A STUDY OF READING INTERESTS

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Hal Richard Taylor

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By

Hal Richard Taylor

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Communication Arts of Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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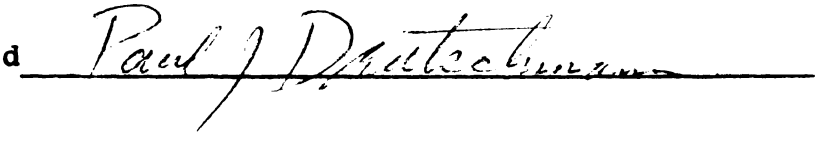
Approved 

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences and similarities in reading interests among farm and urban people. In addition, the study compared 1959 reading interests of farm men, urban men, and urban women with those from a study conducted in 1931 by Douglas Waples and Ralph W. Tyler.

A theoretical formulation was based upon work of other investigators in the areas of interests and reading interests and in rural and urban living. The previous studies indicated that interests are largely influenced by sex, environment, vocation, and education; that farm living has been rapidly changing toward a more urban-like atmosphere.

These hypotheses were developed from the theoretical foundation: Reading interests of...

1. ...farm and urban men of 1959 and of 1931 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm and urban men of 1931.

2. ...urban men of 1959 and of 1931 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm men of 1959 and 1931.

3. ...1931 urban men and farm men will be more closely related than reading interests of 1931 urban men and women; those of 1959 farm and urban women will be more closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women; and those of

1959 farm and urban men will be more closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women.

4. ...college educated farm men (or women) and college educated urban men (or women) will be more closely related than the reading interest relationship of non-college educated farm (or urban) men (or women) and college educated farm (or urban) men (or women).

The Waples-Tyler Reading Interest Check List of 115 topics was mailed to four groups. Response and groups were as shown below with average age and education:

	1st Wave	2d Wave	3d Wave	Total	Col.	Non-Col.	Av. Age
Farm males	26	28	6	60	26	34	41
Farm females	20	19	28	57	20	37	48
Urban males	19	11	18	48	34	14	41
Urban females	50	10		60	23	37	52

Topic scores were organized by deciles to correspond with 1931 data. Correlation coefficients were computed to determine relationships of the various groups.

The 1959 study tended to verify the 1931 findings that sex is a predominant factor in determining reading interests. The hypotheses to that effect were supported and were significant to the 5 percent level and 1 percent level with regard to women groups versus urban men and women groups as well as farm men and women groups; to the 5 percent level only with regard to men groups versus urban men and women groups.

The 1959 study also indicated that farm men and urban men are more alike today than in 1931 and that the difference as hypothesized was significant to the 5 percent level.

None of the other hypotheses were supported. There seemed to be an interaction between variables of environment and education which prevented making conclusive statements with regard to the more important of the two variables.

Topical changes since 1931 which were observed most significant in 1959 included:

1. An increase of interest in "successful business men and women," and in "college and higher education," by urban men.

2. An increase of interest in "U. S. foreign affairs" by farm men.

3. A greater similarity among men in what they least like to read about than in what they most like to read about.

4. An increase in interest among urban women of the topic on "elementary and secondary education."

5. A general stability of topic choice as compared with the contradictory choices made in 1931.

It was also observed that there was a greater similarity of interest in all topics among women than among men in 1959. (No data were available for a 1931 farm women group.)

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of this study is one of simple question. Is there any difference today in general reading interests between farm and urban people? Or, to be more positive: how similar are reading interests today among farm and urban people? What are those differences and similarities? Has there been any change in the past 30 years?

Why Be Concerned?

The establishment of some differences and similarities should be valuable to the communication specialist in that knowing them would provide him with accurate knowledge of handicaps or communication barriers his program might face as he dealt with each group. More important, such knowledge would give him some insight into attitudes underlying opinions on public and other issues, possibly even on the agency providing the information. Even more importantly, knowledge of reading interests may lead to the development of further studies to determine why there are certain interests among people and why they make choices among various interests.

If such answers were available, the information worker, or any mass communicator, should be able to establish a firm base upon which to conduct his program. Practically, he would better know when he was providing material desired

by readers. He could thereby increase the chances that his messages would be read.

There is another reason for some concern about reading interests. It has much broader implications than the immediate problems of the individual mass communicator. It is based on the assumption that most people read something. The amount of published reading material is tremendous and apparently so never-ending that certainly people should not want for something to read. Probably the character of that material--the approach or subject-matter content itself--has much to do with popular attitudes toward current social problems.

A general opinion in the United States holds that the degree to which we are informed about current events and values of importance to our society helps to determine the extent of our protection against those who might have designs against us. Since reading may either enlighten or confuse, the character of reading may be of considerable importance to our society. To know the present character of reading would seem initial to attempts to change or continue it.

What We Need to Know About Reading Interests

The term "interest" here is defined to imply a concept relating to the factors within an indivdual which attract or repel him to or from subjects or activities within his environment. "Reading interests" are intended to relate to those topics or subjects to which a person is

attracted or repelled when he reads or thinks of reading. In this study, the construct of reading interest shall be defined operationally, so to speak, in terms of an instrument known as the Waples-Tyler Reading Interest Check List.[1]

Character of reading may or may not be a reflection of reading interests; at least the two terms as used here are not meant to be synonomous. But surely there is some relation between them. We already have indications that reading interests are not necessarily a direct measure of actual reading, although sex differences in interest often carry over into actual reading. We also have reliable evidence that people are most likely to read topics which they say are of highest interest.

However, nothing of any recency examines the possibility that extensive changes in agriculture, or the increased mobility of American society, might also have affected reading interests. Nor do we have any concrete evidence concerning the extent or change in reading interests, if any, no matter what the cause.

Reading Interests in a Communication Context

Materials which people read deal with an infinite number of topics or subjects. American people in particular have a vast network of communication industries at their disposal. Many of those industries are dependent for

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[1] From Waples, Douglas, and Ralph W. Tyler (94), What People Want to Read About. Chicago: American Public Library Association and the University of Chicago Press, 1931.

support upon the very population they serve. Let us examine the situation in more detail.

Communication in its simplest nature requires at least three elements--a source, a message, and a destination or receiver. The source usually is thought of as an individual --speaking, writing, gesturing, drawing--or as an organization. An organization serving as a source might be a newspaper, publishing company, television or radio station, or any kind of agency preparing and releasing messages on some specific subject or activity. The message may be thought of as a signal or code capable of being interpreted meaningfully as information about or of something or someone. Inked words on paper, a wave of the hand, a semaphore device for trains or between ships, impulses in an electrical current all are messages. The destination or receiver also may be an individual or the member of a group or organization. Here we shall think of the receiver as the reader. He decodes and interprets the message or messages he receives on printed matter.

One other element is involved in the communication process--that of channel. Some theorists define channel in terms of the sense modalities--sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste, i.e., spoken messages use sound waves as the primary channel, giving the receiver words to hear and decode. Printed messages rely on light waves as the primary channel, offering inked words for the receiver to see and to decode. The receiver, in either case, then may encode his interpretation.

Sometimes the receiver creates a new message and may direct it back to the original source, in a return process called feedback. Feedback tells the original source how his message is being interpreted. Mass communicators often find it difficult to obtain feedback, because they have many receivers, each of whom is decoding, interpreting, and encoding.

As the concept of communication is studied, it becomes evident that such a simplified explanation cannot always be considered the total process, by any means. To the reader, the world possibly exists of a confusion of subjects or activities. Contained among the subjects or activities also are various sources of information which are constantly sending messages somewhere. The reader has learned that in order to exist in his own environment with a minimum of frustration, he must be selective toward the messages he receives. He has learned to be selective toward his perceptions of subjects or activities about which he may even transmit his own messages to himself. Thus, he has also learned to relate sources with certain subjects and activities.

In terms of an individual receiver, messages do not always appear in printed form, as has already been suggested. That which is transmitted is not the event, but an abstraction of an event converted in some way to transmissible form--a code. The mere fact that different transmissible forms exist in various codes--sound codes, visible

symbols other than printed words and those which impinge upon the other senses sometimes in combination with those channeled through sound and sight waves--all serves to add to the total confusion. Always, a reader--or receiver--must select out of this confusion that which he wishes to receive.

One who selects abstractions from the confusion of the world makes his decisions on the basis of how well they will fulfill need satisfactions and provide problem solutions. Sometimes there are groups, agencies, and enterprises who make those selections for receivers, i.e., a newspaper or wire service with correspondents located throughout the world.

These selection operations--whether made by individuals for themselves or by groups for other groups or individuals --are each developed in a complexity of varying degrees with regard to selection but common in the source-message-channel-receiver flow. People tend to select and rely more on those messages which they interpret and perceive as most valuable to their individual well-being. Perhaps as people verify those perceptions, or through experience create new ones, they strongly reinforce or build their interests around certain subjects and concepts. Perhaps people also create similar perceptions and interest in the agencies or sources which select and transmit those messages.

Likewise, perhaps the agencies themselves then begin to depend upon the receivers they serve. Rightly or wrongly,

they create their own perceptions using feedback from their receivers. Rightly or wrongly, the agency or original source perceives needs and values of the receivers and the flow begins once again.

An Example of Message Selection

A brief look at information available to farm people may serve as an example of how intensively many subjects are treated by information sources. Doing so also may begin to show how agriculture has changed in recent years, a fact pertinent to the study.

Perhaps because America in past years contained primarily an agrarian society, a significant governmental emphasis was placed on attempts at technological progress in agriculture. Included was the cooperative arrangement between the federal government and the land-grant educational system to support major experimental efforts in agricultural research and to report that research through extension services. Farm people have been receiving the results of that research in many ways --through publications, the press, radio and television, meetings, demonstrations, and so on and on.

In large measure, agricultural research agencies and services have provided information primarily on innovations that would advance farm productivity. But as the nation's farmers improved their knowledge through the years, some rather spectacular changes came about. Efficient farms became truly industrial organizations in themselves in their approach to investment, technology, and production. A problem of over-production brought surplus commodities, and numerous

unworkable plans arose--some of which still attempt to stabilize agriculture. In recent years agencies such as the extension services of each state, in order to broaden the scope and outlook of farm people--and perhaps in efforts to temper emphasis on production--began to issue information considerably different than that of, say, 10 or 15 years ago. Thus, a vast amount of information now exists in printed form about public policy, marketing, urban-rural relations and family relations.

This is not to say that all farmers have shown interest in new ideas about farming nor about the recent emphasis on broadening farm-family living. On the contrary, many farmers seem willing to farm and live in accord with traditional methods. Others accept new practices only when their friends and associates have shown that they think the practices are worthwhile. In other words, they may not read at all the thousands of bulletins and news articles available to them.

Comparing Interests in American Society

Such characteristics do not seem confined to farm people alone. In fact, because of mobility patterns since World War II--movements of farm people to urban areas, urban to suburban, suburban to farm, urban to farm, farm to suburban, etc.--and because of the consequent changes in values, shopping habits, and growing knowledge of the environment surrounding a mobile society, it even becomes difficult to pinpoint any distinct and different characteristics. On almost any issue there are people who are vastly

uninformed, despite sincerely organized efforts to provide interesting and accurate information. Most people seem to be alike in the ways they obtain or do not obtain information. They perceive messages and sources in terms of needs and problem solutions related to their roles in groups to which they belong. But people react differently to messages and the information contained in accord with prior experiences, attitudes, and interests.

Few Americans are so isolated today as to be untouched by some source of information. Sources, in this sense, refer to other people in similar groups or social systems and to all the mass media used by government agencies, public organizations, and private enterprises. It does not seem accurate to say that farm people are as limited in access to media today as is generally supposed.. Instead the differences in accessibility lie within media rather than within receivers. For instance, general newscasts, consumer-education programs, farm shows, or any topic presented on radio and television can occur only at definite times. Seldom are there rebroadcasts. Access is limited to actual time of programming. The same scheduling limitation would hold for meetings, tours, field days, demonstrations, and office calls.

Thus, to compare interests of urban people with those of rural people, it would be preferable to examine similar sources or methods. Also, it would be preferable to compare people in similar roles. For instance, a farmer nowadays,

especially if he is successful, has a broad store of knowledge and skills necessary to manage a complex business. He would not compare with a clerk in a store, with a machine-tool operator in a factory. He might more logically compare with a store manager, a factory president, or a superintendent of a school system. These individuals would have similar economic or managerial responsibilities.

True, there probably would be vocational differences, no matter how similar the responsibilities. A cattle grower might prefer to read of feeding practices in the Farm Journal, whereas a pharmacist probably would prefer an article boosting prescription sales in Modern Pharmacy. But in choosing printed media, as in this example, with which to make comparisons, each individual would use the same channel, sight, from which to secure his information. Also, printed media may be read and re-read at the readers' convenience, suggesting similar advantages and disadvantages of media accessibility. Hence, the decision in this study is to examine reading interests, rather than to study interests relating to those media with less accessibility.

The Organization of the Report

There are six major chapters that follow. They describe in more detail the materials developed and used for the study, the procedures used, the data gathered, and the conclusions reached.

Chapter II summarizes previous research related to reading interests. It also attempts to demonstrate some

information that is related to changes in farmers' interest patterns. Chapter III describes the preliminary steps of the study--the theoretical development and formulation of theoretical hypotheses. Chapter IV outlines the method of procedure, the use of the Waples-Tyler Reading Check List as the measurement instrument, and the sampling plan. Chapter V presents an analysis of data collected and the resulting correlations obtained. Chapter VI summarizes the findings of the study and gives the general conclusions and implications with regard to previous interest studies and with regard to changing agricultural programs.

The appendix presents detailed data not contained in the body of this report and describes the materials used in carrying out the study. The bibliography lists research and resource materials used in the preparation of this report and as background for the study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of studies (34, 84, 91, 94, 95) indicate that an individual's interests are high when topics suggested to him relate to his vocation. Strong (84) says this is especially so when vocational interest is defined not as a single choice but as the sum total of many interests that bear in any way upon an occupational career.

But what happens if the vocation undergoes changes within itself? Strong says that interests are not static. They change from time to time. Let us examine, then, the nature of changes that have taken place in agriculture in order better to determine if there might be changes in farmer-interest patterns. Then let us examine some of the literature in the fields of interests, reading interests, and related concepts which may be pertinent to the problem at hand.

Changes in Farming--1930 to Present

Most U. S. city dwellers know in a general way that the hayseed stereotype of the farmer is a bit out of date. For few Americans could have stood silently by during the past 30 years and have failed to notice the spectacular ways agriculture has changed and production has improved.

Burck (13) says that the average U. S. farm worker is 110 percent more productive than he was 25 years ago. As a result, despite the fact that there are 37 percent fewer farm workers, putting in fewer hours, U. S. farm production is 54 percent more than 25 years ago. Census figures of 1950 indicate that only 13.5 percent of the nation's population lived on farms, as against 25 percent in 1930. Those farm people produce 54 percent more products than farm people did 25 years ago (13). Total farm output rose from $22.6 billion in 1930 to $34.7 billion in 1953, creating a rise in average net income for each farmer from $361 to $2,268 in 1951 or 259 percent. Average factory employee income rose 166 percent in the same period. Of course, averages do not tell a complete story--about 40 percent of the farms grossed more than $2,500 a year in 1950. Many, many unproductive areas and farmers bring down average figures, but the average is still high.

From 1930 to 1953, average farm capital investment in land and equipment increased 65 percent. The two million farms that grossed $2,500 a year or more had an average investment per worker of more than $16,000. Many corn-belt family farms had an investment per worker exceeding $50,000 (13).

The new farmers of whom Burck writes--highly mechanized, capitalized, and specialized--are only one part of the total farm population. Stabilizing production and the agricultural economy for both those people and the less productive farmers has created no small problem for American society. Similarly

the differences between farm and urban income increases have led to criticisms of agricultural subsidizing and thoughts of unfair government treatment to other groups of society (13).

Agriculturists are quite aware of agricultural changes and the criticisms of the rest of American society. McCormick (59) lists seven problems most frequently talked about as a result of concern: farm income, farm prices, efficiency, freedom, the family farm, increasing or at least maintaining the farm population and the number of farms, and increasing farm products. Perhaps the striking rise in productivity has intensified those problems, for surely they have long been with us. Burck (13) says that productivity began to rise in the early 1940's at 4 percent a year or nearly double the rate between 1920 and 1940. Even during World War II, when there were 10 percent fewer men on farms, American civilians ate 12 percent better than 1935-1939.

After the war, improved breeds, fertilizer, seeds, and feed coupled with machines and better management practices brought astounding outputs per acre. Kreitlow (48) writes, "...just as surely as production increased and surpluses arose, farming as a way of life became lost and became a business." So also may have begun a change in social attitudes about farming.

Spaulding (8) discusses trends in agriculture and sees them as closely related to the economic institution of the gesellschaft integration, indicative of the disintegration of the traditional rural community.

Kreitlow (48) lists a number of trends and organizes eight as related most closely to home and family:

"1. Less parental control...." Here he says movement is to a shared or democratic control rather than strong patriarchal or matriarchal control.

"2. Increased activities outside the home...." Today there also is a tendency for each member of the family to go his own way in search of satisfying activities rather than to rely on the old notion that activities should center under one roof with all members of the family.

"3. Increasing numbers of impersonal relationships ...." Environmental conditions which are the same as those factors which made for a decrease in personal relations in city family life create such relationships. For example, the family is no longer a self-sufficient productive unit; its buying leads to impersonal and business-like relationships between any member of the family and a store clerk.

"4. Increased availability of leisure time...." There are less chores because of mechanization. It doesn't take youngsters as long to go to and from school as it once did. Farmers and members of their families may use extra time for more production, to go to town more often, or for recreation.

"5. Acceptance of urban standards...." This has been brought on by increasing contacts between rural and urban people, by mass media. Often instead of examining the value of urban standards, rural people accept them and assume that they are desirable.

"6. Modern farm homes...." Electricity has brought better food preservation methods, plumbing, lighting, radios and television sets, central heating, and everything generally found in an urban home. Farm homes, newly built, have been smaller in size and more similar to urban homes in construction and design.

"7. Decreased numbers of persons in the farm home...." In addition to the decreasing size of the individual farm family--despite increases in birth rates--now there is a separation of the greater family into separate units, i.e., son and his wife no longer live with the parents. Now there is more work available in the villages and cities. Village and city work has helped reduce the number of extra family members who once went back to the farm when there was no other place to go. And the fact that there is less need for large numbers of farm laborers undoubtedly has influenced decisions to go elsewhere.

"8. Decrease in the practice of folk arts and skills ...." This trend or change has been brought on especially by the decrease in size of families and by the ability now to enjoy other recreation.

Kreitlow also suggests five trends that are related to the social organization of the total society. Included are:

"1. Change in the composition of the population...." The average age has been increasing and today farm groups are just as mobile as urban groups. As a result, rural living now has a degree of instability it previously had not known.

"2. Rising standards of living...." Urban families may set the pace, but farm families probably have improved their living standards more since 1940 than any other group in our society. At least their rising incomes could have provided means for improving their standards of living.

"3. Decline of neighboring [sic] in the local setting ...." Visiting among farm neighbors declined especially during the period of rapid change in transportation and communication. At the same time people changed their reasons for contacting others--once location and common work needs determined and perhaps limited contacts; now interests may be more important. Interests also may be broader since mobility is greater. (If we aren't interested in the family at the neighboring farm, we'll just hop in the car and drive on down the road until we find someone who does interest us.)

"4. Increased emphasis on organizations...." Farm people probably have as many, if not more, clubs to join as any group. Also, in comparison with the rural past, farm people now participate more. They take an active part in governmental units, i.e., school district, town, county, and even state organizations. They also work frequently in church and adult education groups and are often members of special commodity groups.

"5. Greater interdependence between rural and urban people...." Kreitlow says interdependence is brought on mainly by specialization. By producing more for the market instead of for the cellar, farm people require certain

commodities which only urban people can provide. And by providing rural people with goods, merchants come to rely on them for their own support.

Such are the trends in agriculture which lead to considerable concern among farmers and farm groups, agricultural agencies and governmental policy makers. Largely the concern carries political implications. As Spaulding (80) points out, "...for their money, farm people characteristically rely on the sale of perishable products on a market over which they have no control since they are neither high nor stably established within the power structure of the industrial-commercial institution." Spaulding continues:

> Economic and governmental institutions "... are functionally interrelated and it is in terms of them that agriculture is most thoroughly involved with the industrial-commercial gesselschaft integration. However, the stability of the government institution is greater than that of the economic institution for the agricultural population. Hence, in working for greater economic stability, on which their levels of living and position in the power structure of the system's economic institution depend, the farm population has utilized the governmental institution to obtain commercial support of agriculture, for the position farmers have achieved in their involvement in the industrial-commercial gesellschaft integration is a tenuous one, dependent upon cash income and credit, and the control of these is seated above them in the overlapping power structure roles of the gesellschaft governmental and economic institutions." (p. 221)

As the traditional rural community breaks down, whatever the politics of the farm problem--if all farm problems can be spoken of as one problem--the local farm leader also undoubtedly will undergo a change in position status, prestige, social role, and social values. That is, he will

change--almost evaporate--unless he can make the transition from the former gemeinschaft structure to gesellschaft structure. Unfortunately, not all farmers have the capital, the education, the skills, and the abilities to make the transition. Simply put, we have larger farms, fewer farms, and fewer farmers today because of the heterogeneity of the farm population. Some individuals have been able to keep pace with technical and political changes. Some have not.

Morally, it appears necessary to help those people who have not kept pace. But as Lionberger (53) suggests, the tragic side of attempts to help them is that, by and large, low income farmers have indicated that they have not felt a need for the services offered by government agencies. He concludes that agencies responsible for channeling information to low income farmers might well consider making better use of channels that appear to be in operation. Unless they do something at least, Burck's prediction may become a reality: "...the transformation of every genuine farmer into a highly capitalized, highly productive, highly specialized, prosperous professional entrepreneur." Unfortunately, Burck's prediction supposes even further changes in farming than we have had to date. Additional changes are not to be labeled bad, but such a movement cannot help but create changes elsewhere in the social system which would require consideration and adjustment. "Pertinent in this respect," Spaulding says, "is the 'labor movement,' which reflects, as does the 'farmers' movement,' the on-

going adjustment to the gesellschaft integration of the industrial-commercial way of life."

The "New" Society

Today, then, we see a farm population rapidly becoming a part of a mass audience, which some writers (1, 4, 22, 23, 28, 51, 66) indicate already includes no such entity as the farmer. Nelson (66) and Anderson (4, 5) see the attitudinal and value-system differences attributed to rural and urban people also diminishing. Loomis and Beegle (55) predict that the general values of rural and urban people will merge and "...contact with people with disturbing and unpopular ideas" will result in little or no difference between farm and urban residents in regard to tolerance. They point to present attitudes toward strikes, organized labor, wages, and the socialization of industry--wherein farm people side with management generally--but also recall how the farmers have aligned with laboring interests in national and state elections.

Green (36) maintains that despite suggestions to the contrary, the older society had less cohesiveness. Family and village groups may have been more intimate, but problems were defined by individuals or primary groups, and their solution was sought by individuals or primary groups. Now, in modern society, distant points and peoples are brought within formal contact through bureaucratic organization and communication devices. Once, despite the lack of formal integration, the smaller groups were united by moral concensus, and the ideas, values, and economic

activities of one locality differed very little from those of others. Now, interests, loyalties, identification, and attitudes probably tend to splinter according to age group, occupation, region, and social class.

The influence of communication media upon people today, whether rural or urban, receives considerable mention by sociologists (1, 7, 22, 23, 41, 51, 55, 61, 62, 79). Loomis and Beegle (55) say about 25-30 percent of the adult population reads one or more books a month; 45-50 percent sees a motion picture once every two weeks or oftener; 60-70 percent reads one or more magazines more or less regularly; about 85-90 percent reads one or more newspapers regularly; about 90-95 percent listens to the radio 15 minutes a day (this was in 1950, before widespread ownership of television sets).

McEvoy (61) reports that in Indiana surveys, newspapers had at least one reader in 92 percent of the families contacted; radio reached at least one person in 71 percent of the families; television reached 78 percent. His returns were mainly from middle class urban families. They generally received two or three different newspapers, three magazines (for families that received any magazines), and had at least one person who read, listened to or watched one or more of the media that came into the home.

As for purely rural--or partly rural--sources, Loomis and Beegle (55) report weekly newspapers published in 8,812 towns and villages in 1952. Copp, et al, (23) found that a categorization of information sources among farm people

was a difficult task, since most sources involved "...both a medium and a sender of communication."

Some researchers, as Copp (22, 23), Beal, et al (7), and Lionberger (53) appear to worry about farmers' evaluation of the effect of different media on their operations. Other studies, such as those by Longstaff and Laybourn (56), Lorge (57), Miller (63), and Schramm and Ludwig (79) show similar worries about urban receivers--or any receiver, rural or urban, for that matter. They seem to slight the suggestions of Hyman and Sheatsley (41) that people are all similar; that they merely react differently to information according to their prior experiences, attitudes, and interests; and that people fall into two extreme groups: the hard core of chronic "know-nothings" and the "interested" people who acquire the most information.

Fliegel (28) may have touched on this concept in his study about aspirations of low-income farmers and their performance and potential for change. He found that there was a significant relationship between aspiration and family income from nonfarm sources. Aspiration was related to orientation toward farming as an occupation, with those high in aspiration tending to reject farming. But he concluded that if those who are farm oriented are not high in aspiration, they are not likely to enlarge or develop their farms so as to increase income.

Fliegel's findings appear significantly related to those of Hyman and Sheatsley when we first study Strong's (85) notion:

> "If a man has the ability and the want to acquire an interest, he has the want and there is nothing remarkable in the fact that interest emerges, since interest is supposed to develop when one is successfully satisfying his needs." (pp. 10-11)

Perhaps then knowledge of interests would lead to predictions of farm orientation. If agencies concerned with helping people adjust to agriculture's changes could develop people's interests into high aspirations, the agencies might create more satisfactory objectives and goals which could be implemented toward more effective social adjustment.

Interests, Reading Interests, and Related Concepts

"Interests" already have been defined to imply the factors within an individual which attract or repel him to or from subjects or activities within his environment. Berdie (10) explains several criteria employed to define interests: attention, process of choice, persistence, success, differential remembering, set or predisposition, emotions or feelings. He also describes the dimensions of interests as "extensity," or spatial quality as an attribute of sensation; "intensity," or degree of strength; and "duration," or the tendency to last in time.

Strong (85) calls an interest simply a response of liking; an aversion is a response of disliking.

In tests conducted by Strong (85) the relationship of interests to attitudes seemed close indeed, at least insofar as his measurements are concerned. For a simple interest test of "like, indifferent, and dislike" simply becomes an attitude test when changed to "agree-disagree."

Educators have studied interests for many years, primarily as a basis on which to develop curricula that will train students for their vocation (19, 29). Evidence from the use of most interest tests bears out the conclusion that interests are primarily of environmental origin; that they appear to have a chance relationship to abilities; that they measure pleasurable associations in social life; that the number, kind, and complexity of one's interests are determined by his training; and that the slight differences found particularly by Strong (84), between men of 25 and 55 years of age[1] make it clear that interests are not particularly affected by years of activity in a given occupation.

Research in reading interests discloses similarities. Here, "reading interests" have been defined as the same factors involved in "interests" except that they are related to reading or thinking of reading. In other words, reading interests constitute those topics a person likes or dislikes to read about.

For 30 years, William S. Gray (33) has included reviews of studies about reading interests in his summaries of reading investigations for the Elementary School Journal and for the Journal of Educational Research. The task has not been a small one. McCullough (60) totaled Gray's summaries in

[1] Thorndike (88) disputes the age theory however. He studied shifts of interests with age by asking respondents, ages 23 to 40, to estimate strength of tendencies of themselves at age 12 and at the time. Although he concluded that interests do change with age, it may be possible to question the ability of respondents to recall their interests to age 12.

her own review of reading research for three years, i.e., from July 1, 1953 through June 30, 1956, Gray reported 291 reading investigations. McCullough also noted other reviews of research, i.e., a count of 760 pieces of research from 1945 through 1952 that did not include 135 items on reading instruction or 129 items on the psychology of reading.

Obviously studies on reading do not always include studies of interest. For example, among Gray's review of research for July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1957, are really only two major studies of reader interest. One had to do with a study of preferences of magazines and radio commentators among college students. The other, by MacLain and Pinna (58), showed how distance from news events affected interest. Broadly speaking, the other studies related to what might be called general interests, i.e., what students like to paint or draw, predicting occupations from wearing apparel, and analyzing grades of students by subjects liked or disliked.

In 1931 Waples and Tyler (94) undertook to study "what people want to read about" by classifying under 117 headings the topics appearing in contemporary magazines over a 10-year period. They excluded four types of material: pure fiction, humorous writing, historical subjects, and subjects addressed primarily to vocational groups.

They exposed their list to specific groups of individuals, asking each person to indicate his relative interest in each topic. They obtained returns from about 5000 people

who represented 13 major groups. Most of the people interviewed had not attended college.

Major findings were first, that all groups of adults express genuine interest in reading about matters of real importance; second, people like to read about themselves; and third, two topics, international attitudes and problems and personal hygiene, were subjects of universal high interest. Self-improvement and laws and legislation were of near-universal, high interest.

Here are the most interesting topics, as revealed by the study:

To non-college men:

Laws and legislation (common sense of legal procedure)
Citizenship (individual responsibilities toward improvement of government and social conditions)
International attitudes (what other nations think of this country and of each other)
Personal hygiene (simple medical discussions, as in press columns)
Interesting places in the U. S. (entertaining travel sketches)
Adult education (opportunities to learn more about useful and interesting subjects)

To non-college women:

Prevention and treatment of specific ills (first aid)
Personal hygiene (as above)
Self improvement (ways of overcoming social, vocational, and personal deficiencies)
The use and abuse of reading (elementary guides to useful reading)
Successful marriage (conditions of and how they may be secured)
Adult education (as above)

The study showed some interesting contrasts when Waples and Tyler tested a group of Vermont farmers and villagers.

Most Preferred	Most Avoided
Successful business men and women	Actors and actresses
Citizenship	Royalty and social leaders
The next war	U. S. foreign affairs
Preparedness	Foreign government and politics
Peace movements	Mining and metal industries
Prices and costs of living	Trades and manufacturing
Personal hygiene	Comments on marriage and divorce
Plant life	Eugenics and birth control
Rural problems	Attitudes--men versus women
Interesting places in the U. S.	Writers and writing
Religion and the world today	Arts and art crafts
The use and abuse of reading	

It is interesting to note the preferences for "citizenship," the "next war," "preparedness," and "peace movements" as opposed to the avoided topics of "U. S. foreign affairs," and "foreign governments and politics." Those avoided topics seem to be the very ingredients of war and peace. Similarly, there was a preference for "prices and costs of living," yet people avoided two topics key to the issue: "mining and metal industries," and "trades and manufacturing."

The Waples and Tyler study failed to reveal any relationship between reading interest and actual reading. It really was not intended to do that anyway, although the questionnaire did contain space for listings of recently-read books. Also the contradictions noted above may be partially explained by the Parry and Crossley study (71) showing that invalidity often follows social pressures, in this case the depression. Also, the Waples-Tyler work did not give much information about the Vermont farm people studied, admittedly unnecessary at the time.

Few studies even today relate directly to interests among agriculture; even fewer relate to reading interests of farm people. The major effort, as already noted, seems to be directed toward measuring the influence of reading upon farmers. Studies show an evaluative concern for past agency programs, but often give little thought to the possibility that attitudes, interests, and so forth may well have had more influence than the reading effects being evaluated. In fact, sometimes there is little or no evidence that people even read the agricultural matter, much less became influenced by it.

But a few studies do have a bearing upon reading interests--especially useful for comparisons of rural-urban values, availability, and considerations made by sources to provide interesting information. For instance: Anderson (4, 5) in his investigations of values in rural living, disclosed opinions of rural life among rural and urban people that are similar. A study by the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities and the Fund for Adult Education (2) pointed to the few differences in availability of all mass media between rural and urban segments of our population. Availability varies, of course, by area, but the urban-oriented person frequently overlooks the rural magazines and periodicals, since most other media are urban centered. (A fuller description of printed media available to farm people is described by Loomis and Beegle (55) and has been discussed earlier.)

The land-grant report outlined an attempt to obtain from college information people a view of mass media efforts to disseminate information to rural people. Responses were rarely unqualified but typically contained evaluative judgments, i.e. considerable pessimism regarding the effectiveness of printed media in adoption of new practices; opinions reflecting more confidence in personal contacts. A number of the publicists thought that if mass media were to be effective in promoting social objectives, their use was contingent upon three conditions: first, monopolizing the media and neutralizing counter social objectives; second, using the mass media to analyze basic attitudes; and third, supplementing mass media with face-to-face contacts. Such answers correspond closely with reports of Katz and Lazarsfeld (46).

Although placing some confidence in written materials, college information specialists emphasized a "balanced program," defined to specify attempts to use all media available to them rather than rely on only one or two.

Two even more practical studies about effects, based on availability are those of Carpenter (20) and Irvine (42). Carpenter uncovered attitudinal factors brought on by format, shape and size, and length of publications. Irvine emphasized importance of educational level of farmers, urging that materials be prepared to meet the abilities of people in the South, thereby allowing readers to develop wider interests and skills.

Johnson and Haver (45) found that barely 1 percent of extension publications and 2 percent of experiment station materials dealt with new technology. They wondered how to increase output per man in farming in order to keep up with advancing industrial wage rates and decided that the solution lay in new technology and in economic adjustment to new technology. But they found indications that economic adjustment within technologies and skills now known to individual farmers probably would not do the job. Farmers apparently have this feeling too; Johnson and Haver investigated in seven states and found that only 18 percent of the information which 1075 farmers would use in operating farms for profit dealt with new technology. The problem then seemed to be in definitions of "new technology," for Johnson and Haver concluded that there should be new emphasis on new technology--at least on labor-saving technology, especially in handling livestock, feeds, livestock products and wastes, and fruits and vegetables.

Lionberger's findings (53 and 54) on diffusion of farm information closely parallel Gray and Rogers conclusions (35)--to be discussed later--that social role is a basic determiner of reading patterns.

A number of individuals and groups apply the social role theory. Gunlogson (37) says:

> "There are many indications that the farmer is not only aware of the multiplying developments in agriculture but that he is searching more diligently for information about new things and practices and how to apply them on his farm. The information sources that can best serve in this capacity will become increasingly valuable to the farmer.

> "There seems to be a growing interrelationship between information sources, and between information and contact. A farmer may read about something in a paper or in manufacturers' literature, then go to the county agent or a neighboring farmer for further and more localized information." (p. 9)

And, as Printers' Ink (27) urged advertisers so recently:

> "Prestige is an important motivating factor in a farmer's decision to buy machinery. Thus, a manufacturer of milking machines assumed that its market lay among farmers with herds of 15 cows and up. However, the Farm Research Institute of Champaign, Illinois, quickly established the fact that many farmers with only 8 to 12 cows wanted to have milking machines as a status symbol.... the farmer is responsive to advertising that gives him information, even semi-technical and detailed information, about the complicated products on which he has come to rely." (p. 102)

Copp (23) suggested that if information is accessible, failure to adopt might be related either to indifference to the media or failure to exploit the media for farm information. He considered that this failure is demonstrated by farmers' evaluation of the effect of different media on their operations, saying: "only two-fifths felt college bulletins had made a difference."

Although Copp (22, 23) primarily discussed adoption of farm practices, he offers an insight, as we have already discussed, into a possible means for creating information of interest to farm readers. Some further comments are appropriate here. Copp says that adoption seems to be better influenced not by promotion of recommended practices but through obtaining changes in an operator's personality orientation. If it becomes impossible to change personality orientations, then "...the agricultural educator will be

forced to conduct his teaching in terms of the operator's frame of reference." If that approach were applied to written material, then there might be some correlation between the mature reader described by Gray and Rogers and information thought to be interesting and useful to agricultural people. It could be that rural readers are more mature than we have thought.

Before jumping to any definite conclusions, however, caution is advisable. Hyman (40) demonstrated effectively the fact that people do not always answer questions in ways that give a true picture of their behavior. Such caution also is applicable to studies of reading interest.

For instance, outside the field of agriculture, Carnovsky (16) studied the relationship of reading interest to actual reading. Specifically, purpose and scope of his study was to determine (a) what subjects students (at the University of Chicago) were interested in reading; (b) effect of sex in differentiating reading interests; (c) year-to-year changes; (d) what class differences were evident; (e) how students compared in different divisions of the university; (f) effect of intelligence on reading interests; (g) effect of scholarship; and (h) effect of reading habits.

Carnovsky's assumption was that such factors as advertising, readability, and accessibility had a general influence on reading. His analysis showed low correlations between interest and actual reading. His evidence, with respect to reading, was more suggestive than conclusive.

Therefore he felt that interest alone does not furnish an adequate guide to what people read.

Other factors did intervene, however: knowledge of material to be read, accessibility, readability, and authority of the authors. Sex differences in interest also appeared stable and perhaps may be considered significant. These factors are all verified by other studies, especially, Waples (90, 92), Nafziger (64), and Johnson (44).

Carnovsky's study considered non-fictional material in book form. His sample was limited to students at the University of Chicago. One might consider that the reading reported was limited to too few titles, but perhaps this is only a general limitation. At least the study did serve as a focus for further investigation.

Gray and Rogers (35), attacking the relationship between interests and actual reading practices in terms of maturity, suggested the problem of purpose which readers have:

> "Closely associated with reading interests are the purposes that prompt individuals to read .... current motives for reading vary all the way from sheer escape to the painstaking search for the answer to a challenging social problem or for a guiding philosophy of life." (p. 14)

Gray and Rogers selected five categories to represent the major aspects of reading: (a) interest in reading; (b) purposes for reading; (c) recognition and construction of meaning; (d) reaction to and use of ideas apprehended; and (e) kinds of material read.

They established 13 major categories as "purposes of reading," defining purpose broadly in terms of behavior as the "motivation which causes a person to do a particular piece of reading." They arrived at the purpose, listed below, by studying literature, consulting experts, and tabulating responses from about 400 people:

1. As a ritual, or from force of habit.
2. From a sense of duty.
3. Merely to kill time.
4. To know and understand current happenings.
5. For immediate personal satisfaction or value.
6. To meet practical demands of daily living.
7. To further vocational interests.
8. To carry on and promote professional or vocational interests.
9. To meet personal-social demands.
10. To meet socio-civic needs and demands (good citizenship).
11. For self development or improvement, including extension of cultural background.
12. To satisfy strictly intellectual demands.
13. To satisfy spiritual needs.

These parallel, partially, the social influences suggested by Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw (93), which might more properly be considered effects of such reading.

Gray and Rogers pointed out that studies about purpose of reading have taken the approach either of finding specific motives for reading or of relating stated purposes with other assumptions concerning human behavior. They say:

> "...studies...indicate that not more than 10 percent of adults voluntarily seek serious, challenging reading material; that half or more of the adult population read little more than the daily newspaper, a few periodicals of mediocre value, and an occasional mystery book; that another 30-40 percent limit their reading largely to immediate-reward reading, including low-grade fiction, in preference to serious reading that promises only delayed rewards." (p. 45)

They made five conclusions from their study of other studies about reading: (a) that social role or class appears as a basic determiner of an individual's reading pattern; (b) that the concept of social role represents a constellation of intellectual, emotional, and social characteristics; (c) that education seems the most likely indicator of the participation patterns; (d) that education is not seen as bearing a direct, simple, causal relationship to the reading pattern but rather as a clue to social role which is more nearly the determiner of the pattern; (e) that education appears to be the springboard or stimulus for the development of a firm foundation of interests and skills. They thought education might lead to wider interests and higher skills, which in turn would stimulate ever growing interests. In this way, according to Gray and Rogers, education is a determiner of social role as well as an outcome of it.

In an attempt to identify and measure characteristics of reaching maturity, Gray and Rogers then made three separate studies: first, an exploratory study of 21 persons widely distributed in respect to education, socio-economic status, and vocation; second, a cross-sectional sampling of 38 adults out of the 160,000 population of a midwestern city; and third, 21 adults selected and interviewed because they were reputedly "well-read" and therefore assumed to be mature readers.

The studies brought forth several conclusions, including these:

1. Each adult reader is distinctive; he represents a combination of reading interests, attitudes, and skills rarely duplicated in full by others.

2. Diverse patterns of reading behavior are the product of varying external factors and personal characteristics that influence development of each person.

3. "...enthusiasm for reading bears a consistent relationship to other maturity levels on the part of the selected cases.... the highly mature reader possess the motives or inner drives and the reading skills that enable them to make use of reading in harmony with their enthusiasm for the role it may play in their lives." (p. 232)

4. "...amount of education appears to be less effective in inculcating the kinds of interests and motives that lead to wide personal reading than in developing ability to understand and interpret what is read.... formal education does not always insure essential reading skills." (p. 233)

This might be stated in another way: amount of formal education seems more closely related to level of reading competence than to extent of personal reading. Other evidence supports this notion (75, 76, 78, 83, 90, 91, 92, 95). Education apparently contributes a great deal to developing an ability to understand and interpret what is read. Yet it also undoubtedly develops interest and motives that lead to wide reading. The studies above also offer evidence similar to that of Gray and Rogers, continued below:

5. Quality of the education given is highly important. As quality varies, education may limit or facilitate growth toward a high level of maturity in reading. Most outstandingly mature readers had had some period in school or college when they acquired strong motives that led to stimulating adventures in reading.

6. Individuals who see themselves as socially responsible members of the larger community--degree to which one feels himself personally

> involved in problems and events outside the orbit of his daily routine, and the degree to which he enters into the solution of those problems through communication with others--are more mature readers.

Or, individuals are more mature readers if they see themselves as socially responsible members of the larger community of which they are a part. Undoubtedly they are also simply more mature.

7. Superior readers are blessed, generally, with high native intelligence.

Klapper (47) takes a somewhat broader outlook relating his remarks to effect of the communication, yet more pointed and specific than agricultural evaluations of effects. He attributes receipt of a communication to pre-existing attitude patterns, saying that they influence and sometimes determine whether a reader sees or hears a communication at all, whether he pays it passing or careful attention, and how he reacts to it. To Klapper, the deeply ingrained or ego-involved attitudes may even affect the meaning which the reader attributes to the communication itself. He also maintains that the significant point is that effect actually derives neither from the content nor from the source, but rather from the image of the source which prevails among the audience.

A recent content analysis study of Ellison and Gosser (26) refutes the old notion that people may be more likely to read if material is short. They believe that "mass readers will sit still for long, thoughtful articles on topics that appeal to them."

Ellison and Gosser seem to practice that type of study mentioned by Gray and Rogers--relating reading to other aspects of human behavior. They say:

> "There is evidence that the individual reader is growing even more concerned about his own orientation and adjustment; the increase in articles about personal management, physical and spiritual, is pronounced. The same period has witnessed a sharp drop in biographical articles except... biographies of criminals. Is the reader becoming too concerned about himself to want to read much about others?" (p. 34)
>
> "Even in the age of satellites, editors are finding science hard to sell. The Atlantic shifted from its '47 emphasis on science to a '57 concern with overseas events, and no other magazine chalked up a gain for science. It will surprise no one to learn that Coronet shifted its preference for cultural miscellany to personal affairs." (p. 34)

It is difficult to summarize such studies briefly and make any separate, conclusive statements from them all. We have the studies by the National Opinion Research Center (95) which reported human behavior, interesting personalities, and homemaking as the most interesting subjects about which 2114 adults in 17 cities prefer to read. We have the Strang (83) studies and the Schramm (78) lists of why people read, how interests vary (slightly) by age, by economic status, and so forth. We have the many library studies (15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 49, 75, 90, 92, 94) some of which have already been discussed. There are studies relating to reading interests in newspapers and magazines (26, 58, 64, 65); studies to determine why people want to read books (52); what their major fields of concern are (11); how interests are related to sex and marital status (44); and how "educated" people

seek information through reading (38). There are also attempts to relate radio listening and reading (6, 33), and to determine effects of television upon interests (8, 9).

Undoubtedly there has been some significant progress in some areas of reading interest in past years. However, much duplication of effort is evident, and, perhaps in some cases, the patterns of investigation and evaluation instruments have not been suitable to the solution of the problems. Such an observation may be too critical. But it is difficult to study mass communication (47) and people if only because of the complexities which permit people to move other people (50).

One can summarize, however, by making these conclusive statements about reading interests:

1. Next to themselves, people like to read about someone like themselves.
2. Of factors that determine reading interest--sex, education, environment, age, and time spent each week in reading--sex is by far the most important.
3. Next to sex, the most important factor is education. Topics of most importance to society, for instance, are least interesting to readers with little schooling.
4. Age, environment, and time are less important factors. In fact, reading interests become stabilized with age; they may change, but degree of change becomes less as one grows older.
5. Topics related to a group's vocation or occupation often are highest in the group's list of total interests, but the group does not necessarily read only about its vocational problems.

6. Attitudes that govern reading may be affected by social necessity, and expectations as to reward compared to efforts required (including availability, readability, and content).

Chapter III

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECT TASKS

Much of the preceding information leads one to restate the questions mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Is there any difference today in general reading interests between farm and urban people? Are there any similarities? If so, what are the differences and similarities?

Before proceding further, let us define "general reading interests." They refer to topics related to the whole of society's problems. For instance, general reading interests would include topics such as health, government, foreign relations, problems of science, changes and problems of education, and so on and on. Waples and Tyler (94) made a further categorization of 115 topics representative of the rather broad topical groupings above. As a contrast to "general reading interest," "vocational reading interests" would relate directly to topics concerned only with a specific occupation.

To use the Waples and Tyler instrument again, we must remember that Waples and Tyler found that special interest groups tended to show more interest in new ideas relating to their vocation than in topics of general interest. There is no particular reason why people today would not act similarly, since people tend to see problems according to the notions of their own group.

But we also know that it is sometimes a different group that is taken as the basis of reference. For instance, among the Waples-Tyler classifications is one topic relating to the vocation of agriculture: "What are the recent developments in farming?" Farmers in 1931 placed that topic high among all those in which they expressed interest. Today, as in 1931, we also might expect individuals belonging to other groups but who have a close relationship to farming, i.e., bankers who loan money to farmers, to place the topic high in interest.

But here we must measure group relationships rather than individual relationships in order to determine some form of the relationship and some accuracy with which we might make predictions. And, according to our basic questions, our groups are simply rural and urban people. Let us analyze briefly the two groups and attempt to make some basic predictions.

If agriculture has changed--in standard of living, mobility, values, reliance upon urban resources, and so on--to the extent supposed by agricultural writers, we might assume that farmers have broader reading interests today than in 1931. If urban people are more aware of agriculture's problems, we might suspect a higher interest, generally speaking, in rural problems now than in 1931. But there are no topics in the Waples-Tyler test to measure rural interest by urban people. We might assume that topics of government problems, marketing, business conditions, and so on could possibly contain some reference to agricultural conditions.

But the only item in the check list related to agriculture, without any assumptions, is that specific one, "...recent developments in farming." Probably urban people today--as in 1931--would express little or no interest in it.

All we can do then is to concern ourselves with general reading interests. Considering degree of change between rural standards of living and those of city people, we might expect relatively little change in general reading interests of urban people since 1931. At least change might not be as great by comparison with rural people. Therefore, the relationship of reading interests of urban people of 1931 and 1959 would be closer than the relationship of reading interests of 1931 farm people and 1959 farm people.

Were we to compare reading interests among farm people of today with urban people of today, again in view of the changes in agriculture, we might expect considerable similarity between urban and farm groups. In other words, we would expect a closer relationship in reading interests between farm people of today than between 1931 groups identifiable with farm and urban people.

The assumptions expressed here disregard two factors: differences among groups as to sex and as to education. However, despite the changes in agriculture since 1931, and despite the fact that those changes might affect placement of specific topics in ranking, we should still expect men and women to compare in their reading interest differences much as they did in 1931. Waples and Tyler apparently did not test farm women in 1931, so comparisons of farm and urban people mentioned above must apply only to male subjects.

Waples and Tyler also did not specify education of the farmers tested in 1931, so we cannot compare reading interests of farmers today with farmers of 1931 according to education--at least, not by using the Waples-Tyler data. Other studies tell us that education tends to broaden reading interests and also that vocations or occupations are important in determining reading interests. But if rural groups are better educated today, if they have more material available to read, we might expect them to have similar reading interests to urban groups, especially so if both groups are educated.

Comparisons implied above do not permit any conclusion about why and how people differentiate among topics available to them. Also, such comparisons do not indicate whether people actually will read topics in which they express an interest. But we can speculate about reference groups and the relationships between the groups selected. Considering that the social pressures brought on by the depression may have influenced ratings of topics in the Waples-Tyler 1931 test, we might determine whether there is some degree of social stabilization prevalent now that was not prevalent in 1931. For instance, the contradictory choices of 1931 may have largely disappeared by now. At the same time, we might find some new relationships between topics now which might be indicative of present social pressures, i.e., international tensions.

In summary, and in view of the rationale expressed above, the relationships presumed in this chapter become project tasks to determine whether:

1. Reading interests of farm and urban men of 1959 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm and urban men of 1931.

2. Reading interests of urban men of 1959 and of 1931 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm men of 1959 and of 1931.

3. Reading interests of 1931 urban men and farm men will be more closely related than reading interests of 1931 urban men and women; those of 1959 farm and urban women will be more closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women; and those of 1959 farm and urban men will be more closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women.

4. Reading interests of college educated farm men (or women) and college educated urban men (or women) will be more closely related than the reading interest relationship of non-college educated farm (or urban) men (or women) and college educated farm (or urban) men (or women).

Chapter IV

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In a sense, the study reported here is a replication of the Waples-Tyler study of 1931 (94), with a few limitations as to groups tested. Basically, however, the method of procedure closely follows that used by Waples and Tyler.

According to instructions for using the Waples-Tyler instrument, the first problem in determining reading interest relationships is to define the group or groups whose reading interests are to be determined. For purposes of this study, two rather broad groups are to be studied--rural or farm people and urban or city people.

Definitions of Groups

The U. S. Census distinguishes between rural and urban localities or communities on the basis of population. But in locating an individual to be studied, it would be difficult to determine size of his community without an accurate check of addresses with populations. To simplify the operation, all persons in this study whose address carred a rural route number were presumed to belong to a rural or farm group. All individuals whose address included a street number in a city (Lansing or East Lansing) or Michigan were presumed to be of the city or urban group.

Admittedly such definitions disregard the possibility that a person may live on a farm yet work in a city or vice versa. A personal data sheet, which accompanied the Waples-Tyler check list, contained space for subjects to specify their occupation and major place of residence. Therefore, it became possible to check on the accuracy of the original determination regarding group by address.

In 1931 tests, Waples and Tyler divided urban groups by vocations. In this study, however, vocations were not considered within rural groups or within urban groups. The two groups--rural and urban--undoubtedly represented widely different vocations, but the major distinction was intended to relate to environment.

Perhaps such a concept for distinguishing between groups differs from Waples-Tyler intentions of keeping groups homogenous, particularly by lumping urban vocations into one. However, Waples and Tyler encouraged use of any group who was somewhat like-minded. It would seem that to obtain like-mindedness among individuals in the urban group, especially, one could use subjects with a similar social background or environment. If individuals were selected by social background, then sampling would obtain an urban group representing different vocational backgrounds, but more representative of an urban group as a whole.

Sampling Plan

Waples and Tyler found that a relatively small number of returns--60--were necessary from a homogenous group in order to determine the reading interest of the group as a

whole. Thus, for this study, it was necessary to obtain four separate groups of 60 each representing farm men, farm women, urban men, and urban women. The present study also required individuals comparable in education. Instead of obtaining 60 college educated people and 60 non-college educated people for each group and each sex, it was decided to collect 60 people from each group and sex without regard to education. By dividing each 60 by education, it would be possible to obtain small numbers from each group and sex with and without a college education. Arbitrarily, all individuals with more than a high school education were considered "college" educated--excepting subjects who might list business college or short course training.

Subjects for each group were available in Ingham County, Michigan. The Cooperative Extension Service of Michigan granted permission to select, at random, 100 names from 8000 farm men on the local county agent's mailing list. He checked each name after selection to determine if the farmer was married, and if so, the title Mrs. was added. If not, the next name on the list was checked for marital status until a married farmer was found. This list then became the farm women group.

Permission also was granted to select, at random, 100 names from a list of 15,000 farm men on a Michigan State University mailing list used for mailing a quarterly farm economic publication. The names were checked to see if they duplicated any in the farm women group--they did not--

and to assure that farmers were from Ingham County only. This list then became the farm men group.

Urban women in Ingham County were chosen at random from a consumer education list of 9000 names also available in the Michigan State University mailing room. From the total, 100 names were selected.

Urban men were selected from Lansing and East Lansing Lions' Club membership lists. Their occupations seemed comparable to farming, insofar as economic status was concerned, for most members owned their own business. Ages varied, permitting a broad range from which to select subjects. From the total of 235 members, 100 were selected at random for testing.

It was possible for the farm men group to contain farmers generally older than people in other groups. The list used was old, corrections and additions had been made yearly, but there was no assurance that new names added in time had been farmers young in age, relatively speaking. And as the list itself grew older, the original farmers contained in the list also grew older. There was no evidence to show when the list was formulated.

Method of Survey

Questionnaires or check lists were sent to each name selected, coded to indicate first mailing. The mailing included a set of instructions--identical to those used in 1931--and a new letter to explain the reasons for the test. (Copies of each item are included in Appendix A.)

In addition, mailings included a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which subjects were to return the check lists.

Response by waves of mailing and education is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Response by Waves and Education

	1st Wave	2d Wave	3d Wave	Total	No College	Some College	Av. Age
Urban women	50	10		60	37	23	52
Urban men	19	11	18	48	14	34	41
Farm women	20	19	18	57	37	20	48
Farm men	26	28	6	60	34	26	41

The Check List

Originally, Waples and Tyler developed a check list of topics containing 117 items. However, the data contained in their book, What People Want to Read About, lists only 115 topics. Therefore, two items were dropped from the questionnaire mailed to 1959 subjects.[1] Waples and Tyler data show topics by division. It was not known whether questionnaires originally contained the division titles. Since it was thought that presence of division titles might influence scoring, they were not included in the 1959 tests. In all other ways the instrument used was identical to that used in 1931.

Statistical Procedure

Methods for inspecting and tabulating returns were identical to Waples and Tyler procedures. Inspection of returns involved checking to see if subject followed

[1]Topic titles were: "What makes a good sportsman," and "What are the issues in American party politics."

instructions; tabulating returns was a bit more involved and time consuming.

The Waples-Tyler method consisted of recording returns on a large sheet of cross-ruled paper, topic by topic for each check list returned. Items marked with an "X" by subjects received an arbitrary score--recommended by Waples and Tyler--of 2 points; items left blank received 1 point; items marked with a zero received 0 point. After each score had been recorded, scores for each group were computed merely by adding topic scores for each respondent. According to Waples and Tyler, a topic score shows the relative interest of the group in that topic. Waples and Tyler considered the topic with the highest score as most interesting; that with the lowest score as least interesting.

After the scores were obtained for all the topics, each was placed in a decile rank according to Waples and Tyler directions. That consisted of arranging the 115 scores for the 115 topics in order from the highest to lowest. Normally, there would be 11.5 topics in each decile, but tie scores were listed together. Tied scores hindered allocation of deciles, particularly in the small educational groups. But, by Waples-Tyler direction, all of the tied topics were placed in the decile in which the majority of the tied scores belonged. Hence there was a difference in the number of topics in deciles, just as in the 1931 Waples-Tyler data.

As a result of the tabulation and computation, each topic would contain a decile rank for comparison with the 1931 decile ranks.

The statistical device known as the method of correlation makes it possible to compare the deciles representing reading-interest scores obtained from any two groups and to obtain a single value, the correlation coefficient. It shows how nearly the two groups have the same relative interest in the same topics.

Exact agreement on topics by any two groups would yield a correlation of 1.00. On the other hand, if the two groups were interested in different topics, the correlation between their reading-interest scores would be less than 1.00.

As decile ranks were organized, as described above, a scatter diagram was made from which correlation coefficients could be computed, using the formula

$$r = \frac{N\Sigma d_x d_y - \Sigma d_x \, d_y}{\sqrt{N\Sigma d^2_x - (\Sigma d_x)^2} \sqrt{N\Sigma d^2_y - (\Sigma d_y)^2}}$$

in which d_x is defined as an individual's score deviation, in step intervals, from an arbitrary origin on the X scale, and d_y is defined similarly for the Y scale.[1] In all cases, N was 115, or the number of topics scored, rather than the number of individuals in a given group.

Tests of significance used the formula

$$\sigma_{z_1 - z_2} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-3} + \frac{1}{N-3}}$$

in which N referred to number of individuals in a given group.

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[1]See McNemar, Quinn, Psychological Statistics, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949, pp. 115-121.

A table of values of z for various values of correlation coefficients was consulted for different correlation coefficients. The difference between z's was obtained. Then the standard error of the difference in z's (see formula) was multiplied by 1.96 and by 2.576. If the z difference was larger than either figure, the difference in correlation coefficients was considered significant at the 5 percent and 1 percent level respectively.[1]

To repeat, the N of 115 used in computations for correlation coefficients referred to the 115 topics in the check list. In tests of significance, N was the number of individuals in groups whose correlation coefficients, based on their separate scoring of the 115 topics, had already been determined. Such a procedure probably served to provide a precautionary measure with regard to the significance of correlation coefficients.

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[1]Procedure for determining level of significance between two correlation coefficients is described in Lindquist, E. F., Statistical Analysis in Educational Research, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940, pp. 214-218.

Chapter V

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES OF DATA

One test for reliability was conducted. The task involved obtaining a new sample of 60 farm males from the same population described in the previous chapter. After scoring each check list and organizing scores into deciles, the results were combined in a scatter diagram of 115 interest topics with those of the original sample of farm males. The correlation coefficient for the two groups was .90.

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients obtained to determine the relationships between the reading interests of groups referred to in the hypotheses or project tasks expressed in Chapter III. The hypotheses were:

1. Reading interests of farm and urban men of 1959 and of 1931 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm and urban men of 1931.

2. Reading interests of urban men of 1959 and of 1931 will be more closely related than the reading interests of farm men of 1959 and of 1931.

3. Reading interests of 1931 men and farm men will be more closely related than reading interests of 1931 urban men and women; those of 1959 farm and urban women will be more closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women; and those of 1959 farm and urban men will be more

closely related than those of 1959 farm (or urban) men and women.

4. Reading interests of college educated farm men (or women) and college educated urban men (or women) will be more closely related than the reading interest relationship of non-college educated farm (or urban) men (or women) and college educated farm (or urban) men (or women).

Let us examine Table 2 at this point:

Table 2

Correlations Between Reading-Interest Scores of Groups

General Group Comparisons	Correlation Coefficient	Identification Symbol
Farm men, 1959 Urban men, 1959	.70	FM_{59} UM_{59}
Farm men, 1931 Urban men, 1931	.54	FM_{31} UM_{31}
Urban men, 1931 Urban men, 1959	.50	UM_{31} UM_{59}
Farm men, 1931 Farm men, 1959	.59	FM_{31} FM_{59}
Urban men, 1931 Urban women, 1931	.40	UM_{31} UW_{31}
Farm women, 1959 Urban women, 1959	.83	FW UW_{59}
Urban men, 1959 Urban women, 1959	.51	UM_{59} UW_{59}
Farm men, 1959 Farm women, 1959	.64	FM_{59} FW
Educational Comparisons, 1959 only		
College educated farm men College educated urban men	.68	FM_c UM_c
College educated farm men Non-college educated farm men	.97	FM_c FM_{nc}

Table 2 (continued)

College educated farm women College educated urban women	.75	FM_c UW_c
College educated farm women Non-college educated farm women	.79	FW_c FW_{nc}
College educated urban men Non-college educated urban men	.59	UM_c UM_{nc}
College educated urban women Non-college educated urban women	.85	UW_c UW_{nc}

Table 3 shows the hypotheses symbolically, using the identification symbols of Table 2, and the correlation coefficient for each group. Table 3 also shows the level of significance, if any, of the difference between the correlation coefficients and whether the difference was as hypothesized.

Table 3

Hypotheses and Correlation Coefficient (r)		Difference as Hypothesized	Level of Significance 5%	1%
General Group Comparisons				
$FM_{59}UM_{59}$ r = .70	$FM_{31}UM_{31}$ r = .54	yes	yes	no
$UM_{31}UM_{59}$ r = .50	$FM_{31}FM_{59}$ r = .59	no	no	no
$FM_{31}UM_{31}$ r = .54	$UM_{31}UW_{31}$ r = .40	yes	no	no
$FW_{59}UW_{59}$ r = .83	$UM_{59}UW_{59}$ r = .51	yes	yes	yes
$FW_{59}UW_{59}$ r = .83	$FW_{59}FW_{59}$ r = .64	yes	yes	yes
$FM_{59}UM_{59}$ r = .70	$FM_{59}FW_{59}$ r = .64	yes	no	no
$FM_{59}UM_{59}$ r = .70	$UM_{59}UW_{59}$ r = .51	yes	yes	no

Table 3 (continued)

Educational Comparisons, 1959

FM_cUM_c $r = .68$	FM_cFM_{nc} $r = .97$	no	yes	yes
FW_cUW_c $r = .75$	FW_cFW_{nc} $r = .79$	no	no	no
FM_cUM_c $r = .68$	UM_cUM_{nc} $r = .59$	yes	no	no
FW_cUW_c $r = .75$	UW_cUW_{nc} $r = .85$	no	no	no

In Chapter III, it was hypothesized that the reading interests of farm men today and those of urban men today would be more closely related than the reading interests of farm men in 1931 and those of urban men in 1931. Table 3 shows that the hypothesis to that effect was sustained, and the table also shows that the difference between relationships was significant at the 5 percent level.

It was expected, however, that urban men of 1931 and of 1959 would have more closely related reading interests than would farm men of 1931 and farm men of 1959. Table 2 and Table 3 show that the correlation coefficient of the two groups of urban men was .50 whereas that of farm men--1931 and 1959--was .59. Thus, as shown graphically in Table 3, the hypothesis was not proven correct. The difference actually was in the opposite direction but was not significant.

Although the hypothesis suggesting a larger relationship in reading interests among farm men and urban men of 1931 than among urban men and urban women of 1931 was supported by the direction of the obtained difference, it was not significant. Neither was there a significant difference in

correlation coefficients of farm men and urban men of 1959 as compared with farm men and farm women of 1959, although the direction was as hypothesized.

The hypotheses set forth in Chapter III with regard to college educated and non-college educated groups were contradicted by direction in three of the four cases (see Table 3). What is more important, the one that was significant was contradictory too. It stated that college educated farm men and college educated urban men would have more closely related reading interests than would college educated farm men and non-college educated farm men. As noted, the difference was significant in the opposite direction as that hypothesized.

Because of the changes in direction among the other hypotheses relating to education, additional correlations were made to cover other possible combinations of comparisons. Table 4 shows the results of the additional computations, arranged for comparisons with similar or different environmental conditions and educational levels.

Table 4

Group	r	Environment	Education
Farm males	.97	same	different
Urban females	.85	same	different
Farm females	.79	same	different
All females	.78	different	same (no college)
All females	.75	different	same (college)
All females	.73	different	different (UW_c FW_{nc})
All females	.68	different	different (UW_{nc} FW_c)
All males	.68	different	same (college)
All males	.68	different	different ($UM_{nc}FM_c$)
Urban males	.59	same	different
All males	.53	different	same (no college)
All males	.52	different	different (UM_c FM_{nc})

Table 5 presents the significance levels, if any, of the differences among the various combinations presented above. Differences between male and female comparisons were not made.

Table 5

Significance Level of Combination Differences

Groups and r's		Level of Significance of Difference in r's 5%	1%
	Men		
$FM_{nc}FM_{c}$(.97)	$FM_{c}UM_{c}$(.68)	yes	yes
"	$FM_{c}UM_{nc}$(.68)	yes	yes
"	$UM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.59)	yes	yes
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{nc}$(.53)	yes	yes
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.52)	yes	yes
$FM_{c}UM_{c}$(.68)	$FM_{c}UM_{nc}$(.68)	no	no
"	$UM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.59)	no	no
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{nc}$(.53)	no	no
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.52)	no	no
$FM_{c}UM_{nc}$(.68)	$UM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.59)	no	no
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{nc}$(.53)	no	no
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.52)	no	no
$UM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.59)	$FM_{nc}UM_{nc}$(.53)	no	no
"	$FM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.52)	no	no
$FM_{nc}UM_{nc}$(.53)	$FM_{nc}UM_{c}$(.52)	no	no
	Women		
$UW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.85)	$FW_{nc}FW_{c}$(.79)	no	no
"	$FW_{nc}UW_{nc}$(.78)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{c}$(.75)	no	no
"	$FW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.73)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{nc}$(.68)	yes	no
FW FW (.79)	$FW_{nc}UW_{nc}$(.78)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{c}$(.75)	no	no
"	$FW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.73)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{nc}$(.68)	no	no
$FW_{nc}UW_{nc}$(.78)	$FW_{c}UW_{c}$(.75)	no	no
"	$FW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.73)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{nc}$(.68)	no	no
$FW_{c}UW_{c}$(.75)	$FW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.73)	no	no
"	$FW_{c}UW_{nc}$(.68)	no	no
$FW_{nc}UW_{c}$(.73)	$FW_{c}UW_{nc}$(.68)	no	no

Topical Differences and Similarities

The correlation coefficients presented in the foregoing tables help us answer the question about how similar reading

interests are today among farm and urban people. But the correlations do not give us any indication as to what those similarities or differences are. In order to find the specific similarities and differences, we must examine results topic by topic.

A summary of decile ratings for each topic in the entire check list is shown in Appendix B. Accompanying the 1959 results in that summary are the 1931 results used for making comparisons.

Table 6 shows the topics which were placed in the first decile or "most interesting" category in 1959 by both urban men and farm men. The table also indicates the decile placements in 1931 for the same topic by each group.

Table 6

Topics Which Both Urban Men and Farm Men Placed in the First Decile in 1959

	1931 Decile UM	FM
13. Criticisms of government policies	2	5
14. Problems of the federal government	2	5
19. International attitudes	1	3

Table 7 shows variations between the two groups, farm males and urban males. The table shows the 1959 decile of one group for a given topic where the other group placed the topic in the first decile--or scored it "most interesting." Also shown is the decile by each group in 1931 for the same topics.

Table 7

Variations in Most Interesting Topics, Men Only

		Decile in 1959 UM	FM	Decile in 1931 UM	FM
4.	Successful business men and women	1	2	9	1
15.	Problems of state and city government	1	4	4	4
16.	Laws and legislation	3	1	2	2
21.	The next war	1	2	1	1
25.	Natural resources--development and conservation	5	1	2	4
26.	Prices and costs of living	2	1	1	1
48.	New developments in farming	7	1	9	2
56.	The nature of human nature and intelligence	1	4	6	3
74.	Rural problems	8	1	9	1
77.	Interesting places in the U. S.	3	1	1	1
91.	College and higher education	1	3	8	6
	(Same topic, by college educated subject)	1	1		
93.	Adult education	3	1	2	2
	(Same topic by college educated subject)	3	1		
95.	Religion and the world today	3	1	7	1
96.	Criticism of the church	3	1	3	2
108.	Travel and outdoor life	2	1	1	3

Table 8 shows other similarities among urban men and farm men, this time through a presentation of topics placed in the tenth decile--or scored "least interesting"--by both groups.

Table 8

Topics Which Both Urban Men and Farm Men Placed in the Tenth Decile in 1959

		1931 Decile UM	FM
7.	Artists and musicians	10	9
9.	Actors and actresses	10	10
11.	Royalty and social leaders	10	10
55.	Personal beauty	10	8

Table 8 (continued)

99.	Writers and writing	10	10
102.	Arts and art crafts	10	10
105.	Motion pictures	6	5
106.	The theater	10	9

Table 9 shows the variations between the two groups of men. The table shows the 1959 decile for one group for a given topic where the other group placed the topic in the tenth decile or "least interesting" category. Also shown is the decile placement by each group--urban men and farm men--in 1931 for the same topics.

Table 9

Variations in Least Interesting Topics, Men Only

		Decile in 1959		Decile in 1931	
		UM	FM	UM	FM
8.	Authors	9	10	10	9
50.	Mining and metal industries	10	9	10	10
63.	Birds and insects	10	8	8	5
70.	Modern styles, manners and customs	10	9	8	9
84.	Prohibition violations and enforcement	10	7	4	3
103.	Civic beauty and architecture	9	10	9	9
110.	Getting along with relatives	10	6	8	7
115.	Household management and food preparation	10	6	7	3

Although there was some duplication in scoring of topics in 1959 as compared to 1931, Tables 10 and 11 present a cross check to show that some topics placed in the first decile in 1931 moved into different deciles than those presented in the preceding tables. Deciles for 1959 are shown for comparisons.

Table 10

Topics Which Both Urban Men and Farm Men Placed in the First Decile in 1931

		1959 Decile UM	FM
21.	The next war	1	2
22.	Preparedness	3	2
27.	Prices and costs of living	2	1
54.	Personal hygiene	3	2
77.	Interesting places in the U. S.	3	1

Table 11

Variations in Most Interesting Topics, Men Only

		Decile in 1959 UM	FM	Decile in 1931 UM	FM
4.	Successful business men and women	1	2	9	1
17.	Citizenship	4	4	2	1
18.	U. S. foreign affairs	4	2	1	10
19.	International attitudes	1	1	1	3
23.	Peace movements	3	2	2	1
31.	Labor and the labor market	2	2	1	3
42.	Electrical inventions	8	3	1	2
53.	Prevention and treatment of specific ills	7	5	1	5
61.	Plant life	9	4	6	1
74.	Rural problems	8	1	9	1
81.	The detection and prevention of crime	5	6	1	6
95.	Religion and the world today	3	1	7	1
98.	The use and abuse of reading	8	6	3	1
108.	Travel and outdoor life	2	1	1	3

Tables 12 and 13 provide another cross check, but allow comparisons between least interesting topics--or those of the tenth decile--in 1931 and 1959.

Table 12

Topics Which Both Urban Men and Farm Men Placed in the Tenth Decile in 1931

		1959 Decile UM	FM
9.	Actors and actresses	10	10
11.	Royalty and social leaders	10	10
50.	Mining and metal industries	10	9
51.	Trades and manufacturing	8	9
99.	Writers and writing	10	10
102.	Arts and art crafts	10	10

Table 13

Variations in Least Interesting Topics

		Decile in 1959 UM	FM	Decile in 1931 UM	FM
7.	Artists and musicians	10	10	10	9
8.	Authors	9	10	10	9
18.	U. S. foreign affairs	4	2	1	10
20.	Foreign politics	6	8	7	10
34.	Marketing--sales methods	5	6	10	7
55.	Personal beauty	10	10	10	8
86.	Comments on marriage and divorce	6	4	7	10
87.	Eugenics and birth control	6	5	3	10
88.	Attitudes--men vs. women	9	9	9	10
106.	The theater	10	10	10	9

Comparisons could not be made between farm and urban women groups for 1959 and 1931, since Waples and Tyler did not test farm women in 1931. Table 14, however, shows the topics placed in the first decile--"most interesting" by both groups and lists the decile given each topic by urban women in 1931.

Table 14

Topics Which Both Urban Women and Farm Women Placed in the First Decile in 1959

		1931 Decile UW
52.	Public health and medical progress	1
53.	Prevention and treatment of specific ills	1
54.	Personal hygiene	1

Table 14 (continued)

56.	The nature of human intelligence	3
58.	Getting along with other people	2
77.	Interesting places in the U. S.	4
93.	Adult education	1
95.	Religion and the world today	1
115.	Household management and food preparation	1

Table 15 shows the variations in the "most interesting" topics and also the 1931 decile for urban women.

Table 15

Variations in Most Interesting Topics, Women Only

		Decile in 1959 UW	Decile in 1959 FW	Decile in 1931 UW
27.	Prices and costs of living	1	3	2
57.	Personal qualities analyzed	1	2	2
59.	Self improvement	2	1	2
90.	Elementary and secondary education	1	2	5
	(same topic, college educated groups)	1	1	
96.	Criticism of the church	2	1	1
111.	Parents' relationships with children	2	1	1
	(same topic, college educated groups)	1	1	

Table 16 shows topics "least interesting" to urban and farm women and the 1931 decile for urban women.

Table 16

Topics Which Both Urban Women and Farm Women Placed in the Tenth Decile in 1959

		1931 Decile UW
11.	Royalty and social leaders	10
50.	Mining and metal industries	10
51.	Trades and manufacturing	9

Table 17 shows the variations between "least interesting" topics.

Table 17

Variations in Least Interesting Topics, Women Only

		Decile in 1959 UW	Decile in 1959 FW	Decile in 1931 UW
5.	Statesmen and politicians	7	10	8
9.	Actors and actresses	8	10	10
20.	Foreign politics	10	8	10
28.	Organization and administration of big business	10	9	10
36.	Business ventures	7	10	9
46.	Developments in the automobile industry	9	10	10
64.	Marine life	10	8	10
71.	Organizations--political, social, and fraternal	8	10	8
99.	Writers and writing	10	9	9
103.	Civic beauty and architecture	10	9	9
106.	The theater	8	10	9
107.	Sports	10	9	10
	(same topic, college educated groups)	7	10	

None of the topics in the first decile of both men groups was in the first decile of both women groups, or vice versa. Each group did have one topic in common among the tenth deciles or "least interesting" topics--Topic 11, "Royalty and social leaders."

A study of the Summary of Decile Ratings in the Appendix shows that the "most interesting" and "least interesting" topics did not vary widely, group to group, generally speaking. But one difference was that urban women put Topic 13, "Criticisms of government policies," in the fifth decile, whereas men ranked it in the first decile and farm women ranked it in the third decile. Another difference was Topic 115, "Household management and food preparation," women groups placed it in the first decile; men put it in the lower deciles.

Two other variations were those of Topic 52, "Public health and medical progress," and Topic 53, "Prevention and treatment of specific ills." Topic 52 was in the first decile of both women groups and in the third and fourth deciles of urban men and farm men respectively. But it ranked in the sixth decile for non-college urban men. Non-college farm men boosted it to the third decile whereas the general farm group put it in the fourth decile. Topic 53 was in the first decile of women groups, the seventh and fifth deciles of urban men and farm men respectively. Again, non-college urban men dropped it a decile to the eighth and non-college farm men moved it up to the fourth.

The differences form a pattern of sorts. But when we examine Topic 54, "Personal hygiene," we find that it was in the first decile of all women groups and generally higher for all men groups than were the two previous topics. The non-college groups, however, tended to place it in a higher decile--first and second (urban non-college and farm non-college respectively)--than did the college groups for both farm and urban men.

Summary of Data Using Division Comparisons

As has been mentioned previously, the topical divisions which Waples and Tyler used were omitted from the check list in 1959. There were twenty divisions, and there were four general groups tested in 1959.

Table 18 summarizes deciles of topics by division for each of the groups tested. (Method of obtaining deciles followed the same method used in obtaining deciles for individual

topics, except that scores used to determine deciles represented averages of the scores of all topics within each division.)

Table 18

Summary of Topic Deciles by Divisions, General Groups Only

Division		1959 Decile UM	FM	UW	FW
I.	Interesting Personalities (Topics 1-12)	6	10	7	9
II.	The United States Government (Topics 13-17)	1	1	4	3
III.	Foreign Relations and Foreign Politics (Topics 18-20)	2	3	7	5
IV.	War and Peace (Topics 21-23)	1	1	3	4
V.	Business Conditions (Topics 24-27)	3	2	6	7
VI.	Business Administration (Topics 28-38)	4	7	9	10
VII.	Values and Problems of Science (Topics 39-45)	8	6	8	8
VIII.	Industrial Science (Topics 46-51)	9	7	10	10
IX.	Health and Hygiene (Topics 52-55)	7	7	1	1
X.	Psychology (Topics 56-60)	2	4	1	1
XI.	Plant and Animal Life (Topics 61-64)	10	9	10	8
XII.	Social Changes and Social Problems (Topics 65-74)	7	8	6	5
XIII.	Peoples and Places (Topics 75-79)	5	7	4	4
XIV.	Crimes (Topics 80-84)	8	9	8	7
XV.	Sex (Topics 85-88)	6	6	5	6
XVI.	Education (Topics 89-94)	3	4	2	2
XVII.	Religion and Beliefs (Topics 95-97)	4	2	2	2
XVIII.	Literature and the Arts (Topics 98-106)	10	10	9	9
XIX.	Recreation (Topics 107-109)	3	3	5	6
XX.	The Home (Topics 110-115)	8	5	3	3

Table 19 shows the correlation coefficients obtained by comparing each general group with another, according to the divisions and deciles of interest. (In making computations, N in each case was 20, whereas in obtaining correlation coefficients according to topics, N was 115.)

Table 19

Groups, 1959 only	Correlation Coefficient
UW/FW	.95
UM/FM	.82
FM/UW	.56
UM/UW	.55
FM/FW	.54
UW/FW	.48

When we compare the various combinations of group differences, as represented by correlation coefficients, we can determine the level of significance of those differences. Table 20 presents such information.

Table 20

Groups and r's		Level of Significance of Difference in r's 5%	1%
UW/FW (.95)	UM/FM (.82)	yes	yes
"	FM/UW (.56)	yes	yes
"	UM/UW (.55)	yes	yes
"	FM/FW (.54)	yes	yes
"	UM/FW (.48)	yes	yes
UM/FM (.82)	FM/UW (.56)	yes	yes
"	UM/UW (.55)	yes	yes
"	FM/FW (.54)	yes	yes
"	UM/FW (.48)	yes	yes
FM/UW (.56)	UM/UW (.55)	no	no
"	FM/FW (.54)	no	no
"	UM/FW (.48)	no	no
UM/UW (.55)	FM/FW (.54)	no	no
"	UM/FW (.48)	no	no
FM/FW (.54)	UM/FW (.48)	no	no

Chapter VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The 1931 study of Waples and Tyler, which the present study replicated in some degree, found that sex was a predominant factor in determining reading interests. The 1959 study tended to verify the 1931 findings, despite the fact that 1959 samples possibly might be considered somewhat inadequate, at least insofar as absolute comparisons of groups were concerned, i.e., 1931 post office workers do not compare in many ways with 1959 Lions Club members.

But, as in 1931, the 1959 study indicated that similar sexes had higher correlations than different sexes, in both farm and urban cases. Farm men and urban men in 1959 had a correlation coefficient of .70; farm women and urban women had a correlation coefficient of .83; but farm men and women had a correlation coefficient of .64 and urban men and women had a correlation coefficient of .51 (see Table 2).

Two other factors seemed predominant, just as in 1931, and they were vocation and education. But the problem in 1959 dealt with environmental conditions, rather than vocational conditions, for the primary question had to do with a comparison between farm people and urban people.

With regard to the environmental variable, the results showed that farm men and urban men of 1959 had more closely

related reading interests than did similar groups in 1931. And the difference between the relationships was significant (see Table 3).

There were no 1931 data to enable a comparison between farm women and urban women of 1931 with 1959 results. The 1959 study showed that the two groups of women had a reading interest correlation of .83, however, and further tests, according to divisions of topics in the check list, showed a correlation coefficient of .95 (see Table 19).

The educational variable created more complexity. It was thought that educational improvements among farm people would help account for more closely related reading interests with urban groups. Only one hypothesis was supported in that respect (see Table 3) and it supposed that college educated farm men and college educated urban men would have more closely related reading interests than would college educated urban men. Even though the direction of the hypothesis was supported, the difference was not significant. One is tempted to speculate that the lack of distinction between urban vocations accounts for the lower correlation of the urban men.

Women seemed to be more closely related when environmental conditions were the same. Although the difference was not significant, the direction was opposite to that hypothesized (see Table 3). One might speculate that, despite the lack of significance in the opposite direction as hypothesized, urban women have more material available to read than do farm women, rather than that they are more alike by environmental unity. Also, the fact that farm and urban women in nearly

all cases, have a larger correlation coefficient than do groups of farm and urban men may indicate a similarity of tasks not so evident among men and tasks which cover a broader area rather than the stricter vocational tasks of men. Possibly the similarity of women groups is related to amount of reading they do, particularly in regard to the similarity of topics liked or disliked as opposed to the small number of topics agreed upon by men groups.

In certain respects, education did not seem to be as important a factor as environment (see Tables 4 and 5). Reading interests tended to be more closely related when the environment was the same and education was different, particularly among farm males, urban females, and farm females. Farm males, those with both college and no college education, were significantly more closely related than any other male group. Education did not seem to make any significant difference between female groups, and environment seemed to be significant only in one respect. In that one respect it was significant only to the 5 percent level and represented the extremes of the various female combinations.

A reorganization of Table 4 shown in Table 21 below helps to point out the organization of groups with regard to sex, environment, and education:

Table 21

Group	r	Environment	Education
		Men	
Farm males	.97	same	different
All males	.68	different	same (college)
All males	.68	different	different ($UM_{nc}FM_{c}$

Table 21 (continued)

Urban males	.59	same	different
All males	.53	different	same (no college)
All males	.52	different	different (UM_cFM_{nc})
		Women	
Urban females	.85	same	different
Farm females	.79	same	different
All females	.78	different	same (no college)
All females	.75	different	same (college)
All females	.73	different	different (UW_cFW_{nc})
All females	.68	different	different ($UW_{nc}FW_c$)

Education did seem to create a higher relationship between urban and farm males if the farm males were college educated. If urban males were college educated, however, and farm men were not, relationship was smaller. In no such case, though, was there a significant difference.

The significant differences obtained do support the notion that environment may be the more important factor when compared to education, but the ordering of other groups by educational differences--as shown in Table 21--do not support the notion. There seems to be an interaction between environment, education, and sex that cannot be sorted out in order to make complete conclusions.

Topical differences and similarities give an idea of what the actual differences and similarities are between farm and urban people. For instance, among topics placed in the first decile by both farm men and urban men, two of the topics --No. 13, "Criticisms of government policies," and No. 14, "Problems of the federal government,"--rose from the fifth decile of interest among farm men in 1931 (see Table 6).

Similarly, Topic 4, "Successful business men and women," was in the ninth decile among urban men in 1931, yet in 1959 they put it in the first decile. Farm men dropped the same topic from the first decile in 1931 to the second in 1959. Urban men also showed an increase in reading interest about Topic 91, "College and higher education," moving the topic from the eighth decile in 1931 to the first in 1959. Farm men put the same topic in the sixth decile in 1931; in the third decile in 1959. The most extreme change among farm men seemed to be in Topic 25, "Natural resources--development and conservation," where it was moved from the fourth decile in 1931 to the first decile in 1959. Urban men's interest in the topic dropped from the second to the fifth decile.

Except for the degree of change expressed by farmers in "Criticisms of government policies," and "Problems of the federal government," urban men seemed to have made more change than farm men at least in regard to topics in which they and farm men were most interested.

But when we examine topics in which both farm men and urban men were least interested, we find that farm men moved more topics from the midrange of interest to the lower end of the decile scale than did urban men. For instance, farm men moved four topics to the tenth decile (No. 7, "Artists and musicians," No. 55, "Personal beauty," No. 105, "Motion pictures," and No. 106, "The theater"). Urban men put all but one of the same topics in the tenth decile in 1931. The exception was Topic 105, "Motion pictures," which urban men had placed in the fourth decile in 1931. Such a change could

be expected in view of the rise in television coverage during recent years, particularly in urban areas.

Although farm men scored some topics higher than those which urban men placed in the tenth decile, farm men tended to place the same topics lower in 1959 than in 1931. The exceptions, noted in Table 9, are Topic 110, "Getting along with relatives," and Topic 115, "Household management and food preparation." The slight rise--from the seventh decile to the sixth--of Topic 110 among farm men may indicate some worry about loss of relatives from farm work units; the difference between farm men and urban men ranking--the sixth decile for farm men and the tenth for urban men--may indicate a difference in meaning of the concept. Farmers, for example, may think of butchering, curing meat, gathering fruit for home use and for market, etc., whereas urban men may think of the topic purely as it relates to homemaking.

In general, then, the data seem to indicate that urban men and farm men are more similar in the items they least like to read about rather than in the topics they most like to read about. It also appears that the topics in which both farm men and urban men were most interested in 1931 are of less interest now. For instance, Tables 10 and 11 show that many items which ranked in the first decile in 1931 for each group now ranks in a lower decile. Degree of change appears greater among urban men than among farm men.

A specific example is the drop among urban men in reading interest of Topic 42, "Electrical inventions." It was in the first decile in 1931; in 1959 it was placed in the

eighth decile. Similarly, urban men dropped Topic 53, "Prevention and treatment of specific ills," from the first decile in 1931 to the seventh in 1959. Most significant rise among topics of farm men was Topic 18, "U. S. foreign affairs." In 1931 farm men placed it in the tenth decile. In 1959 they placed it in the second decile.

Items placed in the tenth decile in 1931 for either group--farm men and urban men--tended to approach the decile given by the opposite group in 1959. In other words, there seemed to be less extreme difference in ranking during 1959 than in 1931. An example is Topic 18, "U. S. foreign affairs," which as previously noted was placed in the tenth decile in 1931 by farm men and in the second decile in 1959 by farm men. In 1931 urban men placed it in the first decile; in 1959 they put it in the fourth decile.

Although it was not possible to make comparisons between 1931 female groups and 1959 female groups, one significant change by urban women was noteworthy. In 1931 urban women placed Topic 90, "Elementary and secondary education," in the fifth decile; in 1959 they placed it in the first decile. Perhaps the change carries implications with regard to higher birthrates in recent years as compared to the years prior to and during 1931. The change also may bear a relationship to greater emphasis on education and a higher percentage of attendance in grade schools, high schools, and college for the present generation of urban women as compared to the generation tested in 1931.

Decile placement of topics between 1959 women groups was seldom different to any large degree. Most widely separated by decile placement was Topic 48, "Developments in farming," which farm women placed in the second decile and urban women in the ninth. Women also placed Topic 74, "Rural problems," the same way--in the second decile by farm women; in the ninth decile by urban women.

In 1931 groups tended to choose topics as "most interesting" which were somewhat contradictory to topics they chose as "least interesting." Men appeared to drop that tendency in 1959, but women continued the contradiction in one respect. They placed Topic 5, "Statesmen and politicians," and Topic 20, "Foreign politics," in the lower deciles (see Table 17) even though they placed related topics of government, foreign affairs, international attitudes, etc., generally in much higher deciles. Perhaps women have a different connotation for the terms used in Topics 5 and 20 than do men.

Generally, however, people seemed to prefer items more in keeping with the times and those of most value to American society today. People seemed to back up their selections of most interesting topics with other topics that would tend to provide background information--or information of parallel value. One might call such a trend an indication of stability or of maturity in reading interests. At the same time, the evidence is not conclusive, i.e., there seems to be little maturity in the preference for "personal hygiene" over "public health and medical progress" and "prevention and treatment of specific ills."

Thus, in 1959 there still were strong indications that environmental conditions--or vocations--strongly influence reading interests, i.e., the unvarying placement in the highest deciles of Topic 48, "Developments in farming," among farm men. But the Waples-Tyler instrument is a check list of general reading interests, not vocational reading interests. Despite the importance of vocations and environments, the use of the Waples-Tyler instrument indicates a tendency for people to be alike in a number of their reading interests, particularly among urban women and farm women and among farm men and urban men when compared with 1931 results. The data in Tables 19 and 20 help substantiate such statements and also bear out the conclusion that there still is considerable difference in reading interests when two groups differ by sex, i.e., those topical divisions which men placed in the higher deciles were placed somewhat lower by women groups; similarly those divisions placed in the higher deciles by women were placed lower by men groups. The mid-range deciles do not show such wide variations. The lowest deciles for one sex tend to be low for the other sex, with some variation but few of any significance.

We can make several speculations as conclusive remarks concerning the placement of topics or divisions. First, the wide variation between urban men and farm men in Division I, "Interesting Personalities," might be explained by the fact that farm men have less availability to media and people. Farm men simply have less contact with written material and with people who might talk about such things as are listed topic-by-topic within the division.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the character of the material farm men read--the approach or subject-matter content itself --may have much to do with popular attitudes toward current social problems relating to interesting personalities. Women, too, tended to rank Division I low, although urban men and urban women placed the division in a higher decile than did farm men and farm women. But the topics represented in the division probably have a closer relationship to urban activities --industry, business, politics, education, etc.--which might account for the differences between groups. Even though all groups ranked the topic, "Royalty and social leaders," in the last decile, one would expect such disinterest to stem from the American culture or value system.

Once again, we could speculate that urban men obviously would be more interested in Division VI, "Business administration," since those tested were business men themselves. But we might not expect farmers to rank the division as low as the seventh decile--three deciles below the urban men placement of the division. If farming has become a business-like operation, we could expect farmers to rank the division at least as high as did the urban men.

When we examine the ranking of topics within Division VI, we find that farm men did compare favorably on all items with urban men and that farm men placed two topics--which might have a connotation closely related to farming--fairly high. The two topics were "Labor and the labor market" and "Business management." Therefore, we might conclude that farmers did rank the topics according to expectations, but

that they looked upon the rest of the division's topics as more representative of urban business rather than of farm business. Topic 28, "Organization and administration of big business," was placed in decile eight among farmers, which would lead to the thought that farmers do not think of their own occupation as "big business."

Off-hand, one might suspect that farm men placed Division XX, "The Home," higher than urban men because of different connotations for the term itself. But when we examine other topics within the division, we find, as noted previously, that farm men ranked Topic 110, "Getting along with relatives," in the sixth decile whereas urban men placed it in the tenth; Topic 112, "Successful marriage," ranked in the second decile of farm men interests and in the fifth of urban men interests. The differences might be explained as before that farm men are concerned about loss of members of the farm family work unit and are searching for answers as to why people are moving from the farms. Also the farm family may be a closer social group than urban families.

Obviously writers cannot always relate the material they direct at one or all four groups to the topics or divisions which are high in interest. If such were the case, writing for men would lean toward topics related to the federal government, war and peace, business conditions, foreign relations and foreign politics, psychology, and possibly recreation. For women, authors would discuss health and hygiene, psychology, education, religion and beliefs, the home, the federal government, war and peace, and people and places.

Instead, it might be better--at least more practical--to take advantage of the similarities, both among the most interesting topics and the least interesting topics. A writer also might prepare material intended mainly for one group or sex by slanting it to another group or sex by making reference to topics in which most mutual interest is shown.

It is not meant to imply here that one can or should wander between audiences in his writing but merely to suggest that the difficulties in keeping information directed to a specific group or sex might be lessened if the topics of mutual interest are known and included in the message.

By writing about mutually interesting topics, an author could provide a frame of reference relatable to the readers' past experiences. All people tend to be most interested in the things or events with which they have already had some experience. People tend to select and rely more on those messages which they interpret and perceive as most valuable to their individual well-being. Therefore, knowledge of reading interests should enable sources--or authors--to prepare messages which will fulfill need satisfactions and provide problem solutions for readers.

For instance, we know now that farm men are most interested in new developments in farming. We also know that they are interested in government policies, problems of the federal government (after all, they may see themselves as contributing to one of the problems), and laws and legislation (no doubt, in particular the laws that may affect them and their products). We also know that farm men are interested in peace movements,

for after all they have an important role to play in feeding the rest of the world. We know that farm wives are interested in health, human nature, getting along with other people, and self-improvement. Since there was some similarity among farm men and women, we might assume that the farm family group is a rather closely knit group and that interests of individual members of the family might receive a sympathetic interest by another member of the family.

We might conclude, too, that there are interrelationships between topics. How will peace programs affect possible new developments in farming? Will there be any curtailment of certain services offered by farm agencies if defense spending goes up? What will a certain direction in U. S. relations with Russia do to the sale of specific crops? In other words, "how do events and decisions, laws and legislations, affect me and my own?"

Use of knowledge about other most interesting topics might be valuable even when writers prepare information about one specific topic known to be of high interest. For instance, one might use anecdotes in written material which directly relate to those other topics. If we wanted to create a negative attitude toward an old practice--say we want to urge people to stop milking by hand--we might direct a simile toward the topics in which people are least interested, i.e., "milking by hand is as old fashioned as a Madonna in a modern art show." Or, we might take a more positive approach, taking advantage of women's high interest in health, and point out that milking by machine is sanitary and conducive to better health.

Such suggestions, while possibly naive, at least might offer ideas to agencies devoted to agriculture and education. School or college information services might wish to take advantage of the rise in reading interest about education; agricultural production or research services might wish to examine their efforts with regard to old production information, especially that concerned with plant and animal life. And even though farm men placed Topic 48, "Developments in farming," in the first decile, they rated the division to which that topic belongs in the seventh decile. One could interpret such placement as an indication that farm men do not think of their vocation as like any other vocation; possibly then sources should avoid drawing comparisons with other vocations when they prepare material about farming, all of which encourages need to establish firmly in mind the topics which are of interest to farmers.

In broad conclusion, we might say that men--both farm and urban--today seem to be concerned with the problems and conditions besetting America; women seem to be concerned with health and psychology--other people. Both groups seem least interested in literature and the arts and in plant and animal life. Thus, one might consider that the subjects which people say they are interested in reading and those in which they are not interested in reading indicate that our country is <u>not</u> going to hell-in-a-handbasket as so often we are tempted to believe. The agencies and education institutions, the mass media, and the individuals who prepare and select material for people to read might well regain their

faith in human beings and provide information which compares more favorably or directly with the reading interests people say they have.

Of course the present study relates to groups of people who all reside in one county--the 1931 farm group, for instance, came from Vermont and were almost isolated from the other groups tested. And, of course, the present study and its conclusions are not meant to imply that reader interests are the only factors of importance to communicators. The real block to communication does not lie solely in interests, attitudes, or other psychological barriers of audiences or receivers. Instead the block may more properly lie in the failure of communicators to take them into account. Or, if they are taken into account, there is the assumption that they are unimportant as factors involved in how people learn and react as members of society.

Summary

In summary then, the conclusions of this study are:

1. That sex remains the strongest variable creating differences and similarities in reading interests as in 1931.

2. That farm men and urban men are more alike today than in 1931 and that the difference as hypothesized is significant to the 5 percent level.

3. That there seems to be an interaction between variables of environment and education which prevents making conclusive statements with regard to the more important of the two variables.

4. Topical changes since 1931 which were observed most significant in 1959 included:

a. An increase of interest in "successful business men and women," "college and higher education" by urban men.

b. An increase of interest in "U. S. foreign affairs," by farm men.

c. A greater similarity among men in what they least like to read about than in what they most like to read about.

d. An increase in interest among urban women of the topic on "elementary and secondary education."

e. A general stability of topic choices as compared with contradictory 1931 choices.

5. It was also observed that there was a greater similarity of interest in all topics among women than among men.

APPENDIX A

MATERIAL SENT TO TEST GROUPS

Letter

Check List Instructions

Reading Interest Check List

NATIONAL PROJECT IN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities · American Association of Agricultural College Editors

N P A C

STANLEY ANDREWS
Executive Director

Wells Hall · Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Would you please help this project develop some data for a training program in written communication?

Last year this project presented a training program to members of the Agricultural Extension Services all over the country. Our goal was simply to help county agents and home demonstration agents write better, so that they, in turn, might better serve people like yourself.

The enclosed questionnaire is a reproduction of a University of Chicago test regarding reading interests of adults. Your answers will help us report up-to-date information necessary for the continued use of our training program.

Therefore, may we ask you to please fill out the questionnaire as soon as possible according to the instructions on the next page. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning your answers.

Sincerely yours,

Hal R. Taylor

Hal R. Taylor
Training Specialist

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST TO READ ABOUT?

On the following pages you will find a list of questions discussed in magazines and books. The questions have to do with real things; they do not represent poetry or novels or stories, which you may like to read better. Also, the questions do not cover the books or articles that tell you how to do some particular thing, like flying an airplane, or making a dress, or hooking up a radio.

In order to show which questions you are most interested in reading about, please follow the directions below as carefully as you can.

Look over the entire list of questions rapidly, to get a general idea of what they are about. Then go back and consider each question in order. If the first question is one you think would be very interesting to read about, place a cross (X) in the space to the left. If it seems to be of merely average interest or if you cannot easily decide whether it is interesting or not, do not mark it at all. If it is not interesting, mark it zero (O). Then do the same with the other questions. In general, the number of questions you do not mark at all (those of some but not much interest) should be about the same as those you mark X or O.

A good way to decide whether a question is interesting or not is to ask yourself whether you would like to read about it right away, if you had at hand a book or magazine article about it. If you would, then mark it with an X, as interesting. If you are not sure, or if you would probably delay reading it for some time, leave it blank. But if you think you probably would not read about the question no matter how much time you had, then mark it O, as not interesting.

READING CHECK LIST

_____ 1. For what qualities are typical people important?

_____ 2. How people of legend and history really lived.

_____ 3. How well-known leaders of industry won their fame.

_____ 4. How successful business men and women made their success.

_____ 5. How great politicians and statesmen became great.

_____ 6. How scientists make their great discoveries.

_____ 7. Why certain artists and musicians are popular.

_____ 8. What some well-known authors are really like.

_____ 9. How successful actors and actresses win their publics.

_____10. Why educators and religious leaders have started world-movements.

_____11. How kings and queens and social leaders win renown.

_____12. Why certain soldiers and sailors became heroes.

_____13. What government policies are questionable?

_____14. What problems of the federal government are most acute?

_____15. What are the troublesome problems of state and city governments?

_____16. How to improve our laws and our obedience to law.

_____17. What problems beset the American citizen?

_____18. Does the United States know how to manage its foreign affairs?

_____19. How other nations feel toward the United States.

_____20. How foreign governments meet their political problems.

_____21. How the next war may come upon us.

_____22. How nations are preparing for war.

_____23. What peace movements are accomplishing.

_____24. How are business conditions in other countries?

_____25. How to develop and conserve our natural resources.

_____26. What makes industries prosperous?

_____27. What determines prices and costs of living?

_____28. How big business is organized and directed.

_____29. How our foreign trade is developing.

_____30. How the money market behaves and how it affects investments.

_____31. How capital and labor can get together.

_____32. What are the present methods and values of insurance?

_____33. Are publicity and advertising worth the cost?

_____34. How marketing and sales methods have developed.

_____35. Is business becoming more or less crooked?

_____36. How various recent fortunes were made.

_____37. How to win personal success in business.

_____38. How to improve business management.

_____39. How science helps society.

_____40. How recent chemical inventions work and why they are valuable.

_____41. How recent mechanical inventions work and why they are valuable.

_____42. How recent electrical inventions work and why they are valuable.

_____43. How modern science has made war terrible.

_____44. How scientific facts and theories explain the world we live in.

_____45. How primitive man became civilized.

_____46. How is the automobile industry developing?

_____47. What is happening in aviation?

_____48. What are the recent developments in farming?

_____49. What are the recent big achievements in engineering?

_____50. What recent changes have occurred in the mining and metal industries?

_____51. What are the recent gains in trades and manufacturing?

_____52. How medical progress affects public health.

_____53. How specific ills are prevented and cured.

_____54. How to keep healthy.

_____55. How to enhance personal beauty.

_____56. Why people behave as they do.

_____57. What makes a personality?

_____58. How to get along with other people.

_____59. What methods of self-improvement are best?

_____60. What is successful living and how is it done?

_____61. How plants live and why they are valuable.

_____62. How animals behave and how they are trained.

_____63. What has been learned about birds and insects?

_____64. What do we know about fish and marine life?

_____65. What factors make for and against social progress?

_____66. Where is modern civilization headed?

_____67. What are the significant facts about American life today?

_____68. By what qualities are Americans best known?

_____69. How the status of women is changing.

_____70. How modern styles, manners, and conventions developed and where they are leading us.

_____71. What our political, social, and fraternal organizations are doing.

_____72. How problems of social welfare are being met.

_____73. What are the problems of modern city life?

_____74. What are the problems of rural life?

_____75. How exploring expeditions are organized and why.

_____76. What places abroad are interesting?

_____77. Where to find interesting places in the United States.

_____78. Who are the world's most interesting peoples?

_____79. How customs vary in different countries and periods.

_____80. How criminals commit their crimes.

_____81. How crimes are being detected and prevented.

_____82. How to improve our courts and court procedure.

_____83. How our criminals are treated and with what success.

_____84. What are the evils of prohibition and how can they be reduced?

_____85. What about our public morals?

_____86. How modern problems of marriage and divorce are being dealt with.

_____87. What are the facts concerning eugenics and birth control?

_____88. Do men treat women fairly in business and in the professions?

_____89. What do we know about the training of young children?

_____90. What important changes are taking place in elementary and secondary education?

_____91. What is happening to the college and higher education?

_____92. How vocational training reduces the number of misfits.

_____ 93. Should adults go on learning, and how?

_____ 94. What is the meaning of culture?

_____ 95. What is the place of religion in the world today?

_____ 96. Why and how is the church being criticized?

_____ 97. How superstitions and beliefs may be explained.

_____ 98. What are the good and bad effects of reading?

_____ 99. How modern writers write.

_____100. What are the policies and effects of the modern newspaper?

_____101. How language and conversation are changing.

_____102. How arts and art crafts are practiced and enjoyed.

_____103. How American buildings and cities might be made more artistic.

_____104. How great music is produced and what great music does.

_____105. How movies are made and what they may become.

_____106. What is happening to the theater?

_____107. What are the recent developments in sports?

_____108. How to enjoy travel and outdoor life, and why.

_____109. How people spend their leisure and why they like their particular hobbies.

_____110. How to get along with relatives.

_____111. How parents should and should not treat their children.

_____112. What makes a successful marriage?

_____113. How to make the home garden a success.

_____114. How to care for the family car.

_____115. How to improve methods of household management and food preparation.

DATA BLANK

Please supply the following information:

1. Your name and address: (if you desire) _____

2. Your age: _____

3. Male or female: _____

4. How many years of schooling have you actually completed? _____grades, _____years high school, _____years college, _____years post-graduate work.

5. In what department or subject have you done most of your college work, if you attended college? _____

6. What is your father's occupation? _____

7. Describe the nature of your own occupation as clearly as you can in the following space: _____

8. Where have you lived most of your life? _____large city; _____suburb of a large city; _____small city; _____ small town; _____on a farm?

9. About how much time do you spend each week in reading things you do not have to read on account of your daily work or business or possible school assignments? _____less than 1 hour; _____from 1 to 2 hours; _____from 2 to 4 hours; _____from 4 to 8 hours; _____from 8 to 12 hours; _____ more than 12 hours?

10. Where do you get your books or magazines:

From:	From:
_____book clubs	_____school or college libraries
_____public libraries	_____circulating or rental libraries
_____club libraries	_____special reference libraries
_____friends	_____book stores
_____publishers' association	

11. List below the titles of all the books you read last week. Write the name of the libraries they came from, if you read any library books:

BOOKS	LIBRARIES

12. What magazines do you read most regularly each month?_____

_____

_____

_____

13. What newspapers do you read daily?_____

_____

_____

Please write the date:_____, 1959

Thank you for filling out these pages. Please return the whole pamphlet to the address below in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

National Project in Agricultural Communications
Room 13, Wells Hall, Unit B
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF DECILE RATINGS

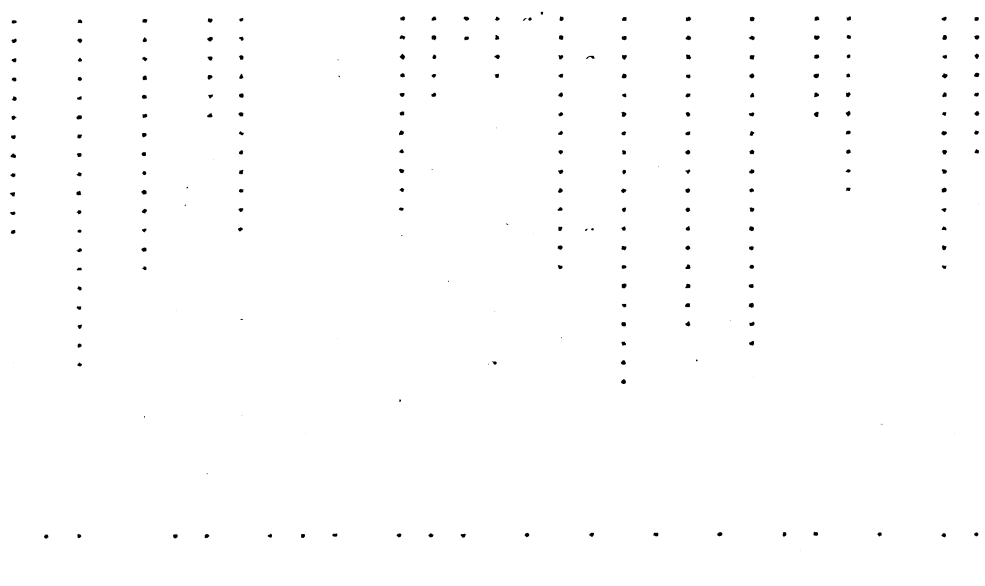
Summary of Decile Ratings

	Topics	1931 UM	1931 UW	1931 FM	1959 FM	1959 FMc	1959 FM nc	1959 FW	1959 FWc	1959 FW nc	1959 UM	1959 UMc	1959 UM nc	1959 UW	1959 UWc	1959 UW nc
1.	Typical personalities...	6	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	6	6	5	4	4
2.	People of legend and history.....	3	4	4	7	5	8	4	4	4	3	2	4	2	2	3
3.	Captains of industry....	7	5	3	5	4	5	6	5	8	3	3	2	6	6	6
4.	Successful business men and women.....	9	2	1	2	2	3	6	6	7	1	2	1	4	4	4
5.	Statesmen and politicians	9	8	8	9	9	9	10	9	10	4	2	6	7	5	8
6.	Scientists.....	2	4	3	2	3	2	4	5	4	2	1	3	4	4	3
7.	Artists and musicians...	10	6	9	10	10	10	9	10	9	10	8	10	7	6	7
8.	Authors.....	10	9	9	10	9	10	6	3	7	9	9	10	6	2	8
9.	Actors and actresses....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	10	8	7	9
10.	Educators and religious leaders.....	9	2	6	4	3	5	4	5	4	3	4	1	3	4	2
11.	Royalty and social leaders.....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	8	10
12.	Military and naval heroes.....	4	8	3	7	6	7	9	10	8	6	4	7	7	7	7
13.	Criticisms of government policies.....	2	7	5	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	5	6	5
14.	Problems of the federal government.....	2	6	5	1	1	1	3	2	4	1	1	1	3	4	2
15.	Problems of state and city government.....	4	8	4	4	4	4	5	4	6	1	2	1	3	4	3
16.	Laws and legislation....	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
17.	Citizenship.....	2	3	1	4	4	3	5	6	4	4	4	2	2	4	2
18.	United States' foreign affairs.....	1	4	10	2	2	2	5	6	5	4	1	5	5	5	5

	Topics	1931 UM	1931 UW	1931 FM	1959 FM	1959 FMc	1959 FM nc	1959 FW	1959 FWc	1959 FW nc	1959 UM	1959 UMc	1959 UM nc	1959 UW	1959 UWc	1959 UW nc
19.	International attitudes..	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
20.	Foreign politics.....	7	10	10	8	7	9	8	8	9	6	4	9	10	10	10
21.	The next war.....	1	5	1	2	2	3	2	5	2	1	4	1	4	5	3
22.	Preparedness.....	1	7	1	2	2	3	5	7	4	3	2	2	3	4	3
23.	Peace movements.....	2	2	1	2	1	3	4	5	4	3	1	7	2	2	2
24.	Business conditions abroad	8	7	6	3	3	4	9	7	10	3	3	2	8	7	8
25.	Natural resources--development and conservation....	2	4	4	1	3	1	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	4
26.	Industrial conditions--prosperity.....	3	6	6	5	5	5	9	8	9	5	6	1	8	9	8
27.	Prices and costs of living.....	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	2
28.	Organization and administration of big business..	8	10	6	8	9	7	9	10	10	6	6	4	10	10	10
29.	Foreign trade.....	8	8	9	4	5	3	6	7	6	6	5	6	8	9	8
30.	The money market--investments.....	7	10	6	5	4	6	9	10	9	4	3	5	9	8	9
31.	Labor and the labor market	1	5	3	2	3	2	8	9	7	2	2	1	4	4	4
32.	Insurance.....	8	7	4	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	3	5	4	5
33.	Advertising and publicity	9	7	7	8	8	8	7	8	6	2	2	1	8	9	7
34.	Marketing--sales methods.	10	10	7	6	8	5	9	8	9	5	5	3	9	9	9
35.	Business ethics and business frauds.....	5	2	2	5	6	4	4	4	4	7	7	4	6	7	5
36.	Business ventures.....	9	9	4	7	5	8	10	9	10	9	8	9	7	7	7
37.	Personal success in business.....	4	3	2	5	4	7	7	9	6	4	4	2	7	6	7
38.	Business management.....		5	8	3	3	4	8	10	7	2	2	1	9	10	9
39.	Social values of science.	5	8	8	6	6	6	7	6	8	6	5	6	4	2	5
40.	Chemical inventions.....	4	9	7	4	7	2	7	7	7	8	6	10	6	6	6

	Topics	1931 UM	1931 UW	1931 FM	1959 FM	1959 FMc	1959 FM nc	1959 FW	1959 FWc	1959 FW nc	1959 UM	1959 UMc	1959 UM nc	1959 UW	1959 UWc	1959 UW nc
41.	Mechanical inventions....	3	10	2	2	4	1	8	8	8	7	6	6	8	8	7
42.	Electrical inventions....	1	6	2	3	5	1	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	7	7
43.	Science and warfare.....	4	8	8	6	6	5	8	10	7	6	7	3	7	7	6
44.	Facts and theories of pure science.....	5	6	7	6	5	7	8	5	9	7	5	8	6	5	7
45.	Facts about mankind.....	3	7	4	9	9	9	7	8	6	9	7	10	6	5	8
46.	Developments in the automobile industry.....	4	10	2	8	8	8	10	10	10	8	9	3	9	7	9
47.	Developments in aviation.	3	9	5	7	7	7	9	9	9	6	6	4	9	10	9
48.	Developments in farming..	9	6	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	7	7	4	9	8	10
49.	Engineering.....	7	9	5	5	6	4	9	9	10	8	8	5	10	10	10
50.	Mining and metal industries.....	10	10	10	9	9	9	10	9	10	10	10	9	10	10	10
51.	Trades and manufacturing.	10	9	10	9	8	9	10	10	10	8	8	7	10	9	10
52.	Public health and medical progress.....	3	1	3	4	5	3	1	1	1	3	1	6	1	1	1
53.	Prevention and treatment of specific ills.....	1	1	5	5	6	4	1	1	1	7	5	8	1	1	1
54.	Personal hygiene.....	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
55.	Personal beauty.....	10	5	8	10	10	10	4	6	3	10	10	10	3	3	3
56.	The nature of human nature and intelligence.....	6	3	3	4	2	6	1	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	2
57.	Personal qualities analyzed.....	3	2	5	6	7	4	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
58.	Getting along with other people.....	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1
59.	Self-improvement.....	2	2	4	5	4	5	1	1	1	4	4	2	2	2	1
60.	The successful life.....	2	1	4	3	2	5	2	1	2	5	5	5	2	1	3
61.	Plant life.....	6	5	1	4	7	2	7	6	8	9	9	9	7	8	6
62.	Animals.....	7	7	5	6	9	3	5	4	6	9	8	10	8	6	9

	Topics	1931			1959											
		UM	UW	FM	FM	FMc	FM nc	FW	FWc	FW nc	UM	UMc	UM nc	UW	UWc	UW nc
63.	Birds and insects.....	8	5	5	8	9	6	8	8	8	10	9	10	9	7	10
64.	Marine life.....	6	10	5	9	10	7	8	7	9	9	7	10	10	8	10
65.	Theories about society and social progress.....	9	5	8	8	8	8	6	8	6	5	2	8	7	6	8
66.	Modern civilization.....	5	4	9	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	6
67.	Comments on modern America.....	6	6	5	7	6	8	4	7	3	4	3	5	4	3	5
68.	Characteristics of the American.....	5	3	7	5	3	6	4	3	5	5	4	6	5	3	5
69.	The changing status of women.....	9	3	9	7	8	5	2	2	3	9	8	7	3	2	4
70.	Modern styles, manners, and customs.....	8	4	9	9	10	9	5	8	5	10	9	9	3	3	4
71.	Organizations--political, social, and fraternal....	6	8	6	9	9	9	10	10	10	9	8	7	8	9	8
72.	Social-welfare problems..	7	6	7	6	7	5	5	8	5	5	3	8	2	3	2
73.	Problems of the city.....	6	8	4	8	8	9	6	8	5	6	6	4	5	6	5
74.	Rural problems.....	9	6	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	8	8	2	9	9	9
75.	Exploration and discovery	5	9	6	8	8	8	8	9	7	8	8	6	9	7	10
76.	Interesting places abroad	6	5	9	7	8	6	3	2	4	5	3	8	5	3	5
77.	Interesting places in the United States.....	1	4	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	1	1
78.	Interesting peoples.....	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	2	5
79.	Customs of other days and other lands.....	7	7	8	7	6	8	3	1	5	7	5	8	4	4	3
80.	Crimes.....	5	8	8	9	10	9	9	10	7	8	8	4	9	8	9
81.	The detection and prevention of crime.....	1	7	6	6	6	5	5	7	5	5	5	4	6	5	6



	Topics	1931 UM	1931 UW	1931 FM	1959 FM	1959 FMc	1959 FM nc	1959 FW	1959 FWc	1959 FW nc	1959 UM	1959 UMc	1959 UM nc	1959 UW	1959 UWc	1959 UW nc
82.	Courts and the administration of justice.....	5	4	8	3	4	2	4	6	3	5	5	5	7	7	7
83.	Criminals and the treatment of criminals.....	7	8	6	7	8	7	6	7	6	4	4	4	6	5	7
84.	Prohibition violations and enforcement.....	4	1	3	7	8	5	8	10	6	10	10	9	8	8	8
85.	Public morals.....	4	3	9	3	1	6	3	5	3	4	4	2	4	3	5
86.	Comments on marriage and divorce.....	7	5	10	4	4	4	4	5	4	6	6	4	4	4	4
87.	Eugenics and birth control	3	6	10	5	4	4	5	5	5	6	5	7	5	3	6
88.	Attitudes--men vs. women.	9	4	10	9	8	9	8	7	9	9	9	7	8	7	7
89.	Child-training.....	5	1	4	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	3	6	3	2	3
90.	Elementary and secondary education.....	8	5	9	3	2	4	2	1	3	2	1	4	1	1	2
91.	College and higher education.....	8	4	6	3	1	5	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	1	4
92.	Vocational guidance and training.....	5	5	7	5	5	5	3	4	2	6	7	2	2	1	3
93.	Adult education.....	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	1
94.	The meaning of culture...	6	3	7	9	9	8	6	3	8	8	6	9	6	6	6
95.	Religion and the world today.....	7	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	3	2	2	1	1	3
96.	Criticism of the church..	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	2	6
97.	Superstitions and beliefs	7	3	4	6	7	6	5	3	6	9	7	9	6	5	10
98.	The use and abuse of reading.....	3	2	1	6	4	7	3	4	3	8	7	7	3	3	3
99.	Writers and writing.....	10	9	10	10	9	10	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
100.	The reporter and the press	5	7	7	8	9	9	8	9	6	6	6	5	8	10	7

	Topics	1931 UM	1931 UW	1931 FM	1959 FM	FMc	FM nc	FW	FWc	FW nc	UM	UMc	UM nc	UW	UWc	UW nc
101.	Language and the art of conversation.....	8	7	9	8	8	9	5	3	6	8	6	7	5	4	6
102.	Arts and crafts.....	10	10	10	10	9	10	6	4	7	10	10	10	5	4	6
103.	Civic beauty and architecture.....	9	9	9	10	10	10	9	9	10	9	9	9	10	9	10
104.	Music.....	9	3	8	9	9	10	8	6	8	8	7	8	7	5	8
105.	Motion pictures.....	6	7	5	10	10	10	9	10	8	10	9	9	9	8	9
106.	The theater.....	10	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	10	8	6	9
107.	Sports.....	5	10	7	7	5	8	9	10	9	3	4	2	10	7	10
108.	Travel and outdoor life..	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3
109.	Hobbies and the use of leisure.....	4	6	6	3	2	4	5	6	5	7	6	7	2	2	3
110.	Getting along with relatives.....	8	4	7	6	7	5	4	3	5	10	10	9	5	5	4
111.	Parents' relationships with children.....	3	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	2
112.	Successful marriage.....	3	3	7	2	2	2	2	2	7	5	4	5	4	2	4
113.	The home garden.....	6	2	3	7	8	5	5	6	5	8	8	6	5	5	4
114.	The family car.....	4	9	8	5	5	4	7	9	7	6	6	3	6	5	7
115.	Household management and food preparation.....	7	1	3	6	7	4	1	2	1	10	9	8	1	1	1

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