Record disclosure in adoption.

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THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

RECORD DISCLOSURE IN ADOPTION

by

Diane J. Stubinger Gertz
R. Malcolm Hiltz

A research project presented to the School of Social Work of The University of Windsor in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Social Work

July, 1977

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
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and

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1977
Research Committee

Professor V. Cruz       Chairman
Professor W. Gallant    Member
Doctor S. Selby         Member
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine record disclosure 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 Windsor Star. The respondents 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
served the biological mother by saving her from social embarrassment. 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 overwhelmed 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 importance 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) adoption agency practice, 3) adoptive parents, 4) adoptees, 5) identity formation of adoptees, 6) telling, and 7) personal 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 history, 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 severance 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, 4,569 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. (50,11)

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. -(3,2)

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 demonstrates 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 authoritative 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 parent
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 15 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 area. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Percentage of Agencies (N=150)²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agency Shares with Adoptive Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City or town of residence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic group</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of siblings</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality, temperament</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If normal or above</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If subnormal</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstances of birth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimacy</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agency Shares with Adoptive Parents</th>
<th>Agency Recommends Adoptive Parents Share with Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incest</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for relinquishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of child</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect of child</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental retardation</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprisonment</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addiction, alcoholism</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aN 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 biological 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 considered 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know or no reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most biological mothers would probably not want contact with a child relinquished years ago.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies should continue to guarantee confidentiality (insofar as their own records are concerned) to: the adoptive parents.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the biological parents.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sealed record controversy poses a major challenge to agency adoption service.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(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, 25 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 discretion 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 throughout 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 conclusions:

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Despair and bitterness</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed, at times desperate feeling of hopelessness and inferiority</td>
<td>Concern about wife’s reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration and disappointment; I had always assumed that I would have children and eagerly anticipated family life</td>
<td>Disappointment, but largely because of wife’s feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forlorn, unfulfilled, lost</td>
<td>Never felt this way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uselessness</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy, depressed</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utter desolation and despair</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed, heartbroken</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitterness, longing</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it was my biggest disappointment. I was completely miserable</td>
<td>Disheartened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not a whole women, heartbroken, then realizing that I must cope and deal with this given situation Anxiety
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely heartsick</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Deep disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A terrific desire for children and a desolate fear that we might not have any</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated, depressed</td>
<td>Did not give up hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment, feeling a flop as a wife and woman</td>
<td>Regret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely lost</td>
<td>Frustrated; also feeling I had failed my wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misery</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearning</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitterness and self-pity</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(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. (15,8)
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." (34,555)

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?" (16,156)

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 commitment 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 (65) 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. Thumen (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 Children (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 could 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 losses, 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 15, 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 important. "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 dispense it as he sees fit." (13,169)
In adolescence and young adulthood Kirk feels the person goes through a period of "conflicting expectations" (13, 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Total Number in Study Group</th>
<th>Adoptees in Study Group</th>
<th>Adoptees Placed by Agency (Percentage)</th>
<th>Adoptive Parent's Status (Relatives or Nonrelatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirk (1966)</td>
<td>2,117</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon-Sonturia (1966)</td>
<td>1,371</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monlove (1965)</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgatta-Fanshol (1964)</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schochter (1964)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schochter (1962)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketchum (1964)</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman (1963)</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humphrey-Ounsted (1963)</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toussaint (1962)</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pringle (1961)</td>
<td>2,593</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association for Mental Health (around 1955)</td>
<td>1,152</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holman (1953)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Nonrelatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonosifor (1942)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (excluding Schochter 1964)</strong></td>
<td>17,186</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 38 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 83 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 judgments 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" (27,53).

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" (11,132).
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group I</th>
<th>Group II</th>
<th>Group III</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoptee did not express desire to learn more about biological parents</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptee did express desire to learn more about biological parents</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparate response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptee never told he was adopted</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, heterosexual 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 3 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.

Jaffe 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.


Toussaint 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 Toussaint, may be brought into the parent-child relationship. In the adoptive mother this attitude may cause
nurturing problems and difficulty in balancing mothering with proper explanation of the child's adoptive status. Toussaint 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 ... original parents, representing a severe narcissistic injury" (90, 31).

Lauton and Cross (71), in reviewing psychiatric literature 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 fantasize 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 (5) 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" (5,1). 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 available 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposals</th>
<th>Birth Parents N=50</th>
<th>Adoptive Parents N=166</th>
<th>Adoptees N=39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)...........</td>
<td>1 - 3%</td>
<td>8 - 4%</td>
<td>2 - 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)...........</td>
<td>1 - 3%</td>
<td>69 - 42%</td>
<td>3 - 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)...........</td>
<td>6 - 20%</td>
<td>54 - 33%</td>
<td>14 - 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)...........</td>
<td>20 - 67%</td>
<td>28 - 17%</td>
<td>19 - 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference.</td>
<td>2 - 7%</td>
<td>7 - 4%</td>
<td>1 - 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>...........</td>
<td><strong>30 -100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>166 -100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39 -100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (i.e., 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birth Parents N=50</th>
<th>Adoptive Parents N=166</th>
<th>Adoptees N=39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25 - 84%</td>
<td>105 - 63%</td>
<td>23 - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4 - 15%</td>
<td>56 - 33%</td>
<td>10 - 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>1 - 5%</td>
<td>5 - 4%</td>
<td>1 - 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 -100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>166 -100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39 -100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. "Crisis 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, Saran 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." (91,364)

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, 545). 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" (70,551). 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 *Adoption and Family Life* (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 forgotten 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 adoptee 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 information 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 adoptive 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. (22,233)

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 incorporate 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 3 points this out.

**Table 3. Nature of Information Regarding Biological Parents Revealed by Total Sample of Adoptive Parents to Adoptees over the Years Following the Initial Revelation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Regarding Characteristics of Biological Parents</th>
<th>Family or Marital Status</th>
<th>Personal and Giving up or Social Characteristics</th>
<th>Abandoning Adoptee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No information revealed: parents did not know facts.........</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information revealed: parents withheld facts...</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some information provided: not true account of facts.......</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some information provided: accurate account of facts........</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparate response.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other..............</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not covered, Unable to determine..............................</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>..........</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 5, 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 Milton 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 himself, 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 Children" (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 biological 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 focused 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.

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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 remove 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, 1975, and in People magazine (82) in August 1975, Mrs Fisher outlined her own search which started at the age of seven when she accidentally 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 biological 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 distributed 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 adop-
tion 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 adop-
tion records.
In the Sunday, July 6, 1975, edition of the Kansas City Star, 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, 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) personal 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
involved in adoption (the adoptee, adoptive parents, biological 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 frequency 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 Research Methods in Social Relations: "(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 formulation 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 Descriptive" and would have as its primary purpose hypothesis testing. 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 phenomena. The authors feel this method has become more acceptable in recent years with improvements in "techniques, statistical 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 successfully 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 assumptions in regard to selection of variables, definitions of concepts and measurement procedures. (31,85)

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 formulating 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 relationship 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; transmission 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 following 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 coopera-
tion and indicating in a general way the kind of question-
naire 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 question-
naire (see Appendix II) designed to cover items descrip-
tive 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 (28,512). 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 background 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 seven 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First marriage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second marriage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (separated)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical worker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled labourer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade school or apprenticeship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than grade eight</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non adopted children present in home before adoption</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non adopted children born after adoption</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 breakdown 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 considering 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Adoptive Father</th>
<th>Adoptive Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or trade school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's college</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional certificate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than grade eight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or no answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Adoptive Father</th>
<th>Adoptive Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businessman (woman)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical worker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled labourer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled labourer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 adoptive 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 biological mother and father. Their total answers were identical for each biological parent. Twenty-five (83.3 percent) respondents stated a desire for information, three (10 percent) stated they did not want information, one (3.3 percent) was undecided, and one (3.3 percent) gave no answer. In only five cases was there recorded one answer for information about the biological mother and another for the biological father. Two of these respondents didn't want information 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 information 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 biological 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
TABLE 16

DESIRE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING BIOLOGICAL FATHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 13).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30

### Table 18
Desire for Reunion with Biological Father

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother</th>
<th>Desired for Up-To-Date Information about Biological Mother</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes 14 No 0 Do Not Know 0</td>
<td>14 (48.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes 9 No 3 Do Not Know 0</td>
<td>12 (41.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Yes 2 No 0 Do Not Know 1</td>
<td>3 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Yes 25 No 3 Do Not Know 1</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 biological 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire for Reunion with Biological Father</th>
<th>Desire for Up-To-Date Information about Biological Father</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Biological Parents with Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 father, fourteen of the twenty-two with a high degree of interest desired a reunion. In the case of the biological mother, fourteen 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Desire for Reunion with Biological Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-206</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207-222</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223-280</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Desire for Reunion with Biological Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-206</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207-222</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223-280</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypotheses one and two the researchers have discussed 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 13 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>7.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why she gave you up for adoption</td>
<td>6.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>6.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background</td>
<td>6.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>6.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If she has other children</td>
<td>6.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>6.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>5.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>5.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>5.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether she was married when you were born</td>
<td>5.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>5.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place, town or city of residence</td>
<td>5.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and talents</td>
<td>5.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>5.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were a result of rape</td>
<td>4.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were a result of incest</td>
<td>4.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he knows of your existence</td>
<td>6.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>5.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>5.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>5.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>5.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>5.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background</td>
<td>5.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>5.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he has other children</td>
<td>5.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>5.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why he gave you up for adoption</td>
<td>5.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>5.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether he was married when you were born</td>
<td>5.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and talents</td>
<td>5.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>5.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>4.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 respondents 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and talents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether she was married</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why she gave you up for adoption</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were a result of rape</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were a result of incest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If she had other children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical history</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric history</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and talents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether he was married</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why he gave you up for adoption</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he knows of your existence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he has other children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Literature, 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 adoption, 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 information 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 ascertaining 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 thirteen (31.25 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 adoptees. 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 adoptee’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 CRIPSES OF NON-SEARCHERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious physical illness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious mental illness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of adoptive parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions from your children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, specify</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to or leaving school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University graduate degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University undergraduate degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade school or apprentice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very positive.....</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive...........</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral............</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative...........</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very negative.....</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not mention...</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total..............</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30

The adoptive parents of those persons who have searched 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 |
| ATITUDE 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 |

\[X^2=5.13; 1 \text{ df}; P \approx 0.05 \]

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30

When Tables 34 and 35 are compared it is shown that among the non-searchers there are more positive relationships 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 adoptees who have a positive relationship with their adoptive mother are less apt to search than those with a poor relationship with the adoptive mother.
TABLE 34
SEARCHER'S AND NON-SEARCHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Searcher</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searcher</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely satisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Searcher</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searcher</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely satisfactory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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 56.

**Table 56**

**Searchers and Non-Searchers and Relationship with Adoptive Mother**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Satisfactory Relationship</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory Relationship</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searchers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-searchers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Satisfactory Relationship</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory Relationship</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searchers.....</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-searchers.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total..........</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 had 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enough Information</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes................</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No................</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81.25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total.............</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think parents withheld information</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30

### Table 40
ADOPTIVE PARENTS SAY THEY HAVE INFORMATION, COMPARING SEARCHERS AND NON-SEARCHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did parents say they had information</th>
<th>Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Non-Searchers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
PHI=.42
Chi-square=5.25; 1 df; P <...
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 51 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 biological 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 relationships.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfactory</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Very Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Extremely Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105-139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-174</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-209</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-244</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245-279</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-174 - low</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-207 - medium</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-244 - high</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245-280 - very high</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=50  
Chi-square=.526; 3 df; P ns

### Table 43

**Interest by Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Adoptive Mother Relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Satisfactory Relationship</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-174 - no interest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-280 - interest</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=50  
Chi-square=.40; 1 df; P ns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Interest</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfactory</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Un satisfactory</th>
<th>Very Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Extremely Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-174</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-209</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-244</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245-280</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total...</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
Chi-square=16.093; 15 df; P ns
### Table 45

**Low or High Interest by Degree of Relationship With Adoptive Mother**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfactory</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Very Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Extremely Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-174</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-280</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
Ch1-square=2.6; 5 df; P ns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>0-69</th>
<th>70-104</th>
<th>105-139</th>
<th>140-174</th>
<th>175-209</th>
<th>210-244</th>
<th>245-279</th>
<th>280</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 30
Chi-square = 4.47; 7 df; P ns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfactory</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-104</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105-139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-174</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-209</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-244</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245-279</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When Learned</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before starting school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten to grade three</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades three to six</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After age eighteen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=29 (one did not answer)

**Table 49**

*How Often Adoption Was Mentioned by Adoptive Parents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Mention</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times per year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rarely</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Found Out</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Told by adoptive mother...</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told by adoptive parents..</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told by other relatives...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told by neighbours.........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told by friends of parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheard others...........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not remember............</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other......................</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:.....................</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
### Table 51

Degree of interest regarding background information as compared with how, when and from whom adoptee learned of his adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level</th>
<th>How Often Mentioned</th>
<th>When Learned of Adoption</th>
<th>How Found Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Before starting school...</td>
<td>From adoptive parents...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three times a year</td>
<td>Kindergarten to grade 3..</td>
<td>From adoptive mother.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Grades three to six......</td>
<td>From relatives...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>During high school........</td>
<td>From neighbours...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>From friends of parents..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not remember...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>Before starting school...</td>
<td>From adoptive parents...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Kindergarten to grade 3..</td>
<td>From adoptive mother.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three times a year</td>
<td>Grades three to six......</td>
<td>From relatives...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>During high school........</td>
<td>Over heard someone......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>After age eighteen........</td>
<td>Do not remember...........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other......................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How Often</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before School</td>
<td>After School</td>
<td>Appropriate Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (27.6%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (72.4%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTIONED</th>
<th>ENOUGH</th>
<th>NOT ENOUGH</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rarely</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=14.98; 5 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learned of Adoption</th>
<th>Told Often Enough</th>
<th>Not Enough</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before starting school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten to grade 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 3 to 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During high school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After age eighteen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=18.05; 3 df; P < .001

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learned of Adoption</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before starting school...</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After starting school...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
Chi-square=15.73; 5 df; P < (at .01)
TABLE 56

WHEN ADOPTION WAS LEARNED OF AS COMPARED WITH

HOW OFTEN ADOPTION WAS MENTIONED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learned of Adoption</th>
<th>Once a Week</th>
<th>Once a Month</th>
<th>Three Times per Year</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before starting school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After starting school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=29 (one did not answer)
Chi-square=12.20; 5 df; P < .05
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

Hypothesis 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 identifi-
cation 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 additional-
ly 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Types</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)..................................</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)..................................</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)..................................</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)..................................</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer given........................</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total...............................</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=30
As we can see by these figures only 26.7 percent (6 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 exchanged. 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 53). Of the eight people who chose agency one, five fall below the mean age of the sample (52) 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Age of Respondents</th>
<th>Agency Type 1</th>
<th>Agency Type 2</th>
<th>Agency Type 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Adoption</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
<th>Number 2</th>
<th>Number 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to six months.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to twelve months.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to five years...</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five to ten years...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over ten years.......</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total................</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 reply. 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 COMPARSED TO WHETHER OR NOT ADOPTIVE MOTHER ALIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoptive Mother</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
<th>Number 2</th>
<th>Number 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoptive Father</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
<th>Number 2</th>
<th>Number 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=23 (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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search</th>
<th>Agency Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 85.3 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
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 per-
cent 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 descrip-
tion. About biological fathers the three most desired facts
were if he knew of the adoptee's existence, his medical his-
tory and his occupation.

4) Respondents knew very little about either bio-
logical 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 relationships 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 adop-
tive 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 identifi-
cation 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 information 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 perspective 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 adoptee 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 adoption 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 secrecy 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 adopted 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 searchers 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 relationship 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 concerning 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 background.

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 recollection of adult adoptees and their adoptive parents in the area of telling.

3) 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 Windsor Star.

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 21 in the boxes provided. If the age is, e.g., eight you would put 08 in the boxes provided. 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

A Present Age □ □
B Sex Male □1 Female □2

C Present marital status:
    Single □1 Divorced □4
    First Marriage □2 Widowed □5
    Second Marriage □3 Other □6 Specify ________

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

E At what age(s) did you separate?
    Age □ □
    Not applicable □99

F At what age(s) did you divorce?
    Age □ □
    Not applicable □99

G At what age(s) were you widowed?
    Age □ □
    Not applicable □99

H Your present occupation:
    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):

- 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?

- 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

L Were you adopted alone or with other biological brothers and/or sisters?

- Alone □1
- With others □2
- Do not know □3

M Is your adoptive mother living?

- Yes □1
- No □2
- Do not know □3

N If your adoptive mother is deceased, at what age were you when she died?

- Age □
- Not applicable □99
O Is your adoptive father living?
   Yes ☐ 1    No ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
P If your adoptive father is deceased, at what age were you when he died?
   Age ☐ 25    Not applicable ☐ 99
Q Was your adoptive mother adopted?
   Yes ☐ 27    No ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
R Was your adoptive father adopted?
   Yes ☐ 23    No ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
S Do you have brothers and/or sisters in your adoptive family who were not adopted?
   Yes ☐ 1    No ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
T Were they born before or after you were adopted?
   Before ☐ 30    Before and After ☐ 3    Not applicable ☐ 9
U Do you have adopted brothers and/or sisters in your adoptive family who are not your biological brothers and/or sisters?
   Yes ☐ 31    No ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
V Were you adopted:
   Privately ☐ 32    Do not know ☐ 3
   Through an agency ☐ 2
W Were you adopted by:
   Relative ☐ 33    Non relative ☐ 2    Do not know ☐ 3
X How old were you when you first became a parent?
   Age ☐ 34    Not applicable ☐ 99
Y Do you have any adopted children?
   Yes ☐ 36    No ☐ 2
2. At what age did you learn that you were adopted?

- Sometime before I went to school □1
- Grades K.-3 □2
- Grades 3-6 □3
- Grades 7-8 □4
- During high school □5
- After age 18 □6

a. How often do you now think about being adopted?

- Almost always □1
- Occasionally □4
- Very often □2
- Seldom □5
- Often □3
- Almost never □6

b. How often was your adoption mentioned to you by your adoptive parents?

- Almost every day. □1
- Once a week □2
- Once a month □3
- Three times per year □4
- Yearly □5
- Very rarely □6
- Never □7

- Other □8 Specify

Please do not mark in this column.

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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

g. How did you first find out that you were adopted?
   (Mark only one)
   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, indicating 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
i  last name
j  education
k  occupation
l  physical description
m  place, town or city of residence
n  race
o  ethnic background
p  religion
q  medical history
r  psychiatric history
s  intelligence
t  hobbies and talents
u  whether she was married when you were born
v  why she gave you up for adoption
w  if you were a result of a rape
x  if you were a result of incest
y  does she have other children

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

Yes  No

z  first name
AA  last name
BB  education
CC  occupation
DD  physical description
EE  place, town or city of residence

Please do not mark in this column.

h
i
j
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l
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n
o
p
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PP  race</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GG  ethnic background</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH  religion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II  medical history</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ  psychiatric history</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KK  intelligence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL  hobbies and talents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM  whether she was married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>NN  why she gave you up for adoption</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>QQ  if you were a result of a rape</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP  if you were a result of incest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQ  if she had other children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to information about your biological father, please put a number in the box after each item, beginning at RR, indicating 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
SS last name
TT education
UU occupation
VV physical description
WW place of residence
XX race
YY ethnic background
ZZ religion
aa medical history
bb psychiatric history
cc intelligence
dd hobbies and talents
ee whether he was married when you were born
ff why he gave you up for adoption
gg if he knows of your existence
hh if he has other children

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

Yes(1) No(2)

ii first name
jj last name
kk education
ll occupation
mm physical description
nn place of residence
oo race
pp ethnic background  
qq religion  
rr medical history  
ss psychiatric history  
tt intelligence  
uu hobbies and talents  
vv whether he was married  
ww why he gave you up for adoption  
xx if he knows of your existence  
yy if he has other children  
zz Do you feel that your adoptive parents gave you enough information regarding your biological parents?

Yes □ 1  No □ 2

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

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

Cc Did your adoptive parents tell you that they had information which you should not have?  

Yes □ 1  No □ 2

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

Yes □ 1  No □ 2
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?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Ii</td>
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<td>Jj</td>
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<td>Kk</td>
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Did any of the following occur just previous to your seeking information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mm</td>
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<td>Nn</td>
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<td>Qq</td>
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Age 1/2
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  
    I do not know how to look  
    I do not wish to hurt my adoptive parents  
    I am afraid of what information I might find  
    I do not want others to know I am adopted  
    I do not wish to hurt my biological parents  
    Other, specify ____________________________

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

Yy  Death of adoptive parent(s)  
Zz  Own marriage  
aA  Pregnancy (self or spouse)  
bB  Death of your spouse  
cC  Serious physical illness (own)  
dD  Serious mental illness (own)  
eE  Questions from your children  
fF  Your children leaving home  
gG  Loss or start of job  
hH  Return to, or leaving school  
iI  Other, specify ____________________________

Yes (1)  No(2)
All respondents answer the rest of the questions.

JJ At this time do you desire to see and know your biological mother?
   Yes □ 1   No □ 2   Undecided □ 3

kK At this time do you desire to see and know your biological father?
   Yes □ 1   No □ 2   Undecided □ 3

lL At this time do you desire up to date information about your biological mother?
   Yes □ 1   No □ 2   Undecided □ 3

mM At this time do you desire up to date information about your biological father?
   Yes □ 1   No □ 2   Undecided □ 3

nN Following are descriptions of types of agencies designed to 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 adoptee(s), 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 identifying 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.
If you decide (or have decided) to search for your biological parents would (did) you tell your adoptive mother?

Yes ☐ 1  No ☐ 2  Do not know ☐ 3  N/A ☐ 9

If you decide (or have decided) to search for your biological parents would (did) you tell your adoptive father?

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

My adoptive mother would be:

qQ  Helpful ☐
rR  Approving ☐
ss  Comfortable ☐
tT  Indifferent ☐
uU  Hurt ☐
vV  Disapproving ☐
ww  Hampering ☐
xX  Angry ☐

My adoptive father would be:

yy  Helpful ☐
zZ  Approving ☐
AAA  Comfortable ☐
BBB  Indifferent ☐
CCC  Hurt ☐
DDD  Disapproving ☐
EEE  Hampering  □
PPP  Angry  □

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

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

III  Has your relationship with your adoptive mother:
- Improved over the years □1
- Deteriorated over the years □2
- Remained the same □3

JJJ  Has your relationship with your adoptive father:
- Improved over the years □1
- Deteriorated over the years □2
- Remained the same □3

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 ________________________
LLL  Education of adoptive mother (mark only one):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>01</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or trade school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary school graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher's college</td>
<td>04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than grade eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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<td>Other, specify</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

MMM  Present occupation of adoptive father:

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<tr>
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<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>Social worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>02</td>
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<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerical worker</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales clerk</td>
<td>04</td>
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<td>Skilled labourer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unskilled labourer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>Homemaker</td>
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<td>Retired</td>
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<td>Unemployed</td>
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<td>Deceased</td>
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<td>Other, specify</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>

NNN  Present occupation of adoptive mother:

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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
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Books


Articles and Periodicals


56. Family and Children's Services, State of Iowa, "Adoption - Out of the Shadows into the Limelight" Iowa Care, Christmas 1975, pp. 1-3.


81. Latterine, L. "The Adopted Seek Their Beginnings" Bergen County (New Jersey) The Sunday Record, 8 May 1975.


Government Document

Dictionaries


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 13, 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.