

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of rural white unwed mothers from Maine and Tennessee who, beginning in the 1870s, took advantage of the increased access to urban areas to find opportunities and support not available in their own communities. Although Maine and Tennessee differed in their economic and political structures, the rural communities from which these women came were remarkably similar. Isolated, rural communities everywhere in the United States shared a reliance on family and community that required hard work and neighbourliness. While men were by custom and law the heads of their households, women and children were valued for their labour, without which the family could not survive.

Between 1870 and 1950 the support and control of unwed mothers in the United States shifted from local communities to a network of social work professionals who counselled single pregnant women in more than 200 unwed mothers homes. Where once young women were kept in line by the oversight of older women who offered assistance but who also paid attention to any form of deviant behaviour, by 1950 trained professionals met with young women under conditions of extreme privacy and offered them choice but also emphasized the best interest of the child. Women in the late nineteenth century were likely to live with, or in close proximity to, their children born out of wedlock; women in the mid-twentieth century were as likely to give their children up to adoption and renounce any attempt to contact them again. This shift happened as the United States moved from a collection of island communities to an integrated nation state and as the care and control of the young women shifted from their local communities, to their individual states, to the national social work network.

Between 1870 and the mid-1900s the United States was transformed by an expanding corporate economy and consumer culture. Regional and local studies have described the ways in which rural communities responded to these changes and have generally concluded that the rural response combined adaptation and resistance. All agree that rural values persisted in spite of the changes. As Jeanette Keith notes, of all the 'millions who migrated from the hinterlands to

the cities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it was places like Upper Cumberland (Tennessee) that their values were formed'. Rejecting the idea that urbanization was a 'one-way street' she calls for recognition of an 'urban and rural dialogue'. Richard Condon speaks of rural Maine communities in the 1930s living in two worlds – the rural and the urban.¹

This work focuses on the young women who moved out of their rural communities but who brought with them their rural experiences and values. Those experiences and values worked 'in dialogue' with what they found in the cities and what they found shifted with the growing power and influence of the professional networks, first in the state and then in the nation. At the turn of the century reformers in the cities throughout the US opened over 150 homes for unwed mothers.² Historians have found that the majority of women served in these homes came from rural areas. I argue that it is not possible to understand the experiences of the women in these homes – and of other pregnant rural women who came to the cities in search of support – without understanding where they came from and the values and experiences they brought with them. By 1950, however, the transformation of American society was complete. A majority of Americans, no matter where they lived, considered themselves middle class. Where once urban middle class values were at odds with values in rural areas, by 1950 the majority (though not all) of those living in rural communities shared similar beliefs in progress and individual achievement built upon hard work, education and respectability.

By focusing on rural white unwed mothers in Maine and Tennessee as they negotiated the changing conditions, this work reveals the way the political economy – first of the rural community, then of the two states and finally of the nation – defined their options. These options, I suggest, had more to do with the priorities of those who defined them than of the unwed mothers themselves.

Numerous historians have analysed the social and political implications of the transformation of the American economy and culture that began at the end of the Civil War. The revolutions in communication and transportation as well as the growth of corporate capitalism and the rise of the professional middle class all changed the form and function of communities. Small communities, defined by geography, and marked by face-to-face interactions and an interchange of goods and services extended over time gave way to communities defined by common interests and education. In the more complex, inter-connected United States of the mid-twentieth century, communities were defined not by space but by the acceptance of abstract rules, and the use of hard currency due at the moment of exchange. Modernity, a separation of space from place and the past from the present as well as a belief in change and a commitment to efficiency, was replacing traditionalism.

This transformation was also a transformation of social control and it occurred in two phases. The first phase was initiated by social dislocation as

rural people moved in great numbers into the cities from the rural countryside and from abroad. In 1800 there were three cities of 25,000 people. In 1880 there were seventy-seven. By then one in four Americans lived in communities of over 8,000. This sudden congregation of strangers in cities where there were limited social networks and a growing disparity of wealth brought with them the threat of violence and loss of control. It was the stakeholders in these growing cities that forced new forms of social control on the state. As Lawrence Friedman notes of this growing urbanization,

The city is the heart of modern society; society is governed from the city; the economy depends on city life. The city is the place where people confront strangers most continuously, where their lives, property, and health are most at hazard. A society that is heavily urban and industrial, with extreme division of labor, has little tolerance for violent crime. Crime is bad for business, and bad for the social order.³

In the cities strangers confronted one another. Crime could only be regulated by an enforcement of the law and a criminal justice system that was seen to be impartial. Those in power in the city sought to impose law in such a way that everyone would know what to expect. This called for a system in which strangers – not neighbours – would make decisions about each other. In small communities law enforcement had relied on ‘a wise panel of neighbors who understood the context of the crime’. In the city, new criminal justice professionals sought to replace that panel of neighbours with people ‘who knew nothing, had heard nothing, suspected nothing’ and who could treat the accused as if he was a complete stranger’. In a similar move, city officials sought to replace the neighbourhood coroner with a professional medical examiner, trained in forensics. For both coroner and jury in traditional communities, the community context and knowledge of the actors was as important as the facts. Crimes could be dismissed if the community determined them to be an aberration for the individual. It was the person and his relation to others more than the crime that was on trial. In the cities, it was the crime that was most important. ‘The common denominator’ in regulating the cities, Roger Lane concluded, ‘was regular, predictable behavior, the same thing that made the trains and trolleys run and kept great crowds of hundreds or even thousands of people moving peacefully to and from work every day, at the same hours’.⁴

Unwed mothers were not considered criminals but as women unsupervised by men they did threaten the social order. Doreen Massey notes that in small-scale areas where control by the community can be tight, ‘women have presented little threat to men. The scale and the complexity of life in the big city, however, make such regulation and control more difficult’ and, as a result, control and surveillance in the city has ‘always been directed particularly at women’.⁵

When the city stakeholders turned to the law to control unwed mothers, they turned to two distinct legal traditions. State legislators, judges and lawyers in both Maine and Tennessee sought to create 'regular, predictable behavior' in the cities, but they did so in ways that reflected the two very different political economies of the two states. While both Maine and Tennessee were originally part of one of the first thirteen colonies and were both settled roughly at the same time by Anglo-Saxon Protestants, they were distinguished by two very different demographics, economies and political structures. These differences resulted in two very different experiences for the unwed mothers in the two states.

Tennessee was marked by diversity in agriculture, wealth and race. The western two-thirds of the state were suitable for cash crops and the development of a slave economy; the eastern third supported only subsistence farming. The diversity supported by a slave economy meant that Tennessee's population was marked by a great disparity in wealth and privilege. At one end were African-Americans who had extremely limited privileges, legal or otherwise, and at the other, white male plantation owners could operate almost without limitation. As a certain level of wealth was required for those who served in the government and as the wealth comprised only a minority of the population, the state legislators wrote and enforced laws in such a way as to maintain their control of the state. They did this by emphasizing the distinctions of race, class and gender, and by offering certain privileges to all white men. As Victoria Bynum notes in her study of social and sexual control in North Carolina, 'Maintaining a slave society based on racial distinctions necessitated control over women's sexual behavior and offspring'⁶

In Maine the agricultural conditions were not conducive to large land-holdings. Those who worked the land generally farmed as much land as their family labour allowed. As a result, there was much less opportunity for accumulating great wealth and less encouragement for people to move into the rural areas of the state looking for economic gain. In Maine, representation to the governing bodies did not require a certain level of wealth. Representation in both bodies of the legislature, however, was by community, even when those communities were very small. As the state's pauper laws required every community to support those who had a settlement within them, the legislators worked to make sure economic responsibility was assumed by someone other than their own small communities.

The second phase in the transformation of the treatment of unwed mothers came with the growing strength of the federal government and the professional middle class. In the early twentieth century, organizations began to pressure federal and state governments to assume responsibility for what their professional expertise determined was best for society. Doctors pushed for anti-abortion laws; social reformers pushed for repression of information on birth control;

women's reformers pushed to end what they called white slavery and for regulation of the food and drug industries. In 1913 the United States ratified the sixteenth amendment that enabled the federal government to "lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived." The federal government now had the funds necessary to support a growing bureaucracy which could be used to disburse funds for social programs and regulation of commerce and industry. Over the following decades the federal government grew slowly but steadily. In 1870 the government employed a little over 50,000 civil servants; by 1950 that number had grown to almost two million.

As the government grew, so did corporations. Both depended on increased efficiency and widespread acceptance of bureaucratic rules sought by the new managerial class. James R. Beniger has called this transformation a control revolution. He points out that bureaucrats, by increasing their capacity to process information and by standardizing the information gathered, are able to 'maintain large-scale social systems'. Noting that the values of a bureaucracy that promoted efficiency were the same as those required of large corporations, Olivier Zunz adds that 'empire building was dependent on bureaucracy building, and the ultimate success of bureaucratic rules depended on the imposition of new values'. Those values, he suggests, were the values of the 'middle class, influenced by the managerial class of the corporations that brought their values into the rural areas.'⁷

For almost a century professionals had moved slowly to solidify their positions of authority within the society at large by requiring specialized training and national standards and by insisting they be consulted on their area of expertise. Their advice, they argued, was based on sound scientific principles. Deferring to their expertise was best for the individual and society. By 1950 their influence and their values united the country as families and individuals adopted the middle-class dream of upward mobility, built upon individualism, education and a good reputation. Robert W. Weibe writes of the shift in relations that emerged with the rise of the cities in the new industrial economy. For the new professional middle class, he maintained, the

new order promised ... release. At a minimum it provided outlets never before available for their talents. Usually it offered them respectable and profitable positions as well. In time, they became sufficiently secure to look beyond the day's work and try to locate themselves within a national system.⁸

For new professionals, he argued, their organizations provided new values and interests to unite them even as their occupational cohesion 'widened the gap between the major cities and rural small-town America.'⁹ If the treatment of unwed mothers in the rural communities were a response to the needs of those communities for women's labour, and the response in both Maine and Tennessee

a response to the needs of those in power in the state, the response that succeeded both in the 1950s filled the needs of the managerial middle class

Each step in this societal transformation had a particular impact on rural white unwed mothers. While many community members retained their distinct set of values they nevertheless needed to respond to the changing social context. Historians of rural life in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century United States have described lives that are remarkably similar in the north and south.¹⁰ The foundation of this life was the family farm where roles were strictly divided by gender and where the work of both men and women was critical for survival. The families were embedded in tight-knit communities in which neighbours looked after each other and provided help when help was needed and who kept an eye on each other to make sure everyone complied with community norms. Men were in control of both the communities and the families and children contributed necessary labour as soon as they were able. These communities were isolated, relatively egalitarian and markedly static. Community members relied on each other for basic services and for assistance. The small amount of cash needed for taxes and goods that had to be purchased were gained through seasonal or temporary labour.

There is a strong similarity between the rural culture in these two American states and that in Europe prior to industrialization. There is also a strong similarity in the way all of these rural communities dealt with birth outside of marriage. In her overview of *Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe* Rachel G. Fuchs outlines how historians of the family in Europe have identified responses to unwed mothers in rural communities. Pre-bridal pregnancy was not always a stigma and did not preclude marriage. Many single pregnant women either stayed with their families or with kin and eventually married. Even when they had moved into the cities, she concludes, 'Poor women had their own codes of conduct retained from their lives in rural areas, and expected men to marry them after they consented to sexual relations.' The uniformity of this response was not complete. In Russia, for example, marriage was reserved for the respectable and unwed mothers did not usually marry. Nevertheless, the persistence of this widespread acceptance of out of wedlock pregnancy in preindustrial European communities suggests that it was the insular nature of the communities, not religion or ethnicity, that determined this response.¹¹

As in nineteenth-century Maine and Tennessee, communities in Europe prior to the industrial revolution 'tended toward self sufficiency and self-containment'. They were governed by an 'intricate web of loyalty and obligation'. People defined themselves within those communities by their relationships to one another. While there were social hierarchies, everyone was included in a system of mutual claims and responsibilities. People were expected to look after one another and this included providing for each other in times of want and, by

keeping an eye on each other 'imposing a conformity that most modern people would find absolutely suffocating'.¹²

Communities organized in this way would have a particular response to unwed mothers. Understanding that a woman would provide support for them when it was needed, they would balance her willingness to work with her sexual impropriety. They would know that, as she wasn't going anywhere, they could always keep an eye on her and prevent her from other rash acts. In addition, they could probably identify the man responsible and make sure that he provided what was necessary. In addition, relying on one another, working side-by-side, they would have come to know the woman through her work. Daniel Kemmis, reflecting on rural American communities, describes the tolerance that might grow out of shared work. He writes of a barn-raising in Montana and how it influenced the relationship between his mother, a woman who did not approve of alcohol, and Albert, who drank prodigiously and was 'too fond of off-color stories'.

Lilly and Albert didn't like each other much better at the end of the barn raising than at the beginning. But that day, and many others like it, taught them something important. They learned, whether they liked it or not, a certain tolerance for another slant on the world, another way of going at things that needed doing. They found in themselves an unsuspected capacity to accept one another. This acceptance, I believe, broadened them beyond the boundaries of their own likes and dislikes ... In addition they learned they could count on one another.¹³

There was another factor involved as well. As Nancy Cott found in her study of marriage in the United States, isolated communities, remote from official state bodies, 'exercised practical control of marriage formation, preservation, and termination'. In many rural communities, sexual activity before marriage was accepted as the first step in a process. In communities where everyone kept an eye on everyone else, neighbours could accept pre-bridal pregnancy because they could make sure that marriage followed. As late as 1911, a maternity home staff-member in the United States commented of women from non-industrialized communities in Europe,

Among certain classes abroad premarital relations seem to be common, and not looked upon as objectionable ... the idea commonly accepted in Germany and Austria of regarding a betrothal as sufficient grounds for men and women to live together ... is undoubtedly reflected in the opinions commonly heard from our girls that there is no impropriety in sexual intercourse if a promise of marriage has been made or may be reasonably expected.¹⁴

Similar acceptance of pregnancy outside of marriage has been documented within the African-American community in the United States. This response must be understood in the historical context of slavery in the United States, but

it was also reinforced by the isolation of the black community by race if not by geography.¹⁵

While traditional communities had a similar response to unwed mothers that extended across time and location, when rural white women entered the cities towards the end of the nineteenth century, they entered a community where different social and gender relations were the norm. The cities, in contrast to the rural communities, were filled with strangers. They were spaces where people recognized each other by dress and behaviour, not by longstanding experience.

In Tennessee following the Civil War the cities were flooded with freed men and women; in Maine, the French Canadians arrived with their families in great numbers to work in the mills. In both states the cities grew rapidly as immigrants from the countryside moved to where there were jobs and where goods and entertainment beckoned.

Threatened by the loss of means to control the fate of single women, men in both places turned to the state. In Tennessee, legislators rewrote the laws to pressure white women to protect their own reputations and their families' honour. In Maine, city managers sent women back to their hometowns. In both cases, the laws that were enforced reflected the interests of those in control of state government. Joan Jacobs Brumberg has pointed out that the late nineteenth century was a time when 'illegitimacy had become a traumatic event'. While a lack of systematic record keeping makes it hard to determine the extent of pregnancy outside of marriage, the public discourse exploded with discussion of the poor unfortunate, fallen or ruined single woman who became pregnant. Made thus visible in the public imagination, negotiating a whole new set of gender relations and expectations, the rural white women found support among the wives of those involved in the state's politics and economic activity who opened maternity homes. With the support of the privileged women they had an opportunity to learn how to navigate the new terrain of public and private spaces as defined within each state.¹⁶

Over the next half-century middle-class values permeated the American culture as the federal government increased its influence over the states, and professional organizations expanded their national networks. In the affluence that followed World War 2 many white families believed they could achieve middle-class status. In 1944 Congress passed the GI Bill of Rights which provided returning GIs with priority for jobs, loans to establish small businesses and farms, educational benefits and technical training, and mortgage assistance to buy homes. As one historian has noted, this was 'perhaps the most significant social legislation of the war years. Sociologists have identified occupation, place of residence, and level of education as three crucial determinants of social class. The GI Bill granted veterans the means to improve their status in these three areas and more'. Four years earlier a national poll estimated that almost 80 per

cent of Americans considered themselves middle class. With a position in the middle class presumably within reach, white families strove to achieve it. What this meant for their daughters was that they had to maintain the family's reputation and accept a sexual propriety maintained by a vigilant and private family.¹⁷

The impact of this shift on unwed mothers was profound. Between 1945 and 1973 an estimated one-and-a-half-million unwed mothers relinquished their infants to strangers for adoption. In that time, there were as many as 25,000 women in more than 200 maternity homes that had to turn away as many as 35 per cent of their applicants for lack of room. Secrecy within the homes was essential and many travelled out of state to make sure their privacy would be protected. Ann Fessler interviewed as many of these women as she could find. She tells story after story of young women in small towns who were pressured by family members, social workers and priests to give up their babies. Said one, 'I remember being really afraid of how she [her mother] would act. I was the one child of her four who just might make it through school, might make it out of our little town'. Another commented 'I was from a small town, so I didn't tell anybody because in 1968 you were considered trash if you were pregnant. They symbol of being a good, white, middle class family was a lily-white daughter'. Still another acknowledged, 'It was weird because the purpose of sending me there was to hide it, but everybody in town already knew. You can't keep a secret like that in a town of 1,200, so I didn't get why I had to go away'. Noting studies that found those who placed their children for adoption 'generally ... had higher educational aspirations', Fessler concludes,

For those families who were moving up, whether white or black, there was a tremendous fear of losing the ground they had gained. Conforming to the middle class values of the time was paramount. Many of the women I interviewed spoke about their parents' fears of being ruined if anyone learned they had an unmarried pregnant daughter.¹⁸

As with the rural communities, industrialized communities shared a similar response to unwed mothers in the last half of the twentieth century. Canada and Australia, for example, report similar stories of women being forced to give up their children to save their families' reputations. In the forefront of those advising the women and their families were professionals. The policies, Fessler concludes, 'were shaped by experts – primarily psychiatrists, social workers, and medical professionals – and promoted by social organizations that had the power and means to disseminate the ideas'. As one young mother noted, 'The message was this is the good thing to do for your baby. It would be really impossible to keep it'.¹⁹ This message was very different from the one many rural women received only several decades earlier.

A Definition of Terms

The fact that so many unwed mothers interviewed by Fessler identified themselves as middle class even though many were from small towns and did not have a lot of money makes clear how slippery socioeconomic terms can be. The definition of rural is equally as slippery. The formal definition used by the US census is a town of 5,000 or less. Avis C. Wiggins, who studied 'the migrant girl' in Nashville in 1933 found that 57 per cent of the girls came from the open country, one to fifteen miles away from a community centre or post office. The majority came from centres with populations less than 2,000 and over a third came from communities of less than 500.²⁰ I am interested specifically in communities which are relatively isolated and in which community members rely upon one another for mutual assistance and support. The women who came to the Good Samaritan Home in Bangor had to have references from three people in their communities, so it is easy to identify their rural backgrounds. The women in Tennessee are less easy to trace, though the scattered evidence places them in small towns in Tennessee and the surrounding states. Whether they were pregnant when they came to the city (as I believe they were in the Maine cases) or became pregnant after they arrived in the city (as may have been the case for some in Tennessee) is less important than that they identify in some way with a non-urban locality – that they grew up in, and became familiar with the values of, the small communities. The relative isolation of the communities is important. It encouraged mutual aid. There were a few Franco-Americans who came to the Good Samaritan Home and often these women were from communities larger than 5,000. They were not directly from a rural community but their community was an isolated one. The Franco-American population in Maine came from the rural area of Quebec and settled in the cities to work at the mill. They were motivated by the idea of *Survivance* – that is, they wanted to retain their culture separate from the Protestant Anglo community in which they found themselves.

'Unwed mother' is an equally difficult term to define. Daniel Scott Smith concluded in his research on illegitimacy that the amount of births to unmarried women between the Civil War and World War 1 is extremely difficult to determine and that 'it is doubtful whether scholars will ever be very certain concerning the magnitude of the problem'. Protestant churches did not keep such records; many states did not require the registration of births until the second decade of the twentieth century; and the federal government did not include such statistics in its vital statistics until 1933.²¹ Women who gave birth outside of marriage had a variety of options and were more often defined by others based on their class, race and location than by themselves. Women left babies in city streets; their families locked them in attics or paid institutions to rear their children; the courts found them to be 'in fear of falling' and committed them to indus-

trial training schools. The term 'unwed mother' at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century was generally reserved for those who entered maternity homes or placed their children for adoption through social service agencies or the black market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that various ethnic groups kept 'illegitimate' pregnancies far from view. In Maine, one woman reported that her great-great-grandmother was an Irish Catholic immigrant who went to work in the mill and was 'taken advantage of'. Her parents locked her in the attic and her sister and brother-in-law took care of her baby. A court case initiated by an out-of-wedlock child makes clear that at least one wealthy Jewish family paid an orphanage to bring up a child. Immigrant women – not labelled as unwed mothers – gave birth in the poor farm. Others were committed to the Industrial training school where they gave birth. And still others stayed home and took care of their child as best they could. For the most part, those defined as unwed mothers had some claim on the dominant culture. They were generally white and native born.²²

I have identified the rural communities as 'traditional' and the cities as 'modern' though both terms are complex and variously defined. By traditional I mean communities which remain relatively stable through generations. Darrett B. Rutman prefers the term 'small' to identify communities in which "farm families faced the same essential problem: how to extract from what land they have the wherewithal to meet their needs and wants. And everywhere the relationships between families tend to form neighborhood networks'. These communities share a certain mutuality but differ in terms of their social stratification, demographic and connection to a larger world. I find his conceptualization useful but the term he uses too slippery for a larger work.²³

Methodology

This is a comparative study of two states chosen because they represent two regional (and very different) responses to unwed mothers. Rachel G. Fuchs wrote that one could not understand the single pregnant women in Paris in the nineteenth century 'without first trying to fathom the world in which they lived. The attitudes that politicians, writers, and social commentators held about them in many ways circumscribed the women's lives ...' I would add that one also needs to understand the world (community) from which they came in order to understand the choices they made.²⁴

In my analysis I draw on feminist geographers who reflect on the complexities of place. I agree with them that place matters and that the rural place and its impact on peoples' lives has not been investigated as it should. Doreen Massey argues that geography is instrumental in the construction of gender and that space must be 'conceptualized integrally with time'. Localities, she argues, 'are

not just about physical buildings, nor even about capital momentarily imprisoned; they are about the intersection of social activities and social relations ... which are necessarily, by definition, dynamic, changing.²⁵ Reflecting on globalization she notes that it is not enough to 'talk of the collapse of time and distance, or to see it in terms only of movement and flows ... what is at issue is the changing geography of (changing) social relations. And to analyse the impact of those changes it is necessary to take account of both sides of the formulation.'²⁶

Evidence of the lives of rural women at the turn of the nineteenth century is scant given their lack of leisure time. Nevertheless, it is possible to recreate a sense of how others viewed them and how they may have viewed themselves by exploring the world in which they lived and the choices that they made. The two states I have chosen not only developed two different legal responses to unwed mothers, they also provide access to different kinds of sources. Though I had a comparable resource in court records, the other sources were diverse. In Maine I found a treasure trove of primary documents in the detailed minutes, case reports and letters kept by the Good Samaritan Agency in Bangor. In Tennessee, I found numerous historical studies of the political economy and its impact on women, both those that looked at Tennessee specifically and those that looked at the south as a region. Tennessee and the south also inspired a number of contemporary social investigations and oral histories while Maine and the Northeast did not. By triangulating these diverse but rich materials I have uncovered a story that deserves to be explored more fully. I have found that those who have experienced rural communities find my explanations true to their experience. I can only encourage more research in this area.

This work is divided into five chapters. The first explores the nature of the rural communities in both the north and the south. It then outlines the two very different legal traditions that developed in Maine and Tennessee.

In 1876 and 1877 privileged women opened five unwed mothers homes in Tennessee. Chapter 2 tells the story of how the one opened by the Woman's Christian Association attracted rural women because it helped them to negotiate the gendered terrain in Memphis. The opportunity that the WCA Home offered women was short-lived as the white privileged women chose race over gender and remodelled their home to fit with the prevailing legal tradition that emphasized the importance of reputation for all white women and white men's role in protecting it.

A rash of infanticides in the last two decades of the century alerted privileged women in Maine to the desperate situation of unwed mothers in rural communities. Of the two homes that were opened for unwed mothers, one implemented the rural practices and attracted both large numbers of rural women to the Home and widespread support from the community. This is the story of Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 returns to Tennessee when the US Children's Bureau and other organizations staffed by the new professional social workers were pushing for national standards in the care of unwed mothers and their children. Georgia Tann, the director of the Memphis Tennessee Children's Home Society drew on both the authority of the developing social work field and on Tennessee's tradition of placing children in families of greater status than their own, to develop a large and notorious child adoption programme.

Chapter 5 explores how those same professional standards forced changes in the Good Samaritan Home that led to rural women rejecting its services.

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