

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S AID:
MEANING AND PRACTICE IN ONTARIO CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES,
1893 - 1912

by

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TO THE RESCUE

Fig. i.1: Two Child Savers of the Belleville CAS. BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 10, facing page.

Abstract

Understanding Children's Aid: Meaning and Practice in Ontario Children's Aid Societies, 1893 - 1912

Michael Reid

In 1893, the Ontario government granted Children's Aid Societies (CASs) the authority to 'apprehend without warrant' any child they deemed to be neglected or dependent. This thesis explores the meaning that CAS work held for the people who performed it, and the relationship between that meaning and the actual practice of the work. The argument is based on research in the archives of three CASs - those of Ottawa, Brantford, and Belleville - from 1893 to 1912. CAS advocates and leaders in this earliest period referred to their work as 'child saving', and they depicted it as a manly, moral enterprise, centered around the dramatic, conclusive rescue of imperiled children from evil surroundings. They believed that children who lived in poverty, vice, and crime would grow up to be threats to Canada's national destiny unless they were rescued and raised to become respectable citizens. Rather than raising such children themselves in an institutional setting, CASs sought to place them in private foster homes, where the child savers expected that kindly, Christian people would give them a natural, moral upbringing. However, foster parents and children themselves had very different interests in and interpretations of the foster care system; thus its practice, like much of CAS work, rarely met the child savers' ideals.

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Introduction

On Wednesday, January 17th, 1908, the Ottawa Children's Aid Society (CAS) held their regular weekly meeting. They discussed the cases under their supervision, and what actions the Society had taken the preceeding week or should take the following week.

The president of the Society, W.L. Scott, kept notes on a piece of scrap paper as he chaired the meeting.

"Roy girl placed [in foster care]. Excellent home."

"Stephens....[Father] Drunk + left child in the snow. 2 years old..."

"O'Reilly, Both [parents] drink. To be notified that unless things change children to be taken."

"Cavanaugh. Three children taken from home."

"Fogart boy not yet found."

"James Firth. Doing remarkably well."

"Harry Green...Must go to work or school."

"Robertson boy. Bad mother. Doing better."¹

"Bad mother," "Must go to work or school," "Drunk," these words convey the ideas of CAS volunteers like Scott about how human lives could be judged and improved.

There were, in 1908, hundreds of men and women volunteering in 57 Children's Aid

Societies throughout Ontario. Each Society investigated and intervened in the lives of

¹ I have used pseudonyms throughout in compliance with privacy laws. The scrap cited has notes concerning at least 25 different cases. LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children's Aid Society Cases, file 11: 1906-1908, scrap paper, January 17, 1908.

local families in the hopes of rescuing children from life sentences of poverty, cruel treatment, vice, crime, filth, and shame. In total, that year, they removed 425 children from their families.² They directly touched the lives of thousands more through warnings, advice, and economic aid to children and parents. They called their work ‘child rescue’ or ‘child saving’, and they considered it their Christian and patriotic duty.

In this thesis, I explore CAS personnel’s understanding of their work. Drawing on archival records, I examine the meaning that CAS work had for child savers at the CASs of Ottawa, Brantford, and Belleville, in the years 1893 - 1912. Throughout the thesis, I use the cultural, practical, and legal contexts of CAS work to explain child savers’ ideas, and in turn, use those ideas to explain the structures child savers crafted and the practices they followed in carrying out their work. My focus on three Societies allows for a detailed, comparative analysis. The period from 1893 to 1912 begins with legislation authorizing Children’s Aid work in Ontario, and ends with the acceleration of professionalization in CASs just prior to World War I. Thus I analyze these Societies within the Victorian, pre-professional context in which they were developed.

Over the course of the 19th century, in Canada, Britain, and the United States, middle- and upper-class moral reformers of various kinds became increasingly concerned about children as future citizens of the nation.³ This child-saving concern manifested itself in the development of institutions of congregate child care, largely orphanages, but

² See Appendix C.

³ Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 3; Robert Adamoski, “The Child - The Citizen - The Nation: The Rhetoric and Experience of Wardship in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia,” in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002) 315.

also industrial and reform schools. Orphanages were usually organized by middle- and upper-class women, who found in child saving a way to express their political interests.⁴ Towards the end of the century, male and female child savers expanded their work to include improving the training of children living outside institutions, by establishing and advocating for Humane Societies,⁵ Sunday Schools, playgrounds and country outings for urban children, and compulsory public schooling.⁶

By the end of the century, child savers, like many in the middle-class, English-speaking world, had come to believe in the singular virtue of the economically independent family. They believed that such a family, with a bread-winning patriarch and a moral mother, was the only proper environment for raising virtuous citizens.⁷ Several prominent male child savers criticized the early institutions of congregate care, not only for being unable to provide children with the moral influences of good homes, but also for being unable to actively remove children from immoral environments. For these men, the ideal homes for raising proper children (especially boys) were rural farms, which both separated a boy from urban temptations and provided him with wholesome labour.⁸ In Britain, ‘Dr.’ Barnardo took poor children out of the crowded mother country, and placed them in the invigorating atmosphere of North American family farms. In New York,

⁴ Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, “The Rise and Decline of British North American Protestant Orphans’ Homes as Woman’s Domain, 1850-1930,” *Atlantis* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1982).

⁵ Humane Societies were, in their first few years, concerned with preventing cruelty to both children and animals.

⁶ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979; reprint Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000).

⁷ Nancy Christie, Introduction to *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002) 15.

⁸ LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997) 40.

Charles Loring Brace founded the first Children's Aid Society, similarly intended to transfer children out of the filthy, vice-ridden slums and into the clean, healthy living of the West. In Canada, J.J. Kelso organized the Toronto CAS in 1891, focusing on interventions to reform private homes as well as to place the children in better ones.

Kelso and his allies pressured the government of Ontario for a law granting the Children's Aid special legal powers with which to rescue children from immoral homes. Until the late 19th century, although Canadian child-saving institutions had received occasional land grants and funding from governments, they had no special legal status. The 1893 Children's Protection Act (CPA) radically altered the relationship between child-saving charities, the state, and families. It gave approved Children's Aid Societies the power to "apprehend without warrant" any child they deemed to be neglected within the rather broad definitions of the Act.⁹ The Society could then bring the child before a lower court judge, who could legally transfer the guardianship of the child away from its natural parents and make it a ward of the CAS. These two abilities, the power to seize children and to receive their guardianship, set the Children's Aid apart from any other child-saving organization in Canadian history.

The CPA also created a Department of Neglected and Dependent Children to oversee and encourage the efforts of Children's Aid Societies and other child-saving institutions. The province appointed J.J. Kelso as the Department's superintendent.

⁹ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA, 7(2), 3154.

Indeed, as the Department had no field staff until 1896, and no permanent office staff until 1910, for all intents and purposes, Kelso was the Department.¹⁰

John Joseph Kelso had immigrated to Canada with his family in 1874, at the age of ten. The Kelsos were Irish Presbyterians, who left Ireland after a disastrous fire that destroyed J.J.'s father's factory and the family's comfortable wealth.¹¹ Throughout his life, J.J. Kelso remained obsessed with his own prestige and income. As a young Toronto newspaper reporter in the late 1880s, he began his child-saving crusades by writing moralistic articles about the fate of newsboys and other 'street arabs'.¹² He helped organize several child-saving charities before becoming Superintendent, starting with the Toronto Humane Society and culminating in the Toronto CAS.¹³

As the Superintendent of a government Department, Kelso maintained his emphasis on propaganda and advocacy, and showed considerable skill in inspiring the emergence of a Children's Aid network in Ontario. In December of 1892, only the Toronto and the Peterborough CASs had been established. By December of 1894 there were 14 Societies in the Province, and by the next year there were 28.¹⁴ Furthermore, Kelso was instrumental in advising and encouraging child savers in other Provinces to adopt the CAS method. He also used his position to advocate for a broad range of child-saving causes far outside of his jurisdiction, and through this work made himself one of

¹⁰ Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 66.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6

¹² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 22, 58.

¹⁴ See Appendix C.

the English-speaking world's most famous child savers. Believing deeply in the value of charitable volunteering, Kelso balked at the trend towards professionalization.¹⁵

However, after 1910, the Provincial Government increasingly insisted on control over the message coming from their Department of Dependent and Neglected Children, and demanded that Kelso focus on administrative matters. Although he became progressively more constrained and frustrated over the next two decades, Kelso continued to serve until he was forced to retire in 1933. He died two years later, deeply dissatisfied with his life of humble pay and stultified service.¹⁶

Child Saving and Child Welfare

This thesis focuses on a period between the passage of the Children's Protection Act in 1893 and the intensification of professionalization in CASs after 1912. This is a period in which new legal powers transformed the possibilities of 'child saving', but new ways of thinking had not yet translated it into the idiom of 'child welfare'.¹⁷ Child saving was most frequently done by volunteers operating within a religious and moral world view, who acted without many formal standards in relatively autonomous local organizations, and relied on philanthropic funding. Child welfare, a mode of CAS work that slowly rose to dominance after 1912, was increasingly performed by professional social workers, within a more medical and psychological framework, with extensive

¹⁵ Patricia T. Rooke, and R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada (1800-1950)* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983) 299.

¹⁶ Jones and Rutman, *In the Children's Aid*, 178.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the origins of the term 'social welfare', see James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) 1.

formal standards distributed by robust provincial and national organizations, over time relying more heavily on state funding.

Almost all historians discussing Canadian CASs have either written about a period after World War I, or about a broader scope of time including both the prewar and the interwar period.¹⁸ Thus, when they have described the earlier, child-saving approach to CAS work, they have done so only as part of a broader study that includes the later, child-welfare approach, often at the expense of an in-depth description of the former. For instance, Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell attempt to describe the entire period from 1893 to 1930, but their interpretation of CASs relies heavily on the 1930 Ross Report.¹⁹ Other scholars downplay the first two decades because for their work it is largely important as a transitional period, “setting the stage for the advocates of professional social work...”²⁰ Although this scholarship is important and valuable, it has left a gap in the description of the CAS system in its child-saving form.

Before 1912, CAS work was characterized by an unabashedly moral, not medical or professional outlook. Children’s Aid workers were mostly volunteers and were completely untrained. Societies’ leadership was usually quite informal and their relationship with the Department was founded on personal partnership rather than on bureaucratic hierarchy. Kelso had rather little control or even knowledge of what any

¹⁸ Adamoski, “The Child - The Citizen - The Nation”; Lori Chambers 2006. “Adoption, Unwed Mothers and the Powers of the Children’s Aid Society in Ontario, 1921-1969,” *Ontario History* 98, no. 2 (September 2006); Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*; Dorothy Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding*, 307. The government-commissioned Ross Report was highly critical of CASs’ lack of professionalism, and led to the creation of a provincial Department of Public Welfare.

²⁰ Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good*, 30.

given CAS did, and he imposed few standard forms or regulations. Although some changes were made during the prewar period in the direction of the interwar and postwar CAS formula of ‘child welfare’, these were small and slow.

By contrast, between 1912 and 1919, at least five significant events led CASs toward professionalization. In 1912, the disparate local Societies, which had until then been linked only loosely by letters and the charisma of Kelso, created the Associated CASs of Ontario (ACASO, later to be renamed the Ontario Association of CASs, the modern OACAS). Its members argued for more provincial standards and centralization, albeit under the banner of the ACASO rather than that of the Department.²¹ Partly as a response to ACASO demands for more funding, the government encouraged Kelso’s administrative assistant (appointed in 1910) to demand detailed budgets and properly completed forms from local agents as well as from Kelso himself.²² In 1914, the first Canadian School of Social Service was founded at the University of Toronto, to provide instruction in the budding profession of social work.²³ Also beginning in that year, World War I confronted Canadian policy makers with a vast number of men too unhealthy to be sent to the front, and the terrible loss of those healthy enough to go. Finally, these medical concerns were bolstered by the loss of 50 000 Canadians in the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 - 1919.²⁴ Although professionalization and its concomitants were long

²¹ AO, Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912-1919, p. 82, June 17 and 18, 1919.

²² Jones and Rutman, *In the Children’s Aid*, 144.

²³ Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

²⁴ Betty O’Keefe and Ian Macdonald, *Dr. Fred and the Spanish Lady: Fighting the Killer Flu* (Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House, 2004) 16

and contested processes that did not ever cleanly break from underlying moralistic methods of organization and action, by 1919, their foundations had been laid. At the ACASO annual meeting of 1919, one member moved that all of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies be renamed "Child Welfare Associations."²⁵

Brantford, Belleville, and Ottawa

The tendency of historians to describe CASs as professional, centralized and standardized institutions, was, I would argue, also partly a result of the limited spatial scope of historical research on these Societies. Their focus has been on on Kelso and Toronto. No Ontario Children's Aid outside of Toronto has ever been the subject of a published academic study.²⁶

Toronto had long been the testing ground for new ideas in Canadian social policy, and after 1923, the Toronto CAS's professionalizing director, R.E. Mills, may have pushed his Society further and faster in the direction of standardized procedures than other Societies in the province.²⁷ The Toronto-based Department of Dependent and Neglected Children also probably found the local Society easier to supervise. By focusing

²⁵ AO, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies Fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912-1919, p. 81, June 17 and 18, 1919. The 1920 formation of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, with Charlotte Whitton as its executive director, was another major milestone on the path to professionalization.

²⁶ However, see the unpublished Rosalyn Cluett, "Child Welfare on a Shoestring: The Origins of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies, 1893-1939," (Ph.D Diss., Guelph University, 1994); the non-academic Alvin Koop, *To Celebrate Children: A History of the Children's Aid Society of the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington, 1893-1993* (Guelph: CAS of Guelph and Wellington, 1993); and the British Columbian Robert Adamoski, "The Child - The Citizen - The Nation"; and "'Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another': Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law*, ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003).

²⁷ Jones and Rutman, *In the Children's Aid*, 150.

on Kelso and the CASs in his city, scholars have made it easy to overlook the heterogeneity and decentralization inherent in the framework of the CPA.

Kelso was not empowered legally or practically to create Children's Aid Societies in other cities from his office in Toronto. Instead, according to the Act, he was to "encourage and assist" pre-existing local philanthropists and volunteers to do so.²⁸ Furthermore, the CPA did not provide for, and CASs did not depend on, a large amount of provincial funding. Therefore, although CASs were developed at Kelso's prodding, they were nonetheless local charities, founded, staffed, and funded by local respectable citizens. Kelso distributed a suggested constitution, but each town modified it to meet local needs.²⁹ There was considerable room for variability between Societies, and Kelso had few carrots or sticks with which to control them.

In the following thesis I use records from the CASs of Ottawa, Brantford, and Belleville, in order to analyze the articulation of CAS thought and practice in local contexts. For provincial context, I consulted Kelso's annual departmental reports in the *Ontario Sessional Papers*, and the minutes of the ACASO in the Archives of Ontario. I also sought records from other local CASs, such as the Peterborough and Lindsay Societies, but their records of the first two decades had been lost. The Owen Sound CAS did preserve some material, and I did some research there, but it lacked a good collection of public and internal administrative documents. Therefore, I left it out of the analysis, save for a few passing references. Ottawa, Brantford, and Belleville have rather different histories of Children's Aid, and present different possibilities and problems in terms of

²⁸ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 3(a), 3150.

²⁹ See Appendix B.

the sources available to study them. However, all three have extensive archival records from the period before 1912, which can provide some access to their public rhetoric, internal administration, and child-saving practices. The unique characteristics of each town, and the relationships of its notable citizens with Kelso and the child-saving project shaped the emergence of its Children's Aid practices.

Of the three cities in question, Ottawa was by far the largest. In the period under study, its economy was based on a declining logging industry and rising federal civil service bureaucracy.³⁰ Slightly less than a third of its population was French, but, with Ottawa's growing Irish immigration, almost one half was Catholic.³¹ Ottawa had three orphanages, two of which were founded by Catholic orders, and one by Protestant feminists.³² None of the other CASs studied here had such institutions nearby .

The president of the Ottawa CAS from 1896 to 1921 (and also the president of the ACASO from 1912 to 1919) was W.L. Scott, an Irish Catholic from a very prominent family. Scott seems to have genuinely disliked Kelso, not least because the other Irishman occasionally used his position to place Catholic children with Protestant families.³³ However, Scott was a man of remarkable tact, and he usually made his

³⁰ Shirley E. Woods, *Ottawa: The Capital of Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1980) 107, 203.

³¹ William G. Dean, ed., *Concise Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) Plate 18; John Webster Grant and John S. Moir, "Religious Denominations," in *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 2, *The Land Transformed*, ed. R. Louis Gentilcore (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993) Plate 52.

³² LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, December 28, 1894; October 12, 1899.

³³ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 12, file 44: Greek Children: 1920-1921, from W.L. Scott to Bishop Budka, April 22, 1921; Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding*, 4; Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000) 34.

disagreements with Kelso known only in discreet and strategic letters to his own friends and allies.³⁴

Towards the end of his life, as a famous child saver, Scott donated his personal papers to the National Archives.³⁵ This material is well-organized into topic and time period, and a considerable amount of it relates to his work with Children's Aid. These documents include letters advising CAS leaders throughout the continent, practical internal correspondence with his own Society, and bits of scrap paper such as the one with which I began this chapter. Scott's papers provide a window into the CAS system as he saw it. The National Archives also contain the Ottawa CAS's first minute book, covering all annual and most monthly meetings from 1893 to 1907.³⁶ However, this collection preserves relatively few public statements. Ottawa is the CAS I discuss least throughout the thesis.

At the end of the 19th century, Brantford was a small industrial city. The most well-known of its businesses was the Cockshutt plow factory, the centerpiece of that family's powerful commercial network.³⁷ Brantford's population was largely Scots, English, and Irish Protestant, although the town was adjacent to a very large Six Nations

³⁴ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children's Aid Society Cases, file 11: 1906-1908, from John Keane to W.L. Scott, August 30, 1907.

³⁵ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, MG 30-C27, finding aid.

³⁶ LAC, Children's Aid Society of Ottawa fonds, MG 28 I84, 1 box.

³⁷ Bruce Hill "The Making of 'The Sheffield of the West,'" in *A Glimpse of the Past: A Centennial History of Brantford and Brant County*, ed. Robert Clark, Mrs. Howard Disher, Bruce Hill, Mrs. Peter D. Luard (Brantford: Brant Historical Society, 1966) 32.

community.³⁸ The Methodist and Presbyterian church populations were by far the largest, but other Protestant denominations were well represented, and there was one Roman Catholic congregation.³⁹

Although the Cockshutts were frequent presences on the executive of the Brantford Children's Aid Society, by far the most important and well-known child saver in this town was their former employee, Stewart Munn Thomson.⁴⁰ Thomson served as secretary and agent of the Brantford CAS from just after its founding in 1894. As a fellow Presbyterian (albeit Scottish) of a humble background, Thomson had much in common with Kelso, and he looked up to the Superintendent so much that he kept newspaper clippings of his public speeches.⁴¹ In 1905, Thomson accepted a position as a provincial agent for the Department, keeping his local duties as well. Despite becoming seriously ill in 1907, Thomson served relentlessly in both of his positions until January of 1910, when, as he was walking to the bank on CAS business, he died of heart failure.⁴² Unstinting devotion like his was rare, and Thomson was remembered, both locally and provincially, as an exceptional CAS agent.⁴³

³⁸ Grant and Moir, "Religious Denominations," *Historical Atlas of Canada*, Plate 52; Dean, *Concise Historical Atlas of Canada*, Plate 18. Indeed, Brantford was named after Colonel Joseph Brant, Thayendanegea, the Haudenosaunee chieftain who had received this large (and today much-disputed) territory from the British Crown in return for his allegiance in the American War of Independence. CASs did not have jurisdiction over children in the legal category of 'Indian' until the 1930s.

³⁹ Warner & Beers, *The History of the County of Brant, Ontario* (Toronto: Warner, Beers & Co., 1883) 326, Brantford Public Library: Digital Archives, <http://www.brantford.library.on.ca/genealogy/digital.php> (accessed September 8, 2008).

⁴⁰ BrCAS, "One Hundred Years of Dedication."

⁴¹ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905.

⁴² BrL. *Brantford Expositor*, January 6, 1910, "Death Came Suddenly to 'Children's Friend.'"

⁴³ AO, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912-1919, p.75, June 17th and 18th, 1919.

The Brantford CAS commemorated Thomson with the creation of children's shelter in his name, and the preservation of some of the journals in which he had recorded his CAS work. These and other miscellaneous papers from the early years of the Brantford CAS are kept in the Society's current offices, in a loosely organized china cabinet. The collection includes correspondence, scrap paper, several annual reports, and the 'history books'. These last documents were the main book of forms in which information about each ward of the CAS was to be recorded. Child savers folded letters and reports about each case into the pages of the history books. Such documents were later removed and microfilmed into case files, to which the Brantford CAS's current administration kindly granted me access. This valuable collection permits me to compare child savers' ideas with their practices at Brantford in a way that is not possible for Ottawa or Belleville. The Brantford CAS is the most discussed of the three in this thesis, especially in Chapter 4.

Belleville, the smallest of the three cities, rested upon an economy of agricultural and timber products.⁴⁴ Although Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Presbyterians all had solid footings in the town, Methodists were by far the largest and most powerful denomination.⁴⁵ The local Woman's Christian Association (WCA), a large moral reform organization involved in projects ranging from occasional adoption placements to the

⁴⁴ Armand P. LaBarge, "The Honourable Billa Flint - King of North Hastings: A Biographical Study of the Life of Senator Billa Flint (1805-1894)" (MA Thesis, Trent University, 2007) 92.

⁴⁵ Grant and Moir, "Religious Denominations," *Historical Atlas of Canada*, Plate 52.

building of a local hospital, was organized by the wife of the Methodist college president.⁴⁶

When Kelso approached Belleville's child savers about starting a CAS in 1894, some townsfolk suggested that the Woman's Christian Association take up the work. Kelso rejected their offer, and instead encouraged the newly formed Belleville Humane Society to become certified as a CAS. The Humane Society grudgingly accepted, but within a year it faded into non-existence.⁴⁷ In 1907, Kelso sent Brantford's S.M. Thomson to re-establish a CAS in Belleville, and this second Society is the one that survives today.⁴⁸ The events of 1894 and 1907 are discussed and analyzed in detail in Chapter 2.

I reviewed two archival collections in Belleville, those of the CAS and the WCA. The Belleville Woman's Christian Association records were in disorganized and potentially damaging conditions, on property not belonging to the WCA and not open to the public.⁴⁹ However, I was able to view some items relevant to CAS work through the good graces of Diane Sule, a current member of the WCA and the Hastings County Historical Society. These documents allowed me to shape a more nuanced argument concerning the gendered connotations of CAS work.

The Belleville CAS itself has preserved several collections of documents from its earliest years, in a rather well-organized fireproof filing cabinet. Perhaps because of this

⁴⁶ Diane Sule, *The Woman's Christian Association of Belleville* (Unpublished, 2004) 4; W.C. Mikel, *City of Belleville History* (Picton: Picton Gazette, 1943) p. 179.

⁴⁷ BeCAS, Correspondence, John J.B. Flint to JJK on Oct. 26, 1894; BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, "Children's Aid Work," May 31, 1895.

⁴⁸ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson Day Journal 1907, May 22.

⁴⁹ BWCA. Diane Sule tells me that the records are now in a better location, more accessible to the WCA.

organization, the Belleville collection lacks the sort of miscellanea often found in the W.L. Scott papers and the records of the Brantford CAS. However, it does preserve an extensive collection of letters from both the 1894 and the 1907 CAS beginnings, most of the annual reports from 1907 to the present, and the minutes of the Society meetings from 1907 to 1936. The preservation of the 1894 letters is likely the result of the involvement of the lawyer W.C. Mikel and the newspaper editor Thomas Ritchie in both the first and the second incarnations of the Society.⁵⁰ The Society minutes provide some brief information about child-saving action in a few cases, but more extensive practical documentation is not available.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into four chapters, preceded by this introduction and followed by a short conclusion. Chapter 1 situates my research within the historiography of child saving and child welfare in Canada, and notes some of the contributions and limitations of my study. Each of the following chapters takes up key aspects of child savers' understanding of Children's Aid in relation to a few elements of CAS practice.

In Chapter 2, I attempt to explain why Children's Aid Societies were largely controlled by men, even though much of 19th century child saving had been controlled by women. I argue that the shift was the result of powerful masculinist metaphors in CAS design and CAS critiques of the orphanage system. In the words that CAS leaders used, and in the practices that they performed, they exalted certain manly attributes and

⁵⁰ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p.1, May 28th, 1907; BeL, *Brantford Intelligencer*, "A Children's Aid Society: A Meeting Last Night Discussed the Question," Nov. 3, 1894; BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p.22, Oct 5, 1908; BeCAS, Correspondence, From Thomas Ritchie to J.J. Kelso, Nov 3, 1894 (sent Nov 5).

denigrated certain womanly ones. By looking at these behaviors and statements, we can begin to understand why CASs gave men control of the most powerful institutions in child saving.

In Chapter 3, I argue that child savers' understanding of morality, poverty, and crime, and the relations between the three, encouraged them to see families needing CAS intervention as belonging to a 'criminal class' separate from their own 'respectable class'. I also describe respectable Canadians' faith in the glorious destiny of their nation, and child savers' concern that crime and poverty were obstacles to be overcome in the progress towards that destiny. I close by arguing that these various ideological elements encouraged child savers to see their work as a benevolent, manly project of nation building, bringing Christ and civilization to the savage wilderness of their own urban poor.

The cornerstone of the CAS system was the ability to remove children from their families, and place them with foster parents. In Chapter 4, I demonstrate that child savers understood and used this ability in ways that had little place for the intentions and actions of foster parents and children themselves. Children's Aid workers tried to keep foster children separate from their former contacts (their family and friends), and expected that annual visitations to foster homes would protect wards from abuses. They also imagined that foster parents would be motivated by kindness, Christianity, and patriotism to take in and raise the children. Although CAS workers had considerable powers of surveillance and negative sanction with which to make manifest their expectations of child care, they discovered again and again that foster children and foster parents had ideas of their own.

Chapter 1: Approaches to Child Saving

The historiography of child saving has formed an interdisciplinary conversation over the last half-century. This discussion has generally engaged with a few central questions: What were the ideas and intentions of the child savers? What were the consequences of different child-saving projects for children, families, the child savers themselves, and for the social order at large? How much can we know about the foregoing questions and how can we know it?

Most of the early historians of Canadian child saving and child welfare were professional social workers and educators writing about the history of their own disciplines. They generally wrote about the most visible, official levels of this history: prominent child savers and the institutions they developed. This scholarship also emphasized the progressive nature of various reform initiatives, leading as they did to the creation of the authors' own professions and institutions.¹ It dwelt on the significance of the ideas and intentions of the famous developers of these initiatives and, as later critics have pointed out, generally assumed that the consequences of child-saving and child-welfare projects followed in a "direct line" from the goals of the reformers who designed them.²

¹ Richard Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario: 1791 - 1893* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1965) 20; Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 66; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Children in English-Canadian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979; reprint Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000).

² Dorothy Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992) 9; Bruce Bellingham, "Institution and Family: An Alternative View of Nineteenth-Century Child Saving," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (Oct.-Dec., 1986): S35.

Such scholarship tells the ‘life and work’ stories of important figures at a level of detail which permits intimate characterization. Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman’s 1981 biography of J.J. Kelso remains the only published monograph dedicated to him.³ Drawing on his personal papers and professional deeds, they are able to explore a central irony of Kelso’s fate: by becoming a state employee to fulfill his dreams for the charitable child-saving movement, he both alienated himself from the evolving needs of that movement, and found his freedom of action as a child saver increasingly curtailed. At the end of his life, after forty years as the provincial Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent children, he wrote that “All those years I was in the wrong place.”⁴ Recent scholars regard the changing and contested relationship between state, charity, and family as one of the most significant subjects in modern social history. Jones and Rutman’s work gives us a detailed window into that struggle.

The early historians of children in general shared this interest in ideas and intentions. Expressed most dramatically in Phillippe Aries’ thesis of the “invention of childhood,” these scholars generally proposed that over the last several hundred years, Western civilization underwent a ‘revolution in sentiments’ towards children.⁵ Educational historian Neil Sutherland’s seminal book, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, for instance, focussed on laws, public statements, and institutions. He argued that the changes in attitudes towards children had, by the beginning of the 20th century,

³ Jones and Rutman, *In the Children’s Aid*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵ Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick, (New York: Vintage, 1962); Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*; see also Bruce Bellingham “The History of Childhood since the ‘Invention of Childhood’: Some Issues in the Eighties,” *Journal of Family History* 13 (1988): 348.

produced institutions that improved their health and economic security, and that treated deviant and criminal children more humanely.⁶ According to this school of thought, adults decreasingly regarded children as cheap labour, and increasingly regarded them as objects of sentimental affection, creating what Viviana Zelizer has called the “economically useless but emotionally priceless child.”⁷

These early optimistic approaches to child saving and child welfare - focusing on sentiments, leaders, and institutions - were soon criticized by a number of scholars inspired by Marxism.⁸ Such critics argued that the essential intention of child savers was to enhance and maintain ‘social control’ over the working class. Capitalism required “intrusive interventions into working class life,” in order to maintain itself, and child saving represented a particularly pernicious intervention.⁹ Thus, according to such scholars, the legal powers of Children’s Aid Societies and juvenile delinquency laws were weapons used by the elite to threaten the working class into acquiescence, not strategies for the humanitarian goal of rescuing helpless children from crime, poverty and abuse.¹⁰

⁶ Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, 238-241.

⁷ Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 209; See also, Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, 27.

⁸ Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Susan E. Houston, “Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience,” *History of Education Quarterly* 12, no. 3, Special Issue: Education and Social Change in English-Speaking Canada (Autumn, 1972).

⁹ Bryan Hogeveen, “‘You will hardly believe I turned out so well’: Parole, Surveillance, Masculinity, and the Victoria Industrial School, 1896-1935,” *Histoire Sociale* 37, no. 74 (November 2004): 211.

¹⁰ Bruce Bellingham, “Institution and Family,” S35; Platt, *The Child Savers*, 9; For a socialist-feminist approach, see Tanis Peikoff, and Stephen Brickley, “Creating Precious Children and Glorified Mothers: A Theoretical Assessment of the Transformation of Childhood,” in *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*, ed. Russel Smandych, Gordon Dodds, and Alvin Esau (Winnipeg: Legal Research Institute of the University of Manitoba, 1991) 51.

Like their opponents, the early social control theorists often assumed a direct connection between elite intentions and social outcomes. In 1969, for instance, Anthony Platt argued that child savers' intellectual approaches to the construction of juvenile courts served their own "class interests."¹¹ More specifically, Susan Houston's 1972 article argued that elites' blurry distinction between delinquent and dependent children increased the middle class' control over the impoverished.¹²

Historians now generally agree that child-saving and child-welfare projects contributed to the formation and the empowerment of the middle class.¹³ Some emphasize that "Charity reflected the values and beliefs of the elite and was a vehicle by which they could impose these on the rest of society."¹⁴ Others argue that the process of imposing these values helped to create and establish the middle-class status of the child savers.¹⁵ For instance, feminist historians point out that middle-class women's charitable work was one of the few ways in which they could gain access to political power.¹⁶ To some, this advance represents unmitigated progress, with middle- and upper-class women

¹¹ Platt, *The Child Savers*, 4

¹² Susan E. Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency," 263.

¹³ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding*, 288.

¹⁴ Janice Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822 - 1900" (PhD. Diss., McGill University, 2001) 3.

¹⁵ Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland, 1991) 29; see also Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) 128.

¹⁶ Carmen Varty, "The City and the Ladies: Politics, Religion and Female Benevolence in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Hamilton, Canada West," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 38, iss. 2 (Spring 2004): 251; Carol Thora Baines, "From Women's Benevolence to Professional Social Work: The Case of the Wimodausis Club and the Earls court Children's Home, 1902 - 1971" (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 1990) 61.

gaining social power while aiding their less fortunate sisters.¹⁷ To those emphasizing the social control effects of charity, the supposedly benevolent women appear to have advanced themselves at the expense of the defenseless and increasingly regulated poor and single mothers¹⁸ It is now generally accepted, at least, that child saving and other moral reform projects dovetailed rather conveniently with the interests of the wealthy patrons and middle-class volunteers who organized and performed them.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, historians came to believe that the ideas and intentions of clients themselves were essential to understanding the consequences of child saving. Institutions were, as Bruce Bellingham argued, “relationships” between states, charities, and families, and the function of those relationships was negotiated by all participants, not dictated unilaterally by the child savers.¹⁹ Thus, the consequences of child saving must be scrutinized by investigating the lives of clients and ordinary families, rather than by “[taking] reformers at their word,” or accepting as “theoretically given” the conclusions of a Marxist or sentimental vision of the history of children.²⁰

John Bullen is one Canadian historian who carefully combined, within a Marxist framework, an analysis of working class family life and an exploration of the law and ideology of CAS child saving. He argued that the CASS’ obsession with enforcing the

¹⁷ Wendy Mitchinson, “Early Women’s Organizations and Social Reform: Prelude to the Welfare State,” in *The ‘Benevolent’ State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, ed. Allan Moscovitch and Tim Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987) 77.

¹⁸ Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum,” 5.

¹⁹ Bellingham, “Institution and Family,” S34

²⁰ Robert Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another’: Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia,” in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law*, ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003) 146; Bellingham, “Institution and Family,” S35; see also Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 5.

work ethic, combined with foster families' use of CAS wards for domestic labour, resulted in the exploitation of foster children.²¹

For most scholars studying child saving 'from the bottom up', however, the actual consequences of child rescue were not nearly so one-sided or dramatic. In particular, several scholars have demonstrated that the disposition and custody of children in the care of child-saving institutions was the object of constant struggle between children, parents, and child savers. Given the lack of legal tools with which 19th century child savers were equipped, the intentions of families often prevailed.²² Feminist scholars in particular have noted that middle- and upper-class women's projects, as class-biased as they may have been, could also be used by working-class mothers to meet their own needs and strategies.²³ Rather than being permanently fragmented by contact with such institutions, many families were able to make use of them temporarily as a last resort in times of crisis in order to maintain long term family cohesion.²⁴ More complexly, these

²¹ John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (Fall 1986): 180; see also John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers, in *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*, ed. R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991).

²² Hogeveen "'You will hardly believe'"; Sara Posen, "Examining Policy from the 'Bottom Up': the Relationship between Parents, Children, and Managers at the Toronto Boy's Home, 1859-1920," in *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History*, ed. Lori Chambers and Edgar-André Montigny (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1998); Jessa Chupik and David Wright, "Treating the 'Idiot' Child in Early 20th-Century Ontario," *Disability and Society* 21, no. 1 (January 2006): 78; Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997) 207; Clay Gish, "Rescuing the 'Waifs and Strays' of the City: The Western Emigration Program of the Children's Aid Society," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (Autumn 1999).

²³ Margaret Little, *'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit': The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998) xiv; Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Viking, 1988) 297.

²⁴ Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982) 117.

institutions became involved in intra-family conflicts.²⁵ Linda Gordon's research, for instance, demonstrates that, at a time when law and public sentiment provided very little recourse for a battered wife, such women actively and intelligently called upon child-protection institutions, and "virtually dragged" the reluctant child savers into dealing with spousal abuse.²⁶

Scholars analyzing child saving from these perspectives argue that its consequences were nuanced, ambiguous, and always mediated by the actions and objectives of families. For example, ten years after her 1972 article written in line with the social control thesis, Houston pointed out that although child-saving institutions perpetuated the economic inequality between classes, they could also be useful to family members' own struggles and strategies, and therefore were "not entirely unwelcome."²⁷ Child savers may not have produced dramatic changes for good or ill, so much as facilitated or inhibited long-standing working-class practices of child care.²⁸

Similarly, many scholars argue that, from the clients' perspective, early Children's Aid Societies may not have represented a fundamental break from the orphanage system.²⁹ Orphanages had long been involved in foster care, and for several decades,

²⁵ Joan Sangster, "Masking and UnMasking the Sexual Abuse of Children: Perceptions of Violence Against Children in 'The Badlands' of Ontario, 1916-1930," *Journal of Family History* 25, no. 4 (October 2000): 510.

²⁶ Gordon, *Heroes*, 252

²⁷ Houston, "Victorian Origins"; Susan Houston, "The 'Waifs and Strays' of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982) 135.

²⁸ Gordon Darroch, "Home and Away: Patterns of Residence, Schooling, and Work Among Children and Never Married Young Adults, Canada, 1871 and 1901," *Journal of Family History* 26, no. 2 (April 2001): 236.

²⁹ Charlotte Neff, "The Use of Apprenticeship and Adoption by the Toronto Protestant Orphans' Home, 1853-1869," *Histoire Sociale* 30, no. 60 (November 1997) 335; Robert Adamoski, 2003, "Charity is One Thing" 163.

CASs remained dependent on congregate care. Families and children were able to negotiate with both practices and incorporate them into their own strategies. For instance, at least 30 per cent of the children transported by Charles Loring Brace's much-vaunted CAS rural relocation program were accompanied by their parents.³⁰ In short, many scholars have argued that insofar as children's experiences were concerned, the differences between CASs and orphanages were smaller than their advocates claimed.³¹

However, social historians have long noted that despite similarities in practice, CASs and orphanages "represented fundamentally opposed philosophies of child care..."³² Robert Adamoski's research on the Vancouver CAS suggests that the Society's "legalist discourse," emphasized the obligation of the state to remove children from criminal parents.³³ The CAS used its legislated mandate to differentiate its actions from the charitable work of orphanages, with whom Children's Aid was in competition for funding and legitimacy.³⁴ As Rebecca Coulter argues, the impact of the CAS was not in how they actually treated children in the short term, but in how they re-framed the relationship between children, families, charities, and the law in the long term.³⁵

Gender has not generally been central to historians' discussion of the differences between CASs and systems of congregate care. However, in historical writing over the

³⁰ Gish, "Rescuing the 'Waifs and Strays,'" 124.

³¹ Charlotte Neff, "The Use of Apprenticeship," 338; Bellingham, "Institution and Family."

³² Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 273.

³³ Adamoski, "Charity is One Thing," 146.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Rebecca Coulter, "'Not to Punish But to Reform': Juvenile Delinquency and the Children's Protection Act in Alberta, 1909-1929," in *Social Welfare Policy in Canada: Historical Readings*, ed. Raymond B. Blake and Jeff Keshen (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995) 144; Adamoski, "Charity is One Thing," 149.

last three decades, there have been some hints that this divide might be a particularly gendered one. While Rooke and Schnell demonstrated that Protestant Orphanage Homes were in many ways a woman's domain, scholars have generally noted that CASs were led by men.³⁶ Linda Gordon and Mariana Valverde have both suggested that moral reformers often saw the power of law as masculine.³⁷ Studies of the most influential leaders of the CAS movement show that they saw their system as a vigorous, masculine replacement for the passive, feminine orphanage system. Charles Loring Brace, for instance, once asserted that congregate care produces "a species of character which is monastic - indolent, unused to struggle; subordinate indeed, but with little independence and manly vigor."³⁸ Therefore, the new relationship between state, charity and family embodied in CASs may have been shaped by a rising sense of the importance of masculinity in child saving.³⁹ This possibility is the central question of Chapter 2.

Following Jacques Donzelot, post-structuralist historical sociologists refer to the interconnections between children, families, charities, and the law in modern liberal or

³⁶ Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "The Rise and Decline of British North American Protestant Orphans' Homes as Woman's Domain, 1850-1930," *Atlantis* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1982); Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 96.

³⁷ Gordon, *Heroes*, 65-66; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 53; see also, Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, 4.

³⁸ Charles Loring Brace, "The Science of Charity," *The Nation* 8, June 10, 1869, 457-458; cited in Gish, "Rescuing the 'Waifs and Strays,'" 126.

³⁹ Patricia Dirks, "Reinventing Christian Masculinity and Fatherhood: The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1900-1920," in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

welfare states as ‘the social.’⁴⁰ The social is a realm of knowledge and intervention that articulates between state and family, and invites governance (writ broadly as ‘the conduct of conduct’) to operate on subjects in pervasive, subtle ways. While this moral regulation always produces resistance, it also conditions, directs, and depoliticizes that resistance. In the post-structuralist framework, families are not independent actors who strategize with or against a top-down social control by the state, but instead are participants in a multi-directional moral regulation diffused through the state, civil society, and families.⁴¹

Moral regulation operates not only through coercive laws and formal organizations, but also through language, symbols and rhetoric. Post-structuralists doubt the reality, knowability, and importance of ‘hidden intents’ behind moral reform. Instead, they prefer to analyze the effects of its discourse for the construction of relations of power.⁴² Valverde’s work on urban reform, for instance, explores “the way in which symbols and rhetorical tropes act to change the world even while purporting merely to describe it...”⁴³ While some have criticized discourse analysis for its occasionally exclusive focus on language, many historians now incorporate the ‘linguistic turn’ to

⁴⁰ Paula Maurutto, *Governing Charities: Church and State in Toronto’s Catholic Archdiocese, 1850 - 1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) 17; Bruce Curtis, “Surveying the Social: Techniques, Practices, Power,” *Histoire Sociale* 35, no. 69 (May 2002) 85; Kenneth Draper, “Redemptive Homes - Redeeming Choices: Saving the Social in Late-Victorian London, Ontario,” in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002) 266.

⁴¹ Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1979) 94; J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn, Introduction to *Regulating lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003) 11; Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 5.

⁴² Mariana Valverde, “Some Remarks on the Rise and Fall of Discourse Analysis,” *Histoire Sociale* 33, no. 65 (May 2000) 71; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 90; Dorothy Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good*, 9; Mona Gleason, “From ‘Disgraceful Carelessness’ to ‘Intelligent Precaution’: Accidents and the Public Child in English Canada,” *Journal of Family History* 30, no. 2 (April 2005): 231, 233.

⁴³ Valverde, “Some Remarks,” 67.

some extent.⁴⁴ Such research calls attention to the metaphoric and literary dimensions of social movements, especially their connections with broader moral and national projects.

Scholarship on child saving and moral regulation has often emphasized the importance of processes of nation building. One of the reasons that child saving gained state sanction at the end of the Victorian era was that the fate of the nation was increasingly seen as being linked to the morality of its families.⁴⁵ Child-saving projects, then, were ways in which bad families could be reformed or circumvented, to ensure that their children became moral, self-regulating citizens suitable to Canada's liberal democratic, capitalist framework.⁴⁶ By exploring the techniques and the justifications that child savers used to carry out these projects, we can study changing understandings of the nation itself.⁴⁷

Central to the national project of late Victorian Canada was the preservation and cultivation of the British race.⁴⁸ Child saving was at the heart of this concern. Xiaobei Chen has pointed out that a disproportionate majority of the cases dealt with by the Toronto CAS concerned white children. She argues that child saving "reflected anxiety

⁴⁴ J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn, Introduction to *Regulating Lives*, 12; Steven Maynard, "On the Case of the Case: The Emergence of the Homosexual as a Case History in Early-Twentieth-Century Ontario," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Joan Sangster 2001, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2001) 32.

⁴⁵ Nancy Christie, Introduction to *Households of Faith*, 15.

⁴⁶ Robert Adamoski, "The Child - The Citizen - The Nation: The Rhetoric and Experience of Wardship in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002) 315.

⁴⁷ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 4.

⁴⁸ Joy Parr, Introduction to *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, ed. Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2003) 6; Linda Kealey, Introduction to *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1979) 5

about the size and quality of the predominant Anglo-Celtic population.”⁴⁹ Such racial concerns extended not only to immigrants of ‘degenerate’ races, but also to the degeneration of the Anglo-Celtic race through the growth of the ‘feeble-minded’ population, with whom child savers were very much concerned.⁵⁰ The meaningful relationship between child saving and nation building is an organizing theme throughout the thesis, but Chapter 3 addresses it most directly.

The work of post-structuralists has also contributed to a broad, interdisciplinary re-evaluation of the role of power in the construction of historical sources, particularly case files.⁵¹ In Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson’s edited volume, *On the Case*, several social historians argue that a central difficulty in reading case files is that the documents were usually produced to control the people that they claimed to describe.⁵² Margaret Little’s work on Ontario Mother’s Allowance case files, in the same volume, argues that the files should be read as objects of struggle, in which not only the social worker, but also the single mother, acts strategically in order to gain control over the writing of the document and the social effects that will flow from it.⁵³ Historians thus face considerable difficulty in using these documents as evidence for understanding the

⁴⁹ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 15.

⁵⁰ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990) 46.

⁵¹ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 77; Karen Swift, “Contradictions in Child Welfare: Neglect and Responsibility,” in *Women’s Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, ed. Carol Baines, Patricia Evans, and Sheila Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991) 248.

⁵² Eric Sager, “Employment Contracts in Merchant Shipping: An Argument for Social Science History,” in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 49; Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, Introduction to *On the Case*, 14.

⁵³ Margaret Hillyard Little, “Ontario Mother’s Allowance Case Files as a Site of Contestation,” in *On the Case*, 231.

lives of either the regulators or the regulated. Certainly, historians in general agree that such documents can no longer be used as transparent windows into the real lives of the past.⁵⁴

James C. Scott, a political anthropologist and theorist of the state, has discussed the problem of studying power relations in his historical research on peasant resistance. He points out that it is often in the interests of both elites and subordinates to cover up acts of subordinate resistance, and endorse the legitimacy of the elite.⁵⁵ The “public transcript” of past struggles therefore, is prone to strategic blind spots which are useful to both the weak and the strong. However, Scott holds up the possibility of a “hidden transcript” in which subordinates collectively rehearse their critique of power while offstage from their interaction with or surveillance by elites.⁵⁶ Chapter 4 considers the implications of case files and the ‘hidden transcript’ for the limits of knowledge about the lives of foster children.

The Meaning of Children's Aid

The main subject matter of this thesis is the ideas and intentions of Children's Aid Society child savers. I attempt to establish the meaning that child saving had for them by situating their ideas about themselves within the cultural values about men, women, children, and the nation that were dominant between 1893 and 1912. I explore how child

⁵⁴ Sager, “Employment Contracts,” 50; Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada 1869-1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) x.

⁵⁵ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990) 89.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 8, 21.

savers saw their world, and themselves within it. While this ethnographic approach to historical material shares many techniques with discourse analysis, and benefits from the post-structuralist emphasis on the heterogeneous, multi-faceted, and re-interpretable nature of meanings, it differs somewhat in epistemology. Most importantly, I assume the knowability and importance of intentions and hidden meanings. Rather than prioritizing consequences on the surface of social life, I focus on child savers' deep, implicit ways of understanding the world. They wrote those understandings into practices that, in interaction with the legal, economic, and cultural structures of late Victorian Ontario, had transformative consequences for child saving, children, and families.

The legal and ideological foundation of the CAS system found practical expression in what Adamoski has called “the assumption of parental disqualification as a necessary prerequisite for public assistance to children in need.”⁵⁷ While Victorian orphanages and industrial schools often found themselves locked in struggles with parents over control of children,⁵⁸ Children's Aid Societies had the power to remove the parents' legal standing to carry on such struggles. Despite the substantial practical continuities between CASs and the institutions of congregate care that preceded them, Children's Aid practice may therefore have had very different effects for children and families.

Limitations of the Study

As a small-scale, localized study, drawing on an eclectic theoretical basis, this thesis does not attempt to establish the role of Children's Aid societies in macro-level

⁵⁷ Adamoski, “Charity is One Thing”, 165

⁵⁸ Posen, “Examining Policy,” 13; Hogeveen, “You will hardly believe,” 220.

historical processes such as the maintenance of capitalism or patriarchy, the development of the social, or the emergence of the liberal diagram of power. My hope is to develop an appreciation of child savers' own understanding of their work, and the relations between that understanding and its practice.

Among the many important lines of inquiry that I have not pursued, there are two that deserve special mention: marriages, and the relation between the Ottawa CAS and nearby orphanages. An exploration of the marriages and other family relationships among CAS child savers and between them and other moral reformers would enrich the gendered analysis I present in Chapter 2. My analysis in Chapter 2 could also be nuanced by a detailed study of the relationship between the Ottawa CAS and the three orphanages in the city, each of which received permanent seats on the CAS's board of management.⁵⁹ Kelso's displeasure with this arrangement, and the Ottawa CAS's maintenance of it, would be fruitful topics for a study of the disagreements among child savers.⁶⁰

On a more general note, I wish to be clear that this study does not define *the* central elements in child savers' understanding of their work, nor does it explain all of child saving's idiosyncrasies and generalities. Child savers' ideas about their world did not form a single, seamless structure. Instead, as Valverde has pointed out, "...moral reformers adhered to many heterogeneous explanations simultaneously and did not regard them as being in conflict."⁶¹ They were followers of Jesus Christ, who sanctified poverty, and also of Adam Smith, who held that unfettered greed was the cause of all national

⁵⁹ LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society fonds, Minutes 1893 - 1907, December 15, 1893. See Appendix A.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, May 5, 1899.

⁶¹ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 99.

greatness. They were the proud successors of colonists whom they believed had pacified the Canadian wilderness, and also the fretful inheritors of an increasingly urban nation. Their ideas were often contradictory, and cannot be neatly systematized. Furthermore, child savers' did not all agree on the best method in every case. My focus has been on developing a preliminary sketch of the Children's Aid child savers' world view, and has thus passed over many complexities and disagreements.

I have generally organized my argument around child savers' hopes of nation building, and used that part of their world view as a reference point to which other ideas can be attached. This choice is merely one explanatory technique, that should not be taken to mean that to child savers, Canada was more important than Christ or capitalism. The ideas that I have described in this study were important ones that informed child savers' practice in many regards, but they do not encompass all of their world view, nor explain all of their actions.

Chapter 2 - “At Last a Practical Man Got a Gun”:

The Masculinity of Children’s Aid

In 1905, J.J. Kelso, the government supervisor of Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario, visited Halifax at the invitation of a local women’s group. There, he told a parable that has a great deal to say about the ways in which he and other CAS child savers understood themselves and their work.

Mr. Kelso...related the fable of a river down which children who had been thrown in further up, no one knew by whom, were being swept down to destruction, except for the few that people were able to save as they passed along. At last a practical man got a gun and went up the river to see what could be done to stop the supply.¹

In the following chapter, I will explain the symbolic context in which this story could have seemed rational, even pithy. This context is CAS child savers’ gendered understandings of themselves.

Although much of Ontarian society was male-dominated in the 1800s, charitable child saving had long been the province of women, both ideologically and practically. Carol Baines has noted that in the second half of the 19th century “...throughout Ontario...women assumed responsibility for managing, raising funds for, and directing the operations of...children’s institutions.”² Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell argue that

¹ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, “Give the Children a Chance,” undated newspaper clipping. Like many of the primary sources on which this thesis is based, this article is riddled with spelling and grammatical irregularities. Rather than distracting the reader with a barrage of [sic], I have copy edited such quotations, seeking a compromise between the original feel of the texts and the readers’ ability to follow them.

² Carol Thora Baines, “From Women’s Benevolence to Professional Social Work: The Case of the Wimodausis Club and the Earls court Children’s Home 1902 - 1971” (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 1990) 6.

actual decision making and leadership in Protestant Orphanage Homes, the most prevalent child-saving institutions of the 19th century, came overwhelmingly from women. Men were often included in positions of formal importance, but they seem to have been present largely to fulfil certain legal functions from which women were barred, to enhance the organizations' legitimacy, and to provide philanthropic contacts.³ Catholic Orphanages in English-Canada, although they have not been the subject of such a broad study, also seem to have been locations of women's control, in that they were usually administered by nuns. Therefore, when the province passed the Children's Protection Act (CPA) in 1893, there was a strong tradition of women's leadership in charitable child saving in Ontario. Indeed, Ottawa's Lady Ritchie seems to have exercised considerable influence in getting the CPA into Parliament.⁴

Although Children's Aid Societies derived their special powers from provincial law, they were nonetheless municipal charities. J.J. Kelso, their energetic overseer, therefore depended on municipal volunteers and philanthropists to establish and fund these organizations. He could often veto the creation of a CAS of which he disapproved, but he could not himself actually create one. Generally, he would work together with some of the prominent or child-saving citizens in a given town to prepare the groundwork for a public meeting there, at which he would urge the assembled populace to organize a CAS. A Society was often formed immediately, which Kelso would then recommend to

³ Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "The Rise and Decline of British North American Protestant Orphans' Homes as Woman's Domain, 1850-1930," *Atlantis* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1982) 24.

⁴ Ottawa Children's Aid Society, "CAS History", http://www.casott.on.ca/html/protection_services/cas_history.html (accessed September 8, 2008) par. 7.

the Lieutenant Governor for approval.⁵ In all three of the communities studied here - Ottawa, Brantford, and Belleville - local women were important in the preparations for the formation of the CAS.

In Ottawa, a group of women worked to arrange an effective and large CAS organization meeting. However, they do not seem to have spoken at this meeting, and the *Ottawa Citizen* report of it mentions them only at the very end of its article, and then as an anonymous adjunct to a named man. The last lines of the story read, “Among them who have quietly contributed time and trouble in the preliminary work of organization is one whose assistance has been of the greatest value, the Hon. William Macdougall. His advice and efforts were...placed at the disposal of the ladies who first took up this important work.”⁶ Despite the fact that these women apparently started the project, that was the only recorded mention of them.

In Brantford, a three-citizen exploratory committee of Mrs. Fullerton, Mrs. Cochrane, and Mr. Thomson was formed to investigate the possibility of starting a CAS. Thomson went on to become the Society’s secretary, agent and most prominent member. Neither woman ever became a member of the CAS board. Fullerton, Cochrane, and the exploratory committee were not even alluded to in the reports of the public meeting that established the CAS. Indeed, the only mention of the work of these two women in the whole of the Brantford CAS’s official record is a brief reference to them by Thomson in a 1907 retrospective.⁷

⁵ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 4(3), 3151.

⁶ LAC, *Ottawa Citizen*, December 9, 1893, “To Rescue the Children.”

⁷ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 1.

In Belleville, in 1894, the Woman's Christian Association (WCA) offered to assume the responsibility of a CAS by being certified to exercise the legal powers under the CPA. The WCA was a municipal philanthropic society, and the most important charitable organization in Belleville. However, for reasons discussed in more detail below, Kelso rejected their bid, and passed the torch to the reluctant and recently formed Belleville Humane Society, which did almost nothing of practical worth before folding in 1895. Belleville was thus left without a CAS until 1907, when Brantford's Mr. Thomson came in Kelso's stead and stayed for two weeks to ensure the proper birth of a Children's Aid. Even then, the CAS was very unsteady both financially and organizationally. It stabilized in 1909, at the same time as some very vocal and active women connected to the WCA joined the board.⁸

In all three cases, women were important in the formation of the Children's Aid Society. However, once each Society was established, formal and practical control rested in the hands of men. At all three CASs, presidents, agents, and corresponding secretaries were always men. The members of the Ottawa CAS usually elected two or three women to be among their five or six vice-presidents in each year. All three CASs had large numbers of vice-presidents in each year, because this position was handed out to make connections with various local interests (at Ottawa, this included ladies' benevolent societies), rather than to provide the CAS with a single clear president-in-waiting or presidential surrogate. Thus, at Ottawa, there was also usually one Catholic and one

⁸ Although this paragraph is intended to describe women's importance, I should also say that two prestigious and dynamic men joined slightly afterwards. I suspect that both women and men were essential to the rejuvenation of this CAS.

Anglican clergyman vice-president each year.⁹ At Brantford and Belleville, women were never elected as vice-presidents, nor, before 1910, to any position on the executive other than recording secretary. Women in the Belleville CAS gained special official positions on their CAS executive in 1910, but these were segregated female positions, such as “Convenor of the Ladies.” At Ottawa in 1893 and Brantford in 1915, the CAS bestowed the title of “Honorary President” on wealthy female patrons.¹⁰ In 1925, Belleville’s CAS had its first woman president, who remained only one year. In 1954, Brantford had its first woman director, Nora Fox, who is actually much commemorated there.

There is little reason to doubt that male leadership of CASs was the general rule, and female leadership the exception. The 1912 “Directory of Children’s Aid Workers in Ontario” lists only 2 women out of 82 CAS presidents, 21 out of 103 CAS secretaries,¹¹ and 1 out of 42 CAS agents.¹² Furthermore, every study to date of a pre-WWII Canadian

⁹ LAC, Ottawa Children’s Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, December 13, 1893; *ibid.*, October 10, 1901; *ibid.*, October 11, 1906.

¹⁰ LAC, Ottawa Children’s Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, enclosed unattributed newspaper clipping, “Notes from the Capital”; BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, “Annual Meeting of the Children’s Aid”; BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society”; BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 7, 1911, “Fine Showing for Past Year.”

¹¹ It is not clear which of these were “Recording” and which “Corresponding” secretaries. The latter would have had much more power.

¹² LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 2, file 5, “Directory of Children’s Aid Workers in Ontario, 1912.” A total of 121 societies are listed. Each CAS had at least one of the three aforementioned officers. Many of these 121 societies existed only “on paper,” and others were soon to collapse, or had recently emerged. J.J. Kelso, “Fourteenth Report: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 35 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1907*, p. 66. The one woman agent, Owen Sound’s Mrs. Lediard, was the successor to her husband, the Rev. James Lediard, who had filled the position until at least 1905. OwCAS, Annual Report 1905, front cover. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to include further CASs, an investigation of the Kenora and Listowel Societies, which the Directory lists as having women presidents, would probably shed a great deal of light on the gender struggles inherent in CAS design.

Children's Aid indicates that men were the leaders both formally and practically.¹³ It is possible that leadership came informally from women in some Societies, but no historian has yet examined this possibility. Thus, although women were active in Children's Aid, they seem to have filled roles that were clearly subordinated to those of men or isolated as secondary to the general work of the Society. Xiaobei Chen has demonstrated women's innovation in using these roles to expand their power within the "male-dominated organization" of the Toronto CAS.¹⁴ Yet before 1893, child-saving organizations had been female-dominated. What was it about Children's Aid Societies that handed this mantle to men?

I argue that there were powerful masculinist metaphors in CAS design and CAS critiques of the orphanage system. In the words that CAS leaders used, and in the practices that they performed, they exalted certain manly attributes and denigrated certain womanly ones. By looking at these behaviours and statements, such as Kelso's 1905 parable, we can begin to understand why men gained control of charitable child saving.

Methodology

This argument relies largely on official documents and public reports concerning

¹³ Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 96; Patricia Rooke, and R.L. Schnell, "The Rise and Decline," 22; Robert Adamoski, "'Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another': Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law*, ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003) 146; John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers: The Genesis of the Children's Aid Movement in Ontario," in R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau, ed. *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991) 141; Alvin Koop, *To Celebrate Children: A History of the Children's Aid Society of the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington, 1893-1993* (Guelph: CAS of Guelph and Wellington, 1993); Rosalyn Cluett, "Child Welfare on a Shoestring: The Origins of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies, 1893-1939" (PhD. Diss., Guelph University, 1994).

¹⁴ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 96.

the organizational level of CAS activity. The vast majority of primary sources used in this thesis were written and edited by men, partly because of the fact that official documents were usually created and preserved by CAS leaders, who were predominantly male. The disparity also stems from the dominant understandings of gender in the 19th century, quite beyond the specifics of CAS control. Men were taught that it was appropriate for them to lead outspoken, public lives. Women, and specifically women volunteers, were taught that it was appropriate for them to work and suffer quietly. Consider the following passage from “The Co-Operation of Women in Philanthropic and Reformatory Work,” an 1891 paper by Virginia T. Smith. She counselled her fellow female volunteers that, “We have a right to be independent, courageous, original, free to express opinions, when necessary; but we shall do better work and earn more privileges if we carry the great load of loving anxiety for our fellows in our hearts much more than on our lips.”¹⁵

It is true that many women resisted these oppressive ideas. In fact, Mary Richmond - in later years to be a major force in the professionalization of social work - replied to Virginia Smith that women already did more voluntary work than men, and “I remember wondering why it was that they did not select as a subject the co-operation of men as more noteworthy.”¹⁶ Unfortunately, the pervasive climate of the times was with Smith rather than Richmond, and held that women in philanthropy were to be helping but not heard. This climate certainly discouraged the production and preservation of official

¹⁵ Virginia T. Smith, “The Co-Operation of Women in Philanthropic and Reformatory Work,” in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction at the Eighteenth Annual Session Held in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 13-20, 1891*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (Boston, Mass.: George H. Ellis, 1891) p. 240.

¹⁶ Mary Richmond, in “Discussion on Co-Operation of Women,” in *Proceedings of the National Conference, 1891*, p. 338.

documents written by women. The very gender system under study has set limits on the evidence available to study it. A different picture of the CAS would likely emerge if there were more documents written about it by women who worked in it.

Not only does this study lack documents written by women, it also lacks documents produced by anyone outside of their official capacity. This thesis, therefore, does not attempt to be an intellectual biography of any one person, nor to describe in detail anyone's particular motivations for making a given decision. Historical evidence, in any case, is rarely suited to making such clear statements of cause and effect. Instead, my research in this chapter intends to establish the symbolic and legal context in which such choices were made.

That context was not determining, and the CAS system actually provided opportunities for some women to gain power relative to some men and relative to some other women. John Bullen has pointed out that CASs "usually made initial [foster] arrangements with wives, while treating husbands as consenting parties."¹⁷ Abused women, having almost no legal recourse in this period to protect themselves against spousal abuse, often strategically used accusations of child abuse to get legal intervention in their families.¹⁸ Meanwhile, women who served as fundraisers and home visitors for CASs held considerable authority over poor and working-class men and women. The effects of the CAS system on gender relations differed between social positions. My argument in this chapter is restricted specifically to the system's implications for the

¹⁷ John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers," 148; see also, J.J. Kelso, "Second Report of Work Done Under the Children's Protection Act," no. 47 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1894*, p. 28.

¹⁸ Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Viking, 1988) 252.

positions of men and women child savers with respect to one another. Before 1893, Ontarian child-saving institutions were dominated by women. CASs were dominated by men.

I make extensive use of anecdotes from Belleville in this chapter, because the unusual organizational history of that CAS provides some clear and dramatic examples of the gender ideology in question and its consequences. Some of this clarity and drama stems from the contested position of women within Belleville's CAS movement, which caused often unspoken gender roles and conflicts to be made more explicit.

Masculinity in Late 19th Century Ontario

By the second half of the 1800s, men in Britain, the United States, and Canada were undergoing a religious crisis in which they felt a contradiction between manliness and Christianity. Marguerite van Die has explored the problem in the course of her discussion of evangelical revivals in Brantford. In churches there, before 1850, "women had outnumbered men...by 16 per cent."¹⁹ This disparity was regarded as a serious problem, because churches felt that they needed the money and leadership of men to maintain themselves. A major goal of the evangelical revival movements of the 1850s and 1870s was to redress this gender imbalance. In Brantford, at least, they failed to do so. In the revival years 1853-1859, only 40% of new converts to evangelical denominations in that town were men, increasing the gender imbalance overall by 2%.²⁰ Again, in a later

¹⁹ Marguerite Van Die, "'The Marks of Genuine Revival': Religion, Social Change, Gender, and Community in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 79 (March 1998): 535.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 536.

intense period of revival from February to April of 1879, only 41% of converts were male.²¹ Churches had a serious and ongoing difficulty in getting men involved.

Pulpits and pundits throughout the English-speaking world offered warnings, explanations and solutions. In general, they argued that men were not going to church because there was a contradiction between men's work lives and church lives. Usually, they believed that the problem lay with churches, and not with men or work. In its January 29th, 1908 issue, the *Ottawa Citizen* included an opinion piece entitled "Tempting Men to the Church." It suggested that churches needed to do more to make men feel socially comfortable, up to and including placing spittoons in the aisles.²²

In the 19th century, men's social positions, and the dominant constructions of masculinity itself, were very much defined by men's work. Many men, but especially middle and upper class ones, looked upon independent business ownership as the archetype of a manly occupation.²³ However, they found a contrast between what was expected of a manly businessman and what was expected of a good Christian. Theology, the staple of church sermons throughout the 19th century, was increasingly seen as impractical, in contrast to the supposed pragmatism of commerce and industry.²⁴ A good businessman was expected to be honest but self-serving, to attend business meetings and negotiate aggressively and boldly for practical purposes. A good Christian was expected to be self-sacrificing, to attend church services and listen passively and quietly to the

²¹ *Ibid.*, 550.

²² LAC, *Ottawa Citizen*, January 29, 1908, "Tempting Men to the Church."

²³ David Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994) 65.

²⁴ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) xii.

clergyman's statements about theology. Thus, men found a contradiction between what made them feel manly (work), and what made them feel Christian (church).²⁵

On the other hand, women found a great deal of similarity between the ideals of respectable white womanhood and those of Christianity. Indeed, the expectation that women would be married homemakers and child-raisers had a distinctly religious overtone in the 19th century. The ideal wife was the "angel in the home", who provided a sacred refuge for her husband from the materialism and selfishness of the secular world. The ideal mother's instruction to her children was also primarily moral. By setting an example with her personal virtue, especially her chastity and capacity for self-sacrifice, a woman was supposed to be able to inspire not only her children, but also her husband, friends, and acquaintances, to lead better lives. In short, Christian morality was an important part of womanliness. It is not surprising, then, that women were "the principal consumers of religion..." in the Victorian era.²⁶

The connection between Christianity and domestic womanhood extended into women's activities in religiously-based volunteering. Middle and upper-class women, partly because they hired working-class women as servants, often had the time and cultural capital to engage in Christian volunteering. Van Die has pointed out that such women "looked to church and voluntary societies as a space in which to express their

²⁵ Van Die, "The Marks of a Genuine Revival," 556; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) 169.

²⁶ Baines, "From Women's Benevolence to Professional Social Work," 31.

family concerns and strategies.”²⁷ For instance, women’s most important roles in charitable institutions were as fundraisers and moralizing home visitors. In fund raising, women often sewed or cooked items for sale at church events, thus using their domestic economic skills. Home visiting allowed them to use the domestic moral powers they were expected to exert over their children. Respectable women on church or charity committees often made such visits to the homes of new church converts, the poor, or the otherwise potentially immoral. When visiting, the ladies were both judges of their hosts’ mothering, and providers of example and guidance towards moral uplift.²⁸

Most 19th century feminist movements were also Christian in motivation and domestic in rhetoric. By the end of the 19th century, as a result of various strategic pressures, maternal feminist movements like the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the National Council of Women (NCW) had largely superseded equalitarian feminist movements like the Canadian Women’s Suffrage Association. The latter had emphasized women’s equality as humans, while the former emphasized women’s special quality as moral mothers.²⁹ The WCTU and the NCW often made use of the belief in women’s superior morality and responsibility for the home as rationale and justification for their action. These organizations bolstered women’s political authority by making use of the growing Canadian belief that national greatness flowed from the moral fibre of

²⁷ Marguerite Van Die, “Revisiting ‘Separate Spheres’: Women, Religion, and the Family in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario,” in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969*, ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002) 256.

²⁸ Carmen Nielson Varty, “‘A Career in Christian Charity’: Women’s Benevolence and the Public Sphere in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canadian City,” *Women’s History Review* 14, no. 2 (June 2005): 245.

²⁹ Wayne Roberts, “‘Rocking the Cradle for the World’: The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1914,” in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1979) 22.

individual, independent homes. Thus the WCTU could push alcohol and domestic abuse as political issues on the national stage.

Such challenges to men's authority were upsetting to many males. Women's power to curb men's private activities, like drinking, or to involve themselves in men's public activities, like voting, was seen by many men as challenging their own masculinity. In April 5, 1910, the *Belleville Intelligencer* ran a short article entitled "Is Man Declining?", which stated that ever since women's search for "equal rights" began, women's average height had increased by two inches, and men's had decreased by three inches. It then went on to say, "Be on your guard, modern man. Your position was never in greater danger than now. Check the retrogression or stop the advance of women while yet you are the larger and the stronger. Another inch and you will have become the weaker sex."³⁰

Having power over women was essential to the sense of being a man. Thus, challenges to patriarchy, as well as the difficulty of being both manly and Christian, made men deeply concerned about themselves, their bodies, and their role in society. Their anxiety was heightened after 1870, as room in the upper economic strata shrank, and many began to realize that they no longer had the opportunity to own a business, nor to rise to positions of church leadership.³¹ Finally, while men found a contradiction between Christianity and their gender, women found a concordance. The ideal woman was self-sacrificing, sympathetic, and virtuous, almost Christ-like. Thus, as more men stopped attending church, and Sunday morning congregations became increasingly composed of

³⁰ BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, April 5, 1910, "Is Man Declining?"

³¹ Van Die, "The Marks of a Genuine Revival," 537, 559.

women, it was easy for some male commentators to argue that women had taken control of the churches and that Christianity had been “feminised.”³²

One response to these inner conflicts was a movement we now call ‘muscular Christianity’. Like the social gospel, this movement sought to change religion by replacing theological discussion with practical action. Like evangelism, it was both popular in focus and individualistic in its concept of salvation. Muscular Christianity was peculiar, however, in putting a positive spiritual value on manliness, and especially on the strength and aggression of manly bodies.³³ Its ideas were a powerful force in developing the YMCA and Frontier College movements, and in emphasizing the importance of physical training and sport to the building up of a man’s moral fibre.³⁴

Charles Gordon, a Winnipeg Presbyterian minister, was among the most prominent late 19th and early 20th century Canadian muscular Christians. Gordon, under the pen name ‘Ralph Connor,’ was the most successful Canadian author of his generation. His melodramatic, moralistic novels sold five million copies throughout the English-speaking world.³⁵ A Connor book or two was an expected component of a Canadian middle-class bookshelf in this period, and as John Lennox notes, “Of [Connor’s]

³² Patricia Dirks, “Reinventing Christian Masculinity and Fatherhood: The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1900-1920,” in *Households of Faith*, 291.

³³ David Rosen, “The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and the Origins of Primal Manliness,” in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 26.

³⁴ Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 17.

³⁵ John Lennox, *Charles W. Gordon {“Ralph Connor”} and His Works* (unknown publisher, 1988) 4, 15; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) 303; for examples of muscular Christian literature from England, see Charles Kingsley, *Westward-Ho* (London: Collins’ Clear-Type Press, 1885); Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown’s School Days* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1890).

popularity in, and relevance to, his own day ... especially in the two decades between 1898 and 1918, there can be no doubt.”³⁶

Ralph Connor’s 1901 novel, *The Man from Glengarry*, concerns a band of Christian lumberjacks. It begins with the enormous and honest Scottish leader of the Christian gang, MacDonald Bhain, fighting and defeating the intemperate, vicious, and vain Quebecois lumberjack, “LeNoir.”³⁷ After being beaten, LeNoir recognizes MacDonald as “de boss bully on de reever Hottawa.”³⁸ LeNoir is encountered again towards the end of the book, in a chapter entitled “LeNoir’s New Master,” wherein the “Frenchman” swears fealty to MacDonald, takes his advice in the matter of temperance, admits to being a sinner, and asks to learn about the rudiments of Christianity.³⁹ The literary critic for *The Outlook* praised this tale for being “free from pietism, from fanaticism, from provincialism, and therefore fresh, wholesome and manly.”⁴⁰

Gordon’s novels are also deeply nationalist and anti-theological, associating Christianity with building up a civilized, prosperous Canada rather than adhering to theological minutia. In his 1909 book, *The Foreigner*, Gordon contrasts the practical benevolence of the Rev. Brown, a pacifist (but physically powerful) Methodist, with the greed and dogmatism of the racialized Father Klazowski, “a Polish priest small and dark

³⁶ Lennox, *Charles W. Gordon*, 15; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) 303.

³⁷ Ralph Connor, *The Man from Glengarry: A Tale of the Ottawa* (1901, reprint Toronto: The Westminster Company, 1951) 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 302-306.

⁴⁰ “Ralph Connor’s Story,” review of *The Man from Glengarry*, in *The Outlook*, 6 July 1901, p.524; cited in Lennox, *Charles W. Gordon*, 8.

and dirty...”⁴¹ Although both are ministering to one small community of Eastern European immigrants, Brown has no objection to the competition of Catholicism. He concerns himself instead with building a school and a hospital, and with directing the immigrants in a mining project for their own economic development. His stated approach is simply to “...do anything to make them good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing.”⁴² Klazowski on the other hand, drinks to excess, demands to be paid for giving religious services, and once “...spent an hour in a furious denunciation of the opponents of his holy religion, and especially of the heretic Brown and all his works...”⁴³ Of course, the Methodist’s practical honesty wins in the end, and the Catholic is driven out of town.

CAS child savers shared these muscular Christian ideas about the negative value of impractical theology and the positive value of aggressive manly bodies. Speakers at CAS annual meetings in our period often associated impracticality and physical frailty with sin, and business sense and physical power with virtue. Consider the following statements from guest speakers at two Annual Meetings of the Brantford CAS. In 1908, W.P. Archibald noted as a matter of fact that “Society, by its theological notions and false standards, its cruel practices, have made it very easy for a man to go astray...”⁴⁴ He also argued concerning a hypothetical law-breaker that “He is a criminal, not because of strength, but because of weakness.”⁴⁵ At the 1909 Brantford CAS meeting, the guest

⁴¹ Ralph Connor, *The Foreigner* (Toronto: Westminster Press, 1909) 275.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 332.

⁴⁴ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, “Annual Meeting of the Children’s Aid.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

speaker was the principal of the Mimico Industrial School for Boys, who reminded the audience that “Work, sport, education, and religion were all necessary to give the boy ‘a fighting chance,’ to make good in the world...”⁴⁶

Orphanages

Protestant Orphanages were the most prevalent child-saving organizations in 19th century Ontario. These institutions were the leaders in child saving, and the leaders of these institutions were almost always women.⁴⁷ Men’s special gendered abilities of competition and aggression were not expected to be of much use in orphanages. Nor was it considered manly to spend time nurturing children. On the other hand, women’s roles as sympathetic caregivers and Christian volunteers suited them to lead in orphanages.

Protestant orphanages in the 19th century were not exactly what we might assume them to have been. They were not, for instance, places that simply admitted any child who had no parents. Indeed, the majority of children in most orphanages had at least one parent still living.⁴⁸ For the most part, these children were present because of the illness, unemployment, or death of one parent. As there was not a significant government social safety net to turn to, parents in dire straits often gave some of their children to an

⁴⁶ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

⁴⁷ Wendy Mitchinson has argued that women’s influence in local charities varied between institutions. However, Janice Harvey, Charlotte Neff, and Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, in their more specialized studies of Protestant Orphanage Homes, have emphasized a fairly uniform predominance of women. Wendy Mitchinson, “Early Women’s Organizations and Social Reform: Prelude to the Welfare State” in *The Benevolent State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, ed. Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987) 77; Janice Harvey, “The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society: A Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822 - 1900” (PhD. Diss., McGill University, 2001) 6; Charlotte Neff, “The Use of Apprenticeship and Adoption by the Toronto Protestant Orphans’ Home, 1853-1869,” *Histoire Sociale* 30, no. 60 (November 1997): 337; Rooke and Schnell, “The Rise and Decline.”

⁴⁸ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 139.

orphanage in the hopes that they would be able to retrieve them in a few months or years when their circumstances improved. Many poor families used orphanages intermittently to mitigate the effects of poverty in difficult periods.⁴⁹

Protestant Orphanages were scrupulous in rejecting applicants on other grounds. Management was especially concerned to ensure that the children came from decent, if poor, families, lest some immoral child corrupt the whole institution. For that reason, many children born out of wedlock were excluded from the Protestant orphanages, and often entered the more accepting Catholic ones.⁵⁰

The most important duty of an orphanage was to nurture⁵¹ the children they did accept. Orphanages generally believed that they provided a good environment for children. However, even when the institutions wished to pass the caring responsibility on to adoptive homes, they faced legal barriers to doing so. Children's living parents technically retained guardianship, and so orphanages lacked the legal status required to hand the child over to a foster family, or to take legal action against such a family if the child should be mistreated.⁵² As a result, for instance, only 11% of the children who stayed at the Alexandra Orphanage in Vancouver between 1892 and 1938 left by being

⁴⁹ Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982) 110; Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 151.

⁵⁰ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 115.

⁵¹ In practice, some orphanage matrons were stern, and others were affectionate (compare Baines, "From Women's Benevolence to Professional Social Work," 107; with Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867 - 1939*, Themes In Social History Series, ed. Craig Heron and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 50. Throughout this thesis, I use the words 'nurture' and 'care' to refer to the raising of children in general, rather than to a specifically kind or truly caring way of doing so.

⁵² Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 140.

boarded out.⁵³ In general then, children who could not return to their parents had to be cared for in the institution for years on end.

Raising these children cost a great deal of money. Sometimes, parents were made to provide the clothing for their children or to pay a few dollars a month for their care.⁵⁴ Even so, orphanages struggled to make ends meet. The costs of building and maintaining facilities, of feeding and clothing children, of providing even the most basic furniture, of paying for the labour of a working-class woman as a matron and often for her husband as a maintenance man, were usually far higher than the funds available. Many orphanages relied on various levels of government for financial support. For instance, by 1893, under the Charity Aid Act, 28 Orphanages received a total of \$14 925 from the province.⁵⁵ Such aid was usually distributed far more to Protestant than to Catholic institutions, but as always in child welfare, the money was never close to enough for any group. It accounted for less than 15% of the total expenditures of these institutions.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, this small amount was considered a significant drain on provincial resources.⁵⁷ Provincial government management of social welfare was generally based on a ‘policy of

⁵³ Diane Purvey, “Alexandra Orphanage and Families in Crisis in Vancouver, 1892-1938,” in *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*, ed. R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991) 125; cited in Adamoski, “Charity is One Thing,” 161. This period actually straddles the shift from institutional (orphanage) to familial (foster home) norms in child saving, and thus might actually exaggerate the number of children boarded out. The later part of the period might actually account for a disproportionately high part of the 11%.

⁵⁴ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 119; Sara Posen, “Examining Policy from the ‘Bottom Up’: the Relationship between Parents, Children, and Managers at the Toronto Boy’s Home, 1859-1920,” in *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History*, ed. Lori Chambers and Edgar-André Montigny (Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press, 1998) 11.

⁵⁵ Richard Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario: 1791 - 1893* (Toronto: University Press, 1965) 63.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ J.J. Kelso, “Second Report of Work Under the Children’s Protection Act,” no. 47 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1894*, p. 2; J.J. Kelso, “Third Report of Work Under the Children’s Protection Act,” no. 17 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1895*, p. 27.

cheapness', and therefore, the government was eager to hear the Children's Aid promoters' claim that they could cut costs by doing away with institutional care.⁵⁸

"A General and Municipal Character"

Since the 1840s, the Ontario provincial government had been involved in supervising and regulating, as well as funding, existing charities. This involvement had deepened from the 1870s forward, under the 1874 Charity Aid Act and the Inspectorship of J.W. Langmuir. The Act had promised financial support to charities meeting certain criteria, and Langmuir had been particularly energetic in ensuring that charities met those criteria.⁵⁹ The 1893 Children's Protection Act, however, indicated a profoundly new connection between government and charity. First, it set out explicitly to spur the creation of new charities.⁶⁰ Second, it provided those new charities with novel legal powers that no organization in Canada had ever possessed before.⁶¹ The resulting emphasis on the governmental and 'public' rather than charitable and 'private' nature of CASs, helped to make child saving masculine.

One of the ways that child saving was made public and manly was by metaphors that described children as natural resources for the state. Xiaobei Chen has demonstrated the prevalence of gardening metaphors in Toronto child saving which did just that.⁶² In general, the Victorian gentleman's hobby of horticulture gave middle-class men the

⁵⁸ Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario*, 59.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 57, 46.

⁶⁰ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario*, 1897, c. 259, CPA 3(a), 3150.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7(2), 3154.

⁶² Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 49.

opportunity to master and reshape nature within a domestic setting, and gardening metaphors were often used to reconcile masculinity with domestic purity.⁶³ When applied to child saving, gardening metaphors pointed out the importance of children to the state, for infants could grow into useful plants or noxious weeds.⁶⁴

CAS advocates, and many other moral reformers in the period, frequently used economic explanations to emphasize the responsibility of the state. These depicted children, especially boys, as citizens-to-be or resources in the project of nation building.⁶⁵ In a particularly hyperbolic moment, Kelso wrote that “Boys are the most valuable asset in the Province of Ontario to-day. Without them there would be no possibility of developing the country...At a low commercial estimate the value of a boy would be one thousand dollars.”⁶⁶ More typical was a 1910 statement by Belleville’s Rev. Drumm: “The Children’s Aid...means the making of citizens, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.”⁶⁷ Economic rationalizations, much like gardening metaphors, helped to reposition children, and therefore the families and civil society organizations that raised them, within the purview of government.

The model of the child as a resource for the future of the country implied that the ‘private’ realm of the family was no longer to be a place where government and ‘public’

⁶³ Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland, 1991) 31.

⁶⁴ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 46-47.

⁶⁵ Girls were also considered essential to the building up of Canada. However, discussion of their role in the national destiny was usually negative, focussing on the problems that bad girls posed rather than the promise that good girls held.

⁶⁶ J.J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 13.

power trembled to step. Henceforth, parental authority, especially in poor or single-mothered families, was to be in many ways subordinated to state authority. Parents were now providers of an essential service to the national project. This new relationship was expressed in the margins of the Children's Protection Act: "...parent must show fitness to exercise parental duties."⁶⁸ Furthermore, if children were an essential national resource, then working in their interests was not necessarily private and womanly, but could instead be patriotic and manly. I now turn to the history of the first attempt to establish a CAS in Belleville as an example of how this emphasis on the public nature of CAS work could facilitate men's leadership and obstruct that of women. This story also demonstrates the limits of Kelso's ability to impose his vision on local volunteers.

In most cases where Kelso or one of his representatives spoke at a municipal public meeting to which they were invited, a Children's Aid Society was promptly formed. Indeed, in one case the Society was formed before Kelso's representative even came to the podium.⁶⁹ Kelso was an energetic and eloquent speaker, and his message often found a sympathetic ear in an audience of philanthropically-minded, respectable Christian citizens. However, his attempt to get a CAS organized in Belleville met with a number of obstacles.

The town's male elite were dubious about the worthiness of the CPA, and even the prominent Methodist, J.J.B. Flint, who was sympathetic to child saving in general, warned Kelso that his chances of getting sufficient support for a CAS in Belleville were

⁶⁸ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario*, 1897, c. 259, CPA 12(3), 3157.

⁶⁹ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, May 19.

limited.⁷⁰ Kelso's November, 1894 speech to the public meeting Flint helped him organize in the town earned a lacklustre, even slightly deprecating, reception. The *Belleville Intelligencer's* report of the event began by noting belittlingly that "Mr. Kelso is a young man, and appears deeply interested in the work of saving..." The townsfolk did not immediately form a CAS, as Kelso generally hoped they would. Instead, the Bellevillians cautiously decided to form "a committee to meet to discuss the question and report to a subsequent meeting."⁷¹

Although an audience member had suggested to Kelso that the town's recently formed Humane Society should be certified as a CAS, Kelso had expressed his preference that the CAS be formed as an independent organization, if at all possible.⁷² In the weeks following the public meeting, the committee that had been formed to investigate the matter instead decided to recommend that Belleville's Woman's Christian Association (WCA) take up the work.⁷³ Established in 1879 by women representatives of each of the local Protestant churches, Belleville's WCA was, by 1894, the town's most important charitable organization.⁷⁴ It had built and staffed Canada's first and only hospital ever to be owned entirely by lay women, and it operated an extensive network of indoor and outdoor relief, whose recipients were monitored by a centrally organized

⁷⁰ BeCAS, correspondence folder, John J.B. Flint to J.J. Kelso, October 26, 1894.

⁷¹ BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, November 3, 1894, "A Children's Aid Society: A Meeting Last Night Discussed the Question."

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ BeCAS, correspondence folder, Thomas Ritchie to J.J. Kelso, November 12, 1894.

⁷⁴ Diane Sule, *The Woman's Christian Association of Belleville* (Unpublished, 2004) 4.

schedule of home visits.⁷⁵ The WCA therefore already had some of the structures and experience required to investigate domestic conditions.

Thomas Ritchie, a leading member of Belleville's CAS exploratory committee, wrote to Kelso to recommend that the WCA be approved as a CAS. Despite the WCA's skills and assets, Ritchie obviously anticipated resistance from Kelso, and he forwarded Kelso the Association's constitution.

by which you will see that one of the objects of this Association is the cause of neglected children and that it is a duly incorporated and organized society...This Society is composed wholly of women and as it does not state in the [Children's Protection] Act that some of the Members shall be men (though it does state that of the Visiting Com. for each electoral division at least three shall be women) therefore I suppose we may presume that the composition of the WCA being all women cannot be objected to...⁷⁶

Kelso wrote back rejecting this offer. Rather than choosing to argue with Ritchie's loophole, he objected on the grounds of the public nature of a CAS.

I do not think the plan you mention would be just the thing. I fully recognize the value of the splendid organization of the WCA and the desirability of having it...aid as sympathy in carrying on work for children but... If the WC...did the whole work the [Roman Catholic Church] would then regard the Children's Aid as a purely Protestant organization whereas the desire and intention is that it should be of a general and municipal character.... I should think the Humane Society would be the next best.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ W.C. Mikel, *City of Belleville History* (Picton: Picton Gazette, 1943) p. 179.

⁷⁶ BeCAS, Thomas Ritchie to J.J. Kelso, November 12, 1894; The sections on visiting committees are the only parts of the 1893 CPA that explicitly address the question of which gender should do what parts of child saving. The committees of six visitors for each municipality were supposed to contain at least three women. Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 5(1), 3151. Thus, the CPA singled out investigation as a task that men could not do alone. The CAS constitution that Kelso distributed also encouraged gender parity on the board of management. See Appendix A.

⁷⁷ BeCAS, J.J. Kelso to Thomas Ritchie, November 19, 1894.

Instead of arguing that management solely by women was inappropriate for a CAS, Kelso argued that management solely by Protestants would compromise the public status of the CAS. Despite that charitable child saving was, until 1893, generally seen as women's natural concern, Kelso hoped that they would merely "aid as sympathy" in this public project.

The language of the Children's Protection Act certainly assumes that there would be separate Catholic and Protestant CASs.⁷⁸ It seems to have been Kelso's own "desire and intention" to incorporate Catholics into "general" Societies. In the spring of 1894 he had struggled vigorously, but vainly, to keep the Catholics of Toronto from organizing a CAS of their own.⁷⁹ It was the only Catholic CAS established in Ontario during the whole of Kelso's reign, and in later years he actively sought to place Catholic children with Protestant foster parents.⁸⁰

It would be very hard to say definitely whether or not Kelso directly wanted to avoid having women control a CAS. He certainly believed that their best work was done in private homes as mothers and foster mothers rather than in institutions as matrons.⁸¹ Regardless, almost all women's charitable work in this period was church-based, and it rarely transcended the Protestant/Catholic line. Therefore, maintaining that CASs must not be based in any religious group was tantamount to maintaining that they must not be based in any women's group.

⁷⁸ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 38(1), 3168.

⁷⁹ Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 14.

⁸⁰ Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000) 34.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

After ruling out the Woman's Christian Association as a CAS, Kelso placed pressure on the new Humane Society to take up the task. According to a newspaper report of the first meeting of the Belleville Humane Society in April of 1894, "Its chief objects...were the prevention of cruelty to animals, the protection of insectivorous birds and the care of children."⁸² However, it seems that the Society was more interested in discussing these goals than in doing anything about them. At this first meeting, "The recently organized Humane Society gave the first of a series of poetry readings..." followed by a presentation by J.J.B. Flint about the recent "Child-Saving Convention" in Toronto, after which "Mrs. York read a charming little story of 'Two Waifs,' written by herself." All in all, "the affair was a pronounced success" and a "delightful and instructive entertainment." The Society made no resolutions for any action at all.⁸³

The Humane Society, under the leadership of Flint, was quite reluctant to become a CAS. It took almost 6 months of Kelso's badgering before the Society's members got it properly organized.⁸⁴ Although they finally began to take action in the summer of 1895, and found an adoptive home for a single child, by then public interest in the Society had waned. It drooped from having an attendance that "was fairly large and most appreciative" for its poetry readings in the spring of 1894 to "there not being a sufficient number of members present for a general meeting" in the spring of 1895.⁸⁵ That summer, Belleville's Humane Society disappeared altogether.

⁸² BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, April 2, 1894, "The Inaugural Meeting."

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ BeCAS, correspondence folder, J.J. Kelso to W.S.B. Armstrong, May 9, 1895.

⁸⁵ BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, April 2, 1894, "The Inaugural Meeting"; BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, May 31, 1895, "Children's Aid Work."

Although Kelso had the power to turn down an offer to create a CAS that would not be sufficiently “general and municipal,” he did not have the power to create a viable alternative. CAS formation was based on local initiative, and where no locals were available who matched Kelso’s needs, he could not conjure them into being. His decisions left Belleville without a CAS until 1907.⁸⁶ In the meantime, the WCA continued to handle adoptions of abandoned children ad hoc.⁸⁷

Criticizing Institutional Nurture and Marginalizing Women’s Volunteering

The Children’s Aid Society system was designed as a part of a critique of the congregate care system of child saving. Rooke and Schnell have pointed out that “...the CAS model was clearly one which, if perfectly actualized, must erode the former spheres of traditional child rescue, the orphan asylum.”⁸⁸ In Kelso’s 1894 speech calling for the establishment of a CAS in Brantford, he explained that “...by caring for children in the way proposed by the Children’s Aid Society it would...in time do away with the usefulness of reformatories.”⁸⁹ CASs were designed to replace public mothering in institutions with private mothering in foster homes.

Perhaps the most frequent criticism Kelso and other CAS advocates posed of orphanages and other child-care institutions was that the care in them was expensive and

⁸⁶ Ironically, once the CAS reappeared, it was composed entirely of Protestants. Although the CAS held open a standing invitation to representatives of each of the town’s churches, no Catholic is recorded as having taken part in CAS activities in the period under study. Kelso does not seem to have objected to the lack of Catholic involvement.

⁸⁷ BeCAS, Jean Cunningham et al., “A Brief History of the Children’s Aid Society of the City of Belleville, the Country of Hastings & the City of Trenton” (unpublished report, 2007) p. 5; Diane Sule, pers. comm.

⁸⁸ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 275.

⁸⁹ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 2.

unnatural or impersonal.⁹⁰ These complaints implied that volunteering women's supposed natural abilities of child raising were inadequate or inappropriate to the task of child saving. The Ontarian CAS system was informed by Kelso's fixation on families, and in particular, on *mothers* as the foundations of virtue.⁹¹ According to him, the best thing a benevolent lady could do for a needy child was to become its foster mother. Kelso argued that, by placing a child in foster care instead of an institution "...the child is kept in his proper element instead of being subjected to the danger of becoming hardened and perverse..."⁹² In the specific field of orphanages, then, Kelso and his CAS system implied a rejection of the general maternal feminist argument that women's special powers in the home could be used in civil society and politics. Instead, he suggested that women's special powers in the home could contribute to the nation best by being used in the home. The application of those powers to institutions like orphanages was not moralizing for children, but instead perverting.

By defining the problem of neglected and dependent children as a "public" problem, criticizing the feminine solution of the orphanages, and offering government a less expensive, more effective solution, CAS advocates could argue for the acquisition of new state powers. The 1893 Children's Protection Act gave these Societies two important

⁹⁰ BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 15; J.J. Kelso, "Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 22.

⁹¹ Christie, *Engendering the State*, 29; Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 84; John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers," 148; J.J. Kelso, "Third Report of Work Under the Children's Protection Act," no. 17 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1895*, p. 28.

⁹² J.J. Kelso, "Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 28.

abilities which the orphanage system had not possessed, indeed which no Canadian person or organization had ever possessed. One, to be discussed later in the chapter, was the power to “apprehend without warrant” any child the CAS deemed to be neglected or dependent.⁹³ The other was the ability of a CAS to assume the guardianship of any such child whom a judge later committed to their care.⁹⁴

Ironically, the acquisition of the legal guardianship of a child was intended to allow Children’s Aid Societies to out-source their nurturing. Having the status of a guardian, the Societies could now transfer the responsibility for, even the guardianship of, their wards to foster parents (especially foster mothers). The only responsibility of child savers for child care became rescuing children from bad homes and placing them in good ones. Ideally speaking, although benevolent women’s visitations would remain important to monitor foster homes, the core women’s child-saving strategy of group nurture in institutions would be replaced by individual nurture in foster homes.

Unfortunately for many children, it was not actually possible for CASs to procure foster placements as quickly as they had foreseen. This was especially true for “unattractive children,” including non-white children, those who had unruly behaviour, or who were thought to possess temporary or permanent disabilities.⁹⁵ Such children could remain in limbo waiting for a foster placement for weeks or months. During that time they resided in CAS shelters, or in other children’s institutions (over which CASs now

⁹³ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 7(2), 3154.

⁹⁴ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 6(1), 3152-3.

⁹⁵ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 6.; J.J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 15.

exercised some control). Annabel Simmons, a dark-complexioned girl, stayed in the Brantford shelter for six months between foster placements in 1904, and five months again in 1905.⁹⁶

CASs soon found themselves providing an unexpected length of congregate care for an unexpected number of children. In October, 1911, the Belleville CAS had 24 children in its shelter.⁹⁷ Such care was the largest budgetary item for the Belleville and Brantford Societies every year after their first.⁹⁸ By 1912, Societies across the province were pleading for government funding to maintain, build, or repair their shelters, and the search for this funding seems to have been one of the main reasons for the establishment of the Association of CASs of Ontario in that year.⁹⁹ Although the CAS system certainly kept a smaller proportion of children in institutions than the orphanage system, it was unable to eliminate institutional nurture altogether.

In order to care for these children, CASs of course relied upon the unpaid labour of benevolent middle-class women or the poorly paid labour of working-class women, in orphanages or in dedicated CAS shelters. These women cooked, sewed, fund-raised, and advocated for their shelters in order to provide them with maintenance, supervision, and fuel, and the children in them with food, clothing, and education.¹⁰⁰ Yet, Children's Aid

⁹⁶ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Annabel Simmons entry. I discuss her case in more detail, and some of the causes and implications of this never-resolved problem in Chapter 4.

⁹⁷ BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 8.

⁹⁸ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 5, 1895, "The Children's Aid Society"; BeCAS, Annual Report 1910. The expenditures of the Ottawa CAS are not available.

⁹⁹ BeCAS, correspondence folder, from C.B. Scantlebury to J.J. Kelso, April 4, 1912; LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 2, file 5: "1912," from W.L. Scott to R.B. Chadwick, April 1, 1912.

¹⁰⁰ BrCAS, newspaper clipping *circa* 1950, *Brantford Expositor*; Jean Waldie, "Pioneered in Children's Aid Work in Brantford"; BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, p.4.

was designed and promoted as a strategy to reduce the moral and financial waste of institutional care, by relocating the work of nurturing neglected and dependent children to individual families. The fact that each CAS still required numerous women to operate congregate care was quite an embarrassment.¹⁰¹ Combined with the general attitude of the time that women were to suffer their burdens with a Christ-like silence, the need for public support pushed volunteering women's caring work very much into the shadow, even though this work was essential to the functioning of the organization.

In the spring of 1907, J.J. Kelso asked Brantford's CAS agent, S.M. Thomson, to go to Belleville and get a Society established there more firmly. Spending two weeks in town, Thomson met with local businessmen, members of the local chapter of his fraternal order,¹⁰² and Presbyterian clergy.¹⁰³ Thomson had no formal meetings with any women or women's organizations, but on May 28, he managed to get a CAS officially organized in Belleville.¹⁰⁴

Despite Thomson's efforts (or perhaps, because of them), the next two years of the Belleville CAS's life consisted largely of a struggle to achieve effective establishment and organization. In the first 18 months, two corresponding secretaries resigned, the agent, Mr. Checker, was laid off and re-hired twice, and the society barely passed a

¹⁰¹ Adamoski, "Charity is One Thing," 157.

¹⁰² The International Order of Oddfellows. BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, May 3.

¹⁰³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, May 22, 23.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, May 28.

motion not to disband.¹⁰⁵ Despite the presence of several important secular male elites on the executive,¹⁰⁶ their participation was inconstant at best. Protestant clergy, especially Presbyterian ministers, filled the resultant gaps.

Until 1909, although a few women attended CAS executive meetings, they neither made nor seconded any motions, and the men treated them simply as subordinates. For instance, in early 1908, the (male) executive appointed Mrs. Maybee and Mrs. Parks *in absentio* as unpaid probation officers to replace the salaried agent, Mr. Checker, who was being laid off for the second time.¹⁰⁷ The executive felt it had to pay a man to do the work, and financial difficulties were the precipitate cause of Checker's removal both times. Nevertheless, the executive assumed it could count on Maybee and Parks to sacrifice their time and energy freely and without complaint. Until 1909, Belleville's CAS women were treated by men as a reserve army of labour, lacking initiative, autonomy, and wage-rights.

In 1909, the CAS achieved greater stability. More dedicated secular male elites had appeared, most notably Thomas Ritchie, who had argued in 1894 that the WCA should run the CAS. The participation of clergymen declined, although the Presbyterian Rev. Drumm remained active. At the same time, another, much more vocal group of women became involved. The most prominent of these were Mrs. Louisa Lewis and Mrs.

¹⁰⁵ BeCAS, correspondence folder, W.W. Knight to J.J. Kelso, June 18, 1908; BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 14, December 16, 1907; *ibid.*, p. 17, February 24, 1908; BeCAS, correspondence folder, H.C. Hunt to J.J. Kelso, October 30, 1908.

¹⁰⁶ Most notably Sir Mackenzie Bowell: then Grand Master of the Orange Order of British America, and soon to be elected Prime Minister of Canada.

¹⁰⁷ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 16, February 3, 1908.

Vermilyea.¹⁰⁸ Both of them also held important roles in the Woman's Christian Association, and were soon to be even more important in it. In October of 1910, Mrs. Lewis was elected the WCA's President, and Mrs. Vermilyea, its "Chairman of the Department of the Indigent."¹⁰⁹

Although Lewis, Vermilyea, and several other WCA women were highly active in CAS activities and in meetings of the board of management, there is little evidence that they were capable of invading what were commonly seen as men's roles of governance on the executive. Instead, the power and energy of these women was expressed through the increasing autonomy and importance of separate ladies' committees, which were devoted to visiting families, and to fund-raising and maintenance for the shelter.

Before 1909, these duties had been handled largely by ad hoc committees dominated by men, which regarded women as useful accessories. For example, in 1908 a committee on finance was formed of "Mr. Thomas Ritchie, Chairman, Messrs McIntosh, Knight, Scantlebury, Clapp with power to add...any of the ladies who would be glad to associate."¹¹⁰ Over the course of 1909, however, more and more space and autonomy were devoted to women on committees, within a broader CAS structure that still emphasized male dominance at the upper levels. In November of 1909, the CAS formed standing committees for fund-raising and shelter maintenance, both of which were dominated by women.¹¹¹ In February of 1910, Mrs. Lewis emerged as the "Convenor of

¹⁰⁸ Only Mrs. Lewis' prominence in the WCA provided documentation that told me her first name rather than her husband's.

¹⁰⁹ BWCA, Annual Report 1910.

¹¹⁰ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 23, October 20, 1908.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41, November 4, 1909.

the Ladies,” apparently in charge of co-ordinating and reporting on the work of all the women in the CAS.¹¹² At a November meeting that year, a standing committee to visit foster homes was added, and all of the committees became populated entirely by women, with the occasional exception of the agent (then W.C. Wrightmyer).¹¹³ Clearly, these women were doing an important part of the work of the CAS.

In 1910, members of the male executive began to make statements indicating their lack of involvement in determining the directions that the CAS committees took. For instance, in October of 1910, after a lengthy report by “the ladies” concerning the shelter, the executive merely “approved of the policy of the ladies in these several matters and adopted same.”¹¹⁴ In February of 1910, the CAS President noted the “particularly good work having been done by the ladies in their several departments.”¹¹⁵ This gendered division of labour appears to have granted women considerable autonomy within their spheres. It also discounted these spheres as marginal. Certain departments were “their” departments, while the rest of the CAS, most notably the executive, belonged to men. The fact that the shelter was the largest item on the CAS budget each year did not qualify the women who worked in and on the shelter for roles on the executive. It qualified them instead for special roles in performing duties which were increasingly distanced from the executive. Women did not, therefore, have any official power over decisions such as

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 47, February 16, 1910.

¹¹³ BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 4. Also at this meeting, the executive appointed the leadership and membership of all of the ladies’ committees. The process by which these nominations were made is unclear, and it is possible that the executive merely ratified a list given to them by the “ladies.” Nonetheless, the male executive had at least symbolic control over the composition of women’s committees. BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 64, November 15, 1910.

¹¹⁴ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 60, October 3, 1910.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49, February 16, 1910.

whether or not a particular child should be made a ward (although they might have been able to declare that the shelter had no space for any wards at all). The marginalization of their work occurred within the context of an organizational design that implied, at its root, that institutional care was the wrong way to save children. Such a context certainly encouraged CAS leaders to see and publicly present the women's work for the shelter, the lion's share of their work in the CAS, as something unimportant and secondary to the true methods of the Society.

Women's public profile in the CAS also failed to rise along with their actual activities in it. The most important public displays of a Society were its annual general meetings, and the concomitant annual reports, through which the work of the year was presented to the public. In the Belleville Society year 1907-1908, women did not give speeches, nor were they mentioned, at the Society's annual meeting.¹¹⁶ This lack was not

MOVERS AND SECONDEES OF MOTIONS AT BELLEVILLE CAS MEETINGS						
1907-1908						
Total Motions	Layman Mover	Layman Seconder	Clergyman Mover	Clergyman Seconder	Woman Mover	Woman Seconder
47	10	13	37	34	0	0
1911-1912						
Total Motions	Layman Mover	Layman Seconder	Clergyman Mover	Clergyman Seconder	Woman Mover*	Woman Seconder
56	29	14	7	5	20	37
Amounts shown are counts from the CAS's minutes of its meetings. Each motion had one mover and one seconder.						
When the minutes did not record both the seconder and the mover, I did not record the motion.						
*Of the 20 times that women moved motions in 1911-1912, 12 were moved by Mrs. Lewis, and 5 by Mrs. Vermilyea						

Table 2.1: Movers and Seconders of Motions at Belleville CAS Meetings.

¹¹⁶ BeCAS, BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 22, October 5, 1908.

altogether surprising, given that women had neither made nor seconded any motions at the year's regular meetings. However, by the Society year 1911-1912, women moved 36%, and seconded 66% of all the motions made at regular meetings. Nonetheless, at the annual meeting they once again neither gave a speech nor were mentioned, beyond a simple listing of committee members.¹¹⁷ Belleville's annual reports frequently included portraits of male child savers, but from 1907-1912 included only one picture of a female child saver, presented unnamed alongside the CAS agent, W.C. Wrightmyer.¹¹⁸

Although each town had its idiosyncrasies, the general trend was towards treating women volunteers as unimportant, subordinate, and separate from the main work of the CAS. In Ottawa, most of the children were housed at pre-existing orphanages in the city, and thus the CAS had less shelter business to deal with than elsewhere. The prestige of Lady Ritchie and the presence of female vice-presidents added something to the power of women in that CAS, but women still did not give speeches at annual meetings until 1907. In that year, W.L. Scott, the CAS president, became enamoured with Philadelphia's 'probation system'. Under his direction, the Ottawa CAS hired Mde. Bruchesi and Mrs. Cassaday as probation officers. These two women spoke at that year's annual meeting, to advocate for Scott's system.¹¹⁹ Bruchesi and Cassaday seem to have had much less autonomy in their day to day work than did the male agents and corresponding secretaries who were the only field employees at most other local CASs before 1912. Each week, Bruchesi and Cassaday visited families and reported their findings to Scott, who then

¹¹⁷ BeCAS, Annual Report 1910.

¹¹⁸ BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 10, facing page. The image is the frontispiece of this thesis.

¹¹⁹ LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, October 11, 1906.

made the judgements on each case and gave his officers their assignments for the next week.¹²⁰

In Brantford, before 1906, Mrs. D.F. Campbell frequently offered up her own home as a temporary shelter for the CAS. She was repeatedly praised by other workers in correspondence and case files, and occasionally in public for her “Noble Self Sacrifice” and for being “an excellent matron, who had wonderful tact and good judgement in dealing with the most refractory children.”¹²¹ Nevertheless, Mrs. Campbell did not have a place on the CAS executive, nor does she seem to have had much influence on the administrative level of CAS decisions. Furthermore, after she had reduced her services as result of remarrying, CAS leaders spoke very little of the women who performed the caring work after her. For instance, in his 1907 annual report, in a section entitled “Faithfulness of Officers and Constancy of Friends,” Thomson used two paragraphs to describe the stalwart support of a number of male friends of the organization, including lawyers, the treasurer, and the police force. In between these two paragraphs, he devoted a single, isolated sentence to the CAS’s female friends, saying “There are several ladies, also, who in all the years since the society was established rarely if ever miss a monthly meeting, and who are ready to assist in any duties to which they may be called.”¹²²

¹²⁰ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 1, file 4: 1911, from W.L. Scott to John Keane, Mde. Bruchesi and Mrs. Cassady, April 6, 1911; LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children’s Aid Society Cases, file 11, from W.L. Scott to John Keane, January 11, 1908.

¹²¹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 8, 1898, “Another Year”; BrCAS, Annual Report 1904, cited in Annual Report 1907, p. 10.

¹²² BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 13.

The Power of Interference

While the CAS ability to out-source the nurturing of children into foster care encouraged men to denigrate and later to ignore the importance of women's caring work, CASs' possession of the power to interfere in families and remove children encouraged them to exalt and publicly proclaim the successes of men's aggressive work. This power allowed Societies to apprehend without warrant any child whom they believed to be neglected, delinquent, or in immoral surroundings.¹²³ The definition of the power was very broad, and it was backed up by the privilege of acting as advisors to the judges who conducted the post-arrest trials to determine whether or not such children would become CAS wards.¹²⁴ Possessing these powers, the most important decision for a child saver became whether or not to take a child. Although children of desperate families were offered to CASs much as they had been to orphanages, CASs also had the power to remove children via the force of the law, and they used this ability to undertake child rescue aggressively. Rhetorically, they contrasted their work with the orphanage system, which they claimed was of limited effect because it undertook the work only passively.

CAS critiques of the inefficiency of institutional nurture were much more explicit than their critiques of the passivity of the orphanage system. The latter criticisms were usually made by presenting orphanages as the straw woman against which the new strategy of the CAS could be posed. The parable that Kelso told in Halifax in 1905, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, is one of the more obvious examples of such a critique. In it, he ridiculed the ineffectiveness of the people on the banks. Linger on

¹²³ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 7(2), 3154.

¹²⁴ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 8(1), 3154.

the riverside, trying to save a “few” children, appeared cruelly stupid when he compared it to the simple, direct, and aggressive action of the “practical man.”¹²⁵

In the CAS system, men’s special gendered powers of aggression were highly valuable, because the central duty of the CAS was to confront bad parents. The Societies were the first Canadian institutions with the power to rupture the legal relationship between parents and children. More specifically, because men were legally and symbolically the heads of households, this was the power to rupture a man’s authority over his family.

The assumption of legal and symbolic patriarchy applied even though it was usually the mother whose conduct was in question.¹²⁶ Take for example the Lyons case, which occurred in Belleville in 1909.¹²⁷ Throughout the investigation of the case, CAS personnel referred to the family as the “home of Mrs. Lyons.”¹²⁸ Eventually, the male executive decided to have Agent Checker temporarily remove the children. A few weeks later, Lewis and Vermilyea visited the house to see if “Mrs. Lyons” had learned her lesson and made some improvement in the home life.¹²⁹ No man was ever mentioned. Nonetheless, when the time came for the Lyons parents to sign a contract pledging to the CAS that they would take better care of their children in the future, it was the male

¹²⁵ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, “Give the Children a Chance,” undated newspaper clipping.

¹²⁶ Karen Swift, “Contradictions in Child Welfare: Neglect and Responsibility,” in *Women’s Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, ed. Carol Baines, Patricia Evans, and Sheila Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991) 242.

¹²⁷ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1911, March 9, 1909.

¹²⁸ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1911, p. 30, May 3, 1909.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

executive who prepared the contract, and “Mr. Lyons” who appeared to sign it.¹³⁰

Mothering was the parenting usually under surveillance, and respectable ladies were often the ones authorized to evaluate and encourage its improvement. Nonetheless, fathers were the heads of families, and male child savers were needed to constrain or revoke their authority. Thus, the CAS system set up masculine confrontations as the essential acts of child saving.

Brantford’s S.M. Thomson once quoted Kelso concerning some of the failures of moral reform, saying “[w]e are not doing a sufficiently aggressive work...”¹³¹ Alternately, of the movement’s successes, Thomson wrote with satisfaction that “those who have the care of children in Brantford have learnt that they cannot with impunity continue to illtreat their children...”¹³² Child savers like Thomson and Kelso considered their methods to be aggressive, threatening bad parents with the legal power to seize their children. The threat of legal force allowed CAS workers to invade the territory of vice and reform those in its realm, or if they deemed that path hopeless, to rescue little ones into the realm of light, wealth, health, and respectability.

This is not to say that CASs were solely bellicose in their interactions with parents they deemed to be bad. They also seem to have provided a great deal of advice and aid, sometimes as simply as finding shoes for children so they could walk to school.¹³³ However, much of their ability to give advice and aid rested on their capacity to threaten

¹³⁰ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1911, p. 31, May 13, 1909. The minutes of these meetings do not record the reason for the children’s removal, nor what Mrs. Lyons did to convince the CAS to return the children.

¹³¹ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 16.

¹³² BrCAS, S.M. Thomson’s prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held on February, 1896, p. 1.

¹³³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, May 30.

parents. In 1901, the Catholic CAS of Toronto reported, “Some years ago it was next to impossible to convince bad parents...but now that hundreds of unfortunate children have been...rescued from misery and crime, our words of advice and warning are heeded in most cases.”¹³⁴ Cautioning against cavalier removals, the Rev. Pedly once argued that “the whole resources of the Christian church ought to be used before, in these kind of cases, the weapon was raised to take the children away.”¹³⁵

Notwithstanding Pedly’s advice, the removal of children was necessary for the institutional survival of a CAS. Consider the difficulties noticed by the Belleville CAS executive while it employed its first agent, Mr. Checker, and the celebratory tone it took to describe his replacement, Mr. Wrightmyer. Checker was not given to splitting up families. As a 1908 letter from the CAS president to Kelso put it, “The agent, I believe, performs his duties faithfully, but has not as yet found it necessary to remove any child from the custody of parents or guardians, and so the work of the Society has not attained a very great amount of publicity.”¹³⁶ After the near-dissolution of the Society in 1908, another letter was sent to Kelso, “...I believe we could not get a better man to faithfully discharge his duties than Mr. Checker...but he is a modest, unassuming man and the public gauge results largely by spectacular display; this he is not likely to furnish.”¹³⁷ Given that the Belleville Society received very little financial support from its municipal government, and therefore relied greatly on philanthropists, removing children from their

¹³⁴ J.J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 42.

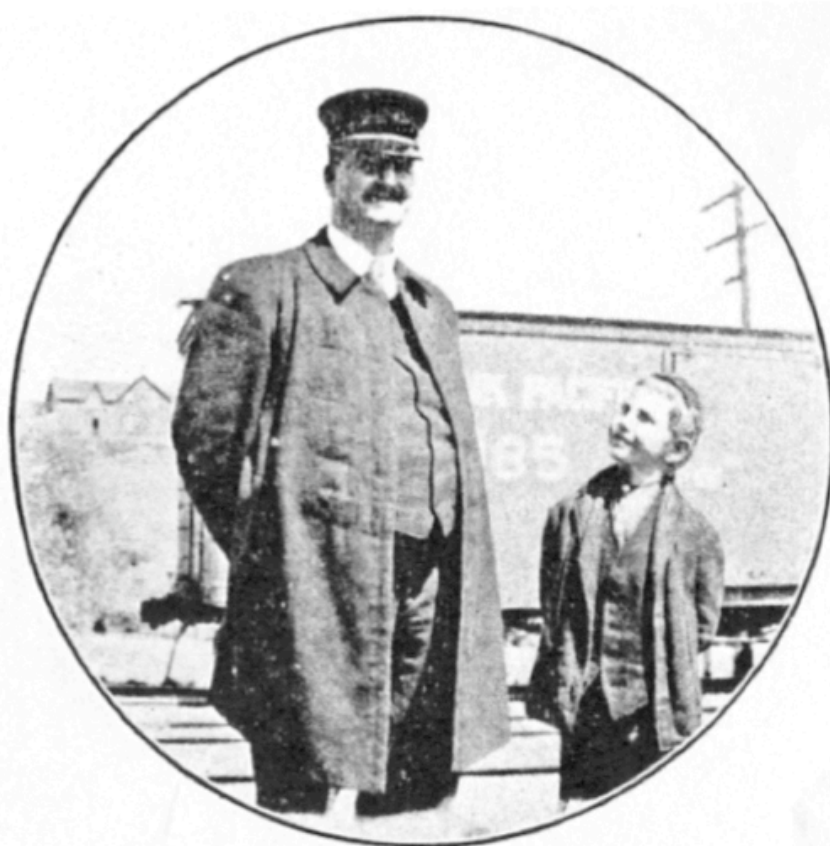
¹³⁵ BrCAS, *Brantford Expositor*, February 15, 1910, “Children’s Aid Meeting Shows Work of the Year.” Pedly was the CAS officer of Woodstock and Oxford County.

¹³⁶ BeCAS, correspondence folder, from John Williams to J.J. Kelso, January 25, 1908.

¹³⁷ BeCAS, correspondence folder, from H.C. Hunt to J.J. Kelso, October 30, 1908.

families and thereby attracting public interest was necessary for its institutional survival.

Therefore, Checker was finally replaced in October of 1909, by Colonel W.C. Wrightmyer. In his first three days of office, Wrightmyer removed three children from their families.¹³⁸ By the end of his first three months, he had removed 42.¹³⁹ Long-standing members of the Society triumphally applauded these deeds at their annual meetings, and continually reiterated their appreciation for Wrightmyer's methods. Their reports soon prominently displayed images of the confident Colonel.¹⁴⁰ The Rev. Drumm



THE BOY'S FRIEND

Fig 2.1: Colonel Wrightmyer and Boy. BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 14 facing page.

¹³⁸ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 41, November 4, 1909.

¹³⁹ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 49, February 16, 1910.

¹⁴⁰ BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 9, facing page; BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 14, facing page.

declared at the end of the new agent's first three months that "Mr. Wrightmyer was the right man in the right place."¹⁴¹

The *Belleville Intelligencer*, the town's only newspaper at the time, was edited by Thomas Ritchie, who was also the CAS President from 1910 to 1911.¹⁴² It regularly carried stories of Wrightmyer's adventures as CAS agent, while passing over the work of the ladies engaged in caring for the wards he brought in. Wrightmyer provided the "spectacular display" that the CAS needed. On May 14, 1910, the *Intelligencer* reported on an arrest Wrightmyer made with a provincial agent, W.A. Gunton.

C.A. Officers Made Round-Up in North
...two 'dives' were broken up, three abandoned women sent to the Mercer reformatory, and ten children have been brought to the shelter here...The Children's Aid agents tell horrifying tales of the state of things they found...There are now 21 children in the local Shelter. Clothing and other things are needed.¹⁴³

The aggressive police act of "rounding-up" deviants is detailed in both the active and the passive tense, and it belongs to the brave agents. The philanthropic act of seeking "clothing and other things" is described briefly in the passive tense only, and the work of it is attributed to nobody. Obviously, Wrightmyer could not have accomplished these deeds if the women of the Belleville CAS had not done the work required to house the influx of wards into the shelter. However, women's work for the shelter went largely unnoticed, not only in newspaper reports like this one, but also in the Society's annual

¹⁴¹ BeCAS, Annual report, 1910, p. 13.

¹⁴² BeL, Microfilm Reel IN 51: "the Daily Intelligencer, Oct. 1894 - Sept. 1895," William H. Cooper, "Essay on history of Belleville newspapers" 1970.

¹⁴³ BeL, *Belleville Intelligencer*, May 14, 1910, "C.A. Officers Made Round-Up in North."

reports - which, starting in 1910, Wrightmyer wrote.

The Children's Aid Society system was advertised to philanthropists and governments as a replacement for the orphanage system. It was intended to attack the root of major social problems by saving children from homes of vice. This design needed women to care for children in shelters, yet insisted that institutional care was ineffective. CAS leaders therefore tried their best to ignore the nurturing work of their Societies' own volunteering women.

When Kelso referred to the "practical man" who "got a gun", he was speaking about the acquisition of the legal power to interfere in private families, and forcibly remove children from them. With this power, Kelso believed that men like Wrightmyer could "stop the supply" of children into the river of destruction in a way that was economical, effective, and aggressive, in short, manly. Without it, he implied, child savers were impractical, ineffective, and passive, in short, womanly. The power of interference is what defined the CAS system as a new and manly solution to the problems of neglected and dependent children. That gun had to be fired to justify a Society's existence.

Conclusion

The metaphors that CAS rhetoric encouraged, the legal framework that the Children's Protection Act established, and the hard work that Kelso did to promote his particular vision, all strongly favoured the development of a child-saving system controlled by men. This system, however, relied on local philanthropists and volunteers

to create and operate the Societies in any given place. Kelso could forbid the Woman's Christian Association to perform CAS duties, but he could not make the Humane Society fulfil them. The state-charity partnership of the Children's Aid system gave independence to neither communities nor Kelso. Furthermore, the design of the system itself inevitably led to extensive breaches of its mandate to do away with institutional child care.¹⁴⁴

CAS advocates' main critiques of the congregate care system had been that it was impractical and passive in failing to address the root of the problem of delinquent and neglected children, and that the institutional nurture it provided was expensive and unnatural. When CAS leaders criticized a female-dominated institution for failing to be businesslike, and for being passive, they were criticizing it for being overly womanly. When they criticized such an institution for being unable to nurture children in a proper way, they were arguing that womanliness was not enough. In contrast, the Children's Aid system presented a number of solutions which were tied to metaphors of manliness. The system was to be more cost-efficient and more effective (business-like) by out-sourcing the nurture of children to families. It was also to be practical and aggressive enough to seek out and attack the root of the problem. When CAS advocates praised these attributes of their new system, they were promising that it would be manly enough to get results. As such, the structures of Children's Aid strongly favoured men's leadership over women's.

Kelso's 1905 speech in Halifax, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, conveys both his criticism of institutional care and his proposal for a solution. The orphanages and reformatories are represented by the people on the bank, saving just a few children as

¹⁴⁴ Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 287.

they are swept by to destruction. Kelso paints them, as he often did, as well-intentioned but passive - unable to take the manly, forceful action required to address the root of the problem. The practical man is of course the Children's Aid founder. The gun he takes on his foray into the unknown is the legal power of the state, which allows him to use masculine aggression to threaten, defeat, and reform bad parents. One wonders what the Halifax Local Council of Women, which, like many other charitable women's groups, had worked to bring Kelso to their town, thought of what he had to say.¹⁴⁵

The manliness of Children's Aid was in large part dependent on the association of child saving with nation building. Children's Aid rhetoric described children as an important national resource that needed to be safeguarded against vice and crime. At the Brantford CAS's 1897 Annual Meeting, S.M. Thomson told the audience that the CAS endeavoured to give these children moral and spiritual influences, "that they may grow up to be useful and intelligent citizens, helpful in building up this Canada of ours which needs for its development and true progress the help and assistance of every child born in the land."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, "Give the Children a Chance," undated newspaper clipping.

¹⁴⁶ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson's prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held on February 1, 1897.

Chapter 3 - The Respectables and the Regulated:

Crime, Poverty, and Nation Building

...this year's programme...with the blessing of Almighty God may be the means of rescuing many a little one from a life of poverty, vice, crime, and shame, and leading them into paths where they will have comfort, contentment and happiness and become useful and intelligent members of society and a credit to this vast dominion of ours of which we are all so proud...¹

Such comprehensive lists of the evils resulting from bad parenting, and the goods produced by saving children from it, were quite common in Children's Aid literature. In general, child savers believed that lives could be evaluated on a single linear scale of moral rectitude. People toward the top of this scale lived in "comfortable" surroundings, and were happy, industrious, Christian, obedient (to both parents and the law), sexually continent, sober, clean, "a credit" to the nation and most generally, respectable. People toward the bottom of this scale lived in poverty, and were miserable, shiftless, prone to vice, unruly, drunken, dirty, a danger to the nation, and most generally, worthless.² The goal of Canadian child saving was to uplift the country by rescuing children who were otherwise doomed by their parents' immorality to become worthless, and by helping them to grow up to be respectable.

This continuum of respectability was singular and linear, so that although there were multiple criteria (cleanliness, sexual propriety, sobriety, and so on), all the elements were tied to one another. Thus, CAS workers rarely discussed a person as being dirty yet thrifty, or sober yet wasteful. Such combinations were unexpected contradictions. Child

¹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 7, 1899, "A Year's Progress."

² Many other attributes, such as honesty and dishonesty, could be added to these lists.

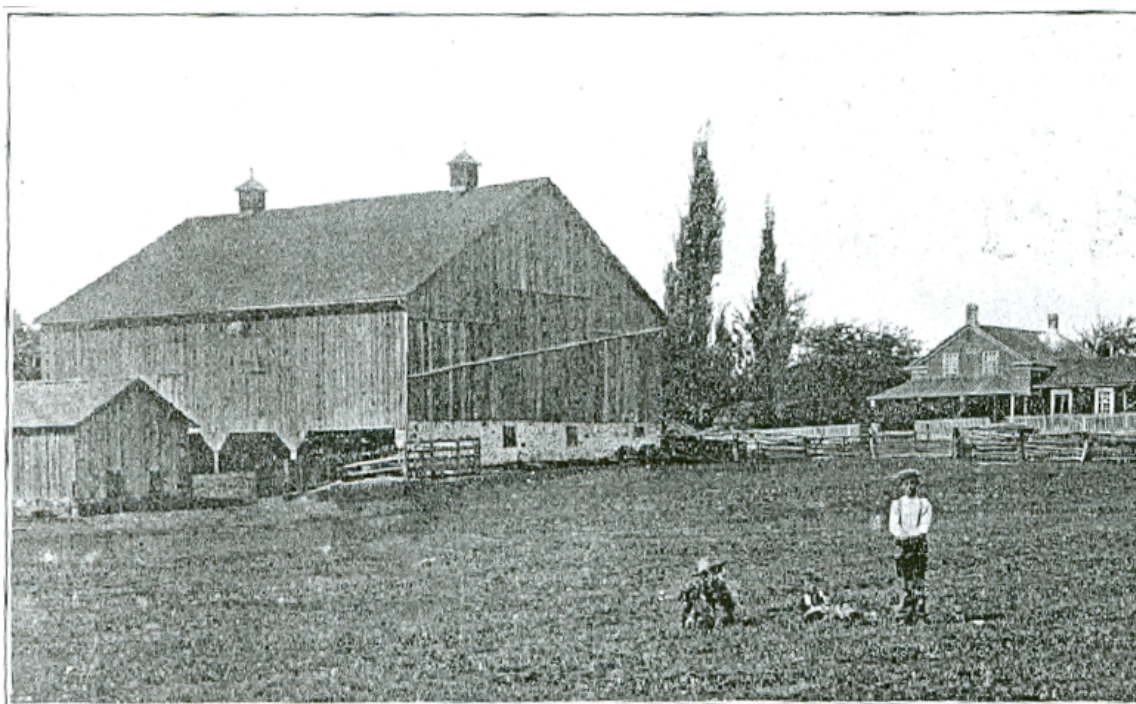
savers expected a respectable person to embody most of the good attributes, and a worthless person, most of the bad ones.

‘Worthlessness’ referred not only to a social and moral sense of worth, but also to a strictly financial one. Speaking with pride about two young male wards of the Society who had since grown up, S.M. Thomson, the Secretary and Agent of the Brantford CAS, contrasted their previous disobedience with their current wealth. “They were restless, mischievous boys and hard to manage...They are now grown to manhood...and fine, strapping, well-doing lads, each with a little savings’ account in the bank.”³ Furthermore, the ‘comfort’ in which children were supposed to grow up referred specifically to big,



Fig. 3.1: A Crowded, Disordered Home. BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 4, facing page.

³ BrCAS, Annual Report 1904, cited in Annual Report 1907, p. 7; Joan Sangster argues that boys’ disobedience was commonly seen as a normal part of their growing up, whereas girls’ disobedience was seen more often as a dangerous, unnatural deviance from the norm that left an indelible stain. Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2001) 37.



RESCUED FROM THE SLUMS OF A CITY AND INTRODUCED TO THE COMFORTS AND
THE HOPEFUL LIFE OF A COUNTRY HOME.

Fig. 3.2: A Spacious, Orderly Farm Home. LAC, AMICUS 103797, W.L. Scott, "Neglected Children" in *Canadian Life and Resources*, volume 8, no. 11 (November 1910): p. 12.

sturdy houses and good furniture. CAS speakers often used pictures to show the difference between the houses from which children were rescued, and those to which they were saved.

The children in whose lives CASs intervened were generally poor. Many of their parents worked as unskilled or casual labourers, and many were unemployed.⁴ Later in this chapter, I will demonstrate that at Brantford, the majority of interventions were made specifically because the children's families were poor. Child savers, on the other hand, were usually from well-to-do families.

⁴ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Susan Carter entry; *ibid.*, Samuel Muir entry; *ibid.*, Jesse Whittier entry; BrCAS, case files, Cooper file, Memo of Agreement, April 26, 1898.

Scholars of social welfare and moral regulation have often stated that moral reform was a result of a “middle-class consciousness.”⁵ Unfortunately, the middle class has not often been well-defined by such scholars, remaining in the words of one critic “an amorphous, even shadowy, collective.”⁶ A firm definition of the term is elusive both because it tends to blur into the working class below and the upper class above, and because the middle class was itself coming into being in the 19th century. Although I am not concerned to dissect the definition of ‘middle class’, I am concerned that readers might be getting the wrong impression by the unqualified use of that term to describe CAS child savers.

Admittedly, the majority of CAS members whose occupations can be determined worked in small-business, the professions, and in the emerging state and corporate bureaucracies.⁷ For instance, Brantford’s CAS Agent, S.M. Thomson, was in business as

⁵ John S. Gilkeson, *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986) 10; Dorothy Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good: Family Courts and Socialized Justice in Ontario, 1880-1940* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992) 28; Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland, 1991) 103; Alan Hunt, “The Purity Wars: Making Sense of Moral Militancy,” *Theoretical Criminology* 3 (1999): 416.

⁶ Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000) x; see also, Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Viking, 1988) 36; Robert van Krieken, “Social Theory and Child Welfare: Beyond Social Control” *Theory and Society* 15, no. 3 (May, 1986): 409.

⁷ I cross-referenced names from CAS annual reports and membership rosters with the Census of Canada via the search engine available at Automated Genealogy, “1911 Census of Canada Indexing Project,” <http://automatedgenealogy.com/census11/> (accessed March 31, 2008); *ibid.*, “1901 Census of Canada Indexing Project,” <http://automatedgenealogy.com/census/> (accessed March 31, 2008). For examples of census records of CAS members reporting middle-class occupations, see LAC, Census of Canada, 1911, Hastings West, Henry F. Ketcheson (district 29, page 3, line 16, “Insurance Agent”); LAC, Census of Canada, 1911, Hastings East, Charles Scantlebury (district 19, page 6, line 20, “Merchant”); and LAC, Census of Canada, 1901, Ottawa, E. H. Bronson (district g-1, page 16, line 1, “Judge”). The census data is limited and partial because there are often multiple people with the same names in the same area, and because some census records, especially for Belleville, are poorly preserved. Therefore, the occupations of many child savers could not be determined. Non-census sources of occupational data (some of which are cited in footnotes 8-12), are no less limited and partial. Therefore, a numerical analysis of child savers’ occupations based on the data available would be spurious.

the owner of a tailoring shop.⁸ The Ottawa CAS Secretary, John Keane, was a civil servant in the municipal government.⁹ For the majority of child savers, their incomes (or if they were wives or young people still living with their parents, their husbands' or fathers' incomes) came from middle-class sources.

However, many child savers were clearly not members of the middle class. Society membership included skilled labourers such as printers and iron moulders, and small proprietors such as farmers.¹⁰ Rarer, but more prominent in CAS business, were powerful local elites. Belleville's CAS president, Thomas Ritchie, was the editor of that town's only newspaper.¹¹ Brantford's Frank and Harry Cockshutt, CAS presidents in 1894-1898, and 1901, respectively, were members of that town's most successful capitalist family.¹² The passage of the Children's Protection Act (CPA) through Parliament in 1893 was at least partly due to the influence of Lady Ritchie, a landed noble who remained active in the Ottawa CAS for many years.¹³ CAS membership was not restricted to the middle class, and members of the upper class often led the movement.

⁸ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, clipping from *Brantford Expositor, Souvenir Edition*, 1895, "Stewart M. Thomson."

⁹ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 1, file 2: 1909, from John Keane to W.L. Scott, August 23, 1909.

¹⁰ For instance, see LAC, Census of Canada, 1911, Brantford, George A. Ward (district 33, page 4, line 36, "Printer"); LAC, Census of Canada, 1911, Hastings West, Harry C. Hunt (district 22, page 15, line 8, "Farmer"); LAC, Census of Canada, 1901, Brant (South), James Wallace (district a-10, page 3, line 18, "Iron Moulder").

¹¹ BeL, microfilm reel IN 51: "The Daily Intelligencer, Oct. 1894-Sept 1895," William H. Cooper, "Essay on history of Belleville newspapers" 1970.

¹² BrCAS, *100 Years of Dedication*, p. 1-4; Warner & Beers, *The History of the County of Brant, Ontario* (Toronto: Warner, Beers & Co., 1883) 293, Brantford Public Library: Digital Archives, <http://www.brantford.library.on.ca/genealogy/digital.php> (accessed September 8, 2008).

¹³ Ottawa CAS, "CAS History," http://www.casott.on.ca/html/protection_services/cas_history.html, par. 7 (accessed September 8, 2008).

Intermediate figures pose a more serious analytical problem. W.L. Scott was elected president of the Ottawa's Children's Aid Society in 1898, and remained in that position into the 1920s.¹⁴ He was a lawyer, and therefore in a strict occupational sense a member of the middle class. He was also the son of Ottawa's famous Catholic ex-mayor, and later national senator, R.W. Scott.¹⁵ Furthermore, W.L.'s brother, D'Arcy, who occasionally attended CAS annual meetings, himself became the mayor of Ottawa in 1907.¹⁶ The President of the Ottawa CAS thus had access to corridors of power that were closed to the vast majority of the members of the middle class. It would be a little misleading to categorize him as one of them. It is quite possible that other child savers whose occupations were technically middle class had such connections.

The term 'middle class' fails to describe adequately the composition of the CAS. Nonetheless, child savers were clearly members of social strata above unskilled labourers, the working poor, and the unemployed. I suggest that it will be more accurate to use a term that reflects their moral definition of themselves - the 'respectable class'.¹⁷

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that child savers' understanding of morality, poverty, and crime, and the connections between the three, encouraged them to see families needing CAS intervention as belonging to a 'criminal class' separate from their own 'respectable class'. I will also discuss the significance of respectable Canadians'

¹⁴ LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, January 14, 1898.

¹⁵ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 23: scrapbook, p. 38, clipping from *The Ottawa Evening Journal*, July 27, 1907, "How a Catholic Mayor Headed an Orange Procession."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ For uses of this terminology in academic literature, see Joan Sangster, "Masking and UnMasking the Sexual Abuse of Children: Perceptions of Violence Against Children in 'The Badlands' of Ontario, 1916-1930," *Journal of Family History*, 25, no. 4 (October 2000) 513; see also Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty*, x; Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives*, 47; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 38.

faith in the glorious destiny of their nation, and child savers' concern that criminals and paupers stood in the way of progress towards that destiny. I will close by arguing that these various beliefs encouraged child savers to see their work against poverty, crime, and other forms of immorality as a benevolent colonial conquest, bringing Christ and civilization to the savage wilderness of their own urban slums.

Methodology

Much of the work that child savers did with respect to poverty and crime was ad hoc, intermittent, and therefore rarely written down, let alone preserved in CAS archives. Thus, in the following argument, I am often dependent on child savers' speeches, which were much more likely to be preserved.¹⁸ To the extent that this chapter is concerned to sort out child savers' understandings of morality, poverty, crime, and progress, these sources are appropriate. However, in order to describe the practices based on those understandings, I am dependent on the few operational documents that have survived, especially letters written by Ottawa's CAS president, W.L. Scott, daily journals written by Brantford's CAS secretary and agent, S.M. Thomson, and a few documents in case files from the Brantford CAS.

Speeches were usually given in the context of an annual meeting, and then recorded and preserved in an annual report. Such reports are, as Carmen Varty has pointed out, "a unique genre of rhetoric."¹⁹ They were designed to educate their audiences, as well as to

¹⁸ On the limitations of these sources, see Bruce Bellingham, "Institution and Family: An Alternative View of Nineteenth-Century Child Saving," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (Oct.-Dec., 1986): S50.

¹⁹ Carmen Varty, "The City and the Ladies: Politics, Religion and Female Benevolence in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Hamilton, Canada West," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 38, iss. 2 (Spring 2004): 251.

encourage them to donate. Child savers chose which stories to tell, and which facts to relate. For instance, they often told stories of atrocious immorality (albeit described with a polite lack of detail).²⁰ They did so in spite of that fact that - if Thomson's daily journals and the Brantford case files are any guide - such cases were the exception rather than the rule. In the following argument, I assume that child savers presented stories that seemed most salient to their own understanding of their work, an understanding which they hoped that their audience shared. I view their reports not as straightforward descriptions of the world they encountered, but instead as interpretations of its significance to themselves and to the respectable public. It is these interpretations which are in question here.

Seeing Respectability and Worthlessness

While the notion of 'worthlessness' had an economic implication, embedded in the idea of 'respectability' was the approval or disapproval of the respectable public. Thus, upon a 1902 visit to a badly behaved foster child placed with Mrs. McTavish, J.L. Harvie, a Departmental visitor, wrote "There are several families named McTavish in Brantford and none of them bear a very good name. Visitor therefore advises that...Mr. Thomson...study the interest and welfare of this child..."²¹ When warning against the influence of a troublesome birth parent in 1903, Harvie wrote, "He is spoken of as a drunken, worthless man..."²² Child savers believed that they could trust in the accuracy of

²⁰ BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 12; BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 16.

²¹ BrCAS, case files, McKenzie file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, February 27, 1902. It seems that the child savers either did not sufficiently research this foster family beforehand, or they were forced to settle for a dubious family for lack of better applicants. In Chapter 4, I explain that lack of good applicants was a constant problem.

²² BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, April 17, 1903.

a person's reputation as an indicator of their moral righteousness.

More generally, child savers felt that moral qualities were easily visible. They believed that much could be seen by taking note of someone's bearing, clothing, or habits. Thomson once reported:

I spent one afternoon...visiting, in company with Constable Wallace, a number of houses that had been brought to my notice at different times, and I confess that the sights were not very satisfactory...The prevailing troubles in the homes were: First, dirt and disorder; second, lack of parental control; third, no effort to have the children attend school; fourth, an apparent general lack of moral tone in the parents, accompanied as is usual by a lack of thrift and habits of industry...it is abundantly evident that unless some change is made to improve their surroundings [of the 19 children in these homes] much good cannot be expected from them in after days, but as they grow up they will become a danger and expense to society.²³

Thomson believed that in a single afternoon he could determine the root moral problems of several different families and know with certainty what the outcome would be in the absence of child-saving intervention. Such an expectation was normal for child savers and Victorian moral reformers in general.²⁴ For instance, as Mariana Valverde has argued, anti-prostitution activists assumed that they “could distinguish ‘fallen’ from what they called ‘unfallen’ girls at a glance.”²⁵

This belief in the visibility of vice helped child savers to differentiate themselves, and respectables as a whole, from those parents whom they believed to be cruel or

²³ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 8, 1898, “Another Year.”

²⁴ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 20.

²⁵ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 78. For a detailed discussion of the intricacies of dress and etiquette by which members of the respectable class were able to recognize their own, see Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, 166.

neglectful. In Xiaobei Chen's exploration of the meaning of cruelty to 19th-century Toronto child savers, she explains that they identified the propensity to commit cruelty with the inability to recognize it. Only a rudely formed 'heart' could commit cruelty against children, and all that was required to recognize such behaviour was "a civilized heart."²⁶ Although Chen does not explicitly explore the class assumptions of this child-saving belief, its implications become clear in the light of a story Thomson told at one annual meeting. He recounted, "a harrowing tale...regarding a family whose parents were dirty, shiftless, lazy and failed to properly provide for their children..." In order to investigate the case before deciding to take action, Thomson "wrote several well-known gentlemen in the neighbourhood about the case..."²⁷ Although this story technically concerns what child savers would have referred to as neglect rather than cruelty, in it we can see Thomson's expectation that one class of persons perpetrated bad parenting, and another class was qualified to detect and police it.

Child savers' understanding of morality helped them to believe that children who needed their intervention came from particular sorts of families, ones who were not like their own. For instance, in a letter to W.L. Scott, Kelso once quoted a Massachusetts state report to the effect that "Almost all juvenile offenders are to be found without homes or healthful home influences. Rarely does one come from a good family."²⁸ Child savers did not expect to discover bad parenting or bad children hiding in the homes of apparently respectable people. They expected to find it out and visible in the homes of obviously

²⁶ Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 35.

²⁷ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, Feb. 7, 1899, "A Year's Progress."

²⁸ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 32, file 11, from J.J. Kelso to W.L. Scott, undated, p. 5.

worthless people.

These ideas were buttressed by economic realities. Middle- and upper-class families were protected by the fact that they usually lived in free standing houses, surrounded by a yard and a gate. Those lower down the economic ladder often lived in multifamily dwellings or thin-walled shacks separated from one another by alleys or nothing at all. Respectable families often had a place of privacy in which family disputes or embarrassing conditions could be hid. Poor families had no such protection, and thus their family business was open for all to see.

As a result of these ideological and economic factors, child savers, who were invariably drawn from respectable families, were accustomed to thinking of the perpetrators of bad parenting as belonging to a separate social group, the ‘criminal class’.²⁹ If one’s house was clean, it was assumed one obeyed the law. If one had comfortable means, one’s parenting was not in question. Unfortunately for those whom child savers expected to save, the social and economic gulf between the two groups probably contributed to child savers’ negative moralizing about poverty.

“Temporary Straits” and Wardship

“Your secretary begs to thank all who have...handed him sums of money from time to time to assist any who are in temporary straits and to whom a little assistance is a great help as well as encouragement.”³⁰

²⁹ J.J. Kelso, “Second Report of Work Under the Children’s Protection Act,” no. 29 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1894*, p. 2; J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 14.

³⁰ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

Turn-of-the-century moral reformers had two major explanations for poverty. One, pauperism, I will discuss later in the chapter. The other was that temporary factors, beyond the control of the poor people in question, had intervened to impoverish them. Although poverty placed a person's morality automatically into question, child savers still believed that some people were poor through no fault of their own. Moreover, child savers expected that the morally upright could soon return to respectable wealth if given a little help and encouragement.³¹

Thus, although child savers believed that material deprivation could hurt children morally, they recognized that some poor parents were not morally responsible for their condition. For instance, Kelso pointed out in 1910: "Sometimes an investigation reveals the present economic situations as the prime cause, and not intentional neglect on the part of the parents. Poor parents need our sympathy and love so as to feel that they are not despised for their low condition..."³² Child savers commonly provided outdoor relief on an informal basis to those they believed to be temporarily poor. Societies frequently put the poor in touch with other charities who could help them. CAS members also made, purchased, or solicited small items to help families. Thomson once encountered a family of "2 little boys [whose] mother would not let them go to school for want of shoes." Later that day, he spoke to a few small businessmen in town and got two pairs of shoes

³¹ BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 15; see also, Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 19, 159.

³² BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 15.

donated.³³ His quick response was typical. Child savers' provision of economic aid was almost always ad hoc, informal, and immediate.

Much like orphanages, CASs could also provide some temporary relief to parents in need by taking care of their children for limited periods of time. However, unlike orphanages, CAS shelters were organized in a legal framework that tended to disempower such parents. Child savers seem to have felt that if they would be caring for the child for more than a few weeks, they should make the child a ward.³⁴ When CASs did take in children for longer periods without making them wards, it was usually a coercive gesture designed to force their parents to regain their industry, temperance, or other virtues.³⁵ The children of impoverished parents often became wards.

In 1903, Charles Whittier deserted his wife, Elaine, and their two-year-old son, Jesse. Elaine worked at a local textile mill, and could not afford to care for Jesse on her own, so she decided to make him a ward of the CAS. Several months later, her working conditions at the factory having improved, Elaine applied to recover Jesse.³⁶ She wrote to Frank Cockshutt, the President of the CAS: "He is my son but circumstances were so

³³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal, 1907, May 30. In order to provide immediate relief to children, child savers sometimes provided this sort of material aid for families even where they believed fault clearly lay with the parents: W.L. Scott once wrote instructions to a subordinate: "Husband drinks and neglects his family, who are in very poor circumstances. They particularly want shoes, 'No. 1', for a boy, in order that he may go to school." LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children's Aid Society Cases, file 11: 1906-1908, from W.L. Scott to "Fanny" Scott, April 25, 1908.

³⁴ In the 1910s, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' argued for the Ontario Mother's Allowance Act (OMAA) to be designed and implemented very broadly, partly because they were overwhelmed with cases of children who could have been allowed to stay with their single mothers if some financial aid were provided. AO, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912-1919, p. 28, April 28 and 29, 1914. See also Margaret Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998) xiv.

³⁵ BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 30, May 3, 1909; BrCAS, History Book 1905-1906, Anne Beaumgardner entry.

³⁶ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Jesse Whittier entry.

with me some time ago that I thought it better to give him into the care of your Society. Since then my affairs are on a much better footing and I am now in a position to maintain him in a respectable manner.”³⁷

Unfortunately for Elaine, she now had to provide an application and three references, just like every other prospective foster parent. When the CAS made her child a ward in order to justify its care for him, she lost all legal rights as his parent. Elaine provided the references, but Cockshutt stated that they “are not of such a character as to Warrant the Society returning the child...”³⁸ A little over a week later, he reconsidered, and allowed Jesse to return to his mother, but only under certain conditions: “as her working hours are very long, it appears to me necessary that her Mother or some other suitable person should live with her and care for her children in her absence.”³⁹

The fact that Elaine Whittier’s work hours militated against single parenthood was a problem that she had to solve with help from her family, not from the CAS. Children’s Aid Societies were organized to provide dramatic interventions, not quotidian assistance. Thus, although Frank Cockshutt was a very prominent local businessman, he did not offer to use his contacts to find Elaine a position with better pay or work hours.

Children’s Aid did provide a source of support for the Whittiers. The CAS (more specifically, its matron, Mrs. Campbell) gave Jesse food, clothing, shelter, and care, and thus gave his mother a temporary reprieve from the duties of parenthood. This support gave Elaine the breathing room she needed to get her family’s life reorganized “on a

³⁷ BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Elaine Whittier to Frank Cockshutt, March 7, 1904.

³⁸ BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Frank Cockshutt to S.M. Thomson, March 11, 1904.

³⁹ BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Frank Cockshutt to S.M. Thomson, March 19, 1904.

better footing.” However, in order to make herself and her child eligible for this aid, Elaine first had to be disqualified as his parent.⁴⁰

For a very short period, the Brantford CAS actually experimented with another model of temporary care. In its first year, it borrowed a room from the YWCA “where children can be cared for during the day, while their mothers are out at work.”⁴¹ This attempt lasted less than a year, and unfortunately, almost nothing about it is recorded. No other CAS in the study seems to have tried such a program, and there was no discussion among child savers at the provincial or national level about this technique. The Brantford CAS’s day care was a brief idiosyncrasy. In most cases then, the best support that CASs could offer impoverished parents was the informal provision of sundry items, or the permanent removal of their children.

In fact, as I show in the following table, the majority of the wards of the Brantford CAS between 1894 and 1906 were made wards explicitly because their parents were too poor to take care of them. Within these years, 127 children were made wards of the CAS.⁴² The CAS’s ‘history books’, books of forms in which basic information for each case was to be entered, recorded the reasons for removal from their parents in 101 of

⁴⁰ For the concept of parental disqualification, see Robert Adamoski, “‘Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another’: Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia,” in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law*, ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003) 165.

⁴¹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 5, 1895, “The Children’s Aid Society.”

⁴² BrCAS, History Books 1894-1904, 1904-1905, 1905-1906.

these 127 cases.⁴³ See Appendix B for the contents and layout of the form. Each child was recorded as an individual entry, and therefore several siblings removed at the same time for the same recorded reason would each count as a separate instance of that reason. Although most of these entries were recorded by the same person, S.M. Thomson, there was no official, standardized terminology with which child savers like him could describe their subjects, and so he might have described similar circumstances with different choices of words on different occasions. In the foregoing chart, I have grouped the

REASONS FOR REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS BRANT CAS, 1894-1906		
Category of Reason for Removal	Number Of Children	Example Entries
<u>Parental Misconduct</u>	<u>20</u>	
General Immorality	5	"Improper Surroundings", "Dissolute habits of Parents"
Cruelty	5	"Illtreatment", "lives with Father...complaint came step mother illtreats"
Drunkenness	4	"Drunk & Disorderly Parents", "Parents Drunken"
Criminal Father	6	"Father Criminal", "Father in jail on serious charge"
Criminal Mother	0	
<u>Desertion, Death, or Nonsupport</u>	<u>25</u>	
Desertion or Nonsupport of Father	18	"Father will not Mother cannot Provide", "Father didn't provide and mother having no means gave up voluntarily"
Death of Father	0	
Desertion or Nonsupport of Mother	5	"Father in ill health can't support mother deserted"
Death of Mother	1	"Mother dead father failed to provide..."
Desertion or Nonsupport of Both Parents	1	"Deserted by Father + Mother"
Death of Both Parents	0	
<u>Poverty Alone</u>	<u>52</u>	"Poverty", "Destitute", "Homeless"
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>4</u>	"Sec Thomson on behalf of Society agrees that this boy ...be boarded at Shelter at 3.00 per week"
Total Children with Reasons Given	101	

Table 3.1: Reasons for Removal.

⁴³ It is possible to account for the lack of reasons for removal in 13 of the 26 cases in which such reasons were not given: 6 of these cases were poorly recorded in general, probably because the judge presiding over them was not the usual police magistrate; 7 were children transferred from other agencies, in which cases the Brantford CAS generally did not see fit to record the original removal. The other 13 of the 26 cases seem to have no particular characteristics in common.

reasons for removal into three categories, “Parental Misconduct,” “Desertion, Death, or Nonsupport,” and “Poverty Alone.” There are also a few miscellaneous cases.

The first two categories each have several subcategories, and each category has an example or two quoted of a reason for removal. I made my categorizations to suit the purposes of my argument, and they are probably not the categorizations that a child saver would have made. For instance, CAS personnel would probably not have made a clear separation between the ‘misconduct’ of parents and their poverty.

Of the 101 cases in which reasons for removal were given, 42 of them were simply given by the single word “Poverty,” and 10 more had similar descriptions such as “No Means,” “Homeless,” and “Destitute.” Thus, the child savers explained 52 cases simply by poverty. However, these were not the only cases in which they referred to material deprivation to explain making the child a ward. Of the 25 reasons for removal that mentioned the desertion, death, or non-support of a parent, 19 mentioned the lack of means or the “failure to provide.” Jesse Whittier was among these 19 children who came into the CAS, not simply because one parent had abandoned them, but because the other could not afford to care for them on his or (usually) her own.⁴⁴ All in all, 71 of the 101 children in question were made wards explicitly because of their poverty.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ While some desertion, death, and non-support cases were thus clearly about poverty, it is also possible that some of the “poverty” cases may have also been about desertion, death, and non-support. The majority of the 42 cases marked with the single word “Poverty” were listed in the first half of the 14 years covered here. In the early years of his work, Thomson was more likely to give a single-word reason for removal, whereas in the later years, he was more likely to provide some detail. Thus, it is entirely possible that some of the early “Poverty” cases were also cases wherein the child lost the support of a parent, but Thomson did not record them as such.

⁴⁵ As I explain in Chapter 4, wards are probably not representative of the CAS clients as a whole. Making a child a ward was the extreme sanction of the Children’s Aid, and it is significant that over two-thirds of the time this extreme sanction was used at Brantford from 1894 to 1906, it was explicitly because of the lack of means of the parent(s).

Although child savers usually preferred to advertise their work as being against extreme parental cruelty or immorality, such cases in fact represented a small proportion of wards. Only 20 of the reasons for removal referred directly to parental misconduct. The majority of the children who entered the foster care system at the Brantford CAS were brought in simply because they were poor.

The CAS did not usually record whether or not these parents consented to give up their children, and so it is not possible to give an accurate count. There are some cases where it is clear that impoverished parents placed their children with the CAS voluntarily, and others where it seems to have been against their will.⁴⁶ The situation of overwork, malnutrition, and CAS surveillance many such parents faced blurs the line between consent and forced removal even when they officially gave permission for their children to be removed. Child savers also did not record whether or not they believed that the poverty of these families resulted from ‘temporary straits’ or from pauperism, the other cause they saw for poverty.

Pauperism, Begging, Foraging, and Staying out After Dark

While child savers believed that those who were in temporary straits were often not responsible for their condition, they believed that most of the long-term poor were moral invalids whose poverty was the result of their own failings. Moral reformers in general expected that respectable, virtuous people would soon recover from poverty. Those who remained poor over the long term, or who had never been well-off to begin with, became

⁴⁶ BrCAS, History Book 1905-1906, Anne Beaumgardner entry; *ibid.*, Lewis Smith entry; *ibid.*, Belinda Fletcher entry; History Book 1894-1904, David Penn entry.

increasingly morally suspect. Child savers believed that long-standing poverty was not primarily an economic problem that could be solved by economic help, but a moral problem that was actually exacerbated by economic help.⁴⁷ They used the word ‘pauper’ to refer to someone whose poverty stemmed from their unwillingness to work, their inability to intelligently control their own spending, and in general from their own lack of discipline.

In one of his reports to the government, Kelso included the following section:

Encouraging the Pauper Spirit

One of the greatest dangers in connection with modern charity work is a too liberal giving to the poor, encouraging helpless dependence and indolence instead of stimulating to activity and thrift...I fully believe that if the money expended through relief agencies were withdrawn the poor would be infinitely better off, and the general tone of the community would be so much improved that there would be no danger of return to present loose methods.⁴⁸

Many reformers, philanthropists, and charity volunteers shared Kelso’s conviction. One of the most important developments within charity work in the late 19th century was the emergence of Charity Organization Societies (COSs). These argued for a shift from what they saw as emotional, disorganized, overly liberal ‘charity’ to rational, organized, parsimonious and discriminating ‘philanthropy’.⁴⁹ In many ways, COSs were to outdoor relief what CASs were to charitable child care. Both appeared in Canada at the end of the 19th century, and criticized the systems that preceded them for being too

⁴⁷ Joan Gittens, *Poor Relations: The Children of the State in Illinois, 1818-1990* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998) 22.

⁴⁸ J.J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1901, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 159.

expensive, and for de-moralizing the people they were supposed to help. Both also sought to control the myriad decentralized charities hailing from the 19th century. Both shared the belief that rational and economical organization was necessary to moralize the masses and prevent pauperism.

The moral quality that paupers most lacked was industry. Child savers believed that the capacity for hard work (especially for males, but also for females) was a cardinal virtue, from which a complete, strong moral character could grow.⁵⁰ The Principal of the Mimico Industrial School for Boys once declared that he “...had every hope for a boy who would work.”⁵¹ Children’s Aid Societies therefore saw it as part of their mission to use their powers to encourage industry in children and their parents. By exposing them to the consequences of their own weakness, philanthropists could help paupers restore their work ethic.

Nancy Christie has pointed out that moral reformers like Kelso “championed state intervention as the principal means by which to *reinforce* parental responsibility and promote the economic self-reliance of families.”⁵² CASs were intended to maintain “...the shibboleth of family independence, whereby ideally a well-trained, skilled wage earner wholly supported his wife and children...”⁵³ Child savers were concerned to ensure that their services did not allow lazy parents to shirk their responsibilities. Hence, the limits

⁵⁰ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 6.

⁵¹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

⁵² Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000) 22. Emphasis in the original.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 111.

on temporary care for children. By doing too much too easily for families, child savers could accidentally undermine parents' acceptance of their own duties, and thus, pauperize them.

Indeed, child savers felt obligated to use their powers to coerce children and parents into recovering their willingness to labour. Referring to one case in February of 1908, W.L. Scott instructed his CAS secretary, John Keane, to "Threaten that unless this man goes to work the children will be taken."⁵⁴ In August of the previous year, Keane had passed on a recommendation of similar intent to Scott, concerning a male teenaged CAS ward: "Employment has been found...he can be sent to the shanty... Mr. O'Keefe [the police constable] thinks it would not be out of the way if he was kept for a few days in jail...He would be more eager to go to the shanty when he would get loose."⁵⁵ Child savers in general took great pains to see that children, as well as their parents, learned to work.

Child savers hoped that children would learn to work hard in the formal economy in order to achieve economic independence. Not surprisingly, they were aghast when children expressed dependence by begging for alms. CASs had a mandate to prevent children from begging. The CPA defined as neglected any child "who is found begging or receiving alms... " or "...in a state of habitual vagrancy or mendicancy..."⁵⁶ Although all CASs were thus involved in preventing children from begging, and all child savers saw it as a great evil, those at the Brantford Society were especially dedicated to this task.

⁵⁴ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children's Aid Society Cases, file 11: 1906-1908, from W.L. Scott to John Keane, February 1, 1908.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, from John Keane to W.L. Scott, August 30, 1907.

⁵⁶ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 7(2)(a), 3154; *ibid.*, 8(1), 3154.

S.M. Thomson saw begging as a central problem for CASs, and one that stemmed from a lack of parental discipline. A newspaper report of the first Annual Meeting of his CAS, subtitled “Begging and Child Abuse Disappearing,” quoted Thomson’s description of his work against child mendicancy: “...complaints come about children who are begging; inquiries are at once instituted as to the homes from which such children come and the parents are warned about permitting their children to do this.”⁵⁷ Thomson did not believe that begging could be solved by economic aid, but instead should be solved by moralizing warnings. When he saw a begging child, he saw not primarily an impoverished family in need of food, clothing, or fuel, but instead an immoral or undisciplined family in need of a warning.

Child savers were concerned that pauper children’s economic activities would result not just in immorality, but even crime. At the turn of the century, many poor urban children helped their families by foraging for wood or stray coal with which to heat their homes.⁵⁸ In S.M. Thomson’s 1907 annual report, he referred to this practice,

Where Crime Has Its Origin

It is not in the police court that children get their first start in crime. We all know it is in bad homes and through lack of proper moral teaching...Many young children are sent out by a careless parent with a basket or bag to pick up fuel. They soon get to know the more valuable article will bring a better price and they unconsciously get into the way of stealing...⁵⁹

I do not wish to argue that Thomson, who by 1907 had spent the last 13 years

⁵⁷ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 5, 1895, “The Children’s Aid Society.”

⁵⁸ John Bullen, “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 18 (Fall 1986): 167.

⁵⁹ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 21.

observing and intervening in the lives of such children, was incorrect in believing that the practice of gathering fuel led to theft, or that begging led away from labour in the formal cash economy. I do, however, wish to point out that Children's Aid Societies were organized legally and socially in ways that tended to persecute and prosecute poor people for doing things that might have been critical to their families' survival. Meanwhile, CASs were powerless to deal with the children of respectable, that is, more well-off parents, who performed activities that presented similar moral dangers, but had no economic importance.

Compare Thomson's *soi disant* successful work against children begging and gathering fuel to Thomas Ritchie's inability to intervene in the lives of the children of "respectable parents." Ritchie, the President of the Belleville CAS, wrote in his Society's annual report in 1911,

A Warning

It may be permitted here to refer to a large class of neglected children, even in Belleville, which we cannot reach. They are young boys and girls of respectable parents who are allowed to roam the streets after dark, and are thus exposed to much evil, with exceedingly bad results. These parents would probably resent any personal appeal to them respecting this, and the only way we know of presenting this matter to them is through persistent appeals from the pulpits.⁶⁰

Ritchie boldly called the children of some of his economic and social peers "neglected", thus implying that they ought to belong to the class of children in whose lives the CAS was mandated to intervene. Furthermore, he placed the blame squarely on the parents who "allowed" these children to be "exposed to much evil." However, Ritchie

⁶⁰ BvCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 22.

felt that he could not directly intervene in these cases to threaten the parents with the removal of their children. He warned them in a public address because he was concerned that such respectable people would “resent any personal appeal to them.”

Ritchie faced at least two barriers to intervention. One was social, and will be discussed shortly. The other was legal. Although the CPA listed a number of late night behaviours that could define a child as “neglected,” these were squarely aimed at activities that might be characteristic of truly destitute children, such as “...sleeping at night in the open air,” or “...wandering about at late hours *and* not having any home or settled place of abode...”⁶¹ It did not, therefore, include children who had homes to return to. Although Ritchie believed that these well-off children out after dark were neglected, the law left him without tools to define and treat them as such. The CPA was not designed to help CASs apprehend without warrant the children of “respectable parents.”

Secondly, and more obviously, Ritchie was faced with a social barrier. “Respectable parents” had social resources with which to resist him. Presumably, some of the parents in whose lives the Belleville Society did intervene “resented” the “personal appeals” of child savers. However, Ritchie never recorded any concern about this resentment. Child savers almost never did.⁶² The people in whose lives CASs usually intervened were “worthless,” and they did not have the money or reputation to put up significant opposition. Those who were able to resist CAS demands usually did so by

⁶¹ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 7(2)(a), 3154. My emphasis.

⁶² After the CAS of Belleville returned the Lyons family’s children from a probationary period in the shelter (see Chapter 2), an unnamed third party complained of the children’s treatment in the shelter, prompting an internal investigation by the CAS. BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, p. 32, May 19, 1909. This incident is the only such complaint by parents recorded in these three CASs before 1912.

getting the endorsement of respectable citizens.⁶³ Respectables themselves, then, had little to fear from Ritchie.

Crime

Child savers frequently promoted their work as one that benefited society by reducing crime and incarceration. Kelso often promised that CASs would “empty the prisons.”⁶⁴ More comprehensively, one Brantford CAS annual report declared that “Our taxes have been lessened. Our property becomes secure. Our lives are in less danger. Our country is made richer. The society has been a blessing all round.”⁶⁵ Indeed, the most frequently used motto of Ontario CASs before World War I was “It is wiser and less expensive to save the child than to punish the criminal.”⁶⁶

According to child savers, crime and poverty shared a moral cause in laziness, and a moral solution in industry. For instance, one CAS pamphlet admonished its readers that “Idleness is a source of much crime. Train the youth in habits of industry. That it is according to God’s law we work for our bread. That the humblest labor is dignified.”⁶⁷

Child savers did not believe that everyone who committed a crime was fully

⁶³ In Chapter 4, I describe the case of the Carter family, in which one child used the support of a respectable friend in order to overcome the indifference of the Brantford CAS president, and another child gained the support of the Brantford Societies’ agent to oppose the money-grubbing of a foster parent and the hostility of Kelso.

⁶⁴ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 15.

⁶⁵ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, “Annual Meeting of the Children’s Aid.”

⁶⁶ Sometimes the motto read “wiser and cheaper.” In either form, this motto was printed on CAS pamphlets, annual reports, funding requests, and letterhead, and even used by other child-saving organizations, such as the American Juvenile Court Record. LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 1, file 2: 1909, undated advertisement, “The Juvenile Court Record: In the Interest of Homeless and Dependent Children.”

⁶⁷ BrCAS, advertising pamphlet, circa 1904, “Children’s Aid Society.”

criminal. Criminality, just like pauperism, was a long-term, learned, moral condition that resulted from a lack of respect for labour and property. Thomson wrote in 1907 that “Education is a thing of slow degree. It is the constant repetition of small acts of theft that makes the confirmed criminal...”⁶⁸ Thus, a child who committed their first crime could yet be saved, and child savers argued fiercely to keep such children out of jail.⁶⁹

The CAS constitution that Kelso promulgated, which local Societies generally adopted with minor revisions, stated that child savers would attend the trials of children, “to take the part of a friend toward any child accused of offences against the laws of the Province...”⁷⁰ Although CAS workers did not generally record the details of these trials, the child savers’ goal seems generally to have been to keep morally uncorrupted children out of jails, “from which none ever emerges without the contagion of criminal bacteria.”⁷¹ Over the course of 1910, Belleville’s W.C. Wrightmyer attended 57 such trials, and Brantford’s J.L. Axford attended 116.⁷² However, the CPA did not provide CASs with any special legal powers in these court cases, except the privilege of advising the judge.

Child savers therefore sought to expand their abilities by getting what they called the ‘probation system’ instituted.⁷³ This system, then in place in several American states,

⁶⁸ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 21.

⁶⁹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, “Annual Meeting of the Children’s Aid.”; J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 10.

⁷⁰ See Appendix B, Article II.

⁷¹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

⁷² BeCAS, Annual report, 1910, p. 1; BrL, *Brantford Courier*, February 17, 1911, “Annual Meeting of the Children’s Aid.” The two time periods do not overlap perfectly. Belleville’s CAS year began in October, and Brantford’s in February.

⁷³ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 8.

was simply to give certain pseudo-legal organizations like the Children's Aid the discretionary power to shorten, commute, or extend the sentences of certain kinds of criminals. Child savers hoped to be able to use the powers of the probation system to morally reform child criminals, much as they often used the power of child removal to try to morally reform parents. Ottawa's W.L. Scott was the most important Canadian in the movement to instate the probation system in this country. In 1906, he had visited a child-saving friend in Philadelphia, where he saw the system in action and was deeply impressed.⁷⁴ He spent the next year advocating vigorously to bring it to Canada, and by 1908, the Canadian government had passed the Juvenile Delinquency Act (JDA), which fulfilled most of Scott's desires.

As Dorothy Chunn's work shows, the implications of the JDA stretch far beyond probation.⁷⁵ However, I do not wish to examine its extensive consequences in detail. Part of the ease with which the JDA was passed was due to the fact that it had no force in any municipality unless it was ratified there by the local government. In our period, only two municipalities, Ottawa (1908) and Toronto (1909), passed the measure, and therefore the JDA was only in effect for a fifth of our period in one of our three CASs.⁷⁶

Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out how child savers understood and used discretionary powers to act as the moralizing "friends" of children and adults. In May of 1908, JDA in hand, Scott wrote a letter to a girl who had been convicted of a crime and released on probation under his aegis.

⁷⁴ LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, June 1, 1906.

⁷⁵ Chunn, *From Punishment to Doing Good*.

⁷⁶ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979; reprint Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000) 125.

I am greatly grieved to learn from Mde. Bruchesi that your conduct has been no better since your last appearance in the Juvenile Court. She tells me you are not yet working anywhere and that you frequently stay out in the evening until late hours. This is not carrying out the promise you made to the Magistrate...Do not forget that you are sentenced to six months in the jail and that if you are once in there no one but the Minister of Justice can release you...We are anxious to be your friends and so we hope you will take warning before it is too late and act on our advice.⁷⁷

Much as child savers often did with the power of child removal, Scott used the power of the JDA to enforce industrial and moral discipline.⁷⁸

Child savers in general found probation to be a powerful metaphor. A guest speaker at the 1908 Brantford CAS Annual Meeting recounted the biblical story wherein Christ, presented with a convicted criminal, entreated the Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."⁷⁹ The speaker then explained the moral of the story: "This is...one of the first records of a suspended sentence, by a parole officer..."⁸⁰

Child savers' discretionary privileges with the laws of 1893 and 1908 gave them enormous power over poor families and children. Although CASs were certainly designed to use these powers to help benighted moral invalids, it is dubious whether lawmakers or CAS advocates would have supported Acts like the CPA and the JDA if

⁷⁷ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children's Aid Society Cases, file 11: 1906-1908, W.L. Scott to Miss Elizabeth Guerin, May 29, 1908.

⁷⁸ Bullen states that "...the society used children as bargaining chips to control the behaviour of adults," in John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers: The Genesis of the Children's Aid Movement in Ontario," in R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau, ed. *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991) 124.

⁷⁹ John 8:7, King James Version; cited in BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, Feb. 4, 1908, "Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid."

⁸⁰ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, Feb. 4, 1908, "Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid."

they expected that the powers could or would be used on themselves or their peers. Child savers felt that child criminals were the products of a special group of families who possessed a number of negative moral conditions that separated them from the respectable public. Scott once explained that “every delinquent child is in at least some respect neglected; and if a neglected child is not delinquent it is accidental that he is not so.”⁸¹ Members of the respectable class, who lived in well furnished homes, whose children did not have to beg or scavenge for sustenance, and whose mothers did not have to work in factories, had little to fear from CASs. The institutions were directed at a different group of Canadians, the poor and outcast, whom respectables called the “criminal class.”⁸²

Civilization, the “Criminal Army,” and Metaphors of Colonial Conquest

Child savers’ reification of the criminal class into a homogenous entity foreign to the respectable class sometimes took on quite militaristic, threatened tones. A speech at the 1905 Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections referred to the threat posed by the “criminal army.”⁸³ Kelso once wrote that neglected children “are growing up in our towns and cities to-day to recruit the ranks of the criminals, the tramps, and the worthless.”⁸⁴ Child savers even used these threatening military metaphors to describe

⁸¹ LAC, AMICUS 103797, W.L. Scott, “Neglected Children,” in *Canadian Life and Resources*, volume 8, no. 11 (November 1910): p. 12.

⁸² Peter A. Baskerville, *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2005) 148.

⁸³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, inside cover, undated newspaper clipping.

⁸⁴ J.J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 5-6.

children who were not necessarily criminals at all, as when W.L. Scott jotted down in his notes, the “great army of cripple children // 7000 round London.”⁸⁵ Child savers felt that civilization was threatened by the masses of the unreformed.

Unreformed, however, did not mean unreformable. Unlike the eugenicists who would later come to prominence in Canada’s social welfare landscape, CAS child savers generally regarded the central problem of deviance as a moral, environmental problem, not a medical, hereditary one.⁸⁶ The eugenicists were largely concerned with keeping the ‘unfit’ out of Canada, by preventing them from immigrating here, or by preventing them from reproducing here.⁸⁷ The CAS child savers, on the other hand, were largely concerned with reforming the immoral, although they certainly encouraged the segregation of disabled children.⁸⁸ Indeed, the CAS system of child removal and replacement in foster homes would hardly make sense from a more hereditarian perspective. If a child was truly hereditarily ‘unfit’ for citizenship, then providing them with an improved environment would do very little good. Eugenicists argued that the worthless should be segregated from respectable society. CASs sought to bring them within its fold.

CAS child savers commonly made use of carefully posed photographs of children

⁸⁵ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: Children’s Aid Society Cases, file 12: 1911-1913, undated scrap paper.

⁸⁶ Bryan Hogeveen, “‘Impossible Cases Can be Cured When All the Factors Are Known’: Gender, Psychiatry and Toronto’s Juvenile Court, 1912-1930,” *Canadian Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 20, no. 1 (January 2003): 49.

⁸⁷ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990) 42.

⁸⁸ AO, Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912-1919, p. 15, April 8 and 9, 1912. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the fate of disabled children in the foster care system.

ostensibly before and after CAS intervention, to demonstrate the redemptive powers of child saving. ‘Before’ pictures showed children supposedly “As We Get Them,” set against backgrounds of public, urban spaces, dressed in rags or the clothing of the working class, with unkempt hair and insubordinate postures.⁸⁹ Children in ‘after’ photos were dressed in middle-class outfits, often in suits or petticoats, and were placed in orderly, obedient postures. The latter pictures were taken in front of private home furnishings, or professional photographers’ backdrops - environments in which respectable portraits could be



Fig. 3.3: Before and After Photographs. OwCAS, undated and torn loose page of images.

⁸⁹ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 20; BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 20, facing page.

taken.⁹⁰ Images like these showed that the Children's Aid could rescue neglected children and make them into good British citizens.

Like most people in British societies in the late 19th century, moral reformers believed in the inevitability of progress on a grand scale. In particular, they saw Canada as a nation destined for greatness. Although this destiny was plagued by the growth of the parasitic and dangerous criminal class and other immoral hordes, it was still destiny, and the members of this class might be reformed into "useful citizens."⁹¹ In 1910, after a speech enumerating a long list of things that still needed to be done for neglected children, Kelso assured his audience, "the world was getting better without a doubt, but still much could be done in the direction named."⁹²

The optimism of the respectable class rested on a symbolic identification of respectability, wealth, and order, with civilization, capitalist economic development, and the future. Hence the use of the term 'progressive' to mean 'effective' or 'socially responsible'.⁹³ In the opposite, respectables also identified disorder, cruelty, poverty, and crime with barbarism, squalor, and the past. Respectable Canadians in general believed that they were progressing to a better future. Their faith in a Christian religion that saw humans burdened with an original sin at the beginning of human history, and longing for a final salvation at the end of days, certainly helped them make these connections. W.P. Archibald spoke with eschatological fervour to a Brantford CAS audience about

⁹⁰ BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, p. 12; BvCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 15.

⁹¹ J.J. Kelso, "First Report of Work Done Under the Children's Protection Act," no. 47 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1893*, p. 28.

⁹² BrL, *Brantford Courier*, February 16, 1910, "Children's Aid."

⁹³ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau. *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) 28.

a universal progression, from nomad to man, from barbarian to civilization, from crime, dense ignorance and bestiality to a universal regeneration...when truth shall triumph, where crime will hide its diminished head, and when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of an eternal light and love... ⁹⁴

With ideas like these, many Ontarians in the 19th century found it easy to picture the indigenous people of North America in an imaginary dangerous and savage past. S.M. Thomson kept a newspaper clipping of a Robbie Burns Day celebration that included a series of eloquent speeches. One speech declared triumphantly that “we no longer hear the howl of the wolf or the wild weird war-whoop of the Algonquin or the Huron, the only human cry that then broke the stillness in this land; but in their stead the church bell now swells out in sweet cadence on the vesper breeze...”⁹⁵

Although respectable Canadians thus generally delighted in the progress of civilization, they also, at the same time, had a few gendered and racialized trepidations about it. They felt that men could become overly civilized, and thus weak, unmanly, and immoral. It was on the grounds that “Orientals” hailed from “an ancient and effete civilization” that the 1902 Canadian Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration asserted that immigrants from these countries could never gain Canadian citizenship.⁹⁶ Men exposed to the wilderness, on the other hand, had a certain strength

⁹⁴ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

⁹⁵ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1900, clipping from undated newspaper article, “The Land We Live In.” Children’s Aid Societies did not have jurisdiction over children in the legal category of ‘Indian’ until the 1930s. John Milloy, pers. comm. However, in the year from 1900 to 1901, people from the Grand River Reserve seem to have taken an interest in the Brantford CAS. According to the CAS annual report, Thomson was approached with several cases from the reserve. BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 5, 1901, “Children’s Aid.” He seems to have referred these cases to the local Indian Agent, and no indigenous child ever became a ward of the CAS. BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1901, August 28 - September 4.

⁹⁶ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 111.

and virility. Thus, one advertisement in the *Brantford Expositor* showed a picture of a man hunched over his office desk, and explained that “lack of exercise” and “indoor work” caused damage to the internal organs. The solution? “Indian Root Pills.”⁹⁷

The ideal white man was not the one cloistered in civilization, but the one on its frontier. Child savers, like many Canadians, were captivated by the idea of civilized men who confronted, explored, and conquered the primordial wilderness. In 1911, the Belleville CAS’s annual report opened with a section entitled “A Golden Heritage,” which was made up of two lengthy quotations. The first quote came from Theodore Roosevelt, and emphasized that “there can be no more important subject [than child saving] from the standpoint of the nation...” The second quote told a story that revealed to the reader, in a dramatic fashion, that the famous African explorer Henry Morton Stanley was an orphan taken into the home of a “gentleman” who decided to “educate him to fit him for the battle of life...” and “to be industrious and persevering.” The report introduced Stanley as “a man who had excited a great deal of attention for splendid work done in Africa.”⁹⁸ Although Roosevelt was introduced in his presidential capacity, he was currently famous for his 1909 African safari, in which he had killed enormous numbers of savage beasts, and donated their corpses to the Smithsonian Museum. Colonel Wrightmyer, Belleville’s CAS agent who prepared the report, did not choose tales of renowned child savers or urban moral reformers to introduce it. Instead he chose two great white conquerors of ‘darkest Africa’. The association of their conquests with child saving was a “Golden Heritage.” In particular, the story of Stanley gave hope that

⁹⁷ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, November 24, 1911, “Lack of Exercise.”

⁹⁸ BvCAS, Annual Report 1911, p. 3.

neglected children could be rescued and become civilizers themselves.

At Annual Meetings, child savers often told horror stories of families living bestial lives far from the light of civilization, as when Kelso presented “an illustration...of a family in North Hastings, whose children lived underground, ate raw meat, and what they could find in the woods.”⁹⁹ Wrightmyer once described his approach to a vice-ridden home with these words: “We went to the nearest point by rail and drove from there to the scene of the trouble, a distance of seventeen miles. It was dark when we neared the home and we stopped to remove the bells from the team, having been assured the children would never be found if they saw or heard us approaching.”¹⁰⁰

The criminal army, far from having ranks and generals, was an “unregenerate horde,” a barbarian mass that threatened the progress of the nation into civilization and redemption.¹⁰¹ Child saving allowed members of the respectable class to confront this army of the uncivilized, and snatch as-yet-unspoiled children away from the jaws of its recruiting stations. Child savers were not organized to save the children of their peers, but only the children of the worthless, whose poverty and vice marked them out as separate from the respectable public.¹⁰² CAS work provided an opportunity for respectable men to confront the racialized geography of poverty and vice.

⁹⁹ BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Henrika Kuklick has written about “...the equation between the urban underclass and primitive peoples...” in late 19th century British journalism. Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 100. See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 292.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 170.

¹⁰² Bullen has argued that in practice, foster children remained in a subordinate economic status. John Bullen, John Bullen, “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario,” *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (Fall 1986): 186.

Conclusions

...there was no clear distinction between the work of providing help for those in need...and the work of controlling, regulating...those deemed undesirable...The fact that [moral reform] exercised coercive power should not lead us to the one-sided conclusion that nobody obtained generous help from it ...¹⁰³

It is too easy to condemn child savers' work with the poor and the criminal as solely the result of prejudice. We should be careful when judging them from the standpoint of child welfare. Their project was called child saving, or child rescue, because its practice was expected to be climactic and moral, not protracted and economic or medical, as child welfare is today. While the Brantford CAS's brief experiment with day care for the children of working mothers might well have been very helpful to families in that community, the ideology of child saving did not encourage undramatic institutional nurture. 'Child rescue' implied that children were in dire peril, and that they could be suddenly and definitively saved by the intervention of a respectable and virtuous hero. The long term care of children was not the emphasis of CAS child saving. The whole field was rhetorically and legally constructed in ways that supported moral interpretations of problems, and dramatically interventionist solutions to them.

Child savers' moral distinction between the respectable and the worthless, those who committed cruelty and those who could recognize it, existed in the context of their optimistic, imperialistic nationalism. The whole project of Ontarian child saving was organized to help Canada fulfil her national destiny. Child savers saw criminals and

¹⁰³ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, 128. Valverde is actually speaking specifically about the Presbyterian Department of the Stranger.

paupers as threats to the progress of civilization. Colonial, racializing metaphors of manly conquest appealed to them, and they saw themselves as bringing moral progress to the darkest Africa of their own urban slums. Their colonial dreams served to strengthen their sense of a moral distinction between the savers and those who needed to be saved, and they often drew stark contrasts between the horrors in which the children of worthless families were trapped, and the foster homes to which they could be rescued. As Thomson put it, “What a contrast is presented to these squalid miserable places to the homes where the children are adopted. There every effort is made to have things neat, clean, and in order...”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 2, 1909, “Children’s Aid Society.”

Chapter 4 - The Foster Care System and The Limits of Control

“I suppose the Inspector means well but they can’t always make things to suit themselves.”¹

In April of 1913, one CAS foster child, Catherine McDougal, wrote to her friend, “Liz,” a CAS ward in another foster placement. Although we do not have Catherine’s letter, we do have Liz’s reply. It is clear that Catherine was explaining the conditions at her placement, planning to run away, and asking Liz for advice. Liz wrote in reply,

Dearest Friend: I received your welcome letter last night...Say, kiddo that sounds pretty tough...I am sorry you did not write a week or two sooner...as there was a woman not so very far from here been wanting a girl for some time, but she has one now...if you had been there we could have seen each other every week or so...you want some advice alright but I don’t know as I dare write what you want to know, as it is hard to say who might get your letter. We had better manage to see each other and I can tell you more...if you could manage to get out somewheres for a few minutes...And say if you want me to help you, don’t you never never mention my name, as it is getting into a peculiar situation...If I knew too when you go, you wouldn’t have to go alone and the road would be perfectly safe...Please kid don’t walk all that way alone in the dark...²

Child savers believed that the grand moral and imperial destiny of Canada would be realized by the moral uplifting of individual Canadian children like Catherine and Liz into hard-working, obedient citizens. This plan had little place for the intentions and

¹ BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, From “Liz” to Catherine McDougal, April, 1913.

² *Ibid.*, I have taken some liberties with the order of the sentences in this letter, as the original author is somewhat wandering.

actions of children themselves. Children's Aid workers tried to keep foster children separate from their former contacts (their family and friends), and expected that the CASS' system of annual visitations to foster homes would protect wards from abuses. They also imagined that foster parents would be motivated by kindness, Christianity, and patriotism to take in and raise children. Although CAS workers had considerable powers of surveillance and negative sanction with which to make manifest their expectations of child care, they discovered again and again that foster parents and foster children themselves had ideas of their own.

The first part of this chapter briefly outlines the positions of child savers, foster parents, and wards within the foster care system between 1893 and 1912. The second part of this chapter describes the system in more detail, the documents it produced and preserved, and the ways in which I have used them here. Then, I consider the model of morality and childhood implicit in child savers' attempts to uplift children through foster care; the situation of marginalized children within foster care; and the conflicts and alliances between child savers, foster parents, and wards with respect to contacts between wards and their birth siblings. Finally, I close the chapter by reflecting on the implications of the foster care system itself for the possibilities of control, resistance, and scholarship. The research for this chapter is based largely on the case files and history books of the Brantford CAS, whose current administration kindly granted me complete access.

Child Savers, Foster Parents, and Wards

This chapter focuses on child savers, foster parents, and wards as the three main

kinds of actors in the foster care system. Birth parents were largely excluded from the functioning of foster care, because the very act of making a child a ward removed its birth parents' legal rights.

Although child savers were by far the most powerful of these three kinds of actors, the system itself placed severe limits on their practical ability to survey and control the actual relationships between children and their new care givers. In an orphanage or reform school, the child-saving management had all of its subject children centralized in a single location, usually under the control of a single matron or headmaster, who was an easily supervised employee caregiver. The CAS system was designed to out-source child rearing to the control of foster parents, numerous largely unpaid caregivers who were usually visited only once a year. CASs had little opportunity and power to control the ways in which children in foster care were actually raised. Their greatest practical sanction was to remove a child. The foster care system also made child savers incapable of directly creating spaces for children. These Societies could not simply build rooms in institutions in order to house their wards, but instead had to advertise through annual reports, pulpits and newspapers, and then bargain with potential foster parents for the placement of every single child.

Foster parents were the primary suppliers of child care in the CAS system. They exercised considerable autonomy in the ways they nurtured, provided for, and worked the children they received. Foster parents were merely adults who had applied to receive a foster child, and had been considered suitable enough for the Children's Aid Society to accept them as foster parents. Adults applied for those children in which they were



TAKE ONE!

Fig. 4.1: Advertisement for Foster Children. BvCAS, Annual Report 1910, p. 10 facing page.

interested, usually for economic or sentimental reasons. Furthermore, they could easily send unsatisfactory children back to the CAS, facing only the moral entreaties of CAS workers not to do so. Foster parents sometimes acted to heal and reform foster children; sometimes to employ them as inexpensive farm or domestic labour. Given the value that respectable people in this period placed on hard work in the formation of moral character, the two directions were not mutually exclusive. Foster parents' power to shape the lives of children was limited partly by the ability of the CAS to remove the children, and partly by the ability of the children to resist and to run away.

Foster children, like Liz and Catherine, were the most sharply controlled and isolated of the three groups of actors. Many of them were emotionally disturbed by the conditions of life with their birth parents as well as by the sudden removal to homes of often unsympathetic strangers. Nonetheless, these children could exercise some autonomy. They had the ability to obey or disobey their foster parents and the CAS, to run away, and occasionally to enlist the support of CAS workers.³ Many children acted to re-establish contacts with lost friends and family, who could provide them with networks of support.

Foster children represented a very small proportion of all the children with whom CASs worked, probably less than 10% of the children a Society encountered in a given year.⁴ Ostensibly, child savers only made children into wards of the CAS (and thus into foster children) in the most intractable cases, where they could not improve the situation of the children through a mixture of warnings and aid to their parents. Therefore the situations, choices made, and resulting conditions in foster care cannot be considered to be representative of those in the total variety of CAS work. Nonetheless, foster care is worthy of detailed study. The power to remove children from families and send them into foster care was the *sine qua non* of the CAS system, the threat from which many of its

³ In Elizabeth Janeway's *Powers of the Weak*, she makes use of Victor Turner's eponymous concept, to point out that the powerful never seem to be powerful enough to ignore the desires of the weak. "What the powerful need is the consent of the governed to their actions as proper, acceptable, free of blame; and this consent can be granted only *by the governed*...Force of arms and physical might cannot exact this grant." Elizabeth Janeway, *Powers of the Weak* (New York: Knopf, 1980) 110. It is this consent that wards, despite their inexperience and physical frailty, could withhold from child savers and foster parents.

⁴ It is very difficult to determine an exact proportion with any accuracy. Each CAS used different measurements in different years to describe their work, and these measurements often describe numbers of CAS actions, rather than numbers of children per se. However, it seems in all cases that wards represented a small proportion of the children with whom CAS personnel interacted. For instance, in 1908, the Brantford CAS reported 132 "interviews about children," 36 "complaints against parents or guardians," and only 7 "made wards of the society." BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, "Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid."

less severe actions, such as investigations and warnings, received their force and meaning.

Sources and Methodology: The Foster Care System

As with all regulatory agencies, the most severe CAS actions produced and preserved the most documentation. Thus the records of foster care are quite abundant compared to those of other CAS activities. Indeed, the case history of each child was only begun once the child was made a ward of the Society. Records of CAS interactions with children not (or not yet) made wards are almost non-existent. The records of foster care are by far the widest window into the actual ‘child saving’ of Children’s Aid Societies.

When child savers felt that a child could not be saved by the improvement of their current home, they called upon the local police magistrate, an untrained lower court judge, to make the child a ward of the CAS.⁵ These proceedings created certain legal documents, and also caused CAS workers to enter the child in a standardized book of forms called a ‘history book’, which devoted two pages to each child, thus beginning their ‘case history’.⁶ History book entries are excellent sources of basic information about children and their parents, such as their ages, religions, occupations, and full names. The legal documents of ward-making, and the other documents produced over the course of a

⁵ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 2, 3150-51; *ibid.*, 8(1), 3154-55.

⁶ BrCAS, History Books 1894-1904, 1904-1905, 1905-1906. Although CAS workers used the word ‘cases’ in this time period, the full elaboration of the case file into a rigorous documentary technique had yet to occur. That development was based on events surrounding the professionalization of social work, such as Mary Richmond’s influential 1922 publication, *What is Social Case Work?* which defined and defended the profession of social work by its use of the case work and case file method. Mary Richmond, *What is Social Case Work?* (1922, reprint New York: Russell Sage, 1971). See also, Karen Tice, *Tales of Wayward Girls and Immoral Women: Case Records and the Professionalization of Social Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998) 79, 54, 184; cited in Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2001) 25.

ward's foster care career were sometimes preserved in the CAS records by being folded between the pages of the child's history book entry. In later decades, staff at the Brantford CAS removed these documents from the book and microfilmed them into family case files.⁷

Almost all of the direct data on foster care in this study comes from the Brantford CAS, who granted me full access to their earliest history books and case files. The Brantford CAS has complete history books from 1894 to 1906, and I have restricted my analysis to the 127 cases with entries in those books. The history books from late 1906 to early 1913 have been lost. The microfilmed case files cover the entire period under study.

Hopefully, soon after a child became a ward of the CAS, a suitable adult would apply to become the child's foster parent.⁸ Such applications had to be made in writing, and include three character references, one of which had to be from a clergyman. Foster applications are an excellent source of information about applicants, and the decisions that CAS workers made on the basis of applications and references are quite enlightening. I argue below that child savers' main criteria for selection were that the applicant be respectable, have no other children to care for, and seem likely to send the child to school fairly often.

In between the removal of the child from its birth family and the success of a foster applicant, the ward would be housed in a shelter, in a private home, or, in the case of

⁷ BrCAS, case files. According to the current staff of the Brantford CAS, this microfilming occurred sometime before 1987.

⁸ Unfortunately, the individual advertisements that probably solicited many such applications have not been preserved.

Ottawa, in a denominationally appropriate orphanage. There, it would be cared for by a volunteer or employee matron, usually in a very informal arrangement. Children who were difficult to place because their appearance or abilities did not appeal to potential foster applicants could remain in limbo in a shelter or orphanage for months at a time. Any log books or personal papers that might have been produced by matrons or shelter committees were not preserved in CAS archives. In order for wards to become foster children, child savers and foster parents had to write and sign legal contract documents.

After the child was placed in a foster home, they were to be visited at least once a year. These visits were performed by local CAS visitors or, after 1896, provincial Department visitors, usually J.L. Harvie for Protestant and Jewish children, and William O'Connor for Catholic children. Relying on the assumption of benevolent women's special power of visitation, the 1893 CPA had called for local "visiting committees," each of six members, at least three of whom were to be women.⁹ However, these committees never materialized, and in 1896, Kelso hired Mrs. J.L. Harvie to replace them.¹⁰ In 1900, Mr. William O'Connor was appointed to join her. Visitors like Harvie and O'Connor produced "reports of visit" which were sent both to Kelso and to the local Society.

Many children passed through several official foster placements, moved unofficially to other foster homes, or simply ran away. Each change was supposed to be recorded in the history book, but CAS workers were not always notified. Indeed, the entry form in the history book referred to "Foster Home" in the singular, and left very

⁹ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 5(1), 3151.

¹⁰ John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers: The Genesis of the Children's Aid Movement in Ontario," in R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau, ed. *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991) 143.

little room in which to record addresses or names for any foster placements after the first.¹¹ In 1902, Kelso admitted that Ontario CASs had lost track of “about thirty-five of the children.”¹²

Teenaged foster children were often paid for their work in foster homes. Although the terms of such arrangements were often agreed upon between the CAS and the foster parent, any formal contracts signed were never folded into the history book.¹³ They were probably stored elsewhere and not passed on to the CAS archives.

A child officially ceased to be a ward of the society at the age of 21, and child savers usually ceased to treat them as wards within a few years of this time. CASs often closed files when wards became married, which was to child savers a sure mark of the completion of their work. Soon after one ward, Keith Hunter, was married at the age of 22, the visitor remarked, “Keith needs no further looking after; his wife is capable of assuming that responsibility.”¹⁴

Although there are a myriad of other documents preserved in the case files, the genres of writing most commonly available about any given case are the legal documents, the reports of visits, and letters between the parties in question. The majority of documents produced about the majority of children were not preserved. The documents

¹¹ See Appendix B.

¹² J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 29; for an example, see BrCAS, case files, King file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, January 15, 1901.

¹³ J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 29.

¹⁴ BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, Charles Black, report of visit, June 30, 1911.

preserved are those that CAS workers deemed useful for the purposes of legitimating their past actions and informing their future ones. For instance, if a ward wrote a letter to a CAS worker, it was that worker and the other members of the Society who decided whether to fold that letter into the history book, to frame it on a wall, or simply to discard it. More recently, when the items preserved in the history books were scanned into microfilm case files, it was again CAS policy and professionals who decided whether or not to copy any given document.

There are many letters from wards in the Brantford CAS case files, but the majority of these come from a small number of cases, and express happiness and gratitude. Some unflattering letters from other cases may have been eliminated. Such letters were also simply less likely to be written.¹⁵ Deeply distressed or exploited children may not have had the freedom from foster parent surveillance, the faith in the CAS, or (given the long hours that some foster parents kept their charges working and away from school) the literacy skills required to write a letter of complaint. Indeed, many such children probably ran away. It seems that none of the children who ran away from a foster home preceded their flight with letters of complaint to the Children's Aid. At the very least no such letters were preserved.¹⁶ Ironically then, although the category of CAS wards represents children from the situations child savers judged to be the most serious, within those situations, the records likely reflect a rose-tinted picture of children's experiences.

¹⁵ Kelso once made a brief, yet concerned reference to the unlikelihood of receiving any letters of complaint. J.J. Kelso, "First Report of Work Under the Children's Protection Act, 1893," no. 47 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1893*, p. 21.

¹⁶ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, April 17, 1903; BrCAS, case files, Cooper file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, April 17, 1903 [sic]; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Gordon Williams entry.

Any conclusions drawn from a data set which has undergone so much selection must be viewed with scepticism. Although it is possible to “read against the grain,” even the most astute archival analysis of this material could not altogether escape the parameters of CAS recording. These documents exist and survive only because they serve Children’s Aid purposes. As James C. Scott has put it, “even close readings of historical and archival evidence tend to favour the hegemonic account of power relations.”¹⁷ In more than one way, child savers did write the history books.

Some of the conclusions I make about these cases from the Brantford CAS can be cautiously generalized to other locations in Ontario. Elements of the Children’s Aid system were probably standardized to the extent that municipal child savers’ activities could be monitored by the central provincial office. Kelso had no regular means of receiving information about children who were not wards of the CAS. He received a description and a picture of each child when he or she was made a ward, but usually less than a sentence about the decision to remove a child from his or her family in the first place. However, because Kelso’s office had salaried visitors like J.L. Harvie, who reported both to him and to each CAS, foster placements themselves were likely fairly well supervised and standardized across different areas. Conclusions based on the practice of foster care at one CAS are more likely to be applicable in other Ontario CASs than are conclusions drawn from any other CAS practice before 1912.

This thesis attempts to describe child savers’ understanding of their work, rather

¹⁷ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990) xii; see also, Eric Sager, “Employment Contracts in Merchant Shipping: An Argument for Social Science History,” in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 49.

than present a statistical norm of the objective facts of an ‘average’ case. Therefore, while the majority of the Brantford CAS’s first 127 wards were able-bodied, white anglophone Protestants, I took care to use cases of Catholic children, Black children, and children with disabilities, all of whom child savers marked as different and difficult. Even though the majority of wards were taken into CAS care because of poverty, I also sought out cases of various forms of parental immorality. As far as it is possible to tell from child savers’ written accounts, no indigenous children were made wards of the Brantford CAS. There is no evidence that Catholic, Black, disabled, or immigrant children were over-represented among wards.¹⁸ As I discuss in Chapter 3, however, wards consistently came from homes that were poor or working class. Although the majority of case files preserve less than five pages of documents, I chose to focus on those cases for which numerous documents were preserved, so that I could study them in greater detail. It is not clear that the amount of documentation preserved is closely connected to the amount of documentation produced, to the difficulties the case presented, or to the child savers’ opinion of the children.

For all of the above reasons, the cases I chose to study in detail were not a representative sample of foster children, and, as I have demonstrated, foster children were

¹⁸ Of 127 cases, there were 11 Catholic, 4 Black, 0 Jewish, and 0 indigenous. Probably none were first generation immigrant children. The proportion of Catholics is close to that in the general population. John Webster Grant and John S. Moir, “Religious Denominations,” in *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 2, *The Land Transformed*, ed. R. Louis Gentilcore (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993) Plate 52. Although precise numbers are not available for the proportion of Brantford’s population formed by Blacks, Jews and recent immigrants, these groups also do not seem to be over-represented, and may in fact be under-represented. William G. Dean, ed., *Concise Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1998) Plate 18. The lack of immigrant children might be due to the monopoly that the Barnardo movement and similar organizations held over immigrant children. John Bullen, “J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers,” 151. The lack of Black and Jewish children probably relates to the fact that, as Xiaobei Chen has put it, “[e]ssentially, child-saving work at the time reflected anxiety about the size and quality of the predominant Anglo-Celtic population...” Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 15.

not a representative sample of the total number of children with which CASs dealt.

Nonetheless, the stories of these children and their families - both foster and birth - tell a great deal about the broader forces that shaped their lives.

Child Savers' Understanding of Morality and Childhood

Child savers designed and practised their CAS work based on practical considerations that they understood through a few central metaphors. Although these metaphors were not equally held by all child savers, and although there were often also contradictory metaphors in the minds of child savers, these frameworks are nonetheless helpful explanations for CAS design and practice. In what follows, I will present some of the metaphors that child savers used to understand and make decisions about foster care.

One of the most important decisions that CAS workers made for a child was where to place them. Child savers preferred to place wards with foster parents who were respectable, had no other children to care for, and seemed likely to send the child to school often. In what follows, I will explore the ideas and assumptions that lay behind each of these three criteria, and the realities that child savers and children faced when these ideas were put into practice.

In Chapter 3, I argue that child savers believed that all human lives could be evaluated on a single, linear, moral scale on which almost all good and bad attributes were arranged. People toward the top of this scale lived in “comfortable” surroundings, and were happy, industrious, Christian, obedient (to both parents and the law), sexually

continent, sober, clean, “a credit” to the nation and most generally, respectable.¹⁹ People toward the bottom of this scale lived in poverty, and were miserable, shiftless, prone to vice, unruly, drunken, dirty, a danger to the nation, and most generally, worthless.

Obviously, child savers sought to ensure that foster parents were respectable. What is interesting in the design of the foster care system is child savers’ assumptions about how children could be made respectable.

Child savers, like most respectable Christians at the time, believed that shifts up the scale of respectability could be accomplished largely through example and exhortation.²⁰ Although child savers occasionally used exhortation by writing letters of advice and guidance to children, they largely relied on example, and on foster parents to provide that example to children. Child savers’ idea of the importance of example in child raising, which Kelso once referred to as the “value of personal influence,” was really very straightforward: children in contact with worthless persons and physical surroundings were likely to become more worthless; and children in contact with respectable persons and surroundings were likely to become more respectable.²¹ In short, good people would be good parents. The most important quality for a foster parent to possess in order to transform an unfortunate child into a respectable citizen was simply respectability itself.

In order for children to receive the full benefits of a respectable home, they

¹⁹ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 7, 1899, “A Year’s Progress.”

²⁰ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 22.

²¹ J. Kelso, “Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, p. 6. Referring to the ideas of the settlement movement, Paul Boyer has described this transmission of morality as happening “almost by osmosis...” Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820 – 1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978) 153.

needed to receive an emotional investment of love and patience from the foster parents in that home.²² Child savers preferred to place wards in homes that did not have other children, even those that had never had children, because CAS workers saw familial love as a limited resource that parents gave to children.²³ Child savers saw siblings as potential competitors for the affections of adults, not as potential sources of affection for lonely foster children. Neither did child savers much consider the affections of the ward themselves towards their foster parents. In 1909, a visitor wrote “There are no other children in this home. Parents love the child, who is as happy as need be.”²⁴ Child savers were primarily concerned with the attitudes of the foster parents towards the ward, and they preferred that the ward had no competition for the foster parents’ attention and resources.

Child savers’ fear that the biological offspring of a foster parent would be privileged over foster children was quite realistic. Even Elizabeth Hunter, a foster child who wrote to S.M. Thomson in 1904 that “I am the only child they have so you see I am treated just like their own child,” discovered upon her foster father’s death in 1909 that he had “left some money to his nephews and nieces and did not leave any to her.”²⁵

Child savers’ realistic concern about sibling competition for parental love was, however, untempered by any concern that those who had never raised a child of their own

²² J.J. Kelso, “Third Report of Work Done Under the Children’s Protection Act,” no. 17 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1895, p. 25.

²³ Records do not allow a statistical analysis of the frequency with which children were placed with childless families.

²⁴ BrCAS, case files, Doran file, J.A. Ross, report of visit, August 3, 1909; see also, BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, W.R. Baxter, report of visit, July 7, 1913.

²⁵ BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, from Elizabeth Hunter to S.M. Thomson, June 4, 1904; BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, unauthored memorandum, March 29, 1909.

might not know how to handle a troubled infant or youth. In the period under study, CAS workers in general believed that child rearing, and even child saving, did not require any experience or training.²⁶ Child savers did make recommendations to one another and to governments based on their years of experience. However, when explaining the success of a particular technique, they generally referred to morality and general laws of child development, not learned skills. In 1908, when Brantford's CAS child savers complemented the new matron of their shelter, Mrs. Botwright, on her skills, they praised her for her "knack" with children.²⁷ These compliments gave no sense that Mrs. Botwright's powers with children were accumulated or refined with experience. They were simply an unlearned, inherent quality.²⁸

Not only did child savers not generally consider child raising a skill, they also did not consider it a relationship. Their mindset was deeply liberal, and they imagined children as atoms of more or less worth that might be placed in foster homes which were also atoms of more or less worth. Rarely, and only at official provincial levels did child savers present the idea that the proper development of a child depended on features of a foster arrangement that were built between ward and foster parent.²⁹ At the local level, child savers focused totally on features of the home that existed prior to the interaction between home and child. Child savers rarely spoke of the value of foster relationships to children, and never mentioned the value of pre-warded relationships. When they removed

²⁶ BeCAS, correspondence, author illegible, to Children's Aid Society, October 20, 1909.

²⁷ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 4, 1908, "Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid."

²⁸ Of course, the belief that child raising required no experience or training helped CASs to denigrate women's work for the shelters.

²⁹ J.J. Kelso, "Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 6.

a child from its family, they believed that it was best if the child simply forgot all about their previous life.³⁰

They also failed, or refused, to recognize that different children had different needs. Not once in all the case files of the Brantford CAS did a child saver mention that a particular child would benefit from a certain kind of work or placement. When Liz wrote to Catherine McDougal about the farm foster home nearby, she both described the work, “Perhaps the work is hard sometimes but not always, and [you] don’t have to milk any cows...” and acknowledged that her friend might not like it, “...if you don’t like country it wouldn’t have suited...”³¹ No child saver at the Brantford CAS ever made such statements in a case file.

Sometimes, at the provincial level, child savers did recognize that children were not all alike. However, their practical understanding for making decisions depended on reducing this information to a single, linear, moral scale. In a 1906 report to the provincial government, J.L. Harvie, the provincial visitor for non-Catholic children, described the qualities of several different wards, who were “lying and stealing,” or “stupid” but “kind and affectionate,” or “naturally troublesome.” She then explained that “With this almost infinite variety of children to be placed in ‘homes’, the effort is to locate each one in the environment most suited to its peculiar characteristics. Consequently there are many kinds of homes, which may be classified as follows: Good,

³⁰ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 18; BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, J.L. Axford, report of visit, October 27, 1910.

³¹ BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, from “Liz” to Catherine McDougal, April, 1913, n.d.

better, best, or good, bad, and indifferent...”³²

Although CASs usually received many more applications than they had wards, the majority of applications were “not ... suitable in some respects.” The most common problem was that the applicants saw the wards as inexpensive child labour.³³ Thus, although in 1896 the Brantford CAS received 61 applications for only 22 wards, they still had 3 children on hand at the end of the year.³⁴ In order to find homes for wards, CASs often had to accept applications which were less than ideal. Child savers operated the foster system, but not under circumstances chosen by themselves.

CAS workers were determined that wards should regularly attend day school, church, and Sunday school.³⁵ They saw formal education as part of the development of a future, “intelligent” citizenry, and they tried to reject foster parent applications which were obviously from parents seeking a cheap or free labourer, because too much work could take away from school attendance.³⁶ Yet Brantford’s child savers were frustrated, and many children badly deprived, because the child-saving expectation that many adults would open up their homes for purely Christian and patriotic motives was simply not

³² J.L. Harvie, “Visiting in Foster Homes” in J.J. Kelso, “Fourteenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1906, p. 25.

³³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson’s prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held on February, 1896, p. 2; see also, J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1902, p. 29.

³⁴ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson’s prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held on February 1, 1897, p. 3.

³⁵ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1902, p. 33.

³⁶ BrL, *Brantford Expositor*, February 7, 1899, “A Year’s Progress.”

fulfilled.³⁷ Indeed, many applicants seemed to consider the foster agreement to be simply a business deal. One farmer wrote to S.M. Thomson in a bartering tone, “I had given up taking a boy, but as I received your letter I thought if we could agree on the terms I would take him on trial...” His application was accepted.³⁸

The fact that CASs generally took children from working-class and poor homes, and placed them in middle- or upper-class homes, where they often “ended up as underpaid domestic servants,” has led Bullen to conclude that “foster children provided personal service for the affluent.”³⁹ Indeed the labour market seems to have been the main determinant of success in finding placements for wards. The fact that CASs usually received far more applications for girls - sometimes twice as many as for boys - is partly attributable to the larger demand for domestic rather than farm labour.⁴⁰

CAS workers certainly resented their wards being put to use so crassly, and they much preferred that children be taken in for sentimental reasons.⁴¹ Child savers were delighted when they received applications like this one from Mrs. Maguire: “I would like

³⁷ Bullen has suggested that CASs in Ontario generally failed to ensure that these children actually attended school. Bullen, “J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers,” 150. The Brantford CAS’ reports of visits to foster homes before 1912 are so infrequent, so brief, and their authors are so likely to have been deceived by foster parents and children that it is impossible to tell with any reliability how many of its wards actually attended school enough to meet the legal requirements. Certainly, CASs saw school attendance as central problem; the Ottawa CAS’s main agent before 1907 was a truant officer. LAC, Ottawa Children’s Aid Society fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, October 10, 1901.

³⁸ BrCAS case files, Williams file, Robert L. Hamilton to S.M. Thomson, March 25, 1901.

³⁹ John Bullen, “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario,” *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (Fall 1986): 187.

⁴⁰ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson’s prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held on February, 1896, p. 2.; Bullen, “Hidden Workers,” 152; see also, Wendy Mitchinson, “Early Women’s Organizations and Social Reform: Prelude to the Welfare State,” in *The ‘Benevolent’ State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada*, ed. Allan Moscovitch and Tim Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987) 87.

⁴¹ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 34.

one with a loving disposition so I could have her as my own.”⁴² Unfortunately, sentimental foster applicants were no more willing or able than others to deal with the often powerful emotions and desires of the children themselves. Mrs. Maguire soon discovered that her foster child, Annabel Simmons, “has a habit of weeping silently in a most pathetic way without any apparent cause.”⁴³ Although Mrs. and Mr. Maguire tried for months to “overcome” Annabel’s trouble, they eventually returned her to the Society. In a final letter, Mrs. Maguire explained that “crying is something my husband will not stand.”⁴⁴

Child savers struggled to ensure that most wards found homes in which they went to school frequently, had fair work conditions, and received some measure of attention and affection from their foster parents. However, some children did not meet the expectations of foster parents for inexpensive labour and sentimental affection, nor those of CAS workers for potential Canadian citizens of the future. Such children often found themselves in badly exploitive conditions, because the market of foster parents rarely provided good homes for them, because child savers were therefore reluctant to remove them from situations of abuse in the homes they did find, and because both child savers and respectable society at large denigrated them as less than normal. Below, I consider the stories of two families of such children. Children in one of these families were labelled “defective,” and in the other, “colored.” Although their marginalizations from white, able-bodied, Ontarian society were quite distinct, they suffered similar fates in the

⁴² BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, from Mrs. Maguire to Children’s Aid Society, November 7, n.y.

⁴³ BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, December 26, 1904. Annabel had developed this “habit” while at a previous foster placement.

⁴⁴ BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, from Mrs. Maguire to S.M. Thomson, March 12, 1905.

foster care system.

The Carter Children

CAS workers both confronted and participated in a general devaluing of children with disabilities. The reality that such children were hard to market to foster parents often combined cruelly with child savers' own attitudes that such children were secondary to the CAS project of regenerating the nation.⁴⁵ After all, Children's Aid was intended to perfect children into respectable citizens who would fulfil the destiny of Canada. If the child savers believed that a child had an incurable flaw, then they could not imagine the child in their future Canada, which they implicitly assumed would be populated by unmarked, able citizens.

In 1899, Gertrude Carter placed three of her children, Charles, Susan, and Norman, in the care of the CAS. Their father had deserted them, and their mother could no longer feed and care for her children.⁴⁶ Susan and her younger brother Norman were disabled, and therefore the Carter children were difficult to place. As Thomson had special trouble placing Susan, Kelso helped him to find a home for her under the auspices of the Department.⁴⁷ Eventually, each child was fostered to a different family in Southern Ontario.

In her 1907 report of a visit to the home in which Norman Carter had been placed,

⁴⁵ In 1913, Belleville's Colonel Wrightmyer reported that, in his first four years as CAS agent, he had been unable to find "kind Christian people" willing to foster even one "defective" child. BvCAS, Annual Report 1913, p. 15; see also J.J. Kelso, "Third Report of Work Done Under the Children's Protection Act," no. 17 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1895*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, Order for Delivery, undated.

⁴⁷ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson Day Journal 1900, May 23.

J.L. Harvie noted that there had been some trouble. Her assessment of the problem, and advice to Norman, reveals clearly the awful situation in which difficult-to-place CAS wards, especially disabled children like Norman, were likely to be trapped.

...some neighbours...had represented that the boy was overworked, etc. Visitor spent an hour or two in this home and as far as she can judge these reports are unfounded... Visitor urged lad not to talk much to other boys and told him that if he had any complaint to make about his home to take it to Dr. Felding, who is the family physician. In dealing with this case it is well to recollect that the boy has a physical infirmity which makes it very unpleasant to wash for him.⁴⁸

J.L. Harvie's reminder of Norman's physical disability was not relevant in any way to the truth of Norman's complaint, but merely to the action the CAS ought to take concerning it.

The provincial rationale for permitting such maltreatment of disabled children was expressed even more clearly in a 1912 argument around wages for the work that Susan Carter had done at a foster placement. Several years earlier, another provincial visitor, Mr. Richardson, had recommended that Susan be removed from this home on the grounds of her disability, which he expressed as both a moral and an economic deficit: "Is mentally weak, untruthful, uncleanly in habits...She would take 1 ½ hours to wash dishes used at one meal and then only very poorly done...Recommend removal."⁴⁹ Richardson expressed Susan's disability from the point of view of whether or not she was capable of working to the foster parents' satisfaction, and on those grounds argued for her removal. He did not discuss what might have been relevant from Susan's point of view: whether or

⁴⁸ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, May 29, 1907.

⁴⁹ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, Mr. Richardson, report of visit, July 22, 1907.

not the foster parents' were capable of parenting to her satisfaction.

It seems that Susan finally left this home in 1911 in the midst of a dispute about whether or not she received enough money for her work there. Technically, Susan's placement was outside of the Brantford CAS's jurisdiction, because she had been placed there through Kelso and the CAS of Toronto. Nonetheless, J.L. Axford, the secretary of the Brantford CAS from 1910 until 1932, chose to pursue the matter of this foster placement, to see if fair payment could be got for Susan's labour.⁵⁰ Kelso had this to say in reply to Mr. Axford's intervention:

I am satisfied if you knew the whole history of this case you would not feel that the girl ought to have received much wages. The people wanted to give her up a dozen times...Had they returned her she would have no doubt...been placed in a public institution at large expense to the Province.⁵¹

Kelso argued that, because of Susan's disability, it would "no doubt" have been impossible to find her another foster home. The other option for such children, institutionalization, was unsavoury to him on financial grounds. Kelso countered Axford's concerns with a callously realistic reminder of the ableism of the pool of potential foster parents, and of the resultant financial burdens that could be placed on the state.

Over the period under study, child savers throughout Canada increasingly set disabled children outside of the purview of the CAS. Harvie's placing of the 'problem' of Norman in the hands of the foster family physician reflects a broader, explicit CAS

⁵⁰ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, J.J. Kelso to J.L. Axford, January 2, 1912.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

project of redefining children with disabilities as part of the domain of medical expertise belonging to psychiatrists and physicians. Orphanages, which had lost much of their autonomy to CASs, became the often final repositories for these children.⁵² Children's Aid Societies increasingly sought to concentrate their resources on those children for whom it was easy to find homes, and easy to imagine places as perfect citizens of the new Canada.

The Hayward Children

The interactions between CAS workers, children, and foster parents became more complex when the child in question could be labelled as a part of a marginal racial community. CAS workers and foster parents shared a fascination with the skin colour of children they categorized as non-white. J.L. Harvie noted of the "colored" child John Hayward, "He is not at all dark, having rather a yellow complexion, might probably be called a mulatto."⁵³ On almost every document in which a child saver wrote about a Black child or adult, they placed the word "colored" in brackets after the first instance of that person's name, treating his or her "race" as a characteristic of great relevance.⁵⁴

In general, child savers and foster parents believed that racial traits were causal in personality and behaviour. J.L. Harvie noted in a 1902 report of visit to the foster home of Annabel Simmons, "She is an interesting baby, brunette complexion..." and in 1904,

⁵² Patricia T. Rooke, and R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada (1800-1950)* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983) 276.

⁵³ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, October 10, 1907.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, John Hayward entry; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Susan Hayward entry; BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb, report of visit, May 15, 1912.

“They [the Foster Parents] wish very much to know the little one’s nationality, as callers had been stating that they thought she had Italian blood or probably Indian ancestry.”⁵⁵ The next year, the foster father wrote to the CAS inquiring about the girl’s parents, explaining “...her crying...I fancy it is her natural temperament. We would so much like to know her nationality. Unless she improves in this respect, I am afraid I shall have to return her.”⁵⁶ Annabel’s caregivers marked her as racially other and enigmatic. Doing so made it possible for them to attribute her emotional distress, which had developed after she entered foster care, to her racial background. They returned her to the CAS early the next year.⁵⁷

Of the first 127 children made wards of the Brantford CAS, there were four Black children. In the first 186 cases of the Owen Sound CAS, there were three Black children.⁵⁸ Of these seven children, five entered foster care, four of them with Black foster parents.⁵⁹ To my knowledge, no non-Black children were placed with Black foster parents at either of these CASs.

Although there was no explicit national child-saving discussion on the treatment of Black children, as there was of children with disabilities, there was a persistent racist discourse. I mentioned respectable Canadians’ association of Africa with savagery and vice in Chapter 3. This could be expressed in direct assumptions, such as Kelso’s

⁵⁵ BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, February 27, 1902; BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, December 26, 1904.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, from Mr. Maguire to S.M. Thomson, February 15, 1905.

⁵⁷ BrCAS, case files, Simmons file, from Mrs. Maguire to S.M. Thomson, March 12, 1905.

⁵⁸ Owen Sound, Record Book, 1895-1908: Cases #1-186, Baker entry.

⁵⁹ Three in the Owen Sound case, and one, John Hayward, in the Brantford case. Owen Sound, Record Book, 1895-1908: Cases #1-186, Baker entry; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, John Hayward entry.

statement in a government report that a “colored” child possessed “the usual characteristics of her race.”⁶⁰ Anti-African racism also emerged much more insidiously, as it does now, in a number of metaphors shared by most members of white Canadian society that associated ‘white’ and ‘fair’ with moral purity, and ‘black’ and ‘dark’ with the opposite. Thus, when “Liz” wished to assure Catherine McDougal that one set of foster parents treated children properly, she wrote “...they use them white...”⁶¹ Similarly, the muscular Christian author Ralph Connor named his vicious and vain Quebecois-caricature lumberjack villain “LeNoir.”⁶² Indeed, the very term “colored” implied that white was the default position. Anglo-Saxons did not refer to themselves as “bleached”; their bodies did not need to be explained. “Colored” children, on the other hand, lived in a pervasive climate of racism that mystified and denigrated their personhood. Such linguistic habits are not random or neutral, but are part and parcel of the racial inequalities and insecurities created by Black slavery in Canada and the British Empire.

In 1903, three “colored” children, John, Elsie and Alexander Hayward, were made wards of the Brantford CAS, because of the “dissolute” habits of their parents.⁶³ The CAS had much trouble finding a placement for the infant Alexander, and in 1904 when he was illegally taken by one Mrs. Paris to Hamilton, the charges against her were dropped.⁶⁴ Also in that year, another Hayward child was made a ward, but was soon

⁶⁰ J.J. Kelso, “Fourteenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*, 1906, p. 8.

⁶¹ BrCAS, case file, McDougal file, from “Liz” to Catherine McDougal, April, 1913, n.d.

⁶² Ralph Connor, *The Man from Glengarry: A Tale of the Ottawa* (1901, reprint Toronto: The Westminster Company, 1951) 35.

⁶³ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, John Hayward entry; *ibid.*, Susan Hayward entry.

⁶⁴ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, S.M. Thomson, scrap paper, “Children’s Aid having no...” undated.

returned to his mother because he was too young to be safely separated from her.⁶⁵

John Hayward passed through a few unsuccessful and under-documented foster placements with white families before he was placed with “Mr. Castor (colored)” in 1906. J.L. Harvie, in the report of her first visit to this home, noted with displeasure that “...though [John] has been in the home a year he has never been at school a single day,” and she “took the ground that unless the boy was sent to school he would certainly be removed.”⁶⁶ Although Harvie was obviously concerned, Thomson remarked upon reading her report that the conditions at the house were “very fair.”⁶⁷

John’s educational conditions improved slightly, but CAS visitors were still dissatisfied, remarking in 1908, “It would be all right if they would keep the boy at school more regularly,” and in 1909, “They do not send him to school much. He is a good lad and they keep him at work pretty steadily.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the CAS did not remove John from his placement with Mr. Castor. CAS workers recognized the difficulty of placing a “colored” boy. They were also obviously pleased by the fact that John “is growing to be a big, stout lad” and that he “goes to his own church with Mr. Castor.”⁶⁹

Given the intense racism of his time, it is entirely possible that John Hayward had a better life on the Castors’ farm than he would have had in a white family, a white

⁶⁵ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, S.M. Thomson, scrap paper, “99” undated; BrCAS, History Book 1904-1905, William Hayward entry. It is not clear why the CAS decided to remove Alexander, but not William.

⁶⁶ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, October 10, 1907.

⁶⁷ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, S.M. Thomson, scrap paper, “81” undated;

⁶⁸ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb report of visit, June 3, 1908; *ibid.*, James Webb, report of visit, September 7, 1909.

⁶⁹ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb, report of visit, September 7, 1909; *ibid.*, James Webb, report of visit, June 13, 1911.

church, or a white school. Indeed, CAS visitors believed that John was “happy in his surroundings and likes to stay there.”⁷⁰ However, at the end of John’s time in the placement, Mr. Castor paid out less than half of the wages he had agreed to.⁷¹ Citing a lack of legal documentation, J.L. Axford did not attempt to intervene.

Elsie Hayward’s placements also involved much more work than did those of most white children. Her first foster parents were Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright. The CAS accepted the Cartwrights’ application for “a (colored) girl” even though one of their references wrote that “...Mrs. Cartwright is a very fine Christian lady, but has been sickly for years and not able to do much household work...their object in adopting this child would be to have someone to do the work of the home at the least possible cost.”⁷² After a few months, the Cartwrights returned Elsie, and the CAS sent her to live with another family, the Nicholsons.⁷³ From 1904 to 1910, she stayed with the Nicholsons at their house in Toronto, in the context of which she was described by S.M. Thomson as “a fine looking clever girl, a good servant.”⁷⁴ At the end of 1910, at the age of 17, she ran away back to Brantford to be with her non-ward (some might say “free”) siblings, but was soon re-entered into foster care.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb, report of visit, June 3, 1908.

⁷¹ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb to J.J. Kelso, January 20, 1916.

⁷² BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, Michael and Victoria Cartwright, application for a child, April 1903, n.d., mf 55; BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, from David Beal to William Watt Jr., April 25, 1903.

⁷³ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, February 3, 1904.

⁷⁴ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Elsie Hayward entry.

⁷⁵ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, from J.J. Kelso to S.M. Thomson, December 15, 1909; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Elsie Hayward entry.

A “natural longing to see her own people”: Struggles Over Contact Between Wards and their Birth Siblings

Child savers generally preferred to place children far away from their siblings, without contact by letter, indeed if possible, “with no recalling of former life.”⁷⁶ CAS workers were concerned that contact would disrupt foster placements by reminding wards of their unrespectable origins, thus inciting them to discontentment and disobedience. Child savers occasionally even stopped making their own visits to foster homes in order to bolster the fiction that the child was a natural part of the family.⁷⁷

Although CAS child savers were sometimes sympathetic to children’s “natural longing” to see their families, and even occasionally facilitated reconnections and reunions, they always expressed these events as concessions to children’s desires, not as positive opportunities with salutary moral potential.⁷⁸ CAS workers did not believe that birth siblings had anything positive to offer one another. They were, after all, parts of the environment that the ‘child savers’ had ‘saved’ the ward from. CAS workers increasingly saw all connections with a child’s past life as impediments to moral progress, and they worked to minimize them.⁷⁹

Two of the Brantford CAS’s very first wards were the Hunter twins, Elizabeth and

⁷⁶ J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 18.

⁷⁷ BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, J.L. Axford, report of visit, October 27, 1910.

⁷⁸ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, J.J. Kelso to S.M. Thomson, December 15, 1909; BrCAS, History Book 1905-1906, Anne Beaumgardner entry.

⁷⁹ Compare J.J. Kelso, “Third Report of Work Done Under the Children’s Protection Act,” no. 17 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1895*, p. 11; with J.J. Kelso, “Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario,” no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902*, p. 18.

Keith. The CAS placed them together with a single family in 1894. In late 1897, the forest parents returned them.⁸⁰ There are no visitation reports from this foster home, but when the children were next placed, they were sent to separate families. On a visit to Elizabeth's new home in early 1898, Harvie remarked with satisfaction "The child is doing better now since separated from her brother."⁸¹

Foster parents, too, were concerned about the possible negative effects of contact between wards and their birth siblings. One foster father wrote to S.M. Thomson, "Sir there is one request I wish to make of you. I see that George is anxious to hear where his people are. I heard him say that he would ask you about them. I am afraid if he got to writing to them he would probably become dissatisfied...he has been a good trusty boy and I would be sorry to have him get dissatisfied."⁸² Another foster parent, the Reverend Bromley, took initiative on his own. As he later explained "[Lewis'] brother got my address and wrote to me...I answered his letter and told him that I would not let Lewis hear from any of his people."⁸³ Child savers and foster parents agreed that they had an interest in the devotion and obedience of wards to their placements, and therefore, in the isolation of wards from their previous networks of support.

Indeed, adults had good reason to fear that contact with relatives and friends from a ward's old life would disrupt their new life. In December of 1910, J.J. Kelso "allowed" John Hayward to visit his sister, Elsie, under the supervision of the Department of

⁸⁰ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Elizabeth Hunter entry; *ibid.*, Keith Hunter entry.

⁸¹ BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, February 4, 1898.

⁸² BrCAS, case files, King file, from Elijah Johnson to S.M. Thomson, June 14, n.y.

⁸³ BrCAS, case files, Baker file, from the Rev. Bromley to S.M. Thomson, report of visit, March 29, 1909.

Dependent and Neglected Children.⁸⁴ Both of the children were CAS wards. Elsie did not attempt to run away with John, but after he left, Elsie stole money from J.J. Kelso's wife, and fled to Brantford to be with some of her other siblings. Kelso explained to S.M. Thomson that "Elsie has been perfectly good in every way and she has just been carried away by a sudden temptation or natural longing to see her own people."⁸⁵

CAS workers and foster parents decided how well a child was doing based on the criteria of obedience and demeanour of contentment in their current placement. However, such phenomena might have been symptoms of a child's sense of powerlessness rather than evidence of true satisfaction. A child isolated from their entire emotional support network might indeed cease to challenge openly their new foster parents and the conditions of life and work with them.

While child savers and foster parents saw wards' birth families largely as potential obstacles to obedience and integration, many foster children obviously believed and felt that contact with their original families was central to their emotional well-being. Wards often struggled to maintain and restore contacts with family in defiance of the powers of CASs and foster parents that were usually arrayed against them. Elsie Hayward's desire to be with her family, although likely renewed by seeing her brother, was probably not "sudden" at all. Although most of the cases below involve conflict or co-operation with the Children's Aid, it is likely that many other children attempted or made contact with their birth siblings without their being recorded. Only when children's attempts to see their families came to the attention of Children's Aid workers could they be discussed in

⁸⁴ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, from J.J. Kelso to S.M. Thomson, December 15, 1909.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

documents preserved in CAS archives.

Elizabeth Hunter strove to establish contact by letters with her twin brother Keith, but it seems that his foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Turner, blocked such attempts.

Elizabeth's foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Silcox, did not seem worried about the contact between the two siblings, but were cognizant of the concerns that Keith's foster parents might have. As Harvie reported in a visit to the Silcox household in 1904, "Elizabeth expressed a very great desire that her brother should write to her, and Mrs. Silcox said that the foster-parents of the boy need not be afraid to allow him to do so as they would have no inclination or desire to make him discontented in his home."⁸⁶

Later, Mr. Silcox organized for Elizabeth to visit Keith in Brantford. In preparation for this trip, Elizabeth wrote to S.M. Thomson. Once again, Elizabeth's desires were expressed in tandem with her foster parents' understanding of the position of Keith's foster parents. "He never writes to me although I write to him, I have not seen him for 5 years so you see I am getting very anxious to see him...Mother [Mrs. Silcox] told me to tell you that maybe Mr. and Mrs. Turner thinks that I may coax my brother away from his home [and that is] the reason he does not write...but ma nor pa would not do such a thing, our farm is worked on shares and they have no occasion to hire a boy..."⁸⁷ The child savers were swayed by compassion for Elizabeth's wishes, and permitted the reunion. With the help of at least one of their sets of foster parents, the Hunter children were able to re-establish their relationship with one another. This relationship carried on into their adulthood (and was probably a source of support when

⁸⁶ BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, J.L. Harvie, report of visit, March 10, 1904.

⁸⁷ BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, from Elizabeth Hunter to S.M. Thomson, June 4, 1904.

Elizabeth later discovered that her foster father's will left nothing to her).⁸⁸

In fact, in order to reunite with their siblings, wards could occasionally alter the behaviour of child savers themselves. Above, I mentioned J.L. Axford's 1912 decision to go out of his way to recover some wages for Susan Carter. This choice requires some contextualization. In the summer of 1911, at the age of 23, Charles Carter, the eldest of the Carter children, and the only one not viewed by the CAS as "defective," had one of his respectable older friends near his foster placement write to the Brantford CAS. This friend requested that Charles be put in touch by letter with his siblings, Susan and Norman.⁸⁹ Not receiving a reply from the CAS, Charles followed up this request with a letter of his own in September, and another in October.⁹⁰

Charles' second and final letter of request was polite, but strongly worded, and in it he threatened social sanctions.

Now I cannot understand your delay at all. It is only a reasonable request that I should know if they are living and...where they are. I believe it is the duty of home to give such information when asked...I am all alone in the world and I shall certainly hunt for them...I have a friend here who is a member of the Children's Aid Society and if you do not answer, they will undertake it for me.⁹¹

Up until this point, Charles' letters had been collecting, unanswered, in the office of the Brantford CAS president, Frank Cockshutt. However, upon receiving this last, Cockshutt forwarded the letters to the new CAS secretary and agent, J.L. Axford. The

⁸⁸ BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Elizabeth and Keith Hunter entries; BrCAS, case files, Hunter file, unauthored memorandum, March 29, 1909.

⁸⁹ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, from Charles Carter to T.H. Preston, September 4, 1911.

⁹⁰ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, from Charles Carter to T.H. Preston, October 8, 1911.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

secretary replied to Charles, and took steps to give him a chance to reunite with his mother in Brantford for Thanksgiving.⁹² From this point on, Axford took a special interest in the Carter family, including his aforementioned advocacy for Susan receiving her wages.

Given the frequency with which the members of the Carter family were forced to move as a result of destitution and the vagaries of foster care, it was quite difficult for them to keep in touch on their own. Although Susan and Norman lived together with their mother in 1913, by 1916 they were again separated.⁹³ In contrast to usual practice, Axford helped the Carter children and their mother get letters to one another until the early 1930s. He kept especially close contact with Susan, having her over for tea, and helping her find work placements again and again well after she had become old enough to officially cease to be a CAS ward.⁹⁴ A moral sceptic might reasonably object that Axford's help could have been a ruse by which he could maintain surveillance of the Carter children. It is true that the CAS agent's involvement certainly gave him control over the potentially seditious flow of information between siblings. It is also true that Mrs. Carter and her children would almost certainly have lost contact with each other several times if Axford had not maintained his surveillance of them and their whereabouts.

The Carter children had transformed their relationship with the Brantford CAS,

⁹² BrCAS, case files, Carter file, from J.L. Axford to Charles Carter, October 16, 1911.

⁹³ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, W.R. Baxter, report of visit, May 31, 1913; BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Norman Carter entry.

⁹⁴ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, Susan Carter to J.L. Axford, November 14, 1922; BrCAS, case files, Carter file, Charles Carter to J.L. Axford, January 13, 1933.

much to their advantage. The catalyst for this transformation, which broke through the fortifications of CAS respectability and its reluctance to allow wards to communicate with their siblings, was Charles' connections with respectable, indeed child-saving adults. Nonetheless, Axford's response and relationship with the family cannot be explained away entirely as a concession to protests, nor as a strategic power ploy. The letter that he wrote in 1922 to inform Susan that her youngest brother, William, had died by drowning, quivers wildly from efficient prose to guilt-ridden repetition.⁹⁵ The child savers in this study cared about children, and Axford's work with the Carter family is only the most obvious of many examples.

In some cases, children were blocked by CAS workers and foster parents, and were simply unable to establish contact with their birth families. In others, family contacts were made, but remained tenuous. In a few cases, there is reason to hope that there was a more full reunion. On January 13, 1933, Charles Carter wrote a letter to J.L. Axford, asking him once again for contact with Susan. Charles wrote "I would like to know where my sister Susan Carter is...I have a chance of taking a farm here next spring and thought it would be a good chance for Susan and I...waiting to hear from you soon."⁹⁶ Axford forwarded this letter on to Susan. He retired from the CAS later that year, and Charles' letter is the last document preserved in the family file.⁹⁷

One case where it seems that a family may have accomplished a reunion without the knowledge or approval of the CAS is the Hayward family. As this reunion, if it indeed

⁹⁵ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, J.L. Axford to Susan Carter, April 21, 1922.

⁹⁶ BrCAS, case files, Carter file, Charles Carter to J.L. Axford, January 13, 1933.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* As was common practice, Axford scrawled in the margins of this letter from Charles that he had forwarded it to Susan.

occurred, did not come to the attention of the Society, our evidence for its occurrence is thin and circumstantial. I mentioned above that in 1904 an otherwise undescribed “Mrs. Paris” illegally took the youngest Hayward child to Hamilton.⁹⁸ That same year, a fourth Hayward child was made a ward, but then returned to her mother, who was then living in Hamilton.⁹⁹ After Elsie Hayward ran away to Brantford, she took a job in a hotel in Hamilton in 1912.¹⁰⁰ If indeed it is more than a coincidence that so many members of this family found their way to the same city, it was without the help of foster parents or child savers.

The many struggles over whether or not foster children would have contact with their birth siblings were not organized across clear boundaries. Respectables were not always on one side and the regulated always on the other. In some situations, foster parents and child savers could facilitate reunions. Children also sometimes tried to prevent or undo them. Kelso learned that Elsie Hayward had run away back to Brantford because her brother John (the only Hayward child who did not eventually find his way to Hamilton) told him so, apparently hoping that Kelso would take steps to extract Elsie from their other siblings. “The boy said that they were living a very wretched life...on the streets all the time, and was gone entirely to the bad.”¹⁰¹

Similarly, Gordon Williams enlisted CAS help to prevent a reunion between his mother and his siblings. Gordon and his two brothers had been made wards of the CAS

⁹⁸ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, S.M. Thomson, undated scrap paper, “The Children’s Aid having no...”

⁹⁹ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, S.M. Thomson, undated scrap paper, “99.”

¹⁰⁰ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, James Webb, report of visit, June 12, 1912.

¹⁰¹ BrCAS, case files, Hayward file, J.J. Kelso to S.M. Thomson, December 15, 1909.

when their mother abandoned them in 1904.¹⁰² In 1908, S.M. Thomson visited the foster placement of Gordon, who was then 18 years old and transitioning to economic independence. Gordon told S.M. Thomson that his birth mother had recently been encouraging her children to move back in with her. Gordon was concerned that his mother's appeals might "unsettle" his brothers. Thomson reported of the boy that "He advises writing them not to be won over by her, but to remain in their adopted homes. This warning note had better be acted on."¹⁰³

Conclusions: The Limits of Foster Care

All three of the major groups of actors in the foster care system - child savers, foster parents, and wards themselves - had an impact on the way in which foster placements and conditions in them were negotiated. Certainly, child savers defined the official parameters within which the system would work, and technically wielded considerable power over foster parents and foster children. They had designed the foster system according to their own understandings of children, families, and child saving. Ironically, their system provided a great deal of latitude for foster parents to extract economic value from foster children, quite against the wishes of the child savers. CAS workers were, frankly, suppliers in an often heartless economy of foster placements, trying to get the best conditions for their wards, but often unable to realize their ideals. Wards, for their own part, often sought to make contact with their birth families, sometimes gaining the help of foster parents or child savers to do so. The regulatory eye

¹⁰² BrCAS, History Book 1904-1905, Gordon and Harry Williams entries.

¹⁰³ BrCAS, case files, Williams file, S.M. Thomson, report of visit, July 1908, n.d.

of the Children's Aid actually had very poor vision with which to see that the agreements on paper were actually carried out.

Although the foster care system placed limits on the ease with which child savers could exert control over child care, it also placed limits on the extent to which wards could develop and exert autonomy. Tamara Myers and Joan Sangster have demonstrated that alliances and co-operation among girls inside reform and industrial schools was an important part of the way such children survived and resisted authority.¹⁰⁴ James C. Scott has pointed out that in societies marked by clear divisions of power, subordinates imagine and rehearse alternate visions of society when they are together "offstage" from the "public transcript" of their interactions with dominants.¹⁰⁵ Offstage conversations and practices constitute a "hidden transcript" of the secret dreams of the subordinate.¹⁰⁶ However, wards of the CAS rarely had opportunities to form such alliances or to have such conversations.

According to Scott, in order to develop their critique of power, subordinates need "an extensive offstage social existence" "where they could exchange and elaborate their criticism..."¹⁰⁷ Children in foster care had to struggle for almost every opportunity to interact with other wards. In a reform school or orphanage, children were in daily contact with others in the same situation, and shared meals, sleeping quarters, and living conditions. In foster care, children were intentionally separated from peers and prior

¹⁰⁴ Tamara Myers and Joan Sangster, "Retorts, Runaways and Riots: Patterns of Resistance in Canadian Reform Schools for Girls, 1930-60," *Journal of Social History* 34, iss. 3 (Spring 2001): 7.

¹⁰⁵ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990) xii.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 21, 8.

contacts, and commonly placed on widely dispersed rural farms.

Foster care was in some senses, a panoptic institution. Certainly, no singular figure at the centre of the CAS system could easily survey of the lives of the inmates. However, each inmate was quite effectively isolated from every other. There was no sanctioned opportunity for foster children, nor even foster parents, to gather as a group, and discover the commonality of their interests and the validity of their experiences. For wards, the walls of each panoptic cell were reinforced by shame and the moralization of poverty and deviance. Wards could lose considerable standing in their communities, and therefore marriage prospects and employability, if they revealed their unrespectable origins.¹⁰⁸ Wards were, and still are, thus discouraged from coming to know themselves as a group.

When children were devalued and marginalized, as were Black children and children with disabilities, they often found themselves further overworked, unpaid, and harshly treated, with no real emotional support. While Black children were usually placed with Black adults, children with disabilities were increasingly institutionalized into the orphanage system that CASs had deposed as the primary method of charitable child care.

Even under the best circumstances, child savers had to trust that the respectable, churchgoing adults they had selected from the pool of foster applicants would treat their wards properly in between annual visitations. These conditions, however, permitted many foster parents to exploit children for farm labour. As “Liz” put it to Catherine McDougal in the letter cited at the beginning of this chapter, “I suppose the Inspector means well but

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Little, *‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit’: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998) 234.

they can't always make things to suit themselves.”¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, CAS workers were capable of considerable direct and indirect surveillance of children's lives. “Liz” worried that someone might intercept her letter of advice to Catherine McDougal.¹¹⁰ Indeed her letter must have been discovered by the CAS for it to have been placed in her case file.

Only fragments of any historical event find their way into the archival record. Unless a child's actions involved the help of child savers, or were discovered by child savers, there is little possibility that they would be recorded. How many letters did wards write to each other that CAS workers did not get to read or choose to fold into the history book? How many times did wards meet each other in secret? How many lonely fantasies of escape did they dream? It is impossible to know. No document in all of the case files of the Brantford CAS was written in the expectation that a child saver would never read it. Whatever happened in wards' terribly limited and often isolated “offstage” is truly out of view. The limits of the foster care system for Children's Aid surveillance and control are also the limits for my research.

¹⁰⁹ BrCAS, case files, McDougal file, From “Liz” to Catherine McDougal, April, 1913.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Conclusion: The Meaning of Children's Aid

Child savers within Ontario's Victorian Children's Aid Societies believed their work represented a heroic moral struggle for national and racial progress. They wrote their ideals into laws and practices that had enormous consequences for those who came under their surveillance. Their work transformed the relationships between children, families, charities, and the state. The power and prominence of their ideas also frequently obscured or erased the interpretations held by other actors in the CAS system.

The defining power of Children's Aid was the ability to "apprehend without warrant" and assume the guardianship of children believed to be neglected.¹ Child savers justified their acquisition of this power by relating the morality of private families to the destiny of Canada as a whole. They argued that children living in poverty, vice, and crime could grow up to threaten the nation's future. Private families, then, had a national duty to raise their children as respectable members of society. Respectable society, in turn, had a duty to ensure that bad parents fulfilled this obligation.

Such metaphors of nation building through child saving contributed to the masculine meaning of Children's Aid. Within the context of 19th century family law and ideology, the power to separate a child from its family was the power to challenge a father's authority over and ownership of his wife and children. CAS child savers depicted this power in violent terms as a "weapon" or a "gun," and they relied on men to wield it.² In their rhetoric, the immorality of pauper and criminal parents posed the threat of a

¹ Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 7(2), 3154.

² BrCAS, *Brantford Expositor*, February 15, 1910, "Children's Aid Meeting Shows Work of the Year"; BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, *Day Journal* 1905, "Give the Children a Chance," undated newspaper clipping.

"criminal army" at the gates of civilization.³ Neglected children were both the victims of and the recruits for this army, and the Children's Aid provided opportunities for respectable, civilized men to rescue such children, and the nation as a whole, by confronting the savage indiscipline of the worthless 'criminal class'.

The masculine overtones of Children's Aid were complicated by its enduring reliance on women's work. CASs had emerged as part of a critique of institutions of congregate care, especially orphanages, which had been largely controlled by women. Children's Aid advocates argued that these institutions were overly feminine, unnatural, and ineffective, and they promised that Children's Aid would be a muscular, aggressive replacement for them. In practice, however, CASs between 1893 and 1912 relied increasingly on shelters and associated orphanages, in which child-saving women continued their work as matrons and fund raisers. Furthermore, while Children's Aid Societies critiqued the unnatural feminine excesses of public mothering in congregate care, they also venerated the special quality of constrained, private mothering in individual homes and in foster care.

The child savers' world view was a fundamentally moral one, and they judged human lives along a linear scale of respectability. Child savers believed that poverty, crime, and cruelty were the results of personal failings, and were therefore resolvable by moralizing interventions and threats. Indeed, no training was required to be a child saver. They relied on their own morality, courage, Christianity, and self-sacrifice to reform families and rescue children.

³ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, inside cover, undated newspaper clipping.

Partly because this moral code aligned vice and virtue with poverty and wealth, and partly because poor families often sought out CAS help, a remarkable proportion of the children brought into foster care in these years were made wards explicitly because of their poverty. Nonetheless, child savers continued to emphasize their work as a series of confrontations with cruelty, intemperance, and vice. For child savers, the economic independence of private family homes was an essential part of their fitness as environments in which proper citizens could be made. Child savers therefore tended to regard a parent needing or seeming to need charitable assistance as morally suspect.

Armed with the ability to remove parents' guardianship over their children, CASs often disempowered such parents in ways that the orphanage system had not been able to do. Elaine Whittier, who put her son, Jesse, into the Brantford CAS during a few months of economic hardship, found that when she wanted custody of him again she had to apply as a foster parent. Thus, in comparison to earlier child-saving systems, Children's Aid Societies may have been particularly resistant to the strategies and desires of the poor and working-class parents whose children they were supposed to help.

Foster parents, who received wards into their care, had their own reasons for adopting children. They were not, as child savers had hoped, commonly motivated by a selfless piety or patriotism, but instead by personal emotional and economic motives. Children's Aid Societies became sellers in a buyers' economy of foster care, trying to get the best conditions they could for their wards. However, children marginalized by respectable society because of their skin colour or perceived disabilities were disadvantaged by foster parents' usual reasons for adopting, as well as by child savers'

racialized and nationalistic motivations for ‘rescue’. Despite the cruel contradictions such children faced, the decentralization of care under the foster system offered small windows in which they could influence the condition of their lives as wards.

On January 11th, 1910, Stewart Munn Thomson died of heart failure. He had been Brantford’s CAS agent for the last sixteen years, and a provincial employee of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children for the last five. Many prominent citizens of Brantford’s philanthropic and business networks attended his public funeral, and J.J. Kelso came from Toronto to serve as a pallbearer. Tributes to Thomson’s work as a child saver were printed in nearby newspapers, reprinted in the *Brantford Expositor*, preserved in the Brantford CAS archives, and put on display in 1994 as part of the Society’s centenary celebrations.⁴ As one newspaper eulogist had put it, “He leaves a name fragrant with noble deeds.”⁵

Respectable child-saving men such as S.M. Thomson, W.L. Scott, Colonel W.C. Wrightmyer, and J.J. Kelso, wrote, spoke, and were remembered publicly. Their part as organizers, advocates, and agents in the CAS system produced and preserved many records of their interpretations of it. CAS and public archives later chose to collect, retain and display these interpretations. With the important exception of the provincial Protestant visitor, J.L. Harvie, the names and deeds of child-saving women, such as Mrs.

⁴ BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, “S.M. Thomson Files: Computer Printout Material,” p. 1, 34, 39; BrCAS, *Brantford Expositor*, January 13, 1910, “Brantford’s Last Tribute to a Good Life,” cited in the BrCAS “S.M. Thomson Files,” 34; BrCAS, *Galt Reformer*, January 12, 1910, cited in *Brantford Expositor Weekly*, n.d., cited in the BrCAS “S.M. Thomson Files,” 39.

⁵ BrCAS, *Stratford Herald*, n.d., cited in *Brantford Expositor Weekly*, n.d., cited in the BrCAS “S.M. Thomson Files.”

Campbell, Mrs. Vermilyea, and Mde. Bruchesi, were much more rarely documented in the archival record. Much of what survives is the male child savers' interpretations of the women's work. The children and families whom the child savers aided, advised, and separated from one another left even less direct or candid impressions in the archival record. The very few letters and statements from them preserved in the CAS archives, including the letter of subversive advice from "Liz" to Catherine McDougal, contained intentional representations of themselves to the child savers.

Therefore, in large part, the archival records left by Children's Aid Societies depict the world as respectable, child-saving men depicted it, and as less-privileged participants in the system depicted it to them. As James C. Scott argues, "History and social science, because they are written by an intelligentsia using written records that are also created largely by literate officials, is simply not well equipped to uncover the silent and anonymous forms of class struggle...Its practitioners implicitly join the conspiracy of the participants, who are themselves, as it were, sworn to secrecy."⁶ Women, men, and children who were regulated by the CAS actively hid their beliefs and practices from child savers as part of their attempts to control their own lives. The meaning and practice of Children's Aid for such people is therefore also largely hidden from archival research. However, this thesis demonstrates that a careful reading of archival material can give important insights into the meaning that CAS child saving held for the influential few who designed and controlled it, and into the contradictions that resulted when they attempted to put that meaning into practice.

⁶ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985) 36-37.

Appendix A: Children's Aid Society Constitutions

In 1893, Kelso developed and began distributing a constitution which, “with any slight modifications or additions might be adopted by Children's Aid Societies in Ontario.”¹ Both the Ottawa and the 1907 Belleville CAS adopted Kelso's constitution, with significant modifications only in Article IV. The Brantford CAS constitution was not preserved, but it was probably similar to the other two. Kelso's complete constitution follows, with the two local versions of Article IV placed in small type below Kelso's. These variations aside, the constitution reflected Kelso's own expectations and interests more than the actual interests, practices, and distributions of power in local Societies.

Article IV concerns the make-up of the Society's leadership. The variations in this article reflect the attempts of Ottawa and Belleville child savers to gain the participation of figures they believed were important to their CAS activities. The Ottawa CAS's Article IV institutionalized a close relationship with the local orphanages, which provided a great deal of child care for the Society. This arrangement probably displeased Kelso, who once gave a speech to the Ottawa Society, pointedly arguing against the worth of congregate care.² The Belleville CAS's Article IV overlays Kelso's structure of gender parity on the board of management with a structure of denominational parity. This decision reflects the importance of interdenominational Protestant organization in that town, and indeed mirrors the organizational structure of the Belleville Woman's Christian Association. The complicated language of the inclusion of the Methodist Brethren and the Salvation Army

¹ J.J. Kelso, "First Report of Work Under the Children's Protection Act, 1893, For the Six Months ending December 31, 1893," no. 47 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1893*, p.10-13.

² LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, May 5, 1899.

reflects Belleville child-savers' willingness to properly describe appropriate representation from these denominations' unusual organizational structures. Despite all this ecumenism, no Catholic clergyman made an appearance at a Belleville CAS meeting before 1912.

CONSTITUTION

Article I

This Society shall be called the Children's Aid Society of _____

Article II

Objects

Its object shall be to protect children from cruelty, to care for and protect neglected, abandoned or orphaned children; to provide such children as may be lawfully committed or entrusted to the Society with suitable homes in private families, and to watch over and guard their interests and promote their happiness and well being; to secure the enforcement of laws relating to neglected and dependent children or juvenile offenders; and to take the part of a friend toward any child accused of offenses against the laws of the Province or the Dominion; to provide free summer excursions, temporary residence in the country, or other means for benefitting poor children; and, generally, to

advocate the claims of neglected, abandoned or orphaned children upon the sympathy and support of the public.

Article III

Membership

Any person paying the sum of \$1 annually shall be deemed a member of the Society, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Honorary members may be elected in recognition of distinguished services to the Society or to the cause of friendless children. Persons paying at any one time the sum of \$50 shall be eligible for life membership.

Article IV

Officers

The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, four Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a secretary, two Honorary Solicitors and a council composed of ten ladies and ten gentlemen - to be elected at the annual meeting of the Society in each year, who shall constitute the Board of Management and who shall hold office till their successors are appointed.

Ottawa CAS:

“The officers of the Society shall consist of an Honorary President, a President, six Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, two Honorary Solicitors and a Council composed of ten ladies and ten gentlemen - to be elected at the annual meeting of the Society in each year. The said officers with two

representatives of the Orphans' Home of the City of Ottawa, one of the St. Patrick's Asylum, and one of the St. Joseph's Orphanage shall constitute the Board of Management and shall hold office till their successors are appointed.”³

Belleville CAS:

“The officers of the Society shall consist of an Honorary President, a President, Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, one Hon. Solicitor and a Council composed of the resident active clergymen of the various denominations, the Captain or Commissioner of the Salvation Army, the resident recognized leader or Evangelist of the Society of Brethren, together with one man and one woman from each of the denominations, Army and Brethren, respectively, to be elected at the annual meeting of the Society in each year, who shall constitute the Board of Management, and who shall hold office until their successors are appointed.”⁴

Article V

Vacancies

Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled up by the Board of Management.

Article VI

Meetings

Meetings of the Board of Management shall be held at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called at any time by the President and Secretary, or upon the request of five members of the Board. Seven members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

³ LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society Fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, February 13, 1894.

⁴ BeCAS, Annual report 1911, p.4-6.

Article VII

Other Officers

The Board of Management shall have power to appoint such officers and agents as they may deem necessary to further the objects of the Society.

Article VIII

Powers

The Board of Management may enact by-laws for the transaction of their business, for the regulation of paid officers, and for all other purposes, and, generally, shall - during their term of office - have the full and complete management, control and disposal of the affairs, property and funds of the Society.

Article IX

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of this Society shall be held on the second Thursday of October in each year. Other general meetings may be called at any time by the Board of Management. On the requisition of twenty members the President shall call a meeting.

Article X

Amendments

No alterations of or additions to this Constitution shall be made except at a meeting of the Board of Management, at which there shall be at least twelve members present, and provided written notice of the proposed change shall have been given at least one month previous, the same to be submitted for confirmation or otherwise to the next general meeting of the Society following such change.

Appendix B: History Book Form

The following is a transcription of a history book entry form from the Brantford CAS. This page would be followed by one blank page. Most categories are self-explanatory. **Committed or Transferred by** sometimes indicated whether or not the parents had given consent to make the children into wards of the Children's Aid. **Why?** entries are the data I call "reasons for removal" in my chart in Chapter 3. In most History Book entries, several fields were left blank.

Record of Child

Case No.	Name	
Description		
Date of Birth		
Father	Dead/Alive	
Mother	Dead/Alive	Married?
Religion		Former Residence
Committed or Transferred by		
Why?		

Foster Home

Name	County
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Other Particulars

Subsequent History

Appendix C: Number of Ontario CASs and Total Children Made Wards, 1893-1912

The following chart draws on figures from Kelso's annual reports in the *Ontario Sessional Papers*. Numbers and reports were not available for all years in the study, and they show the numbers that Kelso calculated and published, which may have been accidentally or intentionally inaccurate. I calculated the Cumulative Number of Children Made Wards for 1908, 1909, and 1910 as if no children had been made wards in 1907.

The occasional reduction in Society numbers between years represents both Societies collapsing formally, and Kelso revising the books to remove CASs that existed on paper only. The 1912 "Directory of Children's Aid Workers in Ontario" included 121 Societies, far more than the 72 that Kelso counted at the end of 1910.⁵ This disparity may result partly from the Directory including more informal or inactive Societies.

Year	Number of Societies	Children Made Wards	Cumulative Number of Children Made Wards
1910	72	758	4914
1909	73	605	4156
1908	57	425	3551
1907	?	?	3126
1906	58	380	3126
1905	40	370	2746
1904	36	346	2376
1903	?	239	2030
1902	25	233	1791
1901	?	240	1558
1900	30	247	1318
1899	30	243	1071
1898	35	225	828
1897	30	215	603
1896	31	194	388
1895	28	115	194
1894	14	79	79

⁵ LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 2, file 5, "Directory of Children's Aid Workers in Ontario, 1912."

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Children's Aid Society of Brant (BrCAS), Brantford

Hastings Children's Aid Society (BvCAS), Belleville

Belleville Woman's Christian Association (BWCA), Belleville

Children's Aid Society of Grey County (OwCAS), Owen Sound

Newspapers

Ottawa Citizen, Library and Archives Canada (LAC)

Brantford Expositor, Brantford Library Archives (BrL)

Brantford Courier, Brantford Library Archives (BrL)

Belleville Intelligencer, Belleville Library Archives (BvL)

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