

T H E   U N I V E R S I T Y   O F   M A N I T O B A

A Study of Some of the General Characteristics of  
Families Involved in Desertions in Winnipeg during  
the Month of October 1957

Being the report of a Research Project submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Social Work.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Disharmony in marriage has been approached from many points of view. Psychologists, sociologists, clergymen, physicians, psychiatrists, educators, lawyers, and social workers - all have examined aspects of the problem. The following is an attempt to examine a segment of this field through families that are involved in desertion.

From reading about the subject, it appears that the basic causes of desertion, like those of divorce, are found in marital discord. But there is one additional factor in the case of desertion which is not present in connection with divorce. The person who initiates a petition for divorce is following the rules which society has laid down for those who wish to sever the family bonds. The rights of the family will be protected by the court. But the deserter appears to be one who does not take responsibility for the pressures of life and family, and allows both the law and the rights and needs of his family to be neglected. The question thus arises as to whether or not certain groups in our population are especially lacking in certain scruples.

With this in mind, I would like to base the following project on some of the general characteristics of the husbands, wives, and children as listed in the identifying information

of the various sample cases.

Discussions of desertion usually emphasize the fact that the cause of broken homes is domestic discord. This shows that the primary problem is marital unhappiness, and not the desertion in which it eventuates. Perhaps, in most cases, too much attention is given to the final break, and not enough to the underlying family crisis. Because of this, I would like to compare the results of studying these characteristics with other studies completed on marital adjustment, and see if our findings have a relation to marital discord findings.

Thus the hypothesis is that there are some characteristics common to all deserted families and that, according to other studies, these characteristics are related to marital discord.

In looking for a research project, Miss Maysie Roger, Director of Research for the School of Social Work, approached the various Winnipeg agencies for suggestions. Because of the seriousness of the problem of desertion and the lack of information on the subject, Mr. Patrick, Director of the Public Welfare Department, City of Winnipeg, suggested that a study be done in this field. The other agencies concurred with this suggestion. The Director of the School accepted the suggestion, and the study was set up as a pilot group research project. The research is to be completed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work for the 1957 - 58 school year.

The sample cases will be chosen by the six agencies: the Family Court, the Family Bureau, the Childrens Aid Society, the Child Guidance Clinic, the Department of Public Welfare (City of Winnipeg), and the Department of Provincial Health and Welfare, in accordance with our definition of desertion. The definition of the deserted family will be as follows:

1) Where there are couples living apart at any time during the month of October 1957, except where they are living apart because of divorce or a separation agreement.

This will include:

- A. Where the partner has wilfully left and is not supporting his family.
- B. Where the partner has wilfully left but since then has received a court order for support.
- C. Where the wife leaves without or with the children and, of her own choice, does not follow it up by court action.
- D. Where the wife leaves with or without the children, takes court action, and the action goes against her.

This will exclude:

- A. Mutual agreement to separate or to divorce.
- B. Separation by court order.

The information will be gathered by the students working on the project. They will read the case records provided and record the needed information on a prepared schedule. This schedule contains questions pertinent to each student's particular study of the total picture of desertion. The next

step will be to do a "trial run". Some students will go to each agency for half a day, read the files, and complete the schedule, paying particular attention to the instructions. Following this, we will have an idea of the time it takes to do one file, of the pertinence of the questions asked, of the points that need clarification, and of the adequacy of the schedule. We may find that the time needed to read the total number of files will be more than we can spare. If this is the case, and keeping in mind our research methods, we will confine ourselves to a reduced sample. When the satisfactory schedules are completed, they will be checked and re-checked by another student in order to detect mistakes. This material will be coded according to printed instructions, and then photostatically copied on small cards. Each card will have all the information taken from one case. Each student will receive one card for each case.

In order to answer our main question, there are several sub-questions which we will have to answer first. As these questions will be dealt with in some detail in Chapter III, I will only mention them here for the sake of focus. These questions are as follows:

1. Does the age at marriage relate to desertion? The disparity between the ages of the married couple?
2. Does the number of years that the couple have been married relate to desertion?
3. Do the number of children in the family and the closeness of their births relate to desertion?

4. Was the wife pregnant at the time of desertion?
5. Do the occupations contribute to desertion?
6. Was the husband unemployed at the time of desertion?
7. Is there any relation between religion and desertion?
8. Is there any relation between nationality and

desertion?

9. Do the academic standings of the husband and wife relate to desertion?

10. Does the deserter come home periodically?

The reason I am confining myself to some of the characteristics, even though a more comprehensive study would be preferable, is that the required information for such a comprehensive study is not available in all the files. In order to obtain a sound overall picture, I will have to use that information which is common to most of the files.

The material that I am using for the comparison is a definite limitation. As there have been few recent studies published, I find that most of the material is taken from projects completed several years ago. More recent material would probably make a better comparison.

Another point is that most of the comparison studies were conducted in the United States. I therefore find myself comparing the Canadian sample to American samples. In dealing with marital discord, it is felt that the problems would be similar regardless of whether the sample is Canadian or American.



As will be seen in Chapter II, my bibliography consists of reading on desertion, divorce, family life, marital adjustment, and marital discord. I have paid particular attention to valid studies completed by various authorities on the significant factors that I am concerned with. Many of these studies will be used as a comparison to my findings.

Most authorities on the subject agree that desertion is the result of marital discord in one form or another. Because of this, I have also concentrated on material concerning marital adjustment and marital maladjustment. I feel that I can base my findings on much of this proven information, and perhaps show that there are characteristics which, when found in one or both spouses in a particular marriage, may cause that marriage to be prone to marital discord. At the same time, I can compare my results with what is considered ideal for good marital adjustment. From this, I should be able to show if the characteristics are close to those noticeable in good marital adjustment or maladjustment.

The main source for the comparison material is from periodicals such as the American Sociological Review, Social Forces, American Psychological Review, The Family, etc., and many individual books written by such authorities as Groves, Hollis, Nimkoff, Hill, Good, Mowrer, Terman, Burgess and Cottrell. The Canadian census and pamphlets issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics are also valuable in obtaining correct information on population, etc..

The proposed method of analysis and presentation of the

data will be statistical and descriptive, using tables to give a clear picture whenever possible. The findings of this study will be compared to the findings of other studies as mentioned earlier. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter III.

In Chapter II, I will discuss material compiled and studies done by authorities on the factors that I am interested in.

In discussing the study proper, Chapter III (Methods) will describe the methods used in selecting the sample, in administering the schedule, in the composition of the schedule, in the coding, and in the manner in which the findings will be analyzed.

In Chapter IV, we will analyze the pertinent material from the "photo-stat" cards.

In the Summary and Conclusions, Chapter V, the significant findings will be discussed in relation to the questions and to other studies.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The investigation of marital adjustment is still almost a virgin field for sociological and social research. While excellent studies have been made by the Mowrers, Hamilton, Dickinson and Beam, Davis, Jessie Bernard, Popenoe, Terman, Burgess, Cottrell, Hixenbaugh, Woodhouse, Hart, and others, the samples have been varied and have been studied with different objectives in mind. However, it is thought by many that the probabilities of success in marriage are affected by such factors as: nationality, religion, education, occupation, ages at marriage, number of years married, and the number of children. Whether or not this prediction is true in every particular case - a matter which we shall shortly investigate - it is interesting because it shows a general appreciation of the fact that some conditions are more favourable to marriage than others. Not as well appreciated, however, is the fact that marriage itself is somewhat of a strain upon the original nature of man. Marriage is good for man, as shown by the evidence that married people generally live longer, enjoy better health, and get into less trouble than single people. Even so, marriage, as the culturally organized relationship of a male and a female, places certain strains upon human nature that are either lacking or less

pronounced in the unmarried state. Marriage generally means a degree of intimacy between two persons which is greater than that between friends; marriage is the more intense relationship, with more of the characteristics of the participants laid open to view than would be the case with friendship. In point of time, as well, marriage is an outreaching experience, a twenty-four hour a day, fifty-two week a year relationship. If tensions develop, it is more difficult to get away from one's spouse than from a friend or acquaintance without doing damage to the relationship. Marriage also makes many demands upon the individual which cannot well be shifted. "Because it is such an intense, such a protracted, such an exacting experience, marriage itself is frequently a source of tensions."<sup>1</sup>

Discussions of desertion usually emphasize the fact that the basic cause of broken homes is domestic discord, and the point is important, for it shows that the primary problem is marital unhappiness and not the desertion in which it eventuates. As a rule, too much attention is given to the final surgical action and not enough to the underlying family crisis. It is well to keep this point in mind, for there are some disorganized homes which are not broken. These couples are unhappy, but they do not separate, because of various circumstances, such as religious scruples, a sense of responsibility towards the children, and considerations of occupation

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<sup>1</sup>Meyer F. Nimkoff, "The Relation of Parental Dominance to Parent-child Conflict", Social Forces, IX (June, 1931), pp. 559-63

and social status.

There is always the possibility that the alternative to an unhappy marriage may be even less attractive than the marriage itself. How numerous such cases are we have no way, of knowing, for we have no data on the proportion of all unhappy homes that are eventually broken. What we do know is that the proportion of marriages ending in desertion has greatly increased during the last half-century.

Desertion and divorce are family problems that have much in common. On account of this likeness, desertion is commonly called "the poor man's divorce".<sup>2</sup> Although this statement correctly brings out the fact that desertion among the poorer classes is often a substitute for divorce, it is misleading insofar as it conveys the impression that these two forms of family disintegration are the same, except that one is confined exclusively to people having a lower economic status. Desertion is one type of family disintegration; divorce is another. The wealthy, the professional classes, and those socially well established turn for various reasons, when family life becomes unsatisfactory, to the divorce courts for relief, while the more mobile unskilled worker, or the individual whose occupation provides great economic freedom, cuts himself away from family difficulties by merely leaving home and disappearing. There are many reasons why the well-to-do should prefer the use of the legal method of

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<sup>2</sup>Ernest R. Groves, "Divorce and Desertion", The American Family, (J. P. Lippincott Co., Chicago, Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 260 - 262.

getting free from marital difficulties. In addition to the other social advantages of divorce, it is the customary way of getting freedom in their class and, therefore, in accord with the proprieties. In the professional class, divorce frequently carries with it social risks from which the individuals shrink, but to attempt to escape these by family desertion would be ruinous; in some cases, it would mean throwing away a professional reputation and giving up all hopes of a second start in one's vocation, as well as negating the possibility of another legal marriage. Here also, the class code does not include family desertion as a proper means of getting rid of marital difficulties.

A study of the conscious motives that lead men in the poorer classes to leave their families discloses the fact that desertion is not just an easier and cheaper way of ending matrimony than is offered by divorce. Often the husband seeks not so much to get rid of the family as to become free from an economic burden, from conditions of work that seem intolerable or from unemployment that appears hopeless. Then the family is not so much repudiated as left behind. The man is consciously seeking not so much a permanent separation from his family as a brief spell of relief from the heavy load he has been carrying or an opportunity to start afresh. To be sure, rationalization is as often found in the motives that lead to desertion as in other lines of conduct where the reason built into consciousness conceals the deeper desires that bring about the behaviour. It is easy for the

desertion that starts as a temporary expediency to become a permanent separation, and in many of these cases the men drift into a complete and final severance of family ties rather than deliberately break from the family with a definite decision to seek a divorce.

It is easy for the unskilled or construction worker to pack up and leave a family situation which has become troublesome. Indeed, this procedure is often the line of least resistance, for it seems, and often actually is, easier to go than to stay. Wanderlust and the desire for travel are at times contributory motives, and they may even constitute occasionally the chief cause of desertion. It is this type of desertion that has led Social Work to call desertion "the poor man's vacation from his family",<sup>3</sup> rather than a divorce.

Where the desertion results from a family incompatibility which in some other class would be likely to end in a divorce, it is easy to understand why so many men prefer to leave their family rather than resort to the legal method of separation through the divorce court. They are familiar with desertion, for it is frequent enough in their class to be a matter of common knowledge, and they have little understanding of court procedure, particularly when they are immigrants who are perhaps suspicious of any process that has to do with our legal machinery. Moreover, if they have religious scruples against divorce, they may find desertion less

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp. 260 - 262.

antagonizing to their conscience.

Relatively recent writings have further developed the theory of the relation of occupation to marital adjustment. One phase of the theory is that occupations characterized by marked physical mobility and by slight group control tend to show a high degree of marital instability, whereas occupations subject to stationary employment and community supervision have low rates of marital maladjustment.<sup>4</sup> Mobility is thought to be bad for marriage because it means frequent uprooting of individuals, which attenuates group ties; the separation of family members; and the development of divergent patterns of behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

When the happiness ratings of husbands in a considerable number of occupations were examined, it was noted that the proportion of happy marriages was very high among school-teachers, and very low among travelling salesmen.<sup>6</sup> These ratings are explained in terms of the theory that travelling salesmen are among the most mobile and least supervised persons in our population, while teachers are among the least mobile and the most highly controlled. The two factors of physical mobility and social control are not unrelated, since

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<sup>4</sup>Ernest W. Burgess & Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939).

<sup>5</sup>Harvey J. Locke, "Mobility and Family Disorganization", American Sociological Review, V (August 1940), pp. 489 - 494.

<sup>6</sup>Richard O. Lang, "The Ratings of Happiness in Marriage", (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago Libraries, 1932), American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIX, (1943 - 44), p. 248.



it is difficult to exercise control over individuals whose work keeps them on the move.

The theory expounded about leads to the question as to whether occupations are selective of personality traits. For instance, does the occupation of travelling salesman in general attract persons who have habits and attitudes which distinguish them from those, let us say, who go into teaching? If such selection does occur, the further question may be asked: what significance, if any, do the selected traits have for marriage? Terman has presented some evidence showing that the happily married are more emotionally stable and more highly socialized than the unhappily married,<sup>7</sup> and Winch's studies suggest that these attributes are probably of premarital rather than of postmarital origin.<sup>8</sup>

If occupations are selective of personality traits, as some believe, then the effect of the occupation itself may be largely limited to reinforcing an already existing tendency in the individual toward marital stability or instability.<sup>9</sup>

The age difference between husband and wife in its relation to happiness in marriage has always been a subject of popular discussion. Hornell Hart and Wilmer Shields did a pioneer study based upon a comparison of the ages at marriage

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<sup>7</sup>Lewis A. Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938).

<sup>8</sup>Robert Winch, "Personality Characteristics of Engaged and Married Couples," American Journal of Sociology, XLVI (1941), pp. 686 - 697.

<sup>9</sup>M. F. Nimkoff, "Occupational Factors and Marriage", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIX (1943 - 44).

of couples appearing in the Domestic Relations Court of Philadelphia and the ages given by couples applying in the same city for licenses to marry. They summarized their findings as follows ..... that the ideal age for marriage is about 29 for the groom and 24 for the bride; that deviations of four years on either side of the ideal age for the groom, or of two years on either side of the ideal age for the bride, make no appreciable difference; that marriage in which the bride is under twenty-one years of age, or the groom under twenty-four, become rapidly more dangerous as younger ages are considered; that marriages in which either party is nineteen or younger are from ten to one hundred times as risky as marriages at the ideal age; and that marriages of persons over thirty-eight years of age are from two to five times as likely to result in domestic difficulties as are marriages at the ideal age.<sup>10</sup>

According to the popular notion, the husband should be older than his wife, but not much older. Investigation of the age differences of married couples in relation to marital happiness does not, however, substantiate this notion. In the Burgess-Cottrell sample, the largest proportion of good adjustments was made where the wife was older than the husband, and the next best record was made by marriages where the husband was eight or more years older than the wife. These marriages also tended more to extremes of adjustment,

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<sup>10</sup>Hornell Hart and Wilmer Shields, "Happiness in Relation to Age at Marriage", Social Hygiene, XII (1926), pp. 403 - 410.

for they also had larger proportions of poor adjustment.<sup>11</sup>  
 In the Terman study, it was found that in general, the happiest couples were those in which the husbands were from three to five years older than the wives, but the happiest husbands were twelve or more years older than their wives, while the happiest group of wives had husbands from four to ten years younger than themselves.<sup>12</sup> A big age difference probably suggests a selective factor. There are a few persons who want much older mates, perhaps because of attitudes of dependency. Such persons are happy when they get the maternal or paternal protection they want, but this does not mean that all of us would be happy under such circumstances. It is therefore doubtful whether the age factor, within the marital range, is in itself important for marital happiness.<sup>13</sup>  
 Burgess and Cottrell state<sup>14</sup> that an examination of their findings indicates that there is a very low proportion of "well adjusted" couples, and a very high proportion of "poorly adjusted" couples, where the wife was under nineteen years and the husband under twenty-two years of age at the time of marriage. In the great majority of cases there seems to be no doubt regarding the unfortunate effects of very

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<sup>11</sup>Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "Age Difference", Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), p. 162.

<sup>12</sup>Lewis M. Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Success, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.; 1938), p. 183.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>14</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit., pp. 116 - 117.

early marriages. They feel that many of these marriages are hasty unions, often after short acquaintance, generally entered into despite the opposition of parents, with the wife unprepared for the duties of managing a household, and with the husband unable to support a wife.

They did not feel that their data gave a clear answer to the question of the optimum age for marriage; although there was some indication that the age group twenty-eight to thirty years (practically identical with Hart and Shields' age of twenty-nine)<sup>15</sup> was the most favourable period for men to marry, they nevertheless felt that the number of cases was too small to be conclusive.

Terman found in his study<sup>16</sup> that a slight tendency to lesser happiness is reported for women who marry under twenty and for men under twenty-two. He added that those who marry in their teens are more apt to be headstrong and unstable than those who marry later, so that immaturity rather than age is probably the crucial factor.

The Burgess-Cottrell and Terman studies gave information on the factors associated with happiness in marriage. They did not consider the length of time to adjust in marriage and its relationship to happiness in marriage. A study to

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<sup>15</sup>Hornell Hart and Wilmer Shields, "Happiness In Relation to Age and Marriage", Journal of Social Hygiene, (October 1926), pp. 403 - 407.

<sup>16</sup>Terman, op. cit.; p. 181.

cover these factors was completed by Landis.<sup>17</sup> His study confirms the findings of others that ages at marriage are associated with happiness in marriage.

Many writers feel that another factor affecting the likelihood of desertion and divorce is the number of years married. Nimkoff indicates in his book, Marriage and the Family,<sup>18</sup> that divorces are more likely to occur in the early years of marriage when couples are young, than in middle life or old age. This is not surprising since youth is the time for mating, and it is also the time during which prospects for remarriage are greatest, especially for women, in case the first marriage proves unsatisfactory. It will be noted that more than one-tenth of all the divorces in the United States occur within the first year of marriage, and approximately two-thirds go to couples who have been married less than ten years. Since the average couple in the United States marries in the late twenties, at least four-fifths of all divorces are granted to couples whose average age is under forty. He feels that what we have, apparently, is a relatively unstable family system in the early years of marriage and a more stable family in the forties. Among preliterates, the stability of the later years of marriage is impressive compared to the instability of earlier years.

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<sup>17</sup>Judson T. Landis, "Length of Time Required to Achieve Adjustment in Marriage", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. II (Dec., 1946).

<sup>18</sup>Meyer F. Nimkoff, "Family Disorganization", Marriage and the Family, (The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947), p. 631.

Nimkoff leaves us with the question, is not, therefore, divorce largely a problem of the younger marriage?

Studies of divorce completed by Mowrer<sup>19</sup> and the United States Census<sup>20</sup> indicate that the highest percentage of separations of couples who are later divorced occur in the first year of marriage, and the percentage of such separations declines regularly with each successive year. From this fact it might be inferred that marital adjustment is most difficult in the first year of marriage and becomes easier with the passage of time.

A common belief is that children add to the happiness of a marriage and that, conversely, the lack of children is detrimental to marital adjustment. The idea, perhaps, derives from the fact that parenthood is the natural purpose of marriage, and infertility represents a negation of the reason for which mating occurs in the natural world. This argument is dulled somewhat by the fact that marriage for human beings is a cultural phenomenon, not a purely natural one, and many couples have other reasons for mating, a prominent one being the desire for companionship.

In looking again at the studies of Burgess and Cottrell,

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<sup>19</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, Family Disorganization, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927), p. 86.

<sup>20</sup>United States Census Bulletin 96, "Marriage and Divorce", (1887 - 1946), p. 44.

we find that of five hundred and twenty-six couples reporting as to children, the majority, two hundred and ninety-three, had no children; one hundred and seventy-four had one child; and fifty-five had two or more children.<sup>21</sup>

Apparently in this sample of cases, there is no difference in marriage adjustment between couples with no children and those with one child. There is, however, a marked difference in "good" adjustment between couples with no children or with one child, and couples with two or three children.

They point out that because of the small number of years married that is characteristic of the cases in the study, it would be unwise to draw hasty conclusions from the data presented. The study of "Ratings of Marital Happiness" by R. O. Lang furnishes a large number of cases grouped according to the number of years married. His data indicates that the effect of the number of children varies with the number of years married.

He states, "In the first two years of marriage, those marriages without children were rated happier than those marriages with children. The next two years of marriage showed about the same tendency, but the variation was not so marked. Those marriages of five years and over showed the general tendency to rate marriages with one or two children happier than those marriages with no children or

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<sup>21</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit., "Number of Children and Marital Adjustment", p. 259.

more than two children."<sup>22</sup>

Nimkoff writes that one of the most important considerations affecting the probability of divorce is the size of family. More than half of all divorces are granted to couples without children, and in an additional one-fifth of the cases, only one child is involved, whereas only about one-fifth of married couples are childless. He feels that it is not clear whether children contribute to marital happiness or just keep parents who want a divorce from seeking one.<sup>23</sup>

The report to follow represents an excerpt from a study of one thousand and fifty-three cases of family desertion which were referred to the Manhattan and Bronx Family Bureau through various sources during the calendar year of 1926. Because of space, we will confine ourselves to a study of the four hundred and twenty-three miscellaneous cases. Out of these, sixty-eight were childless marriages, and the number of children in the fruitful marriages, at the first desertion, were recorded as follows: one child, 121; two children, 81; three children, 60; four children, 31; five children, 13; six children, 10; seven children, 3; nine children, 2; ten children, 1. Of the above number, eighteen

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<sup>22</sup>R. O. Lang, "Ratings of Marital Happiness", (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago Libraries, 1932), American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 49 (1943 - 44), pp. 49 - 50.

<sup>23</sup>Nimkoff, op. cit.; p. 630.



were recorded as pregnancy desertions.<sup>24</sup>

The effect of schooling on marital happiness is not entirely consistent. Burgess and Cottrell report that, with a few slight exceptions, increased chances of success in marriage go with a rising level of education,<sup>25</sup> but other studies (Terman<sup>26</sup>; Bernard<sup>27</sup>; Kirkpatrick<sup>28</sup>) report only a negligible correlation. They point out that there appears to be a slightly greater degree of happiness among wives whose husbands are most highly educated. The discrepancy between the studies may be more apparent than real, and may be due to the probability that mental ability, not amount of schooling, is the important variable affecting marital happiness. They mentioned that for a woman to marry a man with less education is a greater risk than the other way around.

Some people state that the level attained in formal education enters into a person's conception of himself and into his status in the eyes of other people. It is generally assumed that educational achievement is associated with increased personal efficiency and stability. It has been found that educational opportunities should, and to a growing extent do, increase the probability that a person will be

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<sup>24</sup>Charles Zunsner, "Family Desertion", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CXLV (September 1929), pp. 98 - 104.

<sup>25</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit.; p. 122.

<sup>26</sup>Terman, op. cit.; p. 183.

<sup>27</sup>Jessie Bernard, "Factors in the Distribution of Success in Marriage", American Journal of Sociology, XL (July 1934), pp. 49 - 60.

more objective and intelligent in his social relationships, more tolerant in attitude, and better equipped with reliable information about the sexual and other adjustments of married life. It also seems true that the higher the educational level, the longer marriage is postponed.

Various studies have shown that desertion does not represent so sharp and final a break as divorce. Most deserters leave home more than once. In one study, eighty-seven percent of the total number were 'repeaters',<sup>29</sup> while in another investigation it was found that fifty percent of the deserters had returned after previous desertions.<sup>30</sup>

The pregnancy deserter is well known to the social worker, and several theories accounting for him have been advanced. It may be that he leaves because of his wife's general attitude and irritability. Perhaps he dislikes the disorganization of the home during the confinement, with its additional responsibilities in case of economic strain. Or perhaps he thinks that the family will be more apt to receive assistance if the wage earner is absent. In several families, in one study, the combination of unemployment and pregnancy was too much for the man to overcome.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>C. Kirkpatrick, "Factors in Marital Adjustment", American Journal of Sociology, XLIII (1937), pp. 270 - 283.

<sup>29</sup>J. C. Colcord, Broken Homes: A Study of Family Desertion and Its Social Treatment, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1919), pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>30</sup>E. F. O'Neill, "Report on a Study of One Hundred Cases of Desertion", The Family, IX (January 1929), pp. 287 - 291.

<sup>31</sup>Dorothy O'Rourke, "Fifty Family Deserters: An inquiry

Colcord suggests that some pregnancy deserters take the step because they hope that their wives will bring about an abortion. "But this is a modern sophisticated development and the institution of 'pregnancy desertion' is one of undoubted antiquity. Its prevalence among certain European immigrants would almost point to its being a racial tradition."<sup>32</sup> Eubank speaks of the fact that "many men may confidently be relied upon to desert on each occasion of their wives' confinement, unable or unwilling to face the problem of financing additional expense."<sup>33</sup> In this study, desertion occurred at pregnancy in fourteen percent of the families.

O'Rourke concluded that there are usually factors in addition to the pregnancy itself which account for a man's desertion at this time. The fact that men desert at pregnancy just as they do at unemployment or some other unfavourable condition would tend to show that desertion may become a habit of escape from any disconcerting situation.<sup>34</sup>

There are three kinds of cultural disharmony that could be detected in the various writings on desertion. These were differences in religious or ethnic backgrounds among members

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into the Reasons for their Desertions", Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. I, #4 (June 1931), pp. 394 - 395.

<sup>32</sup>Colcord, op. cit., pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>33</sup>E. E. Eubank, "A Study of Family Desertion" (Private edition of doctoral dissertation distributed by the University of Chicago Library, 1916).

<sup>34</sup>O'Rourke, loc. cit..

of the family and differences between previous and present cultural environments due to immigration.

Many workers on desertion believe that nationality is a factor in desertion, that persons of certain nationality desert more readily than others. Mowrer found, in his study of Chicago in 1921, that in proportion to their percentage of the population, Negro, Slavic and South European groups apparently contribute a disproportionate amount of desertion.<sup>35</sup> In twenty-eight percent of the cases studied by Brandt, husband and wife were of different nationality, whereas in the same year only eight and one-half percent of all marriages in the United States were mixed marriages, and less than thirteen percent were of this sort in New York City, where the desertion rate is highest.<sup>36</sup>

The career of the immigrant in North America illustrates the difficulties of a family adjusted to one culture adapting itself to widely different social conditions. The problem created is not merely that which we see in the immigrant who has recently arrived and cannot speak English. The helplessness of the foreigner who speaks another language than ours and has been accustomed to a very unlike social environment may attract our attention because of his need of assistance, but often the adult who has been with us

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<sup>35</sup> Ernest R. Mowrer, The Family, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 164.

<sup>36</sup> L. Brandt, Family Desertion, (The Charity Organization Society of New York City, 1905).

five, ten, or fifteen years and who speaks English and wears American clothes is, in spite of appearance, so limited in habit and attitude to his former experience as to make him almost as badly adjusted to North American civilization as he was the day he landed on our shores.

The tug between the old and the new is bound to show itself to some extent in the atmosphere of the immigrant home. Some feel that it is the gulf that develops all too commonly between the parents and children that constitutes the graver social problem.

Although the child, to all outward appearance, has become thoroughly North American, it is seldom that he has received no injury in his social development because of the antagonistic contact between the culture of his home and that of the school and community. At school, he has been taught one thing and at home another until he finds it difficult to commit himself absolutely to either one of his contending environments. Perhaps he changes his name to one more North American in sound, and ridicules the customs to which the parents attempt to adhere. What he does brings great pain to his parents, and his regret for their suffering makes him react excessively, even to such an extent that he denounces things American, or stifles his conscience and smothers affection in his determination to escape the mark of his parents' culture. Inconsistency of conduct is the more natural since the immigrant of the second generation finds it almost impossible to hold steadfastly either to his

sympathies for North American life or to his affectionate regard for the ways of his parents.

If he marries a girl who has been brought up in a home consistently American or Canadian, the new family is almost certain to be overshadowed by the tragic conflict of his original family circle. In his attitude towards his wife, he is apt to be inconsistent, at times acting in an intolerant manner under the influence of his parents' tradition, at other times being over-generous in his desire to be characteristically North American. It is difficult for him not to show the same division which has been built into his personality in his dealings with his own children. As he senses their difficulties, he feels anew the discord which he suffered in his father's home.

Every person bears the impress of his cultural background. These are constituted by the body of memories, sentiments, and attitudes acquired in childhood that make an adult feel "more at home" with persons similarly reared, and "more a stranger" with those of different cultural backgrounds. Some indexes of the impress of cultural background upon the person are certain fundamental attitudes and values, pronunciations and idioms in language, manner and mannerisms, and food preferences. In cases of intermarriage between persons of widely different cultural background, one or both of the spouses may be more or less irritated by behaviour and attitudes, which reflect differences in their early rearing.

The stability and success of a marriage are often said to be largely related to denominational preference, mixed-religious marriages being particularly hazardous. Two reasons for this have been stated by Mowrer: "First, some religious affiliations because of the emphasis of the church upon the sanctity of marriage lead to greater family stability. Secondly, marriage between persons affiliated to different faiths complicates the problem of marriage adjustment by providing the background for conflict over religion."<sup>37</sup> Sociologists have also found in the religious composition of the population a ready explanation for variation in divorce rates between nations or areas within a country or between certain nationality groups.

Apparently reflecting the viewpoint at the turn of the century, a writer in 1889 stated that divorces were found "almost entirely among the Protestant white population."<sup>38</sup>

Whether or not Catholics rarely got a divorce prior to 1900, it was recognized more and more as time went on that divorce was not a phenomenon peculiar to any religious group. The prevalence of desertion among Catholics continued to be explained, however, as a consequence of the prohibition

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<sup>37</sup>E. R. Mowrer, Disorganization, Personal and Social, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.; 1942), p. 498.

<sup>38</sup>E. J. Phelps, "Divorces in the United States", Forum, VIII (December 1889), p. 350.

of divorce by the church.<sup>39</sup>

Writing in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Colcord averred that mixed-religious marriages "have been shown to yield a high rate of desertion and divorce".<sup>40</sup> In a book on the family, we find the following opinions on mixed-religious marriages: "They present definite hazards which all too often wreck the happiness of those involved. The possibilities of misunderstanding which we see in the case of the marriage of a Baptist and an Episcopalian are multiplied many times in a marriage between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant."<sup>41</sup>

However, in most of the reading that I could find, statistical proof seems to be lacking, but many writers continue to subscribe to the same idea.

The current literature on the subject often refers to three questionnaire studies that have been made.<sup>42</sup> Bell surveyed a broad cross-section of Maryland youth aged sixteen

<sup>39</sup>E. E. Eubank, "A Study of Family Desertion", (private edition of doctoral dissertation distributed by the University of Chicago Library, 1916), pp. 6 - 7.

<sup>40</sup>J. C. Colcord, "Family Desertion and Non-Support", Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, VI (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 78.

<sup>41</sup>J. H. Howson, "Family Life and Religion", chap. XI, in Plan for Marriage, ed. J. K. Folsom (New York: Harper and Bros., 1938), pp. 217 - 220.

<sup>42</sup>H. M. Bell, Youth Tell Their Story, (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1938), pp. 21, 193 - 194; H. A. Weeks, "Differential Divorce Rates by Occupation", Social Forces, XXI, (March 1943), pp. 334 - 337; J. T. Landis, "Marriages of Mixed and Non-Mixed Religious Faith", American Sociological Review, XIV (June 1949), pp. 401 - 407.



to twenty-three; Weeks analyzed data obtained from public and parochial high school students in Spokane, Washington; and Landis polled Midwest college students in marriage courses at Michigan State College. The study included divorce, desertion, and separation; Weeks' table pertains to divorce only; while Landis refers to both a "divorce rate" and a "divorce and separation rate". There also seems to be some question regarding the handling of marital status in cases of remarriage in these studies. Nevertheless, in view of the great scarcity of information on family stability in religious groups, it is pointed out that "these three are significant factual investigations".<sup>43</sup>

In all three studies, there appears to be some agreement about the low 'rate' for the both-Catholic families and the high 'rate' for the mixed-Catholic families, the latter figure exceeding even the both-Protestant group's position.

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<sup>43</sup>Thomas P. Monahan and William M. Kephart, "Divorce and Desertion by Religious and Mixed-Religious Groups", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LIX (1953 - 1954), p. 454.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

In the beginning, all the ten students, from the Masters year of Social Work, worked on the project as a whole. When we were presented with the topic of "Desertion", the first thing that we had to do was define it. After a definition was agreed upon, a letter was forwarded by Professor Roger to each agency, giving them our definition and asking them to select their cases accordingly. While this was being done, we were deciding individually as to the aspect of desertion with which we would like to work. When this had been decided upon, we each formulated a hypothesis and composed the questions necessary to answer it. These questions were discussed thoroughly, sorted out and arranged into a schedule.

By this time, we had heard from the agencies and we were pleased to learn that they had 773 cases for us. A "trial run" was organized in order to test our schedule and our definition. Some students went to each agency and worked half a day. From this, we learned that each case took considerable time to review, that some of the questions were not clear, and that some of the questions were irrelevant. From the examination and analysis of the cases came insights, clues, and leads on the basis of which new items were intro-

duced into the schedule and instruction sheet, and their average significance determined.

Because of the element of time, we decided that we could only use one-third of our total sample. We narrowed the number of cases down to this amount by recording each case on a single slip of paper and dropping them into a box, having a separate box for each agency. As a slip was drawn from the boxes, it was recorded on a master sheet and returned to the box. When we had drawn one-third of the samples from each agency, we checked our list for duplicates from other agencies and replaced them. This left us with two hundred and sixty cases.

We found at this time that our schedule was working smoothly but that we were having some difficulty with our definition. As our definition stood, there was some confusion as to whether or not some of the cases should be used. Consequently our definition was revised.

As the schedules were completed, they were checked by another student and Miss Roger to eliminate any possibility of mistakes. After discarding all cases that did not come within our definition, we had decided upon one hundred and eleven schedules, completed and ready to be coded. An instruction sheet for the coding was developed and each schedule or case was coded accordingly. These were also rechecked in order to avoid mistakes. A photo-stat copy of each case was then transposed onto a card. Each student received one card for each case, or, in other words, one hundred and eleven

cards. We are now ready to work on our individual topics.

As mentioned earlier, this study will be concerned with some of the general characteristics of families involved in desertion. The questions to be discussed will be numbered according to the schedule which is included in the appendix. The first questions that we will explore are:

1. Birthdate of husband.
2. Birthdate of wife.
12. Date of marriage.

Age at marriage and disparity between the ages of the married couples are matters that are thought to be of importance in the study of various problems connected with family life. Careful scientific work in these matters requires a basic knowledge of the facts about age at marriage in general. At what age do marriages take place? What are the extent and frequency of age differences between the contracting parties in the general run of marriages? Until these facts are known about a sufficiently large number of marriages, the importance of age factors in specific family problems cannot be determined. For example, to point out that a given age differential is found in a certain proportion of cases of desertion indicates nothing about its importance unless a comparison is made with the percentage of all marriages in which such a differential exists.

As such a study is not available for the Winnipeg area, I would like to use a study done in Philadelphia for the comparison. The study is said to be valid, and according to

many writers, the findings are similar to theirs, and should therefore represent an average. The study is based on information given concerning age in all marriage licenses granted in Philadelphia and neighbouring counties during 1931.

Age difference between husband and wife in its relation to happiness in marriage has always been a subject of popular discussion.

The above gives us a picture of the ages at which most people marry. To further our comparison, I would like to use studies completed by Hart and Shields, and Burgess and Cottrell. Hart and Shields did a pioneer study based upon a comparison of the ages at marriage of couples appearing in the Domestic Relations Court of Philadelphia, and the ages given by couples applying in the same city for licenses to marry. The Burgess and Cottrell study is predicting success or failure in marriage based on age as a factor.

Another sub-question that we should look at is the number of years married. Many writers indicate that we have a relatively unstable family system in marriages of younger couples and a more stable family in the later years. We should therefore find that desertion is a problem of the younger marriages. As a comparison, I would like to use material taken from Nimkoff's book, Marriage and the Family,<sup>1</sup> and also the findings of Mowrer in his book, Family

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<sup>1</sup>Meyer F. Nimkoff, "Family Disorganization", Marriage and the Family, (The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947), p. 631.

Disorganization.<sup>2</sup>

In the proposed method of analysis and presentation, I will first of all look at the number of married couples that are of the same age, and the percentage that these couples form of the total sample. This will be done for the various age combinations and shown on a table. In further looking at the sub-question of age, tables will be used to look at the number and percent of deserted men and women at a particular age as well as the age of the husband and wife at marriage.

This data will then be compared descriptively with other studies as mentioned previously. For example, a study found that 88% of the differences in ages was less than six years among the average run of marriages, whereas our study may find that the difference is more than ten years in 50% of our sample, etc..

The number of years married and the number of children will be charted in individual tables and commented on. It is hoped that by keeping other studies in mind, an explanation of the results will be possible.

There is a common belief that children add to the happiness of marriage and that, subsequently, the lack of children is detrimental to marital adjustment. This may not be true for our study because if the mother or father had no dependent children, he or she could probably have managed without coming to an agency for assistance. However, it should prove interesting to look at the number of children and the

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<sup>2</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, Family Disorganization, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927), p. 86.

closeness of their births, and evaluate our findings with respect to the figures thus obtained. This information will be obtained from question 54, Birthdates of children.

As a comparison, I would like to use excerpts from a study of 1,053 cases of family desertion which were referred to the Manhattan and Bronx Family Bureau through various sources during the calendar year of 1926. The figures represent the total number of new cases handled during the year, aside from the old, recurrent and holdover cases treated during that period. (I was unable to locate a more recent study).

The stability and success of a marriage are often said to be largely related to denominational affiliations, mixed-religious marriages being particularly hazardous. For this reason, I would like to explore the question of religion from the information under questions 9 and 10, which concern religious denominations of husband and wife. Fortunately, there are only fourteen religious denominations represented in our study. Consequently, the data can be easily tabulated on a prepared table. From this, we can point out the number of Protestant - Catholic marriages, etc.; and find the percentage that they are of our total sample.

As a comparison to my findings, I would like to use material from Mowrer's book, Disorganization, Personal and

Social,<sup>3</sup> and J. H. Howson, Family Life and Religion.<sup>4</sup> Along with this, there are three studies that I would like to use. (H. M. Bell, "Youth Tell Their Story", American Council on Education; H. A. Weeks, "Differential Divorce Rates by Occupation", Social Forces; and J. T. Landis, "Marriages of Mixed and Non-Mixed Religious Faith", American Sociological Review.) These studies drawn up on a table impressively show the hazards of mixed religious marriages.

It is noted that persons from different cultural levels who marry have more difficulty in understanding one another or in sympathizing with each other because they "talk different languages". They attach different meanings to things, react differently to the same symbols, and hence have difficulty in achieving a unity. With this in mind, I would like to look at the various nationalities or racial origins of the husband and wife. This information will come from questions:

3. Country of birth of husband.
4. Country of birth of wife.
5. Year of entry to Canada of husband.
6. Year of entry to Canada of wife.
7. Ethnic origin of husband.
8. Ethnic origin of wife.

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<sup>3</sup>E. R. Mowrer, Disorganization, Personal and Social, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.; 1942), p. 498.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. Howson, "Family Life and Religion", Chapter XI, in Plan for Marriage, ed. J. K. Folsom (New York: Harper and Bros., 1938), pp. 217 - 220.



The data on nationality or racial origin will be presented descriptively. The method will be to compare the percentage of desertion contributed by a given group to the relative size of that group in the general population. For example, we may find that people of Russian descent comprise 3.8% of the population and 5.4% of the desertions. We can then point out which nationality contributed most to the desertions. The percentage of various nationalities in Winnipeg can be found in the Canadian census. For a comparison, I would like to use the findings of Burgess and Cottrell, Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage,<sup>5</sup> and a study completed in Chicago in 1921 as described in Mowrer's book, The Family.<sup>6</sup>

To investigate the question of education, we will use the information from questions 52 and 53. As the exact level of education will be difficult to record because of the various educational systems throughout the world, we will classify the levels of both husband and wife as: public school (complete or incomplete); high school (complete or incomplete); additional on-the-job training; vocational or other training; and professional training. By public school, we mean grades one to eight or an equivalent; by high school, we are referring to the grades from nine to the completion of junior matriculation or an equivalent; by additional on-the-job

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<sup>5</sup>Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr.; Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939).

<sup>6</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, The Family, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 164.

training, we are referring to training such as that which a qualified carpenter, mason, bricklayer, hospital orderly, etc., would receive while employed. Under vocational or other training, we are referring to people that have taken a short course to qualify for their particular job. This may include qualified plumbers, electricians, welders, stenographers, nurses' aides, various technicians, etc.. Grouped under professional training would be people with university degrees, nurses, chartered accountants, etc..

An analysis of the educational standing of the total group as well as how many husbands had more education than their wives and vice versa will be presented through a table and the results commented on. The effect of schooling on marital adjustment is not entirely consistent. Therefore, in order to give a broad unbiased comparison, I would like to draw information from studies completed by Burgess and Cottrell,<sup>7</sup> Bernard<sup>8</sup>, Terman<sup>9</sup>, and Kirkpatrick.<sup>10</sup>

Another question at which we shall look is question 29, Was wife pregnant at time of desertion. Under this question, I would like to estimate the percent that deserted when the

<sup>7</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>8</sup>Jessie Bernard, "Factors in the Distribution of Success in Marriage", American Journal of Sociology, XL (July 1934), pp. 49 - 60.

<sup>9</sup>Lewis M. Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Success, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938), p. 183.

<sup>10</sup>C. Kirkpatrick, "Factors in Marital Adjustment", American Journal of Sociology, XLIII (1937), pp. 270 - 283.

wife was pregnant and also if the percentage is heavily represented by any particular nationality. Colcord suggests that its prevalence among certain European immigrants would almost point to its being a cultural tradition. For comparative information, I would like to look at studies by Colcord,<sup>11</sup> Eubank,<sup>12</sup> and O'Rourke.<sup>13</sup>

The contribution of unemployment will be explored under information from question 36: At time of desertion was man  
1) employed 2) unemployed 3) unemployable 4) retired 5) Not Given.

The percentage of this group in accordance with the total group will be estimated, described briefly in relation to the sample group and compared to other studies. The information used will be drawn from the studies mentioned under the pregnancy desertions.

This leads to the question, "Does the deserter come home periodically?". This is answered under questions 16 and 18, which ask, did the man (woman) desert previously at any time within the present marriage. The percentage of the group

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<sup>11</sup>J. C. Colcord, Broken Homes: A Study of Family Desertion and its Social Treatment, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1919), pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>12</sup>E. E. Eubank, "A Study of Family Desertion", (private edition of doctoral dissertation distributed by the University of Chicago Library, 1916).

<sup>13</sup>Dorothy O'Rourke, "Fifty Family Deserters: An Inquiry into the Reasons for their Desertions", Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. I, #4 (June 1931), pp. 394 - 395.

will be estimated and discussed, drawing on studies by Colcord,<sup>14</sup> O'Rourke,<sup>15</sup> and O'Neill<sup>16</sup> for comparison material.

The final question that I would like to explore is the question of occupation. My main concern with respect to occupation is to see if the deserters are found most often among occupations with little social control and among those that enable the man to move easily. This appears to be one area where most of the writers agree. We therefore have much choice in material to be used as a comparison in our findings. The studies completed by Harvey Locke, "Mobility and Family Disorganization",<sup>17</sup> and Richard Lang, "The Ratings of Happiness in Marriage"<sup>18</sup> appear to be the most appropriate.

The information for this question comes from question 35, occupation of husband. It was hoped that each occupation could be investigated individually but this was found to be almost impossible, as the occupations listed were varied and often not too definite. A Dictionary of Occupational Titles<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Colcord, op. cit..

<sup>15</sup>O'Rourke, loc. cit..

<sup>16</sup>E. F. O'Neill, "Report on a Study of One Hundred Cases of Desertion", The Family, IX (January 1929), pp. 287 - 291.

<sup>17</sup>Harvey J. Locke, "Mobility and Family Disorganization", American Sociological Review, V (August 1940), pp. 489 - 494.

<sup>18</sup>Richard O. Lang, "The Ratings of Happiness in Marriage", (Unpublished Masters' thesis, University of Chicago Libraries, 1932), American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIX (1943 - 44), p. 248.

<sup>19</sup>Dictionary of Occupational Titles, (United States Employment Service, Department of Labour, 1939), Part II.

was located and found to contain classifications that we could use. These classifications are: 0 - professional and managerial personnel; 1 - clerical and sales; 2 - service occupations; 3 - agriculture, fishing, forestry and kindred occupations; 4 - skilled occupations; 6 - semiskilled; 8 - unskilled; 10 - not given; 11 - not applicable; 12 - armed services; 13 - not able to classify.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

In preparing and in utilizing a statistical analysis of a study of this nature, it must be borne in mind that far-reaching conclusions and impressions cannot be definitely arrived at due to the numerical limitations of the sample with which we are dealing. With these limitations in mind, let us proceed with the actual analysis of the results of our study concerning the characteristics of deserters.

First, in looking at our total sample, we find that, out of the 111 cases, there are 86 cases, or 77.5%, in which the husband deserted; 23 cases, or 20.7%, in which the wife deserted; and 2 cases, or 1.8%, in which both husband and wife left home, leaving their offspring to fend for themselves.

#### AGE

##### TABLE I - Age of Husband and Wife at Marriage

Around the question of the age factor, Table I has been compiled to set forth the information gathered as to ages at marriage of the various deserting couples.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF COUPLES BY  
AGE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE AT MARRIAGE

AGE OF HUSBAND	AGE OF WIFE																	TOTAL	
	13 15	16 18	19 21	22 24	25 27	28 30	31 33	34 36	37 39	40 42	43 45	46 48	49 51	52 54	55 57	58 60	61 63		NG <sup>a</sup>
13 - 15			2																2
16 - 18		2	2															1	5
19 - 21		4	10	3	1	2													20
22 - 24		4	6	8	1	2													21
25 - 27		2	4	6															12
28 - 30	1		5	3	1	1													11
31 - 33						1	1												2
34 - 36			1	1				1	1										4
37 - 39				1	1			1											3
40 - 42					1														1
43 - 45						2													2
46 - 48																			
49 - 51																			
52 - 54																			
55 - 57																			
58 - 60																			
61 - 63			1														1		2
NG		2	5		1	1	1	1			1							14	26
TOTAL	1	14	36	22	6	9	2	3	1		1						1	15	111

a - NG throughout this paper means 'not given'.

In analysing the age of the husband and wife at marriage, we find that there are 14 cases, or 12.6%, where the ages for both parties were recorded as not given, and 13 cases, or 11.7%, where the age at marriage of one party was recorded as not given. (Out of these 13 cases, the ages of eight of the other partners were given as being under 22 years of age). Therefore, we have 27 cases, or 24.3% of our total sample, which we are unable to use. Out of the remaining 84 cases, 41 couples, or 48.8%, are under 25 years of age, and 55 couples, or 65.5%, are under 28 years of age. The highest single total (10 couples, or 11.9%) is recorded at age 19 - 21 for both partners. There are no marriages in the sample where both are under 19 years of age at time of marriage, but there are two boys and one girl between 13 and 15 years of age who married partners over the age of 19.

TABLE II - Total Number of Marriages, Showing the Differences in Ages of the Partners

The disparity between the ages of the married couples is shown in Table II.

In the facts presented in Table II, the following are especially significant. In 88 out of our 111 cases, the ages of husband and wife are given. The married couples are the same age in 7 cases, or 8% of the 88 cases; the husband is older by 1 to 3 years in 28 cases, or 31.8%; and the husband is older by 1 to 7 years in 45 cases, or 51.1% of the marriages where both ages are given.

The wife is older by 1 to 3 years in 14 cases, or 15.9%



of the cases, and is 1 to seven years older in 19 cases, or 21.6% of the cases. The predominant percentage of marriages in which desertion occurs seems to be that of marriages in which the husband is older by 1 year.

TABLE II

TOTAL NUMBER OF MARRIAGES, SHOWING DIFFERENCES IN AGES OF PARTNERS

Husband Older, by Number of years		Per- cent a	Wife Older, by Number of years		Per- cent a
0	7	8.0			
1	14	15.9	1	5	5.7
2	6	6.8	2	6	6.8
3	8	9.1	3	3	3.4
4	8	9.1	4	-	-
5	5	5.7	5	-	-
6	2	2.3	6	-	-
7	2	2.3	7	5	5.7
8	2	2.3	8	1	1.1
9	3	3.4	9	1	1.1
10	4	4.6			
12	1	1.1			
14	1	1.1			
15	2	2.3			
17	1	1.1			
41	1	1.1			
TOTAL	67	76.2		21	23.8

a - Because of the 23 cases where the information necessary was not given, the percentages are taken out of the 88 cases where ages of both husband and wife are known. There are 18 cases recorded as not given for the husband and 5 cases where the information is recorded as not given for the wife.

TABLE III - Number of Desertions by Age of Deserted (Deserting)  
Man and Woman at Time of Desertion

In exploring further the questions of age, the husband's age at the time of desertion was given in 89 cases; of these, 13 deserted between the ages of 16 and 24; 23 between the ages of 24 and 30; and 50 between the ages of 30 and 42.

The wife's age at desertion is recorded in 99 cases. Of these, 22 desertions took place when the wife was between the ages of 16 and 24; 33 when she was between the ages of 24 and 30; and 38 when she was between 30 and 42. After this age, the number of desertions dwindles rapidly, and there are no sudden flare-ups in frequency of desertion at any particular age past 42.

The above facts are shown in more detail in Table III. The totals at the right of the table refer to the number of husbands that deserted at the designated age, and the number of wives at the bottom refers to the number of wives that deserted at the particular age mentioned directly above.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF DESERTIONS BY AGE OF DESERTED (DESERTING) MAN AND  
WOMAN AT TIME OF DESERTION

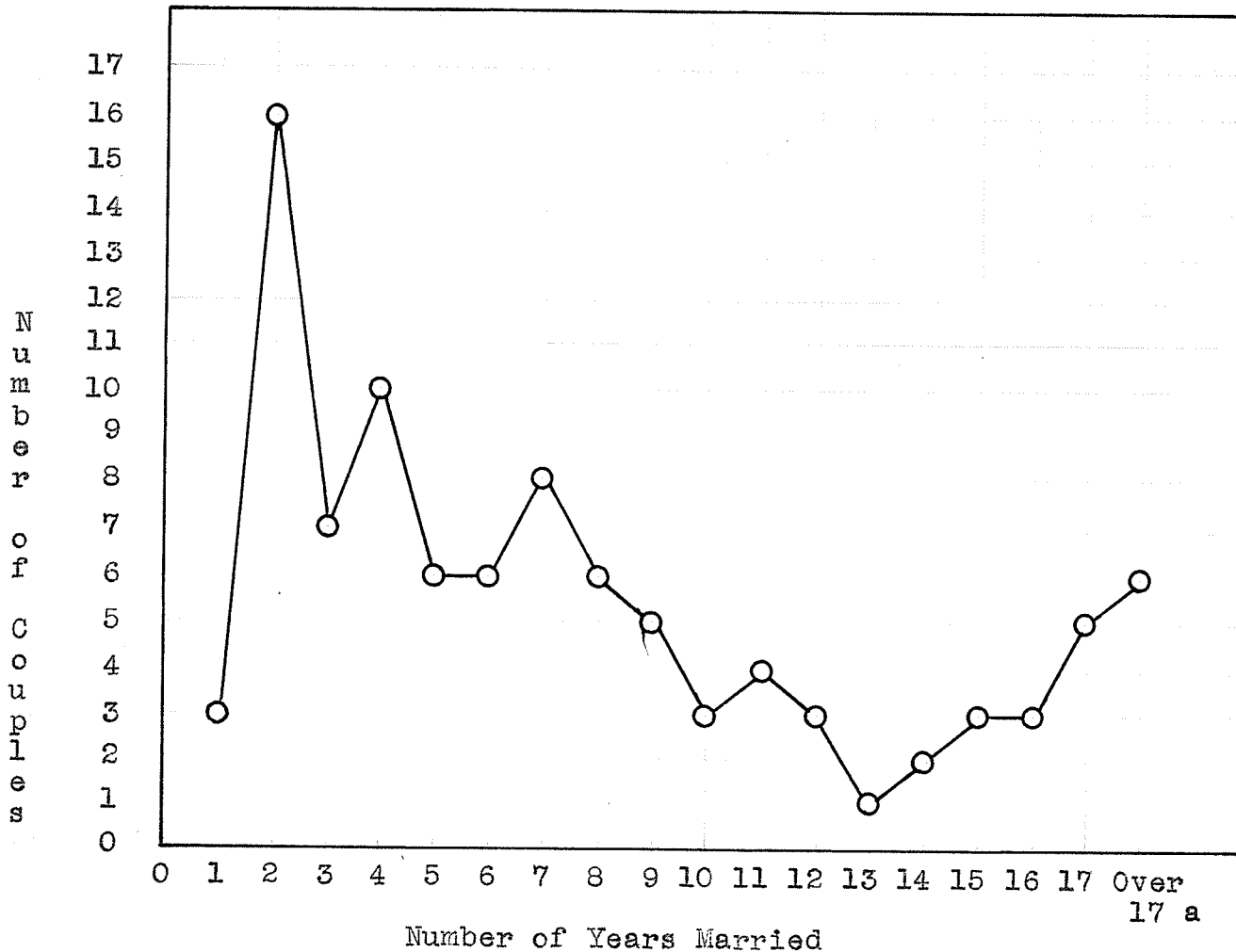
AGE OF HUSBAND	AGE OF WIFE																	T O T A L	
	16 18	19 21	22 24	25 27	28 30	31 33	34 36	37 39	40 42	43 45	46 48	49 51	52 54	55 57	58 60	61 63	64 66		NG
16-18		1	1																2
19-21	1		1	1															3
22-24		3	3	1	1														8
25-27		2	2	7	1		1												13
28-30		1	1	4	3		1												10
31-33		1			4	1	1	2	1									1	11
34-36		1		2		2	3		1										9
37-39					2	1	2	4	2										11
40-42				1	2	1	1	2	2										9
43-45									1									1	2
46-48					1	1		2										1	5
49-51																			
52-54								1											1
55-57									1	1				1					3
58-60																			
61-63																	1		1
64-66																			
78								1											1
NG		2	2	1	2	2	2			2								9	22
TOTAL	1	11	10	17	16	8	11	12	8	3				1			1	12	111

FIGURE I - Number of Years Married

The length of married life for these couples is probably not too accurate. However, the following graph may give us a general picture.

FIGURE I

NUMBER OF YEARS MARRIED



a - This includes 1 couple that has been married between 17 and 18 years, 2 couples between 18 and 19 years, 1 couple between 21 and 22 years, 1 couple between 22 and 23 years, and 1 couple that has been married between 26 and 27 years.

We have 14 cases, or 12.6% of our sample, in which the number of years married is not given.

An examination of the graph on the number of years married shows that the largest single percent (16.5%) of desertions occur in the first year of marriage, and the majority (63.9%) of deserters have been married for less than 8 years. As will be shown later, many of these people have deserted previously. Therefore, if the first desertions had been recorded, the percentage of these early desertions would have been higher.

### CHILDREN

#### TABLES IV & V - The Number of Children of the Couples and The Proximity of Their Ages

In conjunction with the age factor, perhaps the number of children in each family and the proximity of their births are significant. The following two tables are an analysis of our findings with regard to these matters.

TABLE IV

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF THE COUPLES

NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH THIS NO. OCCURS	PERCENTAGE
0	4	3.7
1	17	15.8
2	32	29.6
3	22	20.4
4	16	14.8
5	5	4.6
6	5	4.6
7	2	1.9
8	1	0.9
9	3	2.8
10	-	-
11	-	-
12	1	0.9
TOTAL	108 <sub>a</sub>	100.0

a - Because of the 3 cases in which the number of children was not recorded, percentages are taken out of 108 cases.

In looking at the number of children in the families, it is noted that the largest percentage of families have 2 children (29.6% of the 108 families). The next most common number of children (20.4%) is 3. Only 15.7% of the 108 couples have more than 4 children.

TABLE V  
PROXIMITY OF AGES OF THE CHILDREN<sup>b</sup>

DIFFERENCE IN AGE (years)	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENTAGE
Less than 1	66 <sup>a</sup>	31.7
2	58	27.9
3	40	19.2
4	17	8.2
5	11	5.3
6	8	3.8
7	1	0.5
8	5	2.4
9	-	-
10	1	0.5
11	-	-
12	1	0.5
TOTAL	208	100.0%

a - This group includes 3 sets of twins and 2 sets of triplets.

b - This table refers to the difference in age between each child and the next oldest child in the family. The table therefore excludes those children who are 'only' children and those who are oldest in their family.

In dividing the children by the closeness of their ages, the largest percentage (31.7%) seems to be that of the group in which the age difference is less than 1 year. Many of the age spreads coincide with the absence of the father during a previous desertion.

In closely examining the sample, it is noted that there are 14 families (or 14.6% of the total number of cases in which this question was answered), where the husband left during the wife's pregnancy. Of these, 3 husbands were from the British ethnic origin group, 1 was French, 1 was Russian, and 1 was Polish. The remainder were recorded as ethnic origin not given (i.e., the remainder of the 14). Out of the total sample of 111 cases, 15 cases were recorded as not given in answer to this question.

#### RELIGION

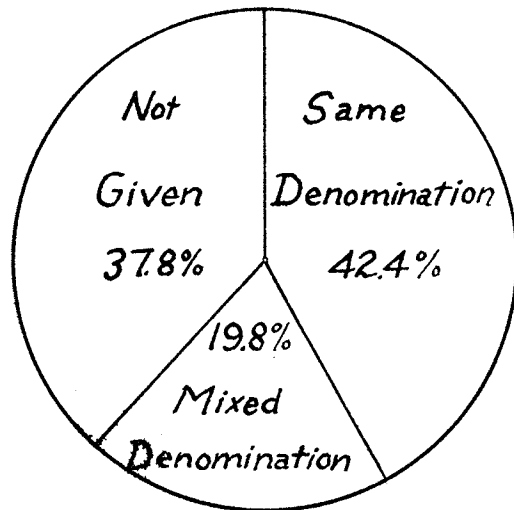
##### FIGURE II - Total Percentage of Desertion by Denomination

In exploring the question of religious denominations, one of the first things noticed is the large percentage of cases where one or both of the parties have their religions recorded as not given. This is unfortunate, as these 42 cases, or 37.8% of the total sample, contain many couples who are interdenominational and many who are of the same denomination. Because of this, the useable sample will be 69 cases.



FIGURE II

## TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF DESERTION BY DENOMINATION



Out of the 69 cases, a difference between mates in the matter of denomination was found in 31.8% of the cases. The remaining 68.2% consisted of couples who had married within their own denomination, as will be seen by the following table. Some in this group were listed as Protestant only. For the purpose of a gross comparison, we will base our percentage analysis on two groups, the Protestant group and the non-Protestant group. The non-Protestant group will include those of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox faiths. The Protestant group will include those listed as Protestant, United Church, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Church of Christ, Salvation Army, Christian Missionary Alliance, Mennonite, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Out of the mixed religious group, 11 couples, or 50%, represented the union of Protestant and non-Protestant; 3 couples, or 13.6%, represented intermarriage which was nevertheless entirely within the non-Protestant group; and 8 couples, or 36.4%, represented intermarriage between different Protestant denominations. Out of the group that married within their own religion, 19 couples, or 40.5%, were of the non-Protestant group, while the remaining 28 couples, or 59.5%, were from the Protestant group.

TABLE VI

TABLE VI - Number of Couples by Religious Denomination

In examining the table that follows, we find that there are 15 couples, or 16.7% of the cases in which the denomination of one or both spouses was given, where both spouses are Roman Catholic, and 33 couples, or 36.6%, where one or both spouses are Roman Catholic. This single group has by far the largest representation.

The Anglican, United Church and Protestant denominations, which represent the dominant groups among the Protestants, appear in 44 cases, or 48.9%.

It is interesting to note that there are no non-Christian religions represented in our sample.

TABLE VI

## NUMBER OF COUPLES BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION OF WIFE	RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION OF HUSBAND															TOTAL
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	NG	
Roman Catholic	15	2	1			1	1		1	1					4	26
Protestant	1	8													1	10
United Church			9				1				1		1			12
Anglican	1			9			1			2					4	17
Baptist															1	1
Presbyterian						1	1									2
Lutheran	1	1													3	5
Church of Christ																
Greek Orthodox									2							2
Greek Catholic	1									2					1	4
Salvation Army		1														1
Christian Missionary Alliance	1															1
Mennonite			1												2	3
Jehovah's Witnesses														1		1
NG	2		2								1				21	26
TOTAL	22	12	13	9		2	3	1	3	5	2		1	1	37	111

NATIONAL ORIGIN

TABLE VII - Number of Couples by Country of Birth of Husband and of Wife

In order to survey the factors associated with nationalities and racial origins, we will consider the country of birth, the year of entry to Canada (if applicable), and the ethnic origin of the couples.

TABLE VIINUMBER OF COUPLES BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF HUSBAND  
AND OF WIFE

COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF HUSBAND	COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF WIFE														TOTAL
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	NG	
Canada	55	5	2	2										1	66
British Isles	4						1								5
United States															
Ukraine															
Poland					1										1
Russia	2														2
Germany															
France	1														1
Italy												1			1
Hungary		1													1
Romania											1				1
Yugoslavia							1								1
Jamaica	1														1
NG	9		1											22	32
TOTAL	72	6	3	2	1		2				1	1		23	222

The table points out clearly that the largest proportion of the couples in our sample are Canadian-born. 55 couples, or 61.8% of the number of couples in which country of birth is given, were both born in Canada; 4 men, or 4.5%, from the British Isles married Canadian women; 5 Canadian men, or 5.6%, married women from the British Isles; 2 Canadian men, or 2.2%, married United States women; and 2 Canadian men, or 2.2%, married Ukrainian girls. Keeping in mind the number of cases (22) where the country of birth is not given for either partner, the number of intermarriages between nationalities is small.

TABLE VIII - Number of Couples by Year of Entry into Canada

The following table represents the year of entry into Canada of the various foreign-born spouses:

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF COUPLES BY YEAR OF ENTRY INTO CANADA

HUSBAND	WIFE							TOTAL
	NG	NA <sub>a</sub>	1906	1944	1946	1953	1957	
NG	27	14	1					42
NA <sub>a</sub>	6	55		1	1			63
1910		1						1
1927	1							1
1934		1						1
1947		1						1
1951						1		1
1956							1	1
TOTAL	34	72	1	1	1	1	1	222

a - NA = Not Applicable

Unfortunately, there is a large percentage (44.2%) with one or both parties recorded as not given. The people tabulated under "Not Applicable" would be those born in Canada.

TABLE IX - Number of Couples by Ethnic Origin of Husband and Wife

The following table is an analysis of the ethnic origins of the couples. Again keeping in mind the number recorded as not given, an examination of this table shows that the couples with British ethnic origin appear to be in the majority. Not only do they compose the largest number of desertions and of intermarriages with other ethnic groups, but they also represent the largest number of marriages within their own ethnic group.

TABLE IX

NUMBER OF COUPLES BY ETHNIC ORIGIN OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

HUSBAND a	WIFE																			TOTAL	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		NG
1	14	4		1	3	1	1				1			1		1				1	28
2	2	5	1			1			1												10
3	1																				1
4				1				1								1					3
5	1	1																			2
6	3	1	1		1	2														1	9
7							1														1
8																	1				1
9						1										1					2
10					1																1
11																					
12						1	1														2
13																1				1	2
14	1																				1
15															1						1
16																				1	1
17																		1			1
18																					
19	1																		1		2
NG	5		1		2	4										2				29	43
TOTAL	28	11	3	2	7	12	3	1	1		1			1	1	6	1	1	1	33	222

a - The numbers represent: 1) English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh; 2) Ukrainian; 3) Polish; 4) Russian; 5) German; 6) French; 7) Dutch; 8) Italian; 9) Norwegian; 10) Swedish; 11) Czechoslovakian; 12) Spanish; 13) Icelandic; 14) Hungarian; 15) Indian (North American); 16) Metis; 17) Yugoslavian; 18) Gypsy; and 19) Negro.

EDUCATIONTABLE X - Number of Couples by Education of Husband and Wife

In investigating the question of education, the following table represents an analysis of the results.

TABLE X

## NUMBER OF COUPLES BY EDUCATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

EDUCATION OF HUSBAND		EDUCATION OF WIFE								
		None	Public School		High School		On Job Training	Vocational Training	Professional	NG
			I	C	I	C				
None										
Public School	I <sub>b</sub>	1	4	2 1	4 2	1	1	1		
	C			4 3	3 1	1		2		
High School	I		6 1	2	3 1	1				1
	C				1 1	1 1				4 3
On Job Training							1	1		4
Vocational				1			2			2
Professional										3
NG			8	6	1 1	1 1	1	2		49

a - Where there are two numbers recorded across from one specific category and below another, the bottom number refers to the number of cases out of the top number in which one or both of the partners have had additional training.

b - I = Incomplete

C = Complete



Unfortunately, in looking at the question of education, there are only 34 cases that we can use. The remainder either have one or both partners recorded as education not given. An examination of the table shows that there are 10 husbands with more education than their wives; 12 wives with more education than their husbands; and 12 couples in which both husband and wife have the same amount of education.

The number of spouses with extra training is relatively large. There were no couples where both parties were illiterate; or where both parties had vocational or professional training. It is interesting to note that there were 3 husbands with professional training. However, the education of the wife in each of these cases was listed as not given.

#### OCCUPATION

TABLE XI - Occupation of the Deserting Husband

In examining the occupations of the husbands that have deserted, it is found that 14.8% of our sample is not useable, since occupations are unlisted.

Out of the remaining 75 cases, the majority (41.3%) are classified under the skilled occupation group. The next largest group is the unskilled, with 32%. The remaining groups are relatively small. The following table shows the trend in more detail. The occupations are coded and classified according to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles in order to differentiate clearly.

TABLE XI

## OCCUPATION OF THE DESERTING HUSBAND

Code # <sup>1</sup>	Occupational Classification	No. of Cases	Percent <sub>a</sub>
0	Professional & Managerial	1	1.3
1	Clerical & Sales	6	8.0
2	Service Occupations	3	4.0
3	Agriculture, fishing, forestry, & kindred occupations	1	1.3
4	Skilled Occupations	31	41.3
6	Semi-skilled	2	2.7
8	Unskilled	24	32.0
12	Armed Services	2	2.7
13	Not able to classify	5	6.7
10	Not given	13	
Total		88	100.0%

a - As there are 13 cases with the information recorded as not given, the percentages are taken out of 75 cases.

It is interesting to note that although the skilled and unskilled occupations are at the top of the percentage scale, the semi-skilled occupations are among those at the bottom.

Unfortunately, in answer to the question, "Was the husband unemployed at the time of desertion?", we have 28

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<sup>1</sup>Dictionary of Occupational Titles, United States Employment Service, Dept. of Labour. Part II, 1939.

cases, or 25.2%, in which this question is unanswered. Therefore, our total sample is only 83. Out of the 83, there were 22 husbands, or 26.5%, that were unemployed.

In carefully examining the question, "Does the deserter come home periodically?", we find that in cases where the husband is the deserter (77.5% of our total sample), 37.2% of the deserting husbands had deserted previously. Out of this same group, 8 wives (9.3%) had deserted and returned before the husband finally left. One thing to keep in mind is the high number of cases where the question of previous desertions was not answered. There were 17 wives, or 19.8% of the cases where the husband deserted, and 22 husbands (25.6%) in whose cases information with regard to this matter was not recorded.

In the cases where the wife deserted, composing 20.7% of our total sample, 21.8% of the deserting wives had deserted previously. There were 6 cases, or 26.1%, where information as to previous desertions by the wife was not given. There were no wives in the group whose husbands had deserted them before the present desertion, unless this was the case in some of the 6 cases in which no knowledge of the previous desertions or lack of them by the husbands could be gleaned from the casework files. In the 2 cases where both parties deserted, both the husband and the wife had left previously in one case, and the wife had left before in the other case.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this, the final chapter of our thesis, we come to the heart of the matter - the drawing of conclusions, if such is possible, as to whether or not our study has denoted certain statistical and/or cultural characteristics common to a preponderance of deserting couples, and as to whether our study is supported by the findings of some of the more eminent authorities who have considered the topic.

The first four chapters, though important in their way, are nevertheless definitely subordinate to this chapter, in that a mass of introduction and statistical analysis is as nothing unless said mass leads up to an intelligent discussion of the import of our methods, analyses and results. It is such a discussion which it is hoped will follow.

To begin with, in exploring the average age of the "Bride" and "Groom" in Canada, a Vital Statistics Bulletin<sup>1</sup> shows that in 1956, the average age for brides was 24.9 years, while for grooms, the average age was 27.9 years. In our sample, out of ninety-seven couples, we find that seventy-three wives, or 75.25%, and sixty husbands, or 61.9%, were married at an age younger than average.

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<sup>1</sup>Vital Statistics Bulletin 112, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, August 8, 1957.

Burgess and Cottrell write that a man who marries between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty is least liable to encounter excessive marital discord.<sup>2</sup> This is borne out by Hart's theories which indicate that marriage in which the groom is twenty-nine years old seems desirable.<sup>3</sup> Burgess and Cottrell also point out that, in the great majority of cases, there seems to be little doubt regarding the unfortunate effects of very early marriages. They feel that many of these marriages are hasty unions, often after short acquaintance and generally entered into despite the opposition of parents. The wife is seldom prepared for the duties of managing a household, while the husband is too often unable to support a wife.<sup>4</sup>

This is corroborated in the writings of Hart and Shields, in which it is pointed out that marriages in which the bride is under twenty-one years of age, or the groom under twenty-four, become rapidly more dangerous as younger ages are considered. They go on to say that marriages in which either party is nineteen or younger are from ten to one hundred times as risky as marriages at the ideal ages.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr.; Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), pp. 116 - 117.

<sup>3</sup>Hornell Hart and Wilmer Shields, "Happiness in Relation to Age at Marriage", Journal of Social Hygiene, XII (October 1956), pp. 403 - 410.

<sup>4</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Hart and Shields, loc. cit.

A study based on information given concerning age in all marriage licenses granted in Philadelphia and neighbouring counties during 1931 yields the following information: - Marriage is consummated primarily by persons in their early twenties. While women generally marry at an earlier age than men, contracting parties are of the same age in about ten percent of the marriages, while in yet another ten percent the women are older - (88% of the difference being less than six years). In the remaining 80% of marriages, the man is older than the woman - (two-thirds of the differences being less than six years). Among the fifteen most frequent age differentials, a one year difference (with the groom being the elder) appears to be most common, while a three year difference (with the bride being the elder) appears least often. In less than 8% of the marriages was the groom more than ten years older than the bride.<sup>6</sup>

Our sample agrees with that studied in Philadelphia insofar as the largest percentage of the marriages had been consummated by persons in their early twenties, and most of the women had married at an early age as compared to the men. In approximately 9% of the marriages, the contracting parties were of the same age, and in another 28%, the women were older (50% of such differences being less than six years). Where the men were older than the women, two-thirds of such

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<sup>6</sup>Jane Bussard, "The Age Factor in Marriage: A Philadelphia Study, 1931", The American Journal of Sociology, (Jan. 1933), pp. 536 - 547.

age differences were less than six years. In our sample, as in the one preceding, the most common age difference was one year, with the groom being the elder of the two spouses. In only six cases, or 6.8%, was the groom more than ten years older than the bride.

Both Nimkoff<sup>7</sup> and Mowrer<sup>8</sup> point out in their studies that the highest percentage of separations occurred between the time of marriage and the first anniversary. In our study, the highest percentage of desertion occurred between the first and second year of marriage. Taking from the Philadelphia study an indication of the number of women who are older than their husbands, we get a figure of 10%, which, when compared to the 28% of our sample in which the wife was older, would lead us to believe that a wife marrying a man her junior would be almost three times as liable to discord and desertion as would otherwise be the case.

In examining the analysis of the age of the deserted or deserting man and woman at the time of desertion, we find that our studies are almost identical to other studies, with the exception that we have no pronounced increase in desertions at middle age. We must note, however, that there is somewhat of an increase in the number of desertions between

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<sup>7</sup>Meyer F. Nimkoff, "Family Disorganization", Marriage and the Family; (The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947), p. 631.

<sup>8</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, Family Disorganization, (University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 86.

the ages of forty-six and forty-eight, and that the decline from then on is sharp. Perhaps the reason for this decline is that many people who have passed middle age have attained a certain degree of financial independence and therefore find that the advisability of reporting to an agency is not so great as in desertions occurring at an earlier age. In addition, an elderly couple is less likely to be supporting dependents.

By exploring the number of children in deserted families, Burgess and Cottrell<sup>9</sup> found that, in their sample, there was no difference in marriage adjustment between couples with no children and those with one child. They did find, however, that couples with two or three children are less likely to have reached and/or retained "good" marital adjustment than couples with no children or with one child.

Our study would seem to indicate that families with two children are somewhat prone to desertion, since in our study they have a higher rate of desertion, while according to the Canadian Census, families with three or four children are in the majority.<sup>10</sup>

In comparing our analysis to the findings of the Manhattan and Bronx Family Bureau study,<sup>11</sup> we find that a higher

<sup>9</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit., "Number of Children and Marital Adjustment", p. 259.

<sup>10</sup>Census of Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Vol. X, 1951.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Zunser, "Family Desertion", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CXLV (September 1929), pp. 98 - 104.



percentage of childless marriages and marriages with only one child was encountered by the persons conducting that study. This is no doubt due to the fact that their study was based only on cases of the first desertion. In our sample, desertions were not necessarily the first occurring to a particular couple, and many of the children considered were born after the father had returned from a previous disappearance.

In examining the proximity of ages among the children, we find that there is a high percentage (59.6%) with birthdays less than two years apart. The added burden of raising more than one infant at the same time would without a doubt contribute to the anxieties and frustrations of the marriage.

It is interesting to note that, in a study completed by Eubank,<sup>12</sup> desertion occurred at pregnancy in 14% of the families. In this study, pregnancy at desertion was present in 14.6% of the cases. Because of the high percentage of cases that had the ethnic origin recorded as not given, we are unable to determine the prevalence of this type of desertion among any particular nationalities.

Because there were only 69 cases (68.2%) out of our sample of 111 that could be used in analysing the religious affiliations, I feel that our conclusions will not be too valid.

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<sup>12</sup>E. E. Eubank, "A Study of Family Desertion", (private edition of doctoral dissertation distributed by the University of Chicago Library, 1916).

Mowrer and Howson both indicate that mixed-religious marriages complicate the problems of marital adjustment, emphasizing the particular hazards encountered in marriages between the Protestant and non-Protestant groups. Our sample agrees with this, as 50% of the intermarriages in which desertion has occurred were between the Protestant and non-Protestant religions.

In the American studies conducted by Bell, Weeks and Landis, as mentioned in Chapter II, we find that there is a low "rate" of desertion among couples who have married within their own faith or group (i.e., Protestant and non-Protestant being the groups), and there is a high rate of desertion in intermarriages which overstep the boundaries of the two groups mentioned.

The Protestant denominations represented in our study make up 41.7% of the total population of Winnipeg. The non-Protestant denominations represented make up 33.9% of Winnipeg's population. This represents a total of 75.6% of Winnipeg's population, and of this 75.6%, 44.9% are non-Protestant while 55.1% are Protestant. In our study, 60.15% of the people involved in desertion were Protestant by faith and 39.85% were non-Protestant. It would thus seem that, compared to their relative numbers in Winnipeg, the Protestant groups here represented are more prone to desertion.

As regards intermarriage between the two major groups, it is seen from Table VIII that such intermarriages were involved in half of the interdenominational marriages which

ended in desertion, exactly equalling the sum of the desertions in intermarriages within the groups. Since inter-group marriages definitely do not represent a full 50% of all intermarriages, we see that the marriage of a Protestant to a non-Protestant is more prone to desertion than the marriage of a Protestant to another Protestant of a different denomination, or than the marriage of a non-Protestant to another non-Protestant of a different denomination. Bell in Maryland found that 15.2% of all inter-group marriages end in divorce, desertion, or separation, compared to 6.4% of completely Protestant marriages and 6.8% of completely non-Protestant marriages. The findings of Weeks and Landis, whose groupings differ somewhat from those in our study and in Bell's study, nevertheless corroborate the trend shown by the above figures, i.e., that, religiously speaking, intermarriage between Protestant and non-Protestant is more hazardous than any other type of religious intermarriage and much more dangerous than marriage within one's own denomination.

Our analysis around the question of ethnic origin shows that, in a very low percentage of our sample, there are differences between previous and present cultural environment due to immigration. Therefore, keeping in mind the high percentage of our cases in which the desired information was not recorded for one or both parties, we will concentrate on the ethnic origin of the husband and wife as listed.

Mowrer<sup>13</sup> found in his study of desertion in Chicago in 1921 that, in proportion to their percentage of the population, Negro, Slavic and South European groups apparently contribute a disproportionate amount of desertion. In our sample, we would not expect to find Negro couples represented as they are relatively less numerous in Winnipeg than in Chicago. However, it is interesting to note that people of French (South European) extract and those of Russian (Slavic) origin are the only ones whose percentages of desertion (11.6% and 3.1% respectively) are higher than the percentages of the total population of Winnipeg which they form (5.1% and 1.1% respectively).

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In 28% of the cases studied by Brandt, husband and wife were of different nationality, whereas in the same year, only 8.5% of all marriages in the United States were mixed (referring to nationality) marriages, and less than 13% were of this sort in New York, where the desertion rate is highest. In our sample, a difference in nationality was found in 61% of the useable cases (64). Statistics as to the relative number of mixed marriages in Winnipeg were not available. As a result, it is impossible to draw a comparison between our study and those conducted by Brandt and by Burgess and Cottrell, the latter of which is discussed next.

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<sup>13</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, The Family, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 164.

<sup>14</sup>L. Brandt, Family Desertion, (The Charity Organization Society of New York City, 1905).

In exploring the studies of Burgess and Cottrell, it is noted that one of their important findings was that similarity of cultural background favours marital adjustment, while dissimilarity, if pronounced, disposes toward maladjustment. A related finding is that the husband's background is usually more important for marital happiness than the wife's. They explain that a possible reason for this difference is that the wife generally makes the major adjustment in marriage, which means that she may deviate more from the ways of her parents than does her husband.

Many sociologists and social workers write that education and marital adjustment are difficult to correlate as education is bound up with economic status, type of neighbourhood, and other social indexes. Even so, it will be almost impossible to come to any conclusion with this study because of the very small percentage of couples that had their education recorded.

Burgess and Cottrell report that, with a few slight exceptions, increased chances of success in marriage go with a rising level of education,<sup>15</sup> but other studies such as those

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<sup>15</sup>Burgess and Cottrell, op. cit., p. 122.

of Terman,<sup>16</sup> Bernard,<sup>17</sup> and Kirkpatrick<sup>18</sup> report only a negligible correlation. They point out that there appears to be a slightly higher degree of happiness among wives whose husbands are more highly educated than themselves. They mention that for a woman to marry a man with less education is a greater risk than the other way around. In our sample, we have ten husbands with more education than their wives; twelve wives with more education than their husbands; and twelve couples in which both husband and wife have the same amount of education. There is, however, a relatively large percentage of spouses with extra training which relates to our occupational findings. Our findings agree with those of Terman, Bernard, and Kirkpatrick in that a slightly higher degree of marital discord was found in marriages where the wife was more highly educated, as evidenced by the slightly greater number of desertions in this group than in the group where the husband was more highly educated. This is more evident when one considers that men are generally more highly educated than women, making the high desertion group a minority in the overall population.

It is interesting to note that, in general, the findings of

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<sup>16</sup>Lewis M. Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Success, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.; 1938), p. 183.

<sup>17</sup>Jessie Bernard, "Factors in the Distribution of Success in Marriage", American Journal of Sociology, XL (July 1934), pp. 49 - 60.

<sup>18</sup>C. Kirkpatrick, "Factors in Marital Adjustment", American Journal of Sociology, XLIII (1937), pp. 270 - 283.

As pointed out in Chapter II, much has been written on the subject of occupational factors and marriage, and this is one of the few areas where most of the writers appear to agree. One theory is that occupations characterized by marked physical mobility and by slight group control tend to show a high degree of marital instability. This theory certainly holds true for our sample, inasmuch as the two occupational groups which are so categorized form, not just the highest percentages, but a substantial majority of our sample.

Unemployment was found by O'Rourke to be the second most frequent cause for desertion.<sup>19</sup> In her sample of fifty, twenty-one were unemployed. In our sample of eighty-three cases in which employment status was recorded, twenty-two were unemployed. However, we must consider that the desired information was not recorded in twenty-eight cases out of our total of one hundred and eleven cases. Eubank, in discussing this type of deserter, says that he is found most commonly among the casual labourers and the immigrants. Our sample is low in immigrants but fairly high in casual labourers.<sup>20</sup>

In studies completed by Colcord and by O'Neill, Colcord found that 87% of the total number had deserted previously<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Dorothy O'Rourke, "Fifty Family Deserters: An Inquiry into the Reasons for their Desertions", Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. 1, #4 (June 1931), p. 391.

<sup>20</sup>Eubank, loc. cit..

<sup>21</sup>J. C. Colcord, Broken Homes: A Study of Family Desertion and Its Social Treatment, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1919), pp. 7 - 8.

and O'Neill found that 50% of his sample had returned after a previous desertion or previous desertions.<sup>22</sup> In our sample, 68.3% of the deserters were repeaters. Here again, we must keep in mind the percentage of cases where the information was not recorded, although the discrepancy here between our findings and those of our references is negligible in that our figure is almost exactly an arithmetic mean between those of Colcord and O'Neill.

Throughout the final chapter, we have, in drawing conclusions, found a good, and in some cases remarkable, degree of similarity between our study and those which we have chosen as our comparisons. Although we were prepared for serious discrepancies due to the numerical non-comprehensiveness of our sample, we do not need to make any excuses for such discrepancies, since the differences which did exist were reasonable and have already been discussed.

There are, of course, other angles from which the adverse factors contributing to desertion might be studied. It is hoped, however, that this study has been successful in categorizing these factors. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that desertion is not attributable to any single predominating influence, although early marriages and intermarriages between widely differing religious denominations are especially prominent as being subject to a high desertion rate.

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<sup>22</sup>E. F. O'Neill, "Report on a Study of One Hundred Cases of Desertion", The Family, IX (January 1929), pp. 287 - 291.



We have been hampered in our attempt at drawing valid conclusions by the small size of our sample, which is reduced even more under most headings by a lack of information in the files as to the particular information desired under that heading.

To sum up, we might say that conflicts and tensions, engendered by various factors, permeate the structure of any marital relationship. These manifest themselves as desertion in such cases where these factors completely prevent the couple from leading a satisfying life together and where one or the other of the spouses cannot entertain the idea of bearing an unsatisfactory and unhappy life.

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APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS USED WITH THE SAMPLE

STUDY OF DESERTION  
School of Social Work  
University of Manitoba

1957-58

Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency File# \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency \_\_\_\_\_  
Reader \_\_\_\_\_

I Identifying Information

- \*1. Birthdate of husband   2. Birthdate of wife
3. Country of birth of husband   4. of wife
5. Year of entry to Canada of husband 6. of wife
7. Ethnic origin of husband   8. of wife
- \*9. Religious denomination of husband 10. of wife
11. Who deserted? 1) husband           2) wife           3) both

II Marriage History

12. Date of Marriage 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N. G.
13. Date of desertion 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N. G.
- \*14. Is this a C. L. U. 1) Yes 2) No 3) N. G.
15. If so, how many years standing 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N. G. 3) N. A.
16. Did the man desert previously at any time within the  
present marriage  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N. G.
17. If yes, record 1) number of times \_\_\_\_\_ 2) actual  
words in record describing frequency of desertion:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Did the woman desert previously at anytime within the  
present marriage?  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N. G.
19. If yes, record 1) number of times \_\_\_\_\_ 2) actual  
words in record describing frequency of desertion:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II cont'd:

- \*20. Was man married previously (circle if C.L.U.)  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
21. If yes, was previous marriage dissolved by:  
1) desertion 2) divorce 3) separation 4) death  
5) other 6) N.G. 7) N.A.
22. Was woman married previously (circle if C.L.U.)  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
23. If yes, was previous marriage dissolved by:  
1) desertion 2) divorce 3) separation 4) death  
5) other 6) N.G. 7) N.A.
24. Did deserted person set up a C.L.U.? 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
25. If so, how long after 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G. 3) N.A.
26. Did deserting person set up a C.L.U. 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
27. If so, how long after 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G. 3) N.A.
28. Is whereabouts of the deserter known?  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G. 4) Doubtful
29. Was wife pregnant at the time of desertion?  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
30. If man drank, was it mainly 1) at home 2) outside home  
3) N.G. 4) N.A.
31. Was man's drinking considered a problem by the wife  
1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G. 4) N.A.
32. by the social worker 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G. 4) N.A.
33. Was mention made in the file of attempts to get man to  
A.A., or that he was in A.A. 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.A.
- \*34. How did husband and wife typically spend their leisure  
time? Quote: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



III Occupation, Work History and Economic Status

- \*35. Occupation of husband 1) \_\_\_\_\_
36. At time of desertion was man 1) employed 2) unemployed  
3) unemployable 4) retired 5) N.G.
- \*37. Was work 1) full time regular 2) full time regular,  
seasonal 3) casual (all other than 1) and 2)) 4) N.G.
38. Was man working 1) at night 2) regularly out of town  
for a few days at a time 3) out of town for a longer  
time 4) worked regular hours in town 5) N.G. 6) N.A.
39. How many jobs did man have in the 3 years prior to  
desertion 1) one 2) several 3) N.G.
- 40) If more than one, were all jobs other than the  
last in Winnipeg 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G. 4) N.A.
41. If not, did family move around with him 1) Yes  
2) No 3) N.G. 4) N.A.
- \*42. At time of desertion was family in receipt of any  
public assistance 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
- \*43. Approximate income (from all sources) at time  
of desertion 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G.
44. Was there a contribution from 1) husband 2) wife  
3) both 4) neither 5) N.A.
45. Was wife working 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
46. Wife's occupation 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G. 3) N.A.
47. If family was not receiving assistance at time of  
desertion were they enrolled subsequently 1) Yes  
2) No 3) N.G. 4) N.A.
48. If yes, give date 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G. 3) N.A.
49. In month of October 1957 was family in receipt of any  
public assistance 1) Yes 2) No 3) N.G.
50. Approx. income (from all sources) for October or  
previous month 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) N.G.
51. Was there a contribution from 1) husband  
2) wife 3) both 4) neither 5) N.G.



VI Reasons given for the Desertion

\*64. By the deserted person:

\*65. Source of above information \_\_\_\_\_

\*66. By deserting person

\*67. Source of above information \_\_\_\_\_

\*68. By social worker

\*69. Source of above information \_\_\_\_\_