

A SURVEY OF RECREATIONAL BOOK READING BY FIFTH
THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE PUPILS IN LUTHERAN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF THE WESTERN
WISCONSIN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

by

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Statement of the problem. Lutheran elementary school teachers as well as other elementary teachers need to be interested in the recreational book reading of their pupils. Beneficial guidance of the pupils in recreational reading demands that teachers know the interests of their pupils, including those who rank at the top and the bottom of the class in achievement. The purpose of this survey was to find the interests and recreational book habits of the high-ranking and low-ranking pupils in grades five to eight in Lutheran schools of Western Wisconsin.

Methods and procedures used. Schedules were administered to teachers and pupils in Lutheran schools of Western Wisconsin to determine recreational reading interests and habits. On the basis of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills the top-ranking and bottom-ranking pupils were selected for further study. These pupils reported on books they read during a portion of the school year. Comparisons were then made between actual and expressed reading interests.

Summary of findings. Fiction books were more preferred than books of non-fiction. It was found that both sexes like books which contain thrills, action, and excitement, but the sexes differ in preference of other things. Actual and expressed reading interests of both sexes are similar. Low-ranking pupils make little use of public library facilities. It was concluded that in planning school libraries teachers and administrators must more fully consider the low-ranking pupils.

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by
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CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Guiding children in literature is an everyday occurrence in the life of the elementary school teacher. So that this experience may be pleasant and worthwhile for both teacher and pupil, and so that both teachers and administrators in Lutheran elementary schools, which must often operate on a limited budget, may have some guidelines to follow in establishing and operating school libraries, this survey was undertaken.

I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Change in philosophy. Listing of recommended or required books is not a new thing in the teaching of literature. What seems to give a new look to book lists is the fact that the reasons for these lists have changed over the course of the years. Formerly books were selected with the following criteria in mind:

1. excellence in writing
2. approval over a long period of time
3. fidelity in portrayal of life.¹

¹William H. Burton, Reading in Child Development (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), p. 364.

The role of interest as a guideline for book selection must not be minimized. Zeller refers to the psychological role of interest when he states that the basis of habit formation is experiencing with satisfaction. This means that children form the habit of reading from reading materials which they enjoy.³ Consequently, a teacher must do all within his power to become acquainted with the interests of his children.

In planning reading activities and in selecting books, teachers . . . need to take into strict account what is known about predominant interest patterns of children and youth at different age levels as well as the factors that influence these interests.⁴

Once a teacher knows the interest patterns of his children both collectively and individually, he has reached a starting point for guiding his readers.

Before he can guide his readers, however, there must be books available to which he can refer his pupils. This means that careful book selection must have been made when the school or classroom library was established. Careful book selection rests also on knowing the general interest patterns of the various age levels of children.

³Dale Zeller, The Relative Importance of Factors of Interest in Reading Materials for Junior High School Pupils (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941), p. 21.

⁴Florence Damon Gleary, Blueprints for Better Reading (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1957), p. 34.

By anticipating book needs, book selection attempts to provide the "right book for the right person at the right time." Book selection is, therefore, one of the important factors in any attempt to interest young people in books and reading.⁵

Since knowing interest patterns is important for guiding readers and for book selection, this knowledge must be kept current. Finding these current interest patterns constitutes the second reason for conducting this survey.

Establishment of guidelines for developing breadth of interest. When a teacher has found those areas which are of interest to the pupil and has guided the pupil to books which will satisfy these interests and needs, he must not feel that his job is completed. He has not as yet done all in his power to make his pupil an educated person. Russell describes an educated person as one who has a breadth of interest as well as a depth of interest in certain areas. He says that in school a teacher has a dual task, "to capitalize upon children's present interests as motivation for reading and other learning and to redirect old interests and stimulate new and productive ones."⁶ The teacher must be ready now to expand and possibly to redirect the interests

⁵Geneva R. Hanna and Mariana K. McAllister, Books, Young People, and Reading Guidance (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 104.

⁶David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1961), pp. 365-366.

of the pupil. He must know what interests are related to those the child now has. He must be ready to guide the pupil not only to books for which the pupil feels the need but also to those for which the pupil might feel the need in the future. The teacher can do this only if he knows the interest patterns of the various age groups.

Developing a breadth of worthwhile interests is important for another reason. The interests with which our pupils leave school are those which they will most likely carry with them throughout their lives.⁷ The responsibility placed upon the teacher is great. He must be ever aware of this fact. To a large extent a child's future rests in the teacher's hands. The teacher, therefore, needs to know about interest patterns so that he can help the pupils develop a breadth of interests. This is the third reason for undertaking this survey.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SURVEY

Aims of the reading program. Although recreational book reading is not exclusively a part of the reading program, it is more closely related to the reading program than to any

⁷Anita E. Dunn, Fare for the Reluctant Reader (Albany: State University of New York, New York State College for Teachers, 1952), p. v.

of the other programs in school. In order to see the significance of this survey one must first look at the aims of the reading program.

The aim of the school reading program is threefold. First, the pupil must acquire the necessary skills needed for reading. Without these he cannot read anything. Secondly, the pupil should acquire the habit of reading. It does little good to teach a child how to read if later in life, when he is not in school, he does not use the skill. If a child has the habit of reading, he will very likely continue to have this habit as an adult. Thirdly, the child must acquire a positive attitude toward reading materials. Without this third point reading is something which will be used by the person only when needed but not for enjoyment. "Development of worthwhile interests and tastes may be regarded as the crowning achievement of any reading program."⁸

It is this third point which shows the significance of this survey. The way to develop a positive attitude toward reading is to start with reading material in which the pupil is interested and with which he will experience success. From this starting point the teacher can work toward encouraging the child to develop a positive attitude toward reading.

The pupil's interests must be considered an essential

⁸Russell, op. cit., p. 362.

part of the reading program. The reading program and pupil interest are not two separate, entirely different points.

Skill and interest must be considered interdependent factors in the development of reading tastes and habits. The skillful reader tends to develop and maintain high interest in reading. In turn, high interest motivates the development of greater skill. In planning reading programs teachers and librarians tend to consider these two factors as mutually exclusive. They make a sharp distinction between free, voluntary, or recreational reading, and required or reference reading. The attendant result . . . is that pupils sometimes gain the impression that free or recreational reading is interesting, while reading for information is dull and difficult.⁹

Some of these goals of the reading program are such as have a long-range and far-reaching effect. Developing a positive attitude toward reading is one of them. Another which has a far-reaching effect is teaching the child to develop an appetite for worthwhile reading material. A third such goal is to develop in the person the desire to read, not only when necessary, but for such things as pleasurable recreation, to find out more about the world, to help in personal development, and to gain a better understanding of other peoples and societies.¹⁰

Need for knowledge of children's interests. In striving

⁹Cleary, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁰Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 466-467.

for these goals a teacher is aided by many of the modern developments in education. Many books have appeared on the market in recent years. There has been an increase in the number of non-fiction books printed. The rise of the paperback book has been of great value to teachers in all fields. Certainly the teacher is not hampered by a lack of material to use. Rather, his problem is one of selecting the most valuable material for achieving the most profitable results for a given student.

The rise of television and the appearance of a television set in every home must be deemed important factors when one considers children's interests and tastes. "The development of newer media of communication, notably television, undoubtedly has influenced the reading habits of children and youth. Consequently, an assessment of changes in interests is desirable."¹¹

These mass media of communication have created much competition for reading. Hanna and McAllister found that children still read, but that they read less. Reading ranks fourth in things to do, coming behind television, movies, and radio. On the other hand, these mass media may stimulate reading. Something seen or heard may have created the desire in the child to find out more about the topic. In another

¹¹Robert A. Sizemore, "Reading Interest in Junior High School," Education, LXXVIII (April, 1963), p. 473.

case when the wishes of the family group differ from the individual's wish to watch a given television program, the individual may turn to reading as an alternate means of entertainment.¹²

Since reading is in competition with these mass media of communication, and since the competition is keen, it is of utmost importance that the reading material with which the pupil comes in contact be of high interest to him. This study is significant in that it points out the interest patterns of the group as a whole and thereby shows what is of high interest to the pupils.

Norvell suggests another factor which makes this study significant. He points out the controversy which has been and is being waged among teachers, makers of courses of study, and authors of textbooks. One side holds that children should read those selections from literature which they, the teachers, makers of courses of study, and authors, are convinced the children should learn. Another group holds that the children should read lightweight materials. Neither group has achieved outstanding success.

Meanwhile there has been an increasing recognition of the role played in learning and habit formation by the factor of interest. Granting the dominance of this factor, it seems the high objective, a love of good reading, might be attained through providing children with

¹²Hanna and McAllister, op. cit., p. 166.

an ample supply of literary selections which stand where the lines of student popularity and critical approval converge. The major difficulty in testing this plan has been the lack of knowledge as to which selections children genuinely enjoy.¹³

Since this is the case, studies should be undertaken which give information about what children genuinely enjoy.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Recreational book reading. Throughout the report of this survey the books and reading habits which are referred to will be recreational books and recreational book reading. This term means that reading which the pupil did on his own, that is, reading which was not part of a specific school assignment. It is reading which the child has done for recreation. Other terms which are applied at times to this type of reading are free or voluntary reading.

Lutheran elementary schools. Various branches of the Lutheran church have established elementary schools. The two branches of the church which lead in the number of elementary schools are the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. These schools for the most part are established on the plan of the self-contained classroom. The schools contain the grades from one to eight.

¹³George W. Norvell, The Reading Interests of Young People (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1950), p. 3.

Many, but not all, also have a kindergarten.

The Lutheran elementary schools which are referred to in this survey are those of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Western Wisconsin Teachers' Conference. In order to carry on more easily the administration of its Lutheran schools, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has placed its congregations in various districts. The congregations in the state of Wisconsin have been placed in three districts, the Southeastern Wisconsin District, the Northern Wisconsin District, and the Western Wisconsin District. The schools which took part in this survey are members of the Western Wisconsin District.

The teachers in the various districts have organized themselves into conferences. The conference lines do not strictly follow district lines. There are more teachers' conferences than there are districts, because the district is generally too large for a worthwhile conference. The Western Wisconsin Teachers' Conference includes all Lutheran elementary schools of the western part of the Western Wisconsin District. Figure 1 shows the location of the schools which participated in this survey.¹⁴

¹⁴See also Appendix A.

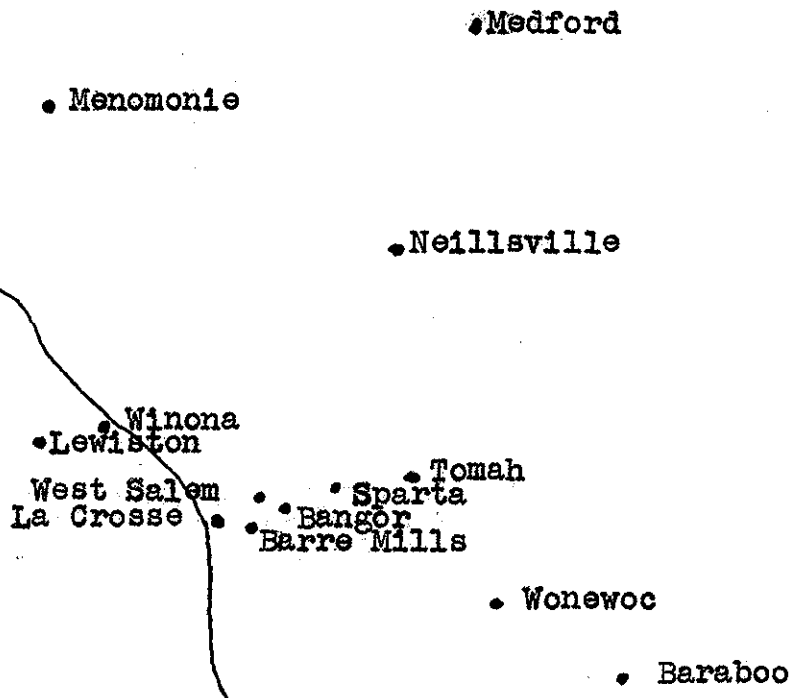


FIGURE 1

PARTICIPATING WISCONSIN SYNOD LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF THE
WESTERN WISCONSIN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

Urban schools. For purposes of this study urban schools are considered to be those schools located in a city of 1000 population or more.

Rural schools. For purposes of this study rural schools are considered to be those schools located in the country or in villages of less than 1000 population.

Large schools. In this survey large schools are those schools which have six teachers or more. In our modern educational system this does not seem large, but this division is fitting for this survey and for the Lutheran schools participating in this study, since most of these schools would seem small when compared with the public schools of the same area.

Medium-sized schools. In this survey medium-sized schools are those which have from three to five teachers.

Small schools. The term small schools will be used to mean those schools which have less than three teachers.

Group A. Approximately ten per cent of the pupils in the participating schools who ranked the highest in their class in scores of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were chosen for special study. This group will hereafter be referred to as Group A.

Group B. Approximately ten per cent of the pupils in the participating schools who ranked the lowest in their class in scores of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were also chosen for special study. This group will hereafter be referred to as Group B.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

Accurate pupil response. The first schedule of this survey was administered in face-to-face contact with the pupils involved in this survey. This was done in order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of the pupils. It was felt that if questions arose, having the same person answer the questions in each case would assure a more consistent understanding of the schedule. This was an avenue, therefore, by which misunderstandings could be avoided. Even though this avenue existed, it would be a mistake to assume that every misunderstanding was thereby avoided. Any person who has worked with children knows that in some, shyness prevents a child from asking questions to clarify a point, and that in others, pride stops a child from asking questions which might give others the chance to think less of the question-asker. These factors would be present in the group of children who participated in this survey. Whether or not shyness, pride, or other factors influenced some responses to the schedule cannot be determined. On the other hand, the schedule was

designed and administered that it would clarify most misunderstandings in order to minimize the inaccuracy of pupil response.

Part of this survey involves reporting by the pupils concerning books which they had read during a period of the school year. There is no way of checking that the books reported on by the pupils were actually read by them or were read during the given time period. It is worthwhile to note that the pupils were informed that any book started but not finished or any book not liked was also important to the survey.

Lack of face-to-face contact. As stated previously, the initial schedule of the survey was conducted so that the person conducting the survey was in direct contact with the pupils responding to the schedule. The results of this schedule constitute the major part of this report. There was participation by the pupils, however, which took place after the initial schedule and which was done in the absence of face-to-face contact. This lack of close contact could be a factor which might not assure complete response by all the pupils in the survey. The fact that the pupils who participated in this survey did so willingly would help to counterbalance this limitation.

Availability of material. This survey was conducted among pupils in various-sized schools and in different types

of localities. Not all of these pupils, therefore, had the same and equal opportunity to come into contact with many varied types of materials for recreational book reading. The lack of availability of materials at hand may have limited, in some cases, the responses of some of the pupils. Since this survey covers a broad area, such limited responses would not significantly affect the findings of this survey.

Limited sample. Since the number of Lutheran schools and of pupils attending them is small in comparison to public schools, the sample of schools of each size group and of the pupils in each group is somewhat limited. This limitation should not substantially alter the results since representatives from each size of school and from each class are included in this survey.

V. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Other studies. The remainder of the thesis can be divided into four parts. First, a report of other studies dealing with recreational book reading is included. It is important to know what has been done in this field and what conclusions have been reached. It is from previous studies and their conclusions that the need for further study is shown.

Procedure of this survey. In order to understand more fully the results of this survey and their significance, it

is necessary to know how this information was obtained and what led to the conclusions which are made as a result of this information. The next part of this report deals with the procedures and methods used in the information-gathering part of this survey.

Information concerning expressed interests. One of the best ways to find out what kinds of books interest pupils is to solicit comments from them about the various types of books. This was done as a major part of this survey. The comments of the pupils and the conclusions reached about them constitute the next part of this report. This information dealing with the expressed interests of the pupils makes up the largest part of the report.

Report on actual reading done. In order to help verify the conclusions on the stated interests of the pupils, an attempt was made to compare these interests with the actual reading done by the pupils. A report on this comparison constitutes the final part of this report.

VI. RESEARCH CONCERNING READING INTEREST

Factors affecting reading interest. Many researchers have worked with the topic of children's reading interests. Some of the early research done in this field was quite easy to carry out. For example, in 1897, at the end of the school

year, H. C. Henderson asked his elementary school children two questions. "What books have you read since school opened in September?" "What did you like best?" He came to the conclusion that the two principal factors affecting reading were age and sex.¹⁵

Florence Cleary considered the book lists which teachers and librarians make for children's required and suggested reading. In this connection she considered primarily the socio-economic factors of the home. She came to the conclusion that librarians in general work with a middle class of pupils who present no outstanding behavior problems. This tends to give librarians a certain mental picture of children which is inaccurate, since over fifty per cent of American young people come from homes of a limited socio-economic background and from tension areas in large cities which tend to make the children suspicious and aggressive. She further concluded that while librarians treat these children as though they fit into the librarians' mental pictures, the children treat the good books of children's literature with boredom, dislike, and cynicism. Cleary suggested that these children need more dynamic, realistic, and useful reading experiences in school and proposed that the school administration must decide to what extent knowing

¹⁵Hanna and McAllister, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

children's interests is of value to the classroom teacher.¹⁶

Mary Hayden Bowen Wollner studied more completely the effect of the socio-economic background of the home on reading choice. On the basis of her research and the research of others she concluded that bright pupils from homes of low socio-economic rating showed as much interest in reading as those bright pupils which came from homes of higher socio-economic rating. She did state, however, that the choices of the pupils from homes of low socio-economic rating were of inferior quality compared to the choices of the others. In her opinion recreational reading was related to intelligence, reading ability, sex, factors in home and school environment, factors in adolescent development, other leisure time pursuits, and individual emotional adjustment. Wollner suggested that such things as home environment, family cultural values, parent-child relationship, and sibling relationship were important, but that since these are harder to measure, not much work has been done with them.¹⁷

Pupils of differing mentality and their reading choices were studied by Huber. Zeller reported that she found similarity in choice between the bright, average, and dull. The

¹⁶Cleary, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

¹⁷Mary Hayden Bowen Wollner, Children's Voluntary Reading as an Expression of Individuality (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949), pp. 3-5.

children of each group do have striking preferences. She also noted some differences. The average and dull like humor better than the bright. The dull are fonder of the thriller type of book than are the average and the bright.¹⁸

Thorndike also considered the reading choices of pupils of varying mental ability and the similarity of these choices. Norvell noted that Thorndike found that the interest patterns of bright children were similar to the patterns of dull children who were two or three years older than the group of bright children.¹⁹

Probably one of the most detailed research studies of children's reading interests conducted during the last decade was that of George Norvell. His first consideration was that of the interest level of school children. He found that the time of rapid change in interests was during the elementary school years. According to Norvell interest levels during the elementary years reach a peak and then decline. This interest is at a high point or near a high point during the course of a number of years so that the same interest patterns may be found in more than one grade at a time.

Norvell found that sex was by far the dominant factor affecting reading choice. He stated that this difference

¹⁸Zeller, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁹Norvell, op. cit., p. 28.

exists in the elementary school, reaches its high point during the junior high years, and then gradually lessens as the people reach adulthood. It never disappears completely.

Norvell also found that it takes four and one-half years' growth to produce a change of interest in a child as great as the difference of interest found between the sexes of the same grade. For this reason and because boys seldom like girls' books, Norvell concluded that this difference must be considered when teachers and librarians plan children's reading choices.

Norvell also considered age, intelligence, and socioeconomic background of the home. His findings were the same or similar to those previously reported on pages seventeen to twenty of this study.

On the basis of his research Norvell concluded that the reading interests of boys and girls must receive separate attention, that the school reading curriculum should be revised in order to give the boys material more suitable to their interests, and that for reading in common, only materials which are well-liked by both boys and girls should be used.²⁰

What children read. Not only has research been carried on which tells what affects reading interest, but research

²⁰Ibid., pp. 7-11.

has also determined what children read. Rudman studied what children read in comparison with what parents, teachers, and librarians would have them read. He pointed out that on the whole children choose mystery, adventure, children, horses, and dogs to read about. Throughout the elementary years interest in mystery increases, and interest in cowboy stories and fairy tales decreases. As children reach the upper elementary grades, their interest in teenager stories, sports, and recreation increases. Rudman pointed out that parents want their children to read reference books and books on ethics and religion. Librarians are more interested in having the children read biographies than are parents and teachers. Rudman found that there is a difference in pattern between what adults want children to read and what children want to read. He came to the following conclusions:

1. In general, adult wishes for children's reading choices do not show the same pattern through the elementary grades as the reading choices expressed by the children.
2. As a group children are reading about the things that adults want them to read.
3. Parents', librarians', and teachers' choices of books for children are more in line with each other than they are in line with the children's expressions as to what they would like to read.²¹

²¹Herbert C. Rudman, "The Informational Needs and Reading Interests of Children in Grades IV Through VIII," Elementary School Journal, LV (May, 1955), pp. 503-505.

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research reported that pupils in the elementary grades read more fiction than anything else and that they like fiction better. However, it was also pointed out that as the interest in juvenile fiction declines, the children do not do additional reading because the home, the school, and the library fail to arouse new interests and to provide appropriate materials for the children with their new interests. It was also stated that children tend to avoid factual or informational material for recreational reading. However, if children are presented with factual and informational books that are simply written and which have attractive presentations, they will read these books.²²

Zeller pointed out that children in general show little interest in poetry. In order to interest the pupils poetry must contain some definite quality such as humor.

Zeller also pointed out that girls read more than boys, but that in many cases boys read more widely. He listed adventure and action as the factors most appealing to boys. According to Zeller girls are interested in mystery, sentimental fiction, and stories about home life.²³

Why children choose certain books. Educational

²²Chester W. Harris (ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 1106.

²³Zeller, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

researchers are concerned with what children read; however, they are equally concerned with why children read what they do and why they choose the books that they do. Accordingly, there are a number of studies which tell why children choose books.

Sizemore reported five book selection factors which were studied by Rankin. They are the theme or specific topic, the need for action, adventure, or excitement, the recommendation of others, acquaintance with the author's name or publications, and the format of the book. Rankin found that the theme or specific topic is the most important single factor in book selection. The recommendation of books by others is particularly important when the persons making the recommendations are friends of the same age group.²⁴

Hanna and McAllister went into more detail concerning some of the book selection factors which were reported by Rankin. One such factor was the format of the book. They found that the most important consideration was the size of the book. Most young people shy away from large, heavy books, but prefer instead the smaller books. In order to be appealing books should have clear print, wide margins, direct conversation, and short chapters. Care must be taken, however, not to insult the adolescent by putting in too many pictures or

²⁴Sizemore, op. cit., p. 475.

too large a print so that the impression of a childish picture book is given.²⁵ The researchers also found that to be appealing to young people books must contain a plot which follows naturally and easily from one event to another, characters that are real and lifelike, a setting which is credible and plausible, a timely theme which reflects their own needs and experiences, and a style which is vivid and moving.²⁶

Categories of reading interest. When researchers study the recreational book reading habits of children, they usually use a list of categories in which they place book titles. Hanna and McAllister assigned the books they used in their research to eight sections. They found that adventure stories are read by all, cowboy stories being the favorite type for the young reader and historical fiction being the favorite of the adolescent. Sports stories have a wide appeal for boys either to compensate for their lack of success and inadequacies or to keep abreast of what is currently taking place in the world of sports. Career stories and love stories hold wide appeal for girls. Mystery and detective stories have a common interest for both boys and girls. Young children rather than adolescents prefer animal stories. Science fiction appeals to all readers, but the boys especially can

²⁵Hanna and McAllister, op. cit., p. 46.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 106-111.

handle books of a difficult nature because of the high interest they have in this type of story.²⁷

G. R. Carlsen delved into the psychological reasons for reading interests. He categorized the types of books into three classes: assurance of status as human beings, assurance of normality, and the need for role playing.²⁸

Many other categories of books have been devised. In general the lists are similar, although each one varies somewhat in form.

The number of surveys dealing with the subject of recreational reading shows the importance of this topic. Interests and tastes change as society changes. As a result research must ever be continued so that educators can keep abreast of the times. It is hoped that this survey will have just that effect.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 47-50.

²⁸G. R. Carlsen, "Behind Reading Interests," English Journal, XLIII (January, 1954), pp. 7-11.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE OF THE SURVEY

I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mastery of skills and recreational reading. Many of the studies previously reported listed intelligence as one of the factors which affected reading interest. Many tests have been devised for the purpose of measuring intelligence. The accuracy of such instruments, however, is subject to variance and is not considered to be wholly reliable nor totally valid. Factors such as the health of the pupil, home environment, reading ability, and the attitude of the person administering the test have an effect on the score and play a part in causing the score to fluctuate from time to time.¹

Another method of determining pupils of varying mental ability was, therefore, considered. It was decided to make use of a test which measured the basic skills the pupils in this study had acquired. The instrument used for this purpose was the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills², hereafter referred to as the Iowa Tests. This instrument will be more fully

¹Cf. John Kord Lageman, "Let's Abolish I. Q. Tests," The PTA Magazine, LVI (December, 1961), pp. 7-10, and Richard Harsh, "Intelligence: Its Nature and Measurement," The National Elementary Principal, XLI (September, 1961), pp. 23-28.

²Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956).

described later in this chapter. One of the main reasons for choosing this test was that it was already being administered in the participating schools, and, therefore, little inconvenience would be caused in the making of this survey.

The assumption was made that in the majority of cases those pupils who ranked high in the results of a test of basic skills would also be those who would rank high in the results of an instrument used to measure intelligence. It was also assumed that the reverse is true, namely that those who scored low on a test of basic skills would also score low on an intelligence test.

Consideration was given to the fact that there are pupils who have high potential in mental ability, but who because of psychological, physical, or other reasons have not mastered the basic skills needed in formal learning. Such persons would score low on a test of basic skills, but in an individualized non-reading intelligence test might score high.

Consideration was also given to the fact that there are pupils who although not exceptionally gifted in intelligence possess such a measure of persistence and diligence that after much effort on their part they do a good job in mastering the basic skills needed for learning. Such persons would rank high on a basic skills test, but they would not rank as high on an intelligence test.

It cannot be denied that such pupils exist and that it is possible that some might be included among the pupils participating in this survey. Nevertheless, on the basis of the personal experience of this survey's author and on the basis of opinion of other teachers who have had many years of experience in working with elementary school pupils, it was decided to let the basic assumption stand, namely, that there would be a close correlation between high and low scorers on a basic skills test and high and low scorers on an intelligence test. No further attempt was made to substantiate this assumption.

The results of the Iowa Tests would enable one to determine those pupils who were superior in the mastery of basic skills and those pupils who were inferior in the mastery of them. These pupils would constitute the top ranking and bottom ranking groups of the classes included in this study. In this report these groups are referred to as Group A and Group B respectively. Since the trend of the day in education has as one of its emphasized points the education of the exceptional child, it was decided to use these exceptional children as determined by the Iowa Tests to be the subjects of this survey.

Since interest in reading is one of the basics needed in reading instruction and learning, and since previous studies have demonstrated that it is best to begin with books in

which the pupils are interested, the problem to be studied was stated thus: "What differences, if any, are there between the interest areas of the two groups?"

Since the interest in and the acquaintance with various types of books which might be read for recreational reading depends, in part, on the library habits of the two groups, a second point was considered as a corollary to the first. "What variance, if any, is there between the library habits of the two groups?"

School environment and recreational reading. Previous studies have indicated that environmental factors may have an influence on the literary interests of the pupils. In many cases what these environmental factors were and what their effect was, was not stated. Since this survey has as one of its main purposes the establishing of guidelines for Lutheran school administrators and teachers involved in book selection for school libraries, it was decided to study different types of school environments and to see what effects, if any, these environments had upon the book interests of the selected groups of pupils.

The first consideration was "What differences, if any, can be observed between the recreational book reading of pupils in a rural school and of pupils in an urban school?" Secondly, the question was considered, "Does the size of the

school have an effect on the recreational book reading of the two groups?"

Since the adult closest to the children in the school environment is the teacher, it was felt that perhaps the teacher's influence may have some effect on the interest areas of the two groups. The effect of a teacher upon his pupils is a study in itself, even in the area of recreational book reading. For this reason a detailed study of this effect could not be undertaken in conjunction with this survey. The assumption was that if the teacher does have an effect on his students' library book reading, he should be able to predict with some degree of accuracy what the main interests of his pupils would be. No attempt was made to substantiate this assumption, but the question was posed, "To what degree of accuracy can classroom teachers predict the interest areas of recreational book reading done by the two groups?"

A second project was included with the teachers' predictions. "Is the amount of teaching experience an important factor in the teacher's ability to predict his pupils' interests with accuracy?" "How important a factor in predicting pupils' interests is the amount of education for teaching the teacher has had?"

School and classroom libraries have been advocated

for some time.³ The Lutheran schools participating in this survey have this type of educational facility. Recreational reading, however, is not restricted to books from the school and classroom library. In fact, the days when pupils have time not consumed by the press of school work, such as vacations and weekends, are the very days during which the facilities of the school and classroom libraries are not available to the pupils. This fact alone, although it is certainly not the only consideration, makes the public library an important agent in the recreational reading of the pupils. There are some pupils, however, who do not have ready access to a public library. This fact suggested the question, "What effect, if any, does the availability of library facilities have upon the recreational reading of the two groups?"

Home environment and recreational reading. The study of home environment and recreational reading is a separate endeavor by itself. Consequently, little consideration was given to this topic in this survey because of the limitations of time. One small factor of home environment was considered in the survey, although it constituted only a small part of this study. The consideration was, "What relationship, if any, is there between family size and the library habits of children?"

³ See Oscar Knade, "A Library Is to Serve," Elementary English, XLI (March, 1964), pp. 289-292.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEDULE

Pupil schedule. Once the problem was developed, it became necessary to devise an instrument for gathering information helpful in answering the questions posed. It was decided to list categories of books along with the description of these categories and give the pupils an opportunity to express their likes or dislikes concerning the types of books. A five-point scale was used, ranging from extreme pleasure in reading to an extreme dislike of the types of books.

At the suggestion of a trained children's librarian⁴ the books were divided into two classifications, Mostly Fiction and Mostly Non-Fiction. It was felt that placing books of fiction and non-fiction in one category gave the books of non-fiction an unfair disadvantage since previous studies have shown that elementary school children are more interested in fiction than in non-fiction.

The twelve types listed under the heading of Mostly Fiction were Adventure, Animal Stories, Fairy Tales and Folk Tales, Humor, Love and Romance, Mystery and Suspense, People from Other Lands, Real Life, Science Fiction, Sports, Teenagers, and Western.

⁴Miss Alice Hagar, Associate Professor, Campus School Librarian, and Instructor in Children's Literature at Wisconsin State University at La Crosse.

Under the heading, Mostly Non-Fiction, there were also twelve categories. They were Biography, Health and Safety, History, Music and Art, Mythology and Legends, Nature, Poetry and Plays, Recreation, Religious Stories, Science, Tips for Teenagers, and Travel.

In addition to expressing their likes and dislikes on the above categories the pupils were also asked to list the favorite and the most disliked book they had ever read, if they could do so. They were also asked to answer questions concerning their family size and their own personal library habits. A complete copy of the pupil schedule can be found in Appendix B.

Teacher schedule. The same lists of book types were also placed on a teacher schedule. Under the heading, Mostly Non-Fiction, the category, Religious Stories, was eliminated. This was done because it was felt that the type of schools involved in the survey would tend to make the teachers weight their response in favor of Religious Stories. The teachers were asked to choose those types of books in which they felt Groups A and B of their class or classes were interested. The teachers were also asked for information concerning their years of teaching experience and their years of education for teaching. A complete copy of the teacher schedule can be found in Appendix D.

Administration of the schedule. After the content of the schedule had been determined, the schedule was administered to a group of pupils picked by means of random sampling from the pupils of grades five to eight in St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran School of Woneewoc, Wisconsin. The purpose of this was to determine points which might cause misunderstanding on the part of the pupils. The pupils were instructed to ask questions about any point which they did not understand. These questions were noted, and the schedule was accordingly revised. This same procedure was followed until few questions were asked concerning misunderstood points.

During the autumn months of the school year the researcher visited each class of grades five to eight in all the schools participating in the survey. At this visit the purpose and intent of the schedule were explained, and the schedule was administered to the teacher and to all the pupils in each grade from five to eight. In all a total of thirty-two teachers, four hundred fifty-three girls, and four hundred fifty-three boys completed this schedule.

III. SELECTING GROUP A AND GROUP B

As part of a constant improvement program the elementary schools of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod administer the Iowa Tests every year. These tests are designed so as to provide comprehensive measurement of vocabulary,

reading, mechanics of correct writing, methods of study, and arithmetic. The purpose of the test is to reveal how well each pupil has mastered the basic skills. The test is published in two forms. In the year 1963 Form 2 was used.

When the teacher and pupil schedules were completed, the researcher was granted access to the results of the Iowa Tests. Each pupil's composite score was recorded on his schedule. When all pupils had completed the schedule, the schedules were arranged in rank order.

An arbitrary group consisting of about ten pupils ranking highest in the class and ten pupils ranking lowest in the class was chosen from each grade. These pupils were designated as Group A and Group B. In each case ten pupils were approximately ten per cent of the class. Taking exactly ten per cent of the highest ranking pupils in each class and exactly ten per cent of the lowest ranking pupils in the class was not always possible since at times pupils beyond the ten per cent mark had the same composite score as those pupils within the ten per cent mark. A division was made which included the most workable number of pupils. Table I shows the number of pupils and the per cent of the entire group which were used in each case.

IV. BOOK REPORTING BY THE GROUPS

Once the two groups were picked, the pupils in each

TABLE I
 NUMBER AND PER CENT OF PUPILS COMPRISING GROUPS A AND B

Boys								
Grade and Group	5A	5B	6A	6B	7A	7B	8A	8B
Number	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10
Per Cent	11 ^a	11	9	9	10	9	7	7
Girls								
Grade and Group	5A	5B	6A	6B	7A	7B	8A	8B
Number	11	11	12	12	10	12	10	12
Per Cent	9	9	10	10	9	10	10	12

^aRounded to the nearest whole per cent.

group were asked to report on books which they read during the school year in the months falling approximately between Christmas and Easter vacations. Each pupil involved in the survey was given a form to follow in reporting on the particular books. The purpose of this part of the survey was to determine more nearly the actual interests of the pupils rather than the expressed interests which were given in the schedule. A copy of the book report form used by the pupils may be found in Appendix C.

V. TABULATION OF DATA

When the schedules were all completed, the information contained in them was tabulated to show in which areas the pupils of the two groups expressed interests and in which areas they expressed dislike. The book report sheets were placed in the appropriate categories and these were then tabulated to determine in what areas of interest the two groups actually read books. The division of books into these areas was based upon the children's description of the book, the author's personal knowledge of the book, and the Children's Catalog.⁵

⁵Dorothy Herbert West and Rachel Shor (ed.), Children's Catalog (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1961).

VI. SUMMARY

A total of nine hundred six elementary pupils in grades five to eight completed a schedule concerning their likes and dislikes of twenty-four classes of books divided into the categories, twelve each, of Mostly Fiction and Mostly Non-Fiction. They also provided information concerning their family size and their personal library habits.

The teachers of these children were asked to predict in what interest areas the high ranking and low ranking groups of their classes would express preferences. The teachers also gave information concerning their teaching experience and teacher education.

As a result of the children's composite score on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills an approximate ten per cent of the high ranking children and an approximate ten per cent of the low ranking children were asked to report on the recreational reading which they did between Christmas and Easter.

Data from these reports and schedules were used to determine the difference of interest between pupils of varying mental abilities and between pupils of different types of school environments.

CHAPTER III

EXPRESSED BOOK INTERESTS OF PUPILS

IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

It was previously stated that one of the ways to procure knowledge concerning the book interests of children is to solicit their comments and preferences about certain categories of books. The accumulation of this type of data and the inferences and conclusions reached as a result of it are reported in this chapter. The information reported in this chapter concerns only the expressed interests of the pupils, not the actual reading behavior. The method used for gathering information concerning reading interests in the participating schools was the administration of a schedule to the pupils in grades five to eight.¹ This schedule listed various categories of fiction and non-fiction. Each of the categories was explained. The pupils were asked to express their preference or dislike for each category by the use of a five-point scale. This schedule allowed the pupils to tell their preferences, but it did not provide them opportunity to report on books that they actually read. Consequently, only expressed interests were shown, and not actual reading behavior.

¹See Appendix B.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first deals with the interests of the class as a body. In the second section the differences between Group A and Group B in each grade are reported. Comparisons are made between the class and Group A, the class and Group B, and between Groups A and B themselves. The third section deals with conclusions which can be made as a result of the data reported in the first two sections of this chapter.

I. CLASS INTERESTS

The groups of children with which this study was mainly concerned were Groups A and B of grades five to eight. Nevertheless, the interests of the class in general also had to be considered. Comparisons could not have been made nor differences noted until the general interest pattern was known. Once this pattern was known, the interest patterns of Group A and Group B could be placed in proper perspective. Hence, the first part of this chapter deals with the general class interest patterns.

Fiction

The schedule which the pupils answered in this survey contained categories of books divided into Mostly Fiction and Mostly Non-Fiction. Since Mostly Fiction was the category which was treated first in the pupil schedule, it is also

treated first in this report. Table II, page 43, and Table III, page 44, give the rank order of the types of books preferred by the boys and girls in grades five to eight.

One of the most important factors which determined book preference was the difference in sex. This factor was expected to be prevalent, since many of the previous studies of this topic reported sex to be the main factor in book preferences and tastes.² In the next nine parts of this chapter sex as a variable in determining book preference will be considered. The tastes of boys and of girls will be kept separate. It is felt that this factor must be kept in mind since it is one of the most important. Without regard for this element the conclusions reached regarding the differences between Group A and Group B would be less valid.

Books liked by boys and girls. Even though the difference in sex affects book preference and book selection, there were some categories which were preferred equally or nearly so by boys and girls. The first part of the discussion of books of fiction will deal with these books.

By far the type of book which was most popular among all students was Mystery and Suspense. This type held first place among the girls of each grade except grade eight. In

²See pages 17 to 23 of this report.

TABLE II
RANK ORDER LISTINGS OF
TYPES OF FICTION PREFERRED BY BOYS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Grade Five	Grade Six
1. Sports	1. Mystery & Suspense
2. Western	2. Adventure
3. Adventure	3. Sports
4. Mystery & Suspense	4. Western
5. Humor	5. Humor
6. Animal Stories	6. Science Fiction
7. Science Fiction	7. Real Life
8. Real Life	8. Animal Stories
9. People from Other Lands ^a	9. People from Other Lands
10. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales	10. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales
11. Teenagers	11. Teenagers
12. Love & Romance	12. Love & Romance
Grade Seven	Grade Eight
1. Mystery & Suspense	1. Adventure
2. Sports	2. Mystery & Suspense
3. Adventure	3. Sports
4. Western	4. Humor
5. Humor	5. Western
6. Science Fiction	6. Science Fiction
7. Animal Stories	7. Animal Stories
8. Real Life	8. Real Life
9. Teenagers	9. Teenagers
10. People from Other Lands	10. People from Other Lands
11. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales	11. Love & Romance
12. Love & Romance	12. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales

^aThe line separating the items in each list indicates the division between positive and negative responses.

TABLE III
RANK ORDER LISTINGS OF
TYPES OF FICTION PREFERRED BY GIRLS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Grade Five	Grade Six
1. Mystery & Suspense	1. Mystery & Suspense
2. Adventure	2. Adventure
3. Humor	3. Humor
4. Real Life	4. Real Life
5. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales	5. Teenagers
6. Animal Stories	6. Animal Stories
7. Western	7. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales
8. Teenagers	8. Western
9. People from Other Lands ^a	9. People from Other Lands
10. Love & Romance	10. Love & Romance
11. Sports	11. Science Fiction
12. Science Fiction	12. Sports
Grade Seven	Grade Eight
1. Mystery & Suspense	1. Teenagers
2. Teenagers	2. Mystery & Suspense
3. Adventure	3. Love & Romance
4. Humor	4. Adventure
5. Love & Romance	5. Real Life
6. Real Life	6. Humor
7. Animal Stories	7. Animal Stories
8. People from Other Lands	8. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales
9. Fairy Tales & Folk Tales	9. People from Other Lands
10. Western	10. Western
11. Science Fiction	11. Sports
12. Sports	12. Science Fiction

^aThe line separating the items in each list indicates the division between positive and negative responses.

grade eight the girls placed Teenagers first and Mystery and Suspense second. The boys also expressed a high degree of preference for Mystery and Suspense. According to the results of this survey Mystery and Suspense was not placed as high in preference by the boys of grade five as by the boys of grades six to eight. Although Mystery and Suspense was well-liked by the boys of grade five, Sports, Western, and Adventure type books were preferred before Mystery and Suspense.

The second most favorite type of book was that of Adventure. Although all groups ranked Adventure stories high, a difference between the sexes appeared in grade eight. The boys placed Adventure stories in first place; the girls placed them in fourth place. This fact coincided with the findings of Norvell that the difference in tastes reaches a high point during the junior high years.³

There were some books which were liked by both boys and girls, but which were preferred to a lesser degree than the two types reported above. One such type of book is Humor. Both sexes in all the grades reported ordinarily placed Humor in fourth or fifth place.

Animal Stories is another classification which was held in a neutral or near neutral position. This means that

³See page 20.

the pupils did not express great preference for nor extreme dislike of this type of story.

Girls showed a preference for the Real Life stories. The preference was greater by the fifth and sixth grade girls than by the seventh and eighth grade girls. The boys did not show a dislike for this type of story, but their preference for this type of story was not strongly expressed. The boys again held a neutral or nearly neutral attitude toward this classification of books.

Books liked by boys but not by girls. The second group of book categories discussed is of those types of books which were liked by boys, but which were not liked by girls.

The first type of book in this category is Sports. Each group of boys placed Sports at the top or near the top of books which they liked best to read. On the other hand, every group of girls, without exception, expressed a negative response toward this type of book.

Another classification of books which was liked by boys but not by girls is Science Fiction. The boys did not express as high a preference for this type of book as they did for Sports; nevertheless, the groups of boys from each grade were consistent in expressing a liking for this type of book. The girls were just as consistent in expressing their dislike for Science Fiction. Every group of girls

responded in the negative in regard to their liking this type of book.

A type of book which mainly follows the pattern of boys liking and girls disliking, but with some variance from the pattern, is Western. All boys liked Western books, this type being liked best by the younger boys. Western decreased in preference from grades five to eight, receiving the highest ranking in grade five and the lowest in grade eight.

This decreasing pattern was also evident in the girls' choices. The younger girls expressed a higher preference for Western than the older girls. The complete difference in taste between the sexes was not present as in the previous two types. Not all groups of girls expressed complete dislike of Western. Girls in grades five and six expressed a liking of Western and girls in seven and eight expressed a dislike. Yet, the degree to which girls preferred Western in grades five and six was less than the degree to which boys in the same grades preferred this type of book. The judgment could then be made that in every grade Western was more popular with boys than with girls.

Books liked by girls but not by boys. The third category of books discussed contains those which were liked by girls but not by boys.

The first type in this category is Teenagers. This

type of book was listed as the most popular among eighth grade girls. It is the only type of book which proved to be more popular among any group of girls than Mystery and Suspense. The ranking of Teenagers moved higher as the grade level increased. Girls of grade five expressed a neutral or nearly neutral attitude toward this type of book. The preference gradually increased until in eighth grade Teenagers was the most popular of the types of fiction.

The boys' pattern for Teenagers follows somewhat the same path, but on a much lower plane. For example, in grade five this type ranks eleventh and in a position of dislike. It gradually rises until in grade eight it ranks ninth and in a position of slight preference. Even though the ranking becomes somewhat higher in grade seven than in grades five and six; nevertheless, the boys in all three of these grades expressed a dislike for this type of book. The boys in grade eight expressed a slight preference, close to neutrality, for this type of book. The explanation for this might be that the boys of this age, less mature than the girls, are now beginning to think more seriously of their social relationships and thus do not show a sharp dislike of books which allude to these relationships.

Another type of book which was liked by girls but not by boys is Love and Romance. The boys in every group placed this category at the bottom or near the bottom in their

preference. The dislike expressed by the boys was very strong. This type of book was not liked by every group of girls. The girls in grades five and six expressed a dislike for this type of book, but the older girls, those in grades seven and eight, expressed a preference for Love and Romance. The girls in grade eight expressed a stronger preference for this type of book than the girls in grade seven. The pattern for this type showed that the preference for Love and Romance increased as the age of the group of girls increased.

Books disliked by boys and girls. The final category of books of fiction which will be discussed is of those which were disliked by both boys and girls. Even though these books were disliked by both sexes, differences between the sexes were obvious in some cases.

Fairy Tales and Folk Tales was disliked by both boys and girls in most cases. The groups of boys were universal in their expression of dislike for this type of book. The girls were not universal in their expression. The attitude toward this type of book seemed to move toward a stronger dislike as the age of the group of girls increased. Thus, grade five girls expressed a liking for this type of book, the girls in grade six showed a neutral or nearly neutral attitude for it, and the girls in grades seven and eight expressed a dislike for Fairy Tales and Folk Tales.

Another type of book which was disliked by both boys and girls is People from Other Lands. Here a difference in age made a slight showing. Both boys and girls in grade five expressed a neutral or nearly neutral feeling about this type of book. Both boys and girls of all other grades expressed a dislike for this classification.

Non-Fiction

The second section of the schedule administered to the children is the section entitled Mostly Non-Fiction. This section of the report deals with data gathered from this part of the pupil schedule.

Differences in attitude of boys and girls regarding books of fiction and books of non-fiction. When a comparison was made between the results of the fiction part of the schedule and the non-fiction part, a notable difference was apparent. As a general rule, the boys and girls had much stronger and more set opinions about different types of fiction than they did of different types of non-fiction.

The pupils were asked to circle a number on a five-point scale which most closely stated their opinions about a certain type of book. The feelings ranged from "This is my favorite kind of book" to "This is the worst kind of book." When the responses were tabulated, each answer on the five-point scale was given a numerical value. The strongest

feelings in favor of a type of book were given a positive two value. Neutral attitudes were given a value of zero. Strong dislikes were given a negative two value. Moderate feelings for and against certain types of books were given the values of positive one and negative one respectively. After the numerical value had been assigned to each response, these values were totaled in order to get a class feeling concerning the various types of books. These totals demonstrated that boys and girls had a more definite opinion about books of fiction than they did about books of non-fiction.

The highest total received by any category of fiction, that of the seventh grade girls for Mystery and Suspense, was 162, or an average of 1.4 per girl. The highest total for books of non-fiction, that of the fifth grade girls for Recreation, was 120, or an average of slightly under 1.2 per girl. Inspection of the scores for all the grades revealed that in every case the highest score for the fiction choices was higher than the highest score for the non-fiction choices. This comparison does not take into account one subject listed under Mostly Non-Fiction, i.e., Religious Stories. Reasons for the elimination of this topic will appear in another part of this chapter.

An examination of the lowest scores of the groups also supported the conclusion that the opinions about fiction were stronger than the opinions of non-fiction. The lowest score

for any type of fiction was that of Love and Romance by sixth grade boys, a total of -153 or an average of -1.4 per boy. The lowest score for any type of non-fiction was that of Poetry and Plays for eighth grade boys, a total of -145 or an average of slightly under -1.1 per boy. Inspection of the scores for all the age groups revealed that in every case, except in the case of eighth grade boys, the lowest score for fiction was lower than the lowest score for non-fiction of the same group.

Differences in expressing opinions of types of books between boys and girls were also noted. In general, girls tended to have stronger preferences for books that were their favorites than did boys. In every case, except one, whether fiction or non-fiction, the girls' highest score was higher than the boys' highest score.

On the other hand, the boys were more decided in their dislikes of books. In every case the boys' most disliked type of book had a lower score than the girls' most disliked type of book.

Books liked well by both boys and girls. In Mostly Non-Fiction as in Mostly Fiction differences in taste between the sexes were apparent, but, as was also the case in Mostly Fiction, so in Mostly Non-Fiction there were books which were well-liked by both boys and girls.

The type of book receiving the highest score in every case was Religious Stories. Only in the case of the eighth grade girls did some other type of non-fiction receive a higher preference than this type. In that instance, Tips for Teenagers was more popular. In most cases the preference given to Religious Stories was much higher than the second choice of books. However, the author of this thesis questions this placement of Religious Stories. When the schedule was administered, the point was expressly made that the topic, Religious Stories, did not mean the Bible Stories which are studied during the religion class periods of these schools. The explanation was given that these would be books about things of religion, whether characters, events, or doctrines, but that these were not the Bible Stories.

On the basis of the author's eight years of attendance in a Lutheran elementary school, home background of Lutheran school teacher, and teaching experience in this kind of school, it is felt that the children do not come into frequent contact with the kind of book which would fit into the type, Religious Stories. It is also believed that the kind of school definitely influenced the pupils' responses, in that a certain faithfulness and loyalty would encourage them to speak highly of Religious Stories, even though they might not have come into contact with them. For these reasons, the category was not considered when comparisons were made between

preferences for books of fiction and preferences for books of non-fiction.

Table IV, page 55, and Table V, page 56, do contain the type, Religious Stories, according to placement as expressed by the pupils. The other types of non-fiction are listed in the rank order that they were preferred by the various groups of children.

The second type of book which was well-liked by both boys and girls is History. History was ranked very high by every group of boys. Even though History was liked by each group of girls, it was not ranked as high as the boys ranked it. Preference by sex was again evident.

Travel was somewhat liked by both boys and girls. This seemed strange in light of the fact that People from Other Lands in the Mostly Fiction section was disliked. One reason for this might be that both boys and girls liked to read about things one might see in visiting strange lands, but that they did not enjoy reading stories about people that live there.

A third type which was liked by both boys and girls is Mythology and Legends. The boys in grade five expressed a neutral or nearly neutral attitude toward this type of book, but the older groups expressed a liking for it.

An examination of the expressed preferences for the type, Biography, revealed differences in age and sex. All

TABLE IV
RANK ORDER LISTINGS OF TYPES OF
NON-FICTION PREFERRED BY BOYS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Grade Five	Grade Six
1. Religious	1. Religious
2. Recreation	2. History
3. History	3. Mythology & Legends
4. Science	4. Science
5. Travel	5. Recreation
6. Nature	6. Biography
7. Tips for Teenagers	7. Travel
8. Biography	8. Nature
9. Mythology & Legends	9. Health & Safety
10. Health & Safety ^a	10. Poetry & Plays
11. Poetry & Plays	11. Tips for Teenagers
12. Music & Art	12. Music & Art
Grade Seven	Grade Eight
1. Religious	1. Religious
2. History	2. History
3. Recreation	3. Science
4. Science	4. Biography
5. Travel	5. Mythology & Legends
6. Mythology & Legends	6. Travel
7. Biography	7. Recreation
8. Nature	8. Tips for Teenagers
9. Tips for Teenagers	9. Nature
10. Health & Safety	10. Health & Safety
11. Poetry & Plays	11. Music & Art
12. Music & Art	12. Poetry & Plays

^aThe line separating the items in each list indicates the division between positive and negative responses.

TABLE V
RANK ORDER LISTINGS OF TYPES OF
NON-FICTION PREFERRED BY GIRLS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Grade Five	Grade Six
1. Religious	1. Religious
2. Recreation	2. History
3. Music & Art	3. Travel
4. Travel	4. Recreation
5. History	5. Mythology & Legends
6. Poetry & Plays	6. Poetry & Plays
7. Health & Safety	7. Tips for Teenagers
8. Mythology & Legends	8. Music & Art
9. Nature	9. Health & Safety
10. Biography	10. Biography
11. Tips for Teenagers ^a	11. Nature
12. Science	12. Science
Grade Seven	Grade Eight
1. Religious	1. Tips for Teenagers
2. Tips for Teenagers	2. Religious
3. Recreation	3. Biography
4. Travel	4. Travel
5. Mythology & Legends	5. History
6. History	6. Mythology & Legends
7. Poetry & Plays	7. Music & Art
8. Music & Art	8. Poetry & Plays
9. Biography	9. Recreation
10. Health & Safety	10. Nature
11. Nature	11. Health & Safety
12. Science	12. Science

^aThe line separating the items in each list indicates the division between positive and negative responses.

groups of boys expressed preference for this type of book. The girls in the lower three grades tended toward a dislike or neutral attitude. Both sexes of grade eight gave a high ranking to Biography. It appears that some maturity factors or some factors in the course of study had some effect on the ranking of this type of book.

The last type of book which was liked by both boys and girls is Recreation. Boys and girls in grade five ranked this type quite high. Girls in grade eight expressed a dislike for this type of book.

Books liked by boys but not by girls. Science books were well-liked by all groups of boys. This type demonstrated the difference in taste between the sexes in that every group of girls placed Science in last place in their preference rating.

Books liked by girls but not by boys. Since the boys were stronger in their dislikes than the girls, the category of books which girls liked but boys did not was larger than the category of books which boys liked and girls did not.

The first type in this category is Tips for Teenagers. This type of book received a higher ranking as the age group became older. Thus it was ranked eleventh in grade five, seventh in grade six, second in grade seven, and first in

grade eight. The boys on the other hand expressed a dislike for this type of book. Grade five boys expressed a neutral or nearly neutral opinion; all the other grades expressed a negative opinion.

Poetry and Plays was liked by most of the groups of girls, except those in eighth grade, who expressed a dislike. The preference expressed by the girls was not a strong opinion. Rather Poetry and Plays ranked near the middle of the non-fiction types. All groups of boys expressed universal dislike for this type of book.

Music and Art ranked in descending preference among the girls as the age group became older. Thus it was liked in grade five, was given a neutral ranking in grades six and seven, and was disliked by grade eight girls. Regardless of the age group the boys expressed a strong dislike for this type of book.

Books disliked by both boys and girls. As in the case of fiction there were also types of non-fiction which were disliked by both boys and girls.

The first type of these books which were liked by neither boys nor girls is Nature. The girls disliked this type more than the boys, although neither group expressed much preference for it. The boys in grade five, however, did express some preference for this type.

A second type disliked by both sexes is Health and Safety. Some preference for this type was stated by the boys and girls in fifth grade, but all the other groups expressed dislike of this type.

Book Classification for Grades Five to Eight

On the basis of the expressed interests of the pupils and with the help of the five-point scale, types of books with which children might come into contact in their recreational reading or which the teacher might suggest for children can be divided into four categories. These categories include the same divisions in which the books of fiction and non-fiction were placed in the previous sections. Table VI, page 60, and Table VII, page 61, show the arrangement of the types of fiction and non-fiction within the various divisions of children.

Boys and Girls. The first division, Boys and Girls, includes those types of books for which both boys and girls in the grade expressed preference. An examination of the table shows that five types of fiction were preferred by the boys and girls in all the grades from five to eight. These five are Adventure, Animal Stories, Humor, Mystery and Suspense, and Real Life. There were four types of non-fiction preferred by boys and girls in all grades. If Religious Stories is counted as one of the types, the four were History,

TABLE VI

CLASSIFICATION OF FICTION ACCORDING TO POSITIVE RESPONSES
OF PUPILS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Type	Boys and Girls	Boys Only	Girls Only	Neither
Adventure	5 6 7 8 ^a			
Animal Stories	5 6 7 8			
Fairy & Folk Tales			5 6	7 8
Humor	5 6 7 8			
Love & Romance			7 8	5 6
Mystery & Suspense	5 6 7 8			
People from Other Lands	5			6 7 8
Real Life	5 6 7 8			
Science Fiction		5 6 7 8		
Sports		5 6 7 8		
Teenagers	8		5 6 7	
Western	5 6	7 8		

^aNumbers refer to grades.

TABLE VII

CLASSIFICATION OF NON-FICTION ACCORDING TO POSITIVE RESPONSES
OF PUPILS IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

Type	Boys and Girls	Boys Only	Girls Only	Neither
Biography	5 7 8 ^a	6		
Health & Safety	5			6 7 8
History	5 6 7 8			
Music & Art			5 6 7	8
Mythology & Legends	5 6 7 8			
Nature	5	6 7		8
Poetry & Plays			5 6 7	8
Recreation	5 6 7	8		
Religious	5 6 7 8			
Science		5 6 7 8		
Tips for Teenagers	5		6 7 8	
Travel	5 6 7 8			

^aNumbers refer to grades.

Mythology and Legends, Religious Stories, and Travel.

Boys Only. The second division, Boys Only, includes those books for which boys expressed preference, but for which girls expressed dislike. There were two types in the area of fiction and one in the area of non-fiction which were preferred by boys only in all grades from five to eight. The two types of fiction are Science Fiction and Sports. Science is the type of non-fiction which was for boys only.

Girls Only. The third division, Girls Only, contains those books for which girls expressed preference, but for which boys expressed dislike. According to the findings of this survey there were no types of fiction nor of non-fiction which were preferred by all the groups of girls in grades five to eight and disliked by all the groups of boys in the same grades. There were a number of these types in which books would be classified Girls Only for three of the grades, but no one type was consistently so classified throughout the four grades.

Neither. The final division in which the types of fiction and non-fiction can be placed is Neither. Into this division fall those types which were disliked by both boys and girls. Again examination of the results of this survey shows that there were no types of books which fell into this

division for all four grades. Again there were some types which were listed for three of the grades but none for all four.

II. DIFFERENCES IN INTERESTS BETWEEN GROUP A AND GROUP B

Once the general interest pattern for the class as a body is known, consideration can be given to the interest patterns of Group A and Group B. It is not necessary to make complete listings of the patterns of interest of the two groups. Knowing where and how their interest patterns deviate from the general class interest patterns is sufficient. This section of the chapter deals with the differences which can be noted among Group A, Group B, and the class.

Differences of Group A from class. In general, the interest patterns of Group A did not differ substantially from the interest patterns of the class. Yet, there were certain differences which were noteworthy. Boys in this group differed from the class in their attitude toward Animal Stories. The class in general expressed a slight liking or nearly neutral preference for this type of story. Boys in Group A expressed a dislike for Animal Stories.

In Science Fiction, these boys expressed a greater interest than the class in general. This fact probably shows that since the boys of Group A have a better mastery of the

basic skills than the class in general, they will tend to read material which requires a higher degree of mastery of these skills.

Group A girls in grades seven and eight showed variation from the class pattern in one area, Teenagers. These girls did not rank Teenagers as high as did the class generally.

The fifth grade boys of Group A varied from the general class pattern in that they ranked Tips for Teenagers in last place. They expressed a strong dislike for this topic. The class in general expressed a neutral or nearly neutral attitude toward this type of book.

One difference was also noted between boys and girls of Group A. In the general class pattern the boys ranked Mythology and Legends on a higher level than the girls. A comparison of interest patterns for boys and girls of Group A, however, revealed that girls placed this type of book on a higher plane than boys.

Differences of Group B from class. Inspection of the interest areas of Group B revealed certain differences from the class pattern. The greatest number of differences and those with the greatest spread were found among girls in this group. They ranked Music and Art high in their list of preferred types of books. The class pattern in general placed

this kind of book in a neutral position or in one of dislike.

These girls also expressed a preference for Health and Safety. This also was in contrast to the general class pattern which was one of dislike.

A strong feeling of dislike was shown in their ranking of History. The class pattern showed preference for History.

The fifth and sixth grade Group B girls showed a preference for Love and Romance. This was contrary to the general class pattern, which showed that Love and Romance was liked by girls in grades seven and eight, but that it was disliked by girls in grades five and six.

Only one slight difference from the class pattern could be noted among the boys of Group B. Boys of grade eight in this group did not rank Adventure as high as all boys in the grade, who ranked it first, yet they still expressed a preference for Adventure.

Differences between Group A and Group B. Since the two groups represent the extremes of the class, it is of importance to see the differences in patterns between them.

In terms of this survey there were three interest areas which Group A members ranked higher than did Group B members. These three areas are Mystery and Suspense, History, and Mythology and Legends.

Also in terms of this survey there were three areas

which the pupils in Group B ranked higher than did those in Group A. These three areas are Love and Romance, Western, and Health and Safety.

Differences between the boys of Group A and the boys of Group B. In addition to the differences already cited there were some which existed between the boys of Group A and the boys of Group B. The interest pattern of the boys of Group B in the area of Humor ran opposite to the interest pattern for the boys of Group A. The preference of Group B boys increased as the age group got older; oppositely, the preference of the Group A boys decreased as the age group got older.

Group B consistently ranked Tips for Teenagers, Animal Stories, and Sports higher than Group A. The boys of Group A ranked Science much higher than the boys of Group B.

Differences between the girls of Group A and the girls of Group B. Few differences could be noted between interest patterns of the Group A girls and interest patterns of Group B girls other than those mentioned in the section dealing with differences between the two groups in general. One pattern not previously mentioned was that in the area, Teenagers, the fifth and sixth grade girls of Group A showed more preference than the Group B girls. On the other hand, in grades seven and eight the Group B girls gave Teenagers a

higher ranking.

III. CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING EXPRESSED BOOK INTERESTS

In terms of data collected in this survey the following conclusions are made concerning fifth to eighth grade pupils in Lutheran elementary schools:

1. Except for differences determined by sex, patterns of Group A and Group B are similar to the interest patterns of the entire class.
2. Group A shows a greater interest in topics which require a certain amount of concentration such as mystery, history, and mythology.
3. Group B shows a higher interest than Group A in topics which do not require deep concentration such as love and westerns.
4. Group B shows more interest than Group A in topics which deal with personal problems such as Tips for Teenagers and Health and Safety.
5. Books of fiction well-liked by both boys and girls contain action, thrills, and excitement.
6. Boys tend to read on a broader range than girls.
7. Books of fiction which deal with situations close to their life are popular with girls.
8. In beginning work in fiction with a group of pupils in grades five to eight a teacher should consider topics to be of the highest interest in the following order:
 - a. Mystery and Suspense
 - b. Adventure
 - c. Humor
 - d. Real Life
 - e. Animal Stories
9. Pupils in intermediate grades are more acquainted with and have a more definite opinion of fiction

than they do of non-fiction.

10. Teachers working in the fields of science, nature study, and health and safety must make a special effort to motivate the girls and in the field of health and safety provide special motivation for the boys.

IV. SUMMARY

Presented in this chapter have been the responses to a schedule administered to elementary school children of grades five to eight. The types of books were divided into four categories, those well-liked by both boys and girls, those liked by boys only, those liked by girls only, and those liked by neither boys nor girls. Books of fiction and non-fiction were thus categorized.

It was shown that Mystery and Suspense was the type of book which was most popular with all. In the non-fiction field Religious Stories was the favorite, but a question was raised as to the validity of this selection.

The pupils in this survey were more acquainted with and had more definite opinions of books of fiction than they did of books of non-fiction.

Few differences existed between the tastes of Group A and the class and the tastes of Group B and the class.

Boys and girls of Group A favored types of books requiring more concentration; Group B boys and girls preferred books requiring less concentration. They also chose books which are

associated with personal problems they might have.

Some types of books were read by all age groups. These books contain elements of action, thrills, and excitement. Such books include Mystery and Suspense, Adventure, Humor, Real Life, and Animal Stories.

CHAPTER IV

LIBRARY HABITS AND RECREATIONAL READING

When guiding pupils in book selection, not only must teachers know the kinds of books in which their pupils are interested, but also the sources of the books which they read. The teacher must also know how often pupils make use of the library resources which are on hand. Knowledge of this information is essential if the teacher is to have a complete understanding of the pupils' interests and needs related to recreational reading.

That such knowledge is essential is the reason for its inclusion in this survey. The specific problems discussed in this chapter are:

1. What are the library habits of the pupils in Groups A and B?
2. What relationship, if any, is there between family size and the library habits of the pupils in Groups A and B?
3. From where do the pupils of these groups get the books which they read?

Questions one and two were answered from the schedule which was administered to the pupils. Not only were the pupils asked to comment on their preferences for certain kinds of books, but they were also asked to tell how often they made use of the public library. Personal information, e.g., size of the family, was also obtained by means of this

schedule.¹ Question two refers to the only attempt undertaken in this survey to find relationships between home background and recreational book reading.

After the pupils had completed the schedule, Group A and Group B were asked to report on books which they read or started to read during the period of the school year from Christmas to Easter.² All of these pupils reported the source of the books which they read. These data were used to determine the sources of books read by the two groups. This chapter deals with the findings of this survey concerning library habits of Groups A and B and the sources of the books which they read.

I. LIBRARY HABITS

Library habits of pupils in Groups A and B. Table VIII reflects library habits of pupils participating in this survey. The per cent of each group which claimed to visit the library at certain intervals is listed.³

Examination of this table reveals that the girls made more use of the library than the boys did. About 18.9 per cent of the boys in Group A and 56 per cent of the boys in

¹See Appendix B.

²See Appendix C.

³See pages 14 and 15.

TABLE VIII
LIBRARY HABITS OF PUPILS IN GROUPS A AND B

Type of Library Visit	Group A Boys	Group B Boys	Group A Girls	Group B Girls
Semi-weekly	0.0 ^a	2.4	7.7	0.0
Weekly	2.7	5.0	25.6	9.3
Bi-weekly	48.7	12.2	23.1	32.6
Monthly	29.7	24.4	35.9	30.2
Never	18.9	56.0	7.7	27.9

^aNumbers represent per cents rounded to the nearest tenth.

Group B never or seldom ever make use of the public library. Contrastingly, about 7.7 per cent of the girls in Group A and 27.9 per cent of the girls in Group B never or seldom ever make use of the public library.

A comparison of the library habits of the pupils in Group A with the library habits of the pupils in Group B shows that Group A pupils, whether boys or girls, make more use of the public library than do Group B pupils.

Library habits and family size. A comparison of the library habits of pupils with the size of their family revealed no apparent relationships. The mean period of library visitation for each group ranged from once every two weeks to once every month. On the basis of this survey it was concluded that family size is not a determining factor in the establishment and development of a child's library habits.

II. SOURCES OF BOOKS

In this survey the sources from which pupils could get books to read were divided into five categories. These five categories are: the public library, the school library (which includes the classroom library), the child's personal library, the library of a relative, and the library of a friend. Table IX shows the percentage apportionment of all books read among

TABLE IX
 PERCENTAGE APPORTIONMENT OF BOOKS READ BY GROUPS A AND B

Library Source	Group A Boys	Group B Boys	Group A Girls	Group B Girls
Public	52 ^a	18	58	34
School	28	76	27	34
Personal	16	16	9	20
Relative	1		3	12
Friend	3		3	3

^aNumbers represent per cents rounded to the nearest whole per cent of total books read.

these five categories.

Sources of books read by Group A. The main source for all books read by Group A, whether boys or girls, was the public library. In each case over 50 per cent of all books read by pupils in this group came from the public library.

The school library was the next most important source. From this source came 28 per cent of the books read by Group A. The other books read came from personal libraries or from libraries of relatives and friends. The most important one of these three sources was the child's personal library.

Sources of books read by Group B. The most important source of books for Group B was the school library. From this source came 16 per cent of all the books read by the boys in Group B. The Group B girls read as many books from the school library as from the public library, the next most important source.

The second most important source was the public library. While for the girls it was equal to the school library source, for the boys it was not used to any great extent. The books which they read from the public library constituted only a slightly larger group than the books these boys read from their own libraries.

Books from the children's personal libraries made up 20 per cent of the books read by the girls and 16 per cent of

the books read by the boys. In the case of the girls the books which they obtained from their own, their relatives', and their friends' libraries constituted a larger part of the total books read than did the books taken from the public library.

III. INFERENCES FOR TEACHERS

On the basis of this survey the following inferences are made:

1. Since the boys of Group B make little use of the public library, and since a large part of the books which these boys read come from the school library, the interests and needs of this group must be taken into special account in the establishment of a school library.
2. Schools operating on a very limited budget should consider first purchasing books in the interest areas of Group B boys or should earmark a high percentage of the budget for such purchases.
3. The needs of girls in Group B should be given next consideration in establishing a school library.
4. Especially in the case of Group B, but also in the case of all pupils, books from one's own personal library constitute a significant part of the total number of books read. It follows that teachers should encourage their children as much as possible to build their own personal libraries.
5. Many children must be given special encouragement and motivation to make use of the public library.

IV. SUMMARY

The library habits of Groups A and B and the sources

of the books which they read were discussed in this chapter. It was found that a substantial number of children, especially those in Group B, make little or no use of the public library. The public library is the chief source of books for Group A, but the school library is the main source for Group B. The books which are personal possessions of the pupils also constitute a significant part of the number of books read by them. It was suggested that the boys of Group B and then the girls of Group B must be given first consideration in the establishment of a school library.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND RECREATIONAL READING

As has been previously assumed, environmental factors seem to have an influence on recreational reading. Therefore, school environments of the pupils in the survey were studied to see what noticeable effects, if any, they had on the recreational reading of the pupils. Comparisons were made between the tastes of pupils in rural schools and those in urban schools. A second comparison was made between pupils in large schools and pupils in small schools.

A third consideration of school environments included the teacher's effect on recreational reading. The teachers were asked to predict what types of books would be the most popular with the students. The report of the findings of this study is included in this chapter.

I. COMPARISON OF PUPILS IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND IN URBAN SCHOOLS

When the tabulations of the pupil schedules were studied in terms of separating rural school pupils from those in urban schools, no differences in taste were found. Those types of books which were favorites and well-liked by urban pupils were favorites and well-liked by rural pupils. The converse was also true. Those types of books which were disliked by urban pupils were also disliked by rural pupils.

II. COMPARISON OF PUPILS IN DIFFERENT-SIZED SCHOOLS

When the tastes of pupils in small, medium, and large schools were compared, no noticeable differences were found. Regardless of the school size the tastes of the pupils were similar.

III. AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Two schools participating in this survey were located in communities which did not support a public library. Because of such facilities as the county library systems, however, there were no schools which were lacking library facilities and contact with a wide selection of books to a great extent. Therefore, no comparisons could be made between those pupils who had access to public library facilities and those pupils who did not.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE TEACHER ON RECREATIONAL READING

Teachers of pupils participating in this survey were given a schedule containing the same categories of books found on the pupils' schedule.¹ The teachers were asked to predict interests of pupils who ranked highest and lowest in their class. They were also asked to give information concerning their specific teacher preparation background and

¹See Appendix D.

the amount of teaching experience they had. Results of the schedule administered to the pupils were then compared with these teachers' predictions. A comparison was then made to determine relationships between the predictions of the teachers' schedule and the number of years of education and experience.

Contrary to the initial assumptions of the author of this survey there was no correlation found between the teachers' abilities to predict accurately their children's preferences and either education or experience. The fact that this part of the survey was a minor part of this study warrants further research on this topic.

V. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the results of this aspect of the survey the following conclusions are made concerning the pupils of these elementary schools:

1. Modern society responding to rapid and effective means of transportation and communication tends to broaden community resources. This tends to make less central and limiting the effect that local environments and resources have on book tastes of pupils.
2. Further study should be made concerning the effect of teachers upon recreational book reading of pupils.

VI. SUMMARY

The environments of the schools and the influence of

teachers upon recreational reading were considered in this chapter. The size and location of and availability of library materials for the school were taken into consideration. Both the years of education for teaching and the years of experience of the teacher were studied in connection with his ability to predict book preferences of his pupils. None of these things was found to be an important factor in the interests and tastes of the pupils.

CHAPTER VI

ACTUAL READING INTERESTS OF PUPILS

IN GRADES FIVE TO EIGHT

As thus far reported, all findings of this survey have been based on expressed interests of pupils participating in the survey. To verify findings of the first part of this survey an investigation was made into the actual reading interests of the pupils, that is, those interests in which the children showed preference through the books which they read. The pupils were asked to report on all books which they read for enjoyment during the months between Christmas and Easter. The data from these reports were arranged within the various interest areas and then tabulated. The results of this tabulation were compared with the results of the tabulation of expressed interests. The final part of this thesis deals with this comparison. This chapter possesses three parts: a comparison of the amount of fiction and non-fiction read, a comparison of interests in fiction, and a comparison of interests in non-fiction.

I. COMPARISON OF AMOUNTS OF FICTION AND NON-FICTION READ

Tabulation of the amounts of fiction and non-fiction read demonstrates conclusively that the previous conclusion that children are more interested in fiction than in

non-fiction is correct.¹ When both sexes were considered, the ratio of fiction to non-fiction was between three and four to one.

The boys demonstrated more interest in non-fiction than the girls. The ratio of fiction to non-fiction for boys was about two to one. For girls it was between six and seven to one.

II. COMPARISON OF FICTION PREFERENCES

Boys. Based on the actual reading interests, the patterns of interest for boys of Group A are similar to the patterns of their expressed interest. Several dissimilarities did appear, however.

Boys of Group A most preferred Adventure, Mystery and Suspense, and Animal Stories. The type, Animal Stories, disproved the expressed interests which reflected dislike by boys in this group.

Other types in which the boys showed preference, although to a lesser degree, were People from Other Lands, Western, Humor, Sports, Science Fiction, and Real Life. Two of these choices seem worthy of comment. People from Other Lands was held in dislike by all groups on the expressed interest preferences. The boys of Group A placed Science

¹See page 67.

Fiction in a higher rank than their actual reading interests showed.

The actual reading interests of boys in Group B coincided with their expressed interest preferences. This group preferred Animal Stories, Humor, Adventure, Mystery and Suspense, and Sports.

Girls. A comparison of actual reading interests with expressed reading interests for girls of Group A indicated that the two lists showed little variation. The girls in this group consistently ranked Real Life and Mystery and Suspense first in their actual reading interests. This is in direct agreement with their expressed interests. Also highly correlated with the expressed interests, the girls in grade eight ranked Adventure in first place.

Two groups not extremely popular were Love and Romance and Teenagers. Even though girls in Group A expressed less preference for these topics than girls in Group B, inspection of their expressed interests seemed to indicate more of an actual reading interest than was demonstrated.

Girls in Group B also gave top priority to Mystery and Suspense and Real Life. There seemed to be little difference in preference between Group A and Group B in this area. Expressed preferences showed that girls in Group A preferred Mystery and Suspense somewhat more strongly than girls in Group B. Eighth grade girls in Group B did place

Love and Romance quite high in their actual reading. This corresponded to the pattern which was established through their expressed preferences. Girls of Group B did prefer Love and Romance to a greater degree than girls of Group A.

III. COMPARISON OF NON-FICTION PREFERENCES

Boys. Actual reading interests of boys in non-fiction were almost identical to their expressed interests. Boys in Group A preferred History throughout. Biography, Science, and Mythology and Legends also received high ranking. Boys in Group B placed in order books about Science, History, and Biography. Mythology and Legends did not receive the preference in this group that it did in Group A. This was also in agreement with their expressed interests.

Girls. Patterns for girls in Group A were also similar to patterns of their expressed interests. These girls showed a preference for History, Biography, and Mythology and Legends. As could be expected from an investigation of the expressed interests, Science was excluded from their list of preferences.

One striking difference between actual and expressed interests appeared in the interests of girls of Group B. In expressed interests these girls showed a dislike for History. In actual reading interest they placed History in first place.

Biography and Mythology and Legends were also placed high in the ranking of preferred types of books.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the results of this part of the survey the following conclusions are made for the fifth through eighth grade children of these Lutheran elementary schools:

1. Fiction books liked by both boys and girls lie in the following areas: Mystery and Suspense, Real Life, and Adventure.
2. Children are more acquainted with and more interested in books of fiction than they are in books of non-fiction.
3. Except in the area of Science, tastes in non-fiction for boys and girls are similar.
4. In most cases expressed interests of these children are identical to their actual reading interests.

V. SUMMARY

Actual reading interests of boys and girls were compared with their expressed interests in this chapter. It seems clear that most of the actual interests and the expressed interests are similar. Fiction was preferred to non-fiction by both boys and girls. The boys' reading of non-fiction constituted a larger part of their entire reading than the girls' reading of non-fiction. Few differences in interests because of sex were found to be pertinent in the selection of non-fiction.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

I. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of this study was to find guidelines for teachers and administrators in the establishment and administration of school libraries. The following broad guidelines are recommended. Suggestions of a more specific and limited nature are found in the conclusion section of each of the preceding chapters.

1. When a teacher is dealing with those pupils who rank high in skill achievement and those pupils who rank low in this achievement, the differences in interests and tastes from the class as a whole are not the varying factors. Rather, the major differences between the two groups are in their library habits and the sources of the books which they read.
2. Many of the books read by Group B pupils were from the school library. Many new books for this library and for the classroom library should be on a lower reading level.
3. Since the boys read on a broader range than the girls, books for school and/or classroom libraries should be chosen with this fact in mind.
4. Teachers should be aware of the fact that both boys and girls are only slightly interested in and little acquainted with books of non-fiction. This should encourage teachers to provide more guidance in selection and reading of non-fiction.

II. ITEMS NEEDING FURTHER STUDY

Annual study. The findings of this survey were based

on information gathered during the school year of 1963-64. Since four grades, five through eight, were studied, the assumption might be made that as pupils reach each of these four grades they will ordinarily have the interest preferences of those grades as cited in this report. This conclusion, however, should not be made hastily. A longitudinal study of this nature for several years might bear out this assumption. Additional studies of this type might show patterns of growth which are common to the various groups of children. Suffice it to say that due to time limitations this survey did not take into consideration the patterns which might be established as individual pupils move from grade to grade.

Effect of teacher. This survey found no apparent relationship between the teacher's influence and the recreational book reading of his pupils. This does not eliminate the possibility of this influence. Further studies with the express purpose of studying the teacher's influence should be undertaken.

Home environment. In terms of this survey school environments were not found to be important factors in recreational book reading. Little was done in the area of home environment, however. Additional studies, designed to determine what influences, if any, home environment has on recreational book reading, should be conducted.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS OF THE
WESTERN WISCONSIN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Teachers^a</u>	<u>Pupils^a</u>	<u>Population^b</u>
St. Paul's	Bangor	3	120	928
St. John's	Baraboo	9	240	7,660
First Lutheran	La Crosse	9	273	47,575
Immanuel	La Crosse	3	82	47,575
Mt. Calvary	La Crosse	4	158	47,575
St. John's	La Crosse (Barre Mills)	2	42	Country
Immanuel	Medford	4	128	3,260
St. Paul's	Menomonie	2	44	8,624
St. John's	Neillsville	3	97	2,728
St. John's	Sparta	3	85	6,080
St. Paul's	Tomah	8	244	5,321
Christ	West Salem	2	68	1,707
St. Paul	Woneewoc	5	157	878
St. John's	Lewiston, Minn.	3	83	890
St. Matthew's	Winona, Minn.	7	189	24,895

^aE. A. Wendland (comp.), Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod for 1962, Northwestern Publishing House, 1963.

^b1960 Census Figures.

How often do you visit the public library?

- Never
 Almost every week
 Every other week
 Once a month
 Some other answer. (Write it in the blank.) _____

DIRECTIONS: In each box you will find a name in capital letters. These names are kinds of books that you might read. Behind the name is a sentence which will tell you about the books in that group. Before the name you will find the numbers, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. Circle the number which best tells how well you like each kind of book.

5 means that you think this is your favorite kind of book.

4 means that you like to read this kind of book.

3 means that you don't care one way or the other about this kind of book.

2 means that you don't like to read this kind of book.

1 means that you think this is the worst kind of book.

MOSTLY FICTION

5 4 3 2 1 ADVENTURE

These are stories about exciting happenings.

5 4 3 2 1 ANIMAL STORIES

These are pet stories and stories about the adventures of wild animals.

5 4 3 2 1 FAIRY TALES AND FOLK TALES

These are make-believe stories that could never happen in real life.

5 4 3 2 1 HUMOR

These are tall tales, jokes, and riddles.

5 4 3 2 1 LOVE AND ROMANCE

These are stories about a boy meeting a girl and falling in love with her.

5 4 3 2 1 MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE

These are usually detective stories with a surprise ending.

5 4 3 2 1 PEOPLE FROM OTHER LANDS

These are stories about people who live in other countries.

5 4 3 2 1 REAL LIFE

These are true-to-life stories about boys and girls your age.

5 4 3 2 1 SCIENCE FICTION

These are make-believe stories about traveling in space.

5 4 3 2 1 SPORTS

These are stories about football, basketball, or baseball players and other athletes.

5 4 3 2 1 TEENAGERS

These are stories about boys and girls in high school.

5 4 3 2 1 WESTERN

These are stories about cowboys, Indians, and the Old West.

MOSTLY NON-FICTION

5 4 3 2 1 BIOGRAPHY

These are books about the lives of people.

5 4 3 2 1 HEALTH AND SAFETY

These are books about how your body works and what you can do to keep it healthy and safe.

5 4 3 2 1 HISTORY

These are books about actual events that happened in times past.

5 4 3 2 1 MUSIC AND ART

These are books that tell how to learn music and art and how to enjoy them.

5 4 3 2 1 MYTHOLOGY AND LEGENDS

These are books about the gods of the Greeks, Romans, and other people.

5 4 3 2 1 NATURE

These are books about such things as plants and the resources of the earth.

5 4 3 2 1 POETRY AND PLAYS

These are books that contain poems or stories written as plays.

5 4 3 2 1 RECREATION

These are books about how to play games, hobbies, and other things to do.

5 4 3 2 1 RELIGIOUS STORIES

These are books about people and events that are found in the Bible.

5 4 3 2 1 SCIENCE

These are books about such things as weather, radio, machines, and stars.

5 4 3 2 1 TIPS FOR TEENAGERS

These are books about such things as problems teenagers have, dating manners, and what to be when you grow up.

5 4 3 2 1 TRAVEL

These are books that tell what you would see if you took a trip to a place.

If you can think of the name of a book that you like especially well, please write it here.

If you can think of the name of a book that you dislike very much, please write it here.

APPENDIX C

BOOK REPORT FORM

1. What is your name? (Please put first name and last name.)
2. What is the name of your school?
3. In what city is your school?
4. In what grade are you?
5. What is the name of the book on which you are reporting?
6. Who wrote the book?
7. Where did you get the book?
8. Who suggested this book to you? (If no one did, say no one.)
9. When you got this book, did you plan to read all of it?
10. Did you read all of the book?
11. Did you like the book?
12. Why did you read this book? (For example, did you read it because it was assigned, or did you just read it on your own?)
13. If you want to, tell why you liked the book or why you didn't like it.
14. If you want to, tell why you didn't finish the book, if you didn't finish it.

APPENDIX D
TEACHER SCHEDULE

Name: _____
(First Name) (Last Name)

Grade(s) you are presently teaching _____

School: _____ City: _____

Number of years of teaching experience, not counting the
present year _____

Years of college attended in preparation for teaching _____

How many summer sessions of teacher education courses, if any,
have you attended? _____

Please list any degrees you hold.

What are your preferences for recreational reading? (In what
interest areas?)

Please check the correct answer to the following questions.

How much purely recreational reading do you do? (ABOUT how
many books?)

- More than one a week
 About one a week
 About two a month
 About one a month
 About one a year
 Some other answer (Please write it in the blank space.)

Do you require book reports from your children?

- Yes (About how many do you require a year? _____)
 No

Do you have a list of books which you require your children to read?

Yes (Would you please attach that list to this
 No questionnaire?)

Do you have a list of books which you suggest to your pupils as books they might enjoy?

Yes (Would you please attach that list to this
 No questionnaire?)

Here is a list of twenty-three areas of interest which researchers have found to be in the field of children's literature. Twelve are in the field of fiction, and eleven are in the field of non-fiction. If you were asked to pick the one from each list in which each of the following groups in your grade(s) would be most interested, which one would you pick? I realize this is a hard decision because of individual differences in taste. I am interested, however, in your opinion as to the group preferences.

The groups are:

1. Boys of the upper fourth of the class
2. Girls of the upper fourth of the class
3. Boys of the lower fourth of the class
4. Girls of the lower fourth of the class

Please do not consult with your pupils. Indicate your choice by putting the numbers in the proper boxes. Make this decision for the grade(s) you are presently teaching. Remember there are four groups listed for each grade. Fill in all four boxes for each grade you teach.

MOSTLY FICTION

1. Adventure
2. Animal Stories
3. Fairy Tales and Folk Tales
4. Humor
5. Love and Romance
6. Mystery and Suspense
7. People from Other Lands
8. Real Life
9. Science Fiction
10. Sports
11. Teenagers
12. Western

MOSTLY NON-FICTION

13. Biography
14. Health and Safety
15. History
16. Music and Art
17. Mythology and Legends
18. Nature
19. Poetry and Plays
20. Recreation
21. Science
22. Tips for Teenagers
23. Travel

MOSTLY FICTION

	UPPER FOURTH		LOWER FOURTH	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
GRADE FIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE SIX	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE SEVEN	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE EIGHT	_____	_____	_____	_____

MOSTLY NON-FICTION

	UPPER FOURTH		LOWER FOURTH	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
GRADE FIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE SIX	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE SEVEN	_____	_____	_____	_____
GRADE EIGHT	_____	_____	_____	_____

Do you wish to receive a summary of the findings of this survey?

Yes
 No

