

The Dionne Quintuplets Legacy: Establishing the "Good Doctor and His Loyal Nurse" Image in American Culture

Fifty years ago, on May 28, 1934, in the wilds of rural Northern Ontario, Canada, the miraculous birth of five identical baby girls had world-wide repercussions for the image of physicians and nurses. It also affected the economy of Canada; it affected the way people raised their children; it even affected, to this very day, the nature of the physician-heroes portrayed in movies and television series.

Viewers growing up in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s probably take for granted the almost archetypal "good doctor," as represented by such men as Drs. Kildare, Welby, and Gannon, and their current counterparts on such television series as *Trapper John, MD* and *St. Elsewhere*. These physicians know all of their patients by name, recognize and solve all of the patient's problems—both physical and psychosocial—and charge little or nothing for their services. Although this media image of the

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physician is nearly standard now, such was not always the case. In motion pictures of the 1920s, for instance, physicians were frequently portrayed negatively, as criminal, avaricious, promiscuous, and/or foolish. But news of the birth of the Dionne quintuplets, and most especially of the modest country doctor who delivered them, changed that bad image and set in its place an example of a physician so good that he approached saintliness [1].

Background

The birth of the five Dionne girls—Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emilie, and Marie—had a staggering impact on the public. The chances of even fraternal quintuplets being born are only one in 54 million to begin with; the odds of five paternal (identical) babies developing from one egg are incalculable, as it has happened only twice before in history and there was no past record of survival beyond a few days of either fraternal or identical quintuplets. Thus, the chances of survival for all five of the Dionne quintuplets were even slimmer. Aside from the miracle of their very existence, these identical, premature mites were born

in a poor farmhouse in rural Canada and were kept alive by a modest physician using rather primitive measures [2].

The press hastened to brighten the gloomy Depression times with this cheery bit of news, and the public responded with almost unprecedented enthusiasm. Nearly 3 million people drove the long trek north to "Quintland" to see the babies, their tourist expenditures helping rescue the depressed economy of the Province of Ontario. Newspapers found an almost insatiable audience for any mention of the quintuplets, and they kept up a steady flow of articles about every aspect of their growth, development, and upbringing; their family background; their physicians and their nurses; their prospects for the future. Businesses by the dozens sought endorsements from the quintuplets or the quintuplets' physician, knowing that their products' success was assured by such sponsorship. Everyone who knew the quintuplets, or knew someone who knew the quintuplets, sold their stories or mementos to the public. Journalists, photographers, businessmen, government, and family all squabbled (often in court) over their rights to various parts of the quintuplets' lives [3].

The American public somehow felt that the babies belonged to everyone; they felt free to advise and criticize about the children's upbringing, and they approved when the Ontario

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The photographs in this article are credited to Twentieth-Century-Fox films.



government stepped in and announced that it was making the Dionne babies wards of the Province because it did not consider the natural parents fit to raise these miracle babies. No one seemed concerned about the five children the Dionnes had already had before the quints were born, nor about the two born later; those children were forever to be left out of the public's concern, generosity, and adulation [4].

For the adorable quintuplets, however, the government built a private hospital up the road from their parents' house; there, the little girls were raised by a group of nurses, in sterile surroundings, and in accordance with the latest scientific theories of childrearing. The Dionne parents were permitted only limited visiting privileges, and the other Dionne children were not allowed to see them at all. A special committee was set up to determine the quint's upbringing and to manage their finances. The poor Dionnes fought the decision in vain, while the press made them look like fools no matter what they did. Hence, before the babies were even a year old, the stage was set for acrimonious battles about how they should be raised and by whom, and about the massive amounts of money that began to pour in. For the first nine years of the quintuplets' lives, the government won the battles [5].

In retrospect, the Ontario government's usurpation of the parents' right to raise their own children

seems outrageous, but such an action was highly approved of at the time because of the way that the media presented the story to the public. This constituted a frightening object lesson about the power of the press to shape the public's image of events. One should not underestimate the greed that surrounded the babies but, on the other hand, no one wished them ill, either; everyone intended only the best for them. However, even with the best of intentions, this interference almost ruined the quint's lives, as the authorities made decisions about them according to what they knew. Unfortunately, what they "knew" was often just what the newspapers told them, and the press offered a highly slanted view. Journalists pictured the quiet, respectable Dionne couple as laughably ignorant peasants who sought only to exploit their miracle babies for money. For years, their articles about Mr. Dionne (in particular) were marked with hostility toward the poor, beleaguered man [6].

The press's view of the physician, however, approached adulation—also a highly biased view. Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, a rather odd man, had fame thrust upon him, and he thoroughly enjoyed it. When the five tiny babies were born two months prematurely, he did not expect them to live, but he sensibly kept them warm, did not handle them much, and—in the absence of enough mother's milk—fed them small amounts of warm water laced with sugar or rum. Shortly after the world

heard about the quints, their every need was filled. Refrigerated loads of mother's milk arrived daily by train, doctors offered their services, and incubators, food, clothing, and money for the babies poured in. The best of experts immediately rallied around to help keep the babies alive, but Dr. Dafoe received all of the credit [7].

The public adored him. As the newspapers presented him, Dr. Dafoe was a man of unlimited medical skills, a modest and altruistic man who lovingly treated the families in his neighborhood without regard for money and who remained untouched by sudden fame. People flocked to hear the speeches he was frequently invited to give, and they avidly read the syndicated column that regularly appeared under his byline. In actuality, Dafoe was a man of quite ordinary, even mediocre, skills—both medical and social. He had deliberately sought out a small, remote community in which to practice medicine, at least partly to escape comparison with his more brilliant and more famous younger brother, a prominent Toronto physician. There, he remained rather reclusive, treating patients any time they needed him but never really becoming part of the community and never bothering to learn French, the primary language of the area. The press consistently pictured him as indifferent to money (and, indeed, he often did refuse to accept a fee from poor patients), but Dr. Dafoe, in fact, became as rich as the quint's themselves (and, unlike them, he

The birth of the Dionne quintuplets—Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emilie, and Marie—was one of the spectacular events of the 1930s.



managed to hold on to his wealth), and he collected fees from his syndicated columns while paying another physician a pittance to write them. He scarcely even glanced at the articles that went out under his name [8].

Clearly, Dafoe did not quite match his public image, but many people believe what they want to believe until forced to do otherwise; and, in a Depression era of singularly bad news, they desperately wanted to believe in the comforting image that the mass media offered them of this noble country doctor. In conjunction with the cute identical babies, he was absolutely irresistible.

The motion picture industry, of course, was as avid to cash in on that irresistible combination as everyone else. Twentieth-Century-Fox planned a series of annual movies featuring the quintuplets. They produced three films in the projected series: *The Country Doctor* in 1936; *Reunion*, later the same year; and *Five of a Kind* in 1938, each containing 10 to 20 minutes of footage on the quints. The artistic values were modest, but the box office success was substantial. In all three films, actor Jean Hersholt played lovable Dr. John Luke (a thinly disguised version of Dr. Dafoe), a role that he was to repeat many times for the next 25 years under one name or another and one that made him famous. The image of this wonderful country doctor, then, became an extraordinarily familiar one, not only because of its own attractiveness, but also because of its close association with the astoundingly popular quintuplets.

Nurses also appeared in the three films. They were not idolized as the physician was, nor were they shown in any consistent characterization. Nevertheless, they were unusually significant because they represented part of the public's image about the "perfect" way in which the quints were being raised. As substitute mothers to the babies—indeed, they were the most "real" mothers that the babies knew—these nurses were considered by the public to be privileged and wonderful women who were somehow immune to the failings of normal motherhood. In one way or another, each of the movies made a comment—directly or indirectly—

about nursing and about the nurse-physician relationship [9].

The three films had certain common elements. In all three, of course, the five famous babies appeared, playing dolls, singing little songs, doing little dances, or playing with the nurses or the doctor. The main plot always concerned some good deed—usually Dr. Luke's—that met with trouble before its happy resolution. In addition, at least one romance always traveled the same rocky path to happiness. Finally, each film had at least three characters to provide comic relief by means of ignorance, pratfalls, or slapstick. Papa Asa Wyatt (character actor John Qualen, who specialized in playing half-wits), the film father of

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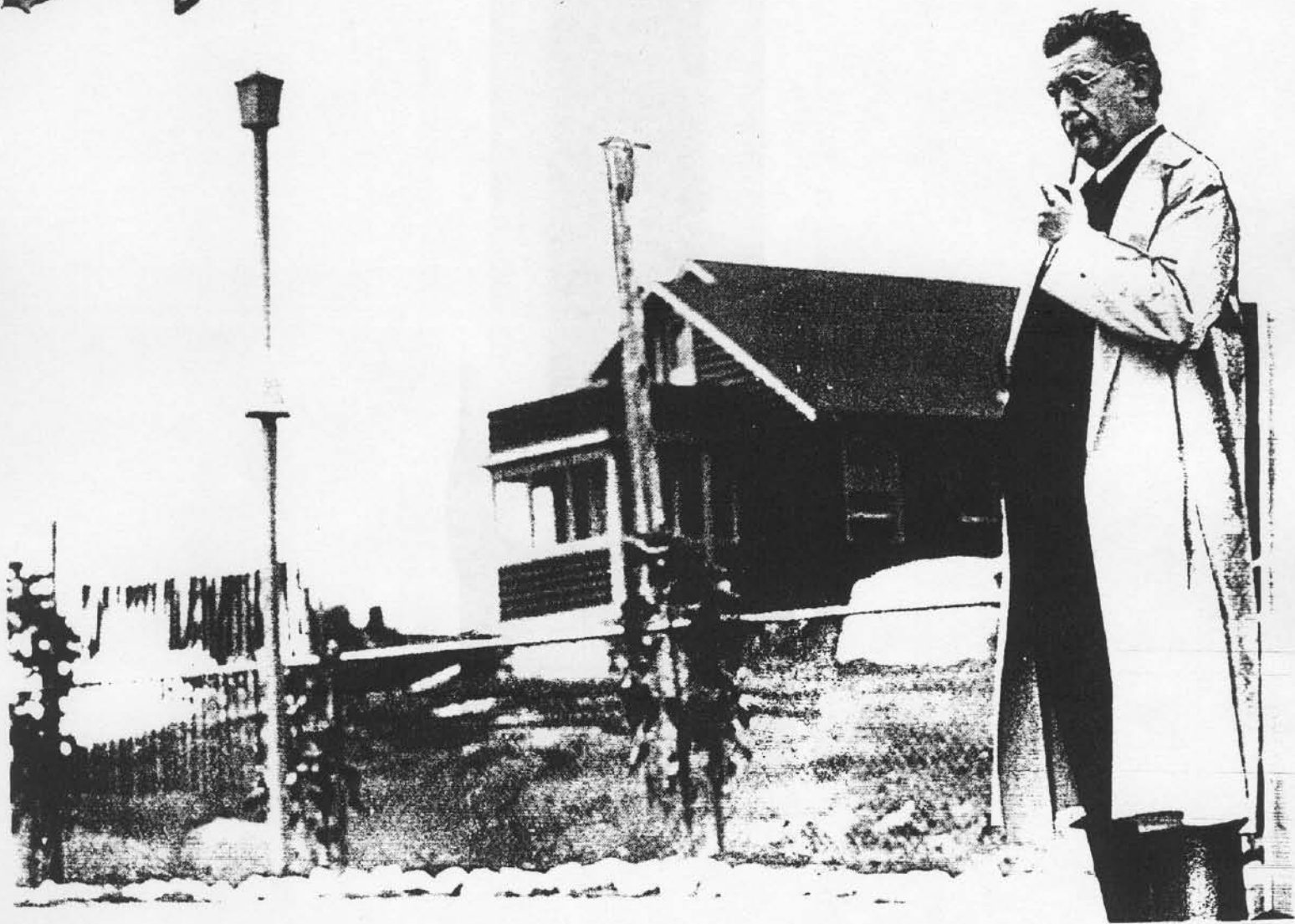
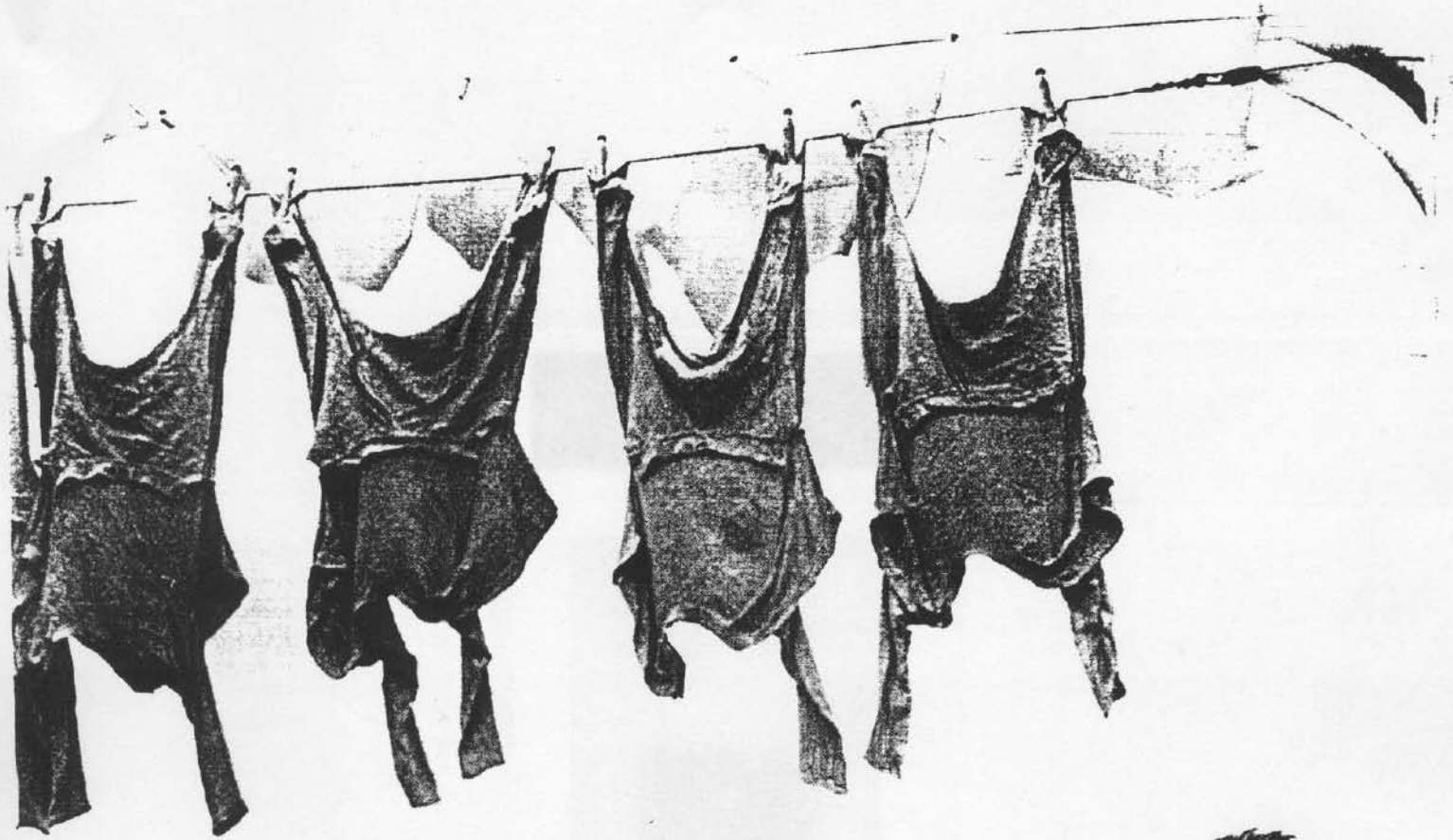
the quints, appeared each time as a slight, weak-chinned, ineffectual man, the butt of numerous jokes about his many progeny. Except for the birth scene, he never appears with the children; indeed, sometimes the crowds shove him aside so determinedly that he can't even catch a glimpse of them. But always there is some oblique reference to his extraordinary virility. (He makes five straight bull's-eyes in darts; he always makes a ringer in horseshoes.) Inevitably, Constable Jim Ogden (played by Slim Summerville), the other constant comic relief character, remarks, "You never miss, Asa." Asa just mugs significantly [10].

The Country Doctor, the first of the

Hollywood movies featuring the quints, was a box office hit for 1936 and set the tone for the films that followed. The plot of *The Country Doctor* is straightforward. Jean Hersholt plays Dr. John Luke, the only doctor in the small lumber-mill community of Moosetown in the north woods of Canada, a town dominated by the North Bay Lumber Company. The story opens when the last boat is about to leave for Montreal before the winter freeze isolates the community. Two people who had planned to go on that ship are prevented. Pretty Mary MacKenzie, daughter of the lumber mill boss, is forbidden to go by her strict father. The other is lumberer Mike Scanlan, who was hurt in a mill accident. His smashed legs encrusted with casts, Mike lies in bed, bored and frustrated, until Dr. Luke gives him an old shortwave radio and tells him to amuse himself by putting it in working order. Delighted, Mike fixes it and whiles away the winter hours by tuning in civilization beyond the snowbound Moosetown [11].

Isolation brings worse problems for others in the town. A diphtheria epidemic erupts, and the disease spreads rapidly, for there is no hospital in which to isolate patients from their families. The priest offers the church as a temporary hospital, and he, the doctor, Nurse Katherine Kennedy, and young Mary MacKenzie work desperately to help the stricken children. Antitoxin serum supplies dwindle alarmingly, telegraph lines are down, and Dr. Luke sees only disaster ahead without outside help. He goes to Mike, who (after some effort) reaches Montreal on his radio, and the doctor asks his brother Paul, a famous big-city doctor, to help.

Paul tries, but gets scant encouragement from the officials at the North Bay Trading Company because bad weather conditions endanger the pilot of the company plane. Paul's son, Tony, volunteers to fly through the blizzard to take the life-saving serum to Moosetown. Stopping only to grab his mechanic, "Greasy" McAndrew, Tony flies precariously through the storm and makes a rough landing, which damages the plane and strands him in Moosetown for the rest of the winter.



At left, Jean Herscholt, screen counterpart of Dr. Allan Roy Daleo, stands below the most photographed clotheshopper in the world—the Doune quinquies clotheshopper in Calcutta, Ontario, Canada.

clothes, and food arrive. Sightseers, eager to see the famous babies, flock into town, reviving the area's stricken economy. All thoughts of dismissing Dr. Luke for lack of his \$20 licensing fee are long forgotten as people praise the modest country physician who kept the babies alive against such unlikely odds. Indeed, the Governor General sends a telegram to Dr. Luke, promising him his coveted hospital. The quintuplets and the hospital grow together—all satisfactorily—and the movie ends at the dedication ceremony of the finished hospital—at which time, the little country doctor humbly accepts the Order of the British Empire, which is bestowed upon him by the

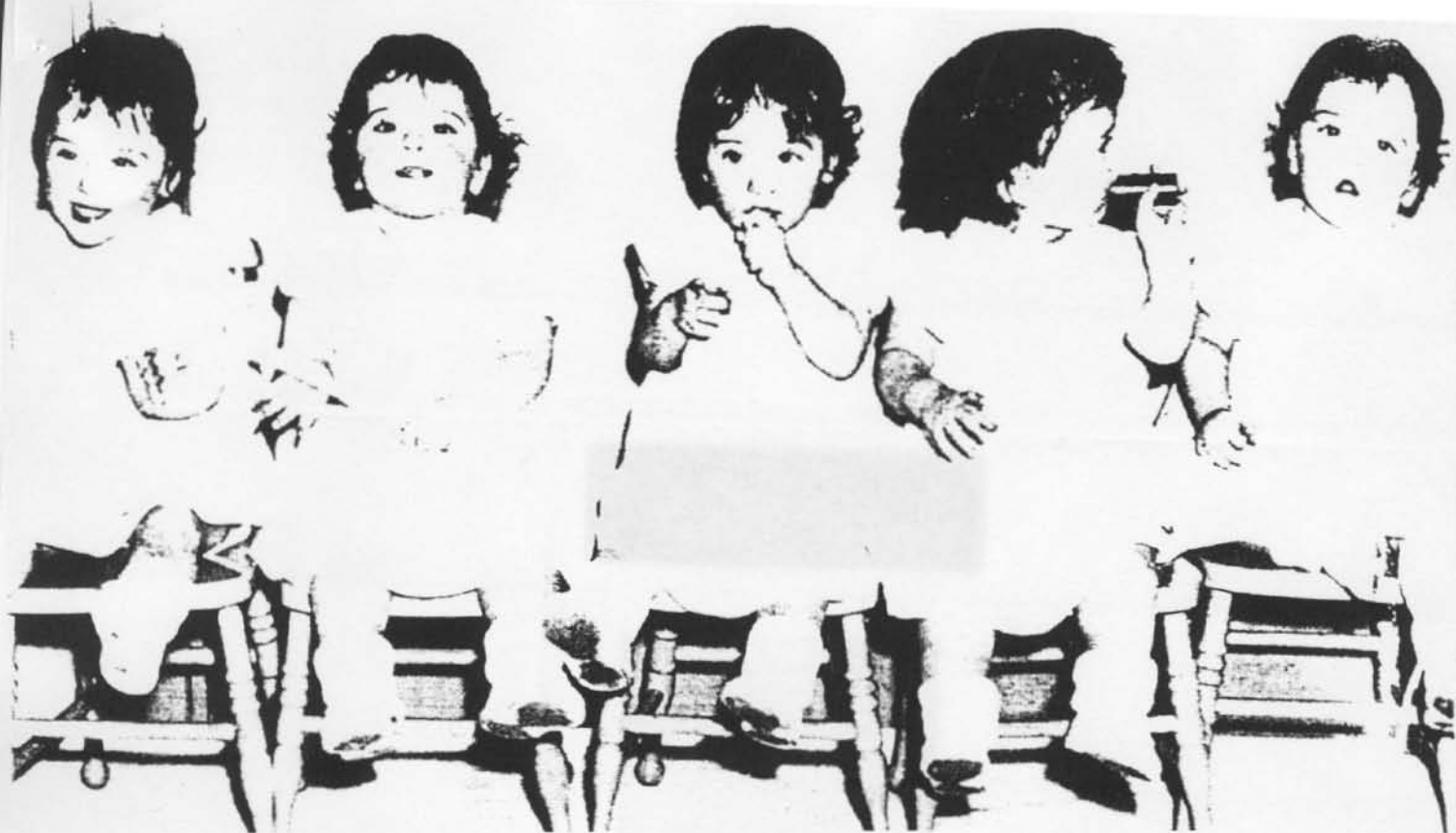
This refusal to value money is just one part of the generally altruistic and unworldly character of the country doctor. The maternal and loyal nurse has to remind him about practical matters like sending out bills, buying a new suit when he needs it, and remembering to take the price tags off when he finally wears it.

Governor General in the name of
King George V.

In *The Country Doctor*, Hersholt, as the beloved Dr. Luke, exhibited virtually all of the characteristics that later became standard traits for the "good doctor." Common, but not essential, was the solid, fatherly physical appearance. Except for about six inches of added height, Hersholt even looked a little like the famous Dafoe. Both had crisp gray hair and mustache, both wore round, wire-rimmed glasses, and both had a comfortable paunch that rounded out their dark, three-piece suits. Behind the glasses, the eyes shone with sympathy, concern, and good humor. It was impossible to expect anything

More important than appearance, however, is the physician's exceptional medical skill. When Mike Scanlan's legs are crushed, everyone assumes that amputation is the only possible treatment, but Dr. Luke, with only his little black bag and with only the mill's bunkhouse as an operating room, saves the man's legs and assures his future employability. Another lumberman credits Dr. Luke with having saved his arm in the past. Finally, of course, the doctor proves his skill by performing the impossible—keeping alive the tiny "miracle babies," the premature quintuplets whose combined birthweight was only about thirteen pounds. Again, the doctor has only his black bag, his common sense, and his uncommon skill to perform this task, but he triumphs, nonetheless.

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The last of the Dionne quintuplets' films was *Five of a Kind*, in 1938.

a sensitive human being whose feelings deserve utmost consideration.

The only needs that he doesn't consider are his own. Patients always come first for Dr. Luke. He goes to them any time that he is needed, sacrificing sleep and personal plans. He often waives even his small fees if he feels that a patient can't afford to pay. At other times, he'll accept eggs, chickens, hogs, or firewood as payment. Even when his own financial position becomes desperate, he still values other people's good before his own.

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However underhanded other people may get, Dr. Luke always remains completely trustworthy; his word is as reliable as gospel to those who know him. When Mike is

screaming hysterically that he wants to die if his legs are cut off, the doctor says quietly: "Now, Mike, you trust me, don't you? Then just go to sleep and leave things to me. I'll take care of you." Mike trustingly submits to the anesthesia. In addition, we see that the doctor's integrity transcends all consideration of personal gain when the nurse points out that he has thrown away some \$50,000 worth of requests for endorsements. Glancing indifferently at an offer that the nurse has snatched up at random, Dr. Luke says mildly: "I couldn't endorse Prun-o-pep. The babies don't like it." To make this point about the doctor's unassailable word, the movie ignores the idea that he might well have used that \$50,000 to build the hospital for which he pleads so desperately. Nothing is allowed to sully the image of honesty, integrity, and unworldliness.

While the doctor is being noble and unworldly, nurse Katherine Kennedy, cast largely in the role of loyal assistant, is taking care of practical matters. Although her image is meant to be favorable, the nurse's importance is completely overshadowed by the central role of the doctor. Whatever her talents, however much she works, no matter how much good

she does, all goes toward making the doctor a more effective, more beloved, and more altruistic character.

When the doctor is not available, the nurse can diagnose and splint a broken arm herself, without giving it a moment's thought. But when doctor and nurse work together, the doctor does everything important, and the nurse is reduced to carrying out only simple tasks requiring no special skills or knowledge, such as calling for boiling water. The nurse works day and night for nearly a week without sleep, but it is the physician who gets the camera's loving focus as he falls wearily asleep in a chair—the hero-doctor who works relentlessly until he literally drops. Although the nurse actually continues to work as he sleeps, her tireless devotion seems to be taken for granted. Aside from her professional work, Katherine Kennedy also manages Dr. Luke's house and his accounts. The resulting image is not that she is the more capable and sensible of the two, but that the doctor is the more unworldly and more altruistic. He alone, apparently, can put the needs of his patients above the thought of money. The nurse no more gets singled out for a share of the glory given the doctor than his right arm would, and

both of them seem content to have it that way.

Katherine Kennedy's combined activities throughout the films, more than anything else, yield a maternal image. Her every function seems to involve the nourishment, protection, and comfort of doctor and patient alike. Despite the fact that she looks about half the doctor's age, the nurse acts like his mother, taking care of his house, making him tea, cooking, fussing about his clothes, packing his suitcase, listening to his problems, and advising him. Even when she works with him professionally, her functions are still maternal in nature.

The nurse is frequently associated with the practical details of living and running a private medical practice. She checks and orders supplies, keeps track of the doctor's bills, and clears away any barrier that might hinder him in his work. When Dr. Luke is away, the nurse seems quite capable of replacing him in many ways. However, this capacity for independent action is not emphasized in a way that makes her seem equal to the doctor (even in areas where she clearly is); rather, she is seen only as a handmaiden to the physician. Everyone likes Katherine Kennedy, but they think of her—as she apparently thinks of herself—primarily as an adjunct of the doctor. In other words, she is simply an agent that helps the physician perform his miracles of modern medicine.

The image of the wonderful Dr. Luke, so firmly established in *The Country Doctor*, persisted undimmed in the other two Dionne quint's films, in the seven *Dr. Christian* motion pictures that continued the country doctor and handmaiden nurse image, and in the 16-year CBS radio series, also called *Dr. Christian* (1937-1953), that followed it. Although many of these later depictions placed less emphasis on the physician's medical skills per se, other positive attributes loomed very large. His ability to plumb the human psyche, to see the need there, and to know how to fill that need is a talent that overpowers even his diagnostic and treatment skills. Somehow, the "good doctor" knows how to give people such a sense of their own worth that they are not only able to solve their problems but also to put aside

wrong actions and choose right ones instead [12].

In fact, the doctor is very nearly a religious hero, although no specific creed is espoused. Repeatedly, his unselfishness, his dedication, and his integrity are emphasized. Even his name is an indication of the writers' intentions to suggest his saintliness. Clearly, Dr. Luke (and Hersholt's subsequent portrayal under the name Dr. Christian) was intended to be a repository of all of the "Christian" virtues. Indeed, in many respects, he is a Christ-like figure in these films. He is humble and self-sacrificing, he is sometimes reviled (temporarily) for his righteous and unselfish actions, and he "saves" many people—not their souls, per-

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haps, but certainly their bodies and their spirits. Above all, he is the incarnation of love—all-encompassing, all-forgiving, untiring, and gracious. There is no hint of sexuality in this love; it asks nothing for itself, but seeks only to give, to make life better for others. Such love has a healing power all its own, quite aside from the medical skills that the doctor possesses, and it raises the doctor to a realm quite above ordinary, flawed human beings. He is, like God Himself, the perfectly loving father-figure, the perfectly wise counselor, the perfectly skilled miracle worker.

This, then, is the image that the eager public absorbed when it flocked to the theaters to glimpse the famous babies. Furthermore, *The Country*

Doctor ended with assurances from the modest Dr. Luke that all country doctors were like that: "I have done nothing more than what they have all done, what they are doing every day." Once convinced that such a being could, in fact, exist, viewers and listeners were reluctant to abandon the image. Hersholt's characterization imprinted indelibly on the public mind the image of the perfect doctor, which has been carried forward, with ever-increasing zeal, to the present day.

The handful of nurses who appeared in the motion pictures with Dr. John Luke could scarcely hope to compete with the dazzling image of the saintly physician. Their appearances were usually very brief. Although nurses were pleasant, attractive, clean, neat, and kindly, their roles were long-familiar stereotypes: they were the doctor's loving, trusted, competent helpmates, but they performed almost no duties requiring any expertise, nor did they demonstrate any real importance in health care.

The nurse characters in these portrayals did assume at least some importance because of their key role in caring for the quintuplets. Since every aspect of the quint's lives was so publicized, the public already had an image of the quint's real-life nurse, which favorably influenced their view of motion picture nurses. The public was well aware of the mothering function of the nurses and that they were part of the quint's "perfect," scientific upbringing in the sterile nursery, where the babies were to bloom unsullied. The nurses, both real and fictional, always appeared cheerful, confident, and relaxed. They somehow didn't look capable of the tiredness, indecision, untidiness, or short tempers that ordinary mothers were heir to. Many a mother wrote to say that she wished her own children could be raised in such ideal conditions, and thousands read with eager awe the syndicated news articles in which one of the quint's first nurses, Yvonne Leroux, described the babies' daily routines and also wrote a series entitled "My Diary of Three Years with the Quintuplets" [13].

Consequently, choosing actresses to play the parts of these revered nurses was no mundane casting job

or the filmmakers. Actress Dorothy Peterson, who played Nurse Katherine Kennedy in two of the three films, was chosen over a host of other applicants for the role, not because of her acting abilities, but because of her blameless character. The Boston *Sunday Post* reported lyrically, "Only one with the highest idealism, whose name never had been even faintly touched by scandalous rumor, could be permitted in close proximity to the babies. What type of woman is the actress chosen as worthy to hold in her arms those precious bundles of babyhood? . . . a charming, low-voiced woman, dedicated to mother roles . . . one seen occasionally at teas, but never in the popular nightclubs. . . . She even blushes!" The worthy Miss Peterson was only in her twenties, but she looked older and was frequently chosen to play middle-aged mother or nurse roles. Something in that serene, rather matronly face suggested "mother" or "nurse" to the directors. She herself speculated that she was chosen for such roles



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"because I am not colorful and glamorous," an interesting, if unintentional, commentary on the image of the nurse [14].

Another reason that the image of the nurse was given greater significance in these motion pictures was the important reality that the nurses actually did replace the babies' mother. The mother of the quints never appears in the fictionalized films; indeed, for the first nine years of their lives, the quints knew Mrs. Dionne only as a visitor to their little hospital-nursery. Their "real" mothers were a succession of nurses apparently providing the babies with loving care. In their bitter autobiography, the quints relate that their happiest years were those early ones spent in the hospital with the nurses. It is perhaps significant that, as adults, four of the five quints entered educational programs to prepare them for humanitarian-oriented careers—two as nurses and two as nuns.

The five babies, whom the nurses and the good doctor cherished dearly, were a cheery sight for the viewing public. Their eyes sparkled, their curls bounced, and their smiles were enchanting. Whatever problems other characters in the stories might have had, no hint of trouble was associated with the quintuplets, who tumbled about as charmingly as five puppies at play while others looked on lovingly. The motion pictures, of course, gave no hint that the babies' real life stories did not end so happily. While the screen nurses and doctor presided wisely and lovingly over a peaceful nursery, the real Mrs. Dionne was having bitter fights with Dr. Dafoe, whom she hated, and was firing and hiring a succession of nurses (14 different nurses served as surrogate mothers during the quint's first 6 years), never allowing the children to have a permanent mother-figure.

The Hollywood creations gave only unconscious hints that the glorious experiment was not going to succeed. Sadly, the children's perfect, scientific upbringing, so celebrated in newspapers, magazines, and motion pictures, did not, in fact, produce superior human beings. The girls grew up to be painfully shy, as isolated in society—when they finally

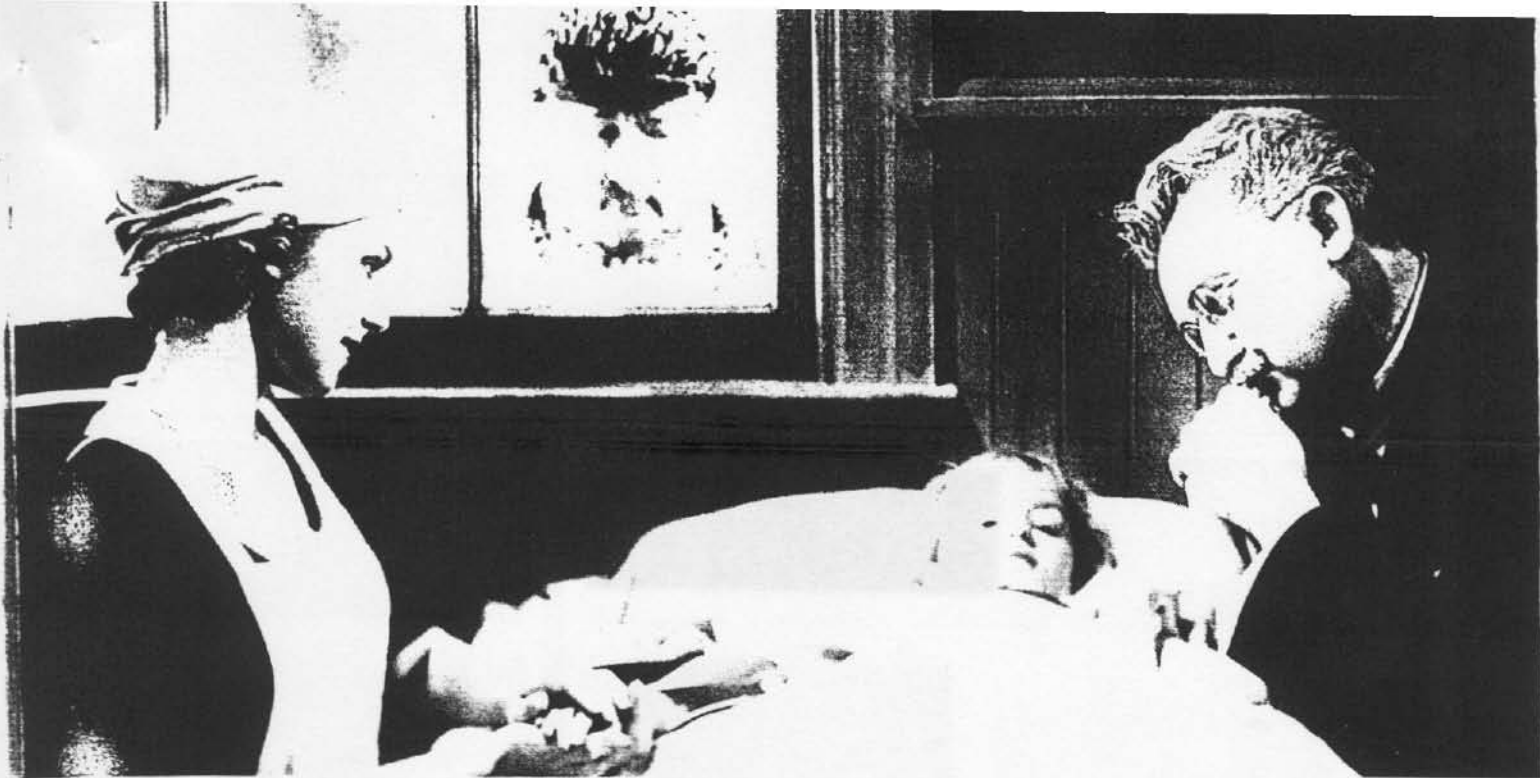
got out into the world—as they had been in their guarded nursery. Their adult lives bore tragic records of early deaths, alcoholism, psychological deterioration, broken marriages, failed careers, poverty, bitterness, and permanent family estrangements. The three surviving quintuplets wrote a bitter autobiography, summing up their vaunted upbringing by stating: "There was more money than love in our lives" [15].

From a 50-year perspective on their birth date, the irony is almost unbearable that these children should have grown up feeling a lack of love when the whole world adored them, when millions of people traveled to the wilds of Canada for the privilege of walking through the viewing compound to glimpse at the quints at play, when the Queen of England herself knelt to greet them, when gifts were sent to the children from admirers around the world, when people snatched up every newspaper and magazine that promised a new picture of the quints or a new story about them.

It is indeed unfortunate that the quintuplets' real lives did not match the image projected in the mass media—an image of children without a problem in the world, playing happily with the nurses who cared for them. The motion pictures about them reflected only the promise, the hope, and the good intentions for these unusual children. Only on film did the noble experiment work the way it was supposed to. In reality, the children inherited the sad fruits of all of the greed, misunderstanding, jealousy, and bitterness that raged around them. The American public, however, inherited the ideal—the image of the courageous country doctor and the devoted, happily subservient nurse. This archetypal image has proven nearly indelible and presents a formidable obstacle to efforts to enhance the current image of the nurse.

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The country doctor and loyal nurse strive to save a child from diphtheria.

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 10. *The Country Doctor*, 110 min., B & W, Released: 3-2-36. Distributor: Twentieth-Century-Fox. Director: Henry King. Screenplay: Sonya Levien, from an original screen story by Charles Blake. Cast: Dionne Quintuplets, Jean Hersholt, June Lang, Slim Summerville, Michael Whalen, Dorothy Peterson, Robert Barrat, John Qualen, Montagu Love, Jane Darwell, Frank Reicher, David Torrence, George Chandler, Helen Jerome Eddy, Aileen Carlyle, George Meeker, J. Anthony Hughes, and William Benedict.
 11. *Ibid.*, the analysis that follows is based on several viewings of *The Country Doctor*.
 12. *Reunion*, 80 min., B & W, Released: 11-13-36. Distributor: Twentieth-Century-Fox. Director: Norman Taurog. Screenplay: Sam Hellman, Gladys Lehman, Son Levien, from an unpublished story by Bruce Gould. Cast: Dionne Quintuplets, Jean Hersholt, Rochelle Hudson, Helen Vinson, Slim Summerville, Robert Kent, John Qualen, Dorothy Peterson, Alan Dinchart, J. Edward Brombert, Sara Haden, Montague Love, Tom Moore, George Ernest, Esther Ralston, Katherine Alexander, Julius Tannen, Edward McWade, Maude Eburne, George Chandler, Claudia Coleman, Hank Mann, Hattie McDaniel. *Five of a Kind*, 83 min., B & W Released: 10-14-38. Distributor: Twentieth-Century Fox. Producer: Sol M. Wurtzel. Director: Herbert I. Leeds. Screenplay: Lou Breslow, John Patrick. Cast: The Dionne Quintuplets, Jean Hersholt, Claire Trevor, Cesar Romero, Slim Summerville, Henry Wilcoxon, Inez Courtney, John Qualen, Jane Darwell, Pauline Moore, John Russell, Andrew Tombes, David Torrence, Marion Byron, Hamilton MacFadden, Spencer Charters, Charles D. Brown. *Meet Dr. Christian*, 63 min., B & W, Released: 11-17-39. Distributor: RKO Radio. Director: Bernard Vorhaus. Screenplay: Ian McLellen Hunter, Ring Lardner, Jr., Harvey Gates, from an original screen story by Harvey Gates. Cast: Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Robert Baldwin, Enid Bennett, Paul Harvey, Marcia Mae Jones, Jackie Moran, Maude Eburne, Frank Coghlan, Jr., Patsy Lee Parsons, Sarah Edwards, John Kelly, Eddie Acuff. *The Courageous Dr. Christian*, 67 min., B & W, Released: 4-5-40. Distributor: RKO Radio. Director: Vernard Vorhaus.
- Screenplay: Ring Lardner, Jr., Ian M. Hunter.
- Cast: Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Robert Baldwin, Tom Neal, Maude Eburne, Vera Lewis, George Meader, Bobby Larson, Bobette Bently, Reginald Barlow, Jacqueline de River, Edmund Glover.
- Dr. Christian Meets the Women*, 58 Min., B & W, Released: 7-5-40. Distributor: RKO Radio. Director: William McGann. Cast: Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Edgar Kennedy, Rod La Roque, Frank Albertson, Marilyn Merrick, Maude Eburne, Veda Ann Borg, Lelah Taylor, William Gould, Phyllis Kennedy, Bertha Priestly, Diedra Vale, Heinie Conklin. *Melody for Three*, 67 min., B & W, Released: 3-28-41. Distributor: RKO Radio. Director: Erle C. Kenton. Screenplay: Lee Loeb, Walter Ferris. Cast: Jean Hersholt, Fay Wray, Walter Woolf King, Astrid Allwyn, Schuyler Standish, Andrew Tombes, Maude Eburne, Patsy Ruth Parsons, Toscha Seidel, Irene Ryan, Elvira Allman, Irene Shirley, Donnie Allen, Leon Tyler, Cliff Nazarro. *They Meet Again*, 67 min., B & W, Released: 7-11-41. Distributor: RKO Radio. Director: Eric C. Kenton. Adapted from an original screen story by Peter Milne. Cast: Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett, Robert Baldwin, Maude Eburne, Neil Hamilton, Anne Bennett, Barton Yarborough, Arthur Hoyt, John Dilson, Frank Melton, Leon Tyler, Milton Kibbee, Gus Glassmire, Patsy Lee Parsons, Meredith Howard.
- 13. Leroux, Yvonne. My diary of three years with quintuplets, *Pittsburgh Press*, May 26-30, 1937. Series of five articles.
- 14. Dionne quints scared Dorothy Peterson, movie star, *Boston Sunday Post*, January 27, 1936.
- 15. Brough, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.