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A SURVEY OF THE READING MATERIALS FOUND IN THE HOMES OF THE
FOURTH AND SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF THE ELEMENTARY
DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL, BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Master of Arts

by
Grace Young Buckland
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is important that we be aware of the many changes that have taken place in the reading habits of our present day society. It has been understood that people's reading habits may never be assumed as fixed. The changing pattern of reading may be shown by referring to and correlating with the periods of development of our country.

As the pages of history unfold we find that during the latter part of the eighteenth century religion dominated the drama of life, therefore it could be expected that religious literature was in great demand. During this period of time when our country was in its infancy this type of literature provided a feeling of security for its readers.

The reading habits of Americans expanded as leisure increased as a result of the industrial revolution, as religion was regarded increasingly as an agency to support rather than suppress man's capacities and interests, and as utilitarianism became to large numbers of people a way of life. Underlying this great expansion was a change in the value of knowledge. Influential nineteenth century leaders frequently expressed in writing and speech the Tolstonian view that the diffusion of printed matter is the most powerful weapon against ignorance. Under the aegis of this spirit many a volume was circulated, read, and enjoyed which at an earlier period would have undoubtedly been condemned and banned as worldly. Reading matter was often

judged less by its moral standards than by its ability to instruct.¹

During the latter half of the nineteenth century there was an influx of books from abroad. It was during this period that this country noticed a great increase in domestic publications, newspapers, magazines and the organization of libraries for the use of the public. In other phases of life this country also had an awakening as no other land had ever seen. This sudden increase of knowledge did much to stir the imagination of men.

Passing on to the more recent years the writer finds equally significant changes in the needs and reading habits of our society. These changes might be itemized as: (1) The change from reading for information to leisure reading; (2) the great demand for books and other reading materials brought about by the advertising through radio, television and the movies; (3) and lastly, the changes brought about in newer and different practices in journalism.

Research studies into the reading habits of members of the present day society agree that many factors have been involved. Therefore this study was made to study the reading habits and materials as found in the homes of the students of

1

Ralph C. Preston, Reading in the Age of Mass Communication (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), p. 108.

the fourth and seventh grades of the Elementary Demonstration School, Boone, North Carolina.

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine the type of reading material provided in the homes of the fourth and seventh grade students; (2) to determine the nature of the reading habits of the parents; (3) and to secure an overall picture of the interest in reading in reference to the economic and social conditions present in the homes of the fourth and seventh grade students of the Elementary Demonstration School.

Importance of the study. One of the outstanding ideas of modern education is to instil in each child desirable habits in the use of leisure time. The growing importance of providing good reading materials in the homes of students has been recognized for many years by authorities in the field of education. It is only through this means that satisfactory interest in reading can be aroused and maintained. It has been shown by Witty² that

Interests and needs of boys and girls should receive greater attention and that evaluation of growth in reading should include an appraisal of children's attitudes toward reading and their success in reading different kinds of subject matter. Reading should be an all school function with every

2

Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1949), p. 9.

teacher assuming responsibility for fostering growth in reading. The significance of home conditions was recognized, and emphasis was placed on the role of experience as basic concern in all phases of reading.

The importance of good reading materials in homes cannot be over emphasized. Many studies have been made on the reading interests and tastes of adults. Gray³ states that "these studies indicate that the reading interests of the general adult population leave much to be desired. Their fare consists chiefly of newspaper headlines, popular magazines, and cheap fiction. Only about one-fourth of them read books of any kind, and a very small proportion of them read substantially non-fiction."

Location of the school. The Elementary Demonstration School is located in Boone, North Carolina, and is the Demonstration School for the Appalachian State Teachers College. Boone is the county seat of Watauga County and is located in the northwest corner of North Carolina. It is a thriving mountain town of about three thousand inhabitants that has a trading radius of over thirty miles. It is almost on top of the Blue Ridge Mountains and has an elevation of 3,333 feet. Boone is approximately 100 miles from Charlotte northwest, 100 miles west of Winston Salem, 100 miles north

³ William S. Gray, Reading in General Education (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1940), p. 233.

east of Asheville, and 60 miles east of Bristol. This college town is located at the point of intersection of United States Highways number 221, 321, and 421 as of the year 1951.

Source of data. Part of the information for this study was obtained by a two-page questionnaire given to the 124 students of the two sections of the fourth grade and to the two sections of the seventh grade of the Elementary Demonstration School. One-hundred per cent of the questionnaires were returned due to the fact that all were filled out during a library period while at school. However, due to oversight on the part of some students, the writer found that one or two questions were left unanswered on fourteen of the questionnaires.

All parents were sent two-page questionnaires concerning the reading material found in the home, the economic status of the parent, and the leisure time activities of the mother and father.

Methods of investigation. The investigation for this study was made through personal contact with the fourth and seventh grade students. Both sections of the grades were included. The students themselves, under the direct supervision of the author, recorded the information requested. However, in the case of the parents' questionnaires, it was

found necessary to discuss the questionnaire with the students and have them act as the intermediary between the author and the parents. This questionnaire also consisted of two pages.

In addition to the questionnaires some information was obtained by direct word of mouth, especially in which parts of the questionnaire had been omitted.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH OF MODERN INTEREST IN PROBLEMS OF READING

Every child has a need for freedom, security, and love in order to be happy. Children are dependent upon those around them for this nurture. Teachers of today have abandoned the idea that the sole purpose of the elementary school is to teach reading. Teachers are interested in providing reading as a means of adventure and entertainment to the child--the outcome will be a permanent interest in reading, a well adjusted personality and the ability to evaluate reading materials and use them in his total life pattern.

Witty¹ says that the modern concept of the reading process has evolved slowly. Along with its development gradual improvement has been made in reading methods and materials. Despite this progress there is a lag between knowledge and practice due in part to the failure of teachers to stress reading as a meaningful functional skill. Many factors complicate the problem of knowing whether reading attainment today is poorer or better than formerly. There has been a great increase in the number of pupils attending secondary schools. There is a lack of accurate criteria for judging reading ability. Each day presents new and

¹ Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1949), p. 14.

greater demands for reading skills of different kinds. Many types of reading matter are unsuitable or too difficult for the high school pupil of today because the nature and variety of instructional materials have not paralleled changing needs.

One of the greatest problems of the school of today grows out of the range of individual differences within classes and the varied purposes for which pupils must read. As a result of this many of our pupils in the middle grades of the elementary school show serious reading retardation. Pupils in junior and senior high schools show even more frequent and serious retardation. Pupils must be led to comprehend and to evaluate facts presented in printed forms in order to take their places as worthy citizens of tomorrow.

Witty² suggests that we look upon such an effort as part of a larger program in communication that leads children and youth to speak clearly, to write effectively, to listen intelligently, and to read critically. Through such an approach, it is possible to equip young people for responsible citizenship.

Nearly everyone who teaches children admits that the ideal introduction to books and reading should be in the home, not as a means of instruction, but as something that each member of the family does and enjoys just as casually as

² Ibid., p. 15.

they eat or sleep. First grade teachers are happy to teach the child who comes from a home in which he is surrounded by magazines, books, pictures, educational toys, newspapers, radio, and often television. These combine to make the transition to school work seem more natural and worthwhile.

Home background, physical status and growth and mental maturity are now generally conceded as the major related factors determining reading readiness and forming a basis for the child's attitude toward reading.³ Even before the child comes to school his curiosity has been aroused as to the meaning of the black and white symbols printed on the page which others read. Pictures have stimulated his imagination and desire to know more.

Modern reading instruction often endeavors to base the first reading instruction upon the child's direct experiences at home. Therefore home background plays a major part in making the reading experience meaningful and in making the transition from home to school.

When we consider the many things reading may do for a child we realize the great need for widespread interest in reading and the problems concerning it. Reading may be for the child a happy retreat, a chance for achievement, a means of information, a leisure time activity, a challenge to the

³ Ibid., pp. 56-57.

imagination, a basis for the development of a life long hobby or career, a means of solving problems in his own small world and a way of molding his attitudes and ideals.

We as a nation have much to be desired when we realize that more than one-third of our children in the United States either live in towns with no libraries or go to schools with no libraries.⁴ Perhaps a greater number of homes fail to have even a meager collection of books for the child to use. At least two million children in our country do not go to school at all. Close to one million children, it is estimated, travel over our country with their migrant families⁵ and attend school very little or not at all. Thus our challenge is difficult and our need as a whole is great.

In writing of the reading problem Forest⁶ has said:

The development of reading ability is not as was once assumed, a sudden phenomenon occurring around the beginning of the seventh year, but rather a slow process starting in babyhood. An intelligent approach to the problem of teaching children to read therefore requires careful study of the very little child's pre-reading experiences as well as of the school child's reading problems.

⁴ Louise Deaman Bechtel, "The Children's Librarian," Library Journal 75:1774-1795, October 15, 1950.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1795.

⁶ Ilse Forest, Early Years at School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1949), p. 189.

Teachers who work carefully with the parents, visit the homes and learn of the child's home life and experiences of all types have a basis upon which to build the reading interests of the children and have a better understanding of his reading problems.

Forest⁷ writes that research studies show that on the whole the limits and rate of the developmental processes are fixed by native capacity, but that complete fruition of this capacity is either furthered or retarded by environmental conditions. So it is obvious that the growth of reading readiness may be materially affected by the child's home environment.

Unless the child is ready from the developmental point of view, learning cannot be forced upon him with any desirable benefits. Response to any sort of motivation and teaching is not likely to be successful before his development is in accord. Therefore our reading program is based upon much scientific study of the processes involved in reading. The child's interest in reading is encouraged by the varied but carefully planned program which takes into account that learning to read is hard work while at the same time highly enjoyable.

⁷
Ibid., p. 190.

Children's Interest. One of the most important factors in learning to read and of continued reading is the child's interest. Reading must be interesting and must tie up with the child's experiences. The reading material provided must be on the level of the child's understanding, while at the same time it must be on his interest level.

Reading material more than ever before is bait for the young reader by means of more and better illustrations in books, more attractive covers for books, more color, better design, more readable type, and more books to read.

Larrick⁸ tells of an experience every teacher, parent, and librarian has experienced in presenting an attractive book to a child to hear him say, "I don't think I would like that I can tell by looking."

Interest is a problem that parents and teachers share with the librarian as they introduce new books to their children. A good checklist followed through before a book is purchased might help in being able to decide upon the interest qualities for the children. If possible a book should be seen before it is purchased. The cover of the book should invite one on in for the story. Approval or disapproval should be voiced to librarians and book salesmen.

8

Nancy Larrick, "Design in Children's Books,"
Library Journal 75:1776-1781, October 15, 1950.

Book companies are always on the lookout for the things children like or for the children's reactions to a book. The reaction of several children is often easy to get and may help in the selection of other materials.

For many years many parents and teachers thought certain book lists had to be followed and certain books should be read by all students. Today we seem to be getting away from that idea. We take the child's interest where it is and lead from that on to suggested readings which cover a wide variety as to subjects and reading level to suit his own particular need. Wide individual reading is desired as compared to the traditional plan of an entire class studying the same literature at the same time.

Reading interests differ as to sex for certain ages.

Norwell⁹ found in his survey that of the literary types of materials commonly used in our schools girls enjoy seven of the literary types better than boys do. The one type liked by boys is speech. Boys rank the novel, the short story and the biography close to the rank given by girls.

It was suggested by Norwell¹⁰ that in choosing reading material for children to choose material which ranks high in

⁹ George W. Norwell, The Reading Interests of Young People (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1950), pp. 70-71.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 71.

the appraisal of both boys and girls.

In examining books for interest factors attractive to boys we may first look for narration. Human characters should be present which present the male rather than the female characters as being dominant. With these two factors in mind we may expect adventure, war, animal stories, humor and patriotism to rank higher with the boys.

Girls selections also place narration first in their interest. The characters for girls' stories may be either male or female. Sentiment is a markedly favorable factor in girls interests. Romantic love, stories of home, school and family life rank high with girls. Girls often seem to tolerate factors which are neutral to their interest in books to a greater degree than boys. Many selections will meet both standards to some degree. Adult reading seems to bring about a more complete disappearance of differences in reading interests as to sex.

Important differences in reading interests of bright, average and dull children are found. Anderson¹¹ cites studies which have shown that dull pupils seemed to avoid science books. Readability was a more important factor than content in a dull child's selection of a book to read.

11

Harold H. Anderson, "Reading Interests and Tastes," Reading in General Education A Report of the Committee on Reading in General Education. (William A. Gray, editor; Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1940), pp. 251-252.

Gifted children were found to read over a much wider range. Their reading preferences included more science, history, biography, travel, folk tales, informational fiction, poetry, and drama than the average or dull child.

Since dull pupils are, for the most part, interested in doing the same things as the gifted child, perhaps their reading interests might tend to be more alike if we had more reading materials available which could hold high interest value and still be low in reading difficulty.

Factors that influence children's reading selection.

The interests of boys and girls always influence the selection of reading materials. However, many other factors enter in. Reading is contagious. A child wants to do what other children are doing. One reader in a group of children can start a cycle by reading a good book and telling others about it or suggesting that they read it. The trend of the times always seems to influence the selection of the books children read. During war time stories of warfare and its' ways are popular, stories fast in action, familiar settings, sports in season cause boys to select these books. Popular movies currently showing, television programs, radio programs, hobbies stories about children their own age, school unit study, family interests all have their influence on the selection of the child's books.

The type of reading selection will also depend upon whether the child is reading for recreation, information, escape fun, or an adult for thoughts and emotions of which no expression is permissible in social living.

Parents first at home, librarians and teachers at school hold the greatest responsibility for the reading selection of the children. They select the collections from which the child is to choose the books which he will read. Many parents and teachers expect children to select and read the same books they read as children. Many books have found favor for three or four generations, nevertheless, during the past twenty years there has been a minor revolution in children's books. The greatest change is in physical appearance. Bindings, print and illustrations all make the book more attractive for the child's selection.

Norwell¹² lists: Adventure, Humor, Animals, Patriotism, Narration, Male and female characters, Love, Home, and Family Life and Supernatural stories as the main special factors influencing the selection of reading materials by boys and girls.

12

Norwell, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

White¹³ has pointed out that if a child reads a book a fortnight from ages seven to fourteen years the number read during the period is 416. This is comparatively few books to read but these four hundred books often influence a child far more powerfully than parents realize and the attitudes and conduct of the author's heroes may be for the time adopted by the reader. A steady diet of second-rate selections here may be just as unfit and have as far reaching effects as poor food for the body. Censorship is not the means to employ perhaps but if good books are available the selection of them will tower above the poor books. Therefore, first in the home, next in the school, the collection from which the child selects his reading material is dependant for the most part on parents and teachers.

Miller¹⁴ says

People need literature, different kinds at different times, to help them live. It really is the life need or purpose that always determines what to read, when to read, and how to read. Our problem is to help young people know what they want to find in reading and how to find it.

¹³ Dorothy Neal White, About Books for Children (New Zealand: Whitcombe and Tombs, Limited, 1946), p. 11.

¹⁴ Helen Rand Miller, "Basic Question in Reading, What is Your Purpose?," The Journal of Education 134:13-14, January, 1951.

Children who are free to use their own initiative and interest as a basis for this selection of materials to read often read a great deal more than any parent or teacher could force them to do.

Emerson said of a child's reading, "Let him read what is proper to him and not waste his memory."

Reading in life today, purpose. So much of the child's education must come through books that we should use every means to add to his chances of success in school adjustment by giving him means of developing skills in reading. The child should be introduced to good books early since the greater his reading experience the more meaningful his school life will be.

Reed¹⁵ speaks of reading with her children before school age and after. Her plea is to begin early in the home. If you wait until the child is old enough to read himself, you will most likely have lost the opportunity to share with him not only the reading but also the emotions that accompany reading. Even the youngest too should feel the security of owning his own library. The interest and purpose of reading in the lives of the parents or those closely associated with the child often determine his interest and enthusiasm for

15

Mrs. H. C. Reed, "Of Reading With My Children,"
Horn Book 27:13-18, January-February, 1951.

reading materials.

Just as home environment does affect reading¹⁶ it is also probable that reading may change attitudes and behavior. One purpose of education today is for healthful living. Education for democratic family living is also being increasingly recognized as being vital to our democratic society. Many books for children of the elementary school have been written on family life.

Fisher¹⁷ has done an evaluation of books available on family life because of the fact that more educators are steadily assuming more responsibility for developing family life education.

Reading in life today has many purposes and may vary from "Humpty Dumpty to Atomic energy."¹⁸ Reading and living are closely interwoven. A young person aged eight once said, "I wonder what families do that don't read books together." It would be like not knowing each other's friends. Reading is something which needs to be shared to be enjoyed to the

¹⁶ Carolyn Towle, "Does Home Environment Affect Reading?," American Childhood 36:9-10, February, 1951.

¹⁷ Helen H. Fisher, "Family Life in Children's Literature," Elementary School Journal 50:516-2, May, 1950.

¹⁸ Ellinor G. Preston, "From Humpty Dumpty to Atomic Energy," Library Journal 75:2122-6, December 15, 1950.

fullest. Constant exposure to books make them pleasant necessities to any family or group living together.

Since the publication of Havinghurst's¹⁹ Developmental Tasks and Education, teachers and librarians have been correlating many of our well known library titles with the nine developmental tasks of the adolescent. McGuire²⁰ gives her list of books for the adolescent and notes that

In everyday life the individual learns how to live and how to meet an ever widening circle of people, situations and experiences. This process involves a continuous pattern of learning and adjusting which has been characterized as achieving developmental tasks....Books help span the gap and help formulate purposes.

Duff²¹ says that "books open doors into more aspects of Heaven and earth than his infant philosophy has dreamed of, and through them he begins to learn what man really is."

19 Robert J. Havinghurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 6.

20 Mrs. H. B. McGuire, "Integrating Books and Reading With Adolescent Tasks," School Review 58:211-19, April, 1950.

21 Annis Duff, Bequest of Wings--A Family's Pleasures With Books (New York: The Viking Press, 1944), p. 21.

CHAPTER III

STUDY OF PARENTAL STATUS

The type of students in attendance at the Elementary Demonstration School determines the type of school in operation. It is believed that proper home environment has a high correlation with the financial, social and economic status of the parents.

It is important to know the status of parents whose children are taught in our school since the education in the classroom represents only a small fraction of the total training a child receives. It is estimated that of the 8,760 hours in a year, the child spends only about 1,000 in school. During the rest of these hours he is under home supervision.

The writer found that wide variation existed in reference to the type of homes, economic status, and the size of families. These facts in themselves accounted for the differing social status encountered.

In this survey it was noted that the number of homes studied were about equally divided between the small town of Boone and the rural section of the county.

The reading materials in the home play a very important part in the over all development of the individual. This was also true of the type and variety of reading materials made

available in the school. Witty¹ states that,

In the planned reading program of the modern school it is recognized that the child's choice of reading materials is an important consideration.... the reading of magazines and newspapers is also a necessary phase of a well balanced reading program.

Types of homes. The particular part of the questionnaire relating to homes included items on their location, facilities for cleanliness and other modern conveniences, size and availability of rooms for each occupant, home ownership, etc.

Table I gives an itemized list of the number of rooms available in the home and also the number of parents reporting.

1

Paul Witty, et als., "Children's Choice of Favorite Books," Journal of Educational Psychology, May, 1946, pp. 276-277.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF HOMES ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF ROOMS

Number of rooms	Number of homes
1	2
2	1
3	5
4	11
5	10
6	21
7	17
8	18
9	10
10	8
11	7
12	4
13	3
14	2
15	0
16	0
17	2

The writer found the number of rooms in the homes varied from one to seventeen. Two parents listed their home as consisting of only one room, while only one parent had two rooms. Five parents reported three rooms, and eleven parents reported four rooms. Ten parents reported five rooms in their homes with a greater number of parents having six rooms. This number being twenty-one. Seventeen families had homes consisting of seven rooms while eighteen families had eight room homes. After this point the writer finds fewer parents had large homes. Ten parents list their

homes as consisting of nine rooms, eight homes have ten rooms. Seven homes have eleven rooms, while four homes have twelve rooms. There were only three families that had as many as thirteen rooms while two homes had fourteen rooms. The greatest number of rooms reported was seventeen. Two families fell in this category.

The median number of rooms listed in 1949 in the United States² for dwelling units was 4.73 rooms. North Carolina listed 4.61 rooms.

The homes studied in this survey seem to be above average in the number of rooms provided for the families.

The large number of rooms available should mean that many of the children have the advantage of having a room to call their own in which to study and read undisturbed.

The location of the home as to town or country seems to have had very little influence as to the availability of modern facilities. Table II gives the location of the home and lists available facilities.

² Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1950
United States Department of Commerce (Washington, D. C.:
United States Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 746.

TABLE II
LOCATION OF HOMES AND AVAILABLE FACILITIES

Homes	Number
In Boone	72
On farm	52
Having running water	99
Electricity	116
Radio	120
Television	10
Automobiles	96
Washing machines	106
Furnace	47

One hundred and twenty-four homes were studied. Of this number over one-half were located in the town of Boone, while fifty-two were located on the farms nearby. About three-fourths of the homes reported having running water in the homes. About ninety-eight per cent of the homes reported electricity in the homes. About ninety-nine per cent of the homes reported radios. Ten homes out of the one hundred and twenty-four, or about two per cent, had television. Two-thirds of the homes had automobiles. About three-fourths of the homes had washing machines. One-third of the homes reported a furnace.

This listing compares favorably to the listing for the United States as a whole. Information Please Almanac,³ with figures from the United States Department of Commerce, reports that in the United States in 1950 seventy-two per cent of the homes had running water, eighty-nine per cent of the homes had electricity. About ninety-nine per cent of the homes had radios. One-twelfth of the homes had television. Over two-thirds of the homes owned automobiles. Over one-half of the homes had washing machines and forty-eight per cent of the homes were equipped with a furnace.

Modern facilities in the homes show a high social and economic status of the parents. Modern conveniences mean more leisure time which parents may have with the children and for their own recreation. Thus we may conclude that the homes of the children attending the Elementary Demonstration School have about as many conveniences as other children in the United States.

A listing was also made of home ownership. Table III gives the distribution of this relationship. It was found that eleven parents were renting their homes, seven were purchasing and twenty-one already owned their homes.

3

John Kieron, editor, Information Please Almanac (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 300.

TABLE III

OWNERSHIP OF HOMES

Item	Number of parents
Renting home	11
Buying home	7
Owned home	21

More than one-half of the homes listed in this study were owned by the person occupying the dwelling as compared to the United States average of one-third of the dwellings owned by the person occupying.⁴

Home ownership provides community solidarity and stability. Education thrives best in such a situation. The Boone community should thus provide a good situation for learning.

Education of parents. A very vital influence in the reading materials provided in the home is the educational background of the parent. The writer discovered that the education of the mothers ran from one with a first grade

4

Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1950
 United States Department of Commerce (Washington, D. C.:
 United States Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 740.

education to another with a Ph. D. Degree. Almost the same was true of the fathers since one father had a third grade education and another a Ph. D. Degree. Table IV gives an overall picture of the education situation.

TABLE IV

EDUCATION OF THE PARENTS SUMMARIZED

Grade Completed	Number completing grade	
	Mother	Father
Elementary		
1	1	0
2	1	0
3	0	3
4	0	2
5	0	1
6	1	3
7	10	10
8	4	1
High School		
9	1	2
10	5	5
11	1	0
12	10	7
College		
1	0	3
2	1	1
3	0	0
4	1	0
M. A. Degree	2	2
Ph. D. Degree	1	1

However, in the over-all picture it was found that in most of the cases the mother and father in the home possessed almost identically the same educational training. Table IV indicates that only one mother's educational training was as low as the first grade while no father fell in this or the second grade level and only one mother had a second grade education. As far as the third grade was concerned the writer found two fathers in this group while no mothers came under the third, fourth, or fifth grade group. In the fourth grade we find two fathers, also one in the fifth grade group. In the sixth grade educational groups we find one mother and three fathers while there was listed ten fathers and ten mothers with a seventh grade education. There is a great probability that these mothers and fathers had completed the elementary school when there were only seven grades in that division. In the eighth grade bracket we find four mothers and one father. In the ninth grade group there was one mother and two fathers listed. In the tenth grade five mothers and five fathers were listed. Only one mother reached the eleventh grade while ten mothers and seven fathers completed high school. In the college bracket the number becomes much smaller. Only three fathers and no mothers reached this rank while one mother and also one father completed the second year of college. No one listed the third year of college. One mother completed four years

of college.

The writer found two mothers and two fathers with masters degrees and one mother and one father with doctorates. This table indicates a great range in the educational achievement of the parents involved in the study.

In the year 1947 the average number of years of school completed was eight and nine tenths for the male. The female population ran slightly higher completing nine and three tenths. The North Carolina average for both male and female was seven and four tenths.⁵

The parents of the children in the Elementary Demonstration School had an average educational level of nine and five tenths for the mothers and nine and one tenth for the fathers. The educational level was slightly above the national average.

Economic status of the parents. Many factors were involved in considering the economic status of the parents. This status had great influence on the reading materials provided in the homes for the students of the Elementary Demonstration School. In Table V the writer has arranged the income of the parents into three brackets.

5

Ibid., pp. 113-114.

TABLE V

INCOME OF THE PARENTS

Income	Number of parents
Under \$1,000 per year	14
Between \$2,000 and \$4,000 per year	20
Over \$4,000 per year	5

Fourteen parents, or about one-third, indicated that their family income was under \$1,000 per year. This figure is much higher in number of people with incomes under \$1,000 than the average given in 1949 for the people in the United States.⁶ At that time about one-seventh of the people had incomes under \$1,000. About one-half the people in the United States had incomes ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 yearly. The writer found in this survey that one-half of the parents had incomes ranging between \$2,000 and \$4,000. Only one-eighth reported incomes over \$4,000 as compared to over one-third of the people in the United States reporting incomes from \$3,000 to over \$5,000.

These figures do not necessarily lower the status so much due to the fact that about one-half of the parents

6

Kieran, op. cit., p. 294.

surveyed live on farms where they produce part of the food thus having money to spend which would in some localities have to be used for food, shelter, and other necessities.

Table VI lists the occupation and the number of fathers and mothers that fell in each group. Division into groups is made as to whether they belong to the common, skilled or professional group of workers.

TABLE VI

Occupation	Number		
	Father	Mother	
Common			
Laborer	Chauffeur	1	
	Coal dealer	1	
	State employee	1	
	Cafeteria worker		1
	Truck driver	3	
	Laborer	4	
	Farmer	7	
	Housework		30
Skilled			
Laborer	Cafe operator	1	
	Game protector	1	
	Highway supervisor	1	
	Mail carrier	1	
	Metal worker	1	
	Painter	1	
	Prison supervisor	1	
	Salesman	1	
	Shovel operator	1	
	Mechanic	2	
	Electrician	2	
	Carpenter	3	
	Merchant	4	
Professional			
Worker	Teacher	3	2
	Librarian		1
	Bookkeeper		1

Forty-eight parents are in the category of the common worker. This large number is due to the fact that thirty mothers listed housework as their occupation. Seventeen fathers work as common workers and one mother as a cafeteria worker.

In the skilled group, twenty fathers are listed as cafe operator, game protector, highway supervisor, mail carrier, metal worker, painter, prison supervisor, salesman, shovel operator, mechanics, electricians, carpenters and merchants. No mothers were listed in this group.

The professional group lists only seven people out of the forty-eight. These are three fathers and four mothers. All the fathers listed are teachers. Two mothers are teachers, one a librarian, and one is a bookkeeper.

The distribution according to occupations indicates that the occupational choice of the parents should be conducive to a desire for high educational achievement among their children.

Table VII indicates the approximate number of books purchased in 1950 and the number of parents purchasing books thus making them available to their children. The number of books owned are listed also with the number of parents.

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF BOOKS PURCHASED AND OWNED IN 1950

Number books purchased	Number parents
None	13
5	6
10	5
15	4
40	2
Number books owned	
None	4
1	1
5	4
15	5
50	4
75	1
100-200	4
200-300	2
500-600	3
600-1000	1
Over 1000	1

Thirteen parents did not purchase any books for their homes during the year 1950. Six parents purchased five books each while five other parents purchased ten books each. Fifteen books were purchased by four of the homes while two parents indicated that they purchased as many as forty books for their homes.

There was considerable variation in the number of books owned from none by four families to over 1000 volumes reported by another. One family owned one book. The title was not given so it was assumed that it was the Bible. Four families indicated ownership of only five books each while five families stated that their libraries consisted of fifteen books. Fifty books were found in the book collections of at least four families while another family listed that they owned seventy-five books. Going into large numbers the writer found four families that had from one hundred to two hundred books. Two families counted their books from two hundred to three hundred. In the larger listing it was indicated that three families had from five hundred to six hundred books. One family each was listed in the six hundred to one thousand bracket as well as in the over one thousand group.

Size of families. The size of the families varied from those students that had fifteen brothers and sisters

down to the many students that had neither brother nor sister. Table VIII summarizes the number of brothers and sisters.

TABLE VIII

SIZE OF FAMILIES

Number of students	Number of brothers and/or sisters
18	0
20	1
20	2
16	3
13	4
15	5
8	6
6	7
3	8
1	9
2	10
0	11
0	12
0	13
1	14
1	15

Table VIII indicates that eighteen students had no brothers or sisters. Twenty students had one brother or sister and twenty others had two brothers or sisters. Sixteen students had three brothers and sisters, thirteen had four brothers and sisters, while fifteen of the students had five brothers and sisters each. We find eight of the

students having six brothers and sisters. Only six students had as many as seven brothers and sisters. Three students had eight brothers and sisters, one student had nine brothers and sisters, and two students had ten brothers and sisters each. At this point we find no student with either eleven, twelve or thirteen brothers and sisters. One student has fourteen brothers and sisters while one other has fifteen brothers and sisters.

This is a total of 581 brothers and sisters for the 124 students reporting or an average of about 4.3 children in 124 homes.

Of the 42,107,000 households listed in 1949, twenty-one and six-tenths per cent had one child under eighteen years of age. Sixteen per cent had two children. Thirteen and eight-tenths per cent had three or more children. The median number of persons including husband, wife and children per household in 1949 was three and eleven-hundredths.⁷

Leisure time activities of the parents. The writer found, by questionnaire returns, that the parents that had noted some leisure time activity were the families in the higher income class and usually those parents that owned or

7

Statistical Abstract, op. cit., p. 23.

were buying their homes. It was noted in comparison that the number of books owned or purchased last year were owned or purchased by those people who were in the leisure class group. Of the parents reporting on the various questions, the writer found that thirty-nine expressed interest in reading while only two stated that they did not enjoy reading.

Table IX shows the leisure time activities listed by both fathers and mothers and the popularity of each activity.

TABLE IX

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

Activity	Father	Mother
Hunting	3	
Travel	2	1
Radio	1	1
Shows	5	8
Reading	10	11
Fishing	4	
Farming	3	
Hiking	1	
Rug making		1
Church work		1
Handiwork		2
Bridge	1	1
Club work		1
Civic organizations	1	
Golf	1	
None	1	1

Table IX indicates that reading was the most popular leisure time activity. One-third of the parents checked reading as their favorite. About one-fourth of the parents surveyed, enjoyed the movies as their favorite leisure time activity. Other activities listed by the parents were hunting, travel, radio, fishing, farming, hiking, rug making, church work, handiwork, bridge, club work, civic organizations, and golf.

The importance of leisure time activities cannot be over-emphasized. Various studies have indicated that a certain amount of a person's time must be devoted to leisure time activities in one form or another in order for that person to become a well-rounded individual.

Monroe⁸ says the need for wholesome recreational activity becomes acute in American culture. Wholesale recreation acts as a personal and social integrator. The Educational Policies Commission has emphasized this point of view by listing among the "imperative educational needs of youth" the importance of worthwhile leisure opportunities.

To be watched and discouraged are the disintegrating types of leisure time use such as, slot machines, pulp magazines, certain comic books, low quality movies, etc.

⁸ Walter S. Monroe, Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 1006.

Some writers⁹ contend that ready made machine pleasures, passive amusements and over-stimulating excitement tend to disintegrate the individual and that society may gradually drift toward a state of boredom and neurosis if we do not begin to popularize the active and creative uses of leisure time.

Many leaders now recognize the part of the school in developing wise choices of leisure time use and in co-operating with the community in planning a recreation program.

Leisure time activities of individuals are always dependent upon space and facilities, material and equipment, leadership, racial backgrounds and local interest of the parents.

Reading as a leisure time activity is possible in the area covered by this survey not only because of home libraries and school libraries but also because of a good bookmobile coverage from the Watauga County Public Library.

In 1940, according to a study made by the United States Department of Agriculture,¹⁰ there were approximately 400 counties out of 3,000 in the United States with library service. This means that nearly 39,000,000 rural Americans do not have access to a permanent library service.

⁹ Ibid., p. 1045.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 1006.

Seventy-six counties in North Carolina in 1950 had one or more public libraries for white people. Forty counties provided libraries for the colored population. Thirty-four cities and towns provided public libraries. There were also twenty-one regional public libraries.¹¹

Income and education versus number of children. The author found that various phases of home life were reflected by the influence of the income and the education of the fathers and mothers in the homes surveyed.

Table X gives the average number of children found in the homes within various income brackets.

TABLE X

PARENTS INCOME VERSUS NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Income bracket (Yearly)	Average number of children in home
Under \$1,000	2.7
\$2,000 to \$4,000	3.1
Over \$4,000	2.0

¹¹

Mrs. J. C. B. Ehringhaus and Mrs. Carl Goerch,
North Carolina Almanac and State Industrial Guide 1950-51
 (Raleigh, North Carolina: Almanac Publishing Company, 1950),
 pp. 495-96.

Families with \$1,000 or less annual income had an average of 2.7 children per home as compared with the national average for 1940,¹² which was 2.55. An increase was noted in the size of families with incomes between \$2,000 and \$4,000 where the average family consisted in the homes surveyed of 3.1 children. Parents with an income of over \$4,000 yearly salary had an average of only 2 children per home which did not follow the national average in which the number of children increased steadily with the income up to 3.87 children for an income of \$10,000 and over.

Table XI indicates the relationship between the mother's education and the average number of children in their homes.

TABLE XI

EDUCATION OF MOTHERS VERSUS NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Education	Average number of children
Grammar grades	2.9
High school	3.0
College	2.5
College (over 4 years)	2.0

12

Statistical Abstract, op. cit., p. 271.

The writer found that mothers with only grade school training averaged 2.9 children per family while mothers that reached high school averaged 3.0 children per home. This group ran higher in the number of children than any other level. Mothers with college education averaged 2.5 children. Those with more than four years of college work averaged only 2.0 children.

Fathers with the various grades of educational attainment as the mothers averaged a slightly larger number of children per home. This is shown in Table XII.

Landis,¹³ in summarizing studies dealing with the relationship between education and human fertility, states that communities and social classes with greater education have lower birth rates. The same findings were also made by this survey concerning both mothers and fathers.

13

Monroe, op. cit., p. 1212.

TABLE XII

EDUCATION OF FATHERS VERSUS NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Education	Average number of children
Grammar grades	3.1
High school	2.4
College	3.0
College (over 4 years)	3.0

Fathers with grammar grade education had an average of 3.1 children per family. Those with high school training averaged only 2.4 children. Fathers with college training and training beyond four years college had an equal rating of 3.0 children in their homes.

SUMMARY

Material for this chapter was obtained by means of questionnaires and was used to show the parental status. Comparisons to the national average, when possible, were made with data presented.

Factors found in the homes which were conducive to a good reading program for children and adults were:

1. A higher than average number of rooms in the homes thus providing a place in which to read undisturbed.

2. The presence in the homes of many modern facilities and conveniences to enable the members of the families to have adequate lighting for reading, facilities for cleanliness and sanitation, time saving devices as the washing machine allowing the mother more time with the children or for leisure time reading, radios and automobiles in most of the homes allowed outside contacts with the world as a means of developing new and more lasting interest and motivation for good reading.

3. A slightly higher than the average educational level of the parents.

4. A high level of leisure time activities of which reading was the activity chosen most frequently.

Factors found which were not conducive to wide reading were:

1. A lower than the average income status which would leave less money for the acquisition of worthwhile reading materials.

2. A larger number of children per home than the national average which might cut down the expenditures for reading materials where they are most needed.

As a whole, the parental status is of a quality which should be conducive to a high reading achievement among their children.

CHAPTER IV

STATUS OF STUDENTS IN THE HOMES STUDIED

The students in the homes studied were, in general, similar to any group of small town elementary school students. According to other surveys that have been made there were many facts concerning the likes and dislikes of children which were substantially the same as those found in the present study.

The questionnaire to students included such items as their interest in library books, how they spent their vacation, the type of pets they found most enjoyable, their leisure time and the manner in which leisure time was utilized.

The author found this group of elementary school students were interested in reading library books and magazines. The number of students reading library books and the approximate number read is indicated in Table XIII. Ninety-seven students stated on the questionnaires that reading library books was the type of reading they enjoyed most. Many enjoyed reading them to a younger brother or sister.

TABLE XIII

LIBRARY BOOKS READ

Number of books	Number of students reading
1	1
2	1
3	1
10	7
20	15
30	9
50	23
60	6
70	7
80	9
90	3
100	12
125	9
200	4
300	3
400	1

The author found one student out of the total of 124 had read only one book during the past year. One student read only two. Another student had read only three books. The study indicates that seven students read ten books each while fifteen read twenty books.

It will be noted that the number of students decreased accordingly as the number of books read increased. Nine students read thirty books each. The number increased in the next category in that twenty-three students listed their

reading as fifty books. Going further in the table the reader will note that six students read sixty books. Seven read seventy books. Nine read eighty books. Only three students read as many as ninety books. When the reader reaches the one-hundred book number it is noted that only twelve students achieved this level. Nine read one-hundred and twenty-five books. In the last listing the author found that four students read two-hundred books, three read three-hundred books. Only one student read as many as four-hundred books.

It is to be kept in mind that the listing given in Table XIII is the estimate of the children which may account for the seemingly high figures although the circulation records in the school library alone seem to uphold their answers.

Monroe¹ lists a study in California in which records were kept which showed that the elementary children in that school read an average of forty-two books per year.

The average number of books read by children in this study was about fifty. Circulation records are not always accurate tests as to whether a child has read a book. A child's own listing is often more likely to be true.

1

Walter S. Monroe, Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 1045.

The unrestricted choices of books by children doing voluntary reading reveal some noteworthy changes.² It is thought if more books were made generally available about careers, tomboyish escapades, loyal heroes, home and school life, historical mystery, aviation, sea adventure and mystery, pupils might show a greater interest in voluntary reading.

Types of vacations. The children showed much interest in the manner in which they spent their vacation during the summer of 1950. Students were asked to name the state or location in which their vacation was spent. Table XIV summarizes the place of vacation and the number of students in each particular location.

2

Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. 114.

TABLE XIV

WHERE STUDENTS SPENT VACATIONS

Place	Number of students
Home	49
Visiting relatives	21
Beach (North Carolina)	7
North Carolina	14
Tennessee	5
California	1
Virginia	7
Washington, D. C.	2
Ohio	3
West Virginia	4
Florida	3
Georgia	1

The fact that forty-nine students stated that they had no vacation probably could be interpreted in several ways. The writer understands this to mean that these students did not leave home during the summer for any length of time. Twenty-one students visited locally while seven spent some time at the various beaches. The writer found that nine states were represented as vacation spots. Fourteen students visited in various parts of North Carolina. Five visited Tennessee, seven Virginia, four West Virginia, and three spent their vacation in Ohio. The other states listed were a greater distance from North Carolina as one student

vacationed in California, two in Washington, D. C., three in Florida, and one in Georgia.

Most all children enjoy books that contain descriptions related to their own everyday experiences. Thus the vacation spots and the new interests and enthusiasm for the new things seen during their vacation form a good basis upon which to begin the guidance toward a balanced reading program during the school year.

The child may have his first introduction to the desert, the seashore, the woods, the plains or modern modes of travel through his vacation time. A few miles of travel exposes the child to the building of roads, cities, lakes, new bridges and all the new and modern implements of construction. Many books may be used to stimulate these new interests and provide information concerning them.

Betzner³ has said that travel, a prominent and accepted part of current life, makes it possible for boys and girls to use their most familiar and dependable means of acquiring knowledge in broader and more distant fields.

Types of pets. In Table XV the author shows the various types of pets owned by the students and the number of students owning pets.

3

Jean Betzner and Annie E. Moore, Every Child and Books (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1940), p. 29.

TABLE XV

TYPES OF PETS

Type of pet	Number of students
Dog	56
Cat	39
Rabbit	6
Chicken	6
Horse	3
Pony	3
Cow	3
Lamb	2
Calf	2
Turtle	1
Mouse	1
Ground hog	1

The dog was the most popular pet. Fifty-six students listed the dog. The cat was second with thirty-nine students. Six students had a pet chicken. Six others had pet rabbits. Groups of three children each had horses, ponies, and cows. Probably due to the spring season, two students had pet lambs. Two also had calves. The smaller number of students had the most unusual pets. One each had a turtle, groundhog, and mouse.

Pets are important to children. The type of pet owned by a child often influences the types of books bought in the home or read in the library. Upon checking the card catalog in the Elementary Demonstration School for the number

of books about each pet mentioned in Table XV it was found that the number followed the children's choices almost identically with the exception of the horse. More books about horses were listed than any other pet.

In play with pets or in writing of them, children express basic feelings and interests. Pets help the child to reveal himself. During the past few years many good books have been written about animals that are popular pets with children. Many good movies have also been made. One of the best is probably "The Yearling" produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer which is a story of Jody and his pet fawn.

Student activity. The types of activity engaged in by the students surveyed varied from those such as studying, listening to the radio, skating, playing ball, attending the movies, etc. Watauga County activities for student enjoyment were of a limited nature especially during the winter months and early spring. It is to be expected that the type of activity would have made a radical change for the outdoors had the survey been made during the summer months.

The type of activities engaged in by the students often influences the type of books they select to read.

Table XVI summarizes the activities engaged in by the various students.

TABLE XVI

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Items	Number of students
Attended shows	75
Read	109
Listened to radio	108
Watched television	30
Played	68
Worked	20
Studied	1
Visited	8
Attended church	113
Read to younger brother or sister	70

Table XVI graphically shows that 113 students were actively engaged in church work which is of special interest in the mountain county. One hundred-eight pupils expressed interest in listening as a favorite pastime. Probably the most popular public entertainment for the Boone Demonstration School students was the movies. Seventy-five students enjoyed this type of activity while seventy contented themselves by reading to their younger brothers or sisters. The writer is convinced that many more than sixty-eight students listed enjoyed some form of play. Probably due to the expense or newness of television only thirty students listed it as their favorite activity. Twenty students worked, eight engaged in visiting while only one used his patime for studying.

Spare time per day. The author found that the spare time enjoyed each day by the students varied from zero to five hours. It was assumed that most pupils had more spare time than they listed. Table XVII gives a summary of these facts.

TABLE XVII

SPARE TIME PER DAY

Number of students	Hours of spare time daily
1	0
21	1
32	2
28	3
14	4
17	5

Table XVII indicated that only one student had no time to call his or her own. Twenty-one students had at least one hour per day. Two hours of leisure time were enjoyed by thirty-two pupils, while twenty-eight had three free hours. As the hours increased the writer found the number of students decreased. The table shows fourteen students had four hours spare time each day. Five hours of leisure were enjoyed by seventeen students.

Favorite magazines. None of the reading material listed by the students held higher esteem or consisted of any greater variety than the magazines. The students listed forty-eight magazines as their favorites.

Table XVIII shows that Life Magazine was leading with seventy-one pupils checking it as their favorite. Look Magazine was second with forty-three pupils which leads us to believe that the students were leaning toward the pictorial. The American Girl placed third with twenty-two students. Boys' Life had fifteen listings. The Saturday Evening Post was checked by fourteen students. The others varied from twelve to one.

TABLE XVIII

FAVORITE MAGAZINES

Magazine	Number of students reading	Magazine	Number of students reading
Life	71	School Activities	3
Look	43	Comics	2
American Girl	22	Red Book	2
Jack and Jill	16	Farm Journal	2
Saturday Evening Post	15	The State	2
Boys' Life	15	Household	2
Woman's Day	12	Open Road for Boys	2
Child Life	7	Children's Playmate	1
Wildlife	7	Ford Times	1
Popular Science	5	Pathfinder	1
Ladies Home Journal	5	Secrets	1
Movie	5	Senior Prom	1
Good Housekeeping	4	Children's Digest	1
McCalls	4	Nature	1
Popular Mechanics	4	Wee Wisdom	1
National Geographic	4	Calling All Girls	1
Flying	4	Holiday	1
Story Parade	3	American Home	1
True Stories	3	Woman's Home Companion	1

SUMMARY

Data from 124 students secured by questionnaires were used in this chapter to establish the status of the students in the homes.

A comparison of the findings of this study with other studies of children's interests shows that the interests,

likes and dislikes of Boone Demonstration School students are much the same as those of other parts of the country.

It was found that an average of forty library books per child had been read during the past year. Magazine and newspaper reading ranked high with the students. Vacations, types of pets and student activities often influenced the reading of the students as to type and selection of materials. The list of favorites in magazines was for the most part high in quality.

CHAPTER V

READING MATERIALS IN THE HOMES STUDIED

The reading materials found in the homes of the fourth and seventh grade students consisted chiefly of magazines. It is to be noted also that more reading was done in the nine different newspapers found in the homes than in the various types of books. Gray¹ states that the tremendous quantity of magazine reading in America today, much of it mediocre in quality, places upon general education a stern responsibility. The schools, we are confident, can direct the potential interests in magazines into channels which will serve both the individual and society to better advantage than at present. But before the schools can undertake an intelligent program of guidance in magazine reading, we need to know more about the reading interests satisfied by magazines.

There have been many investigations of newspaper reading among students but probably the most extensive and careful investigation was reported by Harvey and Denton,²

¹ William S. Gray, Reading in General Education (Washington, D. C.: American Council of Education, 1940), p. 239.

² C. C. Harvey and Cecil F. Denton, "Use of Newspapers in Secondary Schools," School Review, March, 1938, pp. 196-201.

who analyzed questionnaire reports from students in 44 high schools in 15 different states. They found that most students spent from fifteen to thirty minutes daily on the newspapers, and that a large percentage of them reported reading the newspaper for information. In some schools ninety per cent of the students reported not only that they read for information but that they believed what they read.

Gray and Munroe³ reviewed a number of studies of reading interest among six different groups: business and professional men, college students, college alumni, young industrial workers, loggers and rural people. They concluded that nearly all people in all groups read the newspaper, but that group interest varied.

Current literature and popularity. The writer discovered that certain magazines as well as newspapers seemed to be outstanding as popular reading material when compared to all literature studied. In the magazine bracket the homes favored Life and Reader's Digest by a huge majority while the Charlotte Observer was by far the outstanding daily newspaper. However, it is true that the local county weekly, The Watauga Democrat, was the favorite newspaper.

3

William S. Gray and Ruth Munroe, The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 305.

Newspapers. The parents were asked to list the newspapers that were read in their home. Nine such newspapers were listed. Seven of these being daily newspapers of the larger cities of North Carolina. Two were weekly publications, one being the local paper. Table XIX lists the newspapers and the number of homes having these papers available.

TABLE XIX

NUMBER OF HOMES HAVING NEWSPAPERS

Newspaper	Number of homes
Watauga Democrat	20
Charlotte Observer	15
Winston Salem Journal	6
Asheville Citizen	9
Greensboro Daily News	2
Charlotte News	1
Twin City Sentinel	1
Grit	1
None	1

Two weeklies were listed by the parents. The local paper, The Watauga Democrat, was found in twenty homes while the Grit, published in Pennsylvania, was found in only one

home. Of the dailies noted, the writer found fifteen parents subscribe to the Charlotte Observer, nine parents take the Asheville Citizen and six parents take the Winston Salem Journal. The Greensboro Daily News was found in two homes while the Charlotte News was found in only one home. The writer observed that one home reported that no newspaper of any kind was available.

Witty⁴ says that the newspaper attracts young children and continues to hold their interest as they grow older. The comic strip is the favorite section of the newspaper. Its popularity is never equaled by any other part. One investigator assigned ranks to different sections of the paper as checked by students. Comics were at the top while editorials and political accounts were at the lowest rank.

Magazines. Witty and Coomer⁵ investigated a group of high school boys and girls who reported that about four magazines (other than comics) were read regularly. There was little difference in high school as to the types of magazines preferred from grade to grade.

Magazines have recently come to appeal strongly to pupils in the elementary school.

⁴ Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. 40.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 41-43.

A home which offers a variety of magazines along with books and newspapers is offering further opportunities for reading that is appropriate and beneficial.

The writer requested that magazines subscribed to be listed. Fifty-four magazines were listed even though some magazines were subscribed to in only one home. Table XX lists the magazines subscribed to or purchased and the number of homes represented.

TABLE XX

NUMBER OF HOMES HAVING MAGAZINES AVAILABLE

Magazine	Number	Magazine	Number
Life	15	American Home	2
Reader's Digest	10	N. E. A. Journal	2
Saturday Evening Post	9	Hollands	2
McCall's	8	Farm and Range	2
Look	6	American Girl	2
Ladies Home Journal	5	Wildlife	2
Country Gentleman	4	Southern Farmer	2
Farm Journal	4	Scouting	2
Red Book	4	Atlantic	1
Southern Planter	3	American History Review	1
Popular Science	3	United Nation's World	1
N. C. E. A. Journal	3	Roadways	1
Progressive Farmer	3	Royal Service	1
Better Homes and Gardens	3	American Legion	1
Good Housekeeping	2	Time	1
Popular Mechanics	2	Parents Magazine	1
Open Road	2	Skyways	1
Field and Stream	2	Sports Afield	1
American Magazine	2	Child Life	1
Cornet	2		

In referring to the table it will be noted that certain magazines were found in only one home of the 124 studied. The following were in this category: Child Life, Sports Afield, Skyways, Parents Magazine, Time, American Legion, Royal Service, Roadways, United Nation's World, American History Review and Atlantic.

Two homes each reported these magazines: Scouting, Southern Farmer, Wildlife, American Girl, Farm and Range, Holland's, N. E.A. Journal, American Home, Coronet, American Magazine, Field and Stream, Open Road, Popular Mechanics and Good Housekeeping.

Three homes subscribed to or purchased the following magazines: Better Homes and Gardens, Progressive Farmer, N. C. E. A. Journal, Popular Science, and the Southern Planter.

Four homes listed these magazines: Red Book, Farm Journal, and Country Gentleman.

Five homes listed The Ladies Home Journal. Six listed Look, eight McCall's, nine The Saturday Evening Post, ten The Reader's Digest, and fifteen Life.

The writer found that according to the questionnaires ten homes did not subscribe to any magazine as compared to only one home that did not receive a newspaper either weekly or daily.

Books. Parents were asked to list books as found in the four following categories: reference books, religious books, fiction and non-fiction. In spite of the great amount of research that has been undertaken in field of reading, there remains large areas as yet unexplored. The writer assumed that a number of books listed were for shelf purpose only and were never read. For example, one parent listed a complete set of Shakespeare but the parents' educational level was around the fourth or fifth grade.

Four parents stated that they did not list the fiction in their collection because they had too many.

Of the seventy-one titles listed, many were found in more than one home collection. About one-fourth of the fiction listed would be suitable for reading by the grammar grade elementary child. Books for the children of the primary grades were not listed due to the fact that they were usually referred to as easy books or picture books, instead of fiction. Seven parents stated on their questionnaires that they had several Little Golden Books or they had several easy books for the smaller children which they did not list by title.

The writer has listed, as follows, the books found in the homes of the parents of the fourth and seventh grade students of the Elementary Demonstration School.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Ancient and Modern History
 Animal Life
 Art Teacher
 Atlas
 Biblical and Theological Encyclopedia

 Bible Concordance
 Bible Dictionaries
 Biographical Dictionary
 Bird Guide
 Chemical Formulas

 Child Care Books
 Childcraft
 Cities of the United States
 Cook Books
 Compton's Encyclopedia

 Dictionaries
 Insect Guide
 Mathematics Encyclopedia
 Medical Books
 Messages and Papers of the Presidents

 Peoples Encyclopedia
 Review of History
 Roxborough Classics
 Standard Dictionary of Facts
 Standard Encyclopedia

 The Westward Movement
 Wildflower Guide
 World Almanac
 World Book Encyclopedia

RELIGIOUS BOOKS

Bible
 Bible Dictionary
 Bible Stories for Children
 Brown's Concordance
 Child's Bible Reader
 In His Steps
 Light

Marriage, Home and Children
 Modern Concordance
 Modern Pre-Millennium and the Christian Hope
 Paths That Lead to God
 Plebetts Notes

Prayer, Asking and Receiving
 Prophecy and the Prophets
 Stories of the Bible
 The Humiliation of Christ
 Ye Are Christ

FICTION

A Gentlemen's Player
 America, the Great Sacrifice
 Anderson's Fairy Tales
 Barry Gordon
 Ben Hur

Black Beauty
 Brave Cowboy Bill
 Captain Caution
 Cruise of the Shining Light
 Church on the Avenue

Dave Dawson
 David Copperfield
 Doomed Trail
 Frenchman's Creek
 Ghost Stories

Grace Harlow
 Great Sin
 Heat Lightning
 Help Wanted--Male
 It's A Kick

Junior Masterpieces
 Kate Fennigate
 King Arthur
 Leave Her to Heaven
 Little Women

Little Men
Lone Ranger
Little Washington's Holiday
Man and Maid
Minniglan

Moby Dick
Night Life of the Gods
No Pockets in a Shroud
One Foot in Heaven
Panther Man

Pilgrim's Inn
Pilgrim's Progress
Prides Way
Prudence Says So
Raland of Altenburg

Ransom's Folly
Reader's Digest Condensed Books
Robin Hood
Sea Stories
Sergeant York

Seven Keys to Baldpate
Sign of the Crooked Arrow
Smiles
Spirit of the Border
Tidewater

Tom Sawyer
Those Who Walk in Darkness
Three Old Ladies
Treasure Island
Two Years Before the Mast

The Caste
The Enchanted Winer
The City of Fire
The Lady Divine
The Last of Summer

The Lone Episode
The Sun is My Undoing
The Story of Waitsill Baxter
The Weavers
Uncle Remus

Valley of Decision
War and Peace
We Two
Western Stories
Wind, Sand and Stars
Wuthering Heights

SUMMARY

Reading materials in the homes of the students were cited in this chapter. A compilation of the newspapers, magazines and books in the homes studied was included.

The selection and use of newspapers in the homes was of higher quality than the magazine and book selection.

The magazine selection showed wide variation as to titles subscribed to. The most popular types of magazines were the pictorial and the digest editions. Many magazines concerning farming were found in the various homes.

The book selections found in the homes leave much to be desired. The reference collections were not adequate for home use of students or adults. The religious books were for the most part adult selections. A Bible was found in every home. Books of fiction listed were not of a high quality adult fiction. Very few of the titles given were suitable for children of school age.

Many of the titles listed were obviously purchased for shelf purpose or had been bought from high pressure salesmen. Some books were perhaps those passed down from generation to generation. Other titles were recognized

as book club selections.

Newspaper and magazine selection was found to be of a higher quality than book selection.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is the purpose of this chapter to summarize the data considered in the five preceding chapters. The writer finds that the results of this study show that: (1) the reading materials found in the homes of the fourth and seventh grade students are of an unbalanced nature in certain cases; (2) the parents desire good reading materials for their children, and in most cases, attempt to satisfy this desire; (3) and that the problems in reading materials in the homes rest to a great extent upon the schools. This was true in the light that the parents had the desire to give their children adequate reading materials but were not informed as to the best materials available.

Present status of reading in the homes studied. The writer found from this study that reading for pleasure and also for information has become a custom in practically all of the homes studied. The amount of interest in newspapers, magazines and books varied from home to home as well as the amount of interest in each of the reading materials separately. Most homes were spending an adequate sum for magazines and newspapers even though they were not spending accordingly for books. However, some homes had excellent

collections and others were without the barest number of essential books.

One finds from this study that the following conditions exist in relation to the present status of reading materials in the homes studied:

(1) The majority of homes had a daily newspaper available.

(2) Radios were in ninety-nine per cent of the homes studied.

(3) Children enjoyed reading books more than their parents.

(4) The parents showed preference for newspapers over books or magazines.

(5) Parents' understanding in selection of good books were inferior to their understanding in relation to the selection of magazines.

(6) An insufficient number of homes had reference books available.

(7) Parents were interested in reading of all types.

(8) Children showed great interest in the reading of library books.

(9) Children were interested in reading to their younger brothers and sisters.

(10) More emphasis must be placed indirectly if not directly, by teachers upon the importance of the availability

of good reading materials in the homes.

(11) The library of the Elementary Demonstration School has helped to develop a desire in the students for better reading habits.

(12) Sufficient interest has been shown to require closer co-ordination on reading problems between the home and the school.

Need for a better reading program. The writer finds that to inaugurate a better reading program in the homes that the student must be educated in the desirability and necessity of such a program. In this manner the student resells the idea to the parent in those cases where it needs to be done.

The need for better selection of reading materials is acute. Especially is this true in reference to books. The responsibility for a better reading program lies directly upon the faculty of the Elementary Demonstration School. This adequate program cannot be inaugurated or completed quickly. This is a gradual process as can be imagined. However, the need can be met more quickly, in this area, because the parents have shown their interest. This important phase of education is neglected in many schools as has been suggested in previous instances.

CONCLUSIONS

This study suggests that:

(1) The development of the reading program in the homes has not kept pace with the reading development in the Elementary Demonstration School.

(2) There is a decided interest manifested in the securing of good reading materials in the homes for the parents and children.

(3) The parents need to know more about better reading materials, especially in regard to reference books and fiction.

(4) In order to fulfil its responsibility, it is necessary for the faculty to directly or indirectly provide the parents with accurate information in relation to adequate reading materials for the home.

(5) Closer co-ordination must be emphasized between the school and home in reference to reading both for pleasure and for information.

Problems needing further investigation. As a result of this study the writer suggests the following six problems as problems requiring further investigation.

(1) What is the responsibility of the public schools in reference to the inaugurating of a better reading program in the homes of the students?

(2) What is the responsibility of the parents in providing an adequate supply of reading materials in the homes?

(3) What methods could or should be used to bring about better reading in the homes?

(4) What are the possibilities of the school setting up a brief study course for the parents in order to make them aware of the better reading materials?

(5) What method could be used to provide closer correlation between the reading programs of the school and the reading of the home?

(6) What procedures might be used in the school that would carry over into the home which would increase interest in the better types of literature?

The problems suggested are of such nature that they require much thinking. The writer believes that if further investigation were carried out concerning the above mentioned problems that the schools would reap the profits in the long run. The study just completed shows that the conditions prevalent in the homes of the fourth and seventh grade students could be improved to the benefit of the parents as well as to the students and the school.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

GRADES 4 AND 7

ELEMENTARY DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL, BOONE, N. C.

Please answer each question as accurately as possible.
Do not sign your name.

1. Is your Mother living? _____ Father? _____
2. Number of brothers _____ Ages _____
3. Number of sisters _____ Ages _____
4. Number of brothers and sisters at home? _____
5. Is your home located in Boone? _____ On a farm? _____
6. Number of rooms in your home? _____
 Do you have a room of your own? _____
7. Do you have running water? _____ Electricity? _____
 Radio? _____ Television? _____ Automobile? _____
 Washing machine? _____ Furnace? _____
8. What do you and your brothers and sisters do in your
 spare time? Go to the show? _____ Read? _____
 Listen to the radio? _____ Watch television? _____
 Other things? List _____
9. Approximately how many library books have you read
 from the school library, Bookmobile or public library
 since September, 1950? _____
10. How much spare time do you have per day? _____
11. How did you spend your last vacation? _____

12. What is the most distant place you remember visiting?

13. Do you attend church regularly? _____
14. Do you read to your younger brothers or sisters? _____
15. Do older people read to you? _____ How often? _____
16. Do you have a pet? _____ What kind? _____
17. List your 6 favorite books.
- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |
18. List your 3 favorite magazines.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
19. Do you read a newspaper daily? _____
What part? _____
20. What do you enjoy reading most?
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Library books? _____ | Magazines? _____ |
| Newspapers? _____ | Comics? _____ |

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS

GRADES 4 AND 7

ELEMENTARY DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL, BOONE, N. C.

Please answer each question as accurately as possible.
Do not sign your name.

1. State ages of your children and give education of each.

Age	_____	Education	_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
2. Mother's Education _____. Father's Education _____.
3. Do you own _____ rent _____ buying _____ your home?
4. Occupation of father _____. Mother _____.
5. The family income per year is
under \$1,000 _____ \$2,000 to \$4,000 _____
over \$4,000 _____
6. What leisure time activities are engaged in by
Father? _____
Mother? _____
7. Do you enjoy reading books? _____
8. Does the mother or father read the library books brought home from school? Always _____ Sometimes _____
Never _____
9. How many books did you buy for your home during the year 1950? _____
10. How many books do you have in your home? _____
11. List newspapers read in your home.

12. List magazines you subscribe to. Check most popular ones.

13. List books in your home. Place a check mark after most popular one in each listing. Use back of sheet if necessary.

Religious Books

Reference Books

Books of Fiction

Others

FAVORITE BOOKS LISTED BY THE CHILDREN

Abe Lincoln	Fair Adventure
Adam of the Road	Fairy Tales
Airplanes at Work	Firehouse Mystery
Air Workers	Flying Wing
Alex Hamilton	Forgotten Daughter
America	Four Great Americans
Andy Jackson	From Sun to Earth
Animal World	
At Our House	Gallant Bess
Augustus Books	George Washington
Automobiles From Start to Finish	Ginger Bread Boy
	Going on Sixteen
	Golden Gate
Ballet Shoes	
Bambi	Happy Little Family
Big Tree	He Went With Marco Polo
Big Road Walker	Here They Are
Bird Girl	Heidi
Black Beauty	Holiday
Back Stallion	Homer Price
Bluebeard	If I Ran the Zoo
Blue Willow	Indians of the Plains
Buffalo Bill	Island Stallion
Bush Holiday	Jack and the Bean Stalk
Busy Tommy	Jack Tales
	Jane Adams
Call It Courage	Jane Hope
Cats and How to Draw Them	Johnny Appleseed
Chicken Little	Juanita
Cinderella	
Clear Track Ahead	Keep the Wagons Moving
Clementine	Kecka
Courage and the Glory	Kit Carson
Cowboys and Cattle Trails	King of the Wind
Cowboy Small	
Cowgirl Kate	Lad, A Dog
	Lassie Come Home
Daniel Boone	Let's Do Better
Davenport's Are At Dinner	Little Duck
David's Railroad	Little House in the Big
Davy Crockett	Woods
Doll Who Came Alive	Little House on Wheels
Dr. Dolittle's Secret Lake	Little Men
	Little Moo at the Circus
Easter Time	Little Red Hen
Elsa's Secret	Little River of Gold
English Fairy Tales	

Little Town on the Prairie
 Little Women
 Long White Month
 Long Winter

Makes of North Carolina History
 Mary Poppins
 Mickey Mouse Books
 Middle Sister
 Midnight, A Cowboy
 Mother Goose
 Mountain Laurel
 My Friend Flicka
 Mystery of the Haunted Cliff
 Mystery up the Chimney

Nancy Drew Books
 Night Before Christmas

Old Fashioned Girl
 On the Banks of Plum Creek
 Our Calendar

Paddle to the Sea
 Paul Bunyon
 Paul Revere
 Pinocchio
 Practically Seventeen

Rain Forest
 Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm
 Red Horse Hill
 Red Letter Days
 River of the Wolves
 Robin Hood
 Rocky Summer
 Rose in Bloom

Sandy
 Secret Garden
 Senior Year
 Sensible Kate
 Seventeenth Summer
 Shasta of the Wolves
 Silver Chief
 Snow Hill
 Snow White
 Sonny
 Star Wish
 Stablemates

Stephen Foster
 Sue Barton
 Swiss Family Robinson

Tales from Silverlands
 Tarzen
 Television
 The Clue in the Old Album
 The Four Story Mistake
 The Lion's Paw
 The Long Train's Roll
 The Mexican Donkey Boy
 The Newsboy
 The Oak Tree House
 The Seventh Step
 They Loved to Laugh
 Tick, Tack and Jim
 Top Gallant
 Top Kick
 Tom Sawyer
 Treasure Island

Uncle Remus
 Unlimited Horizons
 Up in the Attic

Visits With Friends

Wanted--Two Bikes
 Watch for a Tall White
 Sail
 War in the Air
 Web Adams
 Wild Animals I Have Known
 Wind in the Willows
 Windy Foot
 With a High Heart
 World Round

You Can Write Chinese
 Young Audubon