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Record disclosure in adoption.

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UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

RECORD DISCLOSURE IN ADOPTION

by

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A research project presented to the School
of Social Work of The University of Windsor
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Research Committee

Professor V. Cruz	Chairman
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine record dis-
closure in adoption. A need was felt for such research as
the question of what information should be made available
to adopted adults has received widespread media attention.
Also various governments, including Ontario, have recently
examined present policies on record disclosure.

A questionnaire was administered to thirty adoptees
over the age of eighteen who responded to an advertisement
placed by the researchers in the <u>Windsor Star</u>. The respond-
ents were questioned regarding their views on various issues
in adoption including: whether or not they desired up-to-
date information about their backgrounds, whether or not they
desired a reunion with their biological parents, whether or
not they have actively searched for their biological
parents and if so what prompted them to search, whether
or not the desire for information about their backgrounds
is related to the relationship with their adoptive parents,
how, when and by whom the adoptee was told of his adoption,
and what type of governmental agency should be formed to
deal with exchange of information between adoptees and
biological parents.

Six hypotheses were formulated and tested. The six

hypotheses were:

1) The majority of adoptees desire information about their backgrounds.

2) Adult adoptees desire information about their background rather than a reunion with their biological parents.

3) The search by adoptees for information about their biological parents is related to a life crisis.

4) The degree of interest shown by adoptees for information about their biological parents is not related to whether the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive parents as positive or negative.

5) Adoptees will have less desire for information about their background if they are told of their adoption at an early age and with appropriate frequency by their adoptive parents.

6) Adoptees will favour the creation of an agency, to serve adult adoptees and their biological parents, which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

Hypotheses number one, three, and four were shown to be valid. Hypotheses two and five were not proven to be valid, however, strong trends in the direction of the hypotheses were shown. Hypothesis six was shown not to be valid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adoption has been an acceptable means of constructing families for centuries. There are few other programs within our social welfare system that have gained such widespread interest and support. For the unwed mother adoption provides assurance that her baby will be well cared for and will receive advantages which she might not be able to provide. For the adopting couple it provides a child, something which for medical or other reasons they are unable to produce. For the child adoption provides the security of a family, a home and proper upbringing. Grounded in Roman law, adoption practice has followed time honoured traditions. One of these is the complete severing of ties between the child and his biological parents and the finality with which the new bonds are sealed. Seen as a necessary adjunct to this was the need for secrecy. This secrecy served the adoptive parents by allaying their fears that the biological parent might try to exert prior claim to the child. It also allowed the adoptive parents, many times, to pretend to themselves, the child, and the world that the child was really their own natural child. The secrecy

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served the biological mother by saving her from social embar-
rassment. It was never made very clear whether this secrecy
served the child.

Traditionally adoptive parents have been given scant
information, so that if the child asked questions they
need not feign ignorance. The child, at any rate, was not
supposed to ask questions about his background but to be
grateful for being adopted.

Study after study was produced showing very high
adoption placement success. If, the odd time, one heard
that an adopted child had become entangled with the law it
was attributed to "bad blood". For the most part a rosy
picture was painted of the benefits of the adoption process.

Recently, however, the picture has changed. Adult
adoptees are being very vocal in their demands for access
to their adoption records. Cases are pending before the
United States Supreme Court. The public has been deluged with
media articles about adoptees who have searched for their
biological parents - with or without success. Suddenly a
popular and seemingly highly effective social welfare program
is coming under increasing attack from the group who were
purported to benefit the most from it, adoptees. Governments
all over the world are scrambling to come up with new
policies to meet this rather sudden outcry. Adoptees in
large numbers are forming organizations for the purpose of

gaining assistance in finding their biological parents.
What happened? Is this simply a passing phenomenon? Is
there an overreaction to the "roots" craze?

The researchers feel that the desire of adoptees for
background information is indeed widespread but is certainly
not limited to recent years. As the feelings of adoptees
have become publicized, along with their efforts to obtain
information, others have let it be known that they are going
through the same inner turmoil. As the controversy about
access to records is thrust more into the media limelight,
however, the majority opinion of adoptees may become over-
whelmed by more vocal and organized groups. The researchers
believe that systematic examination of adoptees on a broad
scale is needed before final and binding decisions are made
by governments on what information should or should not be
made available to adoptees. It is the purpose of this
research to examine the views of adult adoptees about their
desire for background information and/or a reunion with
their biological parents. In addition the researchers have
questions concerning what factors are operating in the lives
of adoptees when they make the decision to search for their
biological parents. Also to be investigated is the impor-
tance of the adoptee-adoptive parent relationship, and how
the adoptee was told of his adoption in terms of his interest
about his background. Lastly, adult adoptees will be
asked to state their preference among different types of

government agencies which could be established to handle
information exchange between adoptees and their biological
parents.

The researchers intend that this study should be of
benefit to the social work profession. For the practitioner
in adoption it will bring increased understanding of the
problems adoptive parents experience in telling their child
about his adoption. Workers will be better able to advise
adoptive parents of the need of adoptees to know about
their biological backgrounds. It will also help the
practitioner by eliciting the kinds of information adult
adoptees most desire, so that this information may be care-
fully recorded when the child becomes available for adoption.
For social workers in other agencies study of this work may
increase their sensitivity to some of the struggles adult
adoptees may be going through regarding their backgrounds,
and thereby these practitioners may be able to provide a
better quality of therapeutic service to this population
group. For those involved in educating social workers the
researchers feel this study will give them increased data
to use when presenting lectures on adoption in courses
regarding child welfare. To social work researchers this
study will open up many new areas for further examination.
Social work administrators will find in the study the views
of adult adoptees with regard to a specific governmental and
agency policy, namely access to records.

The literature on adoption has been explored by the researchers in order to become knowledgeable in the area. Specifically, the history of adoption, agency practice, adoptive parents, adoptees, "telling", identity formation, and the personal memoirs of those who have searched were examined in detail.

A sample of adult adoptees was obtained by advertising in the Windsor Star. A questionnaire was designed and sent to each respondent.

The survey of the literature is developed in Chapter II. The purpose, classification, assumptions, hypotheses, definitions, sampling procedure, data collection and limitations of the study are discussed at length in Chapter III. Chapter IV is devoted to the analysis of data and discussion of the findings, while Chapter V consists of a summary, conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Adoption dates back at least to 2800 B.C. Reputable
adoption studies have been recorded as early as 1920. To
review all of the instances of and literature on adoption
is undoubtedly an impossible undertaking. For the purposes
of this review seven major areas of adoption are explored.
They are: 1) the historical development of adoption, 2) a-
doption agency practice, 3) adoptive parents, 4) adoptees,
5) identity formation of adoptees, 6) telling, and 7) per-
sonal memoirs of adoptees.

The Historical Development of Adoption

Although there is a general public awareness of the
existence of a legal and social process called adoption
most people are not really familiar with adoption, its his-
tory, its use and prevalence in various cultures, and the
changes it has gone through to reach the present state of
"social conscience" adoption (65).

Adoption has its roots in antiquity, as can be seen
in myths and legends dating back as far as 2800 B.C. The
founder of the City of Babylon, Sargon, was an adopted
child. His story, which he told on an ancient inscription
is very similar to the biblical story of Moses, a Jewish

child who was adopted by the Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter.

Paris and Tristan are other heroes said to have been reared as "adopted children" by simple lowly people. The story of Oedipus, the adopted son of the king of Corinth, was related by Sophocles (65,3).

In addition to the great length of adoption's history, there is considerable variety in adoption's prevalence in different cultures and in the reasons why it was practiced. Practically all children are adopted in the Polynesian Marquesas Islands. Adoptive parents make a request for the child before he is born. When the infant is a few months old the biological parents hand him over to the adoptive parents, relinquishing all rights to the child and giving the adoptive parents a substantial gift for taking on the expense of raising the child (15,179).

Different cultures view adoption in various ways. Arapesh children, for instance, "learn to think of the world as filled with parents" when they are "sent out" to relatives or friends for weeks at a time (15,178). In the Mundugumor tribe, on the other hand, husbands are not pleased by the wife's pregnancy. These women have a strong tendency toward twin births, and when twins are born one of them is usually adopted by another family (15,178).

There have been different purposes for adoption through the ages and in different societies. The Chinese, who set great values on ancestor worship, established the custom which allowed a childless male to claim the first-

born male child of his younger brother (15,179).

Infausto states that the singular purpose of adoption in the Roman Empire was to provide the adopter with an heir (65,1). Emperor Augustus, an adopted heir, inherited an empire. Gaius Octavius was adopted by his great uncle, Julius Caesar, and Marcus Aurelius was also an adoptee (65,3).

The Romans were the first society to formalize the process of adoption with a judicial hearing. The roots of North American adoption law can be traced to Roman law. We particularly note complete severence of the child from his biological relationships and the complete joining of relationships between the child and his adoptive family. All legal, economic and religious ties with the biological family were cut, and there was no possibility of undoing an adoption once it was formalized (15,180).

Although the basis of our present adoption laws lies in Roman law, it was not the Roman but the English heritage which our forefathers brought with them to the New World. In England blood relationships were most important. According to feudal traditions the property and rights of a parent could pass only to a biological child born during wedlock. As a result of these traditions, England did not have a legal procedure of adoption until 1926 (15,181).

As a social alternative for children who were without home or parents the English developed a system of "putting out" or apprenticing children. In order to provide opportunities for training to insure the child's

future productive contribution to society, children at an early age went to live and work with another family. This system often resulted in cruelty and deprivation for the children (15,182).

In America these legal and social traditions were carried on in the colonies. "Putting out" and apprenticeship were common practice among the Puritans. As the country developed, large numbers of children were gathered up for labour. Infausto describes a scene involving a "caravan of children" who are led into a western town. Their arrival has been announced ahead and the townspeople are waiting to look them over and take their pick of the children to work on the harvest. "Either an indenture was made out or the arrangement remained entirely informal. More often than not, the farmer would work the child through harvest time and then abandon him." (65,2)

At the same time that this sort of placement was going on, there was also a practice similar to modern adoption taking place. Responsibility for orphaned and dependent children was being taken on by their blood relatives. It also became common for people to say in their will with whom they wanted their child to live. It is felt that this custom came about through the influence of emigrants who came from countries with a strong Roman legal and social tradition (15,183).

By the mid-nineteenth century industrialization and immigration were transforming the cities. The "putting out"

system and private adoption were proving inadequate to handle the number of orphaned, neglected and dependent children desperately in need of homes.

Child welfare agencies began to form. Near the end of the nineteenth century the Toronto Children's Aid Society, the first of its kind in Canada, was formed to care for the orphaned and neglected children in the slums of Toronto. The Children's Protection Act of 1893 was a landmark in the history of social welfare in Canada because it stated in explicit terms a principle which had been accepted only tacitly and not clearly spelled out previously, i.e., that the community had responsibility for the welfare of children who for any reason were deprived of adequate care in their own homes. The Protection Act expressed confidence in family life as the proper atmosphere for the nurture of the dependent child, and as the benefits of permanency and commitment in a child's placement became evident adoption became more prevalent. Adoption legislation in Canada was introduced in the 1920's.

Although adoption was seen as a permanent and desirable solution for orphaned and deprived or neglected children, it has tended to be looked at, in practice, as a way of meeting the needs of childless couples. That is, the emphasis was put upon finding the right child for a family, rather than, as it is now, upon finding the right family for the child.

The practice of seeking the right child for the parents probably evolved from two sources. Our Poor Law background caused us to see the provision of care for the neglected, deprived or orphaned as charity and a privilege, rather than as a right. If a couple was going to be kind enough to take on this burden, everything should be done to provide them with the type of child they wanted (18,6). As our social welfare policy has moved toward seeing the provision of services as a right, child welfare agencies have moved to see the right of the child to the "best possible home" (29,3) as of paramount importance.

The other likely cause of the former emphasis on satisfying the wishes of the adoptive parents is that at one time there were more babies and children available for adoption than there were people who wished to adopt them, so that those adopting often had a choice. As adoption has become a more widely known and acceptable practice, the supply of children is decreasing. In 1969, in Ontario, 4,669 babies were given up for adoption. In 1972 this figure dropped to 2,000, with 6,000 families applying to adopt. The Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies predicts that in the late 1970's the chances of getting a child, for a family which wishes to adopt, may drop to one in ten (29,1).

We can see that there have been many changes in the purposes and the philosophy of adoption just in North America's comparatively brief history. Infausto says:

> We have traveled a great distance during the time which has passed since that first caravan deposited its cargo of homeless children in a lonely western town. From the development of the use of social investigation in adoption proceedings to ... control of importation of foreign children, inroads have been made toward securing the best interests of adoptive children. Progress will continue to be made in adoption as long as human hearts continue to generate emotions. (65,12)

Lauder et al. note a shift from "the former emphasis upon supplying children to adoptive applicants to a concern for understanding and assessing both the child and his adopters in order to bring about healthy family functioning" (18,11). The authors feel that this shift marks a new era in adoption practice.

Adoption Agency

The vast majority of adoptions are done through an adoption agency. This area of review will outline the assumptions underlying adoption agency practice, the Child Welfare League of America guidelines for agency service, review of surveys done on actual agency practice, areas of agency practice, and possible alternative services which could be offered.

J. Reid in Social Work in Adoption: Collected Papers (30), outlines what he believes to be the major principles, values, and assumptions underlying adoption practice. Reid views adoption as a sensitive, controversial, public area of agency practice. He feels there are six assumptions on which agency service rests.

1) Society has a responsibility for children;

2) Biological parents, adoptive parents and adoptees all have rights.

3) Administration and practice in social agencies requires particular expertise.

4) All children have a basic right to their own parents.

5) A child's continuing care is essential to the future of the nation.

6) A child must be provided with a home when deprived of his own.

From these six basic assumptions Reid goes on to outline his four basic principles of adoption practice. They are:

1) There must be a determination of the needs of the child, the adoptive parents, and the natural parents before an adoption placement is made.

2) An infant should be placed in an adoptive home at the earliest age possible.

3) Adoptive parents should possess the qualities essential to good parenting.

4) The agency has a responsibility to adoptee, adoptive parents and natural parents.

Reid notes the shift in principle from the view that the adopting couple is doing the child a favour by adopting him to the view that adoption leads the couple to a much fuller life. Agencies have also become centered on the needs of the child.

The job of the agency is to help adoptive applicants determine whether adoption is a solution for the needs and desires that brought them to the agency, and whether they are able to meet the needs of the kind of children for whom the agency needs homes, not whether they will be (perfect) parents. (30,11)

In the Child Welfare League of America's guidelines for adoption service it is stated that "adoption is a way of finding families for children--not a way for childless couples to satisfy their need for offspring" (8,1). The basic principles the Child Welfare League sets out for its member agencies are:

1) Every child has a right to the love, protection, and care he would ordinarily receive from his parents.
2) Family life is the most favorable setting for the child to develop and grow.
3) The biological family should be fostered and preserved wherever possible.
4) If his parents are unable to function as parents, the child must be protected by society. (8,2)

Included in the guidelines for adoption service is an outline of the criteria for accepting adoptive couples. Prospective adoptive couples must be assessed as to: total personality, emotional maturity, marital relationship, feelings about children, readiness to adopt, and motivation to adopt. Only after a positive assessment is made in all these areas should the couple be accepted as adoptive couples.

Child Welfare League member agencies practicing in the area of adoption are seen to have the following responsibilities: maintain high practice standards; have an intake policy; have resources for children with special needs; do recruiting of homes; review foster children for

adoption; maintain legal responsibility for the child;
properly document service; keep case records, statistics
and do research; have active community relations; recruit
suitable staff.

With this base of assumptions and guidelines in
adoption service we will now highlight some agency practices,
both new and old, in the adoption field.

It is traditional that adoptive couple applicants be
dealt with on an individual basis by the adoption agency.
H. Levine (75) describes a project of the Ottawa Children's
Aid Society which introduced the use of groups into adoption
application process. This agency believes that if it dem-
onstrates an open atmosphere about adoption this openness
will carry over into the couple's relationship with the
adopted child. Groups were organized to meet frequently
on a short term basis. The agency expressed the following
advantages of this group experience:

1) It lessens the authoratative position of the
agency.

2) Adoptive applicants show strength when together.

3) There is interaction and reaction to new ideas.

4) There is more comfortableness and normalcy in
regards to adoption.

5) A two way process takes place between agency and
applicants.

6) There is more economical use of staff.

7) Participation by adoptive fathers increases.

8) Resistance to telling child about adoptive status is more clearly defined.

The social worker's role is somewhat different in adoption than in other traditional areas of practice. J. Braden (40) sees that the essential difference in adoption is that by and large the nature of the relationship is defined by the worker rather than this being done by the client. Most social workers come to adoption with training in the diagnosis and treatment of pathology. However in adoption there is a heavy middle-class orientation and the worker is dealing with the strengths of society rather than its weaknesses. "Adoption is, at best, a calculated risk that both (worker and applicant) must be willing to take." (40,489) For the most part the worker deals "with people who may have a problem with reproduction ... rather than with people who suffer from ego-deterioration or social decay" (40,488). When there is a crisis in infertility, adoption is viewed by both the couple and worker as part of the reconstruction process. In Ontario where most adoptions are handled by a multi-service agency (Children's Aid Society) it is fair to say that adoptive couples are viewed on somewhat a different client level than are protection case clients.

An area in which adoption agency practice has come under criticism is that of follow-up after the legalization of the adoption. Often a stigma of failure is felt by

adoptive parents who return to the agency experiencing difficulties with the child. "Letting parents know that they are welcome to return to the agency for consultation establishes a preventive approach to problems that may develop following adoption." (18,171)

In reality however the follow-up is often left to other community agencies, usually after problems become somewhat severe.

Rothenberg et al., in The American Journal of Psychiatry (88) describe a mental health clinic group program to meet needs expressed by adoptive parents. Their study found that most agencies treat adoptive families as all others, offering no particular or specialized service. This mental health clinic found a great need for adoptive parents to discuss with other adoptive parents problems they were experiencing with the adoption. The major problem discussed was their infertility. Many agencies still demand proof that the couple are unable to bear children before the adoption process is begun. People found that infertility, seemingly worked out with their partner, resurfaced as a major issue in the marriage after being introduced during the adoption process. In these groups a great deal of anger and fear about the adoption agencies' power to give them a child, or to deny this fulfillment, was expressed. The clinic also found the groups to be helpful in dealing with the adoptive parents' fears that their adopted child might have some kind

of genetic "badness" that could appear at some future date.
Ways and means of telling children about their adoptive sta-
tus were also shared during the groups.

While follow-up after the legalization of the adoption
is sparse, there remains a good deal of contact between the
agency and the adoptive parents in the postplacement period
between actual placement of the child in the home and the
finalization of the adoption. H. L. Gochros (58) has done
a study of the relationship of the worker and adoptive
parent during this period. Postplacement service to adoptive
couples has traditionally had two major purposes. The first
is to insure adequate care of the child in a probation pe-
riod. The agency during this period retains legal custody
of the child. The second purpose is to give help to the
adoptive couple, mainly support and reassurance. The worker
also is expected to help resolve any problems that occur in
the adoption during this period. However the probation
period is generally seen by both worker and adoptive parents
as a stressful time during which the agency is seen as wield-
ing a great deal of power. Many adoptive parents "see the
agency and their caseworkers as uninvited authority
figures" (58,318). Adoptive parents may assume that the
worker's presence implies that the agency doubts the couple's
ability to function as adequate parents. Also, because of
the somewhat elaborate screening process of the agency,
adoptive couples often believe the agency has very high

expectations of them, expectations which they may feel inadequate to meet.

Gochros studied the perceptions that adoptive couples and workers had of the function of postplacement services. He found "marked disagreement between caseworkers and adoptive parents concerning the function of the postplacement period" (58,320). The adoptive couples generally viewed the probationary aspect of the service as foremost while the caseworkers saw their primary function as the giving of help. Gochros found that although the caseworkers stated they were available mainly to help with problems the workers saw the adoptive couples as generally having few problems. Both adoptive couples and caseworkers were asked to list their major areas of concern during the postplacement period.

> The concern most often reported (by adoptive couples) was the possibility of loss of the child through removal by the agency....Other areas that concerned ... were how to tell their child about adoption; that they were spoiling their child; how they would go about answering their child's questions about his background; and the possibility that some day the child would try to find his natural parents. In rating the same families, caseworkers significantly (chi square tests at .05 level of significance) underestimated these concerns." (58,321)

This study shows that although agency service is provided during the postplacement period it is handicapped by the difference in role viewed by the adoptive couple and the caseworker. The adoptive couple basically see the service as anxiety-provoking and threatening while the caseworker views the service as the giving of help. The caseworkers failed to develop sustained diagnosis and treatment plans

carried on throughout the adoption period.

A criticism heard about adoption agencies is that they are locked into very traditional middle-class views of child placement. There is a need to develop a wider range of options. One such option is called "open adoption". Baran, Pannor and Sorosky (36) have reported on one such experiment in which they were using this placement method. An open adoption is:

> ...one in which the birth parents meet the adoptive parents, participate in the separation and placement process, relinquish all legal, moral, and nurturing rights to the child, but retain the right to continuing contact and to knowledge of the child's whereabouts and welfare. (36,97)

The authors feel that using this method the child's rights become paramount. They feel the biological mother has a right to choose substitute parents for her child and that more extensive use of this kind of adoption by agencies will lessen the tendency for unwed mothers to keep babies in less than ideal circumstances. The benefits to the child in open adoption are: more permanent and reliable parenting; less of a feeling of being rejected by the biological parent; a more realistic understanding of the adoption circumstances. For the biological parent there will be lessened feelings of guilt and loss and the removal of concern about parenting problems. For the adoptive parents open adoption decreases the fear and fantasy involved about the child's background.

Adoption agencies have been drawn rather reluctantly,

with increasing pressure, to disclose files to adult adoptees so these adoptees can know more about the circumstances surrounding their adoption. As far as the agencies are concerned there have always been three historic principles governing adoptions: 1) anonymity and confidentiality of all parties, 2) sealing of court records and issue of new birth certificate in child's adopted name, and 3) confidentiality of agency records. However this view is changing with recent findings that the search for one's biological parents may be a necessary part of identity formation in adoptees; that reunions between adoptees and biological parents have been positive and in many instances have strengthened ties with adoptive parents; and that adult adoptees are increasingly voicing their right to see records, both in the media and in action before the courts.

Recently the Child Welfare League of America mailed a questionnaire to its two-hundred and three affiliated agencies in the U.S.A. and Canada with adoption services to gather into a report (12), opinions, policy, and practice on the sealed adoption record controversy. The agency responses to the questionnaire reported under the following headings: anonymity, information shared, returning adult adoptees, agency searches, reunions, services agencies should perform for adult adoptees, and opinions on sealed records.

Anonymity to biological parents was given by 90 percent of the agencies. In 66 percent of the agencies

anonymity was not a written policy, simply verbal. Seventy-nine percent of the agencies were happy with this policy while 13 percent indicated it to be under review. Twenty-seven percent of the agencies were willing to enter a waiver of anonymity with the biological parents but only 18 percent had ever done this. Sixty-two percent of the agencies were uncertain about their position on this waiver.

Concerning the information shared, 60 percent of the agencies had no written policy but a general understanding amongst staff; 20 percent of the agencies had written policy while 6 percent of the agencies left this decision to the individual worker. Seventeen percent of the agencies were reviewing their policy in this erea. Table 1 shows what information is shared with adoptive parents and what information the agency recommends the adoptive parents share with the child.

Of special interest was the number of adult adoptees reported to be returning to agencies and the kind of information they desired. "The ... Canadian agencies ... averaged nearly 190 returning in 1975 compared with an average of 16 for the U.S. agencies." (12,15) Of those adult adoptees 58 percent wanted non-identifying information and 40 percent desired a reunion. In only 15 percent of the agencies surveyed was there a written policy on what information could be given.

Some agencies undertake searches for biological families on behalf of adult adoptees. In 34 percent of the

TABLE 1

INFORMATION ABOUT BIOLOGICAL PARENTS AGENCIES

USUALLY SHARE WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND

RECOMMEND SHARING WITH ADOPTED CHILD

Items	Percentage of Agencies (N=150)[a]	
	Agency Shares with Adoptive Parents	Agency Recommends Adoptive Parents Share with Child
Name..................	1	1
City or town of residence.........	8	5
Age...................	91	80
Race.................	98	87
Ethnic group.........	94	84
Religion.............	85	76
Education............	95	84
Occupation..........	90	78
Existence of siblings	71	56
Physical description.	98	87
Personality, temperament	89	75
Medical history......	97	82
Psychiatric history..	82	48
Intellectual capacity		
If normal or above ..	93	68
If subnormal	85	40
Circumstances of birth		
Illegitimacy	81	57

TABLE 1 - Continued·

Items	Agency Shares with Adoptive Parents	Agency Recommends Adoptive Parents Share with·Child
Rape.....................	45	16
Incest...................	46	14
Reason for relinquishment		
Abuse of child.........	78	32
Neglect of child......	77	33
Mental illness........	76	32
Mental retardation...	75	32
Imprisonment..........	51	23
Addiction, alcoholism	70	32

[a]N varies slightly on some items.   (12,9)

cases the biological family was not located.. In 52 percent
of the cases the biological family was located and ·agreed
to meet the adult adoptee while in only 10 percent of bio-
logical families located did they refuse to meet the adult
adoptee.

In the reunions facilitated by the agencies 87 percent
were viewed as successful, 20 percent unsuccessful, 2 percent
mixed, and 9 percent results were unknown. "Success was
defined as meaning that all parties involved were glad they
had met." (12,19)

The agencies were also asked whether or not they con-
sidered the biological mother's right to anonymity or the

adult adoptee's right to know as paramount. Agency reply indicated 57 percent saw the right of the biological mother as paramount, 27 percent saw the adult adoptee's right as paramount and 6 percent didn't know. Yet "nearly seven out of ten agencies thought that the desire of an adult adoptee to meet his or her biological parents was most likely to reflect a natural search for identity" (12,21).

In response to what services should be provided by their agency to adult adoptees eighty-nine percent of respondents (N=163) replied that adult adoptees usually should be given non-identifying information but only 14 percent replied that the agency should conduct a search for the biological parents. Only 9 percent felt that the adult adoptee should be given identifying information while 12 percent stated usually, and 54 percent sometimes that it is proper to discourage the adult adoptee from searching. An unpopular question, judging from the tone of the response, asked if reunions were likely to have ill effects on the adoptive parties and their relationship. Nearly three-fifths of the agencies said they didn't know, or that it was impossible to make such a judgement for a whole group of people, or they declined to respond to the question altogether.

In Table 2 the following agency opinions were recorded regarding sealed records. The agencies in this section gave very wide support to the principles of confidentiality.

TABLE 2

OPINIONS ABOUT SEALED RECORD CONTROVERSY

Statements	Percentage of Agencies (N=163)		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know or no reply
If adoptees were given sufficient information about the biological parents and the adoption, short of their actual identities, that would probably satisfy most of the would-be seekers...............	58	30	12
Most biological mothers would probably not want contact with a child relinquished years ago...........................	50	17	33
Agencies should continue to guarantee confidentiality (insofar as their own records are concerned) to:			
the adoptive parents.......	69	22	9
the biological parents.....	69	21	10
The sealed record controversy poses a major challenge to agency adoption service........	72	20	8
The sealed record controversy is a tempest in a teapot, e.g., it affects very few adoptees, it's a media creation, it will blow over, etc.................	5	75	20

(12,24)

It is interesting to note the degree to which the
agencies believe present policies on records should be
changed. For people already adopted, 15 percent of agencies

believe court records should be open; 10 percent believe agency records should be open while 82 percent feel neither should be opened. However for future adoptees 42 percent believe court records should be opened, 23 percent believe agency records should be opened, and 54 percent believe neither should be opened.

In summarizing the survey the following results are particularly noted:

1) The majority of agencies have little written policy in the area.

2) Agencies share more information with adoptive parents than they feel the adoptees should receive.

3) When contacted a high number of biological parents wish contact with their biological children.

4) The success rate for reunions is extremely high.

5) Agencies are very concerned about the sealed record controversy.

6) Agencies feel change is needed concerning sealed records for future adoptees.

7) Agencies place a high regard on the need to protect confidentiality.

The Government of Ontario in January 1976 formed a committee to study record disclosure in adoption and to represent practice and make recommendations on future policy. The report of this committee (101) was made public in June 1976. The following questions were studied by the committee:

1) Should adoptees have access to non-identifying information on biological family? At what age and under what circumstances and conditions should such information be made available?
2) Should adoptees have access to identifying information on biological family? At what age and under what circumstances and conditions should such information be made available?
3) Should biological parents have access to information on the status and/or whereabouts of their relinquished children? If so, under what circumstances and conditions?
4) If access to records is given, how should this be done and by whom? (101,1-2)

The committee held five public forums throughout the Province to obtain opinion and briefs from interested individuals and groups.

The committee report notes that currently in Ontario adoption records are sealed, and are opened only by court order or by order of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare. In general the Child Welfare Act, the legislative base for adoption in Ontario, favours anonymity and confidentiality.

In the report of the committee there is differentiation made between identifying and non-identifying information.

Identifying information is to be considered any information that could lead directly to the identification of a member of the biological family....Non-identifying information is to be considered all other pieces of information. (101,14)

Also discussed in the report of the committee are the merits of a passive mediation or registry system and an active mediation concept.

In a passive mediation or registry system a mediator or other designated person would perform the service requested, given similar unsolicited requests by both parties. In an active mediation concept, a mediator would make discreet inquiries of one party ... on behalf of another party. (101,17)

The committee made the following policy recommendations with regards to record disclosure:

1) "Non-identifying information should be available to adoptive parents on request." (101,17)

2) Adult adoptees should be given non-identifying information without adoptive parent approval.

3) Biological parents should be given non-identifying information about adopted child on request.

4) In future adoptions recommendations 1 to 3 should apply.

5) Unrestricted access to identifying information should not be given.
Rather, an adoption registry should be established to exchange information or arrange contact between biological parents and adult adoptees. The registry would essentially be a passive one and would only take an active role at the descretion of the mediator (head of registry). An adoptee could appeal to an adoption panel to have the registry take a more active role.

Before leaving this discussion of sealed records we again will present briefly a sampling of some published personal opinions in this area.

Rita Dikette in an article "Perspectives for Agency Response to the Adoption-Record Controversy" (52) outlines the history of confidential records in adoption. She states that adoption initially was designed to give heirs to families. Therefore adoption was viewed as a breaking of the past for a new start in the present. Often children placed for adoption had been born secretly out of wedlock. Many of these children however were not adopted but rather placed in permanent foster care. As adoption became more prevalent it was felt that by sealing adoption records all insecurities of the past would be forgotten and this union of child and adoptive parents would be made permanent. At first however records were not sealed but experience with interference and evil intent were so prevalent that records were ordered sealed. Meanwhile biological mothers,

> ...having made what they believed was a final decision ... transferred their legal rights through the assistance of an adoption agency ... (and) were usually promised that their privacy would be respected, that identifying information about them would not be given to the adoptive parents or the child. (52,547)

To compensate for this secrecy adoption agencies gathered histories on the biological parents and passed this information on to the adoptive parents, encouraging them to give the information to the adoptee when deemed appropriate by themselves.

In November 1975 the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver opened its files to clients. In an article K. Rider (86) describes what happened when integration of Social

Services was to come about in Vancouver. The Children's
Aid had records on 20,000 children they had seen since 1901
and the agency felt that to turn over files to a new agency
would be an invasion of their former clients' privacy. The
C.A.S. decided that rather than turn over the files they
would open them to be viewed by the clients who could either
take the file or have it destroyed. People came from through-
out Canada and the United States to view their files. Most
of the files were on foster and adopted children. Rider
recounts several life stories of the people who came to see
their files. The experience of viewing clients as they
saw information about themselves led to the following con-
clusions:

1) Foster children and adoptive children never lose
a feeling of being different.

2) Adoptive parents must give love to a child and
accept his background.

3) Adoptive parents often do not give information
or else give unreliable information.

4) "Being poorly parented does not always lead to
being a poor parent." (86,25)

5) Disclosure of information is charged with emotion.

The Children and Family Services of the State of
Iowa in December 1975 published an article (56) arguing for
more open record disclosure. It is stated that for years
adoption practice has operated on the assumption that

adoptive parents have told their adopted children all they knew. However, recent events have shown that in many cases this is not true. The article indicates that secrecy is still the key word in adoption. In 1975 the State of Iowa was considering changing the law. However, there was opposition both from state agencies which wanted their records to remain confidential and from adoptive parents who believe themselves to be the "real" parents of the children. The article states that in all probability the issue will not be resolved until it has gone to the United States Supreme Court. "Looking back over the history of adoption there is little doubt that the feelings and interests of adults have been given top priority." (56,3)

Adoptive Parents

D. Anderson in Children of Special Value (1), states that while there has been much theory written about adoption little practical help has been given to adoptive parents. "... Good adoptive parenthood requires (few) unusual talents or personal qualities beyond a capacity for loving children, and a large measure of common sense." (1, 105) Anderson feels there are two essential factors to view when discussing adoptive parents. The first factor is an emotional readiness to adopt shared equally by husband and wife. An essential ingredient of this emotional readiness is an ability to understand and deal with differences between adoptive parenthood and natural parenthood. The

capacity to deal with these factors precludes adoption being viewed simply as a resolution to infertility. If this is not the case, the adopted child to a great extent becomes a symbol of his parents' infertility and the parents may transfer many of their attitudes about infertility onto the adopted child. The second factor essential to Anderson is that the adoptive parents must understand the curiosity of the child towards adoption. The adoptive parents must realize that the adopted child often searches through a sense of bewilderment and disorientation rather than love or attachment.

H. Maas (ed.) in Five Fields of Social Services: Reviews of Research (20), introduces the idea that adoptive parents have a role handicap. This role handicap is accompanied by feelings of alienation. Maas sees essentially two ways to cope with this role handicap: 1) rejection of difference between being adoptive parents and being biological parents, or 2) acknowledgement of difference. It is suggested that there is a positive co-relation between degree of acknowledgement of difference and feelings of satisfaction in the adopted child.

David Kirk in Shared Fate (13), and in an article published in Journal of Marriage and the Family (69), points out the incongruous role obligations inherent in being an adoptive parent, namely, integration and revelation. He uses the following chart (Table 3) to note the difference between role adaptation and observed phenomena.

TABLE 3. – Some Phenomena Associated with Adoptive Parental

Aspirations for Family Integration and Substitute Role

Supports

Observed Phenomena	Suggested Explanation of the Phenomena in Terms of Adoptive Parental Aspirations
1. Simulation of appearance, race and ethnic background	
2. Infancy adoption.........	
3. Fending off the inquiries of outsiders...............	Mechanisms serving to keep differentiating adoption factors from outsiders.
4. Simulation of the biological family's arrival spacing....................	
5. Simulation of the biological family's age constellation..................	
6. Minimizing the impact of social problems which gave rise to adoption..........	
7. "Ignoring" the child's biological parents........	Mechanisms serving to keep differentiating adoption factors from the child.
8. Myths of origin of the adoptive family unit (with the child as principal focus).................	
9. Myths of origin of the adoptive family unit (with the adopter as principal focus)..................	Mechanisms serving to keep differentiating adoption factors from the adopters' self-awareness.
10. Repressing the dilemma of identity (forgetting the adoption)................	

In a study done by Kirk in the early 1960's, he showed that childlessness was a more serious crisis for women than for men. In response to the question of how each felt at the time when, wanting children, they knew they could not have any, Kirk noted the following responses. The responses Kirk has noted vary from despair and bitterness to uselessness for the wife while for the husband disappointment and inadequacy are the responses most often given.

Wife	Husband
Despair and bitterness............	Disappointed
Disappointed, at times desperate feeling of hopelessness and inferiority...........................	Concern about wife's reactions
Frustration and disappointment; I had always assumed that I would have children and eagerly anticipated family life................	Disappointment, but largely because of wife's feelings
Forlorn, unfulfilled, lost.......	Never felt this way
Uselessness......................	Disappointed
Unhappy, depressed...............	(no answer)
Utter desolation and despair.....	(no answer)
Depressed, heartbroken...........	Incomplete
Bitterness, longing..............	Disappointment
I think it was my biggest disappointment. I was completely miserable........................	Disheartened
Not a whole women, heartbroken, then realizing that I must cope and deal with this given situation	Anxiety

Wife	Husband
Absolutely heartsick..............	Disappointed
Frustration.......................	Deep disappointment
A terrific desire for children and a desolate fear that we might not have any.........................	Inadequate
Frustrated, depressed.............	Did not give up hope
Sadness...........................	(no answer)
Disappointment, feeling a flop as a wife and woman....................	Regret
Completely lost...................	Frustrated; also feeling I had failed my wife
Misery............................	(no answer)
Yearning..........................	(no answer)
Bitterness and self-pity..........	(no answer)

(13,3)

Of the total survey 34 percent showed strong deprivation, (42 percent in women, 24 percent in men). Again this shows women are "more vulnerable than men to the deprivation of childlessness" (13,4).

To show the role differentiation between adoptive and biological parents, Kirk illustrates role preparation, role autonomy, role obligations, and sanctions and rewards for role performance of adoptive parenthood.

Role Preparation.

Preparation for normal adult life assumes parenthood. Potential fertility is taken for granted. The ability to

have children is assumed. Our culture prepares people for fertility, not for sterility. The parental role models of most people fit the cultural role of biological parenthood. Few people have contact with adoptive parents or adoptees as they formulate roles.

Preparation for biological parenthood and accompanying roles is a gradual process carried on throughout pregnancy. Biological parents more or less know the timetable for assumption of the parental role. Adoptive parents however, have no set timetable. At some point the agency will let the couple know they have been approved for adoption, however, the agency will not be able to be specific on placement date. Biological parents are permitted external signs of their role preparation. The pregnant woman wears maternity clothes, is allowed to have strange food cravings. However, adoptive parents do not have the opportunity to outwardly display signs of impending parenthood.

Role Autonomy.

Biological parents are essentially independent in procuring their child. While they utilize other services, i.e., doctors, hospitals, essentially they are independent. Adoptive couples however, who place a similar middle-class value on independence, need someone else to help secure their child.

In a more subtle sense, agency adoptions tend to make the adoptive applicants dependent because there is seldom an overt listing of agency's criteria for the evaluation of applicants and their eligibility. (13,8)

Adoptive couples are usually about seven years older than biological parents on reception of their first child. This difference in age plus the often frustrating and disappointing time between marriage and adoption suggests that for adoptive couples the switching to parental roles will be difficult.

Role Obligations.

All parents are expected to accept their children no matter what they are like. Every child is to be viewed as a desirable member of that particular family. Adoptive parents, however, know that for up to a year the agency has the power to remove the child. This factor may in some cases impede the adoptive parents committing themselves totally to the child.

Sanctions and Rewards for
Role Performance.

A license to marry is permission to have children in our society. Adoptive couples however must show they are eligible to have children in tangible ways. This eligibility is tested at a time of long frustration and discouragement about their inability to have children.

Certainty about the child's time of arrival allows most couples the luxury of sharing their good news with family and friends. This sharing of the news leads to the couple receiving much support. Adoptive couples cannot share with any real certainty, and they may find that relatives

and friends may be lukewarm or even negative about their adoption plans. Significant support of the adoptive couple may not be forthcoming.

Baran, Pannor, and Sorosky (34), in a survey of adoptive parents in Los Angeles, reported that many adoptive parents feel that biological parents simply shouldn't exist after legal separation from the child. It is suggested that this feeling, when translated to the adopted child, keeps him from searching for his biological parents, fearing he will deeply hurt his adoptive parents. In their survey the authors noted that many adoptive parents feel they have the right to veto the viewing of adoption records by their child, regardless of his age. "Adoptive parents are often part of a group of individuals bearing an irreversible scar: infertility and its psychological sequelae." (34,535) Studies show that adoptive parents generally have a high degree of over-protectiveness and inflexibility. These features are concretely demonstrated in the restrictive views of most adoptive parents concerning access to records. Adoptive parents frequently view their child's interest in his biological parents as indicating that they have failed.

Feelings about illegitimacy and their adopted child's views on his biological parents are difficult areas of resolution for adoptive parents. M. Kornitzer in Adoption and Family Life (16), suggests that the adoptive parents' feelings about illegitimacy often lead them to watch for the

results of bad heredity in their adopted children. The adoptive parents must also face a negative public attitude towards illegitimacy and must feel relaxed in answering questions of relatives and friends about this aspect of the child's background. The public, in most cases, assumes an automatic link between illegitimacy and adoption, while this assumption is not always correct. Kornitzer also feels the adoptive parents have a difficult task in balancing their view and their adopted child's view of his biological parents.

> To what extent does an adopted child need to feel he
> was rejected within his natural family in order to
> develop the resistance to them that will help him in
> his adoptive relationships?" (16,136)

J. Rowe in his chapter "The Reality of the Adoptive Family" in Social Work in Adoption: Collected Papers (30), states that the question of who is the adopted child's real mother is important to adoptive parents. While the law is very clear on when the biological parents' rights end and the adoptive parents' rights begin the emotional base of adoption is not as definable as its legal base. Rowe states that in our culture childlessness is seen as a deprivation and adoption often simply becomes a method of dealing, in our society, with infertility and illegitimacy. Adoptive parents often perceive the biological parents, especially the mother, as a hindrance to successful adoption, fearing that with more information about the biological mother their adopted child will turn away from them. Rowe argues that

"adopters need a sturdy belief that their form of parenthood really is parenthood" (30,149) and is acceptable in our society.

Abraham S. Levine in an article "Substitute Child Care: Recent Research and its Implications" (75), notes some very valid points about adoptive parents. He notes that children in good adoptive homes have a high capacity for overcoming early deprivation. Levine notes the significant factor in successful adoption is the relationship the child has with the adoptive parents. Levine does however, question whether motivation in adoptive parents is a particularly significant factor. While obviously the couple has an expressed interest in adoption, Levine feels too much effort is placed into the somewhat useless task of discovering whether their motivation to adopt is very high. Levine notes that a higher number of children in adoptive homes achieve successful placement than of those in long term foster homes, indicating that total committment of the adoptive parents, both spiritually and legally, is important.

Much speculation has been done concerning adoption as a cure for infertility. It has been stated that when couples adopt with successful results it can lead to the production of a biological child by a couple judged to be infertile. No research has ever confirmed this speculation. E. Weinstein in a study (98) reported in the American Sociological Review, notes that in a follow-up of five-hundred families with adopted children nine to twelve years of age,

found only ten percent of the couples had produced biological children after adoption. The average gap between adoption and birth was three and one-half years. It is interesting to note that in almost fifty percent of the adoptive couples surveyed there was no known medical base to their infertility.

Elsewhere in this literature review we have discussed in-more detail what agencies seek in adoptive parents. F. G. Brown (44) notes personal adjustment, relationship between the couple to their own parents and siblings, motivation and motives, reasons for not having own child, attitude to infertility, acceptance of adoption, and understanding of children as the important criteria in the selection of adoptive parents. E. Brown and D. Brieland (43) state that adoptive applicants come to the adoption agency from strength and in this essential way differ from other agency clients. Studies have shown that adoption workers make decisions about accepting the couple in early interviews and support this decision with later material.

With these factors in mind let us look at some agency programs in giving service to adoptive parents after adoption, noting particularly adoptive parents' reactions at this stage in the adoption process.

G. Sandgrund in _Child Welfare_ (89), notes that adoptive parents have a great need to deny the difference between themselves and biological parents. This need is often manifested in the desire to cease contact with the adoption

agency after the legalization of the adoption. Sandgrund describes agency groups conducted to break this barrier between the agency and adoptive couples in this period. A series of discussion groups was held so the agency could be better equipped to deal with adoption preparation. These sessions allowed adoptive couples to discuss mutual problems with one another and thereby lessen the fantasies about adoption. Sandgrund indicates there was much resistance by the adoptive couples to talk about adoption to their adopted children at an early age, stating the child was unable to understand the concept of adoption. The author notes that the couples reflected their own feelings in saying how the adopted child would react.

M. Humphrey and C. Ounsted (63) note some characteristics of adoptive parents who sought psychiatric advice. Of the seventy cases they studied they noted that the mean age of marriage and obtaining a first child was high in thirty-seven cases. In twenty-nine cases telling was postponed or mishandled. In twenty of the cases the adoptive couples verbalized a fear of unknown heredity. In nineteen cases the couples had been infertile for more than ten years and in thirteen couples the wife told of a sense of biological failure. In other words problems were displayed in the areas of crucial concern noted elsewhere in this section.

F. G. Brown (45) has studied adoptive couples to determine what needs they felt were not met during the

adoption process. In a follow-up survey after adoption completion adoptive parents still showed anxiety about their contact with the agency, their infertility, and the artificial limit on the number of children they could have. The couples expressed as their biggest problem telling. Adoptive couples "felt that they, too, had been 'chosen' and therefore had a good deal to live up to" (45,19). The couples also stated a hesitance to discipline their children because they fear rejection by the children and a loss of love.

M. Thunen (96) surveying agencies using one group meeting to end contact with adoptive parents at the end of the adoption probation period, notes that the adoptive couples stressed feelings that the evaluation of them as suitable took a high priority, while helping them with problems was seemingly less important. The couples stressed that the same worker should be involved in the evaluation and supervision of the adoption. Again telling was seen as a major unresolved issue to be faced in the future.

E. Chappelear and Joyce Fried in <u>Children</u> (47), recount their experience with groups of adoptive parents after adoption placement. Their program consisted of two meetings with six adoptive couples. In the meetings the following topics were invariably discussed:

1. The difference between adoptive and biological parenthood.
2. Helping a child to an acceptance and understanding of his adoptive status.
3. The adoptive parents' feelings towards the biological

parents.
4. The adoptive parents' feelings about illegitimacy.
5. Letting persons outside the family know that child
has been adopted. (47,224)

These five areas discussed by Chappelear and Fried

sum up well this section on adoptive parents and their major

fears and concerns.

Adoptees

David Kirk in Shared Fate (13), states that once the

adopted child has been told of his adoption he will need

increasing information to understand what adoption means to

him. As the child becomes more aware that to get where he

is someone had to give him up, a sense of uneasiness enters

his mind. He then looks for signs that will confirm him as

a part of the family. Often this integration into the

family is made more difficult for the adopted child when

he is told he was given up because his biological mother

loved him. Logically true to an adult, this will confuse

the child. Does this then mean that because his adoptive

mother loves him she will give him up too? With additional

information the child will be able to see a much fuller

picture of the reasons for his adoption. However, within

this process we view the kinds of uncertainties that the

adopted child experiences. This is why "he probably has

especially urgent needs for open channels of communication

with his parents ... and why he must have experiences which

will confirm his membership in the adoptive family" (13,162).

There have been studies done on adoptees years after the legalization of their adoptions to see how they integrated into their adoptive families. One such study (72) done by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto was done over a ten year period. The subjects of the study were adult adoptees who approached the agency during that time seeking information about themselves. The author reported a relationship between the degree of separation from their adoptive parents felt by the adoptees and the amount of information sought. Usually a life crisis brought them to the agency, most often the death of one of their adoptive parents. The adoptees interviewed also said that the way in which their adoptive parents had explained the circumstances of their being given up for adoption was important to them.

In another study (67), the author studied the integration of 91 adolescent children who were adopted after the age of five. Of these children, 78 percent were rated successful, 13 percent unsuccessful, and 9 percent in between. Kadushin notes that this high success level occurs because the child feels a greatly re-enforced sense of acceptibility. Adoption for this group appeared to be very therapeutic, perhaps because of an upward displacement in social class, i.e., movement from lower to middle-class home.

Claire Berman (4) indicates that really little is known about adoption from the adoptee's point of view. She indicates that often success or failure of adoption is measured by how much the child asks, when actually little

talking is done about this area between adoptee and adoptive parents. The author feels that adoptees are very sensitive to the situation they believe their biological mother must be in and wish they coud help her in some way if needed. Older adoptees, according to Berman, may feel that they can't measure up and they overcompensate in many cases for these feelings in their daily activities. Berman cites a study done by the Spaulding Centre for Children in Detroit. This study found that: adoptees wanted to know who they looked like; adoptees were more interested in biological siblings than in parents; curiosity about origin was a separate quality and not linked to rejection of adoptive parents.

Rondell and Murray (26), state that the loss of biological parents leads adoptees to experience feelings of abandonment, which are overcome, however, by the security and sense of belonging they feel in the adoptive home. It is because of this security that the adoptee does not seek more information about himself from his adoptive parents. In adolescence, however, there is much fantasy about perfect parents and this is especially pronounced in adopted children, who essentially view themselves as in fact having that other set of parents. The authors feel, then, that "the desire to learn about his family of origin is certainly normal for any adopted child" (26,109). Rondell and Murray also point out that this desire for knowledge occurs most often at the

death of an adoptive parent – in order to recover loss, or at the time of marriage or birth of a child when genetic questions arise.

McWhinnie (22) feels that the

> ... emotional attitudes and relationships found within the adoptive home and the attitudes in the adoption situation itself ... account to a large extent for the wide range in adjustment found (22,220)

Of the 58 adoptees the author interviewed, only 9 showed no curiosity about their biological parents. She notes that adoptees seem always to think the worst about their background. McWhinnie notes from her study that if little or conflicting information was given to the adoptee by the adoptive parents the adoptee assumed that there was an event of some significance being hidden. She found that female adoptees are more curious than male adoptees and that wives of male adoptees are often more curious about background than their husbands. The author notes that in poor adoptive homes the lack of information about background often leads to heightened insecurities in the adopted children, especially about the unresolved feelings of early rejection.

Lauder et al. (18), in a follow-up study of adoption families, state that the fact of being adopted is not the most significant factor to the adoptee, rather more important is the kind of relationship the adoptee forms with the adoptive parents in order to achieve strong identity formation. The authors see four important factors affecting the adoption relationship:

1) The realization that separation is traumatic and affects ego development is especially significant for those adopted after infancy.

2) The interaction between the infant and the mother will influence the child's identification process. This restates the authors' view that the adoptive relationship is the important variable.

3) The parenting capacity of the adoptive couple can be impaired by their unresolved feelings about their infertility.

4) Identity formation in adopted children is significantly related to how and when they are told of their adoption.

In the Letters to the Editor section of the New York Times, Sunday August 13, 1972 (74), a writer replying to an article about adoptees seeking access to records noted that he had been told of his adoption ever since he could remember. The writer felt that no matter what message adoptive parents verbalize about the child's adoption the adoptee will be able to sense from the strength of the parent-child relationship what the parents' feelings about him really are. A major problem for adoptees occurs when the adoptive parents feel shame about his status, and he in turn feels that shame. If the child then begins to feel out of place in his own home, the writer feels, the adoptee is more likely to search for his biological parents.

In _Shared Fate_ (13), David Kirk outlines the early
stages of life, showing how adoptees view these periods in
their lives with regard to their adoptive status.

Kirk states that the child gathers his first notions
about social roles in early childhood, mainly those that
directly relate to his own family. However, because the
young child is ego-centric much is misinterpreted by him.
The adoptive parent must, then, keep careful watch over how
the young adopted child is interpreting what adoption
means to him.

In middle childhood, age six to twelve, the adopted
child will be concerned about his origins. Writers have
speculated that most children in this age group at one time
or another feel they are adopted. For the biological child
this is fantasy but for the adopted child this must be
incorporated as part of reality. The adopted child during
this stage will ask many questions about adoption that
adoptive parents should answer with empathy and respect.
In middle childhood the child becomes aware of societal
roles and attitudes. The adopted child during this period
may struggle with society's view of illegitimacy. Also
during this period the peer group begins to be very im-
portant. "The adopted child therefore needs a sense of
competence about his adoption which can come only from his
feeling that he has proper knowledge and that he can dis-
pense it as he sees fit." (13,169)

In adolescence and young adulthood Kirk feels the person goes through a period of "conflicting expectations" (15,169). Parents become less important replaced by peer group and heterosexual contact. If the adopted child has not been given sufficient information he will feel even more than normal alienation from his parents. This is also a period of choosing, in many cases, marital partners and a vocation. In the adopted child this raises questions about his heredity and capacities.

Arthur Rautman also outlines (85) the different stages of early life in terms of adoptive status. Rautman believes that by the time the child is moving outside his family he should understand what the word adopted means and be comfortable with the knowledge that he was adopted. He must feel, before he starts school, that he has a secure place in his family and that he is wanted. The author points out that all children fantasize at some point that they were adopted and this is more likely to happen during times of punishment. The adopted child, if insecure in the adoptive relationship, may hold onto these feelings for a longer period of time. In many cases adoptive parents search for mistakes they have made and overcompensate, seeing the child as more insecure than he in fact is.

According to Rautman, early adolescence causes the adopted child to re-examine what adoption means. In this stage there is a great need to be like others and the

distinction of being adopted may not be looked on with such favour as in the past.

Late adolescence, the author states, brings an intense examination of adoption. With the need for more information, and a certain feeling of quickly passing time, specific knowledge, usually in terms of a biological link, is sought. As marriage approaches the future spouse also may put pressure on the adoptee for information.

Rautman sees the birth of the first child as specifically a time of acute crisis for the adopted person and spouse. Without complete genetic information, in most cases, the simple fact that their child fails to achieve milestones at an average rate may bring about deep concern and doubt, with the couple forgetting completely that averages in this case mean little.

A large number of articles have been written about adoptees receiving psychiatric and social work treatment. There is general agreement that adoptees in North America make up about two percent of the population at any given time. Alfred Kadushin (68), has put together a handy chart outlining the findings of the major studies done on adoptive children referred for psychiatric treatment (Table 4).

As we can see by the chart the percentage of adoptees on psychiatric caseloads ranges from a high of 13.3 percent to a low of 1.5 percent with an average of 4.8 percent.

TABLE 4

STUDIES OF ADOPTED CHILDREN REFERRED FOR PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT

Study	Total Number in Study Group	Adoptees in Study Group		Adoptees Placed by Agency (Percentage)	Adoptive Parents' Status (Relatives or Nonrelatives)
		Number	Percentage		
Kirk (1966)................	2,117	132	6.2	–	Both
Simon-Senturia (1966)......	1,371	35	2.6	–	Nonrelatives
Menlove (1965).............	1,314	59	4.6	–	Nonrelatives
Borgatta-Fanshel (1964)....	2,281	123	5.5	–	Nonrelatives
Schechter (1964)..........	–	159	6.6	46	Nonrelatives
Schechter (1962)..........	120	16	13.3	50	Nonrelatives
Ketchum (1964)............	196	20	10.7	–	Both
Goodman (1963)............	593	14	2.4	50	Nonrelatives
Sweeny (1963).............	292	21	7.2	–	Nonrelatives
Humphrey-Ounsted (1963)....	2,700	80	2.9	50	Nonrelatives
Toussieng (1962)..........	357	39	10.9	51	Nonrelatives
Pringle (1961)...........	2,593	210	8.3	–	Both
National Association for Mental Health (around 1955)...................	1,152	17	1.5	–	Both
Holman (1953).............	100	7	7.0	–	Nonrelatives
Stonesifer (1942).........	2,000	48	2.4	–	Both
Total (excluding Schechter 1964).................	17,186	821	4.8		(68,32)

Kadushin goes on to outline some possible reasons for the overrepresentation of adoptees on psychiatric caseloads. He suggests that because adoptive parents have in most cases used the services of an adoption agency to receive their child they are familiar with formal agencies, and more apt to use them for aid. This argument is weakened by the chart cited above, however, which shows that almost as many children are referred from non-agency (relative) placements as from agency placements. The other argument most often used to explain the high percentage of adoptees on psychiatric caseloads is that adoptive parents tend to be middle class with stable incomes. With these demographic factors this class of people is more likely to use the more formal services offered by society's institutions.

Even with these statistics adoption must be seen as essentially a successful service. Kadushin outlines (68,36) some major adoptive outcome studies.

The earliest study Kadushin notes was completed in 1924. After surveying 235 adults one study concluded there was a successful adoption rate of 88 percent. Kadushin noting this and ten other studies completed from 1924 to 1957 points out a very high rate of successful adoptions. Size of the sample in these studies ranges from 18 to 484 with an average of 152 subjects. The length of time between placement and the completion of the study ranges from one year to twenty years. Success rates of the adoption placements range from

a high of 100 percent to a low of 70 percent with an average of 85 percent. Only 14 percent of the adoptions (260 from a total of 1,824) in these studies show an unsatisfactory or problematic adoption placement.

Seglow, Pringle and Wedge in their study (27), include a review of comparative studies of children placed on adoption and non-adopted children. The authors point out that adoption is an exceedingly complex issue about which to make simple judgements because a control group is not possible. However, very specific questions can be studied comparing adopted and nonadopted children. In general it appears from various studies done that "there is some evidence of poor adjustment among adopted children" (27,33).

Seglow et al., also review some major follow-up studies done on adopted children researching rate of successful placements. These studies generally agree that the most important variable in successful adoption is the attitude of the adoptive parents.

Jaffee and Fanshel (11), studied three groups of adoptees. Group I were adoptees showing few problems, group II showed middle range of problems and group III showed a high number of problems. The following Table 5 shows the correlation between these groups and what the adoptees wanted to know about their biological parents.

The data appears "to indicate an association between a less favorable life adjustment on the part of the adoptee and his desire to probe more deeply into his background" (11,138).

TABLE 5. - Presence or Absence of Expressed Desire by
Adoptees over Years to Learn More about Biological Parents
than Adoptive Parents Knew or Were Willing to Divulge

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Total
Adoptee did not express desire to learn more about biological parents.............	91%	79%	58%	76%
Adoptee did express desire to learn more about biological parents..............	3%	15%	30%	16%
Disparate response.....	-	-	6%	2%
Adoptee never told he was adopted..........	6%	3%	3%	4%
Unable to determine....	-	3%	3%	2%
Total cases.............	33%	34%	33%	100%

Jaffee and Fanshel also asked the adoptive parents of
the adoptees in the study to outline the nature and magnitude
of problems attributable to adoptive status.

Group I had 91 percent of the respondents state there
were no problems attributable to their adoptive status. Six
percent of group I had problems with late telling. Eighty-
five percent of group II indicated no problems. Six percent
of this group noted minor problems in the area of acceptance
of adoption, and 3 percent had problems with late telling.
Group III showed only 52 percent with no problems about

their adoptive status. Twelve percent of group III
respondents showed adjustment problems to adoptive status
in two or more areas and a further 12 percent in one area
of adjustment such as conflict with adoptive parents, hetero-
sexual relations, or a feeling of being different because
of adoption. Three percent of group III respondents showed
problems because of late telling and a further 5 percent
were classified as psychotic.

Again the adoptees in group III are noted as having
more problems adjusting to their adoptive status in the view
of their adopted parents.

Jaffee and Fanshel argue in the conclusion of their
study for expanded agency service on a longer range basis to
broaden the knowledge base in the adoption process.

P. Toussieng in *Child Welfare*, 1962 (97) outlines the
etiology of psychological disturbances in some adopted
children. He sees adopted children as having four essential
difficulties: 1) fantasy about biological parents being
"good", 2) difficulty in coping with original rejection,
3) lack of self-boundary, and 4) poor integration of iden-
tification.

Toussieng feels that the root of many of these problems
faced by adopted children is "an unconscious and unresolved
aversion toward parenthood in one or both adoptive parents"
(97,65). This underlying unconscious attitude, according
to Toussieng, may be brought into the parent-child relation-
ship. In the adoptive mother this attitude may cause

nurturing problems and difficulty in balancing mothering
with proper explanation of the child's adoptive status.
Toussieng finds the best way to help the situation is
long term intensive casework to work through the adoptive
parents' negative feelings towards parenthood.

M. Schechter in his "Observations on Adopted Children"
(90), notes the high number of adopted children seen in his
and other psychiatric practices. He shows that "adoption
(wove) itself into the framework of the child's personality
configuration" (90,29). Schechter, as do other authors,
notes that the adopted child has in effect two sets of
parents: real ones, and fantasy ones. To the author this
leads to a sense of emotional distance in many adopted
children and he speculates that this distance may be the
result of a need to identify with distant, fantasy parents.
Schechter also notes that the reality of being given up once
leads adopted children to question whether or not this might
also happen in the future. He feels that "the immature ego
cannot cope with the knowledge of the rejection by ... orig-
inal parents, representing a severe narcissistic injury" (90,
31).

Lauton and Gross (71), in reviewing psychiatric liter-
ature on adopted children, point out four areas of concern:
1) family romance, 2) psychological problems, 3) telling
(discussed elsewhere in this review), and 4) roaming. The
authors state that at some time all children have some

doubt as to whether they are natural children. They fanta-
size parents that have more power, wealth, etc.. This
family romance for adopted children is real. Lauton and
Gross have seen this family romance most often in adopted
children rejected by their adoptive mothers.

The authors feel that not enough conclusive study has
been done to prove that adopted children are significantly
higher on psychiatric caseloads. They feel rather that
adoption is more often a complicating, rather than a causal,
factor in diagnosis and treatment.

Lauton and Gross have also noted a need to roam to
be prevalent in adopted adolescents. They see this as a
physical manifestation of a symbolic search for identity.

We are aware of only one study (3) which has compared
the views of adult adoptees, adoptive parents and biological
parents. This study compared attitudes towards sealed
records. The authors note the recent increasing number of
adult adoptees actively searching for information about their
"genealogical background" (3,1). The central issue to these
searching adoptees, the adoptive parents, the agencies, and
the biological parents is the sealed record. After adoption
is legalized court records are sealed and can only be opened
by a court order. Courts have been extremely reluctant to
issue such an order.

For the study, groups of biological parents, adoptees,
and adoptive parents indicated preference for one of four

options regarding records. The four options given were:

1) Minimal background information provided to adoptive parents at the time of adoption, and the record subsequently kept sealed and released only under court order.
2) Complete background information (except names and addresses of birth parents), provided to the adoptive parents at the time of adoption and the record subsequently sealed and released only under court order.
3) Complete background information except names and addresses provided by the original adoption agency, when requested by adult adoptees, or birth parents, after the adoptee has reached adulthood.
4) Adoption records availble at the Hall of Records when requested by adult adoptees, or birth parents after the adoptee has reached adulthood. (3,6)

Results of the study are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

ATTITUDE ABOUT THE SEALED RECORD

Proposals	Birth Parents N=30	Adoptive Parents N=166	Adoptees N=39
(1)............	1 - 3%	8 - 4%	2 - 5%
(2)............	1 - 3%	69 - 42%	3 - 8%
(3)............	6 - 20%	54 - 33%	14 - 36%
(4)............	20 - 67%	28 - 17%	19 - 49%
No preference.	2 - 7%	7 - 4%	1 - 2%
Total.........	30 -100%	166 -100%	39 -100%

In general the results show that adoptive parents are the most reluctant to unseal records while biological parents, whose desire for confidentiality is the reason given in most instances for sealing records, were overwhelmingly in

favour of unsealing records.

The results of a second question asking attitudes towards the establishing of mediating boards (ie., boards that would bring adult adoptees and their biological parents together) is shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHING

OF MEDIATING BOARDS

	Birth Parents N=30	Adoptive Parents N=166	Adoptees N=39
Agree.........	25 - 84%	105 - 63%	28 - 72%
Disagree.....	4 - 13%	56 - 33%	10 - 26%
No opinion...	1 - 3%	5 - 4%	1 - 2%
Total........	30 -100%	166 -100%	39 -100%

Again adoptive parents are the most reluctant group to favour the establishment of mediating boards while biological parents are the group most in favour of the boards.

Identity Formation

Heinz Wolff in his article "Crisis Points and Problems of Identity" (99), states that crises

> ... occur in response to sudden and more or less unexpected external threats or emotional hazards: the individual concerned experiences acute distress and is unsure whether or not he can master the new situation.
> (99,229)

Through the resolution of these crises points in one's life there is opportunity for personal growth. Social work literature has long suggested that specific crises in relationships lead to the development of identity (17). Wolff draws a distinction between identity and social role, the latter related to how a person feels in relation to others while the former refers to feelings about self. Identity is not formulated then at one particular stage of life but is a continuous process carried on from birth to death.

Wolff outlines three basic kinds of crises. The first is called the crisis of survival (99,230). This crisis is felt by children who are insecure in their relationship with their parents. The crisis is the fear of "ceasing to exist" (99,231). The second type of crisis is referred to as the crisis of separation (99,231). This crisis is the fear of losing a significant person or object. "Crises of separation, real or fantasized, are especially important for identity creation. Their resolution depends on the capacity to mourn and to learn being alone." (99,232) The third is a crisis of conflict (99,232). This crisis concerns the need to choose between inner need and concerns, as opposed to pressures from outside the person. These crises occur at certain stages in life and are often called life crisis. Some of the more common life crises are: independence versus dependency in adolescence, sexual choices, choosing of a life partner, occupation choice, birth of child, death, etc.. Each crisis carries

with it the opportunity for resolution and growth. There is an "opportunity to achieve a greater sense of internal consistency" (99,233).

Sorosky, Baran, and Pannor (92), outline the relationship between life crisis stages and identity formulation in adoptees. The authors see these two factors as related to the adoptees' search for (or desire for) genealogical background information about themselves, which in effect is a search to fill in gaps in identity formation. In early adolescence, with the beginning of heterosexual interest, the adoptee begins to see himself as having distinctive genetic roots. As the adoptee moves into late adolescence and young adulthood choices are being made about life partner and occupation, both of which re-awaken questions about genetic background. Pregnancy, in self or spouse, in adoptees brings concern about possible hereditary weaknesses especially diseases. "Death of one or both adoptive parents creates a feeling of loss or relieves the burden of concern and guilt about hurting the adoptive parents." (92,22) Separation or divorce may heighten long felt feelings of rejection associated with adoption. Middle age in adoptees brings with it the feeling that if biological parents are becoming quite elderly and if something concrete is not done to find them they may die without the adoptee ever having seen them. "Lastly, the approaching of old age may bring about a final yearning for knowledge denied previously." (92,23)

Sorosky, Baran and Pannor feel that their work with adoptees has shown that adopted persons are "more vulnerable than the population at large to the development of identity problems" (92,24). These problems with identity often surface in the adoptee and he becomes immersed in questions about genealogical factors and feels a compulsion to be reunited with biological parents. Adoptees are faced with breaks in their own genealogical continuity, with obvious blocks to their past which in turn cause blocks to and concerns with the future.

Simon and Senturia (91), feel that the crux of identity problems in adoptees lies in two questions: Who are my real parents? and Why did they give me up? Identity with the adoptive parents is interfered with by the fantasy of the biological parents. "The fantasy of reunion with the biological parent appears ... to be an effort to deal with the depression that grows out of fantasies around abandonment." (91,864)

Max Frisk (57) suggests that in the adopted adolescent the normal processes in the formulation of identity are complicated. In his research with adopted children he notes that special problems in identity formation are present. Frisk states that when nothing is known about biological parents the purpose of birth becomes a major issue. The adopted adolescent "lack(s) essential facts for the building up of ... ego and identity" (57,10). The author notes that

adoptees have no "genetic ego but in its place a hereditary ghost" (57,10). This genetic factor is important in identity formation. There is little opportunity for putting together genetic information with environmental material to form a balanced view of self.

Lea Barinbaum in an article (37) about the identity crisis of an adopted girl states that the identity crisis in adopted adolescents will be greater because their "imagination about their real parents is unchecked by reality" (37, 548). Normal parent-child conflicts at this time may bring guilt feelings on the part of the adoptive parents who feel that they have failed and in the adopted child who feel he is being ungrateful to the parents he loves.

Rondell and Murray (26), feel that part of the problem of identity formation in adopted children is interruption of the identification process by the act of adoption. This is especially so in children adopted when older. The youngster must struggle "to reconcile his past models with his new ones" (26,72).

Yarrow in Child Welfare (100), states that the "development of identity is significantly influenced by the quality and continuity of relationship with the mother figure during infancy" (100,70). In many adopted children this continuity of relationship can be interrupted, more than once, as a child may not necessarily go from biological mother to adoptive parents without some intermediate stops. Identity,

according to Yarrow, also grows from feelings of belonging
to a family. In adopted children the lack of knowledge about
their genealogical continuity may hamper development of
their sense of identity. Also the adopted child must always
fit into his identity two sets of parents, one set real and
one set a fantasy. Incorporating two sets of parents into a
developing ego and sense of identity is often problematic.

Telling

Telling the child he is adopted is undoubtedly the
most difficult task faced by adoptive parents. D. Krugman
has outlined what she feels are the issues to be dealt with
in telling (70). She points out that theorists have suggested
everything from killing off the biological parents to simply
saying nothing. No strategy has eliminated the problem.
The issue in telling that most concerns professionals,
according to Krugman, is how the ego of the young child will
incorporate two sets of parents - a real set and a fantasy
set. The second issue of importance is "the likelihood of
severe narcissistic injury associated with knowledge of the
rejection by (his) original parents" (70,351). With these
two concerns various authors have speculated on and researched
whether or not the child should be told of his adoption, if
so at what age, and probably most important, how he should
be told.

Margaret Kornitzer in <u>Adoption and Family Life</u> (16),
states that inadequate telling often leads to crisis and
complicates the adoptive situation. Kornitzer estimates that
over 25 percent of adopted children are not told before the
age of five. She points out that studies show girls more
often react adversely to late telling than do boys. Kornitzer
introduces the idea of a conspiracy of silence which occurs
in many adoption homes. When the adoptive parents tell the
child of his status they feel the issue is now over,
especially when the child doesn't bring the subject up again.
The adoptive parents feel relieved that the child has forgot-
ten all about it. Meanwhile the child sensing the parents'
difficulty in telling, doesn't ask questions because he does
not want to hurt his parents. Thus nothing is said. Some
children are not told directly they are adopted but are
present when their parents tell others about their adoption.
Kornitzer feels that in general adoptive parents assume a
child is not interested in his background. She feels that
the earlier the child is told of his adoption the less
secrecy and less upheaval there is.

A. M. McWhinnie in a follow-up study (22) of adoptees
as adults found an average age of nine years when the adop-
tee was told. Her study showed that adoptees often knew
before parents told them. The adoptees surveyed pointed
out that they felt communication lines were all one way,
from adoptive parents to them. The child longed for infor-
mation to come from the adoptive parents but felt unable to

ask. McWhinnie and Kornitzer have both observed a conspiracy
of silence. The child does not inquire about his background
because he is afraid to hurt his parents. The adoptive
parents are unable to see the turmoil in the child and
since the child doesn't ask for more information the adop-
tive parents assume he is not curious. McWhinnie states
that if adoptees are given little information they will
fantasize their early life, usually imagining the worst.
Avoidance of telling, according to McWhinnie, may be the
result of the adoptive parents' feelings of inadequacy
because they could not have children of their own. Telling

> ... is related to the parent's very basic emotional
> attitudes of rearing children not biologically their
> own, in some cases apparently to their feelings about
> their own infertility and in others to their feelings
> about illegitimacy. (22,253)

McWhinnie also argues for early telling for three reasons:

1) It will prevent the child from being told by
others or from making a chance discovery.

2) Harmful attitudes towards adoption may be avoided.

3) The child has no sense of parental deceit.

Jaffee and Fanshel in their follow-up study (11) of
adoptees point out that most agencies believe the child
should be told at a young age so that he may avoid the
trauma of hearing about his adoptive status from a source
other than his parents.

* Ideally, the development of a youngster's self-concept
would include the fact that he was adopted. This would
alleviate the severe turmoil and conflict that would
arise if he were faced suddenly with having to incorpo-
rate this fact into a new self-conception at a later age.
(11,119)

Agencies, however, often instruct adoptive parents on when
to tell rather than how to tell. The Jaffee and Fanshel
study showed that in a majority of cases adoptive parents
withheld facts. Table 8 points this out.

TABLE 8. — Nature of Information Regarding Biological Parents
Revealed by Total Sample of Adoptive Parents to Adoptees over
the Years Following the Initial Revelation

	Information Regarding Characteristics of Biological Parents		
	Family or Marital Status	Personal and Social Characteristics	Reasons for Giving up or Abandoning Adoptee
No information revealed: parents did not know facts...........	26%	36%	26%
No information revealed: parents withheld facts..	45%	36%	36%
Some information provided: not true account of facts...........	4%	–	8%
Some information provided: accurate account of facts...........	13%	15%	12%
Disparate response.	5%	2%	7%
Other...............	2%	5%	2%
Not covered. Unable to determine...........	5%	6%	9%
Total...............	100%	100%	100%

In Scotland any adoptee seventeen years or older may obtain a copy of his adoption order. In a study (52) done of 70 adoptees seeking information two groups were identified: 1) those wishing a reunion with biological parents, and 2) those wanting only information. Although the adoptees felt an optimum age for telling to be from ages 4 to 8, many in the group were not told until they were adolescents. Those who found out about their adoption from people other than their parents were resentful. Generally the adoptees felt that their adoptive parents had been reluctant to talk about adoption. Most of the group wishing reunions had been given little information by their adoptive parents.

> Outcomes reported in this study were that the adoptees who sought only information were generally satisfied but would have liked more complete records, and that those who set out to find their parents experienced less satisfaction. (52, 549)

Susan and Elton Klibanoff (15) believe that probably the most important variable in telling is the relationship the child has with the family at the time of telling. They point out that self-image begins in infancy "when parents love, hold and feed their young" (15, 41). If the word adopted is used to a young child in an improper way the child may assume a connotation of "different" rather than "special". The authors indicate that a good time to tell about adoption occurs when a child asks where babies come from. The Klibanoffs feel that it is essential for the adoptive parents to be confident and positive about adoption

when discussing it with the child. "The crucial factor in the child's ability to deal with the truth will be the security of his relationship with his present family." (15,46)

Louise Raymond in _Adoption and After_ (25), feels that if the child is not told early of his adoptive status when he is told he will assume the worst about his background. She points out that by telling the child he is adopted not only do the adoptive parents have to deal with their infertility but so does the child. Raymond adds two important factors to our discussion of telling. First she introduces the idea that in early years all children feel they are adopted and that this is natural. When told they are in fact adopted the child becomes more susceptible to self-doubt than do other children. "Especially because he is adopted, he needs to know that he is wanted, that he is acceptable, that the kind of person he is, is a good kind to be." (25,98) The second factor Raymond introduces into telling is the idea that an important element in telling is the feeling the child is left with about his biological parents. If the child senses any resentment or disapproval he may transfer these feelings about his origin to his status within the home.

Seglow, Pringle and Wedge in _Growing Up Adopted_ (27), state that "curiosity about ... biological parents must be expected and dealt with as truthfully as the child is able to understand" (27,168). They also point out that, after

initially telling the child of his adoption, a seeming lack
of interest does not mean there are no questions. Adopted
children often feel that adoptive parents do not want the
subject raised so they do not ask. "This in turn makes
possible parental rationalization or self-deception that the
child is not curious when in fact the real reason stems from
the parental reluctance to tackle the subject." (27,168)
The dilemma then for adoptive parents is how to tell the
child and still have him preserve a positive image of him-
self, his biological parents and his adoptive parents.
Seglow, Pringle and Wedge argue for early truthful telling,
at the same time, suggest that adoptive parents be encouraged
to see telling as a continuing thing not simply a once and
for all phenomenon.

Lauton and Gross in a very brief section of their
article "Review of Psychiatric Literature on Adopted Chil-
dren" (71), note that although there has been much written
on telling there is little if any agreement among experts.
They feel telling need not be overly traumatic unless the
adoptive parents view it as so. In other words the reaction
of the child will be dependent upon the amount of stress
he senses in the adoptive parents. Lauton and Gross feel
it is most often at times of crisis that adoptees have
questions about their backgrounds.

One finds little literature that advises not telling
the child of his adoption. J. Ansfield in his book The
Adopted Child (2), puts forward such an argument, suggesting

that the only reason adoptive parents tell at all is because
adoption agencies insist on it. He feels that adoptive
parents obey this directive out of fear of the agency either
removing the child or not approving them for future adoption
placements. Ansfield says that adoptive parents simply do
not want to tell.

> As a result a lot of anxiety is generated in parents
> because they do not want to hurt the child by being
> truthful but fear that the child will find out the truth
> from someone else and hold it against them for not
> being honest. (2,35)

One pitfall of this approach Ansfield admits is having to
swear friends and relatives to secrecy. He sees this as
acceptable if it means the child learns of his adoptive
status later in life when he is better equipped emotionally
to handle being told he is adopted.

David Kirk is undoubtedly the foremost writer of those
who study and practice in the field of adoption. In his
book Shared Fate (13), he outlines what he sees to be the
dilemmas in telling. Kirk feels that adoptive parents are
caught in four forces pulling in opposite directions which
make whether to tell an extremely difficult decision and
how to tell even more difficult. The four dilemmas are as
follows:.

1) The dilemma of enchantment versus disenchantment
in parental role definition: simply stated this means that
adoptive parents must decide whether they are going to
define their role as the same as parents who have had bio-
logical children or whether the fact of adoption makes their

role as a parent significantly different. Kirk suggests that if they assume the role to be the same as biological parents their relationship with their children will suffer somewhat but their societal role will be made easier. If they see their parental role in adoption as different, consequences will be reversed. This dilemma forces the adoptive couple to make a decision on whether or not the child should be told of his adoption, and if so at how early an age.

2) The dilemma of integration versus differentiation: to integrate the child into the home is a goal of all parents. Once the child has been integrated into the family he is allowed to have progressively more freedom. For this movement towards freedom the child must first feel safe and secure in his attachment to his parents. This process culminates in the formation in the child of a sense of self-identity, or a knowledge of who he is and how he is unique.

Adoptive parents, however, are told to use differentiating terms and acts during this period of integration. They are counseled to use the word adopted. Children soon learn this word has a connotation of being different. For the adoptive parents this differentiating "the child out of their midst ... (comes) at the very time when they also feel especially strong the desire to attach him to themselves and themselves to him" (13,46). The dilemma then is whether or not they risk by revealing his adoptive status, that

the child may have difficulty with the process of integration.

> The penalty of choosing the goal of candidness, then, consists in uncertainty as to their proper and appropriate parental acts on the basis of the unknown relationship that results from the candidness. (13,46)

3) The dilemma of ignorance versus knowledge of the child's background: if adoptive couples are going to be free and open with the child about the adoption and the circumstances surrounding it they obviously must be armed with some facts by the adoption agency. We know that adoption agencies do not always give or have complete background information. The dilemma arises in deciding what to do with the information the agency gives. Do they record it or forget it? Some adoptive parents don't want information on the child's background so that when he asks they truthfully can say they don't know anything. Research is not conclusive on what this does to the parent-child relationship however.

4) The dilemma of reproductive morals versus the principle of respect for individual personality: how are the adoptive parents to feel about the child's biological parents and what message are they to convey to the child about them? This dilemma is focussed around how the adoptive parents feel about illegitimacy and how they provide proper moral guidance to the child without negating his background. This probably is the dilemma with which adoptive parents have the most difficulty.

Kirk in another article (69) further focusses on adoptive parents' feelings about the biological parents and the question of illegitimacy. He feels many adoptive parents try to minimize the impact of telling by depersonalizing the biological parents. This often leads to the adopted child being told he was chosen. The myth of being chosen may arouse in the child feelings of rejection, for to be chosen by a second set of parents there must be separation from the first. By using this approach in an attempt to minimize the impact of telling adoptive parents are in effect saying to the child that his first set of parents didn't want him. The child, Kirk feels, may also fantasize that his being rejected was because of his illegitimacy.

In summary, the important factors regarding telling the child he is adopted are as follows:

1) Improper telling can result in problems incorporating two sets of parents into the child's ego and can result in narcissistic injury because of original rejection.

2) Most authors agree the child should be told as early as he can understand what the word adopted means.

3) Continuous telling is important to break the conspiracy of silence often created by adoptive parents and adoptees.

4) Adoptive parents should tell the child he is adopted. He shouldn't find out from someone else.

5) The relationship the adopted child has with his family at the time of telling is a crucial factor.

6) Adoptive parents' feelings about their own infertility and the child's illegitimacy are important factors in telling.

7) The act of telling should leave the adopted child with positive feelings about his biological parents.

8) Telling the adopted child he was "chosen" may lead to feelings of rejection, for to be "chosen" by a second set of parents implies rejection by the first.

Personal Memoirs

Recently the whole area of adoption has been receiving widespread publicity in Canada and the United States both in print and in the electronic media. Most of the publicity has centered around those adoptees who have undertaken what has come to be known as "the search". Looking for their biological parents has become, for some, a prolonged search lasting for up to twenty years.

The best known of these searchers is Mrs. Florence Fisher. In The Search for Anna Fisher (5), she describes a twenty year search, in which she overcame numerous obstacles to eventually find both of her biological parents. As an outcome of her personal search she founded the Adoptees Liberty Movement Association (A.L.M.A.) an organization consisting of adoptees, biological parents and adoptive

parents. The ultimate aim of the organization is to re-
move the secrecy from adoption by unsealing adoption records
and making it possible for adult adoptees to have access to
information about their adoption. In The Sunday Record (81)
(Bergen County, New Jersey), May 8, 1973, and in People
magazine (82) in August 1975, Mrs Fisher outlined her own
search which started at the age of seven when she acciden-
tally saw an adoption certificate with the name Anna on it.
When she asked her parents who this Anna was her adoptive
parents burned the certificate. Not until she was twenty-
two did she learn for certain, from a cousin, that she had
been adopted. She began to search through old records and
telephone books with only the name Anna Fisher and her city
of birth from which to start. Finally, and only through a
bureaucratic mistake, she gained access to the lawyer who
had arranged her adoption. When she had found both her
biological parents and developed relationships with them,
she took her biological father's name (Fisher). She placed
an ad in a newspaper to see if anyone was interested in
starting an organization to help adoptees in their search.
Within three years A.L.M.A. had eighteen-hundred members.
From 1970 to 1975 A.L.M.A. had helped make six-hundred
reunions between adoptees and biological parents possible.
In all but three cases, according to Mrs. Fisher, the bio-
logical parents wanted to be found and in 80 percent of the
cases permanent relationships developed between adoptees
and biological parents. Mrs. Fisher points out that both

the biological and adoptive parents have the right of choice at the time of adoption but the child does not. She claims that it is unfair that even when the child reaches the age of majority he is not able to exercise his right of choice in the matter of acquiring information about himself.

Another woman who has written two widely read and reported on books about her personal adoption has published under two names. Under the name Betty Lifton she has written Twice Born! Memoirs of an Adopted Daughter (19), and under the name R. Kittson has written Orphan Voyage (14). In the former, Lifton tells that until the death of her adoptive parents when she was thirty she had no idea she was adopted. It was while searching through their effects that she discovered her adoption papers. In only a year she found her biological mother. Lifton says that the reunion between herself and her biological mother had been expected by her mother for years. The author describes how her biological mother's whole life was affected by the act of giving up her baby. She was unable to form meaningful relationships with men lest they find out her secret of the baby she had borne and given up. Lifton, as does Fisher, argues for more liberal access to records by adult adoptees. She sees this as essential for the complete formation of the adoptee's identity. In Twice Born (19,274), Lifton recounts a talk she had with Erik Erikson, a scholar

in the field of identity. Erikson, himself an adoptee, is
rather cautious about forcing reunions between adoptees
and biological parents, however, he suggests that the choice
should be available to adoptees. Initially Erikson feels
that a small, closely watched group be given the choice and
then the effect studied, rather than waiting "for the next
generation of psychiatrists to tell you what damage was
done" (19,277).

Written under the name of Kittson, Orphan Voyage is
an account of the author's interviews with other adoptees.
Kittson placed ads in large Michigan newspapers and dis-
tributed press releases to the electronic media asking that
adult adoptees in Michigan who were willing to talk to her
about adoption write to her in Philadelphia and she would
schedule interviews with them. She chose Michigan because
this had been her birthplace. Her book is a chronicle of
these interviews. She found four themes prominent in the
interviews: 1) nonexistence: adoptive parents state they
know nothing about adoption; 2) degradation: feelings of
a sense of shame; 3) reconstruction: adoptive parents tell
child that biological mother has made her life over; and
4) rejection. Kittson suggests that after her interviews
with adopted adults she feels they always retain at least
one of these four feelings.

Kittson also questioned the adoptees carefully
about how they were told of their adoption and she stated

that the effect of the telling doesn't register until about the age of twelve. The shock of telling at an early age brings about silence in the child, which the adoptive parents desire because it is easy to handle. Kittson feels a conspiracy develops in which the child asks no questions because he perceives this will hurt the adoptive parents, whereas the adoptive parents feel there is no problem because the child asks no questions.

Besides these two well-known women there have been other widely circulated accounts of searches by adoptees for their biological parents.

In the Sunday Times Advertiser (38) (Trenton, New Jersey), on September 8, 1974, a story described the search for biological parents by a Mrs. Graham, age 39, mother of four children, married to a wealthy man. Mrs. Graham was becoming suicidal. Over a period of thirteen years she had invested fifteen thousand dollars in legal fees to have her adoption records unsealed. Finally Mrs. Graham hired a private investigation firm and they found her biological mother in one week. When they were reunited the biological mother explained to Mrs. Graham how she had signed the adoption papers out of feelings of love, not rejection, because her baby had already been in six foster homes by the age of three. Mrs. Graham and her biological mother have a joint petition before an American court to unseal all adoption records.

In the Sunday, July 6, 1975, edition of the Kansas City Star (87), the story of Miss M. Anderson's efforts to unseal adoption records in Missouri is told. Miss Anderson is petitioning the Missouri courts to unseal all birth records at a specific Kansas City home for unwed mothers. She has met much resistance from the state of Missouri where the records are considered confidential.

In the June 25, 1974 issue of Cosmopolitan (53), there appears the story of an unnamed woman's search for her biological mother. She describes her obsession, which began in adolescence, with finding her biological parents. After graduating from high school she purposely entered nursing school in the same hospital where she had been born. The need to know her pre-adoption identity brought increasingly negative feelings about her adoptive parents. Upon graduation from nursing school she deliberately obtained a job in the orphanage where she had been placed after birth, however she was not able to view her records. Finally at the age of twenty-one her adoptive parents told her of her pre-adoption name. She searched telephone books and other records for two years before contacting A.L.M.A., and being reunited with her biological mother. She found that the act of seeing her biological mother and knowing her own story brought her strangely closer to her adoptive parents. She remains in contact with her biological mother.

The New York Times (54) recently carried an article regarding how Ms. Ann Scharp successfully petitioned a Surrogate Court to have her adoption records unsealed. The judge ruled in her favour after hearing a psychologist's evaluation that she was displaying a lack of trust and feelings of isolation and constriction of affection. The article went on to argue that in general the rights of adoptees must be considered before the rights of biological or adoptive parents.

Psychology Today has also carried personal stories of adoptees searching for their biological parents. In one particular article (62), Ms. Howard recounts how her adoptive parents had always insisted she was special, because she was chosen, however, they refused to tell her anything else about her background. Ms. Howard states that she had very little interest in her background until about the age of thirty. At that time she contacted the orphanage from which she had been placed but the file was not found. However, through the State (Virginia) Department of Welfare she learned her pre-adoption name. Ms. Howard again contacted the orphanage with her original name and was told by a social worker there, that actually her file had not been lost. It had been hoped she would give up her search if told no file was available. Ms. Howard went to the court where her adoption had been finalized and to her surprise she was given the file to read. She managed to find the

location of her biological mother. Rather than attempting
to see her, she phoned, posing as a telephone interviewer,
and received all the information she wanted to know about
her biological mother and family.

. While these personal accounts provide interesting
reading it is not possible to generalize from them to all
adopted adults. Two interesting factors, however, stand
out. One is that the accounts cited above are all personal
memoirs of the search by women. We have yet to come across
any reported searches by male adoptees. We can speculate
that female adoptees are more affected by lack of knowledge
about their background than are male adoptees. Secondly,
when the search is undertaken it often becomes an obsession,
lasting in one case twenty years.

This chapter has reviewed literature regarding
adoption in seven areas: 1) historical development,
2) agency practice, 3) adoptive parents, 4) adoptees,
5) identity formation of adoptees, 6) telling, and 7) per-
sonal memoirs of adoptees.

In Chapter III the methodology of this study will
be developed.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Recently the adoption field in North America has been increasingly discussed in the mass media, particularly regarding access to records. There have been numerous books and articles written about adoptees who have searched for their biological parents and have had reunions, about others who are still searching and about adoptive parents' feelings on the issue. In many cases adoptive parents' views have been documented; however the opinions and attitudes of biological parents and adoptees have generally not been as well studied.

The researchers chose to question adult adoptees rather than biological parents because of their belief that there would be problems gaining access to biological parents because of their reticence to expose their past.

Purpose

The researchers' initial purpose was to acquire information about a particular group of people, adult adoptees, their present lives and their adoptive situation. Also to be questioned was to what extent these adult adoptees desire information regarding their background, and what might prompt this interest. It was felt it would be helpful to all those

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involved in adoption (the adoptee, adoptive parents, bio-
logical parents, and the adoption agency) to know whether or
not the desire for information was related to the strength
or weakness of the adoption relationship, how and when the
adoptee learned of his adoption, and the openness and fre-
quency with which adoption was discussed in the adoptive
home. Lastly, the researchers felt it important that the
views of adult adoptees be studied and made known to the
Provincial Government which is studying present adoption
policy in order to make recommendations on what type of
agency should be set up to handle information exchange
between adult adoptees and biological parents.

Classification

The purposes outlined above fit into the research
categories of C. Selltiz' book <u>Research Methods in Social
Relations</u>: "(2) to portray accurately the characteristics
of a particular individual, situation or group" and "(3) to
determine the frequency with which something occurs or with
which it is associated with something else" (28,90). The
authors group these two purposes into "descriptive studies".
In descriptive studies it is necessary to clearly define
what it is that is to be measured and to have the proper
methods for measuring it.

> In collecting evidence for a study of this sort, what
> is needed is not so much flexibility as a clear formu-
> lation of what and who is to be measured and techniques
> for valid and reliable measurements." (28,102)

According to Tripodi's research classification
scheme (31) this study would be labeled "Quantitative Descrip-
tive" and would have as its primary purpose hypothesis test-
ing. When testing the hypotheses one is concerned with
the description of the quantitative relationship among
variables, either through an implication of a cause and effect
relationship or simply as a statement of the existence of a
measurable relationship between variables.

Isaac and Michael (10) call this type of study "causal-
comparative" (10,22) research. They see it as appropriate
where the experimental approach is not feasible, and as
useful in developing information about the nature of phenom-
ena. The authors feel this method has become more acceptable
in recent years with improvements in "techniques, statis-
tical methods and designs with partial control features"
(10,23).

There are a number of weaknesses of the causal-
comparative design. When looking into the past for a
plausible causal factor of a presently existing consequence,
there is a lack of control over independent variables. The
investigator must just take the facts as he finds them. He
must keep in mind all other possible reasons for things
being as they are, all possible rival hypotheses. The
soundness of his conclusions will depend on how success-
fully he can justify them as opposed to other alternatives.
There may be multiple causation of an outcome, or one cause

at one time and another cause at another time. It may
often be difficult to tell which factor is cause, and
which is effect. Showing a relationship does however not
mean there is cause and effect present, rather both may be
related to some additional factor.

Assumptions

Tripodi states:

Included in the researcher's formulation of the study
problem should be a statement of major asssumptions in
regard to selection of variables, definitions of
concepts and measurement procedures. (31,83)

Tripodi defines assumptions as "propositions which
have not been verified, but which are taken as given for
the purpose of investigation" (31,74).

The researchers have made several assumptions in for-
mulating this research. The major assumption is that adult
adoptees will remember details about their early life,
especially when they were told they were adopted. Also
accepted is that these adoptees will now be able to judge
the quality of the relationship they have had and have
presently with their adoptive parents. Also taken as given
is that all people during their lives go through periods of
normal crisis. For adoptees these life crises will be the
same as for other people, such as marriage, death of loved
one, becoming a parent, etc.; however, because of their
adoption there will be specific life crises related to
this aspect of their existence (e.g., being told of adoption).

Hypotheses

Six hypotheses have been formulated to be tested in this work keeping in mind Goode and Hatt's (7) characteristics of usable hypotheses (7,68), namely: hypotheses should be conceptually clear, have empirical reference, be specific, be related to available techniques of measurement and be related to a body of theory.

The six hypotheses are:

1) The majority of adoptees desire information about their backgrounds.

2) Adult adoptees desire information about their background rather than a reunion with their biological parents.

3) The search by adoptees for information about their biological parents is related to a life crisis.

4) The degree of interest shown by adoptees for information about their biological parents is not related to whether the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive parents as positive or negative.

5) Adoptees will have less desire for information about their background if they are told of their adoption at an early age and with appropriate frequency by their adoptive parents.

6) Adoptees will favour the creation of an agency, to serve adult adoptees and their biological parents which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

Hypothesis number one suggests that desiring knowledge about one's roots is a process we all go through. For adoptees, however, learning of their genealogical roots is not merely a simple task of asking one's parents. It is the authors' belief that often this desire for information in adoptees is viewed as somehow a gauge of whether or not the adoption has been successful, rather than being viewed as a normal process, specialized for adoptees because the parents they know are not their parents of birth.

Hypothesis number two states that adoptees desire information about themselves rather than a reunion with their biological parents. With increasing publicity being given to those adoptees who desire to see and know their biological parents, the majority of adoptees, who only desire accurate information about genealogical factors in their backgrounds, will tend to be forgotten.

Hypothesis three will test for the catalyst which activates the search for information about biological parents by adoptees. The researchers feel that the pursuit of information is related to a life crisis. The relationship between life crises and temporary psycho-social dysfunctioning is recognized in social work practice (17). Specifically the authors believe that life crises also can lead the adoptees to a process of searching.

Hypothesis four suggests that this desire for information is not related to the quality of the relationship

between the adoptee and his adoptive parents. In the past, as mentioned above, a search by an adoptee for information about his background was generally assumed to come about because of some failure by the adoptive parents to properly incorporate the adopted child into their family. It is suggested here, however, because the desire for knowledge about one's past is a process we all go through, that the quality of the adoptee-adoptive parent relationship, though important for other obvious reasons, will not be a factor in how much information the adoptee desires to know about himself.

Hypothesis five deals with probably the most controversial issue in adoption, telling. Both the literature on adoption and long standing adoption agency practice suggest that the adopted child should be told he is adopted sometime before entering school. Telling can be extremely traumatic for the adopted child and it is our opinion that the way in which this was done by the adoptive parents will be an important factor in how much information the adoptee desires about himself.

The Government of Ontario is currently reviewing policy on the handling of access to records and information exchange in the area of adoption. Hypothesis six states the kind of agency the researchers believed adoptees will favour for the exchange of information. It is hypothesized that an agency which would exchange information given to it

by both biological parents and adult adoptees, excepting
information which could lead to identification of the other
party, would be the type of agency most favoured.

Definitions

Formal definitions of terms

Adopt: To take by free choice into a close relation-
ship previously not existing, especially by a formal legal
act; specifically to take voluntarily (a child of other
parents) to be in the place of or as one's own child (105).

Information: An informing or being informed; trans-
mission of knowledge; news, word, tidings; knowledge
acquired in any manner; facts, data (103).

Reunion: A bringing together again; a gathering of
persons after separation, as of members of a family (103).

Crisis: An emotionally significant event or radical
change of status in a person's life (104).

Parents: "a father or a mother" (102).

Majority: "the greater part or number; the number
larger than half the total" (102).

Operational definitions

Polansky (24) states that an operational definition
"consists of the steps, action, 'operations' one performs
in order to relate the concept to events in the real
world" (24,23). For the purposes of this study the fol-
lowing were the operational definitions:

Adoptee: Anyone who is past his eighteenth birthday, who is legally adopted, and resides in Essex, Kent or Lambton counties.

Biological parents: Those two people who conceived and gave birth to a child.

Adoptive parents: Those two people who have legally adopted a child.

Reunion: Any contact between an adoptee and his or her biological parent or parents.

Life crisis: An event in one's life which causes temporary disequilibrium in functioning, such as: marriage, separation, divorce, beginning or leaving school or a job, death of spouse, death of a parent, pregnancy of self or spouse, serious physical or mental illness, children leaving home.

Early age: before entering kindergarten.

Appropriate frequency: more than three times per year.

Sampling

Population

The population of this study consisted of adoptees 18 years of age and older who live in the area of Essex, Kent and Lambton counties in the Province of Ontario. The sample was gathered by placing an ad in the personal column of the Windsor Star six days in February 1977 and again for one day on April 25, 1977. The ad read:

"Attention adopted persons over eighteen years old. We would like you to answer a questionnaire regarding access to records. Write Adoption Research, School of Social Work, University of Windsor. Confidential." Upon receiving a reply from a respondent the researchers immediately sent him a letter (see Appendix I) thanking him for his cooperation and indicating in a general way the kind of questionnaire he would receive and why we were interested in his point of view as an adoptee.

A small number of the sample were referred by friends and colleagues. Two of the sample saw mention of the study in a column of local happenings, written by Doris Dickson, which appears in the Windsor Star.

Data Collection

Method

The method of collecting data chosen was a questionnaire (see Appendix II) designed to cover items descriptive of the sample and to inquire about those factors which, through the investigation of the literature, the authors' own experience and that of others whom we have consulted, the researchers believed to be pertinent to the phenomena studied.

It was decided to use a mail out questionnaire. Polansky (24,131) outlines some of the advantages of this type of sampling procedure. He states that a questionnaire can be administered to a larger group of people. "The

standardization of the instrument makes it possible to precode answers, and this results in ease of tabulation. Since responses are on forms ... there can be real anonymity ..." (24,133). The risk of course in utilizing a mail out questionnaire is a low rate of return. This study, however, received a very high rate of return on the questionnaires indicating the population had a high degree of interest in the subject of adoption.

The questionnaire was highly structured, having fixed alternative answers for most of the questions. This type of questionnaire is easy for the respondent to complete, is simple to administer and can be quickly analyzed (28,312). The fixed alternative questionnaire can also, through the answers provided, help to clarify the question and to make clear the dimension along which answers are sought.

There are some disadvantages to fixed alternative answers. One of these is that the respondent may be forced to choose an answer to something about which he does not have a crystallized opinion. This was avoided to the extent possible by providing "I do not know" answers to certain questions.

Another disadvantage of fixed alternative questions is the possibility of not providing all the necessary categories in the answers. This was overcome by using the category "other, please state" in some questions and also by pretesting the questionnaire.

The pretest was done with five adult adoptees. It
was administered with a researcher present in four cases
and by mail in one case. The questionnaire was also pre-
tested with five adoption workers from both the Essex County
Children's Aid Society and the Roman Catholic Children's
Aid Society for the County of Essex.

The questionnaire was precoded so that the analysis
of data could proceed quickly and accurately.

The questionnaire was mailed to our sample adoptees
with a covering letter explaining the response procedure.
A stamped, addressed envelope in which to return it was also
enclosed.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses contain some key concepts which will
be examined in the analysis of data.

Hypothesis number one required the analysis of those
questions which deal with the adoptee's interest in his back-
ground to see whether the majority have indicated interest
in this information.

For the second hypothesis the number of adoptees who
want information about their background is compared to the
number who desire a reunion, in order to determine whether
significantly more adoptees are interested in the information
than are interested in a reunion.

The third hypothesis explored the relationship between the adoptee's search for information and normal life crises. The analysis compared the age at which the respondent looked for information with the ages of his life crises. For those people who have not searched there were questions asking them to speculate which events might spur them to search for information.

The fourth hypothesis was concerned with the relationship between the degree of information desired by the adoptee and his relationship with his adoptive parents.

The testing of hypothesis five again looked at the degree of interest the adoptee has about his background, investigating whether or not it was related to how he found out he was adopted, and how often adoption was discussed with him.

Hypothesis six was answered by the choice adoptees make of one of three different types of agency established for adoption information exchange, or the choice that no agency was needed.

In addition to the questions posed by our hypotheses the researchers introduced other variables to see if there were connections. For instance the analysis of data included cross tabulations of the degree of interest an adoptee indicates in information about his background with factors such as age, sex, his occupation, and education, type of adoption, adoptive parents' reaction to his search for

information, adoptive parents', attitude towards biological parents, other adopted children in the family, how often he thinks about adoption.

The projected reaction of the adoptive parents to the adoptee's search for information was analyzed for its relationship to the parent's age, education, occupation, and whether the adoptee is a relative.

"Telling" was looked at in terms of the age, education, occupation of the adoptive parents; relative or nonrelative adoption; other adopted children in the family. The findings in this area can be of value to adoption agencies in the approval and preparation of adoptive parents.

Examination of this data provided ideas for future research in the adoption field. When a practice so intimately affects the lives of its participants it is vital to gain all possible knowledge that could enhance the probability of a rewarding and fulfilling experience and decrease the possibility of pain and suffering.

Limitations

The major limitation to the study was the method of collection used to obtain the majority of the sample. The Personal Column of the Windsor Star has carried ads on occasion placed by adoptees advertising for their biological parents. It has also been used by parent-finder organizations to advertise for new members. Our sample consisted

mainly of those who heard about the study through this column. In addition, the rate of return on our mail out questionnaire was unusually high. These factors combined lead the authors to speculate that our sample may represent a higher degree of interest in the subject of adoption than is general for adult adoptees.

Another more obvious limitation was our reliance solely on the views of adult adoptees while not researching the other two sides of the adoption triangle, namely, biological and adoptive parents. This was done because of time considerations, because the views of adoptive parents had been well represented, and because the researchers believe there would be too many problems present in obtaining a sample of biological parents who had given a child up for adoption.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this chapter to outline the research design of our study by examining the purposes of the study, its classification, assumptions, hypotheses, formal and operational definitions, sampling method, data collection, data analysis and limitations.

Chapter IV deals with the replies to our questionnaire and the analysis of this data.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Description of the Sample

The researchers have outlined in Chapter III why a sample of adult adoptees was chosen, and how this sample was obtained. Thirty-four questionnaires were sent to adult adoptees and 30 were returned for a return rate of 85 percent. Twenty-five (83.3 percent) of the respondents were female and five (16.7 percent) were male.

The present age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 73. The mean age was 32 and the mode 33. Fifty-seven percent of the sample were between the ages of 25 and 35. The five male respondents ranged in age from 18 to 34 with a mean age of 28.

The marital status of the respondents is outlined in Table 9. Thirty-three percent of the sample were either divorced, separated or married for a second time.

The age at which the respondents were first married produced a mean of 20 and a mode of 19. Sixty-three percent of the sample were married by the time they were 20 years old. The lowest age of marriage recorded by respondents was 15, the highest 26. Of the five males who responded to the questionnaire four were married. Their mean age of marriage

TABLE 9

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
Single...............	3	10.0
First marriage.......	17	56.7
Second marriage.....	1	3.3
Divorced.............	7	23.3
Other (separated)...	2	6.7
Total...............	30	100.0

N=30

was 23, three years higher than the overall mean for the sample and four years higher than the mean for the female portion of the sample. Of the ten respondents who were separated, divorced, or married a second time, the mean age of separation was 23 with a mode of 19. Seventy percent of these ten respondents were separated by the age of 25. The mean age of divorce in the sample was 26 and the mode 22. None of the sample was a widow or widower.

The occupations of the sample (Table 10) showed a wide range of activities. Among those occupations listed on the questionnaire but not represented were: social worker, lawyer, farmer, businessman and businesswoman.

The education of our sample indicated in Table 11 ranged from elementary school diploma to a graduate degree

TABLE 10

OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Homemaker............	9	30.0
Clerical worker.....	5	16.7
Other...............	5	16.7
Unemployed..........	3	10.0
Student.............	2	6.7
Nurse...............	2	6.7
Skilled labourer....	2	6.7
Teacher.............	1	3.3
Retired.............	1	3.3
Total..............	30	100

N=30

from a university. Eighty percent of the sample had a high
school diploma or better while only one respondent did not
go beyond elementary school.

In summary, the total of thirty respondents had the
following noticeable characteristics: 1) high number of
females (83.3 percent), 2) a mean age of thirty-three, 3) a
high incidence (33.3 percent) of marital breakdown, and
4) relatively high level of education (80 percent with high
school or better).

TABLE 11

EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Graduate degree........	1	3.3
Undergraduate degree..	3	10
Some university.......	5	16.7
Community college graduate...........	4	13.3
Trade school or apprenticeship.....	2	6.7
High school graduate..	9	30
Some high school......	5	16.7
Elementary school graduate...........	1	3.3
Less than grade eight.	0	0
Total..................	30	100

N=30

The questionnaire was designed to seek descriptive information in the traditional areas of sex, age, marital status, education, and occupation, but it also gathered statistical information peculiar to adult adoptees. Some of these special areas include: age at adoption, number of times adopted, adopted alone or with other biological brothers and sisters, are the adoptive parents alive, whether or not the adoptive parents were themselves adopted, the make-up of the adoptive family, how and by whom were the

respondents adopted, and the education and occupation of the adoptive parents.

Most theorists (11), (16), (22), agree that the earlier the age at which the child is adopted the better the probability that the adoption will have a successful outcome. Sixty-three percent of our sample were placed on adoption before they were six months old and a further 13 percent were adopted between the ages of six and twelve months. Therefore, about three-quarters (76.7 percent) of the respondents were in their adoptive homes before they were one year old. Ten percent (3 cases) were adopted between the ages of one and five years. A further 10 percent (3 cases) were adopted between the ages of five and ten years while one respondent was adopted after the age of ten.

Only two (6.7 percent) of the respondents were adopted more than once while one respondent stated she didn't know if she had been adopted more than once.

Twenty-nine of the 30 respondents were adopted alone (i.e., not with their biological brothers and/or sisters), while one respondent said she didn't know whether or not she had been adopted alone. Ten of the respondents had brothers and/or sisters in their adoptive families who were not adopted. Of these brothers and/or sisters there was an almost even split between whether they arrived before or after the adoption as shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12

NON ADOPTED SIBLINGS IN ADOPTIVE HOMES

	Frequency	Percentage
Non adopted children present in home before adoption...........	4	40
Non adopted children born after adoption..........	5	50
Both........................	1	10
Total.......................	10	100

N=10

Interestingly enough 10 respondents stated they had adopted brothers and/or sisters who were not biologically related to them. Thirteen of the sample were evidently raised as the only child.

Seventy-seven percent of the sample (23 cases) were adopted through an adoption agency while 13 percent (4 cases) were adopted privately. Ten percent (3 cases) didn't know whether they were adopted through an adoption agency or not.

Eighty-seven percent (26 cases) were adopted by non relatives while only three percent (1 case) were adopted by a relative. Ten percent (3 cases) stated they didn't know whether they were adopted by a relative or not. This break-down is somewhat surprising given the high number of relative adoptions (52 percent of total) noted in some American studies (11). While the researchers have not been able to

obtain Canadian figures for relative versus non relative
adoptions the 52 percent figure for relative adoptions
seems high. On the other hand the 3 percent figure for
relative adoptions in our sample is extremely low consider-
ing that these adoptions were, to a large extent, finalized
about 33 years ago (based on mean age of sample and mode of
age at adoption).

The education of the adoptive parents (Table 13)
ranged from less than grade eight to university degrees.

TABLE 13
EDUCATION OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Education	Adoptive Father	Adoptive Mother
University degree..........	3	2
Business or trade school..	5	4
Apprenticeship.............	2	1
Teacher's college.........	-	-
Professional certificate..	2	1
High school graduate......	2	4
Some high school..........	4	8
Elementary school graduate	5	2
Less than grade eight.....	3	3
Don't know or no answer...	4	5
Total.....................	30	30

The education of the adoptive fathers was slightly higher than that of the adoptive mothers (50 percent of adoptive fathers with high school or better as opposed to 43 percent of adoptive mothers with high school or better). Again these figures seemed somewhat high considering that we are speaking about adoptive parents educated at least forty years ago.

The occupations of the adoptive fathers and mothers of the sample were again wide ranging as shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

OCCUPATIONS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Occupation	Adoptive Father	Adoptive Mother
Businessman (woman).....	6	2
Clerical worker.........	-	1
Teacher.................	-	1
Unemployed.............	-	1
Social worker..........	1	-
Skilled labourer........	2	-
Unskilled labourer......	1	-
Nurse..................	-	1
Homemaker..............	-	11
Retired................	12	6
Deceased...............	8	7
Total.................	30	30

In summary we note the following characteristics of the sample regarding factors specifically about adoption:

1) A large portion (76.7 percent) of respondents were adopted before the age of twelve months. Only one respondent was adopted after the age of ten.

2) Only two of thirty respondents were adopted more than once.

3) Twenty-nine respondents were adopted alone. Ten of the respondents have brothers and/or sisters who were not adopted. A further ten respondents have adopted brothers and/or sisters who are not their biological relations.

4) Seventy-seven percent were adopted through agencies and 87 percent were adopted by non relatives.

5) The education of the adoptive parents of respondents was quite high. Fourteen of the adoptive fathers and twelve of the adoptive mothers were at least high school graduates.

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one states: the majority of adoptees desire information about their backgrounds.

The presentation of this hypothesis, while rather simple in wording and concept, is central to the remainder of the analysis which follows. As we have seen in the

previous section on the review of adoption literature, it
is suggested by many authors (16), (22), (27), that often
in adoptive homes a kind of conspiracy of silence forms.
The silence is caused in part by an assumption of the adop-
tive parents that because no questions are forthcoming from
the adopted child he has no desire for further information.

The researchers asked the sample of adult adoptees
whether they wanted up-to-date information on their bio-
logical mother and father. Their total answers were identi-
cal for each biological parent. Twenty-five (83.3 percent)
respondents stated a desire for information, three (10 per-
cent) stated they did not want information, one (3.3 per-
cent) was undecided, and one (3.3 percent) gave no answer.
In only five cases was there recorded one answer for infor-
mation about the biological mother and another for the bio-
logical father. Two of these respondents didn't want infor-
mation about their biological mother but did about their
biological father. A third case was the reverse to this.
A fourth case was undecided about receiving information
about his biological mother and didn't want information
about his biological father. The fifth case wanted infor-
mation about his biological mother but was undecided about
receiving information about his biological father.

The five male respondents in our sample showed no
significant difference in comparison to the overall result.
Three answered they desired information about both biolo-
gical parents. One wanted information on his biological

mother but was undecided about receiving information regarding his biological father. The fifth male respondent was undecided about receiving information about his biological mother and did not want information about his biological father.

Of the sample of 30, seven respondents were adopted after the age of one year. The researchers speculate that the adoption procedure, at the time it occurred, carried with it some conscious disruption for this group. Six of the seven respondents in this group desire up-to-date information about their biological mother while one does not. Six of the seven respondents in this category also desire up-to-date information about their biological father while one is undecided.

Hypothesis one as stated is shown by the responses to be correct. Eighty-three decimal three percent of the respondents desired information about their biological parents, 10 percent do not, 3.3 percent are undecided, and 3.3 percent did not answer this question.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states: Adult adoptees desire information about their background rather than a reunion with their biological parents.

Respondents were asked four separate questions to ascertain whether or not they were interested in a reunion with and/or up-to-date information about their biological

parents. All questions had three choices as answers: yes, no, and undecided. The questions were:

1) At this time do you desire to see and know your biological mother?

2) At this time do you desire to see and know your biological father?

3) At this time do you desire up-to-date information about your biological mother?

4) At this time do you desire up-to-date information about your biological father?

Responses to the questions (Table 15 and 16) regarding up-to-date information about biological parents showed an overwhelmingly positive answer.

TABLE 15

DESIRE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes..................	25	83.3
No..................	3	10.0
Undecided...........	1	3.3
No answer...........	1	3.3
Total...............	30	100

N=30

TABLE 16

DESIRE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING
BIOLOGICAL FATHER

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes.................	25	83.30
No..................	3	10.00
Undecided...........	1	3.35
No answer...........	1	3.35
Total...............	30	100.00

N=30

A less one-sided result was obtained in responses to whether or not a reunion was desired at this time (Tables 17 and 18).

The desire for reunion with the biological mother is split almost evenly with 10 percent of the sample undecided. The desire for reunion with the biological father is almost identical to a desire for reunion with the biological mother, however the undecided portion of the sample has slightly more than doubled. It may be that to some extent the biological father is kept somewhat in the background during the complete adoption process. It is noted that later in this section the sample rated the question of the biological father knowing of their existence as the item with the highest degree of interest for them.

TABLE 17

DESIRE FOR REUNION WITH

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes................	14	46.7
No..................	12	40.0
Undecided...........	3	10.0
No answer...........	1	3.3
Total...............	30	100

N=30

TABLE 18

DESIRE FOR REUNION WITH

BIOLOGICAL FATHER

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes................	13	43.3
No.................	9	30.0
Undecided..........	7	23.3
No answer..........	1	3.3
Total..............	30	100

N=30

We have then a large number of respondents desiring
up-to-date information about their background and an almost
even split between those who desire a reunion with their
biological parents and those who do not desire a reunion
as shown in Tables 19 and 20.

TABLE 19. - Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother
as Compared to Desire for·Up-To-Date Information about
Biological Mother

		Desire for Up-To-Date Information about Biological Mother			
		Yes	No	Do Not Know	Total
Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother	Yes	14	0	0	14 (48.3%)
	No	9	3	0	12 (41.4%)
	Undecided	2	0	1	3 (10.3%)
	Total	25 (86.2%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	29 (100%)

N=29 (one respondent did not answer)

In terms of the hypothesis we have shown the desire
for up-to-date information to be widespread (83.3 percent)
in the sample. However, we also have results that show the
respondents to be in favour of a reunion with their bio-
logical mother by a margin of 14 to 12 with 3 undecided,
and with their biological father by a margin of 13 to 9 with
7 undecided. The hypothesis states the relationship between

TABLE 20. - Desire for Reunion with Biological Father as Compared to Desire for Up-To-Date Information about Biological Father

| | | Desire for Up-To-Date Information about Biological Father | | | |
		Yes	No	Do Not Know	Total
Desire for Reunion with Biological Father	Yes	13	-	-	13 (44.8%)
	No	5	3	1	9 (31.0%)
	Undecided	7	-	-	7 (24.1%)
	Total	25 (86.2%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	29 (100%)

N=29 (one respondent did not answer)

the variables would be for information rather than for reunion and this has proven not to be the case. Respondents to the questionnaire expressed a desire for both up-to-date information and a reunion, the former by a much greater number than the latter. Therefore the hypothesis has not been proven.

To further understand the respondents' answers to the above questions we have compared the desire for a reunion with the biological mother and biological father with the total degree of interest the respondents have shown for specific items of information about their biological parents. To obtain a numerical sum for the total degree of interest

the respondents were asked to rate their interest on these
items using an eight point scale:

1) I am extremely disinterested in knowing.

2) I am very disinterested in knowing.

3) I am quite disinterested in knowing.

4) I am disinterested in knowing.

5) I am interested in knowing.

6) I am quite interested in knowing.

7) I am very interested in knowing.

8) I am extremely interested in knowing.

In the case of the biological mother there were 18 specific
items and in the case of the biological father 17 items. A
score of 5, 6, 7, or 8, for a specific item was needed to
show a degree of interest. The minimum score therefore,
to indicate interest was five times eighteen (90) for the
biological mother, and five times seventeen (85) for the
biological father. By adding together the two minimum
scores (90 plus 85) a minimum total degree of interest
of 175 was obtained. Any respondent, then, with a total
degree of interest score at or above 175 showed a definite
interest in knowing information about his biological
parents. Of the respondents eight scored below 175 and,
twenty-two scored above.

Tables 21 and 22 show those respondents who exhibited
a low degree of interest and their desire for reunion
with their biological mother and father.

TABLE 21. - Comparing Interest in Information about Bio-
logical Parents with Desire for Reunion with Biological
Mother

		Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother		
		Yes	No	Undecided
Degree of Interest	45	-	1	-
	119	-	1	-
	136	-	-	1
	138	-	1	-
	143	-	1	-
	159	-	-	1
	168	-	1	-
	Total	-	5	2

As one would expect, without exception those who
exhibit a low degree of interest in knowledge about the
specific items about their biological parents demonstrate
no desire for a reunion with either biological parent.

A much different result is obtained when examining
those respondents who have a high degree of interest in
specific items about their biological parents to see
whether they desire a reunion (Tables 23 and 24).

TABLE 22. - Comparing Low Interest in Information about Biological Parents with Desire for Reunion with Biological Father

		Desire for Reunion with Biological Father		
		Yes	No	Undecided
Degree of Interest	45	–	1	–
	119	–	–	1
	136	–	1	–
	138	–	1	–
	143	–	–	1
	159	–	–	1
	168	–	1	–
	Total	–	4	3

As shown in Tables 21 to 24, those respondents who indicated a high degree of interest in specific items about their biological parents also had a strong desire for a reunion with both parents. In the case of the biological mother fourteen of the twenty-two with a high degree of interest desired a reunion. In the case of the biological father thirteen out of twenty-two showing a high degree of interest desired a reunion.

TABLE 23. - Comparing High Interest in Information about Biological Parents with Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother

| | | Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother | | |
		Yes	No	Undecided
High Degree of Interest	175-206	3	4	-
	207-222	4	3	-
	223-280	7	-	1
	Total	14	7	1

TABLE 24. - Comparing High Interest in Information about Biological Parents with Desire for Reunion with Biological Father

| | | Desire for Reunion with Biological Father | | |
		Yes	No	Undecided
High Degree of Interest	175-206	4	2	1
	207-222	4	3	-
	223-280	5	-	3
	Total	13	5	4

In hypotheses one and two the researchers have discuss-
ed information, specifically whether adult adoptees desire

up-to-date information, a reunion, or both. It would be helpful to those in adoption agency practice, the researchers feel, to know what information adult adoptees now have about their backgrounds and secondly what information they might most desire. As the researchers have explained, a list of 18 items about biological mother and 17 about biological father was presented, and respondents were asked to indicate their degree of interest in the items according to the 8 point scale outlined earlier. These specific items have been ranked according to the mean (Tables 25 and 26).

It is shown that there is not a uniform list for both biological parents. Medical history and race are the only items in the top 5 on both lists. Interestingly enough, even though over 50 percent of the sample desire a reunion with their biological parents, potentially identifying information such as first and last name and place of residence rank very low. Also ranking on the lower end of both scales are more personal items such as whether either biological parent was married, and if the respondent was a result of rape or incest. Exceptions are the ranking of reason for giving up for adoption as number 2 on the biological mother list and if he knows of your existence as the first item on the biological father list.

Another obvious difference is the higher mean averages of interest for items regarding the biological mother. The mean of the means for information about the biological

TABLE 25

DEGREE OF INTEREST IN SPECIFIC ITEMS

ABOUT BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

Item	Mean
Medical history........................	7.067
Why she gave you up for adoption......	6.700
Physical description..................	6.333
Ethnic background.....................	6.267
Race.................................	6.200
If she has other children............	6.133
Psychiatric history..................	6.000
Intelligence.........................	5.967
First name...........................	5.900
Last name............................	5.667
Whether she was married when you were born...........................	5.667
Occupation...........................	5.600
Place, town or city of residence.....	5.567
Hobbies and talents..................	5.467
Religion.............................	5.333
Education............................	5.300
If you were a result of rape.........	4.533
If you were a result of incest.......	4.500

TABLE 26

DEGREE OF INTEREST IN SPECIFIC ITEMS
ABOUT BIOLOGICAL FATHER

Item	Mean
If he knows of your existence.........	6.067
Medical history......................	5.867
Occupation...........................	5.500
First name...........................	5.467
Race.................................	5.467
Physical description.................	5.433
Ethnic background....................	5.433
Intelligence........................	5.433
If he has other children............	5.433
Psychiatric history.................	5.400
Why he gave you up for adoption...,...	5.330
Last name...........................	5.133
Whether he was married when you were born......................	5.067
Hobbies and talents.................	5.033
Education...........................	5.000
Religion............................	5.000
Place of residence..................	4.933

mother is 5.79 while for the biological father it is 5.35.
Nevertheless, as seen earlier, the desire for reunion with
both parents is essentially equal while the desire for up-
to-date information is exactly equal.

The degree of interest among respondents regarding
specific items about their biological parents has now been
examined. What information do adult adoptees already have
about their backgrounds? The researchers ascertained this
by simply asking for a "yes" or a "no" response on whether
respondents already knew the information they had indicated
interest in as shown in Tables 27 and 28.

In general the respondents knew much more information
about their biological mother than about their biological
father. It is interesting to note that fully half the
sample knew their biological mother's last name and whether
or not she was married when the respondent was born. Medical
history, which ranked high on the list of items that respond-
ents wished to know, rated low on these lists in terms of
information actually known. Those items which respondents
showed least desire to know are not those items about which
they do know a great deal. Although over half (16) the
respondents have actively searched for information it
would appear their searches have been largely unsuccessful
because they still lack a great deal of information about
their biological parents.

TABLE 27

INFORMATION KNOWN ABOUT

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

Information	Yes	No	No Answer
First name......................	10	20	-
Last name.....................	15	15	-
Education.......................	5	25	-
Occupation......................	6	24	-
Physical description............	6	24	-
Place of residence.............	7	23	-
Race...........................	8	22	-
Ethnic background..............	8	22	-
Religion.......................	7	23	-
Medical history................	4	26	-
Psychiatric history............	2	28	-
Intelligence...................	4	26	-
Hobbies and talents............	3	27	-
Whether she was married........	15	15	-
Why she gave you up for adoption.....................	8	22	-
If you were a result of rape...	3	26	1
If you were a result of incest.	3	26	1
If she had other children......	7	23	-

TABLE 28

INFORMATION KNOWN ABOUT

BIOLOGICAL FATHER

Information	Yes	No	No Answer
First name......................	5	25	-
Last name......................	5	25	-
Education.....................	3	27	-
Occupation....................	3	27	-
Physical description...........	5	25	-
Place of residence.............	3	27	-
Race..........................	7	23	-
Ethnic background.............	8	22	-
Religion......................	4	26	-
Medical history...............	1	29	-
Psychiatric history...........	1	29	-
Intelligence..................	1	29	-
Hobbies and talents...........	3	27	-
Whether he was married.........	5	25	-
Why he gave you up for adoption......................	4	26	-
If he knows of your existence..	2	27	1
If he has other children.......	2	27	1

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states: The search by adoptees for
information about their biological parents is related to
a life crisis.

As indicated previously in the Review of the Litera-
ture, there are normal crises which people may undergo in
the course of their lives (92). These life crises are
operationally defined in this study as marriage, separation,
divorce, pregnancy, death of spouse, serious physical or
mental illness, children leaving home, loss or start of a
job, return to or leaving school and death of (adoptive)
parents. These crises may be intensified for adopted
persons when there is a lack of information about their
backgrounds. In addition to these events which may, and
usually do, occur in the lives of most people, there are
certain crises which are unique to the lives of adopted
persons. These crises centre around the fact of the adop-
tion, and may include such things as finding out one is
adopted, coming across adoption papers or other information
about the adoption or the biological parents, needing infor-
mation about unknown medical background of parents, having
(as a child) other children question you, or having (as a
parent) your own children question you, about your adoption.

The third hypothesis is concerned with both the
normal life crises and those which are special for adoptees.
The investigations for this hypothesis are mainly concerned

with the lives of those persons in our sample who have
actively sought information about their backgrounds.
Sixteen females (53.3 percent of the total sample of 30)
have searched for this information. None of the five males
in the sample have searched. The researchers looked for
indications of life crises both directly by asking if
certain events had taken place just previous to the onset
of the search for information and indirectly by ascertain-
ing at what age, if at all, marriage, separation, divorce,
pregnancy, or death of adoptive parents took place, and
at what age they began their search. Specific life crises
were found to have occurred at the time of search in thir-
teen (81.25 percent) of the sixteen cases. Five of these
persons indicated two life crises occurring around the time
of search, thus there are a total of eighteen crises
reported. Of the three people for whom no particular life
crisis was noted, one searched at age 16, one at 18, and
one at 29. The woman who sought information at 18 said
that the search came about through "natural curiosity",
while the one who began to search at 16 did not note any
significant event occurring at the time of search. The
third person,who sought information at 29, said she had
waited for twenty-one years, from when she found out she
was adopted, until she felt mature and stable enough to
know who she is.

The life crises are divided into two categories:
1) those which are normal for the general population, and

2) those which are specific to adoptees. In the first
category three of the life crises occurred with a pregnancy
and three with a marriage. Two adoptees were searching at
a time of return to or leaving school, and one at the loss
or start of a job. There was one person who separated
from her husband within the year after she began her search.
Finally, there was one adoptee who was suffering from
serious physical illness along with her pregnancy. This
made a total of eleven normal life crises. In addition
there were seven life crises specifically related to adop-
tees. One person found a hidden adoption order, and another
received a baby book she had never seen with information
about herself in it. A third person was told by a social
worker that she had a brother and sister, and was then
told to forget that she knew this. One adoptee's family
doctor wanted information about her medical background. The
fifth adoptee in this category, who had been adopted twice,
began her search at the age of forty upon the death of her
(deceased) first adoptive father's brother. This event
was combined with question about the adoption from the
adoptee's children. The last person with a specific adop-
tee's life crisis also was prompted to search by questions
about her adoption from her children.

It is speculated that the sixteen year old girl who
did not name a life crisis may have been going through an
identity crisis (92), and that the "natural curiosity" of

the eighteen year old may also fall into this category. The
twenty-nine year old connects her search to the need to
know who she is, also. However, not having more specific
indication of an identity crisis, the study centres on
those 13 of 16 cases in which a life crisis was recognized.

Eighty-one and one quarter percent of the searchers,
a significant percentage, have experienced a life crisis
around the time of the search for information about them-
selves. In itself, however, this data does not tell us a
great deal because most of the 14 people in our sample who
did not search have also experienced these crises. Why did
the crises not ignite the spark to search in these respond-
ents? We may not have the answer to that question, but in
examining the reasons given for not searching and what these
people feel might lead them to search, some clues appeared.

Of the 14 people who have not sought information,
7 said they did not wish to hurt their adoptive parents,
and 3 said they did not know how to look. The 4 remaining
answers were: 1) "legislation (protecting privacy of bio-
logical parents)", 2) "At one time I would have wanted to
know more (during early teens), now I have no desire to
know", 3) "I have sufficient information" (this was written
by the only respondent who was adopted by a relative), and
4) "Have not taken opportunity but I am very interested".

In indicating what life crises they felt might lead
them to search a number of respondents named more than one,

so that there was a total of 33 potential life crises named
by 13 persons (one respondent did not answer this question).
The crises are presented in Table 29, ranked according to
frequency.

TABLE 29

POTENTIAL LIFE CRISES OF NON-SEARCHERS

Crisis	Number	Percentage
Pregnancy......................	6	18.2
Serious physical illness........	6	18.2
Serious mental illness..........	5	15.1
Death of adoptive parents.......	5	15.1
Questions from your children....	5	15.1
Other, specify..................	4	12.3
Return to or leaving school.....	1	3.0
Marriage........................	1	3.0
Total...........................	33	100.0

One of the clues the researchers obtained from the
information shown in Table 29 is that it appears that some
of the non-searchers have not yet experienced a number of the
crises indicated by the searchers (pregnancy, serious
physical illness, questions from their children, return
to or leaving school, and marriage).

In the reasons for not searching only two persons indicated that they were not really interested. One said that she had not sought information because she already had sufficient information and the other said she would have liked to know at one time but not now. The main themes indicated were a fear of hurting the adoptive parents (7 respondents) and a lack of know-how (4 respondents).

In order to consider some of the other variables, in addition to life crisis, which affect the search for information, searchers and non-searchers were compared on a number of points: education, attitude of the adoptive parents toward the biological parents, how often the adoptee thinks about being adopted, the adoptee's relationship with the adoptive mother and father, how the adoptee learned of his adoption, whether he felt he received enough information from his adoptive parents, whether he thinks his parents had information they didn't give him and whether they said so.

Looking at the education of the two groups (Table 30) one difference shows up; six (37.5 percent) of the searchers have an education that consists of a university degree or some university or community college graduation. This percentage increases to 50 percent for the non-searchers.

The researchers speculated that those people who have searched or are searching have put more of their energy into pre-occupation with their background than they

TABLE 30

EDUCATION OF SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

Education	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
University grad-uate degree....	-		1	
University under-graduate degree	1		2	
Some university...	2		3	
Community college graduate.......	3	37.5	1	50
Trade school or apprentice course...........	-		2	
High school grad-uate...........	6		3	
Some high school.	3		2	
Elementary school graduate......	1		-	
	16		14	

N=30

have put into their education. This idea may be turned

around to suggest that those people who are concentrating

on their education have not had time to devote to searching.

The searchers have not confined the age of searching

to any particular years of life. Forty-three and three

quarters percent (7 searchers) began their search between

the ages of 15 and 19. Thirty-seven and a half percent
(6 searchers) were between 20 and 30, and eighteen and
three quarters percent (3 searchers) were over 30.

When the attitudes of the adoptive parents towards
the biological parents of searchers and non-searchers were
compared (Table 31) some interesting facts appeared.

TABLE 31

ATTITUDE OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

OF SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

Attitude	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
Very positive....	1		1	
Positive.........	2		3	
Neutral..........	3	37.5	7	78.5
Negative.........	-		1	
Very negative....	5		-	
Did not mention..	5	62.5	2	21.5
Total............	16	100.0	14	100.0

N=30

The adoptive parents of those persons who have search-
ed for their biological parents had shown a negative attitude
toward the biological parents or else had not talked about
them at all in sixty-two and a half percent (10 searchers)

of the cases. This is in marked contrast to the negative
attitude or lack of mention of the adoptive parents of
non-searchers at twenty-one and a half percent (3 non-
searchers). The attitude of the searchers' adoptive parents
was positive or neutral in thirty-seven and a half percent
(6 searchers) of the cases, while this was true for seventy-
eight and a half percent (11 cases) of the non-searchers'
adoptive parents. This is shown in chart form in Table 32.

TABLE 32

ATTITUDE OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

OF SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

Respondents	Positive Attitude	Negative Attitude	Total
Searchers............	6	10	16
Non-searchers........	11	3	14
Total................	17	13	30

N=30
PHI=.41
Chi-square=5.13; 1 df; P s (unless otherwise noted, the
    level of significance used is .05).

Because taking a neutral stand toward the biological
parents is not negative and indicates there is openness of
discussion about the adoption, neutral attitude has been
included with positive and very positive attitude. Not
ever discussing the biological parents, however, suggests

that adoption is not an open topic for discussion and in this atmosphere the adoptee may have more need to know than when adoption is discussed. Therefore the lack of mention has been included with negative and very negative attitudes.

Computing chi-square on Table 32 we find that there is a significant difference at .05 in the attitude of adoptive parents toward the biological parents of searchers and non-searchers. The correlation coefficient is .41 which indicates a moderate degree of correlation. In other words the attitude of the adoptive parents toward the biological parents appears to have significance in regard to whether or not an adoptee searches. The adoptive parents of non-searchers pre-dominantly had positive or neutral attitudes, while the attitudes of the adoptive parents of searchers were mainly negative or else the subject was avoided.

When looking at how often adoptees think about being adopted (Table 33), one would expect that the searchers would have this on their minds more often than the non-searchers, and this is shown to be the case.

As shown in Tables 34 and 35 fewer searchers have positive relationships with either adoptive mother or adoptive father. Overall there are more positive relationships with adoptive fathers than with adoptive mothers.

Whereas ninety-three percent of the non-searchers have a positive relationship with the adoptive mother, only forty-three and three quarters percent of the searchers do.

TABLE 33

HOW OFTEN SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS THINK
ABOUT BEING ADOPTED

Frequency	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
Almost always.	2		-	
Very often....	2		1	
Often.........	5	56.25	5	42.85
Occasionally..	6		4	
Seldom........	1		1	
Almost never..	-		3	
Total.........	16		14	

N=30

When Tables 34 and 35 are compared it is shown that
among the non-searchers there are more positive relation-
ships with the adoptive mother than with the adoptive
father. The reverse of this is true for the searchers.
When this information is combined with the fact that half
of the non-searchers were held back by not wishing to hurt
their adoptive parents, it can be inferred that those adop-
tees who have a positive relationship with their adoptive
mother are less apt to search than those with a poor rela-
tionship with the adoptive mother.

TABLE 34
SEARCHER'S AND NON-SEARCHER'S RELATIONSHIP
WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Relationship	Searcher	Percentage	Non-Searcher	Percentage
Extremely satisfactory.......	2		3	
Very satisfactory	4		3	
Satisfactory.....	1	43.75	7	93
Unsatisfactory...	6		1	
Very unsatisfactory..........	2		-	
Extremely unsatisfactory.....	1	56.25	-	7
Total.............	16	100.00	14	100

N=30

TABLE 35
SEARCHER'S AND NON-SEARCHER'S RELATIONSHIP
WITH ADOPTIVE FATHER

Relationship	Searcher	Percentage	Non-Searcher	Percentage
Extremely satisfactory.......	3		3	
Very satisfactory	5		6	
Satisfactory.....	3	68.75	2	84.5
Unsatisfactory...	4		-	
Very unsatisfactory..........	1		1	
Extremely unsatisfactory.....	-	31.25	1	15.5
Total.............	16	100.00	13*	100.0

*one no answer

N=29

A chi-square test was done to see whether there was a significant relationship between the adoptee's relationship with the adoptive mother and whether or not he searched. Collapsing "extremely satisfactory", "very satisfactory", and "satisfactory" into one category named "satisfactory", and "extremely unsatisfactory", "very unsatisfactory", and "unsatisfactory" into another category called "unsatisfactory", the researchers constructed Table 36.

TABLE 36

SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS AND RELATIONSHIP

WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Respondents	Satisfactory Relationship	Unsatisfactory Relationship	Total
Searchers....	7	9	16
Non-searchers	13	1.	14
Total.........	20	10	30

N=30
PHI=.519
Chi-square=8.11; 1 df; P s at .01

The chi-square value equals 8.11 which at one df is significant at .01 percent. The phi coefficient of correlation is .519 which indicates a moderate correlation between the adoptee's relationship with the adoptive mother and whether he has searched. In other words the chances are that a person who has a positive relationship with his adoptive mother is less likely to search for information about his background.

Using the same procedure with the relationship with the adoptive father Table 37 was set up.

TABLE 37

SEARCHERS' AND NON-SEARCHERS' RELATIONSHIP

WITH ADOPTIVE FATHER

Respondents	Satisfactory Relationship	Unsatisfactory Relationship	Total
Searchers.....	11	5	16
Non-searchers.	11	2	13
Total.........	22	7	29

N=29

The chi-square value equals .99, which is not significant at 1 df. Therefore, it is the relationship with the adoptive mother which appears to be a key to whether or not the adoptee searches. There is no relationship between whether or not a person searches and whether he has a positive or negative relationship with his adoptive father.

The adoptees who searched are more likely than non-searchers to have found out about their adoption from someone other than their adoptive parents. Whereas 64 percent of the non-searchers were told they were adopted by their adoptive mother or both adoptive parents, this figure was 50 percent for searchers. The other half of the searchers found out from relatives, friends of parents, children, or do not remember.

The question about whether the adoptive parents had given enough information to the adoptee also brought out a difference between searchers and non-searchers (Table 38). Whereas 81.25 percent (13 cases) of the searchers did not feel they has been given enough information, that figure dropped to 57 percent (8 cases) for the non-searchers.

TABLE 38

DID ADOPTIVE PARENTS GIVE ENOUGH INFORMATION

TO SEARCHERS, TO NON-SEARCHERS

Enough Information	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
Yes............	3	18.75	6	43
No............	13	81.25	8	57
Total.........	16	100.00	14	100

N=30

Related to Table 38 are the questions which ask whether the adoptive parents may have had information they did not give to the adoptee (Table 39) and whether the adoptive parents actually said they had information which the adoptee should not have (Table 40).

Although there is a slightly higher percentage of searchers who think the adoptive parents withheld certain information from them, it does not appear to be a significant difference. In Table 40, however, it is of interest to

TABLE 39

ADOPTIVE PARENTS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION,

COMPARING SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

Do you think parents withheld information	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
Yes..............	9	56.25	7	50
No..............	4	25.00	6	43
Don't know.......	3	18.75	1	7
Total...........	16	100.00	14	100

N=30

TABLE 40

ADOPTIVE PARENTS SAY THEY HAVE INFORMATION,

COMPARING SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

Did parents say they had information	Searchers	Percentage	Non-Searchers	Percentage
Yes.............	5	31.25	-	-
No...............	11	68.75	14	100
Total..........	16	100.00	14	100

N=30
PHI=.42
Chi-square=5.25; 1 df; P s

note that all 5 of the respondents whose parents told them they had information the adoptee should not have are searchers.

When a chi-square is done on this data a significant value is obtained. The phi of .42 indicates a moderate degree of association between adoptive parents saying they have information the child should not have and the adoptee searching.

In summary, the third hypothesis proved to be true in at least 81 percent of the cases. It is obvious that there are other variables involved in whether or not the adoptee will start the search when he is in the state of crisis. The researchers have shown that these variables include such things as the attitude of the adoptive parents toward the biological parents (as perceived by the adoptee) and the relationship the adoptee has with his adoptive parents, especially with the adoptive mother. In addition adoptees seem more apt to search if their parents have told them that they have information which the child should not have - and it does seem that such a statement would increase an adoptee's curiosity.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four states: The degree of interest shown by adoptees for information about their biological parents is not related to whether the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive parents as positive or negative.

To test hypothesis four the researchers have arranged the data in a number of ways. The degrees of interest have been looked at as simply interest or lack of interest in two tests of independence (Tables 43 and 45), and interest has been divided into four or eight categories for the other tests. The division of degree of interest was decided upon by first placing any score below 175 in the low interest category. The range of scores from 175 to 280 was organized by multiplying the items of interest by five (interested), six (quite interested), seven (very interested), and eight (extremely interested). The categories therefore are: 45-174, low interest; 175-209, medium interest; 210-244, high interest; and 245-280, very high interest.

For one of the tests (Table 41), the interest in biological parents was divided into eight parts, using the division of the scale one through eight. This made the low interest categories 35-69, 70-104, 105-139, and 140-174.

The measurement of the relationship with the adoptive parents was obtained by asking the respondent to rate his relationship with his adoptive mother and father, in the years until he was 18 years old, on a scale which read: 1) extremely satisfactory, 2) very satisfactory, 3) satisfactory, 4) unsatisfactory, 5) very unsatisfactory, and 6) extremely unsatisfactory.

Six tables are shown (Tables 41-47) giving different
arrangements of the data on degree of interest in the bio-
logical parents and the adoptee's relationship with his
adoptive mother. Chi-square was computed for each of these
tables and there was no indication of any relationship
between these variables. The data for the relationship
with the adoptive father is quite similar to that of the
adoptive mother and therefore, one table is sufficient to
show the data. Tests of independence between degree of
interest and relationship with adoptive father showed that
these two variables are not dependent on one another.

Using six different arrangements of the data there
was no relationship found between the degree of interest
shown by adoptees in their backgrounds and whether they
view their relationships with their adoptive parents as
positive or negative. Therefore the fourth hypothesis,
the degree of interest shown by adoptees for information
about their biological parents is not related to whether
the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive
parents as positive or negative, is valid. Adoptees
have interest in their backgrounds which is independent
of the quality of the adoptive parent-adoptee relation-
ships.

TABLE 41

DEGREE OF INTEREST AND RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Degree	Extremely Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	Extremely Unsatisfactory	Total
0-69	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
*105-139	1	-	1	2	-	-	4
140-174	0	1	2	-	-	-	3
175-209	1	3	3	3	-	-	10
210-244	2	1	1	1	2	-	7
245-279	-	2	1	1	-	-	4
280	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

*70-104 no values
N=30
Chi-square=22.51; 30 df; P ns

TABLE 42

DEGREE OF INTEREST BY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

ADOPTIVE MOTHER RELATIONSHIP

Degree	Positive	Negative
35-174 - low...............	6	2
175-207 - medium...........	7	3
210-244 - high.............	4	3
245-280 - very high........	3	2

N=30
Chi-square=.526; 3 df; P ns·

TABLE 43

INTEREST BY SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY

ADOPTIVE MOTHER RELATIONSHIP

Interest	Satisfactory Relationship	Unsatisfactory Relationship
35-174 - no interest......	6	2
175-280 - interest.........	14	8
Total.......................	20	10

N=30
Chi-square=.40; 1 df; P ns

TABLE 44

DEGREE OF INTEREST BY DEGREE OF RELATIONSHIP

WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Degree of Interest	Extremely Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	Extremely Unsatisfactory
35-174	2	1	3	2	-	-
175-209	1	3	3	3	-	-
210-244	2	1	1	1	2	-
245-280	-	2	1	1	-	1
Total.......	5	7	8	7	2	1

N=30
Chi-square=16.093; 15 df; P ns

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TABLE 45

LOW OR HIGH INTEREST BY DEGREE OF RELATIONSHIP,

WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Interest	Extremely Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	Extremely Unsatisfactory
35-174	2	1	3	2	-	-
175-280	3	6	5	5	2	1

N=30
Chi-square=2.6; 5 df; P ns

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TABLE 46

SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY ADOPTIVE, MOTHER

RELATIONSHIP AND DEGREE OF INTEREST

Relation-ship	0-69	70-104	105-139	140-174	175-209	210-244	245-279	280
Satisfac-tory...	1	-	2	3	7	4	3	-
Unsatis-factory	-	-	2	-	3	3	1	1

N=30

Chi-square=4.47; 7 df; P ns

TABLE 47

DEGREE OF INTEREST AND RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE FATHER

Degree	Extremely Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	Extremely Unsatisfactory
0-69	1	-	-	-	-	-
70-104	-	-	-	-	-	-
105-139	3	1	-	-	-	-
140-174	-	2	-	1	-	-
175-209	2	4	3	1	-	-
210-244	-	2	1	1	1	1
245-279	-	2	1	-	1	-
280	-	-	-	1	-	-
Total......	6	11	5	4	2	1

N=29

Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five states: Adoptees will have less desire for information about their background if they are told of their adoption at an early age and with appropriate frequency by their adoptive parents.

This hypothesis is concerned with the concept of "telling", specifically when, how often, and by whom the adoptee was told of his adoption. The way in which the degree of desire for information has been numerically calculated has been explained previously in this chapter.

To find out when the adoptee learned he was adopted, ages were translated into a series of school grade categories with the idea that the adoptee might remember the grade he was in more readily than what age he was when told, and would therefore, be less likely to say he did not remember. The results of that question are noted in Table 48.

The appropriate frequency of telling about the adoption was obtained by asking the adoptee how often adoption had been mentioned to him by his adoptive parents. "Appropriate frequency" was designated as more than three times per year. As seen in Table 49, only 17.5 percent of our sample had been told more than three times per year.

The "others" in Table 49 were: "only when questioned", "don't remember", and "once, when I was told I was adopted".

TABLE 48

WHEN THE ADOPTEE LEARNED HE WAS ADOPTED

When Learned	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Before starting school..........	15	52	52
Kindergarten to grade three.....	5	17	69
Grades three to six	6	21	90
During high school.	2	7	97
After age eighteen.	1	3	100

N=29 (one did not answer)

TABLE 49

HOW OFTEN ADOPTION WAS MENTIONED
BY ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Frequency of Mention	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Almost every day...	-	-	-.
Once a week........	1	3.5	3.5
Once a month.......	4	14.0	17.5
Three times per year.............	5	17.0	34.5
Yearly.............	-	-	34.5
Very rarely........	11	38.0	72.5
Never..............	5	17.0	89.5
Other..............	3	10.5	100.0

N=29 (one did not answer)

In questioning how the adoptee found out he was adopted, twelve possible answers were listed. Three of these responses: "told by adoptive father", "told by brother, sister" and "saw adoption papers", had no responses. The results of the remaining responses are shown in Table 50. The "others" in Table 50 are: "other children, then told by my father", "children from school", "I was asked if I wanted to be adopted at 9 years", and "I was old enough to know".

TABLE 50

HOW THE ADOPTEE FOUND OUT HE WAS ADOPTED

How Found Out	Number	Percentage
Told by adoptive mother...	12	40.0
Told by adoptive parents..	5	16.5
Told by other relatives...	2	7.0
Told by neighbours........	1	3.5
Told by friends of parents	1	3.5
Overheard others..........	1	3.5
Do not remember...........	4	13.0
Other.....................	4	13.0
Total.....................	30	100.0

N = 30

TABLE 51

DEGREE OF INTEREST REGARDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION AS COMPARED WITH HOW,

WHEN AND FROM WHOM ADOPTEE LEARNED OF HIS ADOPTION

Interest	How Often Mentioned	When Learned of Adoption	How Found Out
Low (8)	Once a month...... 2 Three times a year 1 Rarely........... 2 Never........... 1 Other........... 2	Before starting school... 5 Kindergarten to grade 3.. 1 Grades three to six...... 1 During high school....... 1	From adoptive parents..... 3 From adoptive mother...... 1 From relatives........... 1 From neighbours........... 1 From friends of parents... 1 Do not remember.......... 1
High (21)	Once a week........ 1 Once a month...... 2 Three times a year 4 Rarely........... 9 Never........... 4 Other........... 1	Before starting school.. 10 Kindergarten to grade 3.. 4 Grades three to six...... 5 During high school....... 1 After age eighteen....... 1	From adoptive parents..... 2 From adoptive mother...... 11 From relatives... 1 Over heard someone....... 1 Do not remember......... 3 Other................... 3

N=29 (one respondent did not answer)

In examining the degree of interest in information about the adoptee's background as compared with the data from Tables 48, 49 and 50 regarding telling, the interest was divided as previously into low (45-174) and high (175 and up). The chart in Table 51 presents an overall view of this data.

There are two figures that particularly stand out. One is that nine of the twenty-one high interest group (43 percent) as compared with two of eight in the low interest group (25 percent) said that their adoption was rarely mentioned by their adoptive parents. The other figure of note is 52.4 percent (eleven) of the high interest group were told of their adoption by their adoptive mother, whereas this was true for only 12.5 percent (one) of the low interest group. Another way of looking at this factor is that those who were told of their adoption by both parents (the method favoured by the researchers), comprised three (37.5 percent) of the low interest respondents and two (9.5 percent) of the high interest respondents. However, neither one of these sets of figures tests out as having significant differences.

Hypothesis five states that interest will be lower if adoptees are told of their adoption early (before starting school) by their adoptive parents (together) and with appropriate frequency (more than three times per year). By collapsing the data from Table 51 into these categories, Table 52 was obtained.

TABLE 52

DEGREE OF INTEREST WITH WHEN, HOW OFTEN AND

HOW ADOPTEE IS TOLD OF ADOPTION

Interest	When		How Often		By Whom	
	Before School	After School	Appropriate Frequency	Not Frequent Enough	Adoptive Parents	All Others
Low (27.6%)..	5	3	2	6	3	5
High (72.4%).	10	11	3	18	2	19

N=29 (one did not answer)

The examination of Table 52 reveals several noteworthy items.

1) A higher percentage (62.5 percent) of the low interest group were told about their adoption before entering school than was true in the high interest group (47.6 percent). Overall half of the respondents learned they were adopted before starting school.

2) There is a low total percentage (17%) of those who were told about their adoption more than three times per year.

3) With regard to how the adoptees learned of their adoption, 37.5 percent of the low interest group were told by both adoptive parents, compared to 9.5 percent of the high interest group. Of the remaining 90.5 percent of the high interest group, eleven (52%) were told of their adoption by their adoptive mother.

Therefore, although the researchers did not find significant differences between the low and high interest segments of the sample on the when, how and how often of telling, a higher percentage of the low interest group was told before entering school (62.5% to 47.6%), a higher percentage of the low interest group was told by both parents (37.5% to 9.5%) and a higher percentage of the low interest group had the adoption mentioned to them more than three times a year (25% to 14%).

Statistical evidence was not forthcoming to prove

hypothesis five. The trends of the data, however, indicate

that with a larger and more representative sample such

evidence might be found.

Some other interesting data with regard to telling

has come from this study. When comparing how often adoption

was mentioned with whether the adoptee felt he was told

often enough about adoption, a pattern appears, as seen in

Table 53, that the less often adoption was mentioned the

more likely the adoptee feels he was not told often enough.

TABLE 53

HOW OFTEN ADOPTION WAS MENTIONED

AND WAS IT ENOUGH

Mentioned	Enough	Not Enough	Don't Know
Once a week........	1	-	-
Once a month.......	4	-	-
Three times a year.	5	-	-
Very rarely........	6	4	1
Never..............	-	4	1
Other..............	2	1	-

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=14.98; 8 df; P ns

However, a chi-square test finds that there is not

a significant relationship between how often the adoptee is

told and whether he says it is often enough.

Another way to look at the data is by looking at when the adoptee learned he was adopted to see if this has any effect upon whether or not he feels he was told often enough about being adopted. This comparison is set out in Table 54.

TABLE 54

WHEN ADOPTEE LEARNED HE WAS ADOPTED AND IF HE FELT

HE WAS TOLD OFTEN ENOUGH ABOUT BEING ADOPTED

Learned of Adoption	Told			Total
	Often Enough	Not Enough	Don't Know	
Before starting school.......	13	2	–	15
Kindergarten to grade 3......	3	2	–	5
Grades 3 to 6.................	2	2	2	6
During high school...........	–	2	–	2
After age eighteen...........	–	1	–	1

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=18.05; 8 df; P s

The test of significance shows that there is a relationship between how soon the adoptee learns he is adopted and whether or not he feels adoption was mentioned with satisfactory frequency. This could reflect an attitude toward adoption on the part of the adoptive parents. Those

parents who tell the child early about adoption may be more comfortable, relaxed and open with the subject than those who delay the revelation. On the other hand it could be that adoptees who have grown up always knowing about their adoption have incorporated this into their sense of identity and do not have as intense a need to hear about the adoption.

Looking at the fifteen adoptees who learned of their adoption before starting school and comparing them with the other adoptees some interesting facts appear. The comparison of how often the two groups think about adoption is shown in Table 55.

A chi-square performed on these figures shows that there is a significant difference in how often adoptees who learn early and late of their adoption think about adoption. One third of those who learn late think about it almost always or very often, while none of those who learned early do.

A comparison of early and later learners with how often adoption was mentioned by their adoptive parents is shown in Table 56.

We find that there is a significant difference between those people who learned of their adoption early and those who learned of it later when it comes to the frequency with which adoption was mentioned by the adoptive parents. Those who informed the child early about his adoption also spoke of it more often, supporting our

TABLE 55

A COMPARISON OF THOSE WHO LEARNED OF ADOPTION BEFORE AND AFTER STARTING SCHOOL

WITH HOW OFTEN THE ADOPTEE THINKS ABOUT BEING ADOPTED

Learned of Adoption	Thinks About Being Adopted						
	Almost Always	Very Often	Often	Occasion-ally	Seldom	Almost Never	Total
Before starting school....	-	-	6	6	1	2	15
After starting school....	2	3	4	4	1	1	15
Total..................	2	3	10	10	2	3	30

N=30
Chi-square=15.73; 5 df; P s (at .01)

TABLE 56

WHEN ADOPTION WAS LEARNED OF AS COMPARED WITH

HOW OFTEN ADOPTION WAS MENTIONED

Learned of Adoption	Adoption Mentioned					
	Once a Week	Once a Month	Three Times per Year	Very Rarely	Never	Other
Before starting school..........	1	4	4	5	-	1
After starting school..........	-	-	1	6	5	2

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=12.20; 5 df; P s

conjecture about Table 54 that the parents are more open about the subject. Table 54 of course, is related to Table 56 in that if the parents mention adoption more frequently the chances increase that the adoptee will feel he was told often enough.

In summary, hypothesis five was not proven valid, although the data leans toward supporting it. What we did learn from the respondents with regard to telling is that those adoptees who were told of their adoption before they started school are significantly more likely to feel that the adoptive parents have talked to them sufficiently about their adoption, and that in fact the adoptive parents of these children did mention adoption with more frequency. In addition to these findings we discovered that the person who finds out about his adoption at some point after starting school thinks about being adopted more often than the person who found out he was adopted before he started school.

Hypothesis Six

Hyothesis six states: Adoptees will favour the creation of an agency, to serve adult adoptees and their biological parents, which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

Respondents were presented with a question outlining four alternative types of agencies and asked to choose the

one they preferred. The four agency types given were:

1) An agency which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

2) An agency which would accept all information, including identifying information, provided by biological parents and adoptee. This agency would exchange information only when both parties had contacted it.

3) An agency as described in (2) except it additionally would, when requested, seek out the other party when contacted by adoptee or biological parent.

4) No agency in any form is needed.

Table 57 outlines the responses of the sample.

TABLE 57

TYPE OF AGENCY PREFERRED BY ADULT ADOPTEES
TO HANDLE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Agency Types	Frequency	Percentage
(1)............................	8	26.7
(2)............................	1	3.3
(3)............................	19	63.3
(4)............................	–	–
No answer given........	2	6.7
Total...................	30	100.0

N=30

As we can see by these figures only 26.7 percent
(8 cases) preferred the agency hypothesized as the one most
likely to be chosen. Sixty-three decimal three percent
(19 cases) of respondents preferred a more active agency,
which would search out the other party when either the
adult adoptee or biological parent had contacted it. In
both the first and second type of agency presented, favoured
by only 30 percent of the respondents, both parties would
have to contact it before any information could be ex-
changed. It is interesting to note that all respondents
felt an agency of some sort was necessary.

In order to further understand why agency type three
obtained such a high rate of response the researchers
compared the type of agency chosen to the following factors:
present age of respondent, age at adoption, whether or not
the respondent's adoptive parents are alive, and whether or
not the respondent has actively searched for information.

There is no significant relationship between the
type of agency chosen and the present age of respondents
(Table 58). Of the eight people who chose agency one,
five fall below the mean age of the sample (32) and three
above, while of those who chose agency three, eleven fall
below the mean and seven are above. The two respondents
who did not answer are aged eighteen and seventy-three,
the minimum and maximum ages of our sample.

TABLE 58

PRESENT AGE OF RESPONDENTS AS RELATED

TO AGENCY PREFERENCE

Present Age of Respondents	Agency Type		
	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
22...................	-	-	1
23...................	1	-	2
24...................	1	-	1
25...................	1	-	1
26...................	-	-	2
27...................	-	-	3
28...................	1	-	-
31...................	1	-	1
32...................	-	-	1
33...................	1	1	3
34...................	-	-	1
40...................	1	-	-
43...................	-	-	1
45...................	1	-	-
46...................	-	-	1
58...................	-	-	1
Total............	8	1	19

N=28 (two did not answer)

Another factor the researchers felt might influence the type of agency chosen was the age at the time of adoption. Again, however, no significant relationship was shown (Table 59). There is a tendency, however, in that portion of the sample who were adopted after the age of one year to choose agency three, the more active searching type.

TABLE 59

AGENCY TYPE AS COMPARED TO AGE AT ADOPTION

Age at Adoption	Agency Type		
	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
Birth to six months............	6	-	12
Six to twelve months............	1	1	2
One to five years....	-	-	3
Five to ten years...	1	-	2
Over ten years......	-	-	-
Total................	8	1	19

N=28 (two did not answer)

Of the seven people in the sample who were adopted after the age of one year, five chose agency three, one chose agency one, and one didn't relpy. In other words five, 83 percent of those answering, and adopted after the age of one year, chose agency three while 64 percent of

those adopted before the age of one year chose agency three.

A third factor that could influence the type of agency chosen might be whether or not the adoptive parents are alive (Tables 60 and 61). If the respondent's adoptive parents were still alive a more passive kind of agency might be preferred in order not to hurt the adoptive parents.

TABLE 60

AGENCY TYPE AS COMPARED TO WHETHER

OR NOT ADOPTIVE MOTHER ALIVE

Adoptive Mother	Agency Type		
	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
Alive................	6	1	13
Deceased.............	2	-	4
Do not know.........	-	-	2
Total...............	8	1	19

N=28 (two did not answer)

Of the respondents whose adoptive mother was alive (71.5 percent), 65 percent chose agency three. Of the respondents whose adoptive father was alive (64.3 percent), 56 percent chose agency three. Whether or not the adoptive parents were alive had no significant part to play in which agency type was chosen.

TABLE 61

AGENCY TYPE AS COMPARED TO WHETHER

OR NOT ADOPTIVE FATHER ALIVE

Adoptive Father	Agency Type		
	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
Alive...............	7	1	10
Deceased............	1	-	6
Do not know.........	-	-	3
Total...............	8	1	19

N=28 (two did not answer)

Finally the researchers compared the agency type chosen to whether or not the respondents had actively searched for their biological parents (Table 62).

Among those who have searched there was a strong preference for agency three. Sixty-nine percent of those who have actively searched chose the third type of agency while only 25 percent chose agency one. Respondents preferred by a large margin an active, searching agency whether or not they had themselves searched for their biological parents.

In conclusion, hypothesis six has not been verified. Results show an overwhelming preference by respondents (63.3% to 26.7%) for a more active agency which would

TABLE 62

AGENCY TYPE AS COMPARED TO WHETHER OR NOT RESPONDENT

HAS ACTIVELY SEARCHED FOR BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

	Agency Type		
Search	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
Yes....................	4	1	11
No.....................	4	–	8
Total................	8	1	19

N=23 (two did not answer)

exchange information, when contacted by either the adoptee

or biological parent, by searching for the other party.

No significant relationship was shown between the

respondent's choice of agency and the following factors:

present age of respondents, age at adoption, whether or

not the respondent's adoptive parents were alive, and

whether or not the respondent has actively searched for

information about biological parents.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

Description of sample

1) Women responded to the ad at a rate of five to each man who responded.

2) One third of the sample had been separated or divorced.

3) The respondents married early. The average age of marriage for women was nineteen and for men twenty-three.

4) Overall the respondents had a higher level of education than is the norm for the general public.

Hypothesis one

The first hypothesis stated: The majority of adoptees desire information about their backgrounds.

This hypothesis was proven to be valid. In connection with this hypothesis it was found that 83.3 percent of respondents desired up-to-date information about each biological parent.

Hypothesis two

The second hypothesis stated: Adult adoptees desire information about their background rather than a reunion

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with their biological parents.

This hypothesis was not proved valid, however, strong trends in the direction of the hypothesis were shown. The specific findings related to this hypothesis were:

1) Forty-six decimal seven percent of respondents desire a reunion with the biological mother while 43.3 percent desire a reunion with the biological father.

2) Those respondents with a low degree of interest in specific information about the biological parents without exception show no desire for a reunion with either biological parent, while a substantial number of those respondents with a high degree of interest exhibit a desire for a reunion with biological parents.

3) The three items of information about the biological mother most desired by adoptees are her medical history, why she gave her child up for adoption and her physical description. About biological fathers the three most desired facts were if he knew of the adoptee's existence, his medical history and his occupation.

4) Respondents knew very little about either biological parent.

Hypothesis three

The third hypothesis stated: The search by adoptees for information about their biological parents is related to a life crisis.

This hypothesis proved to be valid. Some specific findings associated with this hypothesis were:

1) Sixteen persons had searched, fourteen had not.

2) Of those who had searched 31.25 percent did so at the time of a specific life crisis.

3) A negative attitude of the adoptive parents toward the biological parents appeared to be present in the case of a significant number of searchers.

4) The non-searchers had better relationtionships with their adoptive parents.

5) None of the adoptive parents of the non-searchers stated they had information about the adoptee they would not give to him.

Hypothesis four

The fourth hypothesis stated: The degree of interest shown by adoptees for information about their biological parents is not related to whether the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive parents as positive or negative.

This hypothesis was proven to be valid as no significant relationships could be found involving whether a person was interested in information about his background and the way in which he viewed his relationships with his adoptive parents.

Hypothesis five

The fifth hypothesis stated: Adoptees will have less

desire for information about their background if they are told of their adoption at an early age and with appropriate frequency by their adoptive parents.

This hypothesis was not shown to be valid, however, a strong trend in the direction of the hypothesis was indicated. Specific findings include:

1) Half the sample learned of their adoption before they started school.

2) Fifty-five percent of respondents indicated adoption was mentioned very rarely or never by their adoptive parents.

3) Sixteen and a half percent of the respondents were told by both their adoptive parents that they were adopted.

4) Sixty percent of the sample felt they were told often enough about their adoption.

5) Those parents who told children early about their adoption also spoke of the adoption more often.

6) Those children who learned of their adoption late thought more about being adopted.

Hypothesis six

The sixth hypothesis stated: Adoptees will favour the creation of an agency, to serve adult adoptees and their biological parents, which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

This hypothesis was not proved to be valid. The specific finding associated with this hypothesis was: an agency which would accept all information, including identifying information, provided by biological parents and adoptee and would, when requested seek out the other party when contacted by adoptee or biological parent was favoured by 63.3 percent of respondents.

Implications of the Findings

Adoption is undoubtedly a traumatic experience for a portion of adoptees. In the review of the literature the researchers outlined major studies completed to show the percentage of adoptees on psychiatric caseloads to be a higher number than is general for adoptees in the population as a whole. In the sample studied in this project a high incidence of marital breakdown was revealed. There was also a high incidence of early marriage.

Most studies conducted with a sample of adoptees show a much larger number of female than male respondents. This research project is no exception.

A number of years ago only the so-called "perfect" babies were adopted. Older children or mentally or physically handicapped children were considered not adoptable. Consequently this research project shows a high level of education obtained by the sample. The researchers note

and support the present Government of Ontario adoption
policy which does not consider that any child should be
deprived of a home of his own.

The major implication of this study is undoubtedly
that the desire of adoptees for background information is
widespread and a normal part of the adoption process. The
recent deluge in the media about adoptees seeking informa-
tion will not be merely a passing fad. Both governments
on a large scale and localized adoption agencies will have
to respond to this desire. Also the desire for reunions
between adoptees and biological parents is undoubtedly
growing although the desire for information and desire for
reunion cannot be seen as one and the same. This will shake
the very building stone upon which adoption is based,
confidentiality for all parties. Governments will have to
decide whether these reunions will be sanctioned and/or
controlled by them or left to the individuals involved or
to so-called parent-finder groups which are growing in
number and strength.

Another implication of this study is the linking of
the desire for background information by adoptees with a
life crisis. Life crises have increased significance for
adoptees who have little information with which to answer
their own questions. Agencies who are confronted with
adoptees seeking information should also explore whether
or not the search includes a normative life crisis with

which the agency might lend assistance. The researchers
caution that this link between life crises and desire of
adoptees for information cannot be viewed from the perspec-
tive that the resolution of the crisis will erase the
desire for information. Further research is needed to
explore this particular area of adoption.

This study also has several implications for adoptive
parents. The attitude the adoptive parents have regarding
their adopted child's biological parents is an important
factor in whether the adoptee will actively search for his
birth parents. Also related to whether or not the adoptee
will actively search is the amount of background information
withheld by the adoptive parents. It appears from this study
that the most important factor in whether or not the adop-
tee actively searches for his biological parents is the
quality of the relationship with the adoptive mother.
Finally, those adoptees who are told about their adoption
by the adoptive mother alone will have a higher degree of
interest in background information than those adoptees who
are told by both adoptive parents. If discussion about adop-
tion is perceived by the adoptee as not taking place often
enough the degree of interest in information about the
adoptee's background increases. Adoption should be mentioned
regularly and in a positive way from the day the child is
received into the adoptive home.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research project and the extensive review of adoption literature undertaken by the researchers the following recommendations were made.

Adoption agencies

1) Adoption agencies should keep extensive background information on each adoptee including complete histories on both biological parents as well as circumstances surrounding the adoption.

2) Adoption agencies should implement the following policies regarding adoptive parents: a) more extensive screening and better preparation of adoptive parents, b) specifically better training on how and when to tell the child of his adoption and how to deal with the adopted child's desire for information, c) the adoptive father must be more included in the adoption process beginning with the initial agency contact, d) adoptive parents should be given all available information about their adopted child with the exception of the names of the biological parents, e) regular group follow-up be maintained between the adoption agency and the adoptive parents beyond the legalization of the adoption, and f) the adoption agency remain available to adoptive parents and adoptee at all times during and after the legal adoption.

Provincial Government

1) The Government of Ontario establish a mediating

agency for adoptees and biological parents which would accept and exchange all information, including identifying information provided by each party. This agency when requested would seek out the other party when contacted by either adoptee or biological parent.

The researchers feel that an assessment by a professional social worker of both adoptee and biological parent(s) should be completed before information is exchanged or a reunion is carried out.

2) The laws of Ontario be changed to allow open access to existing adoption records, by the adult adoptee, when either written permission is received from the biological parent who gave the child up for adoption, or it can be proven he/she is deceased. Nonidentifying information should now be given on written request of the adult adoptee.

3) That, henceforward, confidentiality no longer be guaranteed to biological parents after the adopted child reaches age eighteen. This in effect means that children adopted from the date this recommendation took effect would have open access to their records upon reaching the age of eighteen. These records should contain only pertinent, supported facts about the adoption.

4) Alternative adoption styles such as "open" adoption, where contact is maintained between the biological parents, adoptive parents and adopted child be established in law and practice. Careful assessment in these particular

situations must be carried out as the ultimate responsibility
of the agency is the physical and emotional well-being of
the adopted child.

In summary, the researchers recommend that the se-
crecy which has traditionally been an integral part of
the adoption process be lessened. Information must flow
more freely between the adoption agency and the adoptive
parents, between the adoptive parents and the adopted child,
and, ultimately, between the biological parent and the adop-
ted child in either written form or face to face contact.

Suggestions for Future Research

Adoption has long been obscured by the clouds of
secrecy and confidentiality. Consideration of the literature
on adoption combined with the findings of this research
have produced the following suggestions for future research:

1) The least explored corner of the adoption triangle
is that of the biological parents. Because their identity
has been a confidential matter researchers have not often
been able to contact them directly. It would be helpful
if the biological parent's attitude about access to records
could be obtained at the time the child is given up for
adoption. We need to be aware, however, that these
attitudes can change, in one direction or the other, later
in life. Whether or not the parent's feeling changes over
the years, and in what direction (toward or away from open

access) is an important subject for a longitudinal study.

2) Also needed in connection with biological parents is research on reunions. Longitudinal studies should be performed to become cognizant of the long-term effects of reunions on adoptees, biological parents and adoptive parents.

3) A type of open adoption has been tried wherein the biological parent becomes acquainted with, or even chooses, the adoptive parents and then maintains a degree of involvement in the child's life. This is another instance where longitudinal studies could be used. Such research is needed to evaluate this method of adoption.

4) Our research has indicated that certain factors involving adoptive parents have an effect upon whether or not an adoptee searches for information about his background. One of these factors, found to be significant, was the attitude of the adoptive parents toward the biological parents. A study of this variable using a larger and more representative sample of adoptees is suggested. It would also be wise to test the adoptive parents concerning this attitude to see how well it coincides with the adoptee's perception of it.

5) The adoptee's relationship with the adoptive mother is another important factor in whether or not the adoptee actively searches for information. Further research on this matter might include investigation of whether the

statistics hold true for men who search (all of the search-
ers in our sample were women) or whether it might be the
relationship with the adoptive father which is significant
for men. Another factor to be looked at is the relation-
ship between the adoptive parents before adoption and what
effect the adoptee has on this relationship. Nine of the
16 female searchers in our sample had a more positive
relationship with their adoptive father than they had with
their adoptive mother.

More thorough investigation needs to be done concern-
ing whether a negative relationship with the adoptive mother
actually prompts an adoptee to search - looking for a more
satisfactory relationship with the biological mother - or
whether it is simply that a less close relationship leaves
the adoptee not as concerned about hurting the adoptive
mother and more free to pursue an interest in his back-
ground.

The relationship with the adoptive mother appears
from our sample to be an important factor in whether or
not the adult adoptee searches for information. Further
research should be carried out to fully explore this variable
in the adoption process.

6) A third factor involving the adoptive parents is
the telling process. Although when the adoptee learned he
was adopted, from whom he learned of it and how often it
was mentioned do not show a noticeable effect on whether

or not one searches, they do appear to have a connection with the amount of interest an adoptee has in his biological background. Replication of this study with a larger sample of adoptees is needed to provide information on this important process.

7) Who tells the adoptee of his adoption is an aspect of telling which needs investigation. Although agencies advise couples to tell the child together, 11 of the 21 high interest respondents in our sample were told by their adoptive mothers alone, compared to only one of 8 low interest respondents. This may be an error in the adoptee's memory, or it may happen because the child spends so much more time with the mother and appropriate opportunities for telling are more apt to come about. It may be that the first time it registers with the child is not the first time he was told.

On the other hand it may well be that the adoptive mother is the one who told. This could suggest some difficulty around the adoption in the relationship between the parents.

A study should be constructed comparing the re-collection of adult adoptees and their adoptive parents in the area of telling.

8) With regard to this relationship between the parents, the literature suggests that adoptive parents who are unable to have children have difficulty in handling

their feelings about infertility. There is also speculation that deep down an infertile spouse may not really want to have children. The whole area of infertility and adoption needs to be explored by researchers.

9) Our study showed a high rate of separation and divorce for our sample, as well as quite a young age at marriage. It would be of interest to see whether these statistics hold true for a larger sample and if so what some of the particular variables affecting marriage and divorce may be for adoptees.

A study should be constructed isolating the variable "adoption" to see whether or not adoption trauma will lead to problems in all interpersonal relationships beyond the adoptive home.

10) A more probing investigation of the relationship between life crisis and searching for one's background could be fruitful and could help social agencies to be more effective in meeting the needs of searching adoptees.

11) As experienced in other studies of adoptees, our respondents were predominantly women. Research could be done to see whether there are factors which influence and increase the female adoptee's interest in her background more so than the male's, or whether it is somehow easier or more accepted for a woman to pursue this interest than it is for a man.

Summary

    This research project has explored the views of adult adoptees regarding record disclosure and other pertinent aspects of adoption. It was felt by the researchers that because of increasing media coverage on some personal searches by adoptees for their biological parents a broader, more representative sample of adoptees should be studied.

    A survey of the existing literature was conducted to more fully understand the historical and social aspects of adoption.

    Data was collected from thirty adult adoptees by means of a mail out questionnaire. The sample was mainly obtained through an advertisement in the <u>Windsor Star</u>.

    The research project tested the following six hypotheses:

    1) The majority of adoptees desire information about their backgrounds.

    2) Adult adoptees desire information about their background rather than a reunion with their biological parents.

    3) The search by adoptees for information about their biological parents is related to a life crisis.

    4) The degree of interest shown by adoptees for information about their biological parents is not related to whether the adoptee views his relationship with his adoptive parents as positive or negative.

5) Adoptees will have less desire for information about their background if they are told of their adoption at an early age and with appropriate frequency by their adoptive parents.

6) Adoptees will favour the creation of an agency, to serve adult adoptees and their biological parents, which would exchange information given to it by biological parents and adult adoptees, with the exception of information which could lead to the identification of the other party.

Findings, implications, recommendations and areas for further research were outlined.

APPENDIX I

Letter of Introduction

School of Social Work
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario

Dear

     Thank you for volunteering to assist in our adoption research by completing a questionnaire. We feel that adoption is a very important area in need of investigation, and your opinions and the facts of your situation will be most valuable.

     If you have any friends who are adopted adults who may not have seen our ad we would very much appreciate it if you would ask them to contact us also. We would like to get as large and representative a sample as possible.

     You will be hearing from us soon with regard to the questionnaire. The method of response to the questionnaire is a simple check system so it should not take long to complete.

     The research we are doing is connected with our graduate studies in Social Work. We believe our study to be somewhat unique in that adoption has had little attention from the adoptee's point of view. We stress that the material we receive from you will be completely anonymous and strict confidentiality will be maintained.

     Thank you again for your willingness to cooperate in this adoption research.

Sincerely yours,

Diane Gertz, B.A., B.S.W.

Mac Hiltz, B.A., B.S.W.

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent;

Again we wish to thank you for agreeing to answer our questionnaire.

The method of response to the questions in most cases is a simple check (✓) or x in the boxes provided. For some questions we have asked for numbers to correspond to a given scale. Instructions for these particular questions are to be found in the questionnaire. In some questions we ask you to put the requested age into the boxes. If the age is, e.g., twenty-one you would put /2/1/ in the boxes provided. If the age is e.g., eight you would put /0/8/. If a question does not apply to you mark the box for not applicable. We ask that you do not place marks in the column to the extreme right of each page. These columns are for our use in computer coding your responses.

We again assure you that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. If you are interested in our thesis and what we are specifically studying would you enclose your name and address with the returned questionnaire and we will send you additional information on our study.

After you have completed the questionnaire please place it in the stamped, addressed envelope provided and return it to us as soon as possible.

Thank you for your interest, attention, and responses.

Sincerely yours,

Diane Gertz,

Mac Hiltz.

ADOPTION QUESTIONNAIRE   Number.... ▱▱
                                                      1 2

A Present Age ▱▱   B Sex   Male ▱1   Female ▱2   ▱▱ A
                                                     3 4
                                                      ▱ B
C Present marital status: 5

      Single   ▱1   Divorced   ▱4   ▱ C
                                                     6
      First Marriage ▱2   Widowed   ▱5

      Second Marriage ▱3   Other   ▱6 Specify _____

D At what age(s) did you marry?   ▱▱ D
                                                     7 8
      Age of first or only marriage ▱▱ Not applicable ▱99

      Age of second marriage   ▱▱

E At what age(s) did you separate?   ▱▱ E
                                                     9 10
      Age ▱▱   Not applicable ▱99

          ▱▱

F At what age(s) did you divorce?   ▱▱ F
                                                    11 12
      Age ▱▱   Not applicable ▱99

          ▱▱

G At what age(s) were you widowed?   ▱▱ G
                                                    13 14
      Age ▱▱   Not applicable ▱99

          ▱▱

H Your present occupation: ▱▱ H
                                                    15 16
      Farmer   ▱01   Lawyer   ▱10
      Businessman   ▱02   Nurse   ▱11
      Clerical worker ▱03   Skilled Labourer ▱12
      Sales Clerk   ▱04   Unskilled Labourer ▱13
      Teacher   ▱05   Homemaker   ▱14
      Student   ▱06   Retired   ▱15
      Doctor   ▱07   Unemployed   ▱16
      Social Worker   ▱08   Other ▱17 Please state_____

I Education completed (mark only one):

    ☐ I
    17

University graduate degree   ☐1

University under-graduate degree   ☐2

Some university   ☐3

Community College graduate   ☐4

Trades school or apprentice course   ☐5

High school graduate   ☐6

Some high school   ☐7

Elementary school graduate   ☐8

Less than grade eight   ☐9

J At what age were you adopted?

    ☐ J
    18

Birth to six months   ☐1

Six months to one year   ☐2

Over one year to five years   ☐3

Over five years to ten years   ☐4

Over ten years   ☐5

Do not know   ☐6

K Were you adopted more than once?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

    ☐ K
    19

L Were you adopted alone or with other biological brothers
and/or sisters?   Alone ☐1   With others ☐2

Do not know ☐3

    ☐ L
    20

M Is your adoptive mother living?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

    ☐ M
    21

N If your adoptive mother is deceased, at what age were you
when she died?   Age ☐☐   Not applicable ☐99

    ☐☐ N
    22 23

O Is your adoptive father living?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 24   O

P If your adoptive father is deceased, at what age were you
when he died?

Age ☐☐   Not applicable ☐99

▱ 25 26   P

Q Was your adoptive mother adopted?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 27   Q

R Was your adoptive father adopted?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 28   R

S Do you have brothers and/or sisters in your adoptive family
who were not adopted?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 29   S

T Were they born before or after you were adopted?

Before ☐1   Before and After ☐3

After ☐2   Not applicable ☐9

▱ 30   T

U Do you have adopted brothers and/or sisters in your adoptive
family who are not your biological brothers and/or sisters?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 31   U

V Were you adopted:

Privately   ☐1   Do not know ☐3

Through an agency   ☐2

▱ 32   V

W Were you adopted by:

Relative ☐1   Non relative ☐2   Do not know ☐3

▱ 33   W

X How old were you when you first became a parent?

Age ☐☐   Not applicable ☐99

▱ 34 35   X

Y Do you have any adopted children?

Yes ☐1   No ☐2

▱ 36   Y

Z At what age did you learn that you were adopted?

$\boxed{}$ Z
37

Sometime before I went to school $\boxed{}$1

Grades K.-3 $\boxed{}$2

Grades 3-6 $\boxed{}$3

Grades 7-8 $\boxed{}$4

During high school $\boxed{}$5

After age 18 $\boxed{}$6

a How often do you now think about being adopted?

$\boxed{}$ a
38

Almost always $\boxed{}$1   Occasionally $\boxed{}$4

Very often $\boxed{}$2   Seldom $\boxed{}$5

Often $\boxed{}$3   Almost never $\boxed{}$6

b How often was your adoption mentioned to you by your adoptive

parents?   Almost every day. $\boxed{}$1

$\boxed{}$ b
39

Once a week $\boxed{}$2

Once a month $\boxed{}$3

Three times per year $\boxed{}$4

Yearly $\boxed{}$5

Very rarely $\boxed{}$6

Never $\boxed{}$7

Other 8 Specify _____

c Do you now feel you were told often enough, by your adop-
tive parents, about being adopted?

$\boxed{}$ c
40

Yes $\boxed{}$1   No $\boxed{}$2   Do not know $\boxed{}$3

d Have you ever seen your adoption order?

$\boxed{}$ d
41

Yes $\boxed{}$1   No $\boxed{}$2   Do not know $\boxed{}$3

e Do you have your adoption order in your possession?

$\boxed{}$ e
42

Yes $\boxed{}$1   No $\boxed{}$2

f   If you do not have your adoption order in your possession do
you know where it is?

Yes ⌐⌐1   No ⌐⌐2   Not Applicable ⌐⌐9

⌐⌐
43   f

g   How did you first find out that you were adopted?
(Mark only one)

⌐⌐ ⌐⌐
44 45   g

Told by adoptive mother   ⌐⌐01
Told by adoptive father   ⌐⌐02
Told by adoptive parents together ⌐⌐03
Told by brothers, sisters   ⌐⌐04
Told by other relatives   ⌐⌐05
Told by neighbours   ⌐⌐06
Told by friends of parents   ⌐⌐07
Saw adoption papers   ⌐⌐08
Overheard someone talk about you ⌐⌐10
Do not remember   ⌐⌐11
Other ⌐⌐12   Specify _____

With regard to information about your biological mother, please
put a number in the box after each item, beginning at h, indi-
cating by these numbers which of the following statements is
true for you for each item of information.

1. I am extremely disinterested in knowing.

2. I am very disinterested in knowing.

3. I am quite disinterested in knowing.

4. I am disinterested in knowing.

5. I am interested in knowing.

6. I am quite interested in knowing.

7. I am very interested in knowing.

8. I am extremely interested in knowing.

Biological mother's:

h   first name   ☐   ☐   h
                                                                  46
i   last name   ☐   ☐ . i
                                                                  47
j   education   ☐   ☐   j
                                                                  48
k   occupation   ☐   ☐   k
                                                                  49
l   physical description   ☐   ☐ . l
                                                                  50
m   place, town or city of residence   ☐   ☐   m
                                                                  51
n   race   ☐   ☐   n
                                                                  52
o   ethnic background   ☐   ☐   o
                                                                  53
p   religion   ☐   ·)   ☐   p
                                                                  54
q   medical history   ☐   ☐   q
                                                                  55
r   psychiatric history   ☐   ☐ · r
                                                                  56
s   intelligence   ☐   ☐   s
                                                                  57
t   hobbies and talents   ☐   ☐   t
                                                                  58
u   whether she was married when you were born ☐   ☐   u
                                                                  59
v   why she gave you up for adoption   ☐   ☐ ·v
                                                                  60
w   if you were a result of a rape   ☐   ☐   w
                                                                  61
x   if you were a result of incest   ☐   ☐   x
                                                                  62
y   does she have other children   ☐   ☐   y
                                                                  63

With regard to your biological mother do you already know her:

                                            Yes   No

z   first name   ☐   ☐   ☐   z
                                                                64
AA last name   ☐   ☐   ☐   AA
                                                                65
BB education   ☐   ☐   ☐   BB
                                                                66
CC occupation   ☐   ☐   ☐   CC
                                                                67
DD physical description   ☐   ☐   ☐   DD
                                                                68
EE place, town or city of residence   ☐   ☐   ☐   EE
                                                                69

		Yes	No	
FF	race	☐	☐	☐ FP 70
GG	ethnic background	☐	☐	☐ GG 71
HH	religion	☐	☐	☐ HH 72
II	medical history	☐	☐	☐ II 73
JJ	psychiatric history	☐	☐	☐ JJ 74
KK	intelligence	☐	☐	☐ KK 75
LL	hobbies and talents	☐	☐	☐ LL 76
MM	whether she was married	☐	☐	☐ MM 77
NN	why she gave you up for adoption	☐	☐	☐ NN 78
OO	if you were a result of a rape	☐	☐	☐ OO 79
PP	if you were a result of incest	☐	☐	☐ PP 80
QQ	if she had other children	☐	☐	☐ QQ 81

With regard to information about your biological father, please
put a number in the box after each item, beginning at RR, indi-
cating by these numbers which of the following statements is
true for you for each item of information.

1. I am extremely disinterested in knowing.

2. I am very disinterested in knowing.

3. I am quite disinterested in knowing.

4. I am disinterested in knowing.

5. I am interested in knowing.

6. I am quite interested in knowing.

7. I am very interested in knowing.

8. I am extremely interested in knowing.

Biological father's:

RR	first name	☐	☐	RR
			82	
SS	last name	☐	☐	SS
			83	
TT	education	☐	☐	TT
			84	
UU	occupation	☐	☐	UU
			85	
VV	physical description	☐	☐	VV
			86	
WW	place of residence	☐	☐	WW
			87	
XX	race	☐	☐	XX
			88	
YY	ethnic background	☐	☐	YY
			89	
ZZ	religion	☐	☐	ZZ
			90	
aa	medical history	☐	☐	aa
			91	
bb	psychiatric history	☐	☐	bb
			92	
cc	intelligence	☐	☐	cc
			93	
dd	hobbies and talents	☐	☐	dd
			94	
ee	whether he was married when you were born	☐	☐	ee
			95	
ff	why he gave you up for adoption	☐	☐	ff
			96	
gg	if he knows of your existence	☐	☐	gg
			97	
hh	if he has other children	☐	☐	hh
			98	

With regard to your biological father do you already know his:

Yes(1) No(2)

ii	first name	☐	☐	☐	ii
				99	
jj	last name	☐	☐	☐	jj
				100	
kk	education	☐	☐	☐	kk
				101	
ll	occupation	☐	☐	☐	ll
				102	
mm	physical description	☐	☐	☐	mm
				103	
nn	place of residence	☐	☐	☐	nn
				104	
oo	race	☐	☐	☐	oo
				105	

		Yes(1)	No(2)		
pp	ethnic background	☐	☐	☐ 106	pp
qq	religion	☐	☐	☐ 107	qq
rr	medical history	☐	☐	☐ 108	rr
ss	psychiatric history	☐	☐	☐ 109	ss
tt	intelligence	☐	☐	☐ 110	tt
uu	hobbies and talents	☐	☐	☐ 111	uu
vv	whether he was married	☐	☐	☐ 112	vv
ww	why he gave you up for adoption	☐	☐	☐ 113	ww
xx	if he knows of your existence	☐	☐	☐ 114	xx
yy	if he has other children	☐	☐	☐ 115	yy

zz Do you feel that your adoptive parents gave you enough information regarding your biological parents?

Yes ☐1　　　　No ☐2

☐ 116　zz

Aa If your adoptive parents ever talked about your biological parents, was their attitude towards them: (Mark only one)

very positive ☐1　　negative ☐4
positive ☐2　　very negative ☐5
neutral ☐3　　not applicable ☐9

☐ 117　Aa

Bb Do you think your adoptive parents may have had information about your biological parents that they did not give you?

Yes ☐1　　No ☐2　　Do not know ☐3

☐ 118　Bb

Cc Did your adoptive parents tell you that they had information which you should not have?　　Yes ☐1　　No ☐2

☐ 119　Cc

Dd Have you actively sought information about your background from sources other than your adoptive parents?

Yes ☐1　　No ☐2

☐ 120　Dd

If you answered yes to the last question (Dd) please answer all questions on this page, leave out page 11, and resume answering questions on page 12. If you answered no to question Dd leave out this page and resume answering at the top of page 11.

If yes, where have you sought?

		Yes (1)	No (2)		
Ee	Adoption agency	▱	▱	▱ 121	Ee
Ff	Relatives	▱	▱	▱ 122	Ff
Gg	Friends	▱	▱	▱ 123	Gg
Hh	Newspaper ad	▱	▱	▱ 124	Hh
Ii	Parent Finders Group	▱	▱	▱ 125	Ii
Jj	Government agency	▱	▱	▱ 126	Jj
Kk	Other (specify) _____	▱	▱	▱ 127	Kk

Ll At what age did you begin to actively seek additional information about yourself?   Age ▱▱   128 129   Ll

Did any of the following occur just previous to your seeking information?

		Yes (1)	No (2)		
Mm	Death of adoptive parent(s)	▱	▱	▱ 130	Mm
Nn	Own marriage	▱	▱	▱ 131	Nn
Oo	Pregnancy (self or spouse)	▱	▱	▱ 132	Oo
Pp	Death of your spouse	▱	▱	▱ 133	Pp
Qq	Serious physical illness (own)	▱	▱	▱ 134	Qq
Rr	Serious mental illness (own)	▱	▱	▱ 135	Rr
Ss	Questions about adoption from your children	▱	▱	▱ 136	Ss
Tt	Your children leaving home	▱	▱	▱ 137	Tt
Uu	Loss of or start of job	▱	▱	▱ 138	Uu
Vv	Return to or leaving school	▱	▱	▱ 139	Vv
Ww	Other, (specify) _____	▱	▱	▱ 140	Ww

If you answered no to question Dd and have not actively sought information about your background, which of the following statements most closely, represents your reason. (Mark only one)

Xx   I have sufficient information ▱1 ▱ Xx
141

I do not know how to look ▱2

I do not wish to hurt my adoptive parents ▱3

I am afraid of what information I might find ▱4

I do not want others to know I am adopted ▱5

I do not wish to hurt my biological parents ▱6

Other, specify _____ ▱7

Which of the following circumstances do you think would lead you to seek more information.

		Yes (1)	No(2)		
Yy	Death of adoptive parent(s)	▱	▱	▱ 142	Yy
Zz	Own marriage	▱	▱	▱ 143	Zz
aA	Pregnancy (self or spouse)	▱	▱	▱ 144	aA
bB	Death of your spouse	▱	▱	▱ 145	bB
cC	Serious physical illness (own)	▱	▱	▱ 146	cC
dD	Serious mental illness (own)	▱	▱	▱ 147	dD
eE	Questions from your children	▱	▱	▱ 148	eE
fP	Your children leaving home	▱	▱	▱ 149	fP
gG	Loss or start of job	▱	▱	▱ 150	gG
hH	Return to, or leaving school	▱	▱	▱ 151	hH
iI	Other, specify _____	▱	▱	▱ 152	iI

All respondents answer the rest of the questions.

jJ At this time do you desire to see and know your biological

mother?   ☐ jJ
                                                                          153
   Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Undecided ☐3

kK At this time do you desire to see and know your biological

father?   ☐ kK
                                                                          154
   Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Undecided ☐3

lL At this time do you desire up to date information about your

biological mother?   ☐ lL
                                                                          155
   Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Undecided ☐3

mM At this time do you desire up to date information about your

biological father?   ☐ mM
                                                                          156
   Yes ☐1   No ☐2   Undecided ☐3

nN Following are descriptions of types of agencies designed to   ☐ nN
                                                                          157
   handle information about adult adoptees (those over 18 years

   of age) and their biological parents. Please indicate by

   number in the following box which agency you prefer.   ☐

1. An agency which would exchange information given to it by
   biological parent(s) and adult adoptees, except information
   which could lead to identification of the other party. Both
   parties would have to send information to the agency before
   the exchange would take place.

2. An agency which would accept all information, including iden-
   tifying information, provided by biological parent(s) and
   adoptee. This agency would exchange information only when
   both parties had contacted it.

3. An agency as described in (2) except it additionally would,
   when requested, seek out the other party when contacted by
   adoptee or biological parent.

4. No agency in any form is needed.

oO If you decide (or have decided) to search for your biological

parents would (did) you tell your adoptive mother? ⟡ oO
158

Yes ⟡1 No ⟡2 Do not know ⟡3 N/A ⟡9

pP If you decide (or have decided) to search for your biological

parents would (did) you tell your adoptive father? ⟡ pP
159

Yes ⟡1 No ⟡2 Do not know ⟡3 N/A ⟡9

If you did decide to search for your biological mother and/or
biological father and to tell your adoptive parents of it, please
indicate how you think they would react to your search, by putting
a number from the scale below into the box following each reaction
beginning with qQ.

1. Extremely   4. Possibly
2. Very   5. Not at all
3. Somewhat   6. Do not know

My adoptive mother would be:

qQ   Helpful   ⟡   ⟡ qQ
                              160
rR   Approving   ⟡   ⟡ rR
                              161
sS   Comfortable   ⟡   ⟡ sS
                              162
tT   Indifferent   ⟡   ⟡ tT
                              163
uU   Hurt   ⟡   ⟡ uU
                              164
vV   Disapproving   ⟡   ⟡ vV
                              165
wW   Hampering   ⟡   ⟡ wW
                              166
xX   Angry   ⟡   ⟡ xX
                              167

My adoptive father would be:

yY   Helpful   ⟡   ⟡ yY
                              168
zZ   Approving   ⟡   ⟡ zZ
                              169
AAA   Comfortable   ⟡   ⟡ AAA
                              170
BBB   Indifferent   ⟡   ⟡ BBB
                              171
CCC   Hurt   ⟡   ⟡ CCC
                              172
DDD   Disapproving   ⟡   ⟡ DDD
                              173

EEE Hampering ⬦

FFF Angry ⬦

▢ 174 EEE
▢ 175 FFF

GGG Do you feel that in the years until you became age 18 your relationship with your adoptive mother was:

Extremely satisfactory ▢1   Unsatisfactory ▢4
Very satisfactory ▢2   Very unsatisfactory ▢5
Satisfactory ▢3   Extremely unsatisfactory ▢6

▢ 176 GGG

HHH Do you feel that in the years until you became age 18 your relationship with your adoptive father was:

Extremely satisfactory ▢1   Unsatisfactory ▢4
Very satisfactory ▢2   Very unsatisfactory ▢5
Satisfactory ▢3   Extremely unsatisfactory ▢6

▢ 177 HHH

III Has your relationship with your adoptive mother:

Improved over the years ▢1
Deteriorated over the years ▢2
Remained the same ▢3

▢ 178 III

JJJ Has your relationship with your adoptive father:

Improved over the years ▢1
Deteriorated over the years ▢2
Remained the same ▢3

▢ 179 JJJ

KKK Education of adoptive father (mark only one)

University degree ▢01   High school graduate ▢06
Business or trade school ▢02   Some high school ▢07
Apprenticeship graduate ▢03   Elementary school graduate ▢08
Teacher's college ▢04   Less than grade eight ▢10
Professional certificate ▢05   Don't know ▢11
Other, specify _____

▢▢ 180 181 KKK

LLL   Education of adoptive mother (mark only one): ☐☐ LLL
                                                      182 183

University degree   ☐ 01   High school graduate   ☐ 06
Business or trade school ☐ 02   Some high school   ☐ 07
Apprenticship graduate   ☐ 03   Elementary school graduate ☐ 08
Teacher's college   ☐ 04   Less than grade eight   ☐ 10
Professional certificate ☐ 05   Don't know   ☐ 11
Other, specify _____

MMM   Present occupation of adoptive father: ☐☐ MMM
                                                     184 185

Farmer   ☐ 01   Social worker   ☐ 10
Businessman   ☐ 02   Lawyer   ☐ 11
Clerical worker ☐ 03   Nurse   ☐ 12
Sales clerk   ☐ 04   Skilled labourer   ☐ 13
Teacher   ☐ 05   Unskilled labourer ☐ 14
Student   ☐ 06   Homemaker   ☐ 15
Doctor   ☐ 07   Retired   ☐ 16
Unemployed   ☐ 08   Deceased   ☐ 17
Other   ☐ 18   specify _____

NNN   Present occupation of adoptive mother:

Farmer   ☐ 01   Social worker   ☐ 10   ☐☐ NNN
                                                          186 187
Businesswoman   ☐ 02   Lawyer   ☐ 11
Clerical worker ☐ 03   Nurse   ☐ 12
Sales clerk   ☐ 04   Skilled labourer   ☐ 13
Teacher   ☐ 05   Unskilled labourer ☐ 14
Student   ☐ 06   Homemaker   ☐ 15
Doctor   ☐ 07   Retired   ☐ 16
Unemployed   ☐ 08   Deceased   ☐ 17
Other   ☐ 18   specify _____

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VITA

Diane June Stubinger was born on November 23, 1928, in Buffalo, New York. After graduating from grade eight at St. John the Baptist School in 1942, she attended the Nardin Academy for secondary school, graduating in June, 1946.

Before marrying John Blake Gertz on June 18, 1949, Diane attended the teachers' college of the New York State University at Buffalo for three semesters.

The years 1950 to 1966 were devoted to raising a family, five boys and a girl. In 1957 Diane's husband became a member of the faculty of the School of Business Administration at the University of Windsor, and the family moved from Buffalo to Windsor, Ontario.

In 1966 Diane began to attend classes at the University of Windsor, majoring in psychology with a minor in philosophy, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in May, 1970. She went to work at the Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society for the County of Essex in August, 1970.

Five years later Diane left the agency to begin the Master of Social Work program at the University of Windsor. She expects to receive the M.S.W. degree in October, 1977.

VITA

Robert Malcolm (Mac) Hiltz was born in Toronto on January 10, 1949. His secondary school education was completed in 1967 at Sturgeon Falls Secondary School, Sturgeon Falls, Ontario.

After studying at Carleton University, Ottawa, Mr. Hiltz graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in english and political science. In 1971 Mr. Hiltz accepted a position with the Social Services Department of the City of North Bay as a field worker. In 1972 he joined the Family and Children's Services (C.A.S.), Nipissing, as a social worker where he remained until entering the make-up program in the summer of 1975 at the School of Social Work, University of Windsor. In the fall of 1976 Mr. Hiltz enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at the University of Windsor. He expects to graduate in October, 1977. His graduate field placement was with Catholic Family Service Bureau, Windsor, Ontario. Mr. Hiltz has accepted a position with the Ottawa Children's Aid Society.