

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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CHILDREN'S BUREAU

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CHILDREN  
DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE

A STUDY OF CHILDREN TAKEN  
UNDER CARE BY DELAWARE  
AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

By

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, March 30, 1921.*

SIR: I submit herewith a report dealing with 513 children citizens of the State of Delaware who during a two-year period were taken under care by institutions and agencies, and removed from their homes or other places of abode. The study was made, under the supervision of Miss Emma O. Lundberg, Director of the Social Service Division, by Miss Ethel M. Springer and a staff of field agents, and Miss Springer has prepared this report.

The cases presented are for the most part found at the lowest living level. They represent the most obvious social wastage. They are, however, undoubtedly an index of the low social vitality which marks a much larger number. The report avoids any attempt to arouse emotion in the reader and is confined rigidly to statistical enumerations and to literal descriptions. It compels the reader to follow the tabulations and dull records of type cases. It has the monotony of a catalogue of ships—wrecked ships. Ignorance, poverty, imbecility, crime, sickness, abominable housing and living conditions, and civic neglect of surroundings are seen like so many piled rocks against which the family vessel is crushed and the children maimed or lost. It may be doubted if any effort to interpret or clarify could drive home more relentlessly the questions which must occur to every reader alive to human needs.

Is it prudent, let alone humane, to permit children in the poor-house? Can institutional care be made adequate to cure and make normal the children who have suffered the neglect implied in the case of every one of the 513 children? What are the best practical methods by which a modern State may express its legal responsibility for its neglected child citizens? Does not this study emphasize the necessity for the intelligent review of State conditions represented by the work of the code commissions?

It is only fair to add that Delaware has begun a carefully considered forward movement since this study was made.

The practice of the most advanced States shows that among the basic elements of a reasonable system of State care for dependent and neglected children are a State probation system, mothers' pen-

sions, State placing-out and boarding-out, necessary institutions for feeble-minded and socially unmanageable children, proper supervision, and intelligent and sympathetic administration. But these are only the emergency measures in a child-welfare program.

If, as we must, we look further than correction and remedy, and ask how to prevent the unhappiness of which these children are the sign, we can see promise only in great measures, in the slow but sure development of standards of life for the American family based upon a universal wise public educational policy, upon an economic basis that permits a man to earn an income sufficient to support in safety and decency his wife and young children, and leaves the mother in the home to care for the family. A new sense of civic responsibility for decent housing, surroundings, and recreation will come also.

The mysterious phenomena of heredity, of mental and bodily growth which challenge our neglect of research only make more imperative our attention to the conditions of poverty, of ignorance, of unsocial behavior, of civic disregard, which are within our approximate understanding and control. To no smaller conclusions does this little report lead.

Respectfully submitted.

JULIA C. LATHROP, *Chief.*

HON. JAMES J. DAVIS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

## CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE.

### FIELD AND METHOD OF STUDY.

At the request of a child-welfare organization of the State, Delaware was chosen as the field of an inquiry into the histories of children taken under care by agencies and institutions. The interest of the Children's Bureau in making the study was directed toward an analysis of the environment of the children prior to their removal from parental or other homes, and the possibilities of such preventive and constructive work with the families as might have made it possible for some of the children to have remained in their own homes.

As a basis for the inquiry a two-year period was chosen, dating from November 1, 1915, to October 31, 1917, inclusive. Children living in Delaware who were taken under care during this period and removed from their previous surroundings were selected for study. Some of these children had agency or institutional care prior to the beginning of the period chosen.

The method by which the case histories which form the basis of the study were secured involved three distinct processes:

1. Records were secured from every agency and institution known to be caring for Delaware children.
2. These records were checked with other sources for additional information, such as general relief and health agencies (notably the Associated Charities of Wilmington, the Visiting Nurse Association, and the Delaware Tuberculosis Commission), school and court records.
3. Visits were made to families and interested individuals wherever feasible.

The data available were considerable. The combined records of several sources of information amounted in many instances to complete histories. The average number of sources of information in regard to each child was four.

The histories were so compiled as to show the conditions under which the children lived prior to their removal by agencies and the reasons for removal. In detail they contained, besides the description of environmental conditions, a record of the child's parentage and family history; a record of the child's personal history—physical, mental, and social—including school and employment history; a record of agency treatment of the child, both prior and subsequent

to removal; a statement of the constructive work done with the families or households from which the children were removed, with a record of the conditions after the child had been taken away; and a summary indicating the possibility of the child's return to the family group.<sup>1</sup>

The report accordingly deals first with the conditions surrounding the child prior to removal; second, with the agency treatment, discussing the immediate reasons for removal and the kinds of care given; and, third, with suggestions for future constructive effort.

#### GENERAL CONDITIONS IN THE STATE.

##### Area and population.

Territorially, Delaware is the smallest State but one in the United States, extending over only 1,965 square miles. The State is divided into three counties, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex. The population of the State, according to the United States census estimate for 1917, was 215,160. The population of the only large city, Wilmington, located in New Castle County, was at that time estimated as 95,369, or 44 per cent of the total population of the State.<sup>2</sup> The town next in size to Wilmington had an estimated population of less than 5,000, and only three towns exceeded 2,500. The rural population was 92 per cent of the population of the entire State, exclusive of Wilmington.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from manufacturing, which was carried on in or near the large city and some of the towns, farming and fruit-growing constituted the principal industries of the State. Ammunition and metal work were among the important manufactures during the period covered by the study; leather and fiber works were also numerous; while fruit and vegetable canneries were scattered along the railroads at stations convenient to farming districts.

Outside Wilmington, facilities for constructive social work were very meager. With the exception of the almshouses of Kent and Sussex Counties, all the Delaware institutions receiving children were located in New Castle County. Four institutions were situated within the limits of Wilmington and all the child-caring agencies had their headquarters in that city.

##### Institutions and agencies caring for children.

The work of the child-caring agencies and institutions of the State was made the subject of a study published by the Russell Sage

<sup>1</sup> See schedule form, Appendix, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> See Estimates of population of the United States, 1910-1917. Bulletin 138, U. S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, 1918, pp. 11, 15.

<sup>3</sup> The populations for the three towns (Dover, Newcastle, and Milford) were estimated according to the method used by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, which is outlined on p. 5 of Bulletin 138, cited in note 2.



Foundation in 1918.<sup>4</sup> This survey included a general historical statement of the work for children which had been undertaken in Delaware, an account of the present organizations, emphasizing especially their administrative functions, and constructive recommendations for their future development. Since the scope and methods of the agencies and institutions have been covered in this recent report, only a short outline regarding them is necessary here.

Nine institutions in the State were devoted entirely to the care of children: Two industrial schools, two undenominational homes for dependent children, one hospital and home combined, and four church orphanages. Four other institutions—namely, the almshouses of the three counties and the Florence Crittenton Home—included children among their charges.

The two industrial schools were semipublic institutions intended primarily for the care and training of children legally committed to them because of delinquency, though both institutions also received children committed because of dependency. The boys' school<sup>5</sup> provided for white and colored children between 10 and 17 years of age, inclusive; the girls' school received only white girls between 7 and 18 years of age, inclusive. The institution for boys retained legal jurisdiction over its charges until they were 18 years of age; the institution for girls, until 21 years.

One of the undenominational homes for dependent children was for white and the other for colored children. The home for white children received both boys and girls of 3 years and upward. The maximum age for the boys under care was 11 years; for the girls there was no fixed age limit. Besides orphan and destitute children, children were received whose friends or relatives were able to pay a small sum toward their maintenance in the institution. This home also placed children in family homes, retaining supervision over them. At the home for colored children, boys and girls from 2 to 12 years of age were received. Girls were kept until 18 years; boys until 21.

The home and hospital combined provided for white children only and cared for needy children under 3 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

Two of the church orphanages received white children—one caring for boys and one for girls. The other two church institutions were for colored boys.

In addition to the nine institutions listed above, the almshouses of the three counties of the State admitted and cared for children of any age and condition. The special work of the Florence Crittenton

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<sup>4</sup> Richardson, C. Spencer: *Dependent, Delinquent, and Defective Children of Delaware*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York City, March, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> In 1919 this school (Ferris Industrial School) became a State institution. (Laws 1919, ch. 149.)

<sup>6</sup> This institution now provides for colored children.

Home in Wilmington was to care for white girls and women illegitimately pregnant for the first time.

A number of Delaware children were cared for by institutions outside the State. Recourse to outside aid was almost unavoidable in the case of colored children, since the State made very limited provision for them. There was no institution in the State for the care of delinquent colored girls. Three orphanages received colored boys, but only one cared for colored girls. No institution corresponding to the Florence Crittenton Home existed for colored girls and women. During the period of the study eight institutions outside the State had received Delaware children.

The child-caring agencies of Delaware other than institutions comprised three State-wide organizations and two whose work was limited to Wilmington. One of the societies doing State-wide work for children handled nonsupport and cruelty cases, and placed children in institutions and private homes. Another organization was devoted entirely to the work of placing and supervising children in private families. The third had for its purpose the coordinating of the work of the other agencies. The two Wilmington agencies above referred to were the juvenile court and its allied organization, the juvenile court and probation association. The children coming under the care of the juvenile court were boys 17 years and under and girls 18 years and under brought before the court because of delinquency or dependency. In addition to the cases brought before the juvenile court formally, many cases—such as truancy—were handled informally or without a hearing before the judge. Practically all the truancy work in the city was done by the probation officers. The court had authority to place children in private homes as well as to commit them to institutions. The auxiliary organization worked for improved legislation, assisted financially, and furnished volunteer workers.

## CHILDREN INCLUDED IN THE STUDY.

At the outset of the study it was obvious that no clean-cut selection of children could be made on the basis of dependency in its ordinary meaning of material destitution. While all children taken under care were dependent in the sense of being wards of the agencies and institutions in whose care they were found, some had become wards for one reason, some for another. Almost every agency in the State was dealing with all the usually differentiated classes of delinquent, dependent, neglected, and defective children, and all four classes were found in every institution. It was determined, therefore, that the emphasis of the inquiry should be placed upon the fact that the agencies had seen fit to remove these children from their previous surroundings, and the main object of the study should be to ascertain the causes which had necessitated removal.

In all, records were secured for 513 children taken under care by agencies and institutions during the period of the study. These children had been removed by the agencies from various types of environment, as shown by the following list:

Parental homes -----	389	Institutions -----	14
Homes of relatives -----	64	Homeless -----	6
Foster homes -----	32		-----
At service -----	3	Total -----	513
Rooming or boarding houses -----	5		

At the time of their removal 485 children were living in private homes with their own parents or with other guardians. These children constitute the basis of the discussion on home conditions.

### CLASSIFICATION OF CASES.

The 513 children were received by the various agencies and institutions either informally or as the result of court action which removed them from their previous guardians. Court cases included those that had involved hearings before the juvenile court or the municipal court of Wilmington, the county courts, local magistrates, or justices of the peace.

The only court in the State devoted entirely to the interests of children was the juvenile court of Wilmington. This court was established by law in 1911, and the classes of children within its jurisdic-

tion were defined as dependent, neglected, and delinquent.<sup>6</sup> This classification is used in the present report as the basis of the classification of all the children included in the study.

As a matter of fact, though the law provided for the handling of "neglected" children, it was customary in the juvenile court to adjudge a child either delinquent or dependent or both. Cases of neglect were usually heard in other courts or before magistrates, the parents being prosecuted. For the purpose of this report, all cases involving legal action were classed together, and grouped as dependent, neglected, or delinquent. The cases involving no legal action were arbitrarily divided into similar groups, as the history of the case indicated.

#### DISTRIBUTION, BY RACE, SEX, AND CLASS.

Table I shows the distribution of these children by race and sex. Of the group, 403, or 79 per cent, were white and 110, or 21 per cent, were colored. Comparing these figures with the proportion of Negro children among the population under 20 years of age according to

<sup>6</sup> 1915, sec. 3829 *Delinquent child, dependent child, neglected child or children, parent or parents, defined; Disposition of child or evidence in case, not elsewhere admissible against child; Exception.* The words "delinquent child" shall include any male child 17 years of age or under and any female child 18 years of age or under, who violates any law of this State, or who labors when he belongs to any class excluded from laboring in any gainful occupation by the child-labor law of this State, or who is incorrigible; or who knowingly associates with thieves, vicious, or immoral persons; or who, without just cause or without the consent of its parents or custodians, absents itself from its home or place of abode, or who is growing up in idleness or crime; or who, knowingly, visits or enters a house of ill-repute; or who knowingly patronizes or visits any policy shop or place where any gaming device is or shall be operated; or who patronizes or visits any saloon or dram shop where intoxicating liquors are sold; or who patronizes or visits any pool room or bucket shop; or who wanders about the streets in the nighttime without being on lawful business or occupation; or who habitually wanders about any railroad yards; or who smokes or uses any cigarettes of any kind whatsoever; or who habitually uses vile, obscene, vulgar, profane, or indecent language or is guilty of immoral or disorderly conduct in any public place or highway or about any schoolhouse; or who is persistently truant from school.

Any child committing any of the acts hereinabove mentioned shall be deemed a juvenile delinquent person, and shall be proceeded against as such in the manner hereinafter provided. A deposition of any child under sections 12 to 26, inclusive, of this chapter, or any evidence given in such case shall not, in any civil, criminal, or other cause or proceeding whatever in any court, be lawful or proper evidence against such child for any purpose whatever, except in subsequent cases against the same child under said sections. The words "child" or "children" may mean one or more children, or the words "parent" or "parents" may mean one or both parents, when consistent with the intent of said sections.

For the purpose of said sections the words "dependent child" or "neglected child" shall mean any male child 17 years of age or under, or any female child 18 years of age or under, that is found begging, receiving, or gathering alms (whether actually begging or under the pretext of selling or offering for sale anything), or being in any street, road, or public place for the purpose of begging, gathering, or receiving alms, or that is found wandering and not having any home or any settled place of abode or proper guardianship or visible means of subsistence, or that is found destitute, or whose home, by reason of neglect, cruelty, or depravity on the part of its parents, guardian, or other person in whose care it may be, is an unfit place for such child.



the census of 1910—16.9 per cent—the number of colored children included in the study was relatively large.

Boys predominated in both the white and colored groups, though among the colored the sexes were somewhat more evenly divided. There were three-fourths as many white girls as white boys; among the colored there were four-fifths as many girls as boys.

TABLE I.—*Children taken under care, by race and sex, according to class.*

Class of case.	Total children.	White.			Negro.		
		Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.
Total.....	513	403	229	174	110	60	50
Cases involving court action.....	292	218	126	92	74	50	24
Dependent.....	50	41	20	21	9	8	1
Neglected.....	32	21	5	16	11	3	8
Delinquent.....	210	156	101	55	54	39	15
Cases handled informally.....	221	185	103	82	36	10	26
Dependent.....	197	176	100	76	21	8	13
Neglected.....	11	9	3	6	2	1	1
Delinquent.....	13				13	1	12

This table also shows the distribution by classes. Among cases involving court action, delinquents naturally predominated; the majority of the children coming to the agencies without court action were dependent. The majority of the so-called dependent children who had been brought under care through legal action had been handled by the juvenile court, which had power to act on these cases, committing them to institutions or placing them in private homes. The neglect cases involving legal action were those in which parents were prosecuted. It must be remembered that only those cases were included in the study in which the child was removed from his home or other environment. Many cases of neglect were settled without breaking up the home, the parents being required to pay nonsupport orders through the court and to improve conditions.

The delinquent children handled informally were without exception colored children removed from their homes by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. One of these was a small boy who had been reported to the society as beyond the control of the relatives with whom he lived. He stole and ran away from home. The society first placed him in a private family, but his delinquencies continued, and his admission was secured to the boys' industrial school. All the other delinquent children handled informally were girls, who were removed to a private disciplinary institution outside the State. If Delaware had had provision for colored girls at the girls' industrial school, several of these cases would have been legally committed there.

The neglected children who had not been before a court were likewise removed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Children. Two of them were removed from guardians who were unwilling to continue care of them; two were taken from a mother who was mentally incompetent; one was an abandoned child removed from the county hospital to an orphanage; one was a baby in need of care while the mother recovered from a drunken debauch. Two others were neglected by an immoral mother; their father, a respectable man, was willing to ask agency assistance but did not care to have the mother prosecuted. Three others were taken from a mother who had several times been reported as neglecting her children, and had once been before a judge on that charge.

## AGE.

The study included children under 18 years of age. This age limit was chosen after a comparison of the age limits established by the various children's agencies and an analysis of the material which they offered. It was then applied arbitrarily in the selection of cases from those institutions which cared for both adults and children.

Table II shows the ages of the children according to class. The largest numbers appear in the 13 and 14 year groups, the delinquents contributing the largest part. The table shows only one child under 8 years of age classed as delinquent. This was the 7-year-old son of a colored cook, who was away from home all day; there being no one to care for the child, he ran wild in the streets and was brought before the juvenile court for persistent truancy. The majority of the dependent children were under 6 years of age.

TABLE II.—Ages of children when taken under care.

Age of child.	Total.			Children taken under care.								
				Dependent.			Neglected.			Delinquent.		
	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total . . . . .	513	403	110	247	217	30	43	30	13	223	156	67
Less than 1 year	34	32	2	34	32	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 year	23	20	3	21	19	2	2	1	1	—	—	—
2 years	15	13	2	14	13	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
3 years	22	21	1	19	19	—	3	2	1	—	—	—
4 years	23	19	4	19	16	3	4	3	1	—	—	—
5 years	20	18	2	18	17	1	2	1	1	—	—	—
6 years	24	22	2	20	19	1	4	3	1	—	—	—
7 years	29	25	4	19	18	1	9	7	2	1	—	1
8 years	25	20	5	13	10	3	5	5	—	7	5	2
9 years	19	12	7	8	7	1	4	2	2	7	3	4
10 years	37	30	7	15	12	3	3	2	1	19	16	3
11 years	29	22	7	9	6	3	—	—	—	20	16	4
12 years	41	29	12	7	6	1	3	2	1	31	21	10
13 years	47	35	12	10	8	2	1	1	—	36	26	10
14 years	44	32	12	9	5	4	1	1	—	34	26	8
15 years	35	20	15	5	4	1	—	—	—	30	16	14
16 years	29	19	10	4	4	—	1	—	1	24	15	9
17 years	17	14	3	3	2	1	—	—	—	14	12	2



## NATIVITY.

Of 488 children for whom nativity was reported, 469, or 96 per cent, were born in the United States. In the general population of Delaware, according to the United States Census of 1910, the percentage of native born was 91. The native-born white children included in the study represented 75 per cent of the group; the native-born Negro, 21 per cent. The corresponding percentages for the general population were 76 and 15. Only 19 of the children included in the study were reported as foreign born.

## PARENTAGE.

## Nativity of parents.

Facts in regard to the parents were not fully reported. Both parents of 276 children (212 white and 64 colored), or 54 per cent of the entire group, were known to be native born. On the other hand, 96 children, all white, or 19 per cent of the total, were known to have both parents foreign born. Of the remaining children, 32, including 2 colored children, had at least one foreign-born parent. Hence, one-fourth were known to be of foreign or mixed parentage, while more than one-half were known to be of native parentage. (See Table III.) Among the foreign nationalities reported were Italian, Russian, German, Irish, Austrian, English, Canadian, Swedish, Greek, and Rumanian. The Italians were the most numerous. Fifty children were reported as having Italian fathers and 47 as having both parents born in Italy; 13 children had Russian fathers; 11, German; 8, Irish; 7, Austrian; 6, English; none of the other nationalities was reported more than 3 times.

TABLE III.—Race and nativity of parents.

Nativity of fathers.	Children having mothers of specified nativity.									
	Total.	Native.			Foreign.			Not reported.		
		Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	513	312	234	78	111	111	.....	90	58	32
Native.....	293	276	212	64	11	11	.....	6	5	1
Foreign.....	113	10	8	2	96	96	.....	7	7	.....
Not reported.....	107	26	14	12	4	4	.....	77	46	31

## Children born out of wedlock.

Birth out of wedlock was definitely reported for 61, or 12 per cent, of all the children. Of these, 32 were white and 29 were colored. This represented 8 per cent of the total number of white children and 26 per cent of the total number of Negro children. More than two-

thirds of the children of illegitimate birth were classed as dependent or neglected, 25 of them being under 7 years of age. (See Table IV.)

The total group constituted 9 per cent of all delinquent children and 14 per cent of all dependent and neglected children included in the study.

Four of the children included in the study were foundlings.

TABLE IV.—*Children born out of wedlock taken under care, by race and class of case.*

Class of case.	Children born out of wedlock, taken under care during specified age periods.								
	Total.	White.				Negro.			
		Total.	Under 7 years.	7-13 years.	14 years of age and over.	Total.	Under 7 years.	7-13 years.	14 years of age and over.
Total.....	61	32	17	11	4	29	8	11	10
Dependent and neglected....	42	24	17	6	1	18	8	7	3
Delinquent.....	19	8	.....	5	3	11	.....	4	7

#### Length of residence of parents in the United States.

The length of the parents' residence in the United States was computed only for those living at the time of the child's removal to agency care. In only five instances was the father reported as having been in this country less than five years; and in only nine instances was the mother so reported. Inasmuch as, with but 19 exceptions, all the children were native born and had lived all their lives in this country, it may safely be stated that the newly arrived immigrant did not measurably increase the amount of child dependency or delinquency in Delaware.

The actual number of instances where the parents could not speak English was not secured, but that such cases existed and contributed to the conditions which led to taking the children under care is illustrated by the following histories:

The parents of a 12-year-old boy had been 14 years in the United States but were unable to speak English. The boy, however, American born and surrounded by English-speaking people in the poorer section of Wilmington, had absorbed the worst that the city could give him. He was examined and found in good condition mentally and physically, but from the time he was 10 years old he was guilty of repeated delinquencies, chiefly petty larcenies. His parents could not understand him or control him and finally requested the juvenile court to place him in an institution. (Case No. 301.)

A boy 10 years of age was committed to the boys' industrial school on a charge of incorrigibility. His mother, who could not speak a word of English, found it impossible to control him. He would run away from school at recess;

he would disappear from his home early in the morning before the other members of the family were about, and would come home late at night, crawling in through a window or through the cellar. His behavior suggested defective mentality, but when he was placed under observation he was declared normal. Analysis of his record seemed to indicate that the difficulty lay in bad environmental influences and in a lack of sympathy between the boy and his parents. (Case No. 501.)

An Italian ammunition worker had three young boys whom he placed in a church institution when their mother deserted them. Five years later he had them returned to him, and for one year he struggled to care for them properly. He was described as intelligent, showing no marks of dissipation, a remarkable physical specimen, looking not more than 50 years of age, though really 71. He could not speak English; his boys did not understand Italian. There were no relatives in this country who might have made a home for them. Greatly handicapped by the lack of a common language, the father at length complained that he could not work and also care for his boys and applied for their admission to the boys' industrial school. The charges on which the boys were committed were larceny and incorrigibility; but, according to the father's own statement, they were not "bad boys." They merely needed some one to look after them. (Cases Nos. 460, 461, 462.)

#### Families included in study.

Of the total of 513 children, 188, or 37 per cent, had brothers or sisters or half brothers or half sisters included in the study. The number of families represented was 398. (See Table V.) One family group of 6 children was included; 7 families of 4 each were included; 24 families of 3 each; 41 families of 2 each. The remaining 325 children, or 63 per cent of all, were the only members of their family groups represented in the study.

TABLE V.—Families having specified number of children included in study, by race.

Race.	Families having specified number of children included in study.						
	Total.	One.	Two.	Three.	Four.	Five.	Six.
Total.....	398	325	41	24	7	.....	1
White.....	303	239	37	20	6	.....	1
Negro.....	95	86	4	4	1	.....	.....

The size of the child's own family was not adequately reported in agency records. While some organizations had been very particular to secure data on this point, other agencies had made no note whatever in regard to it. For the discussion of this subject, therefore, Table VI was limited to 305 children whose histories were supplemented by family visits, and for whom presumably full information on this point had been obtained.

Forty-three per cent of this group, including 132 of the 305 children—114 white and 18 colored—came from families in which there were 5 or more children; over one-third, or 35 per cent, came from families in which there were 3 or 4 children. Among the white cases large families were much more prevalent than among the colored. Possibly one reason for this was the greater irregularity in the relationship of colored parents to each other, only 20 per cent of the colored children coming from family groups where the parents were married and living together.

To what extent size of family contributed toward dependency can not be judged by so small a group of cases. That a rapidly increasing family of young children constitutes a serious problem, especially when the family income is low, was illustrated by several of the cases studied.

TABLE VI.—*Number of children in child's own family.*

Number of children in family group (including child of study).	Children taken under care whose families were visited.									
	Total.	Class of case.								
		Dependent.			Neglected.			Delinquent.		
		Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	305	154	135	19	39	26	13	112	80	32
One child.....	31	20	15	5	.....	.....	.....	11	4	7
Two children.....	36	21	16	5	5	4	1	10	5	5
Three children.....	56	29	23	6	12	1	11	15	11	4
Four children.....	50	29	28	1	8	8	.....	13	12	1
Five children.....	35	15	14	1	4	4	.....	16	11	5
Six children.....	26	8	8	.....	5	5	.....	13	11	2
Seven children.....	20	7	7	.....	.....	.....	.....	13	8	5
Eight children.....	28	13	13	.....	3	3	.....	12	10	2
Nine or more children.....	23	12	11	1	2	1	1	9	8	1

## ORPHANAGE.

One significant feature of this study of children taken under care by agencies and institutions was the small number of children both of whose parents were dead. (See Table VII.) Information was lacking for a number of children, but only 15, or 3 per cent of all, were known to be full orphans; for 157, or 31 per cent, it was known that one parent was living and one was dead.

For 259 children it was known that both parents were living. With due allowance for possible other cases, not less than 50 per cent nor more than 66 per cent had both parents living. As a matter of fact, in the majority of instances where conditions regarding one or both parents were not reported, the lack of information was due to the absence of the parent from the family group.

TABLE VII.—*Orphanage.*

Class of case.	Total children.	Children whose parents were—					
		Both dead.	One dead.	Both living.	One dead; one not reported as to whether living or dead.	One living; one not reported as to whether living or dead.	Both not reported as to whether living or dead.
Total.....	513	15	157	259	7	63	12
Dependent and neglected.....	290	9	82	143	4	45	7
Delinquent.....	223	6	75	116	3	18	5

The numerous instances in which the full facts were not reported render impossible a satisfactory comparison of the proportions of orphans or half orphans in the dependent and neglected group with those found in the delinquent group. The fact that fully one-half of the children of this study had both parents living suggests the need for an increase of constructive work with families.



## COMMUNITY CONDITIONS SURROUNDING CHILDREN REMOVED FROM FAMILY HOMES.

### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION.

Of the 485 children who at the time of their removal by agencies were living in private homes with their own parents or with other guardians, 367, or 76 per cent, were located in Wilmington. (See Table VIII.) Outside Wilmington, 59 children, or 12 per cent of all, were in New Castle County; 29, or 6 per cent, were in Kent County; 23, or 5 per cent, were in Sussex County. For 4 children the exact place of residence was not reported. Three children were temporarily living in another State but were included in the study because their legal residence was Delaware.

These 485 children represented 389 household groups, of which 303 were white families and 86 were colored.

TABLE VIII.—*Residence of child when taken under care.*

Class of case.	Children having specified residence when taken under care.						
	Total.	Wilmington.	New Castle County, outside Wilmington.	Kent County.	Sussex County.	Location not reported.	Other State.
Total .....	485	367	59	29	23	4	3
Dependent .....	232	187	22	8	10	4	1
Neglected .....	41	19	11	7	4	.....	.....
Delinquent .....	212	161	26	14	9	.....	2

### NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS.

Besides the 367 children whose residence was Wilmington at the time of their removal, only 2 children came from large cities; these were 2 of the 3 children living temporarily in another State. Of the remaining children, 45 were from towns in the State having a population of 500 or over; 17 were from communities of 50 to 499 inhabitants; 49 came from the scattered population; for 5 the population of the place of residence was not reported. A comparison of these figures with those for the population of the State in corresponding groups emphasizes the fact that the one large congested center contributed far more than a proportionate number of children, while the scattered population contributed much less.



The conditions in the neighborhood in which the children lived were graded roughly as good, fair, or poor, according to reports given in the written records or observation of agents at the time of visits to the families. The terms applied to many general aspects of the neighborhood, such as housing, sanitation, and moral influences. The conditions surrounding nearly three-fifths of the children taken under agency care in the large population center were found to be poor; and in other communities having a population of 500 and over the conditions in about two-fifths of the instances were reported as poor. The gradings were more evenly distributed for the children removed from districts having populations of 50 to 499, and indicated only a small number of instances in which actively bad neighborhood conditions surrounded children coming from scattered populations.

The dividing line between neighborhood influences and home influences was somewhat hard to draw, especially for rural districts where social influences outside the home appeared almost nonexistent. Some rural neighborhoods were classified as poor because, while there was little that was bad about them, constructive influences were lacking. For example, two small boys lived in a dilapidated cabin on a desolate strip of seashore. In this case the extreme isolation counteracted all the healthful natural elements.

#### DWELLINGS—NUMBER OF ROOMS AND SANITARY CONDITIONS.

The typical dwelling occupied by wage earners in Wilmington was the block house, two or three stories in height, averaging three rooms to a floor. Houses occupied by the colored and the foreign born were usually small, two stories in height, and sometimes with but two rooms to a floor. Those houses were originally planned as dwellings for one family, but when neighborhoods deteriorated many of them were subdivided.

Dwellings in other communities of the State were of great variety, ranging from houses built in rows in the central or business sections of the district to detached frame houses with small plats of ground.

The typical rural house, occupied by the farm tenant or laborer, was a frame house without cellar or basement, of two stories, having four rooms in the main structure and an ell containing one inclosed room and a porch or summer kitchen.

Overcrowded conditions existed in some of the homes studied. In 24 instances household groups, varying in number from two to six persons, were found living in one room; of these 12 were white and 12 were colored. In 24 instances families lived in two rooms; one of these was a white family comprised of seven persons. Three white families of seven members each were found occupying only

three rooms each. In two instances one white and one colored family of nine were domiciled in four rooms. Twelve white families of 10 or more individuals had only six rooms each.

One boy of 14 belonged to a family numbering seven individuals who shared a tiny five-room house in the poorest part of Wilmington with another family of four. He was brought to the attention of the juvenile court because of his persistent truancy. Three weeks later he, with one of the other children living in the same house, was implicated in a charge of larceny. Probation was insufficient to counteract the influences of his home and neighborhood; and after a year he was again charged with larceny of a more serious nature and was committed to the industrial school for boys. (Case No. 437.)

An inquiry into the sanitary conditions of the homes from which the children were removed produced unsatisfactory results, due to the large number of cases for which conditions were not reported. Moreover, the grades of good, fair, and poor, into which the cases were divided, were very roughly defined. Out of a group of 363 cases in regard to which reports were secured, 134, or more than one-third, were classed as poor. The number classed as good was also about one-third (127 cases). Among white children, the largest number of cases appeared among the good, while, with the colored children, poor conditions exceeded both the good and the fair together.

Congested and insanitary conditions, especially in the foreign quarter of Wilmington, were among the contributing causes of removal in the cases of several children. In certain instances the moral standards had been so lowered that the children became delinquent.

In the home of three Italian children there were, in addition to the mother, eight lodgers. The father had died of pleuro-pneumonia and, at the time the children were removed, arrangements had been made for the admission of the mother to a sanatorium for tuberculous patients. The home was located in a damp, dirty dwelling consisting of six rooms. Two of the rooms were rented to two of the lodgers. The remaining four rooms were occupied by the mother, the three children, and the other six lodgers. (Cases Nos. 6, 7, and 8.)

## CHILDREN REMOVED FROM THEIR PARENTAL HOMES.

A total of 389 children, 313 white and 76 colored, were removed from their parental homes; that is, from the guardianship of at least one parent.

### FAMILY GROUP.

In 124 instances both parents were living in the home and were formally married to each other. For the remaining 265 children the personnel of the family group was irregular. (See Table IX.)

TABLE IX.—*Personnel of family group.*

Personnel of family group.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	265	207	58
Mother only in home.....	136	106	30
Father only in home.....	85	76	9
Mother and stepfather in home.....	21	11	10
Father and stepmother in home.....	16	11	5
Parents living together, not married.....	2	.....	2
Mother in home, civil condition unknown, whereabouts of father unknown.....	4	2	2
Father in home, civil condition unknown, whereabouts of mother unknown.....	1	1	.....

Among the 221 children removed from homes where only one parent was present, there were 86 instances in which one parent was dead and 3 in which the parents were divorced. In 87 instances the parents had separated without formal divorce. These included 20 instances in which the mother had deserted the family, leaving the child with the father; 6 in which the mother had deserted her husband but had taken the child with her; 38 in which the father had deserted the family, leaving the child with the mother, 2 being children whose parents had not been married to each other but had lived together for a considerable period until about three months before the children were removed; in 4 instances the parents had never been married to each other, but the mother, at the time of the study, was separated from another consort; the remaining 19 instances appeared to be cases of a separation by mutual agreement of the parents, including 7 cases in which the child stayed with the father and 12 in which the mother had the custody of the child. There were 23 instances in which the parents were legally married but one parent was temporarily absent from the home—because of sickness, incarceration in prison, or (in 2 instances) for military

duty; 13 in which the parent was unmarried; and 8 in which the parent was alone, but his or her civil condition was not reported.

Sixteen children were from homes in which the child's father and a stepmother were living together, one of the unions being a common-law marriage. In 21 instances the child's mother and a stepfather were living together, 8 of these being cases where there had been no marriage. In two cases the parents were living together but were not married. In five other instances the exact civil status was not known.

Analyzing the above situations from a slightly different angle, 111 of the 389 children removed from their parental homes were known to have lost one parent by death. There were also among this group 39 children—20 white and 19 colored—who had been born out of wedlock.

#### ECONOMIC HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD.

For 246—63 per cent—of the children removed from their parental homes the economic head of their family group was the father of the family; in 19 instances this was a stepfather. In 130 instances the children were removed from homes of which the mother was the economic head. Of the remaining children, 6 came from homes where a brother was the main support of the family; 6 came from homes where other individuals had assumed the responsibility; and for 1 child the conditions were not reported. (See Table X.)

TABLE X.—*Economic head of parental home.*

Race.	Children removed from households having specified economic head.					Not reported.
	Total.	Father.	Mother.	Brother.	Other.	
Total.....	389	246	130	6	6	1
White.....	313	203	99	5	5	1
Negro.....	76	43	31	1	1	.....

It will be noted that one-third of the children were from homes in which the mother was the economic head of the family. The question naturally arises whether in some of these families the application of widows' or mothers' pensions would not have been justified and have prevented the removal of the child from his home.

An analysis of the civil status of the mothers of the children showed that in 37 instances the mother had been left a widow through the death of the child's father; in 81 instances the parents were living apart, including 11 children born out of wedlock whose mothers were still unmarried at the time of the study, 56 in which the parents had voluntarily separated presumably because of friction, and 14 in which



the fathers were temporarily absent, because of delinquency, sickness, or military service; in the remaining 12 cases the civil status of the mother was either irregular or unknown.

The inference from the above analysis is that, while for at least 81 of these children the father seemed to be the first source to which anyone attempting family rehabilitation would naturally turn, there were 37 children, or 10 per cent of all the children removed from parental homes, for whom a mother's pension might have eliminated the necessity for removal.

#### OCCUPATION OF HEAD OF FAMILY GROUP.

Since a large majority of the children included in the study were removed from homes located in a city district, it was natural that manufacturing and mechanical industries predominated among the types of work in which the heads of households and family groups were engaged. In all types of industry the semiskilled occupations exceeded the other grades of work. Table XI shows grades of work reported:

TABLE XI.—*Occupation of economic head of parental home.*

Occupation of economic head of parental home.	Economic heads of households.	Children involved.
Total .....	307	389
Proprietors, officials, managers .....	15	17
Clerks and kindred workers .....	5	6
Skilled workers .....	43	53
Semiskilled workers .....	79	97
Laborers .....	46	63
Servants .....	48	62
Semiofficial public employee .....	1	3
Professional persons .....	1	2
Grade not reported .....	50	59
No gainful occupation .....	19	27

These figures, it must be remembered, apply to the economic head of the household, whether the father or mother. In 49 instances of the 163, where two parents were present in the home, both the father and the mother were gainfully employed. In the case of 27 children the head of the family group had no gainful occupation.

#### EMPLOYMENT OF MOTHER.

Of a group of 303 children removed from parental homes in which a mother or a stepmother was present, 152, or 50 per cent, had mothers who were known to be gainfully employed; 60 children had mothers who were not gainfully employed; for 91 the information was not available.

In all, the mothers of 105 children were known to be working away from home. Outside the various forms of domestic service

which were reported, the principal occupations were in the manufacturing industries, notably in connection with the leather works in Wilmington. The mothers of 47 children were reported as being employed at home, among these were lodging and boarding house keepers, women who took in sewing or washing, and several women who kept small "stores" in the front room of the family dwelling. One mother derived her income from maintaining a disorderly house. In a few instances the mother had been able to keep her child with her and make a home for it within the household of her employer. Although the mothers of these children were more easily accessible in case of need than were the mothers employed away from home, there was little evidence that their attention to their children was at all adequate. Of the mother of two children it was reported that she did not have time to "care for her children, as she must tend store."

Despite the number for which conditions were not reported, Table XII indicates that at the utmost less than two-fifths of the children had the full advantage of a mother's or stepmother's care.

TABLE XII.—*Employment of mother.*

Employment of mother.	Households.	Children involved.
Total .....	307	389
Mother <sup>1</sup> not gainfully employed.....	48	60
Mother gainfully employed at home.....	40	47
Mother gainfully employed away from home.....	84	105
No mother in household group.....	60	86
Mother's occupation not reported.....	75	91

<sup>1</sup> The term "mother," as here used, means mother or stepmother.

The numerous charges of misconduct against a 10-year-old colored boy were traceable to absolute lack of supervision at home. Within a year he had been three times before the juvenile court—for throwing stones, for attacking another boy with a knife, and for causing a false alarm of fire. He was guilty also of persistent truancy. His home—a small, shabby, brick house in a very poor, narrow alley—faced the high, unbroken wall of a factory. His father was an unskilled laborer. His mother worked out at service, and he, with three other children, the oldest of whom was 11 years of age, were left alone all day. (Case No. 86.)

The removal of two little white girls and their baby brother was due to the fact that their mother had to go to work. Two years before the girls' father had been killed in a mine. His employers made a flat settlement of a "few hundred dollars," which the mother's brother quickly squandered. For a short time the mother lived under the protection of a man to whom she was not married, and by him gave birth to a baby boy. Before the child was 6 months old, however, the alliance terminated abruptly, and the mother was obliged to seek employment. Local agencies placed the children in institutions. (Cases Nos. 144, 145, and 146.)



## ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILY.

Table XIII shows a rough distribution of the cases by the economic standards of the homes from which the children were removed. The classes "adequate," "inadequate," and "low" were gradings based upon evidence in the records or upon the personal judgment of the agents handling the cases. The border line between a decent living and an income insufficient to maintain a decent standard lay between "adequate" and "inadequate."

TABLE XIII.—*Economic status of parental home.*

Class of case.	Children removed from parental home of specified economic status.				
	Total.	Ade-quate.	Inade-quate.	Low.	Not re-ported.
Total.....	389	155	115	52	67
White.....	313	136	96	36	45
Dependent.....	158	54	55	20	29
Neglected.....	27	5	10	9	3
Delinquent.....	128	77	31	7	13
Negro.....	76	19	19	16	22
Dependent.....	17	5	2	5	5
Neglected.....	12	.....	6	6	.....
Delinquent.....	47	14	11	5	17

Only one child, a delinquent white boy, came from a home with income allowing for more than ordinary comforts and luxuries. Those children being classed as from homes with "low" income came from families receiving outside aid or in desperate need of help.

Unfortunately, the figures in this table include too many "not reported" to afford a satisfactory basis for comparison. Of the 322 cases whose surroundings were definitely reported, 155 children were reported as coming from homes with adequate income, 115 from homes with inadequate income, and 52 from homes with low income. Thus it appears that 48 per cent of those for whom conditions were reported were graded as coming from homes where the income was adequate. Proportionately, the larger number of these came from the white group.

Distributing by class of case the 155 children from homes where the income was reported as adequate, 59, or 38 per cent, were of the so-called "dependent" class—showing that other reasons than inadequacy of income were operative in bringing the children under agency care as dependents.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS AND THEIR OTHER CHILDREN.

For 284, or 73 per cent, of the children removed from their parental homes, unfavorable characteristics were reported of one or more members of the family group. Among the remaining group of 105

children there were a number, especially among the colored children, for whom information on this point was incomplete.

Three headings were used for grouping the unfavorable characteristics—physical, mental, and social. In order to simplify the study of the various conditions, every characteristic was listed by itself regardless of the instances in which it was combined with other characteristics. Table XIV shows the number of times the specific condition was reported of a child's parent or parents.

TABLE XIV.—*Characteristics of parents.*

Characteristics of parents.	Total.	White.	Negro.
<b>Physical condition poor:</b>			
Tuberculosis.....	34	30	4
Venereal disease.....	10	10	.....
Epileptic seizures.....	2	2	.....
Crippled.....	4	4	.....
Defective vision.....	3	3	.....
Defective hearing.....	2	2	.....
Other poor physical condition.....	38	34	4
<b>Mentality not normal:</b>			
Obviously defective.....	13	8	5
Insane.....	14	13	1
<b>Social characteristics poor:</b>			
Correctional institution record.....	45	41	4
Immorality.....	89	68	21
Illegitimate parentage.....	23	8	15
Deserting.....	79	73	6
Alcoholism.....	103	88	15
Other delinquency.....	25	18	7
Almshouse record.....	4	2	2
Other institution record.....	10	8	2
Other dependency.....	28	24	4
Other poor social characteristics.....	57	50	7

### Physical condition of parents.

The physical condition of the child's parents was very inadequately reported. Tuberculosis stood out as the most common illness of those for whom some unfavorable physical condition was reported. In 34 instances, one parent at least was known to be tuberculous. That with four exceptions cases of tuberculosis were among white persons suggests that tuberculosis was more carefully noted among the white than among the colored inhabitants. Delaware is at present making an effort to give more thorough attention to the tuberculous colored of its population.

Two children were reported as having epileptic parents; 10 children had parents reported as having venereal disease; in 4 instances the parents were reported as being crippled; in 3 instances as having defective vision; in 2 as having defective hearing; in 38 as being otherwise in poor physical condition. In this last group were included cases of general weakness, cancer, kidney trouble, and suspected tuberculosis; also instances of acute or temporary disability which had necessitated the removal of the children. One father who was classed as in poor physical condition had been sent to a

hospital because of pneumonia; his illness, together with his wife's tuberculous condition, had precipitated the breaking up of the family. In another instance the child's father had recently returned from a hospital after an attack of typhoid fever. His protracted convalescence proved too great a financial burden for the family, and his wife was obliged to place their child in an institution temporarily, while she sought employment.

Information regarding the physical condition of parents was very inadequate, since records apparently were made only of glaring instances. While agencies frequently arranged for the physical examination of the child to be removed, they made no systematic inquiry regarding the health of the individuals with whom the child had been associated. Frequently, in the nature of the case, such an inquiry would have been impossible.

#### **Mentality of parents.**

Data on the subject of the mentality of the parents were very meager and in no instance was there a record of a scientific diagnosis. Twenty-seven children had parents who were reported as not normal mentally. These children represented 18 family groups, 14 white and 4 colored. Fourteen had parents who showed a history of insanity; these represented 9 families, 8 white and 1 colored. The remaining 13 children had parents who were reported as obviously defective, representing, however, only 9 individual parents, 6 white and 3 colored. Throughout this report the terms "imbecile," "feeble-minded," and "border line," are used only for cases diagnosed by experts. Cases of obviously low-grade mentality, but not diagnosed, were so designated.

Among the children having a parent obviously defective in mentality were two colored children, a boy and a girl, aged 9 and 12 years, respectively, who were removed from their home because of the cruelty of their mother's consort. Both children had been born out of wedlock. A third child of illegitimate birth, whose father was the above-mentioned man, was allowed to remain with the mother. The agent removing the children reported that they were removed because of cruelty and neglect. The baby was allowed to remain with the mother, who was not arrested because of her mental condition. A family visit reaffirmed the fact that the mother was of low-grade mentality. She had been married once, but had lived with two other men and had wandered from place to place. (Cases Nos. 514 and 516.)

The negative treatment of the foregoing case, which allowed the mother to go at large because she appeared mentally weak, will doubtless not be tolerated much longer by a State which has become awakened to the need for care of its feeble-minded.

One of the instances of insanity was that of an Italian mother. Shortly after coming to the United States, and at a time when she was pregnant, she saw an electric car run over and kill two of her children. Her baby, born prematurely

soon afterwards, died at the age of 2 months. The shock of those three deaths affected her mental condition. She had still living at this time one little girl, and during the next six years three other children were born to her. Gradually her mind became a blank. She would take no notice of what was going on about her and would make no response when addressed. One by one her three youngest children were removed from the home and placed in institutions, and at length she herself was sent to the State hospital for the insane. (Cases Nos. 197 and 198.)

### Social characteristics of parents.

Alcoholism was the most frequently reported of any of the unfavorable social characteristics—in 74 instances of a total of 103 occurring in combination with other unfavorable social traits. In more than one-fourth of the parental homes from which children were removed alcoholism was a deteriorating factor. Alcoholism and immorality were reported together of one or both guardians of 22 children. One 14-year-old colored girl was found living in one room with her mother and her mother's consort. Both the man and the woman were confirmed drunkards and snuff users and were teaching the girl to drink, smoke, and "rub snuff." The home of a white baby boy was broken up through the action of two older half sisters. These girls, not yet 16 years old, secured the prosecution of their alcoholic father on the ground of his abusing them in a depraved and immoral fashion.

Immorality stood next to alcoholism in frequency of occurrence. More than one-fifth of the children removed from their parental homes were from households where one or both parents were reported as immoral. The facts in many of these cases were too sordid for publication. One girl, both of whose parents had been found guilty of extramarital relations, was removed from her home because her mother was commercializing the girl's personal attractions. Another white child of 11 years was removed from her home because of the mother's moral laxity. This woman had had six children born out of wedlock by as many different men. If anything, the figures for immorality were obtained through too conservative a rating. It will be noted that where the birth of one child out of wedlock was the only sexual offense reported, it was designated as illegitimate parentage and not as immorality.

The term "deserting" is used throughout this report as applying only to the active agent in a case of desertion. The deserting parent was usually absent from the household. Hence, while there were but 10 children living at the time of their removal with parents who had previously deserted their mates, there were found 79 children living with a parent who had been deserted. Among the children removed from deserting parents was a baby whose mother had left her three other children and their father and had gone to a boarding house.



She found very soon that she could not care for her baby and keep up the work which was necessary for their support. Two other children of a deserting parent were the sons of an immoral woman who had left her legal husband to live with another man. Both the mother and her consort were addicted to drink. The man was reported as cruel to her and to the children. They had their living quarters in cheap rooming houses, moving frequently. At the time that the agencies removed the children the man and the woman, the two boys, and a new-born baby were occupying one room.

"Other delinquency" reported of the parents included instances of cruelty, brutality, neglect, and larceny. Among the children exposed to such conditions were three small colored girls whose mother was dead and whose father left them alone all day in filth and rags to pick up such food as they might find by sneaking into the gardens or sheds of neighbors. The homes of three Italian children were broken up as a result of the murderous attacks which the fathers made upon the mothers. The mother of one of these Italian children, however, was giving her husband great provocation by her immoral conduct. One 8-year-old white boy, whose father had deserted and whose mother was living immorally with another man, was left by his mother to the precarious interest of a colored family who, after a number of days, turned him over to the agency. In all, 14 cases of neglect or nonsupport were included in this group, 3 of them being neglect by the mother.

The social characteristics of the parents were designated as "poor" when the statements made were derogatory but not specific. Not infrequently there was an implication that the moral standards were low. Such expressions as the following were sometimes used: "Mother not a proper person," "mother not strong morally," "father ran with other women." Other descriptions included parents who were lazy, irresponsible, nervous, erratic, profane, or more vaguely "poor" as to character or condition. In 5 instances the parent was spoken of as a "poor manager"; in 5 instances the parent had been teaching the children to steal. In 12 instances neglect or mistreatment of the children was reported. Three children lived in homes where the father was a gambler.

Homes where a step-parent was present, though not a large proportion of the whole, furnished some interesting illustrations of unfavorable social conditions.

One boy's mother died when he was 2 years old. His father, left with a large family, put the three youngest children into an institution and, for the others, secured a housekeeper. Later he married her and brought the other children home. The stepmother was never able to get along with the children, and gradually the older ones left home. The youngest boy was not easy to



control, resenting any correction, and frequently running away to his older sisters. He played truant and was on the streets at all hours, sometimes staying out all night; he smoked cigarettes and stole. The irregular life which he lived was demoralizing, and at 9 years of age he came under the care of the juvenile court. At the age of 14 he was brought before the juvenile-court judge for incorrigibility and the larceny of a bicycle. After trying him on probation, the court placed him with a private family; but within a month the court decided that it was necessary to send him to the industrial school. (Case No. 176.)

The underlying cause of the delinquencies of a 15-year-old white boy, which eventually brought about his commitment to the industrial school, was the constant irritation in his home. The youngest of a large family, he was the only child left at home when his father married again. The stepmother was reported as untruthful and a poor manager. For about three months before he was taken under the care of the juvenile court, the boy had stayed away from home because of a family quarrel and had slept in an unfinished building, getting his meals at cheap lunch counters and begging when his money gave out. Finally he left town with another boy and was picked up in the tenderloin district of Philadelphia by a detective, who returned him to the custody of the juvenile court. (Case No. 454.)

More frequently than otherwise poor characteristics occurred in combination. Many of the complex situations which actually existed defy tabulation or even enumeration. They can best be suggested by a few illustrative cases:

*White children.*—One 13-year-old boy came from a thoroughly degenerate family, with bad heredity and physical and mental defect apparent in varying forms among all the members. The father, disfigured not only through accidents which had occurred at his work but by congenital deformities, was described as frightful in appearance. Although at one time he had earned good wages, he became more and more intemperate and was arrested at different times for wife beating, for nonsupport, and for larceny. The mother, born of the incestuous relationship of her father with his own daughter, had been brought up in an institution. She was degenerate both physically and mentally, undersized, deaf, sly, irresponsible, shiftless, and utterly depraved. The children, of whom there were four, were undersized and retarded. The family lived in an old two-story brick house in a city block. The dwelling consisted of five small rooms, damp, dirty, and neglected. The location was poor, being near railroads and dumping grounds; the streets were unpaved and contaminated by open sewage. The family itself, however, constituted one of the most degrading influences of the neighborhood. The income of the family was very meager and irregular and, such as it was, was improvidently squandered. Conditions in this home were first reported to agencies by relatives. Prior to the period of the study the oldest girl had been removed to an institution because her mother had rented her out for immoral purposes. The girl had contracted syphilis. The boy included in this study was removed and placed with relatives, and before the close of the period agencies were seriously considering the removal of the two youngest children, for it had become known that the mother was permitting them to steal. (Case No. 28.)

At the request of their father, two young girls and their older half sister were moved from their home in a remote rural district. Their mother had deserted. At the time of the study the family lived in a one-room shack situated in a secluded location in beautiful country beside a stream and wood-

land. The shack was crowded with furniture and clothes. Two beds 3 feet apart occupied most of the floor space. A swinging cradle stood between them. The floor was carpetless and dirty. The man in this family, own father of the two younger girls, was a widower who had become attached to the children's mother; he said that he really wished to marry her but had been unable to persuade her. He endeavored to provide for the family by trapping and fishing, and by farming a small plat of ground which surrounded the cabin. According to his own statement he was able to support the family; but the fact that he paid no rent for his house and ground only emphasized the general impression that the family income was very low. It is reported that at times he drank. The mother relied upon money derived from her own and from the oldest girl's immorality. This woman had led a thoroughly promiscuous career. In addition to the three girls included in the study, she had "five or six" children, all born out of wedlock; it is not known what became of them. Periodically she went off with a new affinity, and the man, left alone, found that the care of the three girls was too much for him. (Cases Nos. 137, 140, and 229.)

The parents of three children—a girl 14 years old, a boy of 11, and their little 3-year-old sister—proved themselves to be utterly unsuitable guardians for their children. The father was a carpenter and could earn good wages, but he worked very irregularly because of his intemperance. At the time of the breaking up of the family he had been sentenced to the workhouse for carnal abuse of the oldest girl. The mother also was alcoholic. As one agency record put it, "both parents drank and carried on." The home was described as squalid; the dwelling, an unpainted, two-story frame house, was located in an unfavorable neighborhood, near railroad tracks and saloons, exposed to odors from open sewage and backyard privies. The children were almost uncared for. "How could they be up to average?" said the school-teacher of the two older children, "they were starved all the time." While they had never been in any serious trouble, it was said that they were always quarreling, always "picking on" other children, and on one occasion they had been warned by public officials because the boy had hit a little girl, and his sisters had been offending the neighbors by "swearing and using vile language." At the time of their father's sentence each of the children was placed in an institution. There is every evidence that the disposition made of them was of a makeshift variety, the agency handling them having inadequate facilities for suitable treatment. The oldest girl was committed to the industrial school on the ground of incorrigibility. The boy was sent to the boys' industrial school on the same charge, although the agency had on its record the statement that he was not a "very bad boy." The younger girl, 3 years old, was placed in one of the homes for dependent children. (Cases Nos. 183, 184, 185.)

A little girl of 4 years was admitted "as a boarder" to one of the homes for dependent children on the application of her mother, who had secured a position at service where it was impossible to have the child with her. The baby had been born out of wedlock. Of the father the mother stated that he drank and gambled. He wished to marry her, but she felt that the union could only bring her "more children and a lot of trouble," and she would not consent. She continued to live with her parents and her married sister; but the family comprised altogether nine persons living in a small rented house consisting of five rooms; conditions were so crowded that the mother felt it advisable to accept an offer of work with living, even though it involved separation from her child. (Case No. 317.)

*Colored children.*—Three small colored girls were taken from their mother on the ground of neglect and were placed in an institution. The father of the oldest child was a white boy who had visited the family in which the mother, a

colored woman, was a servant. In order to secure a home and protection, the mother married a colored man, by whom she gave birth to the two other children of the study. The family lived in a two-room house located in an alley in a very poor neighborhood. The man soon proved to be a disreputable character, a drunkard, not contributing to the family, and brutal to the mother. The mother was obliged to work out at domestic service, leaving the children in the care of a woman who lived in a near-by cellar. A man who lodged with the family carnally abused the oldest girl, only 6 years of age, and was sentenced to three years hard labor at the workhouse. Shortly before the removal of the children from their home the father was sentenced to the workhouse for neglect and nonsupport. (Cases Nos. 250, 251, 252.)

Two boys, aged 9 and 14 years, respectively, were removed from their home by an agency on the ground of delinquency and were committed to the boys' industrial school. An older brother was already an inmate of that institution. The family seems to have been at some disadvantage because of the fact that they were the only colored people in the community. They had lived in one house for 16 years, the father working out as a farm laborer and the mother helping white families as a servant. The white people complained that the home conditions were bad and that the parents taught the children to steal. The colored family complained that they were not fairly treated. A mental specialist who had chanced to observe the mother stated that he regarded her as an imbecile. It was also reported that she drank. As an infant she had been abandoned by her parents and had been brought up in an institution. Her home, when visited, was found in a dirty condition. Apart from the obvious inefficiency of the woman, the fact that both parents were away at work meant a lack of parental control over the children. The charges against the two boys of the study were "larceny and assault and battery." They had had a fight with a small boy and had gone off with his bicycle and express wagon. (Cases Nos. 463, 465.)

A 16-year-old girl was removed from the home of her mother and placed in a disciplinary institution outside the State because of her immoral relations with a white man. The family from which she came had few, if any, uplifting elements. The parents had separated. The girl's father, so the mother stated, drank and fought, and she wanted nothing more to do with him. At the time of the study the mother, this 16-year-old girl, and two elder brothers lived in one small room, for which they paid 75 cents a week. One of the brothers was a laborer about the freight wharves and the other did occasional odd jobs at a liquor store. The mother had worked out as laundress, but had had to apply to a charitable society for relief. (Case No. 470.)

#### Characteristics of child's own brothers and sisters.

In analyzing the histories of the child's own fraternity the half brothers and sisters were included so far as information had been secured about them.

Records of the physical and mental conditions of the fraternity were inadequate. In 84 instances physical defect was reported, 7 of them being cases where the children had tuberculosis; 61 were listed as being in "poor" physical condition. Records of the mental condition of the brothers and sisters were found for 6 instances of diagnosed mental defect and 13 instances of undiagnosed but very obvious low mentality. Here again the records were extremely inadequate.

Social histories, however, were more complete. Frequently two or more children of the same family were included in the investigation, 135 of the children having brothers and sisters with institutional records. "Correctional institutions" for this group referred to juvenile reformatories. "Other delinquency" referred to instances where children had juvenile court records. The eight cases which showed a fraternity with almshouse record happened to be instances of destitute families, where parents as well as children were sent to the institution. "Other dependency" usually implied placed-out children.

The unfavorable characteristics of the fraternity, enumerated without regard to the combinations in which the characteristics occurred, are shown in Table XV.

TABLE XV.—*Characteristics of fraternity.*

Characteristics of fraternity.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Physical condition poor:			
Tuberculosis.....	7	5	2
Venereal disease.....	2	2	.....
Crippled.....	9	9	.....
Defective vision.....	5	5	.....
Other poor physical condition.....	61	53	8
Mentality not normal:			
Imbecile.....	1	.....	1
Feeble-minded.....	3	3	.....
Border line.....	2	2	.....
Obviously defective.....	13	12	1
Social characteristics poor:			
Correctional institution record.....	26	23	3
Immorality.....	15	15	.....
Deserting.....	1	1	.....
Alcoholism.....	1	1	.....
Other delinquency.....	30	25	5
Almshouse record.....	8	4	4
Other institution record.....	135	121	14
Other dependency.....	16	15	1
Other poor social characteristics.....	10	7	3

Incomplete information regarding the households from which agencies felt it necessary to remove children would appear to reflect on the thoroughness with which agencies had made their investigations or had kept their records. Preventive and constructive social work with families for the purpose of holding the group together is, to be sure, comparatively new. To infer from the facts herein reported that agencies were not doing constructive work with families would be unfair, inasmuch as no attempt has been made in this report to account for those cases where children were cared for in their homes through assistance by agencies. Nevertheless, it does seem perfectly just to say that if conditions were serious enough to appear to the agency to warrant the removal of the child, such conditions should have been minutely and definitely recorded.



## OTHER CHILDREN TAKEN UNDER CARE.

Besides the 389 children who were removed from the care of their parents during the period of the study, 124 children were taken under care by agencies and institutions under other circumstances. Of these, 96 were living in private homes under guardianship; 3 were living at service; 5 were living independently in rooming or boarding houses; 14 were transferred from institutions; and 6 were homeless children.

### CHILDREN REMOVED FROM FAMILY HOMES OTHER THAN PARENTAL.

#### Types of homes.

Of the 96 children who, previous to the time they were taken under care by agencies, had been living in private homes under guardianship other than that of their own parents, 64 came from homes where the guardians were related to them either by blood or by marriage. The remaining 32 children were from homes in which the guardian stood to them in a purely foster relationship. In only 12 instances was the residence of the child in this home due to an arrangement made by an agency.

The length of time that these 96 children had lived in the homes from which they were removed varied from a very short interval to one which had extended over almost the entire life of the child. One little girl 8 years of age had been under the protection of a family but 10 days when they petitioned an agency to take her under care. The child's parents had been a long time separated and both bore poor reputations. The little girl had been living with her uncle, who told her one day that he was tired of her. Of her own accord she left her uncle and went to another family and asked to be taken in. This family befriended her for a few days; they then reported the child to an agency as "homeless," asking for her removal. The agency placed her in an institution.

One little white girl had been in a foster home since she was 17 months old; but after the death of her foster mother, it became necessary to place her in an institution. The child's mother was a young unmarried girl whom, with her baby, the foster parents had taken from a home for destitute girls; the baby's father was the mother's uncle, with whom she had at one time made her home. The mother was too frail for housework, and to make possible her return to her own parents, who refused to receive a grandchild born out of wedlock, the persons who had taken her into their home adopted the child.



The foster mother was fond of the child, but was in such poor mental and physical condition that she was unable to care for a child properly; she became insane, and was run over by a train and fatally injured. The foster father, a man not more than 30 years of age, then came to Wilmington, bringing the little girl with him, and found a room in a boarding house, the landlady of which was reported to be immoral. For a while the man attempted to keep the child with him, but the landlady was not able to control her and finally insisted upon her removal. Two months later the foster father married the landlady's daughter and took the child from the institution into their home. (Case No. 409.)

Of the group of 96 children removed from other than parental homes, 55 were from so-called normal homes—that is, homes over which a man and his wife presided. Among the children removed from their parental homes only 152 out of 389 were from so-called normal homes.

The 41 remaining instances included 7 in which the only guardian present in the household group was a man; in 2 cases he was a widower; in 2, he was separated from his wife; in 3, he was a single man, being in every instance the older brother of the child of the study. In 21 instances the only guardian in the home was a woman, in 10 instances being a widow, and in 11 separated from her husband. For the other 13 cases the conditions were not reported.

#### Economic and other conditions.

Generally speaking, the economic conditions of the households from which this group of 96 children were removed were better than the conditions existing in the parental homes from which children were removed. A relatively larger number were from homes where the economic head of the household was the man of the family.

Likewise, a larger percentage were from households where the incomes were graded as adequate. In the group of children removed from their parental homes 48 per cent of those for whom conditions were reported were graded as coming from families with incomes considered as adequate for a decent standard of living. In the group of children removed from other homes, 57, or 71 per cent, of those for whom conditions were reported were so graded.

The general conditions in these homes were, on the whole, better than the conditions found in the parental homes from which children were removed.

Conditions that necessitated the removal of this group of children can best be illustrated by cases:

One colored boy, whose parents were both dead, was given over to agency care when his foster mother went to a hospital to be operated upon for cancer. He had been born out of wedlock of a woman who lived and worked on a farm. When he was about 1 year old his mother went to the city, securing work by the day and boarding with a colored woman—who was willing to care for the baby while she was away. This arrangement proved satisfactory for a few

months; then the mother was taken ill with "bronchial asthma," was carried to the county hospital, and died. The boarding-house keeper continued to care for the child until she herself was obliged to go to a hospital. He was then placed in an orphanage. (Case No. 391.)

The half brother of an orphaned colored boy had assumed the care of him. This half brother, though well regarded in other respects, had punished the boy severely for wrongdoing and had been arrested and fined for mistreatment of the child. (Case No. 477.)

A 9-year-old white girl lived with her maternal grandmother. Her father had deserted his family, and her mother, indifferent to the interests of her children, had left the little girl with the grandparents, while she herself "lived around with relatives." The grandmother tried to help the girl, but complained of being "sickly" and unequal to the task. (Case No. 258.)

The conditions in the foster home of an 11-year-old white boy were discovered by a child-placing agency which had occasion to inspect the home with a view to using it for placing children under their charge. The man of the household was described as a religious fanatic, shiftless, without ability to discipline or manage, but possessing a sentimental interest in friendless children. The wife was crippled, and her condition handicapped her in the management of her household; but she had previously been a school-teacher and was superior to the man in intelligence. At the time of the study this couple were sheltering seven children. Although one child was known to be stealing, they were not attempting to correct him. The child of the study had been born out of wedlock and had been placed at 2 years of age in this home by his mother when the boy's father deserted her. His career had been under observation for a considerable period by the agency before it could secure legal control of him and remove him to a more suitable home. (Case No. 513.)

One white girl 16 years of age was removed by court action from the care of her stepmother. Of the child's father it was reported that he was utterly worthless and spent most of his time in the workhouse. The records declared him to be a "liar, a thief, a drunkard, and cruel to his wives." The stepmother, from whose charge it seemed advisable to remove the child, was regarded as a "questionable" character, suspected of immorality. She was acting as housekeeper for a man whom she hoped to marry as soon as she could secure a divorce from her husband. At the time the girl was taken under agency care she had run away from other relatives, who, she claimed, mistreated her, and had thrown herself upon the mercy of the stepmother. When the case was reported to the juvenile court and an investigation made, the stepmother's home was declared unfit, and the girl was adjudged a dependent child and removed to another family. (Case No. 209.)

On the appeal of her mother, a girl of 16 years was removed to the industrial school from the home of a boy cousin, who had enticed her away from her rural home because he wished her near him in the city. The conditions in the girl's own home were described as fairly good, though the distance of the farm from any village resulted in a lack of opportunity for good educational training and for recreation. The girl was one of 17 children, having at least 7 older brothers and sisters. At the time of the study only three children, all younger than herself, were left at home with the girl's parents. The family income was adequate. The father had at one time been addicted to alcohol, but had given up this habit about four years before the time of the girl's running away. In spite of the fact that the girl's mother resented her leaving and tried to induce her to return home, the uncle and aunt permitted her to remain with their son. (Case No. 399.)

## CHILDREN LIVING AT SERVICE OR INDEPENDENTLY.

Even so small a group as three can serve to suggest an important problem in child welfare, namely, the safeguarding of young girls living away from home at domestic service. All three of the children included in this study, who were removed from the households of employers, illustrate the dangers that may befall young girls who are away from their natural guardians. They were two white girls and one colored.

One of the white girls was 14 years of age. She was one of a family of six children and had been placed by her mother in a private family consisting of a man and his invalid wife. Within two months the mother became suspicious that the girl was having improper relations with her employer, reported the case to a child-caring agency, and, through its interest, secured the commitment of the girl to the industrial school. (Case No. 159.)

The other white girl was of Italian parentage and had been under foster care since she was 6 years of age. Her own parents, during her babyhood, kept a boarding house in New York City; but the father drank to excess, the parents quarreled, and they decided to separate. They divided the children and their belongings; the mother went with one of the Italian boarders, and the father, with two children, came to Delaware. The little girl of the study was only 6 years old when she had to help keep house for her father. It was while she was out of doors washing clothes at a little stream that a kind-hearted American woman watched her and began to take an interest in her. When the father deserted the children soon afterward this woman took the little girl to live with her. The other child was placed in an institution. Although the foster mother seems to have taken a genuine interest in the girl, the home conditions were not all favorable. When she was 13 years old the foster father died and the family had a financial struggle. The child's teacher considered the home conditions bad, and reported that the child was "bright," but was irregular in her attendance. The girl was described as "very fine looking," large, and overdeveloped for her age. When about 17 years old the girl left her foster home and began work as a domestic servant. At first she brought her wages home to her foster mother, but very shortly she showed dishonest tendencies and also began staying out late at night with men. She was charged with stealing both money and clothing from her employer, and also admitted that she had been having improper relations with men. She was committed to the industrial school for girls. (Case No. 398.)

The third case was that of a 16-year-old colored girl, who at 13 years of age began work as a child's nurse, and from that time had many different positions in domestic service. At the time of her commitment to an institution she was taken from a disorderly house where she was serving drinks to men and women. (Case No. 100.)

Five children were living independently in rooming or boarding houses at the time when they were taken bodily under care by agencies. They included a white girl 17 years old, two colored boys 15 and 16 years of age, respectively, and two colored girls, aged, respectively, 14 and 16 years. Three of these children had no

parental home. The other two had left their homes and were found by agencies in houses of a questionable character.

The one white child of this group was a girl from Sussex County. Enticed to Wilmington by promise of work, she had left her foster home in the country and had taken a position as a servant in a boarding house. When a young child she had suffered from one or two attacks which had been diagnosed by a local doctor as epilepsy. Moreover, her high-strung and nervous temperament, combined with natural indolence and weak will, proved to be unequal to the temptations of her new environment. She left her first place within a few days, considering it "too hard." She then answered an advertisement and took a position with a private family. From this house she was discharged summarily because she failed to return at the appointed time from a pleasure trip. Her third place of employment was a boarding house, where she yielded to the immoral advances of men boarders and soon after went to live with one of the men. In the meantime she had stolen articles of clothing from her employers, and, on charges of larceny and incorrigibility she was committed to the girls' industrial school. (Case No. 139.)

Both of the colored boys of this group had become self-supporting but lacked the moral or mental caliber to resist the inclination to steal. One was a foundling who had lived all his life, except a few months, in institutions. The other was the child of an insane woman; he was subsequently diagnosed as feeble-minded. The first of the two boys, though but 15 years old, was strong and large. The woman from whom he rented a room which he shared with three other colored boys, said she thought of them all as "men" and paid no attention to them. The charge on which this boy was apprehended was the theft of six handkerchiefs, and by action of the juvenile court he was committed to the care of a child-placing agency to be placed with a private family on a farm. The second boy, besides being feeble-minded, was the victim of bad home conditions. After his mother became mentally unbalanced an unscrupulous colored woman bargained with her for legal control of the boy, agreeing to pay the mother \$3.50 a week. The home of this self-appointed guardian consisted of one room, which she shared with two men and the boy. Her record for a period of three years showed 14 court charges for such delinquencies as disorderly conduct, larceny, selling intoxicating liquors without a license, keeping a house of assignation, and breach of peace. On several of these charges she was committed for short terms to the workhouse, and the boy was obliged to shift for himself. During this time he was placed on probation, having been brought before the juvenile court for stealing a watch. Since it seemed inadvisable for him to remain at the boarding house where he had taken lodging, the decision of the court at the next hearing of his case was to commit him to the industrial school. (Cases Nos. 14, 422.)

Both the colored girls were held in cases involving immoral conduct and were committed by the court to an agency which placed them in an institution outside the State. Both had parents living but had left their homes, one of the girls having run away from her home in an adjoining State. One girl was caught in a raid of a disorderly house, the other was held in a case against a man who had had immoral relations with her. (Cases Nos. 46, 212.)

The problems involved in the cases of these five children were far more complicated than for those in any of the preceding groups, and suggest that constructive treatment should have been undertaken a long time previous to the period of the study.



## CHILDREN TRANSFERRED FROM INSTITUTIONS.

Fourteen children had been transferred from one institution to another. Six were children who had reached the age limit of the institution which had been caring for them. Six had been under hospital care. Two, who had previously been in institutions for dependent children, were committed to the industrial schools because of delinquencies.

Of the six who had reached the age limit of the institution in which they were being cared for, three were full orphans and the other three were neglected children whose parents were considered unsuitable guardians. These six were all white boys.

Of the children who had previously been under physical care two were infants born in hospitals and transferred as soon as possible to an institution for babies; in both instances the mother's occupation interfered with her keeping the child. Another baby had been born of an Italian woman dying of tuberculosis at a sanitarium. The mother did not survive the birth of the child, and as soon as possible this baby was transferred to an institution which cared for infants. Two other children, one a white boy aged 4 and the other a colored girl aged 13, had been under treatment at the county hospital. Both had had to be removed prior to the period of the study from homes which were very unfavorable, but the physical condition of the children was such that the only available place for them was the almshouse, where they could have the advantage of care at the county hospital located under the same roof. At the time of the study they had sufficiently improved to be placed in other institutions. The sixth of this group was an especially pathetic case of a little boy whose mother was dead and whose father, a laborer for a coal company, had contracted tuberculosis. Father and child together had been admitted to a hospital, the father with pneumonia and the little boy with a sore ear. When it became evident that the father must go to a sanitarium the child was sent to an orphanage.

The two remaining children, one a boy, the other a girl, were both transferred to the industrial schools from institutions caring for young dependent children. The boy had run away from the "home" of which he had previously been an inmate. The girl had been the victim of an unfortunate placement on the part of the institution to which she was first admitted. When she was 14 years of age, it was discovered that she had been carnally abused by her foster brother, and she was recalled to the institution. Here she remained for only a few days while the necessary arrangements were being made for her commitment to the industrial school.



## HOMELESS CHILDREN.

The group of six homeless children included three foundlings, who were picked up on doorsteps and taken at once under the care of a home for infants. No clue was ever secured as to their parentage. They were all white children and were thought to be not over 2 weeks old when found.

Two of the other homeless children were older boys, one white and one colored, who had been picked up as tramps and taken to the almshouse. Of these also it was impossible to secure a previous history.

The sixth child was a runaway boy who had been following a traveling circus. Ordinarily a runaway boy who came into the care of the agencies was returned directly to the community from which he came. The case of this 15-year-old colored boy, however, was not ordinary. He was found hiding in a freight car, carrying concealed weapons. From the general gossip of the workmen associated with him about the freight cars, it was gathered that he was under suspicion as having been implicated in a murder. The local authorities thought that it was not safe to have such a boy at large. Moreover, he could not be trusted to return to the community where his father was supposed to be living. He was, accordingly, committed to the boys' industrial school.

## PERSONAL HISTORIES OF THE CHILDREN.

An analysis of conditions which brought the children under the protection of agencies or institutions should include not only a discussion of the external conditions surrounding the children at the time they were taken by agencies but also a consideration of the children's own personalities.

Certain details regarding the children who were selected as subjects for this study, such as sex, color, legitimacy, and nativity, have already been discussed. In addition to these points, data were obtained in regard to the physical and mental condition of the children, and also in regard to their personal conduct, school attendance, and employment histories.

### PHYSICAL CONDITION.

Only three of the Delaware agencies included in the study required a physical examination of children prior to placing them in family homes or admitting them to institutions. The facts regarding the physical condition of the children were, therefore, thoroughly adequate for some and entirely lacking for others. Taking into consideration the history of each child for the entire two-year period of the study, some unfavorable physical characteristic was recorded for 85 children; the other 428 were in good physical condition, so far as known. The conditions are given in Table XVI without regard to the few instances in which they occurred in combination, showing the number of children affected by a given condition.

TABLE XVI.—*Physical condition of children.*

Physical condition.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Physical condition good, so far as known.....	428	332	96
Tuberculosis.....	2	1	1
Veneral disease.....	5	5	.....
Epileptic seizures.....	3	2	1
Crippled.....	4	3	1
Defective vision.....	11	10	1
Defective hearing.....	6	6	.....
Defective speech.....	2	1	1
Other poor physical condition.....	61	52	9

Under the heading "other poor physical condition" were included children who were reported as "poorly developed," "undernourished," or generally run down because of neglect.

## MENTALITY.

Of 107 children diagnosed for mentality, only 31 were examined and tested prior to the time the agency removed them from their surroundings. Of the remaining 406 children, 21 were reported as obviously defective. Table XVII shows the mentality as reported for all cases.

TABLE XVII.—*Mentality of children.*

Mentality.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	513	403	110
Diagnosed:			
Normal.....	70	51	19
Below normal.....	3	3	.....
Retarded.....	2	2	.....
Border line.....	7	5	2
Feeble-minded.....	4	2	2
Imbecile.....	21	10	11
Undiagnosed:			
Normal so far as known.....	384	312	72
Obviously defective.....	21	17	4
Insane <sup>1</sup> .....	1	1	.....

<sup>1</sup> Diagnosed subsequent to period of study.

With the exception of cases diagnosed by surgeons of the United States Public Health Service during the course of investigations of the prevalence of mental defect, there were during the period of this study no mental examinations made in Delaware outside New Castle County. Attention was being given to certain classes of children, especially in Wilmington, and notable work had been done for several months by the juvenile court in having mental tests applied to children coming before the court, but this work had been discontinued.<sup>7</sup> Also, during the month of August, 1916, a special examination was made of the inmates of the Ferris Industrial School for Boys by specialists from the University of Pennsylvania.

Even the more progressive agencies, however, found it impossible to secure suitable care for feeble-minded children.

A colored boy in his sixteenth year was brought to Wilmington from a Southern State by his older brother, who hoped to get employment for the boy and to take care of him. The lad promptly exhibited his incompetency. After working for one week at an unskilled occupation, he gave it up and was reported to the juvenile court for vagrancy. He was examined and diagnosed a middle-grade imbecile. Lacking other possible solutions of his problem, the juvenile court two months later adjudged him a dependent child and committed him to the boys' industrial school, the older brother being required to pay something toward his maintenance. (Case No. 74.)

Another feeble-minded child committed to the industrial school because no institution for mental defectives was available was a 13-year-old white boy.

<sup>7</sup> A psychological clinic is now (1921) held in connection with the Wilmington Juvenile Court. This clinic also gives free examinations to children for social agencies of the city.

who had been a constant source of irritation to his family and to his teachers. He was one of 10 children, 3 of whom had died in infancy. One sister, two years younger than the boy, had been examined mentally and graded as "between dullard and suspected psychopathic." Another sister was reported as "very slow" and of a "nervous temperament." The father was said to have had dropsy for 15 years before he died. Four of the older children worked; the members of the family were thrifty, with sufficient income for needs and for some comforts. They owned their home, which was badly located on the edge of the city—near dumps, swamps, and open sewage. The neighborhood was notorious as a rendezvous for mischievous boys. The mother of this family was a very strict disciplinarian, frequently administering the rod to her children; she manifestly failed to understand the needs of the boy of the study. He was physically strong and active, with fairly good features; but by temperament he was brutal, dirty, and troublesome. He delighted in killing birds and illtreating animals, especially when he had an opportunity to "show off" before other children. His school-teacher reported that he was a demoralizing influence and seemed to grow increasingly irresponsible in his conduct. At recess he attacked smaller boys, one day injuring a child by hitting him with a sharp rock. This boy—incomprehensible to his family, a bad influence in his neighborhood, a misfit in school—was brought to the attention of the probation officers for malicious mischief, for disorderly conduct, for truancy, for wandering the streets at night, and for larceny before it was decided that he must be removed from his home and placed where he would not have his freedom. (Case No. 415.)

One 8-year-old white boy, who was subsequently found to be feeble-minded, was brought into the juvenile court on the charge of "assault with intent to commit murder." The history of the child's family indicates the handicaps with which he was confronted.

The boy's father had been born in Germany, had attended school there, and had served a year in the army. He contracted a severe stomach trouble from exposure, was operated on, and secured a permanent release from the army. He came to America in 1889 and boarded with a woman whose daughter he later married. He was considered an undesirable character, was accused of creating disturbances in his neighborhood, and of hoarding stolen property in his dwelling. Relatives of the family accused him of being intemperate and of violent disposition, and were of the opinion that he was not mentally normal. An agency which was for a long time interested in the family investigated his employment and found that he was a good worker, capable of earning high wages, but constantly changing jobs because of his own dissatisfaction and restlessness. One company refused to have anything more to do with him, because they found that he was drinking and stirring up the other men; they classed him as an agitator. At one time he was held for threatening to kill a man; at another he was a victim of shooting. Shortly after his child was taken under care he was committed to the workhouse.

The boy's mother was born in Switzerland of German parents. Although she had lived in the United States 33 years, she spoke and understood little English. She was deaf and was described as "stolid and dull"; she had had but two years of schooling, which ended when she was 9 years old. After she was married her peculiarities grew more marked. From the time her first child was born it was said that she was "somewhat out of her head." Relatives blamed the father for the woman's mental condition and said that it was due to his cruelty that six of the children had died.

The one surviving child of this couple, the little boy who is the subject of this study, was described as in "rags and tatters," shockheaded, and dirty.

From a fresh-air camp where he was taken during the summer by a charitable society, came the report that the child was lazy and babyish, a bully, and that his behavior with the girls was not of the best. Until he was taken in hand by an agency he had not gone to school; at 8 years of age he entered the lowest grade and did not succeed very well, though for the few weeks remaining in this term his attendance was regular. It was at the beginning of the next school term that he got into the difficulty which resulted in his removal from his home. His father had told him and his boy companion, a child 9 years old, not to let anyone come into the yard and to shoot anyone who tried to steal tomatoes from the garden. A man came in and began to pick the tomatoes; the boys told him not to do it, but he replied by throwing tomatoes at them. The youngsters then rushed into the house and upstairs, one getting a revolver and the other a shotgun. The gun went off and fell out of the second-story window, the boy who was holding it falling out with it. The other boy then made a grab for his friend's heels and fell out after him. The result of all this confusion was that both boys were taken into custody and shortly afterwards were placed in an institution for dependent children. There, the little boy of the study showed marked improvement in behavior, but he was kept under observation and was found to be feeble-minded and in need of special institutional care. (Case No. 518.)

Another feeble-minded child who constituted an especially difficult problem was a colored boy, born out of wedlock of an obviously defective woman who had been the prey of numerous men. The boy's home was one in which immorality was taken as a matter of course. The mother also had been born out of wedlock. The maternal uncles and aunts of the boy were "all very dull," as were also some of their children. A brother of the child of the study had been diagnosed feeble-minded. The child included in the study had attended school for 10 years and had learned nothing. Physically, he was healthy and strong with a ravenous appetite. By temperament he was very destructive and cruel to children, beating them and cutting them. On one occasion he was arrested for throwing stones. He finally became so abusive at home that the maternal grandmother feared he would do her violence, and at length, by taking oath that he was three years younger than he really was, she brought his age down to 16 years, which made possible his commitment to the boys' industrial school. (Case No. 267.)

Among the children classed as obviously defective was a 13-year-old Italian boy, who had been four years in the United States, and had become such a problem to his neighborhood that he was eventually removed by one of the child-caring agencies and placed on a farm. Subsequent reports of him were at first unfavorable, but after a second placement he seemed to improve. From the time he arrived in this country he had shown peculiarities which made him a trial to the teachers of the public schools. They could not trust him to play with the other children at recess, and also found him troublesome and sullen in the schoolroom. Sometimes he was silly; at other times he was vicious and even dangerous. He had on one occasion stayed away from home all night, and he was altogether beyond the control of his parents. This boy, because of his obviously low mentality, was among those reported to the United States Children's Bureau at the time of its inquiry into the prevalence of feeble-mindedness in New Castle County. Two years later, however, when the child's name appeared among those who had been removed from their own homes, his record showed that he had had no sort of mental examination or treatment. Fortunately, he was placed with a guardian who dealt with him sympathetically and intelligently. (Case No. 11.)



The history of one 17-year-old girl culminated with her admission to the State hospital for the insane. The precipitating cause of her mental difficulty seems to have been a year spent in the home of her own father, a miserly man, who refused to buy clothes for her, took away the little money which she had earned, and sometimes kept her shut out of the house while he was away late at night. The girl's mother had died when she was but 2 years old, and her life until she was 12 had been spent largely in institutions; but after she was 12 years of age she lived with different private families, earning something for her housework. For a year before she went to live with her father she stayed with a relative, who reported that at that time the girl appeared perfectly normal. Her father, however, after she had come to live with him, made complaint to the juvenile court that she was immoral, vagrant, and thievish. The court committed her to the girls' industrial school, where she had been only a short time when her mind showed marked aberration. The relative who had been successful in her guardianship of the girl was called upon to take her again, but was entirely unable to control her. Whether more careful social treatment could have averted the ultimate breakdown is problematical, for a teacher recorded of her: "No concentration; can not remember from day to day." (Case No. 318.)

## PERSONAL CONDUCT.

The extent of delinquency among the children prior to their removal by agencies is brought out in Table XVIII. Only 250—less than half—could be classed as good, so far as known, and among these were included all the 161 children under 7 years of age, except a 5-year-old white girl reported as ungovernable and a colored girl of the same age who had been guilty of pilfering. A fairer estimate, therefore, would be based on the 352 children 7 years of age or over, of whom 261, or 74 per cent, had some record of delinquency.

Court records of delinquency embraced three types of offenses: Those against the person, those against property, those against public order. Offenses against the person included assault and battery, violating the age of consent law, assault with intent to commit murder. Offenses against property included larceny, breaking and entering, malicious mischief, breaking windows, driving off automobile without consent of owner, forgery, arson. Offenses against public order included all other charges, such as incorrigibility, causing false alarm of fire, running away, truancy, and others.

TABLE XVIII.—*Conduct of children prior to removal.*

Conduct of children prior to removal.	Children of specified ages.						
	Total.	Under 7 years.			7 years or over.		
		Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	513	161	145	16	352	258	94
Good, so far as known.....	250	159	144	15	91	80	11
Court record for delinquency.....	216				216	158	58
Informal records of delinquency.....	47	2	1	1	45	20	25

All cases of delinquency in which there were hearings before the juvenile court, the Municipal Court of Wilmington, the county courts, or formal hearings before local magistrates or justices of the peace were included under "offenses involving legal action." As stated previously, the jurisdiction of the juvenile court extended over the city of Wilmington only. Cases of delinquent children in other parts of the State were heard by the courts of general sessions or by local magistrates.

Table XIX shows the number of times the various types of delinquencies were reported, without regard to the combinations in which they occurred.

TABLE XIX.—*Delinquencies of children.*

Type of delinquency.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Formal records of offenses involving (legal action)—			
Against the person.....	14	8	6
Against property.....	108	83	25
Against public order.....	155	118	37
Charge not clearly specified.....	1		1
Informal records, child reported—			
Alcoholic.....	2	1	1
Immoral.....	14	7	7
Dishonest.....	28	14	14
Uncontrollable.....	25	15	10
Truant.....	34	25	9
Runaway.....	24	11	13
Otherwise delinquent.....	8	6	2

"Incorrigibility," a charge used extensively by the juvenile court, produced the large showing of offenses against public order. "Larceny" was the most frequent charge in cases of offense against property. No complete picture of the social histories of the children can be made by any enumeration of delinquencies. The combinations in which the delinquencies were reported and the intermixture of bad environmental influences with inferior personalities can only be suggested by specific instances.

The second son of a poor Polish family was often kept at home from school to care for the younger children, of whom there were six, while his mother went out to work. Through the irregular habits which he undoubtedly acquired in this way, he became more and more of a problem. The neighborhood in which he lived was the rendezvous of rough gangs of boys. His older brother was taken before the juvenile court twice for larceny and on another occasion for breaking and entering. The parents seemed unable to comprehend the efforts of the probation officers in behalf of their boys, for they refused to cooperate and tried to shield the boys in their wrongdoing. During a year and a half of probation the boy of the study was reported at various times as trespassing, as stealing copper wire, as not attending school; then, on the charge of larceny, he was committed to the industrial school. He soon escaped, however, and was never located. (Case No. 376.)

A 10-year-old white boy, who came to the attention of the juvenile court twice for larceny and once for malicious mischief within 15 months, was removed from his home and placed in a neighboring State with a relative, who returned

excellent reports of his behavior. The home from which he was removed included a father who had been ill for several months, a mother who was nervous and excitable, a brother who had a record of several minor delinquencies, and two other brothers—an environment which manifestly had reacted unfavorably on the boy. (Case No. 483.)

A 15-year-old colored boy, who was brought before the juvenile court for assault and battery and again for larceny, and was placed on probation on both occasions, appeared to have a mania for running away. During the time covered by this history he was reported as frequently staying out late at night, sometimes sleeping away from home. The father complained that the boy stole, was disobedient, and had a habit of disappearing from home, doing so on one occasion when the father was to bring the boy to court. The boy was eventually committed to the industrial school, where he promptly lived up to his previous record and escaped. (Case No. 213.)

The home of the small son of Italian parents was located in a poor neighborhood. The boy first came before the juvenile court when 7 years old for throwing stones at passenger trains. He was so young that his offense was not regarded very seriously, and he was dismissed without probation. Two years later he was again before the court for breaking and entering. This time he was put on probation. During the next two years he returned to the court three times on different charges and finally was committed to the boys' industrial school. (Case No. 414.)

At 15 years of age, a colored boy was placed with a private family in a rural district. His own home was in an alley in the poorest part of the city. His father was in constant trouble, having had to appear before the municipal judge six times within three years. His mother went out working by the day. Both parents drank. Although the home conditions were poor, the boy seemed mischievous rather than malicious. He was brought twice to the attention of the probation officers, first for annoying other children and handling them violently. The specific reason given for his removal was a charge of carrying concealed weapons; he had run away with his father's revolver. (Case No. 238.)

#### SCHOOL HISTORY.

Table XX indicates the school history of the children. Only four of those under 7 years of age, or below the age for compulsory school attendance, were in school at the time of their removal. In the group of those 14 years of age and over, or above compulsory school age, 37, or 30 per cent, were still attending school. In all, 199 were reported as in school at the time they were taken under care by agencies, and in addition, 69 other children were known to have attended school. The records of 79 children were unknown. The remaining 166 children, of whom 157 were under 7 years of age, had never attended.

Teachers commented almost unanimously upon the fact that the attendance records of the children included in the study had been among the poorest in their classes. In order to classify the cases by regularity of attendance, the standard chosen arbitrarily as the dividing line between regularity and irregularity was 83 per cent of the school term; that is, a child reported as absent for one-sixth or

more of the total number of school days for the year was classed as irregular. This seemed a sufficiently conservative grading. The regularity of attendance of the 199 children still in school at the time of removal was as follows: Sixty-one children, 53 white and 8 colored, were attending regularly; 93 children, 68 white and 25 colored, were attending irregularly; the attendance for 36 white and 9 colored was not reported. The amount of irregular attendance in the group for whom conditions were reported was serious.

TABLE XX.—*School histories of children prior to removal.*

Age when taken under agency care.	Total.	Children in school at time of removal.				Children not in school at time of removal.				Children not reported as to school attendance at time of removal.
		Total.	Attending regularly.	Attending irregularly.	Regularity not reported.	Total.	Attended previously.	Never attended.	Previous attendance not reported.	
Total.....	513	199	61	93	45	250	69	166	15	64
White.....	403	157	53	68	36	209	54	145	10	37
Under 7 years...	145	4	1	1	2	141	7	141	4	31
7-13 years.....	173	128	43	60	25	14	7	4	3	6
14 years and over	85	25	9	7	7	54	47	.....	7	.....
Negro.....	110	42	8	25	9	41	15	21	5	27
Under 7 years...	16	.....	.....	.....	.....	16	.....	16	.....	.....
7-13 years.....	54	30	5	19	6	8	2	5	1	16
14 years and over	40	12	3	6	3	17	13	.....	4	11

Regularity at school might have helped one 13-year-old girl who was committed to the girls' industrial school for immorality. During the last term before her commitment her teachers complained that she was kept at home "for the slightest reason." She was the oldest girl in a household of six children. Her mother worked and was away from home much of the time, expecting the girl to keep the house during her absence. Left to her own devices all day, she got into bad company and finally ran away with another girl, four years older than herself. They met two men, accompanied them to another town, and were arrested by the police at the railroad station. The younger girl was returned to the juvenile court in her own city, and was committed to the girls' industrial school. (Case No. 504.)

Irregularity of school attendance was in the majority of instances accompanied by other poor social history. Sometimes the child had been guilty of delinquencies which had brought him before the juvenile court.

An 11-year-old white boy, who had begun school at 7 years, had had a poor record for every term. During the nine months before he was removed from his home and committed to the industrial school, in addition to being warned by the probation officer because of truancy, he was before the juvenile court for stealing a bicycle, stealing a rifle, taking milk from doorsteps, and stealing an automobile watch. The conditions in this boy's home were very bad. The



family occupied four rooms over a stable in an alley beside a brewery. The father was very irregular at his work, and the family income was so inadequate that the household was under the observation of a charitable agency. (Case No. 253.)

Sometimes maladjustments in the homes of foreign-born parents seemed to account for the children's delinquencies and irregular attendance at school.

One 13-year-old boy of Italian parents who could speak almost no English was four times before the juvenile court during one year—for truancy, for disorderly conduct, for larceny, and again for persistent truancy. It was finally decided to try this boy in a new environment, and he was taken under the care of the court and placed on a farm. (Case No. 344.)

Lack of parental supervision was in some instances the primary cause for the child's irregularity at school.

One 11-year-old white boy, whose attendance record was exceedingly poor, though he lived in the city where schools were easily accessible, came from a home which the father had deserted. The mother, in order to keep her five children with her, went into a metal factory to work, intrusting the house-keeping to the oldest child, a 12-year-old girl who had of necessity to stay home from school to care for the younger children. The boy of the study went practically undisciplined. Eventually his mother was constrained to report him to the juvenile court, and on the charge of having stolen money from his mother and having refused to go to school he was committed to the boys' industrial school. (Case No. 270.)

Sometimes irregularity of attendance seemed to be tied up with the child's mental defect.

A 10-year-old colored boy whose father was dead was a constant source of trouble to his mother, who had to go out to work by the day. Both his mother and his teacher punished him because he would not go to school, but punishment "made no impression on him." He was brought to the attention of the probation officers because of his absence from school and was at first dealt with informally; but while under observation, he stole a pocketbook, for which delinquency he was taken before the juvenile court judge and was committed to the industrial school. After his admission to the institution he was given a mental examination and was diagnosed as a middle-grade imbecile. (Case No. 257.)

An inquiry regarding school progress showed that the few scattering individuals who reached the higher grades took more than the regular amount of time to accomplish it. Only five children were reported as having reached high school grades. These were all from the "delinquent" groups. Among the dependent and neglected children, the highest grade attained was the eighth. Only two children were reported as having progressed so far.

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY.

Of the 125 children who were 14 years of age or over, 70 were known to have been gainfully employed at some time, 55 being taken under care by agencies; 30 had not been



ployed; and for 17 the facts were not reported. (See Table XXI.) A special analysis of the 30 children who had never been gainfully employed showed that 22 were still attending school, 6 were in foster homes assisting their guardians without remuneration, 1 was physically unfit for work, and 1 girl, living in her parental home, was giving part time to the care of a friend's baby.

In addition to the 78 children 14 years of age and over who had employment histories, 22 children under 14 years of age had had some gainful employment prior to the time they were taken under care by agencies. The group includes 5 children employed on farms, 3 of them being little berry pickers under 8 years of age; 3 errand boys; 6 boys helping in mercantile or manufacturing establishments; 7 children engaged in various forms of domestic service; and 1 child of whom it was vaguely reported that he had been earning money. To what extent these children were violating the child-labor laws is difficult to say. Delaware laws did not regulate employment in agriculture or domestic service. The 4 boys who had worked for mercantile establishments, also 1 boy who did errands for a grocery store, and 1 girl who at 13 years was a waitress in a public eating house appear to have been working illegally.

TABLE XXI.—*Employment histories of children prior to removal.*

Age of child at time of removal.	Total children.	Children gainfully employed.	Children not gainfully employed.	Children not reported as to employment.
Total.....	513	100	393	20
White.....	403	68	328	7
Under 14 years.....	318	13	304	1
14 years and over.....	85	55	24	6
Negro.....	110	32	65	13
Under 14 years.....	70	9	59	2
14 years and over.....	40	23	6	11

Allowing for possible conditions among the 20 children whose work history was not reported, there were fewer absolute idlers than might be expected in a study of dependent children. Figures do not reflect the actual facts, however, as to unfavorable circumstances attending the employment of the children. Records were too broken to permit any tabulation of the regularity of employment, the length of time employed, or the character of the work. Among 78 children reported as at work at the time of their being taken under care, 21 were engaged in occupations connected with manufacturing and other mechanical industries. The next largest group comprised 21 children employed in domestic service, 2 of whom were boys, both

colored. The only colored girls for whom employment was reported were 8 who were in this group.

The actual histories of some of the children reveal the greatest irregularity of employment, a haphazard choice of occupations, and frequent changes.

A 16-year-old Italian lad, who had never fitted into the school régime, seemed to be unsuccessful, also, in his employment record. The positions which he is reported as having held were driving an ice wagon from 4 a. m. to 3 p. m. and working in a factory at night. While just beyond the age when his working hours could be regulated, the jobs which he found for himself were obviously unsuitable. From the time he was 13 until he was committed to the boys' industrial school, at 16 years and 9 months, he had been before the juvenile court on seven different charges, including larceny, assault and battery, disorderly conduct, and trespassing. Although his parents were reported as taking a "good attitude" toward the boy, his home was in one of the most wretched parts of the city, and the dwelling was described as dirty and insanitary. (Case No. 173.)

A boy who left school at 14 came to the attention of the juvenile court about a year later on a charge of larceny in which several other boys were involved. The juvenile court became interested in the boy's work record and saw to it that he was always employed. Innately lazy, he was satisfactory at no occupation. Within three months he was reported as having had 10 different positions. He was then sent out on a farm, ran away the following day, was caught, and was eventually committed to the boys' industrial school. Eight months later he escaped.

What was wrong? A physical examination showed that his nose and throat were in bad condition; his tonsils were enlarged and diseased; and his left nasal passage was obstructed. His mentality was classed as "low-grade normal." Possibly an examination and treatment when he was a much younger child would have removed the irritating conditions which seem to have resulted in his becoming a social problem. Probably vocational or technical training would have stimulated in him some interest in a settled trade. (Case No. 237.)

Another case of unsatisfactory employment, very similar to the last, was that of a boy who went to work the summer before he was 14 years old. In three months he had tried six different positions—all involving unskilled work, such as cutting grass, assisting in a bakery, and working in a coal yard. His inability to hold a job coupled with his vagrant habits led to his speedy commitment to the industrial school. His mother stated that he was always nervous and "contrary" and absent-minded. Mentally, he was diagnosed as normal. Physically, he was reported in good condition except for adenoids. (Case No. 288.)



## AGENCY TREATMENT.

### REASONS FOR REMOVAL.

The discussion of conditions surrounding the children of this study at the time they were taken under care by agencies, also the consideration of the histories of the children, have revealed social abnormalities in household groups and defects in personal character, many of which were undoubtedly fundamental causes of the children's dependency. In analyzing case histories for reasons why agencies removed the children from their previous environment it was found, however, that the immediate reason for the agency's action frequently obscured the fundamental causes of the difficulty. Nevertheless, the immediate reasons for agency care are of interest in some instances as showing the imperfect functioning of family groups and in others as pointing to the failure of agencies to alleviate the home difficulties.

The specific statements given as reasons for removing children from their environment were so varied that analysis was difficult; but in Table XXII they have been grouped under fairly comprehensive headings. In 229 cases the child himself was charged as being delinquent, defective, or homeless. In 114 instances delinquencies were charged against one or both parents or heads of household groups. In 33 cases the agency took the child under care because one or both parents or guardians were dead. The parents or guardians of 120 children were reported as being unable to continue care. For 16 children the home was declared generally unfit. For 1 no definite reason was reported.

TABLE XXII.—Reasons for removal, by types of environment.

Reasons for removal.	Children removed from specified environment.														
	Total.			Parental home.			Relatives' home.			Foster home.			Other environment.		
	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.	Total.	White.	Negro.
Total.....	513	403	110	389	313	76	64	48	15	32	23	9	28	19	9
Child delinquent.....	221	155	66	175	128	47	20	14	6	13	9	7	10	4	6
Child defective, mentally.....	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Child homeless.....	5	4	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5	4	1
One or both parents dead.....	32	32	.....	24	24	.....	3	3	.....	1	1	.....	.....	4	4
One or both parents delinquent.....	102	89	13	90	77	13	6	6	.....	3	3	.....	3	3	.....
One or both parents unable to care for child.....	98	82	16	91	76	15	1	1	.....	2	2	.....	4	3	1
One of foster parents dead.....	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
One or both foster parents delinquent.....	12	11	1	.....	.....	.....	10	9	1	2	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
One or both foster parents unable to care for child.....	22	12	10	.....	.....	.....	17	9	8	5	3	2	.....	.....	.....
Home unfit.....	16	15	1	7	7	.....	5	5	.....	2	2	.....	2	1	1
Not reported.....	1	.....	1	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

### The child's delinquency.

In the case of 221 children the immediate reason for removing the child from his environment was given as the child's delinquency. The several elements contributing toward the delinquency were obscured. For example, a 14-year-old boy committed to the boys' industrial school for delinquency, came from a family which had for many years been subjects of outdoor poor relief. The father drank, "could not keep a job," and eventually deserted. The mother was a confirmed beggar. At one time she attempted to poison herself. Two sisters and a brother had had periods of institutional care. Two children, including the boy of the study, had organic physical defects, stigmata of their degenerate heredity. Although several local agencies attempted correctional treatment, the family never rose above the lowest social level and seemed several times on the verge of disintegrating. Such an environment was undoubtedly favorable to delinquency.

The delinquency of a child could in some instances be traced to the deliberate instigation of the mother, as in the case of an 11-year-old son of foreign-born parents, who, on a second charge of larceny, was committed to the boys' industrial school. His exact offense was that he had taken from the railroad a quantity of coal valued at 50 cents. In the course of investigating his home surroundings, the probation officers discovered that his mother was teaching the boy to steal, and they felt that it was imperative to remove him from his environment. While the reason for this child's removal was delinquency, the reason for the delinquency was his environment.

Often the charge of delinquency concealed the fact that the child was defective physically or mentally.

Such was the case of a 13-year-old white boy who was adjudged delinquent on a charge of malicious mischief and was placed on a farm. His history read: At 6 years of age, "very weak, has a bad cough"; at 7 years, "frail in body"; at 9 years, "poorly nourished, stunted mentally"; at 11 years, "does not seem to possess normal mentality"; at 13 years, "not normal, unsatisfactory conduct, taken before the juvenile court and placed with a farmer." Three times he ran away from families with whom he had been placed. He was then committed to the industrial school. (Case No. 232.)

Another white boy, almost 10 years of age, examined just before his juvenile court hearing, was diagnosed as a middle-grade imbecile and was recommended for institutional treatment. As no institution for feeble-minded children was available, the decision at the hearing was commitment to the industrial school, an institution intended primarily for delinquents. The reason for removing him from his home was given as delinquency, the charge being malicious mischief on railroad property. (Case No. 147.)



## Delinquency of parent or guardian.

Children removed from their surroundings because of delinquencies of parents or guardians numbered 114. The cases were distributed as follows:

Both parents delinquent-----	25	Both foster parents delinquent---	7
Father delinquent-----	32	Foster father delinquent-----	1
Mother delinquent-----	45	Foster mother delinquent-----	4

The delinquencies included in this group were, specifically, instances of neglect, desertion, separation, immorality, cruelty, alcoholism, absence from home in penal servitude, and deliberate unwillingness to care for the children.

One of the saddest histories secured was that of a little girl whose parents were syphilitic. Her father, who as a boy had been placed by an agency in the lower part of Delaware, had married a young woman from the neighborhood of his foster home. They had 10 children; 7 were stillborn, 1 lived a few hours, a girl and a boy survived. The mother had contracted syphilis from the father and later died in a sanatorium for tuberculous patients. The father drank, gambled, and neglected his children shamefully. A maternal aunt took the children to her home; but the girl had syphilis and required so much care that the aunt neglected her and gladly relinquished her to authorities, who placed her in the county almshouse. After about six months other relatives took the child from the almshouse and finally gave her to a neighbor, in whose home she remained until she died. (Case No. 152.)

Three of a family of five white children were removed from the home of their maternal aunt, where they had been deserted by an immoral mother. At the time of their father's death the mother persuaded her sister to start a boarding house. The two women ran the house together and kept all the children for about six months, when the house was raided because of the mother's behavior. The mother then took all the children and went to other relatives, who shortly found the group too great a burden and refused to keep them. The mother next returned to the sister, with whom she had previously tried to live. Once more they undertook to run a boarding house. During this time the mother gave birth to a child out of wedlock. The mother's behavior was again such that the aunt remonstrated, and the mother again departed. Shortly after birth the baby had been relinquished to a woman of the neighborhood, but the aunt sheltered the other children for more than a year after the mother's departure. Eventually she appealed to an agency for help, and three of the children were placed in foster homes. (Cases Nos. 274, 275, 276.)

Three white children aged 7, 8, and 10 years, were taken from their parental home when their parents were sent to the workhouse, for neglect. The parents had rented two rooms in an upper story of a dwelling in a poor city neighborhood; but they had lived there only one week when the landlady reported that both the man and his wife had been intoxicated and had driven the children out of the house. The parents were prosecuted in the city court and were sentenced to the workhouse, while the children were given into the care of an agency to be placed in an institution. The parents were ordered to pay maintenance for the children. (Cases Nos. 348, 349, 350.)

**Death of parent or guardian.**

The 33 instances in which the fact that one or both parents or other guardians were dead constituted the reason for agency treatment were distributed as follows:

Both parents dead.....	4	Mother dead.....	19
Father dead.....	9	Foster mother dead.....	1

The difficulties met with by widowers in their efforts to keep their homes together and care for a family of young children are illustrated by a number of cases.

Three little girls and their small brother were admitted to an institution after their mother had committed suicide by taking poison. She was 38 years of age at the time of her death and in 13 years had given birth to eight children, three of whom had died in infancy. The oldest child was a cripple, but was capable of partial self-support. The father's wages were reported as \$2.15 per day. The school reported that the home conditions had been good, however, showing that the mother must have worked hard to keep up the home. After her death two of the father's sisters attempted to help him keep house, but soon found that they could not continue. The father was unable to afford a good housekeeper and finally solved his problem by placing the four younger children in an institution, keeping only the crippled boy at home. (Cases Nos. 95, 96, 97, 98.)

One little white boy was only 2½ months old when the mother died of pulmonary tuberculosis. Within 22 months she had given birth to three children and had been entirely unequal to the care of them. At the time of her death the maternal grandmother undertook the care of the babies; but the father was not satisfied with this arrangement and secured the admission of the youngest to an institution. The child was suffering from malnutrition when admitted and died four months later. (Cases No. 527.)

**Inability of parents or guardians to care for the children.**

The 120 cases of inability on the part of the parents or guardians to care for the children included the following groups:

Parents unable.....	8	Foster parents unable.....	10
Father unable.....	7	Foster father unable.....	2
Mother unable.....	83	Foster mother unable.....	10

The situations existing in the above cases involved sickness, poverty, inefficiency due to mental defect or ignorance, and absence from home during the day. The large number of instances in which the mother's inability was the precipitating cause of removal, included 30 where the mother was sick and 35 where the mother had to be away at work.

A 3-year-old boy came under agency care because of the mental incapacity of the mother and neglect by the father. He was the third child of a woman who was not only in bad physical condition but was also obviously defective. In spite of the unfavorable conditions surrounding this child from his birth he was described as a plump, healthy-looking youngster. At 1 year of age he had taken a prize at a baby show. The boy's mother, though reported as a hard-working woman, was too defective to give her children proper care, and

she left her lodgings in such a filthy condition that she was reported to the board of health. It was stated that she lost both her first children through gross neglect. The father said that he had more than once been called from his work by his wife because she thought that the babies were dead, and he had rushed home to find them in complete stupor from an overdose of narcotics. Besides being below normal in intelligence, she was afflicted with kidney trouble and was so lacking in physical control that she was obnoxious wherever she lived. It was also reported that the father assumed almost no responsibility toward his family and that the mother had to work constantly to support herself and the children. The family never had more than one room and was constantly moving. When the little boy was about 3 years old his father took him from the mother and placed him with the paternal grandmother, an elderly woman described as "frail, nervous, absent-minded, and incapable of caring for the boy." A charitable society which had for some time been watching the family soon arranged for the child's admission to an institution. (Case No. 319.)

The paternal grandparents of four children undertook to care for them when their father was committed to the workhouse for nonsupport. Their mother had been obliged to go to work and was not free to look after them. Although the grandparents had a fairly comfortable home, were of good reputation, and had sufficient income to provide for the children, the children had had so little training that the grandparents were utterly unequal to the task of controlling them, and after attempting for three months to manage them, became discouraged. The children's mother then requested their admission to an institution, agreeing to pay for their maintenance, and three of the children were taken, the oldest, a boy of 14 years, remaining with the grandparents. The youngest of the children, a little girl aged 5, was regarded by the grandparents and other relatives as ungovernable. She has the distinction of being one of the youngest children in the study who had a record of delinquent conduct. An 8-year-old boy, who succeeded in making a good impression on the friendly visitor—for it was stated in the agency record that he was "nice looking and polite"—was almost equally hard for his grandmother to control. A 10-year-old girl was said to be "sexually precocious." The 14-year-old boy, who was retained when the other children were placed in the institution, had a juvenile-court charge against him of "assault and battery."

That the children were delinquent is not surprising when their family history is known. All through their lives their home life had been in a turmoil because of the intermittent relationship of the parents. The father was a heavy drinker and cruel to his wife; he had been before a court 10 times for breach of peace, wife beating, nonsupport, drunkenness, and threatening bodily harm. A sister of the mother, however, testified that the man was not wholly to blame for the trouble. He had been enraged by the fact that the mother had entertained men during his absence. On one occasion he attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat. He was at length committed to the workhouse for six months. While he was serving his sentence the mother secured a divorce from him; but upon his release she changed her mind and decided to try him again. Three months later the father was again committed to the workhouse on the same charge—nonsupport—and during this period the divorce was confirmed. (Cases Nos. 70, 71, 72.)

#### Reasons for removal, by type of home.

Interest also attaches to a distribution of the reasons for removing the children according to the various types of home or other environ-

ment from which they were taken. Of 389 children removed from their parental homes, 175, or 45 per cent, were removed because of the delinquency of the child himself; 90 because of the delinquency of one or both parents; 91 because of the inability of one or both parents to continue care of the child; 24 because of the death of one or both of the parents; 7 because the home was unfit; 1 because the child himself was mentally defective; and in 1 case the reason was not reported.

Of 96 children removed from other than parental homes, 36 were removed because of their delinquency; 9 because of the delinquency of their parents; 12 because of the delinquency of the foster parents; 22 because the foster parents were unable to care for them; and 3 because their own parents were unable to provide; 7 because the home was unfit; and 2 because the children were mentally defective.

Of 28 other children taken under care, 14 were taken from institutions, the continued agency care meaning simply a transfer to another institution. Two of these children had been delinquent; the others had originally come from unfavorable conditions which were still operative in keeping the child away from the family group. Six children were homeless, 3 of them being foundlings. Three children had been living at service with employers and 5 independently in boarding houses; of these, 7 were removed because they were delinquent and 1 because the home was unfit.

#### INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

Despite the fact that home-finding agencies of other States have placed out large numbers of dependent children in Delaware, the results of this study showed that institutional care was used by Delaware agencies to a much greater extent than placing in family homes. Of all the children included in the study, 425, or 83 per cent, were, upon removal from their surroundings, placed in institutions, and only 88 were placed in private families. (See Table XXIII.) Subsequently, during the period of the investigation, 19 institutional children were placed out; but counterbalancing this number, 16 children, first placed out, were later admitted to institutions.

The types of institutions to which the children were sent were the two industrial schools, the homes for dependent children, the almshouses, and a fourth group comprised of other disciplinary institutions—with one exception outside the State. A majority of the children in this last group were delinquent colored girls for whom no institution existed in Delaware.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> The Industrial School for Colored Girls has been incorporated recently to provide a home for and to train morally and industrially about 15 girls under 18 years of age.



TABLE XXIII.—*First disposition of children after removal by agencies.*

Class of case.	Total children.	Children placed under institutional care.								
		Total.			Industrial schools.			Homes for dependent children.		
		Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.
Total.....	513	425	228	197	136	82	54	225	129	96
White.....	403	333	182	151	103	49	54	204	118	86
Legal commitment:										
Dependent.....	41	17	10	7	4		4	13	10	3
Neglected.....	21	20	4	16	1		1	14	4	10
Delinquent.....	156	121	70	51	98	49	49	10	10	
Informal commitment:										
Dependent.....	176	166	95	71				159	91	68
Neglected.....	9	9	3	6				8	3	5
Delinquent.....										
Negro.....	110	92	46	46	33	33		21	11	10
Legal commitment:										
Dependent.....	9	5	5		5	5				
Neglected.....	11	11	3	8				10	3	7
Delinquent.....	54	41	29	12	28	28		1	1	
Informal commitment:										
Dependent.....	21	21	8	13				8	6	2
Neglected.....	2	2	1	1				2	1	1
Delinquent.....	13	12		12						

Class of case.	Children placed under institutional care.						Children placed out.		
	Almshouses.			Other institutions.			Total.	Boys.	Girls.
	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.			
Total.....	22	6	16	42	11	31	88	61	27
White.....	13	4	9	13	11	2	70	47	23
Legal commitment:									
Dependent.....							24	10	14
Neglected.....	5		5				1	1	
Delinquent.....				13	11	2	35	31	4
Informal commitment:									
Dependent.....	7	4	3				10	5	5
Neglected.....	1		1						
Delinquent.....									
Negro.....	9	2	7	29		29	18	14	4
Legal commitment:									
Dependent.....							4	3	1
Neglected.....				1		1			
Delinquent.....				12		12	13	10	
Informal commitment:									
Dependent.....	9	2	7	4		4			
Neglected.....									
Delinquent.....				12		12	1	1	

**Industrial schools.**

Table XXIII shows 136, or 27 per cent of all, as taken under the custody of the industrial schools. Sixteen children first taken under care by other agencies were subsequently committed, making a total of 152 children received at these institutions during the two-year period under consideration. All the colored children committed



were, perforce, boys, since the girls' industrial school received only white children.

Delaware permitted commitment to the industrial schools of children adjudged dependent or neglected.<sup>8</sup> During the period studied 15 children—12 adjudged dependent and 3 adjudged neglected—had been committed. Five of these, however, had first been disposed of in other ways. One of them was a 9-year-old boy, who had to be removed from a colored orphanage five months after he had been placed there because of neglect. Delinquencies which might have given ground for commitment were not reported; but doubtless he had become a problem to the orphanage, for soon after his admission to the industrial school he was diagnosed as a middle-grade imbecile. Another colored boy, also a neglected child, had a history somewhat similar to the foregoing. He had run away from the private institution in which he had first been placed, and when caught was committed to the industrial school. He was but 10 years old at the time of his commitment. As it happened, all the white children of the dependent and neglected groups committed to an industrial school were girls. Two were girls from foster homes, whose guardians were either unable or unwilling to keep them longer. Two were sisters, 12 and 14 years of age, who were removed from association with an immoral mother.

The ages at which children were committed to the industrial school bring up a point of almost equal interest with the question of committing children on the grounds of dependency. The Delaware law stated that the boys' industrial school should receive "males not over 16 years nor under 9 years of age";<sup>9</sup> the industrial school for girls received any girl under 18 years; no minimum age was mentioned.<sup>10</sup> Three boys had been committed at 8 years; 6 boys and 1 girl at 9 years; 12 boys and 1 girl at 10 years. (See Table XXIV.) Of these, 4 were committed on the ground of dependency and 2 because of neglect. The largest numbers were committed at 13 and 14 years. Both the girls' and boys' institutions had two buildings in which to accommodate the children. At the girls' industrial school, where only white children were cared for, it was possible to segregate the younger girls from the older to some extent. At the boys' institution, where one building was devoted to white boys and the other to colored, this separation by ages or by degree of delinquency was practically impossible.

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<sup>8</sup> R. C. 1915. Sec. 2196 gives regulation for Ferris Industrial School for Boys. Sec. 2203 gives regulation for Delaware Industrial School for Girls.

<sup>9</sup> R. C. 1915, sec. 2196.

<sup>10</sup> R. C. 1915, sec. 2203.

TABLE XXIV.—Ages of children when committed to industrial schools.

Industrial schools.	Children committed to industrial schools at specified ages.										
	Total.	8 years.	9 years.	10 years.	11 years.	12 years.	13 years.	14 years.	15 years.	16 years.	17 years.
Total.....	152	3	7	13	16	16	25	25	21	15	11
Boys' industrial school.	93	3	6	12	13	10	16	10	16	7	.....
Girls' industrial school.	59	.....	1	1	3	6	9	15	5	8	11

Sometimes the seriousness of the delinquency seemed hardly commensurate with the penalty imposed.

One 10-year-old girl was committed to the industrial school on the charge of incorrigibility. The complainant was the child's father, who stated that the girl was unmanageable, careless, disobedient, took things to eat without permission, and kept 1 cent of change from money which had been given her to do an errand. Other delinquencies equally trivial were reported. The officer who visited the case felt that there was strong evidence that the charges were made with a desire to get rid of the child. Whereas the father and the stepmother reported her as vicious and ungovernable, neighbors testified that she was well behaved and industrious, but was neglected and mistreated by her family. The decision of the court resulted in the child's removal to the industrial school, an action which was deliberately suggested by an appeal of the father. Thus the family was released from responsibility. No maintenance was paid by them for the child at the institution. (Case No. 372.)

In one instance, a 9-year-old colored boy was committed on the ground of persistent truancy, with no record of other delinquency. Commitment to the industrial schools is the punishment established by law for truancy for both boys and girls. Any justice of the peace has power to commit for this cause.<sup>11</sup> Be it said to the credit of Delaware, however, that this extreme form of discipline for absence from school was not ordinarily resorted to, unless the truancy were coupled with other delinquent acts.

Other instances of commitment for seemingly trivial delinquencies were:

A 14-year-old white girl, whose immoral mother had deserted, was committed by a justice of the peace, on the ground of incorrigibility without more specific statement of the child's delinquency. Her record at the industrial school read—"mild, neat, careful, obedient, attractive." The real necessity for the child's removal seems to have been occasioned by the absence of a mother to look after her. (Case No. 51.)

An 8-year-old colored boy was committed at once on the ground of incorrigibility when his father complained that the child "had a good deal of time on his hands and got into bad company." No other record stood against him. The report for his first year in school had been excellent in ability and industry, very good in conduct. (Case No. 423.)

<sup>11</sup> R. C. 1915, sec. 2315.

A 15-year-old colored boy was committed as incorrigible through the complaint of his teacher to a justice of the peace. She reported that he had been a "good boy" in school but was running the streets and was not adequately cared for at home. (Case No. 477.)

These children and others, some of whose histories have been given to illustrate other points, seemed to deserve a milder sentence. Their cases are mentioned not in the way of criticism of the agency treatment but rather as an argument for more facilities for handling special groups of children. Given the circumstances in which these particular children were found, the agents handling the cases may have had little choice except to remove them. They certainly lacked facilities for adequately supervising the home or working out a plan of reconstruction. Having removed the child, however, they might have made more use of the placing-out system. As for finding suitable institutions, they were again at a loss. A number of histories showed that children were committed to the industrial schools, not because they needed reformatory care, but because the agencies who had charge of them could find no other place.

The industrial schools of Delaware, as of many other States, have been the depositories for all sorts of problematical children—the dependent, the neglected, the defective, and the mildly delinquent, as well as the more seriously delinquent. The Delaware statutes permit the commitment of children to these institutions on the ground of dependency, but the fact that the industrial schools were the only institutions in the State providing disciplinary or reformatory care for juvenile delinquents stigmatized all who were received. Moreover, the influence of these various classes of children on one another can only be bad.

#### Homes for dependent children.

The homes for dependent children used by Delaware agencies have already been described in this report. Children placed in institutions of this type numbered 225, or 44 per cent of the entire group. Forty-eight of them had been placed through court action, including 13 adjudged dependent by the juvenile court, 24 whose parents had been prosecuted for neglect, and 11 adjudged delinquent.

For everyone of the 13 children who had been adjudged dependent, the home environment was decidedly unfavorable; none had a normal home. Four were children born out of wedlock who were taken from neglecting and immoral mothers; a brother of one of these four was also included in this group. Two brothers, 7 and 10 years old, were taken from their father, their mother having deserted the family four years previously. One little girl of 8 was removed from the home of her mother and stepfather, because the mother was supposed to be living illicitly with the stepfather. The legality of their union was subsequently proved, however, and when they moved

to a better neighborhood in an endeavor to improve conditions for the child the little girl was released to them. Three of the children adjudged dependent were removed from the homes of relatives who had declared themselves unwilling to continue care of the children; two of these were brothers whose mother was dead and whose father was in the workhouse; the third was also motherless, his father, an Italian, having deserted and returned to Europe. One was a 10-year-old boy taken from the care of a lodger who had been left temporarily in charge of the boy's home when his mother was committed to the workhouse for keeping a house of assignation. One was a boy who had reached the age limit of the institution, where he had been an inmate for three years, having been placed there by a court because his mother was immoral and drunken and was neglecting him.

The prevailing method of handling the so-called neglected children seems to have been to place them in homes for dependent children; 34 out of a total of 43 had been cared for in this way, 24 by court action. A number of the children in this group had parents who had served time in a correctional institution or had been sentenced at the time the children were removed.

Two children were removed from a one-room shanty in a rural neighborhood because of the father's neglect and immorality. The children's mother was living with another man several miles away. Persons who had long known the father stated that he was "a floater," "a bad lot," and spent "much of his time in jail." They reported that at one time, when he was serving a prison sentence for murder, he married a woman also in prison for murder; she was not the mother of the children included in the study. Relatives of the children were not sure whether the father had ever been married to the children's mother. They knew that the father had been very irregular in his work and was extremely poor. Having no one to care for his children, he had brought to his home a woman who was supposed to be his housekeeper. This situation was reported to an agency, which decided that the children would be better off under institutional care. (Cases Nos. 24, 25.)

The 11 children adjudged delinquent were all boys, most of them so young that the court was reluctant to send them to the institutions regularly caring for delinquent juveniles. Most of them were removed from their homes, not so much with the thought that institutional care would furnish them with corrective treatment, as because their own homes did not provide suitable environment. Two of them were brothers, aged 8 and 10 years, whose father had died and whose mother had gone into a factory to work. Their home was on the outskirts of a town, in a row of houses owned by the mill where their mother worked. During her absence, one day, they wandered into a garage and took some money from purses found in a coat pocket. Because of their lack of supervision at home, the court thought best to place them in institutions. Two others were boys who pointed



firearms at a man who had trespassed in their back yard. The story of how they were brought into court, charged with "assault with intent to commit murder," is told in another connection.<sup>12</sup> Two others were boys whose mothers were dead. The fathers in both cases worked all day and had no one to care for their children.

By far the largest number of those placed in homes for dependent children had been received by the institutions through an informal arrangement made either by some social agency or by the personal request of the child's family or friends. The group of so-called "dependent" children received in this informal way numbered 167 and included more than two-thirds of those whose families had contributed to the maintenance of the child in the institution. Within this special group were most of the instances in which the sickness of the mother or her absence at work had been the reason given for removing the child from his home. More than one-half of these children, 92 out of 167, received only temporary care and were released during the period of the study, 83 of them having been in the institutions less than one year.

Temporary care was arranged by a charitable organization for three children whose mother went to a hospital for confinement. The parents were very poor, but the mother kept the one bare room, which constituted the family abode, in a neat and clean condition. The father had been out of work, but had finally secured a position as night watchman at \$3.25 per day, and seemed to be trying to do his part. During the two weeks that the children stayed at the institution he paid the full fee required for them. The use of an institution in such an emergency seemed to be a wise one. (Cases Nos. 351, 352, 353.)

With one exception, the children taken under care because of the death of one or both guardians were placed in institutions for dependent children.

One 4-year-old white boy was the child of an Italian who had been left a widower with four children when their mother died during childbirth. The godmother of one of the little girls took her and the father's sister assumed the care of another little girl, leaving the father with two boys. One of these, a 7-year-old boy, the father found it possible to keep with him. For the younger, the child included in this study, he decided to ask outside help and personally made the arrangements for the child's admission to a "home," agreeing to pay the regular fee for maintenance. (Case No. 467.)

Other types of children found in institutions for dependent children were foundlings, children given institutional care because their mothers had become insane, children taken from other than their own homes in cases where the guardians felt unable to continue care of them, and many of those children who had been removed because of the delinquencies of parents or guardians or because the home was found unfit.

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<sup>12</sup> See pp. 47-48.



## Almshouses.

Delaware is among the States which still countenance the admission of children to almshouses. Records of children taken under care at the three county almshouses of Delaware during the two-year period of the study were gathered as follows:

New Castle County Almshouse.....	13 17
Kent County Almshouse.....	2
Sussex County Almshouse.....	4

The county hospital in New Castle County is located in the same building as the almshouse. The cases recorded there were analyzed and no cases received for hospital treatment only were included in the study. Cases which combined dependency with need for hospital care were included, as, for example, the following instance:

A drunken father who had been living with an immoral woman was arrested and sent to the workhouse for neglect of his four children. The children's own mother had died nearly two years previous as the result of a miscarriage. Immediately upon the father's commitment his home was broken up. The children, ranging in age from 3 to 11 years, were placed in institutions. Because the youngest was suffering with a sore ear, the children's institution to which her sisters and brother were admitted could not take her and she was sent to the hospital ward of the county almshouse. Not until six months later did the events which had taken place in this family come to the attention of relatives. A maternal aunt, upon hearing that the family had been broken up, came to Delaware from her home in a neighboring State and pleaded to be allowed to take the children. Without investigating the merits of her petition, the agencies concerned refused to grant her request. She continued to urge her claim and after six months succeeded in securing custody of the child who was at the almshouse. (Case No. 39.)

The lack of any suitable institution for the care of the feeble-minded has, up to the present, resulted in the admission of defective children to the almshouse.

A 10-year-old girl from a rural home was admitted because she had become a problem to the community in which she lived. Her father had deserted; her mother and maternal grandmother maintained a miserable one-room shack by doing "day's work" when such was obtainable. The child was reported as "too defective for her grandmother to control" and also as "too defective to go to school." On the ground that she needed institutional care, the neighbors persuaded her mother to release her, and believing that the girl was to be placed where she would receive special treatment, the mother allowed her to be removed. The girl remained at the almshouse for about six months; then, on the mother's petition, she was discharged with the understanding that the mother, who was about to move to another State, would place her as soon as possible in a more suitable institution. The child's subsequent history is unknown. (Case No. 431.)

During the period of the study 16 babies—9 white and 7 colored—were born at the county almshouses of Delaware, 11 in New Castle, 1 in Kent, and 4 in Sussex. Of these, 12 children—6 white and 6 col-

<sup>13</sup> Includes one child who was previously committed to institution other than almshouse.

ored—were born out of wedlock. These children have not been included in the tables of the study for the obvious reason that they were not deprived of parental care at the time when they came under the jurisdiction of the institution. They represent on the whole, however, a group of the most abjectly dependent children in the State, and for that reason deserve at least a passing mention in this report. At the New Castle County Almshouse, where the county hospital is a separate feature of the institution, the birth records were kept in a book by themselves and did not appear among the list of admissions to the almshouse. At the Kent County and Sussex County Almshouses infants born in those institutions were entered in the chronological list of admission among those who become public charges.

In some instances the mother had undergone her confinement in the almshouse because it seemed to be the only available place where she could secure the needed care. The custom in the New Castle County Almshouse was to charge a small fee (\$10) for confinement services if the woman could afford to pay it. If not, she was expected to remain at the almshouse for six months after the birth of the child and assist with the work of the institution. In six cases the mother was released about two weeks after the birth of the child, presumably having met the financial requirements.

Two white mothers and one colored were working out at service previously to their going to the almshouse for confinement. Both the white women had become pregnant out of wedlock. Of one, little was known except that she was employed as a house servant immediately prior to her admission to the almshouse. The birth record of the baby gave the occupation of the father as "a mill hand." The mother remained at the almshouse six months, but nothing is known of her subsequent history or that of the child. The other white woman had been housekeeper for a man who had alternately abused her and neglected her. She had been diagnosed as an imbecile by a mental specialist. In the same almshouse in which she gave birth to her baby, she herself had been born of a woman who was reported as mentally weak. All her brothers and sisters, 10 of whom were on record, were regarded as below normal in intelligence. This inefficient woman, incapable of planning for herself, unable to read or write, had been thrown on her own resources when she was 12 years old. Because of her even temper and usual good health, she made an acceptable helper in farmers' households, but frequently changed her place of employment. A neighbor stated that she had kept house for both white and colored men. The child of the study was at least her second, though no previous child was living. When this baby was 1 month old the mother left the almshouse, keeping the child with her, and again went into service.

The colored baby was born of a domestic servant who had previously been an inmate of the State hospital for the insane. This woman had been married and had had two children by her husband. Soon after the second child was born she suffered from a psychosis, during which she attempted to kill her baby. Her third child was born out of wedlock. At the time of his birth she again had puerperal insanity, and when he was but 2 months old she became violent and was transferred from the almshouse to the State hospital. The only report that could be secured in regard to the baby was that it had been "given away."

Three colored babies had not only been born but had been conceived at the almshouse. One of these babies had a white mother, an imbecile woman who had been for 17 years in the almshouse, during which time she was said to have had seven children born out of wedlock. Four of these children were located. Two of them were colored. One was positively feeble-minded. Each had a different father.

Another was the child of a woman aged 21 and a man aged 51, both almshouse inmates, and both diagnosed as imbeciles. The mental age of the mother was 4.2; of the father, 7.2. This baby at 9 months of age was declared to be developing normally. At the age of 16 months he was indentured from the almshouse to the care of a private family.

The third of the colored babies, who had been not only born but conceived while the mother was an almshouse inmate, was also the child of an imbecile woman. This woman was but 18 years old when her baby was born; the child's father was unknown, though the gossip of the institution had it that he was one of the white employees. The mother's intelligence was not equal to that of a 5-year-old child, and she was also crippled. She was in urgent need of proper institutional care and protection.

Low or abnormal mentality characterized several of the mothers of the almshouse babies. It was noteworthy that every mother who had become pregnant while in the institution was not normal mentally. Among the others accustomed to work at domestic service there was one imbecile white woman and one insane colored woman.

Among the other histories there was that of one colored mother of whom it was reported that she would answer questions but showed no initiative. This woman had feet and legs so undeveloped that she had never been able to stand. Her baby had been born out of wedlock, the child's father being a colored sailor.

Of another woman it was said that she was "restless and disagreeable." She had been twice married. Her first child was defective physically and mentally. At the time of her third pregnancy she deserted her husband and, taking her two boys, went to live with relatives. When it came time for her confinement all three were

received at the almshouse. The brighter of the two boys was subsequently indentured; the other boy was placed several times but was always unsatisfactory because of his condition. The baby was discharged with the mother when 11 days old.

There remain two of the almshouse babies. Of these one was born of a white mother who had come from a considerable distance to the almshouse for her confinement. Nothing further is known of this case except that both parents were classed as "laborers," and the child was registered as illegitimate. The other white mother had taken her 1-year-old baby with her when she went for confinement. Hers seems to have been a case of poverty due to nonsupport. Her husband drank and spent his money on other women. Their first child was being cared for in the home of the maternal grandfather; but the grandfather refused to do anything more for the family so long as the mother continued to "stick to the worthless husband." This mother, when visited, was hoping to find a foster home for the 1-year-old baby.

#### PLACING OUT.

One State-wide agency in Delaware was devoted entirely to the work of placing children in private homes, and two other child-caring agencies also placed children. Placing out from institutions was practised only to a limited extent. Both the industrial schools placed out their charges on parole, under their own strict supervision. The system of indenture was still kept up in Sussex County, two children having been "bound out" during the time of the study. One other institution made a special feature of placing, and employed a supervisor to select and visit homes where children were placed.<sup>14</sup>

Of the 513 children, 88 children were placed in private homes at the time of their removal from their previous surroundings and 19 children who had first been admitted to institutions were later placed out. If the conservative figures gathered for this report puzzle some who have studied carefully the annual reports of the agencies included, it should be stated that the explanation lies in the limitations of the study. For example, institutions which used the placing system frequently retained the child at the institution for a considerable period. The disposition of children retained in the institution for two years or more would not be noted in this report. Likewise the child-caring agencies sometimes supervised children in their own homes for two or more years before removing them. Such cases would not come within the scope of this study. Again, it was customary for agencies and institutions to report on the number of placements, not on the number of individual children placed. Reports of this character may give an accurate idea of the amount of

<sup>14</sup> For further details, see *Dependent, Delinquent, and Defective Children of Delaware*, by C. Spencer Richardson. Russell Sage Foundation, New York City, March, 1918.



work done by the organizations, but they do not give the exact number of children cared for.

The large number of children committed through court action, and especially of delinquent children, who were placed out, was due to the activity of the juvenile court of Wilmington, the largest single agency in Delaware. By the act establishing it, the court was given authority to find private homes for children coming under its jurisdiction. In many instances the juvenile court asked the cooperation of a child-placing agency in carrying on this work.

Proportionately fewer girls were placed than boys. More children were placed at 13 years than at any other age. With only nine exceptions, all the children under 7 years were placed in institutions.

#### NUMBER OF AGENCIES DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN.

In 272 instances, or in more than half the cases included in the study, the children had been handled, during the two-year period, by more than one agency; 21 had been handled by three or more agencies. (See Table XXV.)

There are two distinct possibilities underlying this state of things. On the one hand, the overlapping of case work may show a duplication of labor; on the other hand, it may signify a close and advantageous cooperation. Without analysis of the specific instances, it is impossible to criticize the condition. Certain agencies dovetailed their work efficiently, as in the case of two institutions which by mutual agreement care continuously for children, transferring them at a given age from one institution to the other. In other instances, unfortunately, agencies were guilty of attempting to usurp the work others were better equipped to do, with the result that in the end both agencies had devoted time and money to the case. When a child was brought to the attention of one agency and referred immediately to the proper office, such action was not classed in this report as agency treatment.

TABLE XXV.—*Number of agencies receiving each child during two-year period.*

Race and sex.	Total children.	Number of agencies receiving each child during two-year period.		
		One.	Two.	Three or more.
Total.....	513	241	251	21
White.....	403	211	174	18
Boys.....	229	121	102	6
Girls.....	174	90	72	12
Negro.....	110	30	77	3
Boys.....	60	18	39	3
Girls.....	50	12	38	.....



When the inquiry regarding the amount of agency treatment was extended over the life history of the children, the amount of duplication or overlapping was still more marked. Whereas, for the period of the investigation, 272 cases were found to have been handled by more than one agency, for the more extended period covering the life history of the children, 303 of the 513 children, or 59 per cent, were reported as having been under the care of more than one agency. Moreover, the number which were reported as having been handled by three or more agencies was 39, as against 21 so dealt with in the two-year period. The checkered experiences of some of the children who had been handled by several agencies are suggested by the following histories:

A colored boy, sent at 3 years of age from a foundling hospital in New York to an institution in Delaware, was transferred at 13 years of age—the age limit of this institution to still another orphanage. At 15 he was released and allowed to seek employment in Wilmington. He was large and strong, appearing older than his actual years, had borne a good character while at the institution, and was apparently ready to undertake an independent and self-supporting life. In less than one year he had come under the care of the juvenile court because he had stolen six handkerchiefs. The court dealt with him wisely in placing him on a farm. After his placement no unfavorable report came of him. (Case No. 14.)

One girl was committed at 17 years of age to the girls' industrial school for absenting herself from home. From the time she was 4 years old until she was 14 she had lived in various orphanages. Her parents both drank heavily and had served terms at the workhouse for neglecting their children. At 16 years the girl went to work in a hotel, and later she went to live with her own parents. Conditions had apparently not improved at home, for the girl soon began to stay away and finally came to the attention of the police. When brought before the juvenile court she was summarily committed to the industrial school. (Case No. 282.)

The institutional history of one boy began when he was 1 year old and continued uninterrupted, except for a change of institutions, until he was 9. The original ground for admitting him was the fact that his parents had separated, and his mother found it impossible to work and to care for him. Two of his brothers also were placed in institutions. At 9 years of age he was returned to his mother because she had remarried. His history while at home showed numerous delinquencies, including running away, disorderly conduct, and incorrigibility. After three years of almost continuous conflict with school-teachers, neighbors, and probation officers he was committed to the boys' industrial school. There, for the first time, he came under the observation of a mental specialist and was diagnosed a middle-grade imbecile. (Case No. 13.)

Inadequate cooperation between agencies was evidenced by the fact that fairly complete histories of some families were found with one agency, while another agency, also interested in the case, was apparently unaware that the data had been gathered. Lack of cooperation was well illustrated by the case of an epileptic and feeble-minded girl, twice examined and diagnosed. The examinations were both made in another State at considerable expense and inconvenience to

the societies arranging for them. Both agencies, moreover, belonged to the Confidential Exchange of Wilmington and might, by utilizing their resources, have economized time and money. The constantly increasing use of the confidential exchange will gradually eliminate such occurrences.

#### MAINTENANCE CONTRIBUTED BY FAMILIES.

Classed by the sources from which they derived their support, the agencies and institutions caring for the dependent children of Delaware were of three types—public (i. e., supported entirely by public funds), semipublic, and private.

As a rule the public institutions received no maintenance toward the support of the child from the child's own family or relatives. The results of an inquiry into the amounts contributed by families are exhibited in Table XXVI. Where a family paid the maximum amount charged by the institution it was credited with the full rate, though the charge was seldom equal to the actual cost of maintenance. The fees expected from families who could pay ranged from \$5 to \$15 a month. Some institutions charged a weekly rate, usually \$1.50 or \$2. Families who paid less than the maximum amount were classed as contributing part. The third group were those who contributed nothing. In this last group were included 70 per cent of all cases.

TABLE XXVI.—Amount of support contributed by children's families to agencies and institutions caring for children.

Types of agencies and institutions.	Total.	Children whose families contributed specified amounts of support.							
		White children.				Negro children.			
		Total.	Full.	Part.	None.	Total.	Full.	Part.	None.
Total.....	513	403	130	10	263	110	1	14	95
Public.....	69	50	3	1	46	19	.....	.....	19
Semipublic.....	196	162	36	3	123	34	.....	2	32
Private.....	248	191	91	6	94	57	1	12	44

#### NUMBER OF CHILDREN DISCHARGED DURING THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD.

Before the close of the two-year period on which this investigation was based, 138 children out of the total of 513 taken under care had been discharged, as indicated in the following list:

Released to parents.....	105	Discharged (no guardian).....	9
Released to other guardians.....	14	Died while under care.....	10

More than three-fourths of those discharged were returned to their own parents, 9 were thrown upon their own resources, 10 had died while under care. A special analysis of this group of 138 children showed that 65, or almost half, were under care less than two months.

#### LIMITATIONS IN THE WORK OF AGENCIES.

##### Absence of provision for defective children.

At the beginning of this report it was stated that the agencies of Delaware lacked special facilities for handling mentally defective children. During the two-year period of the study only three children were removed from their homes with the definite statement of the child's defect as the immediate reason for removal. (See Table XXII.) One of these children had been diagnosed feeble-minded. As a matter of fact, there were included in the investigation 37 children who had been diagnosed as subnormal, varying from the border-line cases to imbeciles. (See p. 46.) In addition to the diagnosed cases there were 21 children reported as of obviously low mentality, and 1 child reported as insane.

The reasons given for removing the 37 children known to be subnormal are listed below:

	Cases.		Cases.
Child delinquent .....	29	Parents working [away from	
Child defective .....	1	home] .....	1
Mother delinquent .....	1	Parents neglecting .....	1
Mother defective .....	1	Home unfit .....	2
Mother unable to support .....	1		

Among the delinquencies charged against the 29 mentally defective children were 11 court cases of larceny; 6 court charges of incorrigibility; 3 cases of malicious mischief, including 1 combined with larceny; 2, absenting self from home; 1, disorderly conduct; 1, throwing stones; 1, assault with intent to commit murder; 1, breaking terms of probation; 3 (not court cases), delinquencies unspecified.

For the 21 children who were not diagnosed, but who were popularly regarded as lacking in average intelligence the reported reasons for removing were:

	Cases.		Cases.
Child delinquent .....	10	Mother unable to care .....	3
Child defective .....	2	Parents separated .....	1
Father delinquent .....	1	Parents unable to care .....	1
Death of father .....	1	Home unfit .....	1
Mother delinquent .....	1		

The delinquencies reported of the 10 children were larceny, incorrigibility, ungovernable temper, immorality, and vagrancy.

Excluding the 1 child reported as insane, for whom appropriate care was eventually secured in the State hospital for the insane, the

dispositions made of these 58 children by agencies were as follows: 31 were committed to the industrial schools; 7 were placed in orphanages, of whom 1 was later transferred to an industrial school; 5 were placed in almshouses; 5, in other institutions; 10 were placed in private families, but 3 of them were subsequently committed to industrial schools, and 1 was sent to an orphanage. (See Table XXVII.) These cases represent 11 per cent of the entire group included in the study. At the time covered by the investigation the only provision made by the State of Delaware for the feeble-minded was an appropriation for the care of 14 individuals in institutions outside the State. During the time of the investigation no opportunity for admitting a new case to this group occurred. Improper or unsuitable care for these 58 children was, therefore, inevitable.

TABLE XXVII.—Types of dispositions of subnormal children.

Mentality.	Total.	Subnormal children.					
		Placed in institutions.				Placed out.	Placed out and in institutions.
		Industrial schools.	Homes for dependent children.	Alms-houses.	Other institutions.		
Total.....	58	31	7	5	5	6	4
White.....	39	19	6	4	1	6	3
Below normal.....	3		1				1
Borderline.....	5	2	1			1	
Retarded.....	2	1	1				
Feeble-minded.....	2	1	1				
Imbecile.....	10	8			1	1	
Obviously low mentality.....	17	7	2	4		2	2
Negro.....	19	12	1	1	4		1
Border line.....	2	1					1
Feeble-minded.....	2	1		1			
Imbecile.....	11	10	1				
Obviously low mentality.....	4				4		

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently placed in an orphanage.

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently placed with a family.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequently placed in an industrial school.

A 17-year-old white girl, who was brought before the juvenile court on a charge of incorrigibility, was examined while under probation and was diagnosed a high-grade imbecile. She had been irregular at her work, admitted immoral relations with a man older than herself, and was annoying an aunt with whom she lived by associating with a young fellow notorious for his general stupidity. The girl's mother had died when she was 6 years old. An older sister also had a record of immoral living. Although institutional care was urgently recommended, none was available, and the girl was placed with a private family in the hope that new environment might stimulate her to more wholesome activity. She was forbidden to associate with the young man, and for a while she seemed to conduct herself respectably. Nine months



later she was reported as engaged to marry a soldier, and within a few months she married him, in spite of the fact that she was under the immediate surveillance of Delaware agencies. (Case No. 506.)

A boy, charged with repeated petty larcenies, was examined under the auspices of the juvenile court and was diagnosed a high-grade imbecile. Care and training in an institution for the feeble-minded were recommended by the diagnostician. The difficulty of carrying out this recommendation was such that the boy was placed in a private correctional institution in another State, where the results were evidently unsatisfactory, since after 10 months he was returned to his home, free to repeat his previous delinquencies. (Case No. 387.)

Another case was that of an epileptic low-grade imbecile girl, the oldest of five children of foreign-born parents. Sufficient interest had been taken in her mental condition to have an examination and diagnosis by specialists. Although these specialists recommended institutional care, no opportunity to place the child in a suitable institution could be found. Later, she came under care of the juvenile court, and on the ground of delinquency was placed in the girls' industrial school, only to prove an impossible inmate for that institution and to be passed on to the county almshouse. (Case No. 210.)

The problem of caring for the mentally defective has, however, received considerable attention in Delaware since 1915, with the result that in 1917 the legislature passed an act providing for a State commission for the feeble-minded, with powers to arrange for the establishment of a State institution, which is now being constructed.

#### Action by local magistrates.

Throughout the report, cases in which legal process was involved in the arrangements for the child's removal, have been classed as "cases involving court action." The group included children who had been before the juvenile court, courts of general sessions, local magistrates, and justices of the peace. That the quality of the treatment varied greatly under this diverse handling is obvious. One of the crying needs of Delaware was uniform legal protection for children throughout the State, with an adequate corps of probation officers for investigation and supervision.<sup>16</sup>

An illustration of ill-advised action on the part of local magistrates who lacked machinery for adequate investigation is found in the story of a man who, after the death of his wife from tuberculosis, went with his children to live with relatives on a farm. The older children were required to assist on the farm and with the housework, but the arrangement had continued only about two months when trouble began. The oldest boy, intrusted with a certain amount of business responsibility, failed of his trust and appropriated \$100. The father was slow in making restitution, and in the meantime all

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<sup>16</sup> In 1919 a reconstruction commission was created in Delaware to devise and put into operation plans for child-welfare and community organization throughout the State, and this commission has appointed a committee to draft a children's code.



the children suffered from the resentment which their relatives felt toward them. The boy was taken to court and was committed to the workhouse. Whether or not his age was unknown to the authorities who committed him was not clear from the records. As a matter of fact, he was only 15, and in a month he was transferred to the boys' industrial school. His sisters, growing restless under the discord, refused to remain at the farm. Their father made this incident an excuse to have them committed to the girls' industrial school, though they had no other record of delinquency and were highly regarded by their teachers.

On the oath of a foster mother that a 9-year-old boy was vicious and ungovernable, the child was committed by a justice of the peace to the industrial school. One month later the foster father had appealed from the order of commitment, and the boy was released on the ground that he had been committed without sufficient evidence. Investigation brought to light the fact that the commitment had been the result of a slight family quarrel over the management of the boy. The child was described as a fine-looking little fellow, bright, active, and mischievous. He was small for his age and could easily have been controlled by intelligent guardians. If the case had first been presented to a juvenile court, he would never have been committed to an institution for delinquents.

#### **Absence of constructive work with families.**

The amount of work done by agencies in preparing homes for the return of children was very slight. The agencies comprising the group under consideration in this study were, to be sure, those whose special function was to care for children. The emphasis in their treatment was laid upon care of the child as an individual and not as a member of a family group. Constructive work with families had either not been considered an essential part of the agency program or had been crowded to the wall under pressure of more immediate tasks.

One exception to this statement existed in the juvenile court of Wilmington, which made a part of its activity the improving, so far as possible, of the children's own environment, removing them only as a last resort. During the period of the investigation 182 children received under the care of the court were removed from their homes and were, therefore, included in this study, whereas during the same time a total of 740 individual children had come before the court. Subsequent to the child's removal, however, there was rarely any attempt made to fit the home for the child's return.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, also, through its prosecutions of delinquent fathers, in nonsupport cases, often prevented the breaking up of families. In the cases where

children were removed, however, there were no facilities for following up home conditions or working with families toward the possible return of children.

Inquiry into the conditions in the homes of children removed from their parental or foster homes brought out the fact that for 219 cases—45 per cent—the general conditions at the time of removal remained the same up to the date of the child's discharge from agency care or until the end of the period studied. In 80 other cases—16 per cent—a change of residence had taken place, other conditions remaining practically as before. In 21 instances the family had been entirely broken up. In 9 cases the family group had been restored; in 10 others the parents had remarried, creating an opportunity for the child's return. The conditions in other cases were of great variety, but in almost none had any decided improvement taken place.

Condition of household subsequent to child's removal from his parental or foster home:

Total.....	485	Absent parent returned.....	9
Same as prior to removal.....	219	Parent married again.....	10
Change of residence.....	80	Other changes.....	67
Home entirely broken up.....	21	Not reported.....	79

On the whole, the agencies were tenacious of their claim over the children. One institution, where both free and paying cases were received, declined to accept maintenance from parents, even though offered freely, when for some reason the institution desired to have absolute right to the child. Not only was there little evidence of constructive work among families, but there was often evidence that families lacked redress or opportunity to defend themselves when agencies took action to remove children. Occasionally in the period of the investigation parents went to the expense of proving their right to their child, and won their case.

Two boys—one 13 and one 14 years of age—full of mischief and somewhat troublesome to their school-teacher, were reported to a member of the local school board, who summoned an official and had them both committed to the industrial school. The two boys were from different homes and from very different surroundings. One was the foster child of a farm owner of that neighborhood; the other was the son of a domestic servant employed on another farm. The first boy had not only the protection of his foster parents but also the supervision of the child-caring agency which had placed him with them. In both cases the offenses committed by the boys seemed to their guardians as too slight to warrant the action taken against them. The foster parents immediately reported the case of their ward to the child-placing agent, who went to law and won his suit. This boy was detained at the industrial school only three weeks. The other child, whose mother was a serving woman without influence, remained at the industrial school throughout the period studied, despite the fact that he had been committed on the same charge as the other

boy, and the decision in one case would have been equally applicable to the other. The offenses committed, as reported in the lawsuit, were: (1) "Caught hold of a girl's dress;" (2) "placed a rail across a road;" (3) "dammed up a brook." (Cases Nos. 128, 464.)

At the urgent insistence of a prominent person in a small community, three children were placed in an institution on the ground that their mother had been neglecting them. Three complaints were made against the mother before the arrangements for the children's removal were completed. On the occasion of the second complaint the case was heard before a local officer, who decided to allow the mother to keep her children. On the occasion of the third complaint, no formal action was taken, but the mother agreed to release the children. The agency removing them could give no information relating to the children's father, except that he was not with the family at that time.

The mother's story was as follows: The children's father had been away only two weeks when the children were removed. He had been engaged at hauling, receiving \$1.50 per day, but had been out of work for a time, had become discouraged, and had left in the night without giving any warning of his plan. The mother denied that she was neglecting her children; she said that they had good clothes and plenty to eat. The house rent was free, and the mother took in washings to add to the family income. Her house at the time it was visited was fairly well furnished and was very clean. Shortly after the children were removed the father returned and was "upset" over what had happened. The parents lived together for a short time; then the father went away again. "He feels that without his children it is not worth while to keep a home," said the mother. He had consulted a lawyer about getting his children back, but had been unsuccessful in the attempt. In the meantime, the mother, with her baby which she had been permitted to keep, went to work as housekeeper for a farmer.

Whether or not the parents were justified in feeling that they were entitled to their children, the facts remain: That the children were removed without other investigation than the report of the prominent neighbor, whose word could presumably be trusted; that subsequent to the removal of the children the parents had not been the subjects of any constructive work on the part of the agencies interested; that the parents' own attempt to have the children returned had been fruitless; and that no effort whatever had been made looking forward to the possible return of the children. (Cases Nos. 449, 450, 451.)

In regard to children placed in foster homes, the policy throughout the State was to keep the child's own parents in ignorance of his whereabouts.

Two boys who had been deserted by their mother were placed by their father in an institution and were retained there for over a year. The father had agreed to pay \$2 a week maintenance for each of them, but he got behind in his payments and finally took them out. For a time the paternal grandparents assisted him in keeping the family together; but the grandmother finally became ill and died, and the housework became a problem. The grandfather did what he could, and an older brother of the children—a boy only 12 years old but dependable—was very helpful with the cooking and sweeping. He could not, however, control the younger boys, who at length came to the attention of officials because of truancy. They were sent to the institution where they had previously been cared for, and from there were placed in foster homes in another

part of the State. The father at this time was working steadily, receiving higher and higher wages as the war emergency work increased; he was eager to assume a definite responsibility for his children, agreeing to make up the back payments which he owed the institution. He annoyed the agency, however, by writing to the boys, and when, a few months later, the agency removed the children to other homes he was not informed of their whereabouts. At Christmas time he was especially eager to get in touch with them and wrote to the agency inclosing money for them. The letter speaks for itself: "Please be sure to arrange that it be spent for their Christmas, bearing in mind that clothes do not mean much to a boy at this season. I do not understand why I am not allowed to know where the boys are, as I have a very distinct impression that \* \* \* said I was to be in touch with them. However, if you will arrange the forwarding of this money for me, I will be satisfied for the present." (Cases Nos. 416 and 417.)

#### Inadequate investigation and supervision.

Lack of an adequate staff of workers for handling cases sometimes meant insufficient investigation of the conditions in the homes of the children before removal and inadequate supervision over the children after they were placed.

Two colored children received at an orphanage were admitted at the request of their mother, who obviously wanted to be relieved of the responsibility of caring for them. She was an unmarried domestic servant, reported as immoral and undependable. The maternal grandmother of the children and their aunt were in fairly comfortable circumstances; they had a neat home, were able financially to care for the children, and permitted the mother to live with them whenever she wished. She, however, preferred to rent a room for herself where she could have freedom to do as she pleased. Upon the advice of some of her friends without the knowledge of the other members of her family, she disposed of the children. The institution which took these children knew almost nothing of their previous history. (Cases Nos. 525, 526.)

A girl of 16 years, who had been living for more than two years in a foster home, assisting her guardians with housework, became gradually more and more vicious in her habits and finally was committed to the industrial school because of immorality. The girl's father was an alcoholic, who had been killed by an electric car. There were five children, but even after the mother had remarried she claimed that she was unable to provide for their care. Two of them were taken by the maternal grandfather, and three, including the girl of the study, were given to a child-placing agency. This agency had the girl examined physically and made considerable effort to see that she was in good physical condition. Eleven entries were found of treatments provided by the agency; adenoids and tonsils were removed. There was no evidence of any mental examination, though the agency record included the statement that "girls of her own age called her simple," and the institution to which she was committed stated that she was certainly weak-minded. Her school record showed that she had been irregular in attendance, and at 14 years of age, when she stopped attending, she had reached only the fourth grade. The girl, after removal from her own home, was placed three different times by the agency. At the first place she remained only 10 days; at the second she remained one year; then she was placed with the family who had her until she was committed to the industrial school. Although at first they complained that she was impudent to them and that she gave trouble at school, the guardians accepted her as a



member of their family for nearly two years and a half. When they found it necessary to have her removed they reported that she had "been much changed during the last six months." She had become overdeveloped physically and manifested inordinate sex tendencies. At the time of her commitment evidence was presented that she had had intercourse with four men, one of whom was the son of her guardians. Although this girl had apparently had considerable supervision at first, the agency had gradually relaxed its watchfulness. The serious responsibility of placing an adolescent girl in a family where there are unmarried men is one which some agencies are unwilling to assume. (Case No. 528.)

The necessity for a careful selection of foster homes was illustrated by the case of a 9-year-old colored boy, who was placed with a white family in the lower part of Delaware. The new guardians were accepted by the agency as suitable on the strength of recommendations given by neighbors. The boy remained with them from September to June, but did not attend school during this period for the reason that the family lived 6 miles from the nearest colored school—a fact that should have been ascertained before the boy was placed. The child was removed, however, not because of his nonattendance at school, but because the foster father proved himself unfit by murderously attacking another man. The next foster parents seemed to be exemplary in every way; but this arrangement proved unsatisfactory because the boy manifested thievish tendencies. At the request of these people he was again removed, and once more he was placed with a private family. The last placement was too recent to have been well tested, but it is doubtful whether it contained elements which might be relied upon to correct the boy's delinquent traits. (Case No. 101.)

The foregoing history would seem to indicate a lack of careful investigation on the part of the agency of the proposed foster home. On the other hand, foster parents did not always inform themselves in regard to the child's previous history though it must be admitted that agencies did not make this information easily accessible.

In the home of a married couple, who had applied for a "quiet, settled girl," a child of 12 years was placed who had been shifted from one home to another because of her ungovernable temper. When a little less than 10 years of age she had been committed by a justice of the peace to an institution for delinquent women. Because of her youth, however, she was soon transferred to another more suitable institution. She was described by those in charge of her as a "strange child," a "waif of the streets who had learned much that was not good for her." She had been born out of wedlock. Her mother and her grandmother were reported as "questionable characters." Nevertheless, when she was about 12 years old she was released to her grandmother. In less than six months the grandmother became dissatisfied with the arrangement, and through the activity of two of the child-caring agencies secured a place for her in a private home. No mental examination was made of the little girl although her conduct would seem to indicate the need for one. Within five weeks three different foster homes had been found for her, but from each there came complaints of her bad behavior. "Very disobedient, unreasonable, and uncontrollable," said one guardian. "Lazy and ugly," said another; while the third guardians, the ones mentioned above, wrote "Very saucy; the girl must be taken away at once." The upshot of the situation was that she was committed to the girls' industrial school. (Case No. 520.)



## CONSTRUCTIVE MEASURES.

### SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS.

The findings of this study are based on an analysis of the histories of 513 children under 18 years of age, taken under care by Delaware agencies and institutions during a two-year period. The group was limited to those who were not only received by the agencies but were removed from their previous environment during that time and, therefore, does not indicate the total number of Delaware children being cared for during the period of the investigation.

The group selected according to the above limitations included 403 white and 110 Negro children, representing, respectively, 79 per cent and 21 per cent of the total. Compared with the proportion of Negroes in the general population, however, the number of Negro children was relatively large. Only 19 of the children were foreign born; but one-fourth of the total group were known to be of foreign or mixed parentage. Twelve per cent of all were known to have been born out of wedlock.

Seventy-six per cent (367) had their residence in Wilmington at the time of their removal by agencies. The study emphasizes the fact that this one large center contributed far more than a proportionate number of children, while the scattered population of the State contributed much less.

The number of family groups represented by these 513 children was 398, over one-third of the children having brothers or sisters included in the study. Many of the children were from large families, 43 per cent of them coming from families of five or more children. Of all the children taken under care not more than 3 per cent were known to be full orphans; not more than 31 per cent were known to be half-orphans. With due allowance for the cases in which the full facts were not known, not less than 50 per cent nor more than 66 per cent had both parents living.

Children removed from their parental homes—that is, from the guardianship of at least one of their own parents—numbered 389, or 76 per cent of the entire group. Children removed from other family homes—that is, from relatives or from foster guardians—numbered 96, or 19 per cent. The remaining 28 children were from various conditions; 3 had been living at service, 5 had been living independently in rooming or boarding houses, 6 had been homeless, 14 had been taken by transfer from one institution to another.

Slightly less than three-tenths (152) of the 513 children included in the study were from homes in which both parents were present and married, 28 having one step-parent; 55 children came from homes other than parental, presided over by a man and wife. For the remaining children, including 11 from homes in which two parents were present though their relationship had not been legalized, the home conditions were more or less irregular.

For 73 per cent of the children removed from their parental homes, unfavorable conditions were reported of one or more members of the family group. This statement is in every way conservative, inasmuch as among the remaining group there were a number, especially among the colored, for whom the information was incomplete. Alcoholism was the most frequently reported of any of the unfavorable social characteristics of parents, occurring usually in combination with other unfavorable social traits. In more than one-fourth of the parental homes from which children were removed, alcoholism was a deteriorating factor. More than one-fifth of the children removed from their parental homes were from households where one or both parents were reported as immoral. General conditions were on the whole better in the homes other than parental.

In the group of children removed from their parental homes, 48 per cent of those for whom conditions were reported were graded as coming from families with income adequate for a decent standard of living. In the group of children removed from other homes, 71 per cent of those for whom conditions were reported were so graded.

In 130 instances the children removed from parental homes came from household groups of which the mother was the economic head. In all, the mothers of 105 children were working away from home. Despite the number for whom conditions were not reported, at the utmost less than two-fifths of the children removed from parental homes, had the full advantage of a mother's care. Special analysis of the conditions seemed to indicate that for 10 per cent of the children a mother's pension might have eliminated the necessity for removal.

An analysis of the children's own personalities showed that 74 per cent of all the children 7 years of age and over had some record of delinquency. School-teachers commented almost unanimously upon the fact that the attendance records of the children included in the study had been among the poorest in their classes. The actual histories of some of the children who had been gainfully employed prior to their removal reveal the greatest irregularity of employment, a haphazard choice of occupations, and frequent changes.

In analyzing case histories for the reasons why agencies had removed children from their previous environment, it was found that

the immediate reason for the agency's action frequently obscured the fundamental causes of the difficulty. For example, 221 children were removed because of their delinquencies. Sometimes the delinquency could be traced to the deliberate instigation of the parents; sometimes the charge of delinquency concealed the fact that the child was defective physically or mentally. In 114 instances delinquencies were charged against one or both parents or guardians. In 33 cases the death of one or both guardians was the reason given by the agency for taking the child under care. The parents or guardians of 120 children were reported as being unable to continue care. For 16 children, the home was declared unfit.

Despite the fact that home-finding agencies of other States have placed out large number of dependent children in Delaware, the results of the study showed that institutional care was used by Delaware agencies to a greater extent than placing in family homes. At the time of their removal 83 per cent were placed in institutions while only 17 per cent were placed in private families.

The types of institutions to which the children were sent were two industrial schools, homes for dependent children, almshouses, and other institutions mainly outside the State. Twenty-seven per cent of the children, including a few who had been adjudged dependent or neglected, were received at the industrial schools. The total number of children placed in homes for dependent juveniles numbered 225; of these 48 were placed by court commitment, by far the larger number, 177, being placed informally either by agencies or by the personal request of the child's family or friends.

Delaware is among the States which still countenance the admission of children to almshouses. Babies born in the almshouses, while not included in the general discussion of this report, were some of them among the most abjectly dependent children of the State. It was the custom at two of the almshouses to enter the name of the child, at its birth, among the admissions of persons who had become public charges.

Of the children placed in other institutions, the majority were delinquent colored girls for whom no institution existed in Delaware.

Agencies in Delaware lacked special facilities for handling mentally defective children. For the 58 subnormal children included in the study, improper or unsuitable care was inevitable.

Those children for whom no maintenance was paid by the family to the agency or institution which had assumed care of the child constituted 70 per cent of the entire group.

Children whose cases had involved legal process had been brought before the juvenile court, courts of general sessions, local magistrates, and justices of the peace. That the quality of treatment received

under this diverse handling varied greatly is obvious. One of the greatest needs of Delaware, as seen in this study, was uniform legal protection for children throughout the State.

The amount of work done by agencies in preparing homes for the return of children was very slight. Not only was there little evidence of constructive work among families but there was sometimes evidence that families lacked redress or opportunity to defend themselves when agencies took action to remove children.

With the exception of the county almshouses, it was the general plan of agencies placing children to retain supervision over them. The necessity for careful selection of foster homes was illustrated by the unfortunate developments in the histories of some of the children.

#### SPECIAL NEEDS.

The limitations in the meaning of the word "dependency" as used in this study suggest of themselves the essential features of any preventive measures. If "dependent" children are defined as those taken under care as wards of agencies or institutions, the prevention of such dependency must lie in constructive effort to improve the conditions which necessitated their removal from their previous environment. Any form of public welfare that strengthens the integrity of the family, maintains standards of decency, and creates healthful surroundings with opportunities for education and recreation, operates to the benefit of the children of the family and reduces the chance of their becoming charges upon outside individuals and organizations.

In the report cited on the dependent, delinquent, and defective children of Delaware,<sup>17</sup> considerable space is devoted to the discussion of the future development of the child-caring activities of Delaware, including recommendations regarding the care of temporary dependents; the special needs of colored children; the regulation of the importation of children; the development of the system of mothers' pensions; the exclusion of children from almshouses; the extension of the juvenile court and probation system throughout the State, including the prosecution of adults for neglecting minors or for contributing to their delinquency; the care of the feeble-minded, with the introduction of medical and psychological examinations in the public schools and the establishment of special classes for backward children; State supervision of the charitable and correctional work of the State; and standardization of institutional methods.

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<sup>17</sup> Richardson, C. Spencer: *Dependent, Delinquent, and Defective Children of Delaware*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York City, March, 1918.



### Extension of juvenile-court and probation work.

The desirability of a State-wide probation system is illustrated by the case of a 12-year-old white girl living in the poorest section of one of the "down-State" communities, in home surroundings which were regarded by better persons of the town as unsuitable. A citizen made complaint, with the result that the child was immediately taken before a justice of the peace and removed to the girls' industrial school. When visited, the mother showed very little grasp of the real significance of the girl's removal. "She wasn't nearly so bad as some still running around and not taken from their homes," said the mother. The visitor's comment on the situation was: "Family evidently low grade; either poor or shiftless; not qualified to give girl all the training and discipline necessary. The supervision of a probation officer or 'big sister' would seem to have been preferable to removal from home."

A 14-year-old white girl, the daughter of a widow who bore a good character, was committed to the industrial school through the action of the local justice of the peace. The agent who removed the child reported that the mother could not control her, and the industrial school was told that she was immoral. The school, however, reported "good" characteristics for her after her admission. The mother's story was that the girl had been going about with a boy of the neighborhood against the wish of his mother, who made the complaint and had sufficient influence to win her point. The girl's mother felt that the action was not warranted. Whatever the merits of this particular case, it offers one more argument for State-wide probation.

Not only would the delinquent children coming before courts and magistrates outside Wilmington have been better handled through a juvenile court with adequate facilities for investigation and supervision, but the delinquents not coming through courts, though fewer in number, would have benefited by supervision. Moreover, through the work of probation officers, parents could have been brought to a realization of their own responsibilities. The case of a 16-year-old colored girl, removed at the request of her parents because they "could not control her," is not the only instance in which a child became a full expense to an institution while the parents were entirely relieved of further effort.

### Physical and mental examinations.

The need for physical and mental examination of children, not only in Wilmington, where the subject had been under consideration, but throughout the State, is made evident by such histories as the following:

The vagaries of one girl's conduct suggested a psychopathic condition; but, though her agency record covered a period of six years,



no mental examination of any sort was reported. At 9 years she was reported as "very nervous; seems tubercular"; at 10 years, "she makes no effort to learn"; at 14 years, she "is careless and indifferent, lacks concentration, depends upon others." At 15, she was reported to the police by a man who found her out of doors in an unconscious condition. She said that she had been assaulted, but not the slightest mark of violence was found upon her. About this time she developed a habit of fainting, or pretending to faint, whenever anyone antagonized her. Her family complained that she was bad tempered, strong willed, untruthful, impertinent, violent, thievish, and often stayed away from home. She had been expelled from school because she could not get along with her teachers. She had begun to make appointments with men, when her family requested her commitment to a disciplinary institution outside the State.

The young son of a well-to-do Delaware man behaved in a manner absolutely incomprehensible to his family and to his teachers. His home was comfortable and refined, but his parents could not control him. His teachers reported that they questioned his mentality. However, no mental specialist was immediately available, and the father, fearing that the boy might get into trouble in the community, took matters into his own hands and asked for the boy's commitment to the industrial school. The surroundings at the reform school were not calculated to benefit a boy who had not come into conflict with the law. As it happened, the boy was so dissatisfied that he made his escape and finally enlisted in the Army.

Another boy from a comfortable home, who needed mental examination and special treatment, was a 14-year-old white boy who, from the time he was 9 years old, showed thievish and vicious tendencies. His mother was described as nervous and rather indifferent to the boy's conduct. Evidently he was allowed to do much as he pleased, and, following his natural, depraved inclinations, he was brought before the juvenile court at different times for larceny and for sex offenses.

Another child whose history emphasized the need of mental hygiene in the public schools was a girl who had to be transferred, soon after her commitment to the industrial school, to an institution which cared for her at the birth of a child out of wedlock. From the time when she entered school, her reports showed unfavorable traits—one year, lack of industry; another year, inattention, irregular attendance, and poor conduct. At 14 years of age she went to work in a factory, where she seems to have been regular, earning, however, only \$5 a week. At 17 years of age she left home with a girl companion and two men and was shortly apprehended.

Physical and mental examinations not only are needed in schools, but also should be applied to all wards of agencies and institutions.

No institution can safeguard the welfare of its charges which does not require, before admission, a thorough test of every child's condition.

#### Special provision for the care of mentally defective children.

The results of mental examination of children at once force upon the public consideration of the provision of suitable care for the mentally defective, including not only the establishment of custodial institutions for the low-grade cases but a system of special training and supervision in the community, not only for those who are capable of at least partial self-support, but also those who can be safely provided for in the community. The higher-grade mental defectives—those most likely to be regarded as capable of independent careers—are apt to offer the most serious problems, and, though they may not require segregation, to need the most careful supervision and direction. The establishment of special classes for defective or handicapped children in connection with the public-school system is, assuredly, a part of the obligation which the American people assumed when they declared for general free education. The proper training of a defective child in good habits and self-control may save him from delinquency; the development of his capacity for self-help, through industrial training, may save him from becoming a financial charge upon others.

Delaware in 1917 appropriated funds for the establishment of an institution for the feeble-minded.<sup>18</sup> Wilmington is equipping special classes for backward children in the public schools. The present interest of the public in this subject may be regarded as a hopeful sign that activity in this direction will be extended.

#### Restriction of work of reformatory institutions.

The case histories of certain children committed to the industrial schools for trivial reasons suggest not only the need for State-wide juvenile probation and for suitable provision for defective children but also for the exclusion of "dependent" children from reformatories, improved facilities for temporary care, and the extension of the placing-out system.

That the influence of delinquent children upon those who become public charges through no fault of their own must necessarily be harmful seems obvious. Leaders in child-welfare work are convinced that the various types of children requiring institutional care should be carefully segregated; that every institution should limit its work to the care of its own chosen group; that reformatories are sufficiently burdened with the responsibility of delinquents; that other institutions should care specifically for the disabled or defec-

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<sup>18</sup> Laws, 1917, ch. 172. It is expected that one of the buildings will be open for the admission of patients by the spring of 1921.

tive; that children who do not in themselves constitute special problems, but who must be taken under agency care because of some defect in their environment, should have the protection of carefully selected and supervised foster homes.

In regard to an extension of the placing-out system it is generally agreed that "the carefully selected foster home is for the normal child the best substitute for the natural home."<sup>19</sup> That child-caring agencies of Delaware need have little difficulty in finding foster homes for their children is evidenced by the fact that for many years the State has been used extensively as a placing ground for children from outside the State. In 1916, a survey<sup>20</sup> of the State discovered 1,087 placed-out children, 660 of whom had been brought in from other States. In 1917 Delaware put a check upon the importation of dependent children by requiring that agencies placing children from outside Delaware file a bond of \$3,000 for every child placed.

#### Exclusion of children from almshouses.

The need for excluding children from almshouses is so obvious that it hardly requires comment. At the present time only a few States in the Union allow children to mingle with adults in the public poor-houses. Some States absolutely forbid the admission of children to almshouses—Connecticut, for example. Other States will not permit the admission of children of certain ages; Maine forbids admission of children between 2 and 16 years of age, and Missouri between 2 and 18 years. A number of States make partial restrictions; for example, Minnesota and Michigan will not admit a child who can be received at the State public school; Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and others permit the admission of idiots.

#### Enforcement of school attendance.

Enforcement of school attendance throughout the State would undoubtedly act as a deterrent on delinquency. The compulsory period of attendance in Delaware, at the time of the study, was five months, with the proviso that local school boards had authority to reduce the period to three months. Many districts, especially in the more remote rural sections where farm labor was difficult to procure, established the shorter period. The enforcement of the law was in the hands of the county superintendent. In rural districts, where there was only the county superintendent to look up absentees; in the towns, where the compulsory attendance could be regulated through the aid of police; and in Wilmington, where probation officers were required to include this additional task among their over-numerous duties,

<sup>19</sup> See Proceedings of the Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, 1909. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1909, pp. 192-197.

<sup>20</sup> Survey made by the U. S. Children's Bureau at the request of the governor for the information of the legislature. Report in manuscript.

there was room for improvement in the methods of reaching truant children. That irregularity of attendance was a conspicuous characteristic in the history of the children studied has already been noted. With more thorough supervision of the child's attendance, it is possible not only that delinquency could be reduced but also that impending family difficulties could be discovered in season to prevent disruption, resulting in child dependency.

#### **Improved regulation of employment.**

The unfortunate employment histories of some of the children included in this study, who shifted from one wrongly chosen occupation to another, with intervals for mischief, suggest that vocational guidance and training, with assurance of suitable and regular work, would have brought about an entirely different career and possibly obviated the necessity for the child's removal from his home.

Along the line of labor legislation, the greater protection of working parents by safety requirements, by workmen's compensation acts, and by health insurance must mean the prevention of a certain amount of child dependency. Delaware in 1917 took a forward step when the legislature enacted a workmen's compensation law and established a State industrial accident board to enforce it.

#### **Recreation centers.**

Improved neighborhood conditions and the establishment of increased recreational facilities, especially in congested city neighborhoods, would tend to reduce the amount of delinquency. Numerous instances of delinquency occurred near railroads—localities which are usually among the most neglected. Since 1911, Wilmington has had a number of playgrounds open during the two months of the summer school vacation. Outside Wilmington very little consideration had been given to the subject. Attention to the needs of colored people, both in regard to housing conditions and to neighborhood recreation had been very slight.

#### **Public-health work.**

To what extent an adequate program of public health would reduce dependency can only be conjectured. In the information gathered relative to the physical condition of parents and children, however, there was evidence of certain preventable conditions. Tuberculosis, for example, was reported as existing in the households from which 24 children were removed. Also, 48 children were reported as having tuberculous parents. Altogether, these conditions affected 54 children, or about one-tenth of the whole group. Of the 106 instances in which the child's own mother was reported dead, the causes of death were stated for 61; in 17 cases as tuberculosis, in 20, as complications at child-birth, both of which causes of death are at the



present time regarded as including a considerable percentage of preventable cases. At any rate, for at least one-seventh of the children included in the study conditions existed which are generally considered as a profitable field for preventive health work.

#### **Standardization of agency care.**

Delaware has the advantage of being sufficiently small in population and in area to make standardization through State regulation and supervision a comparatively easy matter. Within the past few years several measures of social legislation have been enacted which are comparable to the best in the country. In 1917 a number of agencies dealing with dependent, neglected, and delinquent children organized a new society the purpose of which was to do State-wide work, especially for dependent children, in cooperation with existing agencies. This agency, the Delaware Children's Bureau, has entered upon case-work with individual children and has taken the lead in constructive child-welfare work. In 1919 a State board of charities was created. The centralization and standardization of work under this board is one of the fundamental improvements which now appear to be under way and which will inevitably remove many of the conditions dealt with in this report.



## APPENDIX.—SCHEDULE USED IN STUDY.

U. S. Department of Labor  
Children's Bureau.

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Agent

### OUTLINE FOR STUDY OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Institutions or agencies .....                | 2. Name of child .....                               |
| 4. Present address of child .....                | 3. Class of case .....                               |
| 5. Original address .....                        | 6. Place of birth .....                              |
| 7. Type of home .....                            | 8. Date of birth .....                               |
|  | 9. Legitimate.....<br>Illegitimate.....              |
| 10. Name of ..... father .....                   | 11. Address .....                                    |
| 12. Name of ..... mother .....                   | 13. Address .....                                    |
| 14. Nativity of father.....mother..... Case..... | 15. Years in U. S.: Father..... Mother..... Case..   |
| 16. Color of father.....mother..... Case.....    | 17. Years in State (case).....in county or city..... |
18. Sources of information with dates.....
19. Date of child's removal..... 20. Reasons.....
21. Household group at time of child's removal:

Name.	Relation.	Year of birth.	Conjugal condition.	Occupation or school.	Wage.	Regular employment.	Special characteristics, mental and physical defects, delinquencies, etc.
Father.....							
Mother.....							
1.....							
2.....							
3, etc.....							

22. Other sources of income. Specify.....
23. Estimated annual income of family for year previous to child's removal.....
24. Members of child's own family not in same household group (at time of removal):

Name.	Relation.	Year of birth.	Conjugal condition.	Occupation or school.	Wage.	Regular employment.	Special characteristics, mental and physical defects, delinquencies, etc.	Whereabouts.
.....								
.....								
.....								
.....								

(25-30 to be filled out only when parent or parents appear in above list.)

- |                                     |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 25. Father's race and nativity..... | 26. Years in U. S..... |
| 27. Father's present address.....   |                        |
| 28. Mother's race and nativity..... | 29. Years in U. S..... |
| 30. Mother's present address.....   |                        |
- (31-33 to be filled out only when child was removed from parental home prior to two-year period—Nov. 1, 1915.)
31. Date of child's leaving parental home.....
32. Reasons for child's leaving parental home.....
33. Description of parental home.....

## DESCRIPTION OF HOME FROM WHICH CHILD WAS REMOVED.

34. Character of dwelling—sanitary condition and repair; cleanliness; number of rooms; rent, etc.:  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
35. Type of neighborhood and neighborhood influences:  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
36. Character of family and home life (characteristics of father, mother, fraternity; defects, diseases, delinquencies, etc.; economic circumstances, including public and private aid):  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
37. Child's characteristics (physical and mental condition, delinquencies, etc.):  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
38. Child's school history:  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
39. Child's record of employment:  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
40. Child's environment subsequent to removal. (If placed out, describe dwelling, neighborhood, and guardians' home life, in usual order.)-----
41. Record of agency treatment of child:  
 Prior to removal ----- Subsequent to removal -----
42. Constructive work done with family before or after child's removal (including agencies interested in family, and summary of agency treatment)-----
43. Means by which child might have been kept with family-----
44. Present possibilities of assumption of responsibility for child by family-----

