

CHILD WELFARE CASE RECORDS

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EDITED BY

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## PREFACE

Child welfare case records are continually in demand, not only by instructors in schools of social work for teaching purposes, but also by social workers who are constantly seeking new and better methods of work. The eighteen case records in this volume were selected from a number of records generously loaned from the files of the children's agencies in Chicago and the outlying community, and then edited and mimeographed for the use of classes in child welfare case work in the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago. During this period of classroom use, the records that proved to be most valuable for teaching purposes were selected and re-edited for publication in order that they might be made available to meet the wider demand for teaching material in this field.

Social workers know that the assembling of a collection of records is not a simple task. The perfect record has never been kept, and many social workers are reluctant to have their records so minutely scrutinized. Many of the limitations of case work arise out of the limitations of the social thinking of the period and also out of the limitations of the resources of the community. When records are published, they are almost inevitably soon out of date in many ways, and agency workers not infrequently are unwilling to have their work of several years ago used for criticism in the light of more recent theories and practice. However, the old record may still remain of value to the student, for the problems do not change so radically, and it is good practice for students to consider in their thinking the various possibilities in treatment in addition to the policies that were used in the cases selected.

Some workers also sincerely object to having such confidential material as case records published even after careful editing. Sharing every desire to preserve the confidential character of this material, every effort has been made to protect the anonymity of these records. All proper names have been carefully disguised, and, in some few cases, when the agency so requested, even the dates were changed to make any identification impossible. It is believed that the information in these materials, presented to meet the needs of professional workers and of professional students in professional schools, has been protected against any possible misuse.

These eighteen records were selected from the files of seven different child welfare agencies dealing with dependent children. In many of these

records the student learns also of the work of the other agencies which co-operated with those especially organized for work with children, and such agencies as the United Charities, the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare, the Jewish Social Service Bureau, and various medical agencies appear frequently in this material. The main function of these seven children's agencies (with the exception of the Mothers' Pension Division of the Cook County Juvenile Court) is the placement and supervision of children in foster-homes. In several of these cases, however, the children were kept in their own homes under supervision. In three cases it was possible to keep the children with their parents through the help of a housekeeper. In some cases the children were placed away from home.

One record was furnished by the Mothers' Pension Department of the Juvenile Court of Cook County. Five records were contributed by the child-placing division of the Joint Service Bureau for Children's Institutions, a private agency which has carried on the placing of dependent Negro children in foster-homes because there was no adequate institutional provision for this group.

Five records were selected from the files of the Chicago Orphan Asylum, the agency founded for the care of children orphaned in the great cholera epidemic of 1851. A large and very well-equipped institution for children was maintained for many years, but in the last decade the whole program of this agency has been brought in line with the best modern standards of boarding-home care, with the large congregate institution given up for a small receiving home where children may be kept for a short time, and two cottages for small groups of children.

The Chicago Home for the Friendless furnished three records. This is another of Chicago's earliest social agencies, and for many years this Home furnished only temporary institutional care for children. More recently, however, the agency added a Visiting Housekeeping Department to its services and thereby made it possible to leave children in their own homes instead of removing them when the mother became ill or for any other reason became unable to care for them. The agency has now entirely abandoned its institutional program, and housekeeping service and foster-home care are exclusively used for the children.

Two records were furnished by the Jewish Home Finding Society, an agency for the placement of children in foster-homes. This agency also furnishes a housekeeping service, making it possible in one of these cases for a father to keep his children with him when their mother died.

The record of a family with many children was furnished by the Illinois

Children's Home and Aid Society, a state-wide placement agency interested in dependent children throughout Illinois. This agency, which has a central office in Chicago, maintains a receiving home, two institutions for a small number of children, and places many children over the state in boarding-homes, free homes, and wage homes.

The Children's Service League of Sangamon County, with headquarters in Springfield, Illinois, an agency which places children in foster-homes throughout the county, contributed one case record on which they co-operated with the State Department of Public Welfare and the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society.

On the whole, the material is presented as it appears in the original records; but there has been some deletion to avoid repetition, and some summary letters and reports have been omitted when the material has been included in the body of the record.

Finally, it should be said that these cases are not presented because they illustrate the best methods of work or because the records are especially satisfactory or well written. They were selected rather because of the variety of problems presented and because of the clearness and directness with which the situations, and in some cases the treatment, have been recorded. In many of these cases much more detail in process of treatment would have been desirable.

No attempt is made to interpret the case work in the records. It is believed that each teacher will prefer to analyze and interpret the work in her own way, that interpretations and lists of questions often interfere with the student's thinking and analyses. Only those explanations are made that seem necessary in order to give the reader an understanding of the local situation and resources. It must be constantly kept in mind, however, in all the discussions of these records, that the case work was carried on in the years between 1929 and 1936—a time of great unemployment, of very heavy "case loads" in many agencies, and of serious inadequacies in all services. These are children's agency records, but they were affected in many ways by the difficulties of the period.

Deep appreciation is expressed of the help of the executives of the agencies who so generously offered these records. Special acknowledgment should be made of the help given by Miss Ethel Verry, of the Chicago Orphan Asylum; Mr. Jacob Kepecs, of the Jewish Home Finding Society; Mr. Louis Evans, formerly of the Joint Service Bureau's Placement Division and now of the School of Social Work of the University of Indiana; Miss Ruth Burbridge, also of the Joint Service Bureau; Mr. C. V. Williams, of the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society; Mrs.

Elizabeth Littler of the Chicago Home for the Friendless; Miss Mildred Arnold, formerly of the Children's Service League of Sangamon County and now director of the Children's Division of the Department of Public Welfare of the State of Indiana; and to Mr. Harry Hill, chief probation officer, and Mrs. Mary McPartlin, head of the Mothers' Pension Division, of the Cook County Juvenile Court. Warm appreciation must also be expressed to Dean Edith Abbott, of the School of Social Service Administration, for her encouragement and guidance in the publication of teaching material for the use of students; to Miss S. P. Breckinridge and Mr. Harrison A. Dobbs of the faculty of the School of Social Service for valuable counsel and advice at many points; and to Miss Eulah Belle Orr, formerly field-work instructor in Child Welfare in the School of Social Service Administration and now of the Omaha Child Welfare Association, and to Miss Gladys G. Fraser, formerly field-work assistant and now of the staff of the Indiana Children's Division, for their help in the reading of records during the early stages of this work. Finally, the financial assistance given by the Local Community Research Committee (now the Social Science Research Committee) of the University of Chicago and by the Samuel Deutsch Foundation of the School of Social Service Administration is gratefully acknowledged. Acknowledgment is also made of the assistance of Miss M. E. Lavery, who helped in many ways in the preparation of the material for the press, in proofreading, and in the preparation of the Index.

WILMA WALKER

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION  
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## SECTION I

### CASE RECORDS OF CHILDREN WHO WERE SUPERVISED IN THE HOMES OF THEIR PARENTS BY THE CHILDREN'S AGENCY

#### 1. The Children of Antonio and Mary Morotto

*(Two Children Whose Father Is Incapacitated Are Supported by a  
Mothers' Pension and Continue To Live with Their Parents)*

*April 2, 1929.*—Mrs. Morotto came to the Juvenile Court to apply for Mothers' Pension for her three children. She had her husband's second papers, dated December 7, 1918, taken out in the United States District Court. He has been ill since May, 1928. He has been in the County Hospital for the past five weeks.

There are three Morotto children: Rose, eight years; Susie, five years; and Rocco, three years of age.

State of Illinois	}	ss	
County of Cook	}		Mary Morotto

Being first duly sworn, on oath doth depose and say that the written statement under the various printed headings on the opposite side of this application card were voluntarily made by this affiant and written thereon by direction of this affiant and that the statements thereon, both written and printed, are true in substance and in fact.

[Signed] MARY MOROTTO

(This applies to face sheet information)

Agencies and persons interested reported by Social Service Exchange:

Agency	Name	Date
County Welfare. . . . .	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	November 14, 1928
Family Agency—Union District	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	October 29, 1928
Free Dispensary No. 82278. . . . .	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	August 7, 1928
Children's Protective Agency		
No. 55354. . . . .	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	July 12, 1928
Infant Welfare Society No. 7785	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	December 6, 1927
Warner Dispensary No. 48302. . . . .	Morotto, Antonio, Mary	May 24, 1926

*June 4, 1929.*—Letter written to the medical social worker at Warner Hospital by Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court:

Mrs. Mary Morotto has made application to this court for assistance under the "Mother's Pension Act." Before this aid can be granted, it is necessary for this department to be informed concerning the mother's mental, physical, and moral fitness to care for her children.

Social Service Bureau shows that you registered on this family May 24, 1926.

Will you kindly send us a detailed report concerning your contact with the family so that we may be fully advised in making our recommendation to the Judge of this court.

Thanking you kindly for your co-operation in this matter, I remain

*Later.*—Report received from Warner Hospital:

Mary Morotto was treated in our Skin Clinic for a slight non-infectious rash in June, 1926. We have no social information on this family.

*June 5, 1929.*—Letter received by the Chief Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court from the County Welfare Bureau:

In compliance with your request of June 1, we are sending the following report of our contact with the Morotto family:

Mrs. Morotto applied to us for assistance on October 30, 1928, as Mr. Morotto was suffering with swollen legs and had been unemployed since May, 1928. He was then receiving treatment at the Free Dispensary. Since then we have been sending a Number 3 ration,<sup>1</sup> coal, and one quart of milk a day.

Mr. Morotto was sent to Veterans' Hospital in November and was discharged in December, 1928. It was suggested that work in damp places would aggravate his arthritic condition. He could do light work only; and on May 17, 1929, Mrs. Morotto informed us that he had found work as a watchman, but she could give no further information nor has Mr. Morotto called at our office since, as we requested, to give us further details.

*June 11, 1929.*—Letter received by the Chief Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court from the Children's Protective Agency:

In reply to your letter of June 1 requesting information regarding our contact with the Morotto family, we send the following report:

On July 6, 1928, Mrs. Morotto came to us saying that her husband had been sick for two months, was not working, and was drinking heavily.

Our worker visited, found Mr. Morotto at home, and had a talk with him. He claimed to be too sick to work, but had never had a physical examination. Our worker advised him to go to the Free Dispensary, which he did not do. We later found that the family was being assisted by the Family Agency, and when

<sup>1</sup> [Number 3 Ration at this time consisted of \$5.29 worth of staple groceries delivered once every month.]

Mrs. Morotto came to us again for help we referred her to the Union District Office of the Family Agency.

We had no further contact.

*June 12, 1929.*—Letter received by the Probation Officer from the Social Service Department of Free Dispensary:

In answer to your letter of June 1 would say that Mr. Morotto reported at our General Medicine Clinic August 6, 1928, at which time he was referred to the Orthopedic Department because of flat feet. A Wassermann taken August 7, 1928, was negative. Patient was examined in our Dental Department November 8, 1929, at which time one tooth was extracted, and he was instructed to return to University Dental College for the necessary fillings and cleaning of teeth. On December 28 when he was seen in our Orthopedic Department he stated that his tonsils had recently been removed. Patient was last seen in our Orthopedic Department January 15, 1929, at which time his feet were somewhat improved.

This patient was referred to us by the Family Agency, Union District.

*June 18, 1929.*—Letter received by Probation Officer from the Infant Welfare Society:

We find Mrs. Morotto, living at 345 Farragut Street, a very good mother. The children are well cared for and co-operation with us has been very good.

*August 22, 1929.*—Called. Mrs. Morotto states that Mr. Morotto's health is much improved and that he is working regularly.

*August 29, 1929.*—Recommendation—dismissed. Man working.

*September 16, 1930.*—Reapplication. Mrs. Morotto in office to reapply for the pension, having been sent in by Miss Marony of the Charitable Society.<sup>2</sup> She states that Mr. Morotto has been in the Veterans' Hospital for four months. The Charitable Society and the County Welfare Bureau are assisting her.

Telephoned Miss Marony of the Charitable Society. She stated she had spoken to Miss Gibbons of the Juvenile Court over the telephone with regard to Mrs. Morotto's reapplication for a pension. She will send a report of Mr. Morotto's condition as soon as they get one.

*September 27, 1930.*—Letter received by Juvenile Court from Charitable Society:

Following your request of September 17, we are enclosing letters of June 13 and September 18 from the Veterans' Hospital regarding Mr. Morotto's condition.

Enclosure, dated June 13, 1930:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 3, 1930, requesting information regarding above-named veteran. Mr. Morotto was admitted to this

<sup>2</sup> [The Charitable Society is maintained by the Catholic Church.]

hospital on May 27, 1930, and has been given diagnosis of psychosis with other somatic disease (pellagra). It is believed that hospitalization will be required indefinitely.

Owing to Mr. Morotto's mental condition we are unable to secure information from him in regard to his compensation. However, the files here show that he has no service-connected disability so that he is not entitled to compensation.

Enclosure, dated September 18, 1930:

This will acknowledge receipt of your communication of recent date, making inquiry relative to above-named veteran. Please refer to communication sent you on June 15, 1930. This veteran has recovered from his psychosis, and his physical condition has improved somewhat, but he is considered to be totally and permanently incapacitated. The prognosis is, of course, guarded. It cannot be stated at this time just how much longer it will be necessary to hospitalize him, but it will undoubtedly be for a long period of time.

As you were previously informed, he is not entitled to compensation, neither is he entitled to disability allowance as he was not in service a sufficient length of time to make him eligible.

We shall appreciate hearing from you as to whether or not Mrs. Morotto is granted a pension.

*October 24, 1930.*—Letter received by Probation Officer from the Board of County Commissioners:

This will introduce Mrs. Mary Morotto, who resides at 320 Farragut Street, second floor, rear.

Mrs. Morotto's husband is a war veteran who was so badly gassed that he has been in the Veterans' Hospital for the past four or five years. She is not receiving relief from the government. I have just requested that she be assisted with County aid, and I would like to have you arrange to have her application taken for a mother's pension as soon as there is an available opening.

*November 3, 1930.*—Mrs. Morotto in the office. She showed her marriage certificate giving the date of marriage as February 12, 1921, but it was not signed. She said that later her marriage had been blessed at All Saints Church. She showed birth certificates from the Chicago Health Department for her three children:

Rose Morotto, born August 23, 1922, at 345 Farragut Street—C.H.D. No. 98372  
Susie Morotto, born May 22, 1925, at 345 Farragut Street—C.H.D. No. 22165  
Antonio Morotto, born October 9, 1927, at 345 Farragut Street—C.H.D. No.

74932

Mrs. Morotto said that her mother had eight children, one of whom died. The others are listed on the face card. Mr. Morotto has only his

father in Italy and one brother in Chicago. All other relatives are dead.

The County Bureau is supporting Mrs. Morotto and the children.

*November 15, 1930.*—Verified marriage of Antonio Morotto and Mary Simonelli, which took place February 12, 1921. License No. 42361, recorded in Volume A. Ceremony performed by Manus Donohoo. License returned February 21, 1921.

*Later.*—Read record of Mrs. Morotto's mother, Mrs. Marie Simonelli, who received a Mothers' Pension from December 21, 1922, to October 8, 1925. Mrs. Morotto's father, who was a laborer, died of pneumonia in 1921. Both her parents were born in Italy. Her mother attended citizenship classes at Neighborhood House faithfully and learned English. Other members of the family attended Neighborhood House classes and clubs. When Mrs. Morotto was interviewed in February, 1922, regarding assisting her mother, she said that she was unable to do so because her husband worked irregularly. She was afraid that if she went to work herself that he would not work at all. She said that her marriage was unhappy and if she had known her father would die she would never have married. Mrs. Morotto was a child of about two years when her father, who had previously come to the United States, sent for her and her mother. She seemed to take a real interest in her mother, brothers, and sisters, and frequently took them for medical care as suggested by the court officer.

*November 17, 1930.*—Called upon Mrs. Simonelli, mother of Mrs. Morotto. They live in a four-room flat and pay \$18 per month rent. Mrs. Simonelli says that she is afraid to move into better rooms with times as uncertain as they now are. Her family consists of herself and six children, only one under working age. Joseph is employed in a candy factory but is getting only from two to four days' work a week. When he works full time he earns \$25 per week. Carlotta is a file clerk and earns \$14 per week. Frances earns \$16 per week. John has stomach trouble and is not well enough to work. Andrew is an errand boy and earns \$10 per week.

*Later.*—Called upon Mrs. Morotto. Checked Rocco's birth certificate, which is in the name of Antonio. Mrs. Morotto said she supposed the midwife made a mistake in sending in the registration. Rose attends All Saints School. She formerly attended Phillips School, but the County Bureau encouraged a change to parochial school, which Mrs. Morotto does not like as books and paper are not free. Mrs. Morotto could not give the names of any employers of Mr. Morotto, who worked for so many different companies for only short periods of time. He was a sewer-digger.

The Fourteenth Division of American War Mothers pays Mrs. Morotto's gas and electricity bills. Mrs. Morotto sends her bills each month to Mrs. Shane, 231 Campbell Avenue, telephone Blue Ridge 405, who is one of the officers in the Division. This aid was arranged through Miss Arthur, social worker at Veterans' Hospital.

*Later.*—Called upon Mrs. Pinelli, present landlady. Mrs. Morotto moved into her present rooms in June, 1930. Mrs. Pinelli understood that she had lived in Chicago since childhood though she did not know her until she moved to the present address.

*Later.*—Called upon Mrs. Fouletti, 345 Farragut Street, former landlady. Mrs. Morotto owed four months' rent when she moved out. Mrs. Fouletti realizes that Mrs. Morotto had no money to pay and could not help this. Mrs. Fouletti liked her and Mr. Morotto very well. They were good, dependable tenants, and Mrs. Fouletti would like to have them back. The Morottos were there for several years, Mrs. Fouletti said about ten years. They moved away last summer.

*Later.*—Called upon Mr. Felix Morotto, brother of Mr. Morotto. He said that he, too, is a sewer-digger but has been unemployed for six months. He has a wife and four children. He could not give the names of any of Mr. Morotto's employers except the last one, who he said was dead. Mr. Morotto never worked for any one concern more than six months because of the nature of his work. Both Mr. Felix Morotto and Mr. Antonio Morotto were born in France, their parents having emigrated there from Italy.<sup>3</sup> Both boys attended school in France and learned to read and write. Mr. Felix Morotto went to school three years. He does not know how much schooling his brother had. Mr. Antonio Morotto cannot read or write English.

Mr. Felix Morotto says that they have been unable to help the Morottos. Their own rent is \$25 per month. There are no other relatives in the United States. An aged father is in Italy.

*Later.*—Telephoned Mrs. Shane of American War Mothers. They have given no assistance except to provide a coat for Rose. Mrs. Morotto has asked that they provide underwear for the children. She said that they need no other clothing at present. Mrs. Shane believes that Mrs. Morotto is very reasonable in her requests and a very intelligent mother. They have visited her in her home. The probation officer asked that they care for the family at Christmas. As the Division has a meeting November 21, 1930, Mrs. Shane will take up this matter and if they decide to take the family

<sup>3</sup> [The family lived in France for eighteen years and then moved back to Italy.]

will register with the Christmas Bureau.<sup>4</sup> They plan to provide the underwear needed for the children.

*November 18, 1930.*—The following report was received from the principal of All Saints School in response to a request from the Probation Officer:

TO THE JUDGES OF THE JUVENILE COURT:

The records of this school show the following in the case of the above-named child [Rose Morotto]:

Record of attendance for the term beginning Sept. 3, 1930. ABSENCES: Excused, 2—Unexcused, 0; DEPORTMENT, Excellent; GRADE, 3; SCHOLARSHIP, Good; DATE OF BIRTH: Aug. 23, 1922

SUMMARY

(Prepared November 17, 1930, by Probation Officer for the Judge of the Juvenile Court)

Morotto, Antonio and Mary, 320 Farragut Street

*Citizenship.*—Mr. Morotto has second papers taken out in the United States District Court December 7, 1918. Seen by Miss Huggins upon application.

*Residence.*—Verified by present landlady, Mrs. Pinelli, and by former landlady, Mrs. Fouletti. See dictation November 17, 1930.

*Incapacity.*—Mr. Morotto is diagnosed (Veterans' Bureau Report, June 16, 1930) as having psychosis and other somatic disease (pellagra). A later report (Veterans' Bureau, September 18, 1930) states that he has recovered from the psychosis but is permanently and totally incapacitated. He is now in the Veterans' Hospital.

*Marriage.*—Verified at County Clerk's office. See dictation November 15, 1930. Antonio Morotto and Mary Simonelli, February 12, 1921. License No. 42361, recorded in Volume A.

*Births.*—Rose Morotto, born August 23, 1922, City Health Department No. 98372; Susie Morotto, born May 22, 1925, City Health Department No. 22165; Antonio Morotto, born October 9, 1927, City Health Department No. 74932 (Rocco). See dictation November 3, 1930.

<sup>4</sup>[At Christmas time the Council of Social Agencies of the City of Chicago attempts to direct the indiscriminate giving of Christmas baskets. A clearing house, called the Christmas Bureau, is set up where the names of needy families may be sent and where those persons who wish to give may register and get the names of those in need. This service helps to avoid duplication and also to make sure that especially needy families are not forgotten.]



*Resources.*—County Bureau is paying rent of \$16 and giving allowance of \$4.00 per week and the Fourteenth Division Chapter of the American War Mothers pays gas and electric bills, which usually is under \$2.00. See dictation November 17, 1930. Mr. Morotto is not entitled to any compensation from the United States government for his army service. See letter from Veterans' Bureau, September 18, 1930.

*Property.*—None.

*History.*—Mrs. Morotto was but two years old when her father, who had come to the United States previously, sent to Italy for her and her mother. Her father was a laborer and died in 1921 of pneumonia. Her mother received a Mothers' Pension from December 21, 1922, to October 8, 1925. Mr. Morotto was a sewer-digger and had somewhat irregular employment until about a year ago, when he became too ill to do any work. He is of Italian descent, though born in France, where his parents lived for about eighteen years.

*Relatives.*—Mrs. Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, mother of Mrs. Morotto. Joseph Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, brother of Mrs. Morotto. Carlotta Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, sister of Mrs. Morotto. Frances Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, sister of Mrs. Morotto. John Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, brother of Mrs. Morotto. Andrew Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, brother of Mrs. Morotto. Paul Simonelli, 432 Cambridge Avenue, brother of Mrs. Morotto.

As stated above, Mrs. Simonelli formerly received a Mothers' Pension, which was stayed October 8, 1925, because her family became self-supporting. None of the children except Mrs. Morotto is married. Joseph, the oldest of those at home, is twenty-five years old. Four of them are working though none earning much. For detailed report see dictation November 17, 1930. Felix Morotto, 2239 E. Kaster Street, brother of Mr. Morotto is a sewer-digger and has been unemployed for the past six months. He is married and has four children. He is unable to assist. See dictation November 17, 1930.

*School.*—Rose attends the All Saints School. Mrs. Morotto states that she is in third grade. School report sent for November 17, 1930.

*November 20, 1930.*—Recommendation. Grant \$55.<sup>5</sup>

*February 12, 1931.*—Letter received by the Probation Officer from Mrs. Morotto:

Will you please call at the hospital and ask for social service, Miss Arthur, and ask her if the war mothers will keep up paying my gas bills. Please let me

<sup>5</sup>[This is still dependent on diagnosis of total and permanent incapacity of Mr. Morotto.]