptive parents average ten years or more older than biological fathers and mothers. Some, of course, have postponed adoption in the hope that they will have a child of their own. Others may not have felt that they were financially able earlier to adopt a child. Still others may have been seeking careers which took both husband and wife away from the home.

Flexibility is one prerequisite in dealing with children. Children do not stay in one stage of growth and development very long, and parents who are too old to adjust themselves to meet any situation in the childhood of the youngster should not adopt a child.

It requires physical strength and endurance to care for children; especially is this true in the case of younger children. Parents must be young enough to withstand the strain that is placed upon them.

The opinion is held by many psychologists that couples
who have waited several years in the hope of having a child of their own are likely to be over-protective, over-demonstrative, and over-solicitous toward an adopted child. Such a condition is not conducive to the development of good character. Adoption agencies seldom regard the homes of middle-aged parents as ideal ones for infants, although older children might not be misplaced under such circumstances.

It is difficult to set an age limit for those who should apply for children to adopt. People differ very much in attitudes; some are old in years but young in their outlook on life; some are young in years but old in experience. Responsible agencies are careful not to place children with couples who are too old. Nature does not allow old people to become natural parents, and it is probably wise in its refusal. Grandparents do not often make good parents.

The following case history shows what might be expected when a child is adopted by a mother who is too old to understand children:

Angela, eight years of age, was brought to the clinic by her fifty-year-old foster mother. She had been adopted when she was about five and although she remembered her previous environment she seemed to be devoted to her foster parents and regarded them as her father and mother. They in turn were devoted to her; the mother especially seemed to be deeply attached to the child. She seemed to have built a model in her own mind to emulate, and any deviation from this model seemed to affect the mother deeply. She talked to Angela about the disappointments and heartaches caused by her conduct.
In school, the mother had hoped that she would be a star, but she was woefully disappointed. Angela, in order to live up to this ideal, naturally misrepresented herself to her mother. For instance, she came dashing in from school the other day and announced that she had made 101 on her arithmetic paper. To her mother's comment that 101 was a most unusual mark, she stated that 100 was for a perfect paper and 1 was for neatness. After grilling questions, the child admitted that she had received only 30 in the examination.

A short time ago, Angela began to steal. The psychiatric examination brought out the fact that she was stealing money to buy candy. Indeed, she wanted some pleasure not superimposed upon her by her firm, just father, or by her conventional mother. Yet in the eyes of her parents and society she was an abnormal child headed toward a delinquent career.2

Angela's parents being too old to understand her, they could not make adjustments for the child. They had been ruled by one set of values -- their values -- to such an extent that those of the child could not seem important to them. The parents did not treat the child as an individual with tastes and needs different from their own, but always endeavored to have her fit their mould and ideas of ethical standards. Angela may have been a child of superior mental endowment, but in her surroundings she could not function efficiently. And it is difficult to change the attitudes of parents of fifty toward a child. They cannot always see that they, by their own arbitrary ideas, do much to cause their children to act as they do. Children are usually taught in school to be self-reliant and independent personalities, and are made unhappy by too rigid home surroundings.

The rearing of children is a liberal education in itself, but an adult must be sufficiently young and plastic to absorb that education. One adoptive father said that he had learned as much from the children as they had learned from him. This father had an open mind and was willing to learn and capable of learning.

On the other hand, older couples may have learned patience and tolerance to a degree not yet attained by a younger couple. They may have more time to devote to the children, since older people like to stay at home more than younger ones. They may also be better established professionally and financially and consequently may be able to do more for the children in a material way.

Another motive which frequently leads to adoption is a particular interest in the child to be adopted. In most of these cases the foster parents know the child or knew its natural parents, and a situation arises which makes it necessary that the child depends upon others. One adoptive mother states that she had always loved the baby she actually got, but had no idea of ever adopting any child until this particular child became an orphan. Even after taking the child immediately on the death of its parents, it was not until she felt that she could not give it up that adoption proceedings were instituted. She and her husband had much to give a child, but probably would never have considered taking an unknown child into their home.
When both the prospective parents come to the childplacing agency to apply for a child to adopt, they usually are not questioned closely as to their motives; but if a woman comes in alone and says that she wants to adopt a baby and admits that her husband is reluctant, the situation calls for close examination and analysis of the motives involved and the real attitude of the husband. In some cases the husband might become an excellent father, but is happy with his wife and does not feel the need of a child in the home. Or, he may be so engrossed in his business or profession that he thinks he does not have any time to devote to a child. It is very important to know his real attitude, because in some instances he may feel inferior in that he has not sired a child and resent the fact that another man's child is in his home. A careful check upon his feelings will be made before the agency will consider placing a child with such a family, even though the husband finally and apparently cheerfully consents.

But experience has shown that husbands who at first are lukewarm but not actually hostile to the idea of adoption make excellent fathers. The wife is likely to be the one who broaches the subject of adoption, as she is usually the first to feel the need of a child to complete the family setup. And even if the husband did not exactly approve of the idea in the beginning, it will not be long before he will be taking all the credit for originating the idea of
adopting a child and will be boasting of its superiority and saying that he knows exactly how to go about selecting one who is superior. Natural fathers who have had parenthood thrust upon them when they did not want a child are almost invariably as proud of their babies as the father who longs for one.

Applications are frequently made for a child to take the place of one who has been lost. The father usually pleads that they must be given a baby to save his wife's sanity. Some fathers even want to be given a child at once so they can place it in the arms of the mother who has lost her child. This is very often a risky procedure. The parents, in their desperate grief, reach the point where they conceive the idea that by taking a child they can distract their minds from the loss and be furnished a substitute for their devotion. When they are mature persons, capable of deep thinking, and realize their own capacities, such a plan may work out admirably for all concerned. However, their desire for a child may be a mere expression of desperation on the part of immature, impulsive people who would be wiser to wait until their grief has become more calm.

The enthusiasm for the child on the part of the bereaved couple may disappear as soon as the child is brought before them; or it may last until the child is actually carried into their home. They may come to the conclusion
that they are unable to transfer to this little stranger the affection they had for the lost child. Sometimes they cannot endure the sight of a child using the lost baby’s toys and clothes, or sleeping in his bed. They may not return him to the agency because of a sense of duty, nevertheless some sense of bitterness may develop. The child will realize that he is living in an unfriendly atmosphere and will not be happy.

Generally, too, adopting parents who have recently lost their child will sometimes expect the new baby to resemble their other child personally. This may lead to unfortunate comparisons of the two children. If the lost child is an older child and the one to take his place is of approximately the same age, parents may be so thoughtless as to remind the new child that he compares unfavorably with the other one.

On the other hand, it sometimes happens that the child who takes the place of a lost one is coddled and fondled to an extent that is detrimental to his proper development. Parents in such a situation are not likely to have the poise that would be exhibited by those in a more normal frame of mind.

The case of Eleanor furnishes an illustration of what may happen when parents adopt a child to take the place of one who has died:
Eleanor's golden hair lay in ringlets and her tiny form was graceful and fragile. Looking so much like the little girl they had lost, she was adopted to take the other child's place. The little girl who died had been gentle, appealing, and responsive, but Eleanor proved to be rowdy, boisterous, and fiercely independent. Now there is discord and resentment in this home because the parents did not realize that emotional make-up is more important than mere physical attraction and appeal.\(^3\)

Sometimes couples desire to adopt a child just because they both think it will prevent a separation. This is definitely unfair to the child, and rarely, if ever, would adoption be justified under such conditions. The proper rearing of every child requires two parents who are working together harmoniously for the best interests of the child. A united front of authority must be held before him. The emotional disturbance under which such parents are laboring is not conducive to harmony. If one parent corrects the child, the other must not interfere in the child's presence, even if one feels that the correction might have been handled in a better way. Couples who bicker cannot agree on how to handle a child, and the child soon realizes that he can depend upon one parent's being on his side regardless of the rightness or wrongness of any situation.

Unhappily married couples often find that instead of strengthening the bonds between husband and wife, a child becomes a battleground, especially if one parent has been persuaded against his will to consent to the adoption.

A child psychologist, when asked, "Is it safe to adopt a child?" replied, "That depends on why you adopt him." In response to the puzzled look of the inquirer, he added, "I was not thinking of you; I was thinking of the child."4

(Adults who are at war with themselves or with the world are not equipped to guide children, because in the earlier years attitudes are as contagious as measles or mumps.) If this fact is important in own-parent relationships, how much more is it when a parental maladjustment may not only exist, but may be the principal reason for adoption.

(It would therefore seem essential that prospective foster parents study themselves and consider in an objective manner if possible the helpful and harmful approaches they are likely to make toward the child.)

(Although it is usually not advisable to adopt a child just to hold an ungenial couple together, yet foster parenthood may avert divorce by couples who had not reached a stage of conflict when they got the child. Most couples need someone on whom they can depend as an object upon which to expend their superfluous affections. Generally it is true that a mere husband and wife are not enough to make a home.) For most women, a career, admiration, or money cannot take the place of a baby. But a stable home should have been attained before adoption is considered.

One that is unstable or that is resting on a shaky foundation may fall to pieces even if a baby is placed in it; yet a child may hold the home together if too much disintegration has not already taken place.

Parents who cannot have another child of their own often wish to adopt one as a companion for their own child. Difficulties are likely to arise if there is too much difference in their ages. Youth craves the companionship of youth, but the fact is easily apparent that when there is considerable disparity in the ages of children, they are not interested in the same things and have many conflicts. The natural child may become jealous of the new member of the family, or the adopted child may be envious of the natural child. Parents must be capable of showing impartiality before adopting a child under such conditions.

The following case history shows some of the difficulties that may be encountered when a child is taken as a companion for an only child:

At four, Betty was taken into a most luxurious home as a little sister for Robert, who was two years her senior. If the children were congenial and the family grew fond of her, she was to be adopted. Young as she was, Betty seemed to realize the precariousness of her position. Her defensive mechanisms came to her rescue, and Betty literally adopted the family. Soon, however, Betty's feeling of insecurity manifested itself in more unpleasant ways. She had to express some superiority to compensate for her own feeling of inadequacy, so she attempted to dominate the servants in order to secure attention from her foster parents, who were much engrossed in their social program. She engaged in the most outrageous
temper outbursts, and behaved in such a rude, ugly fashion to her friends that she was left practically without associates. At the clinic Betty admitted that if someone loved her best at home, she knew that she could be a good girl. The servants all liked Robert better; her parents said they loved them both the same, but she thought they loved Robert better. She wanted someone to love her best. She could not help being mean when no one liked her anyway. 5

Thus an ideal home situation seemed almost the ruina-
tion of Betty. Grown-ups could not make the transition, but they expected the child to do so with grace and ease. Betty felt that she was regarded as an intruder and had no sense of security.

Sometimes an unmarried person desires to adopt a baby. This, of course, is not a normal situation and calls for a consideration of many phases of the problem. Most authorities on the subject think that an unmarried woman or a childless widow should not take a child, because the child needs two parents; it needs the love, instruction, and example of a father as well as of a mother in order to de-
velop into a well-rounded personality.

The motives which actuate an unmarried woman who wants to adopt a child should be thoroughly understood and ap-
proved before the adoption is allowed. She may be entirely selfish, even though unknowingly so, in wanting a child upon whom she can lavish her attention, or one to be a com-
panion to her. In such a case, the child is likely to be

5 Crutcher, op. cit., p. 83.
hopelessly spoiled to begin with, and thus a bad start has been made. Yet there may be instances where single women have gained the utmost satisfaction from giving the child a happy and a proper home life. There is an instance of a child being placed with a group of teachers who were living together and who decided that they would like to rear a child. They had much to give her — much time, cultural advantages, and education far above the average. A child in such a situation no doubt would miss many experiences common to most children, but she would receive other valuable experiences not known by the average child.

Some psychologists think that if an unmarried woman adopts any child at all, she should adopt more than one, and get children of both sexes, so their contacts with children will not be one-sided. It is also believed, however, that the unmarried woman should take girls, as boys seem to require the masculine influence more than girls.

Sometimes an unmarried man applies for a child. It is believed that men are as capable of caring for a child as are women. Records prove that in many cases the adoption of children by unmarried men proves to be very successful. They often lack the time that ought to be devoted to a child, but they do not lack love, understanding, and sympathy. Boys several years of age are usually the subjects of such adoptions. Some examples of the adoption of children by unmarried men are given:
After the death of her mother a two-year-old child had been placed by her own father in the home of the petitioner, a single man, who lived nearby with his mother. The child had been in the foster home for some eight years and nothing had been heard from her father for about five years. The foster grandmother was seventy-six years old at the time of the adoption. No formal recommendation was made to the court, but the case had been classified as informally disapproved. However, the court granted the adoption.

A boy about eleven years of age was left in the home of the mother of an unmarried man. The child's mother paid his board for six weeks, and then deserted him. The boy remained in the home, and after the death of the foster mother the petitioner and the boy went to live in the home of a married brother and his family. Both the boy and the petitioner were anxious for the adoption and after approval by the State department a decree was granted, although the boy was almost twenty years of age.6

People who are considering adopting a child must ask themselves whether they are persistent in seeing anything through that they undertake, or whether they are subject to enthusiasm that flares up and immediately dies down, leaving them bored and ready for a change. Adoption should be as permanent as a natural family. The adoption of children will involve sacrifices. The mother must consider the time that she will be required to devote to the child. While it is very young, a nurse may meet most of the requirements, but as it grows older, the mother will assume more of the responsibility. Natural mothers have the months of pregnancy which curtail their social activities greatly, and for them their adjustment to the baby is not so difficult. But a young adoptive mother who is accustomed to a

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6 Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Problems and Procedure in Adoption, Bulletin 262, p. 12.
gay social life may feel that she is making a considerable 
sacrifice when the new baby keeps her at home. She will 
soon find, however, that life has other things more im-
portant than bridge and cocktails, and she will be staying 
at home evenings with the baby, not because he needs her, 
but because she wants to be with him.

Above all things, parents must be patient. The best 
of children will be very trying at times. Parents may meet 
this test satisfactorily, and even then there will be times 
when they will lose their temper and do the wrong thing. To 
err is human, and they need not be discouraged if an oc-
casional emotional outburst does occur.

The physical condition of the parents must be sound, 
and there should be no danger of the child's contracting 
any disease from them. If care is taken, the adopted child 
can be reasonably sure of having healthy parents. This 
cannot be said of a natural child.

A publication of the Children's Bureau, The A B C of 
Foster-Family Care for Children, gives the following as es-
sentials for the well-being of adopted children:

1. Security. -- A feeling of stability, and 
of belonging and counting for something in other lives.

2. Family life. -- A chance to live in a normal 
family group of differing ages without being crushed 
by numbers; to develop mutual attachments and a sense 
of responsibility for others and for the work of run-
ning the household.

3. Sufficient nutritious food. -- This should 
be simple, well prepared, and adapted to age of the 
child. It should be served at regular hours, amid
attractive surroundings, and eaten at leisure in a cheerful atmosphere.

4. Adequate shelter. -- A clean, light, well-ventilated, well-kept home, properly heated in winter, with sanitary toilet facilities. The child should have a separate bed and a place in which to keep private possessions and to entertain friends.

5. Comfortable clothing. -- Clean, whole, attractive garments that fit and that are individually owned; sufficient changes for cleanliness; adequate protection against inclement weather.

6. Health habits. -- Individual toilet articles; frequent baths; proper care of the teeth; regular bedtime and plenty of sleep; abundance of fresh air and of pure drinking water; several hours of outdoor play each day; definite teaching of health rules and of wholesome, happy, courageous attitudes; sensible instruction in sex matters.

7. Educational essentials. -- Attendance at a community school of good standards as long as the law requires, and as much longer as the child's capacities warrant. Development of each child's fullest capacities through high-school, commercial, or trade-school training in line with special abilities.

8. Recreation. -- A safe, clean, roomy place for outdoor and indoor play; suitable play material and tools; sympathetic supervision.

9. Community life. -- A part in community group activities and festivities; opportunity to make friends in natural ways through entertaining and being entertained; normal neighborhood contacts and wholesome association with persons of the opposite sex.

10. Moral and religious training. -- Positive teaching of standards of right and wrong aside from measures of discipline; daily contact with adults of sound character and inspiring personality; attendance at religious services of the type preferred for each individual case.

To give these things to every child received under care may seem like a large order... Man is a social being. He springs from the soil of family life; from it he draws his sustenance, to it he is bound by innumerable fibers. When for any reason he is uprooted, his well-being demands that he be transplanted and nurtured with the same tender solicitude for conditions of atmosphere, soil, and sun that the careful gardener displays toward his seedlings. From infancy through adolescence the fundamental need of a human being is the opportunity for undisturbed growth. A child should be deeply rooted; bound to his environment
on every side by ties of interest, habit, and affection. Only so can he attain the stability to withstand the storms of later life and make his fullest contribution to society.\textsuperscript{7}

If a child has the above essentials, his opportunity for growth will not likely be disturbed. The first and most fundamental is the need for security. Without the love and care of persons upon whom the child can unquestionably depend, not only is his physical survival jeopardized but his social development is threatened. The freedom to grow is perhaps the next most important need. Devoted parents often hold their children too close, and authoritative parents may unnecessarily deny their children this opportunity of free expression. In the family life there should be a normal mother-father relationship and an understanding of childhood problems and behavior, joys, woes, and doubts. Neurotic tendencies in members of the family are often detrimental to normal development of children.

Generally, the home does not teach the child skills as it formerly did, but parents can teach by reading and talking to the child. Answering the child's questions may not be an easy task, but one should endeavor to do so. The time and effort they devote to living on the child's level of mind and interest should not be begrudged by the parents. The bonds of comradeship will be strengthened, and parents will find that their own horizons will be widened as they

\textsuperscript{7}Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, \textit{The A B C of Foster-Family Care for Children}, Bulletin 216, p. 2.
become interested in things they had no time for before the child aroused and motivated their interests. By sharing their recreational activities with the children the parents may promote such qualities as sportsmanship, unselfishness, and honesty.

Prospective foster parents may wonder if they will be different from natural parents. They frequently have more typically genuine enthusiasm for children than natural parents, since they deliberately bring children into their home, and many others merely accept those who come to them. There is, of course, no physical bond between them and their children, no common heredity, no responsibility for bringing them into the world; but these matters do not as a rule affect the parent-child relationship.

Whatever may be the motive for adopting children, foster parents are accepting a tremendous responsibility. They must recognize the seriousness of voluntarily becoming, through a legal procedure, the parents of a child. Their engagement to care for and educate the child may entail great sacrifices; but the responsibilities and risks involved must be squarely faced. They must be willing to assume such obligations for the sake of the happiness and pleasure the child may bring to them and the happiness and security they may bring to it. They must not consider adoption at all if they realize that because of ignorance, lack of understanding of their duty, insufficient income, or
emotional instability, they are not entirely fit to be entrusted with such a precious thing as the life of a child. But those who have the necessary qualifications will find their compensation in the love the child will have for them, in the joy of seeing a young life develop normally, and in the acquisition of an undying interest in life.)
CHAPTER V

SELECTING THE CHILD

After the prospective adoptive parents have definitely decided that they really want a child, and that they either possess or are reasonably capable of developing the qualifications for good parenthood, they are ready to make formal application for the child. If they apply to a responsible agency, one that is interested only in making the best possible placement of the child, the prospective parents will find that all couples do not measure up to the required standards.

But when the agency is satisfied that the applicants are worthy and well qualified for the duties and responsibilities of parenthood, the next step is the selection of the child. The question, What kind of child with what kind of background and characteristics should they get? becomes all-important. The applicants will want to know something about the circumstances which made it necessary for such children as are available for selection to be offered for adoption; for example, whether they are foundlings, orphans, children of divorced parents, or children of parents who
gave them up for prudential reasons, or whose right to their
continued custody has been forfeited by misconduct or lost
through misfortune.

(Foundlings, or children who have been abandoned by
their parents, usually offer considerable risks, since the
agency will be unable to get the family history or to have
the parents examined for physical or mental defects. The
physical and mental endowments of the child, however, can
in time be ascertained with reasonable certainty by a com-
petent agency by using all the physiological and psycholog-
ical tests known to modern science. The hereditary factors,
of course, can usually be known only as they are revealed
in the child.) A very young child, whose ancestry is en-
tirely unknown, should therefore never be offered for adop-
tion. Time should be taken to learn all that can be reason-
ably learned about his capacities and propensities.

(There are not so many orphans placed for adoption as
might be generally supposed. These children are usually
taken by relatives, and are rarely legally adopted. A
good deal about the ancestry of orphans can usually be
learned, but, contrary to the seemingly prevailing opinion,
orphans do not appear to be a more suitable type for adop-
tion than other classes of children.)

(Children whose parents are financially unable to care
for them are occasionally offered for adoption, but in most
cases they are cared for in some other manner. Social workers are naturally very reluctant to tear a child permanently from the only home it ever knew so long as there is any likelihood that the parents will be able to provide for it at some time in the future. But when there seems to be no hope of reconstructing the home and such children are finally offered for adoption, those who are old enough to remember their parents and their former home may be expected to offer some serious difficulties. It may take a long time for them to become adjusted to their new environment and some of them may never feel that they completely belong to the new family.

Children of divorced couples who are old enough to know something of the family turmoil will likely be victims of an emotional instability which may seriously interfere with the building up of an adequate sense of security in their adopted home.

Some parents are morally unfit to rear children, and lose the custody of and parental authority over them by court action. Many will consider it established that the inheritance of such children from their immediate parents is bad. But even if this be true, it does not, of course, prove that the children cannot be suitably placed or that they will not prove to be satisfactory in every way. Children do not inherit all the bad qualities or all the good qualities of their near ancestors. But every care should
be taken to ascertain as nearly as possible the inherited characteristics of the particular child.

Some prospective adoptive parents would not under any circumstances consider adopting an illegitimate child; others will hesitate to do so; but a large majority of those who seek children for adoption consider the fact of illegitimacy to be a matter of no importance in itself. (There has been so much discussion of this phase of the problem of adoption that more time perhaps should be devoted to its consideration.)

A majority of the children who are available for adoption today are born out of wedlock. The spread of contraceptive information has not appreciably decreased the percentage of such births. And if being born out of wedlock renders a child unfit for adoption, then what we have called progress in the past is meaningless. It would indeed be a dismal thing to contemplate if all the fine children whose parents were not married to each other were to be consigned to a class fit only for institutional upbringing. Nor would the picture be much brighter after an institution had provided for their material well-being until they reached maturity. The alleged stigma of their birth could as reasonably be expected to follow them in after years, casting its shadow over the lives of their descendants unto generations yet unborn. Happily, a sane and rational society has a better solution for the problem
than that. And experience has indisputably shown that such children are altogether as satisfactory when adopted as is any other class.)

The principal objection to illegitimate children is on account of the fear that they will "turn out like their parents." (It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the relative importance of heredity and environment in influencing the lives and characters of human beings. But) it has never been proved that a child inherits his morality. And even if he does, we cannot know whether the morals of his grandmother will not appear in him as strongly as those of his mother.

It is believed by biologists that there are transmitted from parent to offspring certain physical and mental qualities and capacities, but the same authorities concede that these qualities may come from remote ancestors as well as from father and mother. Nothing in nature is truer than that like does not always beget like. There is often a correlation between parent and child with respect to mentality and temperament; on the other hand, one will often find in the same family both bright and dull children, the range of their mentality running all the way from genius to the most abject stupidity. Twins, and even identical twins, may not show family likeness or likeness to each other in mentality or talents. A child often shows traits or superior intelligence that cannot be found in either father
or mother, or he may reveal defective traits that neither parent seems to have.

The idea that a child's shortcomings should be blamed upon heredity has been fostered, perhaps unconsciously, by parents and educators merely as a method to escape their own responsibility for the proper guidance and training of the child. Traits of character are generally acquired by imitation, or by the influence of precept and example. Slum people do not make slums, but slums make slum people. If this were not true, the advantages of proper housing, nutrition, preventative medicine, education, and cultural environment would be imaginary rather than real.

(1) The children of illegitimate birth have an equal chance with other children to inherit capacities that make for happy and useful lives. People who engage in extra-marital relations are not always subnormal mentally. Poverty is considered an important cause of such irregularities. It does not of itself predispose to vice or looseness of morals, but it weakens the barriers against temptation. Marriage is often postponed because of economic insecurity, and every impediment to marriage tends to increase illicit relationships.)

Of course, if the prospective adoptive parents think that they cannot escape the uncomfortable feeling that the child has a stigma attached to the circumstances of his birth, or that he is foreordained to immoral or antisocial
activities, they should not, under any circumstances, adopt an illegitimate child. They will not be happy, and the child will know that he is not considered their equal.

After a consideration of the different classes of children who are available for adoption with respect to their backgrounds, the next step is to determine what are the essential things to be known about the particular child in order that the applicants may be satisfied with him and have the best possible assurance that the venture will be successful.

It is particularly important to know the sort of nervous and physical heritage the child may have; yet it may be exceedingly perilous to rely on a little knowledge of biology and heredity. Sometimes the pathway to the adoption of a promising child may be blocked only because the applicants know enough of these subjects to raise doubts in their minds and not enough to enable them to form reasonable conclusions as to the problems presented.

The applicants must realize the danger of being swayed by their emotions as they are permitted to visit the childplacing agency. In search of the long-awaited baby, they must not hurriedly take a child different from the one they had in mind. At no stage in the whole proceeding is it so necessary to be calm and deliberate. There will be brilliant children, healthy children, sick children, handicapped children, beautiful children, ugly children; children with
blue eyes, children with brown eyes, children with black hair, golden hair, red hair, and no hair at all. They may be of any age up to several years. Some will have complete family histories and some will have no history. Unless they have thought of the real situation in advance, the couple may be confused. In the seriousness of this momentous step, judgment rather than emotion must be the controlling factor. It is not wise for the prospective adoptive parents to be allowed to go into the nursery and select the baby that appeals to them the most. They might be influenced by his attractiveness before they knew anything of his background.

(It is considered a wise procedure to see only one child at a time, and the agency usually will exhibit only one at a time for inspection.) If two adorable children, both of whom apparently come up to the ideal of the applicants, are shown, they will hesitate to make a choice for fear that it will be the wrong choice. Too, it is difficult to choose between two children in the same room if they appear to be equally desirable, because the normal impulse of generous and sympathetic people will be to want both of them; and although the selection of a child for adoption is never a cold business transaction, unmixed with a bountiful supply of sentiment and emotion, the applicants must nevertheless be level-headed about it and keep in mind
that they cannot adopt all the adorable and helpless children in the world.

(No applicant should hesitate to leave the agency without making a selection when in doubt as to which child to accept. His chances of ever getting a child from that agency will not for that reason be jeopardized. Social workers understand that some children who seem to meet the most exacting requirements of the applicants will fail to appeal to them. It is not at all necessary that the applicants take a child because the agency thinks that is the one best suited to them and their circumstances.)

While it has been said with a great deal of truth that little children are pearls, and no one would think of selecting a pearl without the advice of an expert, nevertheless the final decision must in every case be made by the applicants themselves.) It is far from ridiculous to say that the selection of a child may be governed by psychic and psychological reactions which those who are making the selections can feel but can neither explain nor comprehend.

Adoption is a permanent proposition, and it should not be gone through with when there is a feeling that the adopting parents are not getting just what they want.

(Although the adopting parents will want to lose all trace of the natural parents of the child, and even forget that they ever existed, they should know something about them, because to some extent at least the natural father
and mother are being brought into their home in the personality and physical makeup of the child.

Perhaps the most important question that can be asked by the candidates for foster parenthood will be, Is the child sound in mind and body? Soundness of mind and body is the best equipment any child can have. But health is not altogether an individual matter. If the natural parents come from a line of long-lived people, the child will normally be expected to have a good family stamina, and information about the physical fitness of the natural parents will better enable the adoptive parents to understand the child's physical needs and to help him build a strong, healthy body.

A well-regulated agency will hesitate to offer for adoption a child whose family history discloses a likelihood of inherited disease, especially while he is young. And there are many scientific aids in determining a child's mental and physical fitness. All laboratory tests will be given. Older children should be given Wassermann tests in order to be certain that they are free of syphilis. The mothers of very young children are given the Wassermann test. The agency and the adopting parents should see to it that use is made of all that modern science can do to reduce the hazards incident to adoption. The services of a child specialist are usually secured by the agency. Intelligence tests are resorted to and the results are often
surprisingly accurate in gauging the child's intelligence quotient. The following case history shows what misery could have been avoided if reasonable care had been taken before a child was adopted:

The Browns had never had any children of their own. They adopted wistful little Edith, on whom they lavished all their indulgent affection and pride. Edith did not learn to walk at the customary age and as she grew older, her speech continued babyish and disjointed. Now she is twenty-two, but she has the mind of an eight-year-old. A spinal deformity has interfered with her physical development, and her foster parents have spent all their resources in a futile effort to help her. If proper physical and mental examinations had been made and the customary trial period had been used, this tragedy might have been prevented. Edith would have been cared for in another way, and a normal child might have had the benefit of the love and devotion of those parents.

(There are some adoptive parents who do not object if the child has a few physical defects. They are perhaps drawn to such children because of sympathy. If the parents are unusually intelligent and patient, the child may have a normal life and the lives of the parents may be enriched. Such a case happened when a couple adopted from a Texas agency a deaf girl because they were afraid the little child would not be adopted by anyone else.)
(The lack of the opportunity for securing necessary information about the physical and mental endowment of children taken from sources other than well-conducted agencies renders such adoption so risky that the practice is not advisable and is generally discouraged by those who have had experience in adoption. Mistakes will occasionally occur even when every precaution is taken, but nothing should be left to chance if it can be avoided.)

It is difficult to determine just how old a child should be in order to obtain the greatest assurance that its transplanting will be successful. There can be no inflexible rule; much will depend upon the attitudes and desires, and perhaps the age and circumstances, of the foster parents. In the case of an older child, one advantage undoubtedly lies in the fact that much more can be known about his health, mentality, and propensities. (And those who have very definite ideas as to the type of child they want can be reasonably assured that they are actually getting such a child when they get one who is a few years or several years of age. Too, they can know more about how the child will look as he grows older than it would be possible to know about an infant.)

But it seems that at the present time at least a large majority of foster parents secure babies. An infant will always seem more like their own child; having had him practically all his life, they will usually feel that he
belongs to them as truly as he would were he their natural child. This is a satisfaction that is difficult to attain if the child's character and personality have already developed to a considerable extent when he is brought into their home. Being more adaptable, the baby will have no difficulty in the transition. An older child, who remembers his parents and his former home, may find it difficult and it may take a long time to make the proper adjustment to his new surroundings. The parents will also have less adjustment to make if the child is an infant. It is impossible to think that any normal man and woman cannot become adjusted to a baby.

A baby will not have undergone the devastating experience of uncertainty and the feeling of insecurity which are usually the lot of an older child who has been torn from his moorings.

The care of the baby will present only the problems and necessitate the performance of the same duties as would attend the care of a natural child. His requirements will be largely physical.

The relationship between the foster parents and the child will be closer if he is adopted in his infancy, as there will be a common bond between them from his babyhood to his adulthood. There will be nothing that the child can remember from his former experiences that will affect his life. He will respond to the affection of the parents as
surely and as readily as he would were he flesh of their flesh and blood of their blood.

Those who have had wide experience in caring for babies and in finding homes for them believe that by the time a baby is three or four months of age it can generally be determined whether he has a sound mind and a sound body; whether he is bright or dull; and whether, taking into consideration a reasonable amount of information about his parents and the likelihood of inherited tendencies, he will likely prove to be a suitable child for a particular couple to adopt.

( It has been said that formerly adoptive parents selected the child from various sources without paying much attention to the child's mental endowments. If the child proved to be unsatisfactory it would be carried back; but now one can be reasonably assured of normal mentality in a child before it is placed for adoption. ) The modern model nursery has trained nurses who begin, when the child is about ten days old, to watch for any sign of abnormality. The lack of attention or response is noted. These nurses observe hundreds of children every year, and they are quick to discover any defects. At two or three months the baby should be able to hold up his head, and should coo or laugh at three or four months. He should begin to sit up at about six months. Something may occur later to retard his development, such as ill health; but the same might happen to a
natural child. (If the child's parents graduated from high school, they are considered mentally above the average. Since most children offered for adoption are from unmarried mothers, it is almost impossible for the social worker to interview the father, and the mother's word must suffice as to the father's education. If the mother did not finish high school, it will be learned whether she left school to go to work, or if it was because of many failures in school. If one doubts the normal mentality of the mother, she should be given a mental test.)

Intelligence tests are not always accurate in ascertaining the mentality of children, and especially of infants. Some children show poor results from these tests, and later great improvement will be noted. But these tests should always be used. If a child talks well before he is two years old, he is likely to be a superior child. Some children talk rather early and learn motor activities later than the average. Motor precocity does not always indicate superior mentality. Executive and artistic ability might be found in the behavior field rather than in the language field.

While a child's mental potentialities will be of great concern to prospective parents, this does not mean that they should expect the child to be endowed with superior mentality; but if the placement is to be successful, it usually means that the abilities of the child and the foster
parents should be approximately the same. The adoptive parents will want the child who comes into their home to be able to profit from the educational advantages which they are able to provide. The over-placed child, whose mental endowment is more limited than that of the adopting family, is rarely happy.

If parents are told that the baby is normal, it does not mean that he will do at six months what the baby in the next block will do at that age. Individual differences must be taken into consideration. If he makes steady progress, the baby is considered normal even if he does not measure up to certain standards or charts. The child who is directly under the care of intelligent people who speak well, and not under the care of some servant who can give him his food but rarely speaks at all, has a better chance of learning to speak earlier. Much depends upon the time spent with the child by different persons as to the rapidity with which he develops his speaking abilities. The child who is left alone cannot learn to talk very well because he has had no example.

The appearance of the child is not to be relied upon as a guide in determining his intelligence. Many children with low mentality are very attractive and sweet during their first years. Affection and an appealing smile may hide a dull mind. Some parents, especially the older ones, like a "well-behaved" child; and they may not realize that
the reason he is so quiet is that he does not have enough initiative to do otherwise.

To most foster parents the question of the sex of the child is important. Few will be satisfied with a girl if they have long wanted a boy. It seems, however, that the majority of the prospective parents desire girls. Many believe that it is more difficult to rear a boy than it is to rear a girl. Girls stay at home more than boys and seem more like members of the family; boys have a tendency to roam and live more active lives. "A girl is your girl all of her life, but a boy is your boy until he acquires a wife."

Boys are considered economic assets; and the applicants from rural communities seem to prefer them. Too, if the motive for the adoption is to secure an heir to carry on the family name and responsibilities, boys are preferred.

The selection of a child is such an important and serious step that one should not become impatient and select one who is not completely satisfactory in major requirements. Minor things, such as color of hair or eyes, are not so vital. Perhaps a blond child is the favorite choice of the applicants; but if a brunette who has all the other qualifications is taken, the parents will soon feel that a brunette was what they preferred all the time, and will wonder how they ever imagined they wanted a blond.

One adoptive family took a baby girl and planned to take another when the first child was about two years old,
so the two would be congenial. However, a suitable child could not be found when they thought it was a proper time to bring in little sister. Two more years elapsed before a suitable child was found. Perhaps it was better to have too many years' difference in ages than to take the risk of securing an inferior child who would be expected to compete with the older child whom psychiatrists had pronounced to be very superior.)

Adoptive parents can select their child with a feeling of assurance if patience, thoughtfulness, care, and the help of trained and experienced social workers are used.
CHAPTER VI

THE CHILD-PLACING AGENCY

There has been for many years a steady growth in technical skill based upon an understanding of children, of adopting parents, and the meaning and value of child-placement. In the last decade the business of caring permanently for homeless children has attained something approaching a scientific basis.

One of the first institutions to be established for the care of dependent children was the almshouse. But it was not established exclusively for children. Poor and wretched adults, some of whom were handicapped by age or disease, were gathered there. The almshouse was, in fact, a dumping ground for all kinds of misfits. And all were herded in large rooms with no segregation of the sexes.

As evidence of the evolution of public consciousness in regard to caring for dependent children we find the orphan asylum gradually replacing the almshouse. It was a distinct improvement. It was not merely a detention camp, but a place where the needs of children as a group could in some fashion be served. There was less danger of physical
and moral disintegration in the orphan home than in the almshouse. The facilities for a rudimentary education were provided.

Clothier thus describes these early institutions:

Faupers, drunkards, drug addicts, sexual perverts, and the insane became the daily companions of the children committed to these institutions (almshouses). They became habitations of vice and degradation.

The orphan asylum came next after the vices of the almshouse became generally known. It offered a routine much like a convent. Hard work, memorizing scriptures and singing sentimental songs of gratefulness played a most important part in the program. This is a sample of the songs they sang:

With cheerful notes begin the strains
To charity so justly due;
And gratulate this orphan train
On the best hopes they ever knew.

No more complaining fills the street
Of children who deserted roam,
For here the houseless vagrants meet
A benefactor and a home.

And girls defenceless, wretched, poor,
Snatched from the haunts of vice and care,
From ill examples here secure
Instruction and protection share.

Trained in wisdom's pleasant ways,
And taught to be discreet and good,
Virtue will be through all their days
From habit and from choice pursued.

Then as they praise each patroness
Who bounty and assistance lends,
Join them in prayers that God will bless
The institution and its friends.

The attitude of the people of that day as reflected in the song seems to have been one of smug satisfaction that

1Clothier, op. cit., p. 598.
so much was being done for homeless children. Food and shelter are very important, as well as instruction and education; but the community attitude in other generations was that if an institution provided for the material wants and some educational advantages, there was little more to be desired. The individual attention and care which a child can receive only in a home was not considered of prime importance. The institution was an end in itself, and not a means for attaining an end. The most outstanding development in child care during the present generation has been the realization that institutional care of children can never be the ideal solution for the problem of the homeless child. We know now that a homeless child needs above all else simply a home.

Even in the days of the almshouse there was occasionally an adoption, either legal or de facto, of an inmate. The custom generally was to allow anyone desiring a child to take his choice of any in the institution. When a child was taken, there was one less mouth to feed; and it seems that there was never any concern as to the character or qualifications of the adopting parents or any thought on the part of those who operated the house as to the conditions which were likely to have either a favorable or an unfavorable effect upon the success of the undertaking.

When society began to realize that all was not being done for a dependent normal child that should be done until
he has a home with a real family and is allowed to grow up as a member of that family, the need for some scientific selection and preparation of children for adoption was apparent. Haphazard methods of placing children in foster homes led to many unhappy and unsuccessful adoptions. The establishment of the child-placing agency, financed by state, municipal, or private funds, and staffed by trained and expert personnel, appeared to offer the best chance for improvement in the broad field of child-welfare work.

We still have the orphan homes, supported by the state or by religious or fraternal groups, and there is still a real necessity for these homes. But the people who are responsible for the operation of the orphan homes have learned much about the scientific aspects of child placement, and are willing to allow a child to be taken from the home only when there appears to be a reasonable chance that his new surroundings will be congenial and beneficial.

The "adoption nursery" is an institution of recent origin, and offers to adopting parents the best guarantee that they will be taking into their home a baby who is normal physically and mentally; and the baby's chances for future growth and happiness are very materially enhanced. The adoption nursery receives the baby usually a few days after its birth. Most of the children are those of unmarried mothers. The nursery is not an orphans' home, or
a home in any sense of the word. The babies who prove to be suitable for adoption are allowed to be adopted; those who are too defective to be offered for adoption are given homes in proper institutions.

A pioneer in adoption work was Miss Josephine Flows-Day of London. Twenty years of experience in working with unmarried mothers convinced her that the child had his best if not his only chance for happiness and health of body and mind if taken entirely out of the unfortunate conditions under which he was born and adopted by suitable families. Miss Flows-Day later became one of the founders of the National Children's Adoption Society of England. The Society maintains a Babies' Hostel and nursery training school. It places from three hundred to four hundred babies each year with carefully investigated and selected adopting families.

In 1895 Miss Clara B. Spence of New York, a friend of Miss Flows-Day, became interested in organized work for the saving of babies through adoption. She was maintaining the Spence School for Girls; and when the alumnae association of her school desired a field of work, she suggested the founding of an adoption nursery. Her suggestion resulted in the establishment of the Spence Alumnae Nursery, from which more than eight hundred children have been adopted.

The most outstanding of the private nurseries is The Cradle in Evanston, Illinois. Many motion picture stars
secure babies from this institution, and it has received much publicity from newspapers and magazines. It is a charitable institution and all its revenues are derived from voluntary gifts and endowments, since it receives no financial aid from city, state, or church and has no alliance with organized social-welfare groups. Its services are free. There have been sharp differences with the welfare groups over both the theory and practice of adoption. Prospective adoptive parents are not informed of the names of the child's parents, married or unmarried, but are given only general information. This is contrary to the practice of most agencies. The applicants are not allowed to "shop around." They see only one child -- the one selected for them. The Cradle attempts to match child and adoptive parents in racial stock, in temperament, in coloring, and in cultural heritage. Parents are not asked to take a child unless they are entirely satisfied. No child who is considered a fit subject for adoption is ever turned away, and every child accepted has been adopted. The Cradle finds the foster parents willing to take their advice and judgment without investigation of their own. Health is a first consideration, and the baby is kept long enough for this to be guaranteed. The average length of time spent by a baby in the institution is forty days. Elaborate investigation of the ancestry of the baby is not made, but information is based on intuition and understanding of mother psychology. The adoption of a baby from The Cradle is a
process of selection on both sides. Before the baby is received the mother is questioned and her statements are verified to some degree. Prospective parents must satisfy the institution that they will give the child a good home.

The Cradle came into existence because of the vision of Florence Walrath, who is more than sixty years of age. She had personally found and placed sixty children before she gathered a band of volunteer workers. It was organized in 1923 and still has the original board of directors. By 1935 The Cradle had placed three thousand infants. On account of excellent care and feeding the death rate is less than one per cent -- the lowest in the world. Infants considered unfit for adoption are returned to the mother or placed in a suitable institution. The period during which the baby is being examined and established on his artificial feeding is spent in collecting and weighing all the facts obtainable which go to make up his heritage, so that every reasonable assurance may be had that he is sound and normal. It is this exhaustive study of the child under modern and scientific methods that most notably distinguishes The Cradle.

Mrs. Walrath believes that parenthood is spiritual as well as physical, and it should be considered a stewardship, not an ownership. Babies should not be victims of a broken law. Society welcomes the adopted baby when he loses his identity in an accepted home. Adoptive parents must trust
her judgment as to the background of the child, as no so-
cial history is given them.

The case-work agency offers the child, his natural
parents, and the adopting parents a measure of security
that cannot be left to chance, no matter how excellent or
how well-intentioned the agent of chance may be. The
agency accepting adoption as its function is subject to two
kinds of pressure, one from within, which is the pressure
to adhere to its own case-work philosophy, developed through
years of practical experience; and the other from without --
the pressure of the community to meet its needs -- the
need of families wanting children for adoption, and the gen-
eral feeling of the community that it is right in demanding
that these needs be met because they are inherent in cer-
tain phases of human relationships.

Case work has to do with realities, and the worker who
understands this is enabled to make an efficient contribu-
tion to the value of the institution. The sphere of in-
fluence of the agency can be increased only on the basis of
its own work. It has a triple responsibility, one to the
child, one to the parents of the child, and one to the
adopting parents. It owes the child the responsibility of
finding the home which offers the best assurance of giving
him the opportunity of normal growth and development; it
owes to the natural parents the responsibility of securing
for the child of their own flesh and blood the best of everything that can be had -- at all events, a better situation than they could offer him; and to the adopting parents it owes the responsibility of wise counsel and guidance in selecting a normal, healthy child who will be best fitted to them and their surroundings. When it has done all these things well, it has fulfilled its responsibility to the community.

The adoption procedure begins with the parents of the child. If the child is illegitimate, which is usually the case, the procedure begins with the mother. The agency usually points out to the mother the advantages that adoption would bring to herself and to the child, and does all that is possible to assist her in making a wise decision as to whether the child ought to be offered for adoption. After the mother decides to allow the child to be offered for adoption, the emphasis shifts from her to the child. She will be required to give all possible information about her own background and that of the child's father. She will be made to understand that it is for the child's interest that this information be given truthfully and fully; it will aid materially in selecting the proper adoptive parents and home for her child.

After the agency has learned all that it is possible to know about the child, his background, his heredity, and his mental and physical endowments, its duty is to find for him the most suitable foster home.
The agency ascertains the respective ages of the prospective adoptive parents, their educational attainments, church affiliations, occupations, income, nationality, number of times they have married, and the duration of the present marriage where the applicants are husband and wife. Any history of divorce will be carefully scrutinized. It usually requires a statement from the banker, the family physician, and the pastor of the applicants. In addition to what may be learned from interviews with the applicants and from the references required, the agency will make an independent investigation of their background and general situation and circumstances.

After the child has been selected by the applicants with the approval of the agency, the actual mechanics of the adoption process are just being put into operation. The child is taken to the home of the prospective parents and kept for a considerable waiting and adjustment period. During this time the social workers of the agency will make regular visits to the home of the applicants to learn if the child seems to be suited to them and if they seem to be suited to the child. It is not at all certain that the prospective parents will eventually want to adopt that particular child at the end of the trial period; nor is it certain that they will be allowed to do so even if it is their desire. If it is determined that a mistake is about to be made, the child is returned to the agency and a more suitable foster home is sought for him.
Hope Cottage, at Dallas, Texas, is one of the best regulated adoption nurseries or child-placing agencies in the country. The following is an account of some of its proceedings:

The first break that the babies get at Hope Cottage is Mrs. Glen Carson (the Executive Secretary). Motherly in every move, . . . she has the mother's touch. In that job, what else matters?

Every one of those babies, right on to the little pickaninny, belongs to Mother Carson. She and her staff treat them just as you treat your babies at home; the same feeding formulas, routine living, play hours, and care.

It is a difficult matter to get one of those babies away from Hope Cottage. It's an adoption center, all right, but you can't get a baby in a day or two, or a week or two. Many years ago the adoption of an infant was a matter of a day or so. "Never did the mother have the opportunity to get on her feet and determine whether she wanted to care for her child," said Mrs. Carson. "Now we give them that opportunity. Never is an adoption completed in less than six months. We make every effort to establish the mother, help her get a job and have the chance at real motherhood. Several babies in Hope Cottage now are kept there by mothers who pay their board."

In 1941, Hope Cottage completed eighty-nine adoptions and handled 184 babies. Not once did they have to bring back a baby because of a wrong decision on the part of the parents.

"We visit the homes of the parents who take our children regularly for six months," said Mrs. Carson. "If, for any reason, we feel they should be returned, we bring them back. On their nine-month birthday the babies are returned for a clinical checkup to determine if normal development has occurred. Too, we ask the parents to return the babies on their second birthday for a routine checkup." On those occasions, she said, the psychiatrists who examine them have never failed to raise their mentality rating. It is a great protection to the foster parents -- and gives Hope Cottage a tremendous feeling of pride that their infants have developed almost 100 per cent since the start of the institution.
No longer do couples seeking an infant come in and ask for the proverbial "blue-eyed, curly-haired blonde." Now they just want a child. An average of three applications are made daily, but not all are accepted. Case workers spend tireless weeks examining the background of prospective foster parents. They ferret out every characteristic. If an infant is high spirited and demands considerable attention, it is placed with a stable, unemotional couple. Incidentally, Hope Cottage tries to place all children with comparatively young couples, feeling that the couples past middle age will be far out of a youngster's age range.

Prospective parents are required to take an exhaustive medical examination, including the Wassermann test, and no infant is released to parents without positive proof that they are well-intentioned, qualified parents. Oh, yes -- if you want to adopt a cute little one at Hope Cottage, don't be impatient. The waiting list would make it impossible to fill your order in less than eighteen months.2

The staff at Hope Cottage are exceedingly painstaking and thorough in securing all relevant information about the child and the prospective adoptive parents. Copies of the application form, health record of foster father and mother, release of the child by its natural parent, the child's social history, and the agreement between the agency and the adoptive parents are included in the Appendix.

If a qualified agency is used, the foster parents can be assured that the decision to sever the natural relationship and to transfer the legal custody to the agency was carefully done and that all legal requirements for the completion of all the processes have been complied with. This type of agency will ask for no money but will ask for much information concerning the adopting family and their motives for wanting a child. It would seem to be better if such an

2Felix McKnight, "Mother Love Gets Assistance of Science to Give Babies a Good Start at Hope Cottage," Dallas News, April 27, 1942, p. 4.
agency is found near the home of the adopting parents, so that visits and investigations can be made with less expense. However, some couples prefer to deal with an agency which is located a great distance from their home, as this might check the curiosity of the neighbors. If the agency is located in another state, there might be legal complications since the laws of the two states may be different. Too, if the child is very young, there might be enough change of climate if it is carried a great distance to affect its health.

An irresponsible agency cannot give the parents or the child any protection if an unwise selection has been made. For this reason, if there were no others, no one should patronize baby farms or non-legal maternity homes.

Some maternity or rescue homes do a great work for both unmarried mothers and their children, but in most cases they are in the business for the profit there is attached to it, and the workers are not well trained. These homes are usually operated by individuals, and even though profit is the principal motive, the owners would probably like to be able to give the child all physical and mental examinations, but they usually do not have the means or the facilities. Institutions which cannot afford a social worker cannot hope to do satisfactory work. There is a failure to learn enough about children when they are taken, or to record what may have been learned. Often high standards
are not required of the foster home. There is a lack of attention to the health of the child and the foster family. There is no supervision after the child is placed to see if proper adjustment has been made.

The orphans' home is now an agency for child-placement. Older children are more often placed by this agency. Children are sometimes placed hurriedly when there is pressure for space in the home for new inmates. Too often placement has been done casually by busy executives or trustees who think they have found a good home for the child without realizing the difficulties or far-reaching consequences involved in adoption.

The physicians and hospitals that immediately place the infants of their patients feel that they are doing the families a distinct service, but experience has shown that it is unwise to ask a physician or a hospital for a newborn baby without having him under the observation of trained workers for several months. There is a possibility that a baby may be sought by a couple and sold to them to pay the hospital and doctor's bills; and, although usually high motives actuate those engaged in these transactions, the danger is too great and the practice should be discouraged.

Some institutions having adoption for their purpose fall into errors as a result of their peculiar constitutions.
Since their appeal to the public is solely on the basis of making placements for adoption, they may fail to see adoption in its proper relationship, as one of a variety of procedures by which the needs of children may be met, and as one with many serious risks. The true interests of the child do not always demand adoption, but may be better served by some other arrangement. Those who see adoption as the only solution for the problems of all children are likely to sentimentalize their philosophy to a point which regards as unnecessary the investigations which are an integral part of good adoption work. In most instances, child-placing agencies accept and use modern methods of placing, and few are misplaced; but they are not omniscient, and careful study is necessary if the transplanting of a child is to bring no maladjustment.

When the community understands the importance of the agencies in adoption, the poorer types will not be tolerated, and better methods of handling the problems will be used. The cardinal principle of every adoption agency should be that every child is entitled at birth to a fair chance in life. This is believed by all to be a natural and a divine right.
CHAPTER VII

LEGAL PROCEDURE

Now we come to the consideration of the legal and judicial phases of adoption, "the tough cement that holds together the disconnected fragments of the various contributing disciplines and builds a firm wall of security about the child."\(^1\)

Adoption statutes began to appear in the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. In all of the states the statutes now require court procedure. The early laws prescribed a process whereby custody of a child could be transferred by deed, by special legislative act, or by contract. A trend toward greater administrative and court supervision is seen in the more recent legislation. In the related fields, such as the licensing and supervision of placing agencies, maternity homes, hospitals, the prohibition of advertising for or of children for adoption, a growing emphasis on the human elements is reflected. This is shown in provisions for the consent of the natural parents, investigation before adoption, and the trial period. These are primarily to guard the helpless child, but in reality they also protect both natural and foster

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\(^1\)Brooks, op. cit., p. 121.
parents. Heisterman describes the tendency of modern adoption legislation as follows:

A study of the history of America's adoption legislation discloses that many of the earlier laws were intended merely to provide a procedure by which the custody of a child could be legally transferred from the natural parent to the adopting parent, the chief object in many states being to enable the adopting parent to make the child his legal heir. These laws are now being gradually displaced by legislation which, in the light of modern developments for the care and protection of children, emphasize the human relationships involved in adoption. . . . The modern adoption legislation reflects a growing emphasis on the necessity of a better understanding of the child's individual needs, so that he may be adopted into a home where he will be happy and develop properly. This tendency is manifested in the important aspects of adoption legislation, such as the provision for social investigation pending hearing of the case, a trial period of residence of the child in the proposed home, adequate consent to the adoption, restrictions on the parental transfer of the custody of the child, and also for safeguards against undesirable placements for adoption.²

Since adoption is the establishment of the legal relationship of parent and child, between a child and a person other than his natural parent, the question will arise as to the legal effects of this new relationship. These are:

1. The child takes the name of the adopter.
2. The adopting parent is entitled to the child's custody and to his services and earnings during his minority.
3. The child is entitled to support, care, and education from his adopter.
4. The child and his adopter may inherit from each other.

To validate the adoption proceedings, which vitally affect the rights of the child's natural parents, it is normally essential to have their consent. There are exceptions, as when a parent is mentally incompetent, or has forfeited his right to the care and custody of the child by reason of his neglect or misconduct.

The child's welfare must be the paramount consideration in every case. The rights and natural ties of love and affection of his parents should also be given due regard. The causes for taking the custody of the child from his natural parents are carefully weighed to see if such action is justifiable. No enlightened court would take a child from his parents on account of poverty alone, no matter how many advantages the adopting parents could offer.

Limitations of Transfer of Parental Control

We have seen in this study the importance of protecting the child from indiscriminate placing by his parents. A number of states prohibit the transfer of parental guardianship or control of children under certain ages without an order of court unless the transfer is made to a licensed children's agency. Parents should not be allowed to give up parental rights and responsibilities without the consideration of all issues involved. The consequences of such acts are too far-reaching and defenceless children should be fully protected by law. Some states will permit the
transfer of guardianship without the approval of any recognized social or welfare agency. Connolly gives the following account of such practices:

Figures from many sections of the United States sustain the charge that "boot-leg" adoptions far out-number those sponsored by authorized welfare groups. A study made in New Jersey of over 1000 adoptions reveals less than 300 sponsored by any welfare agency. A similar survey for 1931-1932 in Pennsylvania records agency participation in only 129 out of 712 adoptions. Behind the "boot-leg" adoptions -- made without investigation, records, intelligence and health tests, or a probationary period of trial -- lies the shameful twilight zone of heartless commercialism, haste, deceit, avarice, and ignorant blundering well-nigh incredible in this civilized day. Against this iniquitous practice the U. S. Children's Bureau, the Child Welfare League of America, and practically all other child-protective groups in the land are ar-reigning themselves. Citizens can help by promoting a more honest public attitude toward child adoption and by applying when desirous of adopting a child only to certified, authorized agencies. Adopting couples, even if from selfish motives only, should let the off-color, secret, or substandard nursery severely alone.  

Jurisdiction

In the majority of states the jurisdiction has been placed in probate or orphans' courts. In many others, the courts dealing with adoptions have no connection with juvenile courts. In such courts the adoption may be considered as a routine matter and a thorough study of the case may not be made.

The adoption laws in many states require the petition to be filed in the county or city in which the petitioner

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resides; some specify that it be filed in the city or county of the residence of the child; while others provide that it may be filed in either. Many authorities believe that it is better to have the proceedings in the jurisdiction where the adopting parents reside.

Interstate Adoption

The adoption laws of many states indicate that the adopting parents must be residents of the state in which the adoption takes place. This is very desirable in that adequate social investigation can be made with less expense, and the trial period of residence can be more properly supervised. However, non-residents may in some states win adoption decrees by submitting to the jurisdiction of the courts where the children reside and complying with all requirements of the law.

Adoption Procedure

Adoption proceedings are instituted by filing a petition for adoption in the proper court. It should give the name, age, and sex of the child; the new name by which he is to be known; the names and addresses of the petitioners; the names and addresses of the living parents of the child and all available information concerning them, together with their reasons for desiring to be relieved of their parental responsibilities, or, if they are morally unfit or mentally incapable of giving consent, or are dead,
these facts should be stated. The laws of some states provide for the appointment of a guardian ad litem or "next friend" to represent the true interests of the child if there is neither a competent parent or regular guardian to give consent.

The child's consent to the proceedings is required by law in most states, provided he is of a specified age. This required age ranges from ten to seventeen years.

Social Investigation

Social investigation should include the securing of information concerning the moral fitness and financial responsibility of the adopting parents and also the mental and physical fitness of the child. Ten states require this investigation to be made by or under the supervision of the State Department of Public Welfare. Twelve others require the investigation to be made by a person appointed by the court in which the adoption proceedings are pending. Twenty-two states have no such requirement at all.

In about half of the jurisdictions the statutes require a hearing before the decree is granted. This is not considered necessary in other states if the proper consents have been obtained and other requisites met. Some states require the adopters and natural parents to appear in court; generally, however, the natural parents are not required to appear, after due notice of the hearing has been served them and proper consent has been obtained.
The decree of the court confirms the adoption. When it is entered, the child belongs to the adopting parents. Many of the states require that the bureau of vital statistics issue a new birth certificate in the name given the child in the court proceedings, with no indication that the child has been adopted or as to whether it is legitimate.

Provisions for the annulment of the adoption under certain conditions are made in the laws of eighteen states. Reasons for annulment vary, but are generally such as evidences of feeblemindedness, insanity, epilepsy, or venereal disease in the child, from causes existing at the time of the adoption and not known to the adopting parents. Misrepresentation or fraud may be ground for annulment in some cases. Foster parents will, of course, forfeit their rights to the child by misconduct of such gravity as to prove their unfitness to have the custody of a child.

Inheritance of Property

One of the impelling motives immediately actuating adopting parents to take a child is the desire to make him their heir. If there are natural children in the family, they all share equally. It has been generally held that a statute making the adopted child an heir of the adopting parent does not entitle him to inherit from the ancestors of the adopting parent, nor does it make him the heir of the kindred of those who adopt him; but there are some exceptions to these general rules. Four states provide that
adoption does not prevent a child from inheriting from his natural parents; and the general rule is that natural parents may not inherit from their child who has been adopted by another.

Strict compliance with the statutory requirements in adoption proceedings is necessary in order to insure the validity of the adoption; although the courts will hesitate to set aside an adoption that is otherwise satisfactory because of a technical non-observance of some statute.

In about one third of the states the records of adoption proceedings are not open to the public; persons having a direct interest in the proceedings only are allowed to inspect them. In other jurisdictions, the final decree is a public record, but the evidence and other reports filed in the case are not open to inspection by the public.
CHAPTER VIII

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

When the final decree is granted, the adopting parents have the sole responsibility of the child. The relationship between them will be largely what the parents make it. The question will certainly arise, "What, when, and how shall I tell my child about his early life?" The way adoptive parents meet this question divides them into three classes. There are those who do not intend to tell their child that he is not of their flesh and blood; those who tell him the essential facts as early as he can understand them; and those who tell him so late in his childhood that the knowledge profoundly affects him.

Those who do not tell the child that he is adopted believe that he will never know the truth. Many believe that the course of adoption would run more smoothly if the child never suspected that he was not born to his parents. But those who rely on the chance that he will not learn the truth are running a dangerous risk. Too many people are concerned in the adoptions and the knowledge invariably leaks out. The facts may be revealed innocently and they
may be revealed maliciously; but revealed they will be. When the child learns the truth from people other than his parents, the demoralizing effects of the shock may never be entirely overcome. When he learns that he has been deceived in regard to such a personal and important matter, he may never trust his parents again. Or, he may conceal the fact that he knows the truth lest such knowledge hurt his parents. Many questions may arise in his mind the answers to which he would like to have, but he may fail to mention them. He may become resentful toward his parents, which fact may cause him to run away from home.

Those who wait too long to tell the child that he is adopted of course run the same risks as those who do not tell him at all. The earlier he learns this fact from those he trusts the most, the easier it will be for him to accept them without disturbance. But experience has indisputably shown that a child can grow up with the knowledge of his true status without seemingly giving it a serious thought; but adolescents rarely are endowed with sufficient philosophic calm to carry them unscathed through the emotional upheaval that the stark realities might engender, even though they may be able to understand that the adoption was the best thing that could have happened to them.

Those who tell the child as soon as he can grasp any of the significance of the facts find that it rarely causes a ripple on the serenity of his mind. It is not so difficult
as one might suppose to explain to a child that he was a chosen and selected child; that the word "adopted" is something fine and wholesome. The mother might say, "We selected you because we wanted you; I did not give you physical birth, but that does not matter; whoever did would not have been your real mother until she had worked for you and cared for you and learned to love you as I do. For some good reason which neither of us will ever know, she brought you into the world but left real motherhood to me. You are my child because I want you and love you."

Clothier expresses the necessity of telling the child the truth while he is small:

The parents and the child's affection for them are the very foundations on which his life is built. But on this foundation of real love is usually built a superstructure of imagination and fantasy. The child loves to play, to make believe, to pretend; and one of the oldest of these fantasies, as old as legends and fairy stories, is the idea that the child is not really the son of his parents but comes from a strange kingdom where his real parents were fabulously rich and famous. Some adults can actually recall their own imaginings along this line. Others have forgotten them. But it seems to be true that at some time during childhood such representations occur to every child. The beauty of them is of course that the child can always turn from them to find his mother or father very close to him and very real and satisfying people. But suppose that one day he should inadvertently be told that his parents were not really his own. The whole world is turned upside-down. Fantasy becomes reality, and reality becomes unreal. It may well be a shock from which the child cannot recover. It may fill him with resentment at having been deceived, or it may turn him so completely against his parents and into a world of imagination that he can never find a satisfying place in the real world. Such a discovery
always comes as a profound blow, no matter what age a child may have reached, in adolescence or even in maturity. It is for this reason that every reputable child-placing agency urges adoptive parents to tell the child at once. If this is done, he grows up with the knowledge of his adoption as a fact in reality, something that has always been, with which he is so familiar that most of the time it is taken for granted and forgotten. Naturally he will be curious at various times and at various ages. He will want to know and should know about his origin. But during all this time, if the adoption is a successful one, he will be growing more deeply into the love of his adoptive parents, finding the security that he needs, making the necessary identifications with the people who are legally and emotionally his parents.¹

In a small city there are five adopted children living in the same block. They all seem to be very happy and very proud of the fact that they are adopted. They know that they were wanted; and they feel that their parents are pleased with them. The one natural child living in the block feels that she is the one who is different, as is shown by her question, "Mother, are you sure that I am not an adopted child, too?"

As the child grows older he may ask about his natural parents and why they gave him up. Adoptive parents should be ready for such questions. At first, some parents may be tempted to disclaim any knowledge of the past in order to postpone the ordeal as long as possible; others may evade the question, leaving the child to use his imagination. But these questions should be met honestly and the facts explained in language that the child can understand;

¹Clothier, op. cit., p. 598.
and the information should be given in such a way as will best meet his emotional needs. It must be remembered that the natural parents had positive as well as negative qualities, and there was a real reason for allowing the child to be adopted. Denial of these facts is a denial of reality, and makes a false foundation for a real and constructive relationship.

Foster or prospective parents may be interested in what other foster parents think about problems that have arisen in their experiences. The following material is taken from an article by Brooks.²

This is a study of how forty foster homes regard their experience with adoption. Twenty-nine of the participating families reside in the south and southwest and eleven in the north. The occupational distribution reveals eight as farming, ten in the professions, eighteen in business and industry, and four in miscellaneous pursuits. In twelve of the forty homes "own" children had been born, but in three the "own" children had died. In two homes, children were born subsequent to the coming of the adopted children. Some of the questions asked and the gist of the answers are given:

1. Can the flow of affection between foster parents and child compare favorably with that which exists in the

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case of own children? More than three fourths of the participants disclosed clearly, often enthusiastically, even where own children had been born, that they believed the affection in the foster type of family was not in the least inferior to that of the more usual type where children are born to their parents.

2. What part does instinct play in child care and affection? They believed thirty-seven to one (two omitted) that efficient parenthood is not a matter of instinct or of ready-made attitudes and abilities, but an acquisition that comes through hard study and patient work.

3. To what extent is the foster parent aware, as the years pass, that the adopted child is not his own? Thirty-five homes have become so accustomed to thinking of their foster children as their own that they have practically forgotten the earlier circumstances of the child.

4. Is it wise to tell the child that he is adopted and, if so, when? Thirty-eight answered that it is wise to tell the child; two were in doubt. Most of the thirty-eight agreed that he should be told before he was ten years of age.

5. Should all possible details of the child's history be known by the foster parent? Thirty-eight agreed that is may be better at times to be able to say honestly in answer to unimportant details about the child -- whether to himself later or to an inquiring neighbor -- "I don't
know"; that from the child's standpoint it is possible to investigate too deeply into his background. The implication here is that any searching which exceeds the bounds of good sense and dips into the trivial or morbid may lead to embarrassment and distress on the one hand, and to falsehood on the other.

6. Should the so-called illegitimacy of the child be considered by prospective parents as a barrier to adoption? Thirty-seven replied, "No." They thought that the ancestry of so-called illegitimate children is likely to be better than that of legitimate children thrown on the market for adoption. One parent said: "To reasoning, intelligent people, who do not let their emotions govern them, I do not think illegitimacy would be a bar."

7. Is it proper to adopt a child as a sort of insurance against loneliness and old age, or for later work about the house and farm? Fourteen answered, "Yes": twenty, that they were doubtful; and four answered, "No" (two omitted).

8. Is there a tendency to put too much emphasis upon the immediate parentage of a child and to undervalue the importance of earlier ancestry? Thirty-two answered in the affirmative, believing with many biologists that the child's own parents contribute only a portion of the physical and mental constitution of the offspring; that parents are a by-pool in the long stream of heredity; that preceding generations play a very large part.
9. Which seems the greater risk, the uncertain heredity of the child, or the uncertainty about whether the prospective parents are desirable? All forty agreed that in the process of adoption the more serious risk is that the child may be misplaced in a home where emotionally unstable parents can inflict irreparable damage upon mental and physical foundations that were hereditarily sound.

10. What is the attitude of the community, and intimate friends and relatives, toward the adoptive home? It was found that the inquisitiveness of the community was usually superficial rather than malicious in its nature. The manner in which the child is accepted depends very largely upon the reputation of the adopting family. Thirty-nine testified that the adopted child will not suffer from the taunts of playmates if he feels secure in the affections of his foster parents and if they have tactfully and honestly unfolded his history to him.

There is always a great change in the home after the baby arrives. It is said that parents live in a different world from non-parents. Their attitude toward life becomes broadened and deepened. Husband and wife may have been devoted to each other but narrow and unconsciously selfish in their social outlook. But they become radiant, generous, and interested in all children after they have become especially interested in one child.
The adoption relationship is unique; it is different from any other relationship between parents and child; but it has its own particular joys and its own sense of pride; and it can bring the greatest satisfaction only if the inherent values are recognized.

There are many fortunate adoptions, but this does not prove that every childless couple should take a child. All are not capable of understanding a child or willing to make the necessary sacrifices in rearing one; but for the majority, parenthood is such an enriching experience that it is worth whatever it may cost.)
APPENDIX
THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF DALLAS

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That we, and

wife,

for and in consideration of the placement by the Hope Cottage Association of Baby

in our care and custody for a probation period of six (6) months:

Do hereby agree that at the end of the said probation period, if our home is deemed suitable for the said baby, and if the said baby is satisfactory and suitable in all respects and we desire to keep it in our custody, we will present it for examination to the Child Guidance Clinic, at Dallas, Texas, and complete the adoption of the said child in one of the District Courts of Dallas County, Texas, within the following three (3) months, through an attorney designated by the Hope Cottage Association.

Witness our hands at Dallas, Texas, this the day of , A. D. 19

______________________________

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, this the day of , A. D. 19

______________________________

Notary Public, Dallas County, Texas
HOPE COTTAGE ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATED)
DALLAS, TEXAS

RELEASE BY PARENT

I, ____________________________________________, living at No. _____________, ____________________________ St.
in the city of ________________________________, ____________________________ County, Texas, being
over ________ years of age and being the ____________________________________________ of a certain child known as ________________________________, said child having been born on
the ________ day of __________________________, 19______, being solicitous that my said child should receive the ben-
efits and advantages provided by the Hope Cottage Association, a corporation duly organized and existing under
and by virtue of the laws of the State of Texas, and said corporation being willing to receive my said child and
provide for ____________________________________________ a Christian home where ____________________________ will be loved, trained and educated so
as to be fitted for the requirements of life: ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Now, therefore, in consideration of the benevolent purpose of said corporation with respect to my said
child and the expense to which said corporation will be put in its providing a home for my child, I do hereby
commit my parental authority, control and custody over my said child to the said Hope Cottage Association
until said association shall secure for my child a permanent home with some proper person or persons who will
legally adopt it, whereupon my parental authority, control and custody of my said child shall be considered
transferred to and shall vest in its said foster parent to the same extent as if the same had been directly trans-
ferred by me to such foster parent in the first instance; and

I hereby authorize and empower the said association as my agent and attorney-in-fact to execute in my
name any other and further transfer or release of my parental authority, control and custody over my said child
to such adopted parent as said association may deem proper or expedient by way of original transfer or confir-
mation of the transfer hereinabove made by me to such adopted parent or parents.

I do hereby surrender possession of my said child to the said association for said purpose or purposes and
promise not to interfere with the possession, management or control of said child in any respect; and do hereby
release unto said association and said adopted parent or parents any claim that I might have for the value of
the services of the said child during its minority; and agree that I will not undertake to recover possession of
said child or to induce it to leave the family where it may be placed by said association or its duly authorized
agent; it being my purpose to hereby surrender all authority, control and custody over said child and any and all
claim for its possession, services and remuneration therefor. 

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, this ____________________________ day of

A. D. 19______

THE STATE OF TEXAS,

County of ________________________________

Before me, the undersigned Notary Public, on this day personally appeared ____________________________________________, known to me to be the person whose
HOPE COTTAGE ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATED)
DALLAS, TEXAS

FOSTER FATHER:

1. Name of Patient:

2. Date of Birth:

3. Weight:

4. Height:

5. Heart:

6. Lungs:

7. Blood Pressure:

8. Abnormal Findings:

9. Do you know of any reason why this patient should be sterile?

10. What is this patient's prognosis for continued health?

11. Is this patient suffering from any chronic disease detrimental to supervision and discipline of a child?

12. Is there any evidence of tuberculosis, of epilepsy, or symptoms of any other mental disease?

13. Is there any evidence of venereal disease?

14. What is his general appearance?

15. Are there any other persons residing in the home with suspicious symptoms?

16. Do you consider this patient, in view of your findings, mentally and physically competent to undertake the care, training, and support of an adopted child?

PHYSICIAN'S SIGNATURE

Address:

DATE:
HOPE COTTAGE ASSOCIATION  
(INCORPORATED)  
DALLAS, TEXAS

Name of Applicant Mr._________________________________________ Mrs. (Maiden Name)____________________________
Address____________________________________________________ Telephone No______________________________

Date______________________________  10______________________________

1. What is the name and address of your family physician?

2. What magazines or newspapers do you take?

3. What is your object in taking a child?

4. Do you expect to adopt it legally?

5. Are you a member of any church?

6. To what denomination do you belong?

7. What is the name of your pastor?

8. Will you come for the child? What are your ages?

9. How long have you been married? Have you been married before?

10. Have you any children? If so, how many and what are their ages?

11. Is there any reason why you cannot have babies of your own?

12. Have you taken any children before? If so, from whom and how long ago?

13. Have you had experience in the care of young children?

14. What is your nationality?

15. What is the occupation of the man of the house?

16. What is your average income?

17. What is the occupation of the wife, if employed? Do you keep roomers or boarders?

18. Do you own any property? What does it consist of?

19. Do you carry life insurance? If so, how much?

20. How many persons in the family?

21. Give names and addresses of your Minister, Physician, Banker and other persons who know you and to whom we may write for references:

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Kindly fill in the above form, and if you will return to us, we shall be glad to consider your application fully, and if satisfactory, give you a child as soon as possible. $7.50 Filing Fee, Plus Court Cost.

If you have a preference for any particular kind of child, please write us, explaining your preference. When we have a child such as you desire, we will notify you so that you may call for the child.

Yours very truly,

Executive Secretary.
SOCIAL HISTORY

NAME: Baby's name
       Mother's name

CHILD: Name, place of birth, date of birth. Name of physician who delivered
       the baby. Type of delivery. Length of labor. Description of any injuries
       incurred during birth to either the baby or mother. Weight of baby at birth.
       Details of any physical abnormalities of baby at birth. Mother's condition
       following delivery, and repairs done. Reports of mother's Wasserman. The
       date and laboratory at which made, and results given.

MOTHER OF THE CHILD: Full name, (also given aliases she has used), date of
       birth, birth place.

DESCRIPTION: Height, weight, color of eyes, color of hair. Describe in de-
       tail general appearance and manner, with any physical abnormalities.

DEVELOPMENTAL: Indicate whether mother was full term baby, and if no infor-
       mation available state this. Nutritional difficulties during infancy. The
       age at which she began to walk and talk, and when dentition began. Were there
       any illnesses in infancy?

How early did her periods appear? Were they regular? Were they accompanied
       by cramps? Was any medical attention necessary? How was her sex information
       gained, and at what age? Was it secured from the maternal grandmother, or
       other sources, or at what age? Did she have any sex experiences during early
       childhood. If so, describe them. Give the ages, and names of the boys with
       whom she has had sex experiences. If more than one please secure exact dates,
       and names in order to establish, if possible, the paternity of the child.

HEALTH: Childhood diseases, type and age at which they occurred. The history
       of any injuries or operations up to the present time.

Please give definitely the history of any previous pregnancies, with the
       resulting births, or miscarriages. Also describe condition during the term
       of pregnancy preceding the birth of this child, and any medical examina-
       tions, the name of physician who made the examination, laboratory reports,
       where made, and results.

EDUCATION: The age at which the mother entered school, whether in urban or
       rural school. Adjustment to teachers and fellow pupils. What grades or
       subjects were repeated, and why? Education achievements with dates, and names
       of schools. Additional training in special subjects, or trades.

EMPLOYMENT: Positions held, type of work, names of employer, amount of pay,
       length of time employed, and reason for leaving in chronological order.

PERSONALITY & BEHAVIOR: Attitude toward self, and others, whether self cen-
       tered, high tempered or stubborn. Adjustment to other members of the family,
       and group of friends. Whether interested in both boys and girls, and friends
       among each. What are recreational interests. Does she drink, and to what
       extent?
       Attitude toward child, and this experience.

The worker's impression of the mother, with as accurate description as possible
       of her attitude, manner, and personality.

If the mother has been a behavior problem describe in what manner, and her
       experiences in this regard, giving dates, experiences, and companions.
PLANS FOR BABY: Does the mother want to keep the baby, and what plans can she make for its care? What is her attitude towards foster home placement, and the reason for it? What is the attitude of her family towards the acceptance of the child in the home.

MATERNAL ANTECEDENTS: GRANDFATHER: Name in full, date and place of birth. Give as accurately as possible nationalities from which descended. Health, describing any illnesses, whether there are any chronic diseases, epilepsy, mental diseases, or cross eyes in the family line. Educational achievements, extent and where received. Employment record, giving types of work, and salaries earned.

If family have lived on farm whether share-cropper, renter, or owner, in detail.

What has been the relationship between the grandfather, and the children. Is he a member of any church? Has he been a leader in the community, and what position has he occupied? What are his morals? Did he know of the birth of the baby? What is his attitude toward the mother and child.

GRANDMOTHER: Give each detail requested as listed above for grandfather, also give the girl's attitude toward her mother, and when she told her mother of her pregnancy, and the grandmother's attitude toward the situation. Please list each item completely, or state definitely if there is no information available regarding it.

OWN BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF MOTHER: List in chronological order, giving full name, date and place of birth. Also the married names and addresses of sisters. The health history, education achievement, employment record, and knowledge of the child, and mother's pregnancy.

If there are any step-brothers or sisters, or half-brothers and sisters, or step-father, describe as requested on previous page.

HOME AND HOME CONDITIONS OF THE MOTHER: Describe the location, and type of home and living conditions during early childhood of the mother, with the economic status. Was financial assistance from either relatives, or agencies? The attitude of the grandparents to each other, and to the children. Was discipline consistent? What were the recreational interests of the family as a whole? What was the cultural status in the home? Were there any other relatives, or persons in the home? Was there discord between the children? Was the home atmosphere happy, or not? Describe the physical set-up of the home, size conveniences, type of furnishings, and standard of house-keeping. What is the religious affiliation of the family, and was attendance in church and Sunday school regular?

FATHER OF THE CHILD: Give the information requested under "MOTHER OF THE CHILD."

If not possible to secure each point listed under developmental, health, school, employment, personality and behavior, give as much information under each as can possibly be secured.

Please describe definitely his appearance, nationality, employment and moral status.

Had the father and mother considered marriage? Why was this postponed? Is there a possibility of it yet being effected? Was he told of the mother's
pregnancy, and what was his attitude towards it? What is his attitude towards the child? How long had the mother known him, and under what circumstances did she meet him, and how long had their sex relations continued? Had any of the mother's family discussed the situation with him, and to what extent did he feel responsible? Give present address, and name, and by whom employed.

PATERNAL ANTECEDENTS: GRANDFATHER: Give information requested under maternal grandfather.

GRANDMOTHER: Give information requested under maternal grandmother.

OWN BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF FATHER: Give information requested as in "MOTHER'S OWN BROTHERS AND SISTERS."

HOME AND HOME CONDITIONS OF THE FATHER: Same as in mother's history.

Signed __________________
worker by whom history secured.
HOPE COTTAGE ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATED)
DALLAS, TEXAS

FOSTER MOTHER:

1. Name of Patient: .................................................................

2. Date of Birth: .................................................................

3. Weight: ........................................................................

4. Height: ........................................................................

5. Heart: ...........................................................................

6. Lungs: ................................................................................

7. Blood Pressure: ..............................................................

8. Abnormal Findings: ...........................................................

9. What is this patient’s prognosis for continued health? ...........

10. Is this patient suffering from any chronic disease detrimental to supervision or discipline of a child? .................................................................

11. Is there any evidence of venereal disease? ............................

12. Has this patient ever had any abnormal pelvic conditions? ....

13. Is there any evidence of tuberculosis, of epilepsy, or symptoms of any other mental disease? .................................................................

14. Are there any other persons residing in the home with suspicious symptoms? .................................................................

15. Do you consider this patient, in view of your findings, mentally and physically competent to undertake the care and training of an adopted child? .................................................................

PHYSICIAN’S SIGNATURE: .....................................................

Address: ..............................................................................

DATE: .................................................................................
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