

## Rate of Unintended Pregnancies Drops 16 Percent

By Ridgely Ochs=(c) 1998, Newsday

The rate of unintended pregnancies in the United States has fallen 16 percent within the past decade, probably reflecting increased use of condoms, according to a study released recently.

The study, using data from 1987 to 1994, also found an 11 percent drop in the overall abortion rate and a 22 percent drop in the unintended birth rate.

"I was surprised," said the study's author, Stanley Henshaw, deputy director of research at the Alan Guttmacher Institute in Manhattan, a nonprofit group that researches reproductive health issues. "I think it's good to know couples are using contraceptives more effectively."

"This recent study shows we're making progress. Couples are using more contraception and they are using it more effectively. We should all redouble our efforts to continue this national decline," said Alexander Sanger of Planned Parenthood of New York City.

Data from 1995 show that condom use - reflecting a fear of HIV - has increased significantly.

But Henshaw pointed out that the unintended pregnancy rate remains high, accounting for 49 percent of 5.4 million pregnancies in the United States in 1994 - still higher than many European countries, he said.

The rate of unintended pregnancies among women of reproductive age dropped 16

percent from 54 to 45 pregnancies per 1,000 women annually between 1987 and 1994, the study said.

Greater use of contraceptives may explain some of the drop in the abortion rate, Henshaw said. But he said he was "surprised even more" by a 24 percent drop in the abortion rate among teen-agers 15-19, while the rate of unintended births among teens actually rose slightly.

"In 1994, teen-age women were less likely than women in any other age group to end an unintended pregnancy by abortion, whereas in earlier periods teen-agers have been similar to other women in this respect," the study said. Henshaw said he thought this reflected decreased access to abortion services for teens, including "barriers posed by parental involvement statutes" in some states. Among women in their 20s, abortion rates changed little or increased slightly, Henshaw said, which supports his contention.

Findings in the study included: -One in 11 women become pregnant each year.

-About 48 percent of all women age 15-44 had had an unintended pregnancy. The percentage increased to 60 percent among women age 35-39. The percentage was lower among women age 40-44 because abortions were not counted in this estimate, the study said.

-Low-income women have nearly three times the rate of unintended pregnancy as high-income women but are less likely to have abortions.

## Sylvia Plath's Husband Ends His Silence

By John Burgess=(c) 1998, The Washington Post

LONDON - For 35 years they've been awaiting an explanation, sometimes growing angry over the delay. Devotees of the poet Sylvia Plath, who committed suicide in a London apartment in 1963, have wanted to hear from her husband, a fellow poet, who had separated from her shortly before she died.

But Ted Hughes kept silent. He got on with his life. He became Britain's poet laureate. Along the way he offered hardly a word about his and Plath's failed seven-year marriage and what role he might have played in the final despair of a woman who became an icon of the feminist movement.

Now the wait is over. Hughes is telling his story of their life together in verse, 198 pages of it, starting from the moment he scanned a news photo of young American Fulbright scholars, newly arrived in England in 1955, and wondered idly if he might meet any of them.

Prepared in secrecy, the book "Birthday Letters" was excerpted in the Times newspaper here this weekend and instantly became the talk of the literary world, though sales won't begin until the end of the month. "It sounds very exciting," said poet James Fenton. "Good for him, I say, that he's managed to put together so many poems about this subject and allowed us to see them."

Today Hughes is 67. Tall and craggy, he writes verse for state occasions, campaigns for river conservancy and gives readings in a voice that could only belong to one of his calling. But for all his accomplishments, his long-ago link with a bigger name is a large part of who he is in the literary world.

Writing up to her death in 1963, Plath used jarring, sometimes-morbid

images to convey feelings of loneliness and general powerlessness of a woman in postwar America. Her work rang true to more and more people in the 1970s and '80s, notably feminists, and she became one of the best-selling poets of the century, a posthumous Pulitzer Prize winner.

Hughes' defenders say Plath was unstable from the beginning - she had tried suicide before her marriage - and drove him out of the house. But for the past 35 years, he has been subjected to constant, often-vicious hostility from people who variously consider him heartless, responsible for her suicide or a symbol of male domination in general.

Vandals hacked his surname off her headstone in Yorkshire; someone once piled his papers on floors in

In his new verse, Hughes writes of leaving the party with a swelling ring-moat that was to brand my face for the next month The me beneath it for good.

He made an impression on her too. She wrote a few days later to her mother that he was "the only man I've met yet here who'd be strong enough to be equal with - such is life."

She was 23 at the time, a Smith College graduate who was already a prize-winning writer. He was a Cambridge University graduate in English and anthropology, a sometime rose gardener given to cruising around London in a corduroy jacket with poems stuffed in the pockets.

Some of the excerpts published Saturday recount the courtship. He

But they never found a settled nest, traveling frequently. Tension began to appear at home.

All the time, deeper rage and frustration were spilling out in her writing. Many of Hughes' critics see him in some of it. Her poem "Daddy" focuses on feelings of love and abhorrence for her father, who died when she was 8, but her husband seems to appear in the words as well:

The vampire who said he was you  
And drank my blood for a year,  
Seven years, if you want to know.  
In 1962, involved with another woman, Hughes moved out. He left Plath caring for their two small children.

One night in February that year, she turned on the gas in the kitchen. She was found dead the next morning.

Hughes inherited rights to her works and later edited and published some of them. His career advanced - he became poet laureate in 1984 - but the sniping continued. At times he responded to critics in letters to newspapers, but for the most part he let it go.

"That silence seems to confirm every worst suspicion," he wrote in a 1989 letter. "I preferred it, on the whole, to allowing myself to be dragged out into the bull-ring and teased and pricked and goaded into vomiting up every detail of my life with Sylvia," according to "The Silent Woman: Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath" by Janet Malcolm.

But now, for reasons he hasn't explained, Hughes is giving a detailed account, in poems that were written over the past quarter-century.

Motion, one of the few people to have read the full work, says the poems' complexity increases as Hughes moves toward her death. "You feel it's written in a burning, continuing process - like she's just left the room," he said.

"You can't read this book without being absolutely swept away by his feelings for her."

Andrew Motion  
a poet and critic

several rooms of his home and set fire to them.

Andrew Motion, a poet and critic here, doubts that Hughes' hard-core critics will be swayed by the poems in "Birthday Letters." But Motion, who knows Hughes, says the verse proves the man's deep tenderness. "You can't read this book without being absolutely swept away by his feelings for her," he said.

It was a tumultuous bond from the start. Their first meeting, in February 1956 at a boozily London party for the launching of a new magazine, has passed into literary legend. Details vary, but they apparently retired to a back room where Hughes appears to have kissed Plath hard and ripped off her scarf, and she to have responded by biting him on the face.

writes of an early walk around London with her:

We clutched each other giddily  
For safety and went in a barrel together  
Over some Niagara ...

You were slim and lithe and smooth as a fish.  
You were a new world. My new world.

They married in June 1956. In later years, they moved to the United States, then back to London. They had two children. Along the way, they became perhaps the premier literary couple of the time. She published her first book of poems, "The Colossus," in 1960. In 1963 came an autobiographical novel, "The Bell Jar," drawing on the despair that led to her first suicide attempt.

## A civil rights martyr no longer rests in peace

By J.R. Moehringer=(c) 1998, Los Angeles Times

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Every few minutes, it's like another bomb going off.

Above her headstone, one after another, jets from the nearby airport re-create the last sound she heard, their booming engines recalling the tragedy that befell her 34 years ago, a tragedy that still reverberates.

Addie Mae Collins was 14 years old when she became one of the civil rights movement's most lamented victims. On Sept. 15, 1963, she and three other girls were killed by Ku Klux Klan members who planted dynamite beneath the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where the girls were getting dressed for Sunday morning services.

Monday, as the nation commemorates the birthday of assassinated civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Addie Mae Collins has become more than a martyr. She is also a mystery.

King spoke at the girls' funeral three days later, telling 8,000 mourners and 800 pastors, black and white, that Addie and the other girls were "modern heroines of a holy crusade."

But a baffling discovery was made last week when Addie's sister, Sarah, ordered her grave opened. Sarah wanted Addie removed from the lumpy field of decrepit trees and crumbling headstones, which was abandoned 20 years ago. She wanted Addie reburied in a better cemetery, one where weeds don't grow shin-high in summertime, where planes don't drown out your conversations with an older sister who never had a chance.

But when workers opened Addie's grave, they were horrified to find nothing. They dug two feet deeper, then two feet wider - still nothing. No body was there to accompany the gray marker that read: "Addie Mae Collins ... She Died So Freedom Might Live."

"I was really shocked," said Sarah. "It was really hurtful, too. I've been going there, talking to her for years. Then to find out that she really wasn't there. I knew her spirit was with the Lord, but I never thought her remains weren't there."

"At times, life is hard," King said at Addie's funeral, "as hard as crucible steel."

But what would he have made of this latest hardship? Of losing a beloved sister twice? And on this of all weekends.

"This is one of those weekends when people are reflecting on the civil rights movement," said a shaken Rep. Earl F. Hilliard, D-Ala., the first black congressman from Alabama since Reconstruction. "This is a tragedy. It's a loss to his-

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tory."

The fear is that someone took Addie. Over time, the cemetery has been a playground for countless vandals, both casual and deliberate. Or else someone connected with the cemetery moved her, for who knows what reason. A spokesman for Poole Funeral Home, which reportedly handled the burial 34 years ago, refused to comment, but no one seems sure if Poole even has the cemetery records, or if such records still exist.

Even the name of the cemetery isn't certain. Newspapers call it Greenwood; history books say Woodlawn.

The most likely scenario seems to be that Addie's grave wasn't accurately marked at the time of her death. According to one book about the bombing and its aftermath, "Until Justice Rolls Down," Addie's parents could not afford a proper headstone. Now that Addie's sister can, the parents and everyone else who might say where Addie lies has joined her underground.

Hilliard, whose spokesman gave the inscribed marker as a gift to Addie's family, said a "monumental effort" was being made to retrace the steps of mourners who swarmed through the cemetery so many years ago, but he wasn't specific about that effort. "I just hope it's successful," he said.

It was a pivotal moment in American history when the bomb went off at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, turning part of the beloved local landmark into a pile of bricks. Three weeks earlier, King had marched on Washington and delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. Two months later, President Kennedy would be dead. With Birmingham public schools facing a federal court order to admit black students, the city and the nation were trembling with racial tension.

Addie's sister, Sarah, lost an eye that morning. She'd been standing across the church basement from her sister when suddenly the world erupted. Lying in a hospital bed for days, both eyes bandaged, she was unable to attend Addie's funeral.

Another sister, Janie Gaines, attended the funeral but never again visited the cemetery. She never so much as laid a flower there until last week, she told a Birmingham newspaper, because the pain was just too great.

The pain promises to become still greater and fresher when news spreads that a central figure from the civil rights era isn't resting in peace. As workers clambered over the cemetery Saturday afternoon, searching for Addie, her face filled a TV screen at the rebuilt church - along with the faces of fellow victims Denise McNair, 11, Carole Robertson, 14, and Cynthia Wesley, 14 - as dozens of visitors viewed a documentary about the bombing.

But this particular Saturday, the documentary had a somber postscript. Tara Walton, a tour guide, informed the crowd that one of the victims was missing.

Many gasped. "Heaven's sake!" cried a woman. "Oh no!" said another.

The visitors then peppered Walton with questions, none of which she could answer. Are vandals respon-

sible? Can anything be done? How long has the little girl been gone?

Nervously, Walton said only that talks had been under way to bring all four girls back to the church, to rebury them together in a special memorial area, but that those talks were now indefinitely on hold.

If Addie can be found, it may be largely the result of efforts by Jim Stokes, manager of the Superior Concrete Co. He's the man Sarah hired to open the grave, and the only man now willing to search for the body.

"I thought we were coming to a conclusion of this situation," he said the other day, standing in the forlorn cemetery, peering at the ground. "Instead, we've just made the situation worse."

Stokes has consulted various old-timers and longtime Birmingham residents with sharp memories, hoping one will remember that funeral in vivid and precise detail. But already he's discovered what historians have long known: When it comes to memory, time is the ultimate vandal.

"You get 10 people out here," he said, "and they'll point in 10 different directions. Some say the body's in this vicinity. Some say it's in that vicinity."

He walked back and forth, examining the plane of the ground like a golfer, squinting at every name etched in the old stones. He was 12 when the bombing happened, and he remembers little about it.

"I wish I'd paid attention," he said, "so maybe I could solve this now."

Next to the place Addie was supposed to be buried is the grave of Cynthia Wesley. Below Cynthia is an unmarked, muddy mound where Stokes suspects Addie may be. But he needs Sarah's permission to dig again, and even then he fears exhuming the wrong person, inadvertently reopening another family's grief.

Idly, he studied the epitaph on the nearby grave of an unrelated stranger.

"Gone But Not Forgotten," he read. "That's a for-sure statement."

Behind him, however, he failed to notice the epitaph on a large crypt, a quote from the Book of Psalms: "He is at my right hand," it read. "I shall not be moved."

## 22 new Cardinals named, including 2 Americans

By Vera Haller=Special to The Washington Post

VATICAN CITY - Pope John Paul II on Sunday named 22 new cardinals - among them two Americans, a Canadian, seven Italians and the archbishops of Mexico City and Vienna.

When the new cardinals are elevated officially at a ceremony Feb. 21, John Paul will have named 106 of the 123 cardinals who will be eligible to take part in the conclave that chooses his successor.

With the new appointments, the total number of cardinals, including those over the age of 80 - who are not eligible to vote in the election of a pope - will be 168.

The pope tapped American Archbishops Francis Eugene George, 61, of Chicago and James Francis Stafford, 65, the former archbishop of Denver who is now prefect of the Vatican's council on the laity. From 1976 to 1982, Stafford was auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, where he was born.

The Canadian is Aloysius Matthew Ambrozic, archbishop of Toronto.

In Chicago, George said that his elevation to cardinal is as much a recognition of the place that the Chicago Archdiocese holds in the church as it is a personal honor. "I knew it was going to come sometime," he said during a news conference at his residence. "This is an honor to Chicago primarily. I'm really very grateful."

## Trying to make it on reduced assistance

By Kim Murphy=(c) 1998, Los Angeles Times

LEWISTON, Idaho - Colleen Astleford isn't one of the 63 percent of Lewiston welfare recipients dropped from the rolls. She's still trying to make it with Idaho's reduced cash grant. "I'm so far behind, it's not even funny anymore," said the 25-year-old single mother of three. "I was getting \$382 a month, which wasn't enough to begin with. You're not really gaining, but you're staying above water. In July, it went down to \$276. And I completely drowned."

Medicaid still pays the doctor bills for her 7-year-old daughter, who was born with a hole in her heart. But

now, Astleford's 9-year-old daughter has been diagnosed with leukemia. Her doctor says she must be treated in Portland, Ore. And Astleford has no car.

Why not move 10 minutes away to Clarkston, Wash.? Washington's cash assistance program also requires work or job hunting every week, but the benefits would be \$642 a month - at least after the first year.

Astleford shakes her head. "That's what everybody asks me," she said. "I have kids = this is their home. ... Now, they have their school, they're happy. They have their friends, and it is fair to drag them somewhere else again?"