Benny’s Mother and Father

- Mildred Stoughton
- Benjamin Ives Spock
Family Tree

- The Hooper’s came from England
- Settled in Massachusetts
- Relative, Samuel, was charged with devil worship.
- Four Hooper’s Revolutionary War colonel officers
- William Hooper signed the Declaration of Independence
- A generation later, Benny’s great grandfather, had Ada Hooper (Mildred’s mother)
  - She married a Civil War colonel, Charles Stoughton (Mildred’s father)
  - Charles practiced law in his father’s law firm in New York City
  - Ada and Charles moved to Connecticut
Family Tree

- Charles became an alcoholic
- He would leave for long periods of time
- Ada would always take him back
- This on and off abandonment caused Mildred lasting hurt
Family Tree

- Mildred once witnessed her father cheat on her mother
- “Sex is an emotional time bomb, very likely to explode at any time unless properly controlled.”
- Ada finally left Charles
- Took her anger out on the children
Family Background

“When furious, she would beat us with a rawhide whip or lock us in little closets.” Mildred talking about Ada, “She once locked my sister in for a whole day.”

- Mildred’s father passed
- Ada turned to maids and nurses to assist with the daily lives of the children.
Family Background

- Ada’s emotional distance and her father’s desertion caused Mildred to feel she suffered through her childhood.
- Promised herself the rest of her life would be different.
- Mildred found Benjamin Ives Spock
  - Tall, soft spoken lawyer from Yale.
Early Life

- Benny’s rough patch was his childhood
- Benjamin McLane Spock
- Born May 2, 1903
- Oldest followed by Hiddy, Betty, Anne, Bobby, and Sally
- All born at home
- Under Mildred’s watchful eye
Benny and Hiddy; constant companions
Mildred’s Mothering

“She wanted to be the perfect mother and have perfect children.” Hiddy said. “She wanted all six children to be glorious advertisements for the human race.”

“It was perfectly obvious to all of us”, Hiddy recalls, “that he (Benny) was the one she loved. Mainly because he was so much like her.”
Benjamin Ives’ Fathering

- “Cozy” father as described by Benny
- Affectionate
- “I couldn’t do what Mildred did with raising the children. It wouldn’t have worked. She’s too powerful in her own way. She must know what she was doing.”
  – Benjamin Ives Spock
What started it all . . .

- “Summer Complaint”
- State of Maine’s chillier climate
- Mildred became a firm believer in the recuperative power of Maine’s cooler climate and invigorating beauty
- This fact will be relevant in use of raising her children
Mildred Spock’s Rules

- *The Care and Feeding of Children*
- Released in the 1890’s
- Dr. Luther Emmet Holt
- They knew her demands by heart and wouldn’t dare cross her.
- They children came to realize Mildred’s demands were unique
Children’s Diet

- Meats and fats were to be avoided
- First 12 years diet consisted of mainly vegetables, fruits, and eggs
- Chicken on Sundays
- Dr. Holt and Mother believed banana’s disagreed with a youngsters delicate constitution
Expected Behavior

- Always dressed in Sunday best
- Spock kids would bow when neighbors would pass by, Benny would doff off his cap to them as well.
Unexpected Behavior

- Outside of the home Mother was warm, sparkly, funny, and bright
- All of the neighbors considers us fortunate to be her children.
Fresh air “cured” Benny’s summer complaint, so it must work for everything.

To the extreme

“You must have lots of fresh air, no matter how cold.” – Mildred Spock.

Photo from Dr. Holt’s book
- Sleeping Porch
- 2nd story of the Spock's home
- Dr. Denton's to bed
- When freezing: he wore a toboggan hat with ear flaps
Protect Your Child’s Health

Dr. Denton

Soft-Knit Sleeping Garments

are made of our hygienic fabric, knit from special yarn spun in our own mills from unbleached cotton, with some soft wool. No waste or shoddy is used.

Our loosely twisted yarn, knit in an open stitch, and also the natural smoothness of unbleached cotton, give the unique soft-knit feeling.

The hygienic qualities are spun and knit into Dr. Denton fabric.

No dyes or chemicals are used, only raw materials washed with pure soap and water. Our washing process avoids shrinking. Dentons do not shrink but keep their original shape and elasticity.

Body, feet and hands are covered, protecting the child, even if bed coverings are thrown off.

Elastic outside seams, collars double thickness, strong button holes, facings all stayed. Fabric is a moisture, light grey color that does not readily show soil.

Made for children up to fourteen years old.

Price low for the quality.

Insist on genuine Dentons. Name is on each hanger. Our trade mark is on tag attached to each garment. Sold in over 3,200 Dry Goods Stores. If you cannot get them from your dealer, write us.

Dr. Denton Sleeping Garment Mills,

351 NIS Street, Centreville, Michigan.
Sleeping Porch

“There was nothing we could do about it, so we put up with it I guess. We knew it was somewhat peculiar, but it didn’t seem to us like cruelty.” – Benjamin Spock
Education

- All six Spock children first attended Worthington Hooker School
Fresh-Air School

- Mildred and Professor Hocking’s idea
- A Yale professor had a tent and a backyard to use
Benjamin’s Education

- Attended an all-male school at Hamden Hall
- 6 ft. tall by age 12
- Beautiful campus, unlike public schools
- He felt relaxed and focused
- Did well in school
- Played baseball and took dance lessons
Higher Education

- Started at Yale 1921
- Declared major: English
- Did poorly in freshman year
- Summer job changed his drive
- Camp counselor for children with polio
- Impressed by the doctor’s skill level and overall feeling of helping others
- Possible physician?
“I decided at that moment it would be a good career, I didn’t know the difference between pediatrics and orthopedics. But after my first undergraduate summer, I decided to be a children’s doctor.” –Dr. Spock.
Sophomore Year

- Signed up for as many science classes as he could that could get him into medical school
- Sports helped get him out of his academic slump
- He got introduced to rowing.
- Wanted to be successful academically and athletically
“Not only did I want to be one of the boys, but I wanted to accomplish certain things. I wanted other people to recognize me as a successful striver. All of that meant an enormous amount to me, particularly against the feeling that I was a mother’s boy.”
Sophomore Year - 1923

- Met Jane Chaney at a Yale football game
- She would soon become his wife in 1927
- His rowing team qualified for the Summer 1924 Olympics
- Won a Gold Medal!
1927

- Ben started medical school at Columbia
- Babe Ruth was hitting a record 60 home runs
- Empire State building was in the works
Adulthood

- Married Jane in 1927
- 1929 Ben graduated from Medical School
- Two –year internship at Presbyterian Hospital
- Worked long hours
- Bed-side manner
- Made his medical notes readable unlike most doctors
Jane began working at Presbyterian Hospital as well, but as a research assistant with Dr. Draper. This is where Spock began studying Freud. Emotional development >>> pediatrician.
Rough patch

- Jane became pregnant but lost the baby
- Ben came down with a form of tuberculosis
- Chaney and Spock families sent the two off on a vacation
- Ben’s father died of a massive heart attack
Looking up

- Started work at the New York Nursery and Children’s Hospital
- Thumb-sucking
- People still relying on Dr. Holt’s book, just like his mother
- Spock wasn’t the first to want to give advice on how best to raise a child . . .
Child upbringing

- The Bible and local preachers
- Jane’s grandfather always said: “The light of God’s will rather than the back of a parent’s hand, would produce a good Christian adult.”
A lot of Spock’s knowledge and ways he would portray his tips to raising a child

John. B. Watson

Behaviorism

“blank slates”

Began bringing in Freud’s concepts into his analyzing
Caroline B. Zachry

- Highly regarded educator and psychologist at Columbia’s Teachers College
- Helped Spock translate his theories into every day advice
- Spock described his best work as the product of “Freudian psychoanalytic concepts”, what mothers told me, and what Caroline Zachry taught me.
1933

- Their first son Michael was born after Jane had many more miscarriages.
- To this day Ben thinks the miscarriages were punishment for having sexual thoughts during puberty (initiated by his mother, Mildred).
1941

- After working in the hospitals for a few more years Spock felt ready to put his brand of advice into book form.
- “I thought there must be pleasanter ways to raise children than the anguish the six Spock children had known.”
- Jane encouraged him every night to start after hearing his daily experiences.
Ben finally started *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care.*

Didn’t know how to use a typewriter, so Jane would listen and type everything out for him.

She deserves a lot more credit for this book than what she received.

WWII

Went for physical, lungs were too inflamed and he was too unhealthy so wasn’t drafted.

He continued his work on the book.
The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care

- Had many sections
- **Things You’ll Need:** Rubber nipples for the bottles, proper tools to clean the bottles, baby oil and powder, a baby carriage/stroller.
- Milk and food charts
- Two-Page spread about different formulas
- How teeth should look
- Breastfeeding
- How to read a thermometer
- Skin problems
  - “110. Diaper Rash”
  - “113. Cradle Cap”
  - “378. Emergency treatment for high fever”
  - “450. Convulsions”
Spock gave readers precise instructions about what to do in these situations so the parents could better understand and to ease the worry.

- Egg shaped as babies instead of ball-shape, when dressed sweaters should be slipped over back portion of the child’s head then the front
- How much a baby should sleep
- How to make a house or apartment toddler safe
- *Unlike Holt,* Spock said don’t be afraid to hold and kiss your baby when you want
- No sleeping in parents bedrooms past 6 months of age.
- *Modest approach so conservatives thought he was with them*
“To trust yourself, you know more than you think you do.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTDBL_U68XM
Politically active

- 1967 – Martin Luther King Jr.
- 1968 – Against the Vietnam War
Mary Morgan
Discussion

- Has anyone ever heard of Dr. Spock or his book?
- Did your parents or grandparents go by his book?
- Do you think Dr. Spock brought up a generation of disrespectful, independent individual’s? Or was it a combination of psychologist’s inputs? Religion evolving? World evolving?
- Does anyone have any out of the ordinary child upbringing’s of their own they would like to share?
- Has child care/discipline changed from when you were a kid?
References