



*A constant  
panorama of hills  
and valleys as  
seen from a  
ridge road*



*A road lovely  
in May but almost  
impassable  
in winter*

*Typical rural  
area between  
the hills where the  
road follows  
the creek*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

W. N. DOAK, Secretary

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

GRACE ABBOTT, Chief

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LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF  
RURAL CHILDREN IN SELECTED  
AREAS OF WEST VIRGINIA

BY

ELLA GARDNER  
and CAROLINE E. LEGG



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

THE CARE OF WISCONSIN CHILDREN  
IN THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU

BY  
MRS. J. H. GARDNER





## CONTENTS

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	Page
Letter of transmittal .....	v
Introduction .....	1
Purpose of study .....	2
Counties chosen for the survey .....	2
Method of inquiry .....	4
Types of communities visited .....	6
Rural communities .....	6
Villages .....	8
The children .....	10
General characteristics and environment .....	10
Number interviewed .....	10
Age .....	10
Grade .....	11
Type of school attended .....	11
Location of homes .....	12
Parents .....	12
Work time and play time of children interviewed .....	13
Home chores and other work .....	13
Leisure time during school term .....	15
Recreational opportunities and the use made of them .....	22
Home .....	22
Playmates .....	22
Home facilities .....	29
Outings .....	35
Recommendations .....	39
Church .....	40
The social programs of the churches .....	40
Contributions of churches to social life of children .....	45
Recommendations .....	47
School .....	48
Location and kinds .....	48
Equipment .....	48
Program .....	51
Recommendations .....	56
Juvenile clubs .....	57
Kinds and number .....	57
Membership .....	58
The 4-H club .....	59
Other national organizations .....	66
Recommendations .....	68
Adult organizations .....	70
Women's clubs and community organizations .....	70
Parent-teacher organizations .....	72
Lodges and fraternal orders .....	72
Recommendations .....	73
Other recreational agencies .....	73
Commercial amusements .....	73
Parks and playgrounds .....	76
Community buildings .....	77
Loafing places .....	77
Recommendations .....	78
Special interests expressed by the children .....	80
Summary .....	83

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	Facing page
A constant panorama of hills and valleys.....	Frontispiece.
A road lovely in May but almost impassable in winter.....	Frontispiece.
Typical rural area between the hills.....	Frontispiece.
Junior leaders successfully direct games during recess.....	52
Shacks may harbor early settlers or border raiders.....	52
The younger children learn a new game.....	52
Jumping rope on a narrow school walk.....	53
Homemade equipment in a village school yard.....	53
Playing wood tag on a narrow strip near the road.....	53
A school in the woods with no cleared space for games.....	76
A school yard too muddy for play.....	76
A large school yard with no equipment.....	76
A narrow strip by the railroad serves for a ball ground.....	77
A small town playground equipped but unsupervised.....	77
A small village school with a good playground.....	77

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, November 14, 1931.*

SIR: There is transmitted herewith a report of rural recreation in West Virginia, which was made at the request of the director of the extension division of the college of agriculture, West Virginia University. The report deals with the amount of leisure rural children have and the kind of recreation they now enjoy, and the outlook for extension and betterment of rural recreational programs. The field work was carried out and the report written by Ella Gardner and Caroline E. Legg under the general supervision of Agnes Hanna, director of the social-service division of the Children's Bureau. Miss Gardner, who is the specialist in recreation of the Children's Bureau, has during the past three years devoted most of her time to demonstrations at 4-H club camps and to classes and institutes for rural recreation leaders organized and under the direction of the extension service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the cooperating State extension services. She is familiar with the recreation needs and interests of rural children.

Acknowledgment is made of the cooperation given the bureau by the West Virginia Extension Service, as well as teachers and other school officials and recreational leaders in the counties visited in connection with the preparation of this report.

Respectfully submitted.

GRACE ABBOTT, *Chief.*

Hon. W. N. DOAK,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

As of the close of business on the 31st day of December, 1912

Assets	Liabilities
Reserve for Redemption of National Currency	Reserve for Redemption of National Currency
Reserve for Redemption of United States Currency	Reserve for Redemption of United States Currency
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Notes	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Notes
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Bank Notes	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Bank Notes
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Checks	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Checks
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Receipts	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Receipts
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Bonds	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Bonds
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Securities	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Securities
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Loans	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Loans
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Advances	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Advances
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Discounts	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Discounts
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Credits	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Credits
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Debits	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Debits
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Balances	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Balances
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Funds	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Funds
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Assets	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Assets
Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Liabilities	Reserve for Redemption of Federal Reserve Liabilities

# LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF RURAL CHILDREN IN SELECTED AREAS OF WEST VIRGINIA

## INTRODUCTION

Education for life as a whole is the chief activity of youth. Wholesome living includes not only satisfying work but also satisfying leisure. Many individuals need to expand their ideas of education to include not only training for earning a living but also preparation for living a full life.

Normal boys and girls should play. It is said by some earnest parents and teachers, "Give a child plenty of work, make him do it, and he will not get into mischief." Perhaps he will not, but neither will he know abundant life. There are others who say, "The country child is fortunate; he lives in a beautiful and healthful world. If he does chores outdoors, he needs no other recreation." The country child does live in a beautiful world; but unless he is introduced to its possibilities and can call birds by their names and become acquainted with trees, flowers, and rocks, he is very likely to fail to recognize his natural wealth. To exercise in the open air and sunlight is healthful, but work is work wherever it is done. There should be work, but there should also be play, because it is a balance between these activities that makes for a well-developed child.

Every child needs first a family background in which he can find understanding and affection, a circle in which he is expected to assume his share of responsibility and in which worthy contributions of service are appreciated. He needs the regular daily round of home life and play that sets his tempo for growing up. Uncertainties may appeal to adventurous adults, but the feeling of security that comes from a smoothly running régime is necessary to a child's happiness. He finds excitement and variation enough in the small happenings, of much importance to him, occurring within the daily round of school work, home chores, and recreation at school and at home.

The child's world, however, should not be limited to the home. There are those who think that because their children are closely supervised at home and are encouraged to stay within the family circle, they are being given the fullest opportunity to grow up well. This is not at all true. Outside of the daily chores and the school-room studies there are many worth-while activities that add zest to life and prepare the child for the larger world in which he is to live some day. If he is to do team work with others when an adult he must learn in his youth how to play the game. He needs opportunities for meetings of various sorts with his own kind. He needs the discipline, the relief from the pressure of daily duties, the exhilaration of success, and the determination engendered by defeat, which come from playing outdoors with a group. He needs the self-control, the ability to think and express himself clearly, the thoughtfulness of the interests of others, that are best developed by membership in club and class groups. He needs the inspiration of hearing and

discussing with his kind good sermons, lectures, and informal talks upon daily problems and their solutions. As an individual he should have leisure in which to cultivate these activities and solitude in which to sort and evaluate the ideas accumulated.

The rural child is often far removed from playmates except those he sees during school hours. Farm life makes demands on the time of children and adults alike. It is probable that real planning is necessary in many farm homes to give children the needed amount of leisure at the proper time and to provide for the wisest use of that leisure.

#### PURPOSE OF STUDY

The present study of leisure-time activities of West Virginia boys and girls was made in 1928 at the request of the director of the State agricultural extension service. It was desired to ascertain the amount of leisure that rural young folks had and the kinds of recreation that they enjoyed. Specific information was wanted on the play facilities in rural communities and in near-by towns. The State extension service was interested not only in parks, playgrounds, and commercial amusements, but more particularly in the opportunities for play in the home, and the social programs of churches, schools, clubs, and other community organizations. In connection with the programs of these various agencies, information was also desired on the types of leadership available and the sources of inspiration, past and present, that led club and other recreation leaders to undertake the work in which they were engaged. It was felt that the assembling of some general information of this kind was necessary before plans could be formulated for the extension and betterment of the rural recreational program of the State.

#### COUNTIES CHOSEN FOR THE SURVEY

The territory selected for the survey covered the larger part of 12 school districts in 5 counties, these being the 4 counties of the northern panhandle—Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, and Marshall—and 1 non-contiguous county, Webster, in the central part of the State.

The general nature of the panhandle counties may be described as hilly, increasingly so away from the Ohio River, which forms their entire western boundary line. In some sections the hills are partly wooded; in others, especially toward the south, they are more like vast rolling pasture lands. From the main roads along the ridges many square miles of open country may be seen. In the valleys between the hills the roads follow the creeks and form picturesque settings for many rural homes.

Except in or near the industrial towns along the river, where many are employed in the iron, steel, brick, and clay industries, and in Marshall County, where natural oil and gas deposits have been worked to some extent, the principal occupation of the people of the northern panhandle is farming. According to the 1925 farm census, corn, oats, wheat, and potatoes are the largest crops, besides the garden vegetables which most of the farmers raise for their own consumption. Orchard fruits, particularly apples and peaches, are also raised extensively. Among the most important agricultural



pursuits are dairying and the raising of beef cattle and sheep. Marshall County raises more sheep than any other county in the State.

Webster County is situated in the east-central part of the State on the western edge of the Appalachian Range and is in a rugged mountainous country. Much less farming is done in this county because physical conditions discourage it. Extensive areas of forest and immense deposits of coal are found here, but the latter are only developed to a slight degree. The principal industry is lumbering, many of the little villages being built up around logging camps. The Gauley, Elk, and Williams Rivers are aids to this industry.

The extent to which the areas visited may be termed rural is easily seen from some comparative statistics on farm lands in 1925 in the different counties and in the State. (Table 1.)

TABLE 1.—*Certain statistics concerning farms in the State and in five selected counties of West Virginia, 1925*<sup>1</sup>

Items	West Virginia	Counties				
		Brooke	Hancock	Marshall	Ohio	Webster
Per cent of land area in farms.....	58	74	69	87	56	30
Average value of all farm property per farm.....	\$4,549	\$9,489	\$7,165	\$7,273	\$11,528	\$3,603
Average acreage per farm.....	99	116	101	102	84	104
Total acreage in farms.....	8,979,847	42,135	36,445	172,183	38,467	110,703
Per cent in crop land.....	21	37	37	30	41	14
Per cent in pasture land.....	48	44	47	52	54	24
Per cent in woodland not used for pasture.....	25	6	7	14	2	55
Per cent in all other land.....	6	13	10	4	3	7
Total number of farms.....	90,380	364	360	1,681	460	1,065
Per cent of farms located on—						
Concrete or brick roads.....	3	8	31	6	7	-----
Macadam roads.....	4	32	-----	9	72	-----
Gravel roads.....	1	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	-----
Improved dirt roads.....	14	6	6	27	1	20
Unimproved dirt roads.....	73	47	59	51	17	66
All other roads (including not reported).....	6	7	4	7	3	15

<sup>1</sup> U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1925, Pt. 2, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 214-229. Washington, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Less than 1 per cent.

The percentage of land area devoted to farms in three of the four counties of the panhandle (Brooke, Hancock, and Marshall) was greater than for the State as a whole. The average acreage per farm in these three panhandle counties and in Webster County was also more than the average for the State.

The farm country visited was fairly prosperous. The homes and buildings were for the most part neatly kept and in good repair, not only on the farms but in the rural towns and villages, where many of them were owned by the farmers. About many of the homes was a settled atmosphere that came from long living in one place, several generations having been reared in the same house. The average value of farm property per farm in each of the panhandle counties was more than the average for the State, and in Brooke and Ohio Counties it exceeded the average value quoted for the United States, which was \$8,949 in 1925.<sup>1</sup>

The percentage of farm acreage devoted to crops, pasture, and woodland is also shown in Table 1. It will be noted that more than

<sup>1</sup> U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1925, Pt. 2, Table 2, p. 16.

half the acreage in farms in Webster County was woodland not used for pasture.

This table also shows the percentage of farms located on improved and unimproved roads. The proportion of the farms located on hard-surface roads was much larger in the four panhandle counties than in the State as a whole. The road conditions in Ohio County were exceptionally good. In Webster County, where conditions in general were much more primitive, more than four-fifths (85 per cent) of the farms were located on dirt roads, one-fifth on improved and more than three-fifths on unimproved dirt roads. The territory thus surveyed included various rural conditions that were representative of those in the State as a whole. Quite similar conditions are found also in the adjacent farm lands of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The natural beauties of the West Virginia hills and their history have been the theme of many a song and story. The sections visited teemed with traditions of days when the first white settlers fought their way against hostile Indians and of later Revolutionary times when Ohio County and its environs were the scenes of dramatic episodes. Many thrilling tales of pioneer days may be heard from the mountain folk of Webster County. Older still are the traditions of Marshall County, where in the city of Moundsville stands one of the most famous of the monuments left by that ancient people, the mound builders.

Thus the territory in which the recreation survey was made was not poor either in material wealth or in historical lore. It was not in any sense run down or struggling to recover from disasters wrought by wind and floods, as are certain vast sections of the rural South. Neither was it like the rural sections of many Western States, so far removed from the manufacturing and commercial world as to prevent acquaintance with city organizations and forces that make for broader culture and more all-round living. There was probably as great an opportunity for the penetration of these forces into surrounding rural districts in the counties studied in West Virginia as in any rural section of the State or adjacent States.

#### METHOD OF INQUIRY

This study of the leisure-time interests of young folks was conducted through the schools by interviews with the children. Information was also obtained as to the social resources of the communities. In the 12 selected districts visits were made in practically all the towns and villages.<sup>2</sup> As many rural communities were visited as could be reached before the beginning of the school vacation, which in some instances was as early as the middle of April. Some roads still impassable at this time forbade entrance into a few of the most remote communities. However, a goodly number of the isolated schools were visited in spite of the difficulties, because when mud was too deep or hillside roads too narrow to permit the Government car to pass, the agents resorted to hiking. This proved to be the only way to reach 16 of the 75 schools visited during the 3-month survey. Even hiking presented its difficulties, with rough, hilly roads to climb, creeks to cross, and mud to contend with at all times,

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this report a community with 100 but less than 1,000 inhabitants is called a village, and one with 1,000 or more inhabitants is called a town. All the villages visited in this survey, however, had a population of less than 500.



as snow and rain fall heavily in these regions. Progress in these more remote regions was necessarily slow, but it left the agents with little doubt as to how some of the time of certain country boys and girls was consumed.

In connection with the school visits, personal interviews were held with the boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 who were present on the day of the agent's visit. The schedule called for a few facts about the child and his family and the location of his home. His record as a club member was taken if he had belonged to any organization during the previous year. The social life offered by the school and church, as far as he attended affairs given by these agencies, and the activities he enjoyed with his playmates at home and at school were recorded. Family recreation, both active and passive, the amount of time the child spent in play and work, and the character of his chores were inquired into; an attempt was also made to discover the things he liked best to do in his leisure time. Each child was interviewed in his own school, 20 to 30 minutes being required to complete the schedule.

The second line of inquiry was made through leaders in the communities visited. Teachers, ministers, club leaders, and outstanding recreation workers were asked about the character and adequacy of the community's program of social events and the immediate needs of the neighborhood. These visits were made not only in the neighborhood of the 75 schools visited but also in 11 near-by towns and centers to which the children scheduled went for recreation or any other purpose. Ministers of neighboring city and town churches, scout masters, Young Men's Christian Association workers, proprietors of commercial amusement places, and many others furnished information as to the recreational facilities offered in their respective towns and the use made of them by country folk. Community meetings, country-life conferences (see p. 71), and other rural evening affairs were attended as often as possible, and a few public dance halls and moving-picture theaters were visited by the agents in order to obtain first-hand information as to the character of these amusement places. Pool rooms and loafing places were noted also, especially the use made of them by young men and boys in the evening.

The facts regarding the leisure-time activities of rural boys and girls thus obtained from the school children themselves on the one hand and the adult leaders on the other have been combined for purposes of this study. Following a description of the types of communities visited, the general characteristics and home surroundings of the children interviewed, and their own statements as to the amount of free time at their disposal, are the findings regarding the various agencies through which recreation could be provided, as home, church, school, clubs, and the extent to which children were reached by their programs. In order to complete the picture of the recreational interests of young people in the areas visited, each child was asked not only what he did but what he would like to do in his leisure time. The special interests and desires expressed were many and varied, and these are summarized at the end of the report, with recommendations which point toward the possible gratification of some of the unfulfilled yet simple desires to which the rural child is entitled.

## TYPES OF COMMUNITIES VISITED

The word "community" is defined as a body politic—a village, town, city, or state—and also as any body of persons having common interests. The latter part of this definition makes the term applicable in this study to rural as well as village and town folk. Since this report is largely concerned with the open country, the "rural communities" and then the "villages" will be described. Towns hardly need description.

### RURAL COMMUNITIES

In the areas visited were found many groups of rural people, numbering anywhere from 25 or 30 to several hundred, that were brought together partly by similarity of interests but more by geographic location. The names of the localities were often descriptive of their setting, many having 2-part names, which consisted of valley, run, creek, ridge, grove, or glade, and an appropriate prefix such as "little," "green," "pleasant," or the name of some family at one time prominent in the locality. A very few of these rural communities had a tiny settlement as a center, but most of them had no definite center unless the church, the school, or the crossroads store and gas station could be called one. The larger number of families belonging to the community were scattered along main highways that for the most part followed the ridges and the runs. Others lived far back on unfrequented roads, some in half-hidden hollows or on steep hillsides, and some in wide-open fields plainly visible from the main roads.

Not every home in a rural community was a farm home. A few of the rural families lived on small lots, and the men worked as laborers in town or as miners or at various other occupations, driving or walking back and forth each day. Even in some of the farm homes the father and older boys worked in town, leaving the mother and younger children to carry on the daily routine of farm chores. Some of the more prosperous farmers had hired help to do the heavy work.

Fifty-one rural communities were visited during the survey, if each locality where there was a rural school is considered a rural community. Descriptions of a few of these communities will give a clearer idea of what they were like.

I. About 10 miles from the center of one of the principal cities of the northern Panhandle was located a tiny settlement which formed the nucleus of what may be termed a "rurban"<sup>3</sup> community. While the entire organized community included about 75 homes scattered here and there among the hills over an area of several square miles, its visible center was composed of five houses, two stores, a church, and a gas station clustered about a crossroads. Another

<sup>3</sup>This term is a combination of the words "rural" and "urban" and is sometimes applied to rural communities lying close to large cities.

church a little distance away also contributed its share to community life, but each church was a center principally for its own membership.

The real center of the community, in spirit at least, was the school a quarter of a mile up one of the pikes. This was a modern, well-equipped building with a large combination auditorium-gymnasium. Throughout the winter season it was used every Friday evening for basket-ball games, both the boys and the girls having teams that played with other schools. These games were largely attended by parents and friends. Once a month meetings that were forerunners of the annual country-life conference were held in this same auditorium. Other organizations, such as the farm women's club, the community-welfare club, and the 4-H club, held meetings, programs, and plays here during the year. It was said by most leaders that the people worked well together and usually agreed on community projects.

The two stores served as daily social centers. Both men and women met there and discussed the latest village news, often seating themselves comfortably as if visiting in a friend's home. The garage also provided chairs around the fire, and these showed the high polish of much service.

People had frequent contacts in this "rurban" community; this was largely due to the fact that nearly all the farms were located on good, hard-surfaced roads such as a comparatively wealthy county with a large city was able to provide.

Good roads also helped to bring about a situation in this "rurban" community and a few others like it which made them different from the more distant rural communities. A drive of 3 or 4 miles brought one into either of two city suburbs, which in themselves were shopping and social centers. Some of the homes were located within 5 miles of a small town where a normal school offered social programs and weekly movies. The adults seemed to experience little difficulty in keeping their groups interested in their own churches and clubs, but the older adolescents complained that school and social affairs in other places pulled their small company in four directions, making local affairs difficult to arrange.

II. A community that had originally grown up around a store, a school, and a church was found in Marshall County. There were only a score or so of homes within a 2-mile radius of the center, but people living along 10 miles of the pike considered themselves a part of the community. This was the oldest and one of the most strongly organized communities visited.

Participation in church, school, and community affairs was quite general. The schoolhouse, although only a 4-room building and the poorest of all the consolidated schools visited, was filled to capacity when such events took place. The young people's organizations of the different churches had a joint choir and held joint meetings. It was expected that in time the several starving little churches which had been drawn into the community organization would consolidate.

III. One of the best examples of an isolated and unorganized rural community was found in Webster County. The schoolhouse was located 2½ miles from the pike that connected one of the villages with the county seat. To reach it one usually had to travel on foot, or on horseback, because even a horse and carriage could not accomplish the trip with safety except in dry weather. The road, if such it could be called, was narrow and very rough and wound around pasture lands and over rocks, small streams, fallen trees, and underbrush. To reach the school on the day of the agent's visit it seemed preferable to avoid the "road" and take the "short cut" through the fields and pastures, even though this necessitated climbing over several stone walls and wire fences.

The homes of this community were scattered through the fields and by the road for about a mile on either side of the school. The nearest settlement was a small lumber town, or camp, 3 miles away. A general store near the pike supplied small family needs, but other necessities were purchased either at the lumber camp or at the nearest village of importance, 7 miles away. It was not uncommon to see a rather small tot trudging along the pike, sometimes with older brothers or sisters, sometimes alone, carrying a basket or pail, or perhaps a large bag slung over his shoulder containing the day's purchases.

This community could not be considered prosperous. In fact, several of the houses visited were very poor and were scantily furnished. Others might be called comfortable.

The schoolhouse was a very poor 1-room structure not worth repairing. It was hoped that the funds would be forthcoming for a new building the next year. Such as it was, however, the old schoolhouse served the needs of the neighboring families both on week days and on Sundays. A small Sunday school was held there every Sunday afternoon, and preaching services on week-day evenings now and then when a minister could arrange to come.

The teacher of the school said the people were rather timid about coming together in any community activity. Among the young folks there was material for good leadership, as was evidenced by the excellent work done by a few of the 4-H club members. They had carried out what was practically the only social program that the community had had during the year, but they were available only a small part of the time because they were away at the town high school from Monday until Saturday.

IV. A community less isolated but nevertheless difficult of access in certain seasons was not far distant in the same county. On the whole, it presented a much more prosperous appearance, although a number of the farmers, "solid, honest, country people" as they were termed, were in bad financial condition because they were paying off notes that they had indorsed for merchants who had failed in business in a near-by town.

Their country was a fertile farming section along the creek. A logging train furnished the chief means of travel in wet weather.

The church, with a membership of about 50 people, and the new 1-room school, with its energetic teacher and flock of 14 enthusiastic children, furnished the social life of the community. In fact, the school was the pride of the neighborhood, largely because of the capable leadership and devoted interest of the teacher. She had tactfully won over the interest of the parents, most of whom belonged to old conservative families. Community meetings were gradually becoming events of interest.

## VILLAGES

The rural villages visited were similar, in that their population, which in each case was less than 500, was concentrated in a fairly small area, in the middle of which were the post office, the school, one or more churches, stores, and sometimes a railroad station. Each village possessed individual characteristics, however, that make a more detailed description of two worth while.

I. One of the average-sized villages visited had been a county seat and quite a thriving town. Its population at the time of the survey was a little more than 400 and consisted largely of the older member of families who had lived there for several generations. The majority of the young people had gone away to work. The removal of the county seat to another town had undoubtedly been one of the causes of the exodus of a good part of the former population. The town had become a quiet, country village with a school, two churches, two general stores, and a garage. There was no industry aside from farming, but there was a general air of prosperity and comfort.

The schoolhouse had been built by the Grange and the county. It was a 2-story building, the second floor of which was used as a lodge hall and community room. There was practically no play space around the school; the boys played ball in the road.

Both the churches were struggling to retain their membership which had been gradually dropping off, partly because the young people were moving away and no new generation was rising in their place. One church was without a pastor; the other had a student pastor who spent only week-ends in the village and knew little of its real needs.

The social life of the village was promoted chiefly by the Grange and by the Ladies' Aid Society and a few organized Sunday-school classes of the two churches. The Grange was the strongest single organization of the community, having a membership of 125 persons, which included both old folks and youngsters in their teens. A small 4-H club furnished some social life for about 15 boys and girls. There were no commercial amusements of any kind. The people of the two churches were not much in favor of "worldly" recreation, although they did not object to the dancing and social affairs of the Grange.



II. A village along a railroad in Webster County, even though it had less than 500 inhabitants, presented a very different picture. It was one of the first lumber-mill towns to be built in that part of the State and seemed fairly prosperous. A school (including both grammar and high-school grades), two churches, two hotels, two lodge halls, garage, post office, railroad station, bank, and a dozen or so stores composed the business section of the main street. Beyond these on either side were the homes of the village folks. The people living farther back on the hills and across the river in the vicinity of one of the lumber mills were also counted as residents of the community.

Along the entire length of the main street was a board walk, considerably elevated in places. It served not only as the one safe place to walk in wet weather, when the streets were ankle deep with clayey mud, but also as the most popular place for evening strolls of the village young folk in pleasant weather.

The chief interest of one small group of very active citizens was to get a real road through to the outside world, a truly worthy objective. Social affairs and plays put on by various societies were much enjoyed by most of the village folk, although on the whole they were somewhat conservative.

## THE CHILDREN

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ENVIRONMENT

#### NUMBER INTERVIEWED

In the course of the 3-month survey 1,929 school children were interviewed individually in their own schools—927 boys and 1,002 girls. The number of children in each county and school district was as follows:

Brooke County .....	274
Buffalo .....	155
Cross Creek .....	119
Hancock County .....	302
Clay .....	89
Grant .....	213
Marshall County .....	615
Cameron .....	291
Clay .....	50
Union .....	122
Washington .....	79
Webster .....	73
Ohio County .....	319
Liberty .....	200
Richland .....	119
Webster County: Glade .....	419

#### AGE

This survey included only children over 10 and under 18 years of age. These ages were selected in order to cover the "club-age" period among West Virginia 4-H club boys and girls. As will be seen in Table 2, about the same number of children was included in each yearly age group up to 15 years. After 15 the number of boys fell off decidedly, and after 16 the number of girls dropped.

TABLE 2.—Number of boys and girls of each age interviewed in five counties of West Virginia

Age	Total	Boys	Girls
Total .....	1,929	927	1,002
10 years .....	299	152	147
11 years .....	293	155	138
12 years .....	301	138	163
13 years .....	280	141	139
14 years .....	278	135	143
15 years .....	219	91	128
16 years .....	160	79	81
17 years .....	98	35	63
Not reported .....	1	1	-----

## GRADE

The grades in which the children were found ranged from the first grade, in which there were eight 10-year-olds and three 11-year-olds, to the last grade of high school, which was represented by one child 15 years old, six 16 years old, and eighteen 17 years old. A comparison of the average age of the children in each grade in these schools with the average age of children of the same grades in 900 city schools shows that there is not a great deal of difference in the age distribution of the children in the lower grades. From grade six to grade eleven, however, the average ages of the children in the study were well above that of the city children. The average age of children in grade twelve was approximately the same as that of children in this grade in the cities. The fact that many of these country boys and girls were above average age for their grade meant not only discomfort in the schoolroom, where 14 and 15 year old boys were forced to sit in seats made for 10 or 11 year olds, but inequality on the playgrounds, where children of different ages but of the same mental attainment were thrown together in play. A dull 14-year-old boy often asserted himself by being the bully in a gang of younger children when he was pushed aside by those of his own age.

## TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED

Fifty-one of the seventy-five schools in which these children were interviewed were distinctly rural (that is, in the open country), 14 were in villages, and 10 were in towns. In the 65 rural and village schools and in 2 of the town schools all boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 who were attending school on the day of the agent's visit were interviewed. In the other town schools the only children seen were those coming in to high school from homes in the rural neighborhoods where grade schools were visited. The reason for including all children in the two town schools was that the town in which both schools were located was essentially rural in character, being not a manufacturing but a mercantile center which served principally the interests of the many dairy and sheep farmers who lived in the surrounding country.

All children of the survey may be spoken of in general terms as rural, having about them on all sides the influences of country life even while enjoying certain advantages offered in near-by town and city institutions. However, there is no question but that certain children were more subjected than others to the influence of town life. Therefore, in order that the recreational opportunities offered to and utilized by these boys and girls may be compared, the children have been divided into three groups according to the kind of school they attended—rural, village, or town.

Nearly half (903) of the total number of children interviewed attended rural schools, 678 attended village schools, and 348 attended town schools. Further subdivision of those attending rural schools may be made according to the type of school attended, whether a one or a two room building or one of the larger and better-equipped consolidated schools. The number of children interviewed in the 1-room and 2-room buildings combined was 476, only 65

being seen in the latter type of school. In the consolidated schools, which were visited only in Brooke, Marshall, and Ohio Counties, 427 children were interviewed. The largest number of pupils attending rural 1-room schools was in Hancock County. More villages were visited, and consequently more village school children were interviewed in Webster County. The majority of the pupils attending town schools were in one district of Marshall County.

#### LOCATION OF HOMES

Although slightly less than one-half of the children interviewed attended rural schools, more than two-thirds of the boys and girls (1,344) lived on farms or in other rural dwellings and considered themselves a part of some rural community like the ones described. (See p. 6.) In contrast to these rural children, there were included in the survey 585 who lived in villages and towns. The differences between these two groups were chiefly in respect to home duties, the country children having more and heavier ones, and the proximity to school, church, and the various educational and recreational advantages offered by villages and towns. Twenty-one of the boys and girls whose homes were in the country and 11 who lived in very small villages boarded in some near-by town or village during the school year in order to attend high school. These children returned to their homes for vacations and usually for week-ends also. The home conditions described by them were those relating to their own farm homes rather than their temporary homes in the towns.

#### PARENTS

##### **Nativity.**

The families in the territory visited were practically all of native stock, 93 per cent of the children reporting both parents as native born. The few children of foreign parentage that were found in the rural districts belonged for the most part to miners' families. Some of the miners were on strike and either had been moved by the unions to small villages away from the mines, or had turned to farming to make a living, though they were having a hard struggle to do so. Sixty-four per cent of the children who had some foreign blood were living in the open country, mostly on farms; the remainder lived in villages, some of which were nothing more than camps that had been built for the striking miners' families.

##### **Literacy and knowledge of English.**

Illiteracy and inability to speak English were rare among the families of these children. Nine children reported both parents and 39 one parent as being unable to read and write in any language. In 1 case only were both parents unable to speak English, and in 10 cases the children said that only one parent could speak English.

##### **Status in relation to child.**

Information was obtained concerning the presence of both father and mother in the home which makes for a child's happiness and security. In an unusually large proportion of homes (84 per cent) the children had both parents, either their own or one parent and a step-parent, living and in the home. Eleven per cent of the children were in their own homes with one parent present. Four per cent



(74 children) were in foster homes; all but 6 of these children had two foster parents. Only four children in the entire study had no parents.

#### Occupations.

Since the country covered by the survey was largely rural, it was expected that the fathers of most of the children interviewed would be farmers. As a matter of fact, only 41 per cent of these children had fathers engaged in any kind of agricultural or allied pursuits, which included farming, dairying, sheep raising, and logging. Even among those children who lived in the country, only a little more than one-half (53 per cent) had fathers who were agricultural workers, and a number of these did other work in addition. The fathers of 21 per cent of the children worked in factories—glass and pottery principally—or at mechanical trades; those of 9 per cent were employed in the coal mines or in the oil fields. An equal proportion of children (7 per cent) reported their fathers' occupation as in trade or in transportation. The professions were represented sparingly, and very few of the fathers were engaged in personal and domestic service or in public service. Five per cent of the children had no father living.

Some of the mothers were employed outside the home, but only 7 per cent of the country children whose own mothers were alive said that their mothers did remunerative work, as compared with 18 per cent of those living in towns and villages. Some form of domestic service was given most often as the mother's occupation. The other employed mothers were working chiefly in the potteries and other factories, or in stores.

#### WORK TIME AND PLAY TIME OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED

The most essential element in a program of play and recreation is time. Without leisure, playmates, playthings, and programs are valueless. Therefore before describing the various facilities for recreation found in the communities visited and the use made of them, it is well to analyze the statements made by the boys and girls interviewed as to the time spent on home chores and other work, and the time that they could call their own. The information was obtained by asking each boy and girl to outline his or her daily program, including rising and retiring time, meal hours, home chores, and other duties, time spent at school and in travel to and from school, and free time with the use made of it.

#### HOME CHORES AND OTHER WORK

The daily routine of farm work and house work, which was not light in the farm homes where the majority of children lived, and other odd jobs done by town as well as farm children, made varying demands upon their time. Very few children—only 149 (8 per cent of all those interviewed)—said they had no regular work to do.

Home chores kept most boys and girls busy for an hour or more a day, and work outside the home was undertaken by some. It was not unusual to find a boy or girl doing janitor work in the rural schoolhouses, \$1 a week or \$5 a month being the compensation in most cases. They usually went early in the morning to build the

fires, or "stir them up," and stayed after school in the afternoon to sweep. This work appealed principally to boys and girls 12 to 15 years of age. An 11-year-old girl alternated with a 14-year-old girl in keeping one isolated rural school warm and clean. Certain boys also did janitor work at churches and movies, the form of pay for the latter being free admission to the Saturday-night show.

In most of the villages where schools were visited some of the boys interviewed sold papers, which meant either a morning or an afternoon job, or sometimes both. Children on farms frequently delivered milk to neighbors, sometimes by wagon or auto truck, but often on foot, and this required much time. Tending market stands in town and peddling farm produce from a wagon or truck were occasionally named as Saturday jobs by country boys. After-school or Saturday work in stores and automobile-repair shops or filling stations attracted a few of the village and town boys.

TABLE 3.—Percentage of country and of village and town boys and girls of each specified age group having no chores in five counties of West Virginia

Age	Percentage having no chores			
	Boys		Girls	
	Country	Village and town	Country	Village and town
Total.....	5	21	5	8
10 years, under 12.....	5	8	9	16
12 years, under 14.....	1	23	3	7
14 years, under 16.....	6	16	4	6
16 years, under 18.....	12	45	4	6

The country children, however, had more regular duties than the village and town children, especially in the matter of home chores. Of the country children, only 5 per cent reported no work, and 71 per cent said they had work both before and after school. Of the village and town children, 14 per cent had no home or other duties, and only 59 per cent had both morning and evening work. The average farm boy had barn chores to do, such as milking and feeding stock, and field work besides. The town boy escaped most of these duties, more than 21 per cent reporting no chores whatever, whereas only 5 per cent of the country boys had no work to do. Among the girls the difference was less marked, all but 5 per cent of the country girls and 8 per cent of the town girls having some housework or other chores to do.

A much larger percentage of the boys 14 and over than under 14 escaped work altogether. This was especially true in the case of the town boys, who left the household tasks, which constituted the bulk of the work in town and village homes, to sisters or to younger brothers. Even in the country fewer boys 14 and over than under 14 appeared to work. This was probably because they were obliged to spend their time in study and in going back and forth to high school, which was frequently many miles distant, and not because there was no work for them to do.

In the case of the girls, in both farm and town homes, it was rather the younger children, between 10 and 12 years of age, who escaped home duties.

The amount of time spent on chores and other work daily was small, nearly three-fourths of the boys and girls doing less than two hours' work daily and more than one-third doing less than one hour's work. Country children generally worked longer hours than village and town children, 33 per cent of the country children compared with 18 per cent of the town children having worked two hours or more a day.

#### LEISURE TIME DURING SCHOOL TERM

##### Week days except Saturday.

The amount of free time that a child had outside of school hours did not necessarily depend on the amount of work he did, although this was a large factor. Hours of rising and retiring, home study, distance traveled to school, care of younger children, and even meals, caused much variation in individual schedules. These factors were all taken into consideration in computing leisure time.

Two hours of play, outside of the little that the child gets while he is under the supervision of the school, should be the minimum for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18. In the present survey, 23 per cent of the boys and 36 per cent of the girls had less than two hours before and after school that they could call their own to use for play, reading, or any purpose they desired.

The girls always had less spare time than the boys, and the older children always less than the younger ones, as the following figures show:

TABLE 4.—Percentage of boys and girls of each specified age group having less than two free hours on school days in five counties of West Virginia

Age	Percentage having less than 2 free hours	
	Boys	Girls
Total.....	23	36
10 years, under 12.....	17	26
12 years, under 14.....	24	35
14 years, under 16.....	26	44
16 years, under 18.....	26	44

Approximately half of both boys and girls (54 and 51 per cent, respectively) had between 2 and 4 hours a day in which to do as they pleased, and 24 per cent of the boys and 13 per cent of the girls had 4 hours and more.

Children living in rural districts spent much time in traveling to and from school, some having 2 or more miles to walk in addition to a bus ride, others walking the whole distance even up to 5 and 6 miles each way. Also, as was previously observed, country children had considerably more home chores to do than village and town children. Thirty-four per cent of the country children, compared with 19 per cent of the village and town children, had less than two

free hours on school days. (Table 5.) In the group having two to four free hours there was practically no difference between these two—53 per cent of the former as compared with 49 per cent of the latter having this period of leisure. However, among the group having four or more hours there was considerable difference, 31 per cent of the village and town children having as much as four hours compared with 12 per cent of the country children.

TABLE 5.—Percentage of boys and girls with permanent country or village or town residence having specified number of free hours on school days in five counties of West Virginia

Free hours daily	Percentage having specified number of free hours					
	Country children			Village and town children		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Less than 2.....	34	28	41	19	10	27
2, less than 4.....	53	56	50	49	46	52
4 or more.....	12	16	9	31	44	22

Though the statement made by 38 country children and 10 village and town children that they had no free time on week days may be doubted, they probably had very little leisure, and they can be combined with those who said they had some free time but less than one hour daily. This entire group constituted 11 per cent of the country children and 4 per cent of those living in villages and towns.

The following daily schedules are typical for the average farm boys and girls during the school months:

*Farm boy, 12 years of age.* Works 2¾ hours; free 2½ hours.

*a. m.*

6.00 Rises.

6.15 Waters and feeds chickens, helps milk, throws down hay at uncle's farm near by.

7.30 Breakfast.

8.00 Starts for school—1½-mile walk over bad roads.

*p. m.*

4.15 Arrives home from school; supper.

4.30 Milks and does other chores.

6.00 Reads papers.

6.30 Studies.

7.00 Free—sits around and talks.

9.00 Bed.

*Farm boy, 15 years of age.* Works 3 hours; free 2¾ hours.

*a. m.*

5.30 Rises.

5.45 Feeds cows and horses; milks two cows.

6.30 Breakfast.

7.00 Feeds sheep and does other chores.

8.00 Gets ready for school.

8.15 Starts for school—2 miles; walks part way, takes bus part way.

*p. m.*

4.30 Home, plays baseball.

5.30 Does chores.

6.45 Supper.

7.15 Studies.

8.15 Reads.

10.00 Bed.

*Farm boy, 14 years of age.* Works 2 hours; free  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours.

- a. m.*  
 6.00 Rises.  
 6.30 Feeds horses, cleans own horse.  
 7.00 Breakfast.  
 7.30 Waters horses, puts down fodder, gets ready for school.  
 8.15 Starts for school— $1\frac{1}{2}$ -mile walk.  
*p. m.*  
 5.00 Arrives home—waters and feeds horses.  
 6.00 Supper.  
 6.15 Studies.  
 7.15 Looks at papers, plays.  
 9.00 Bed.

*Farm girl, 13 years of age.* Works  $2\frac{3}{4}$  hours; free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

- a. m.*  
 6.00 Rises; feeds stock.  
 6.30 Breakfast.  
 6.45 Packs lunches, gets little ones ready for school, tends stock.  
 8.30 Leaves for school.  
*p. m.*  
 4.30 Arrives home; tends stock.  
 5.00 Plays.  
 5.30 Supper and dishes.  
 6.00 Studies lessons.  
 6.30 Plays; reads.  
 8.30 Bed.

*Farm girl, 12 years of age.* Works  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours; free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

- a. m.*  
 6.30 Rises; works around house one-half hour.  
 7.30 Breakfast.  
 7.45 Gets coal and water, puts up lunch.  
 8.15 Starts for school—1-mile walk.  
*p. m.*  
 5.00 Arrives home (plays one-half hour on way); gets wood and water, feeds chickens, helps prepare supper.  
 6.00 Supper.  
 6.30 Dishes.  
 7.00 Plays piano or reads.  
 9.00 Bed.

*Farm girl, 14 years of age.* Works  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hour; free  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

- a. m.*  
 7.00 Rises; milks 2 cows and feeds chickens.  
 7.30 Breakfast.  
 7.45 Washes dishes and makes bed.  
 8.15 Starts for school—1-mile walk.  
*p. m.*  
 4.45 Arrives home; feeds chickens, milks cows.  
 5.00 Plays.  
 6.00 Supper.  
 6.15 Washes dishes.  
 6.30 Studies.  
 7.00 Plays out of doors.  
 8.30 Bed.

Hard-working farm children who had many chores and less than two hours of leisure time outside of school on week days had programs something like the following:

*Farm boy, 13 years of age.* Works 7 hours; free 1 hour.

- a. m.*  
 5.00 Rises and milks.  
 6.15 Breakfast; two hours of stable work.  
 8.30 Goes to school.



*Farm boy, 13 years of age.—Continued.**p. m.*

- 4.00 Arrives home; waters cows and horses and does house chores.
- 5.00 Free.
- 6.00 Supper.
- 6.30 Feeds stock, milks, and does barn chores.
- 8.00 Goes to town, 2½ miles, and peddles milk.
- 9.30 Returns home and goes to bed.

*Farm girl, 15 years of age. Works 3 hours; free three-quarters of an hour.**a. m.*

- 6.00 Rises.
- 6.15 Breakfast.
- 6.45 Does housework and barn chores.
- 7.45 Leaves for school—5-mile walk; usually catches a ride part way.

*p. m.*

- 5.30 Arrives home; helps in the house.
- 6.00 Supper.
- 6.30 Milks, washes dishes.
- 8.00 Studies.
- 8.30 Free.
- 9.15 Bed.

*Country boy, 15 years of age. Works 3½ hours; free one-half hour. [This boy does not live on a farm, but lives in the open country near a farm, and works there.]**a. m.*

- 7.30 Rises.
- 7.45 Breakfast.
- 8.00 Chops wood, gets in coal and water, tends furnace, gathers eggs.
- 8.30 Goes to school.

*p. m.*

- 3.30 Arrives home, does some chores.
- 4.00 Goes to neighboring dairy and washes bottles.
- 5.00 Eats supper there.
- 5.30 Free.
- 6.30 Feeds cows, sometimes milks, bottles milk.
- 7.30 Studies.
- 9.00 Bed.

Fewer chores and more free time are indicated in the daily routine of these village and town children.

*Village boy, 13 years of age. Chores 1 hours; free 4½ hours.**a. m.*

- 6.30 Rises.
- 6.45 Gets coal and water.
- 7.00 Breakfast.
- 7.15 Gets ready for school, "fools around."
- 8.00 Starts for school, three-quarters of an hour free on grounds.

*p. m.*

- 3.30 Arrives home; plays.
- 4.45 Gets coal and wood; goes to train for papers and delivers them.
- 5.30 Washes up, and sits in house one-half hour.
- 6.00 Supper.
- 6.30 Goes to town and plays with boys.
- 8.00 Studies.
- 8.30 Bed.

*Village girl, 12 years of age.* Works one-half hour; free 3 hours.

*a. m.*

7.30 Rises; breakfast.  
8.00 Washes dishes, gets ready for school.  
8.30 Goes to school.

*p. m.*

4.30 Arrives home; reads or sews 1 hour.  
5.30 Supper.  
6.00 Washes dishes.  
6.15 Goes to neighbor's and studies with friend.  
7.30 Free; visits with friend.  
9.30 Home; bed.

*Town girl, 15 years of age.* Works three-quarters of an hour; free 3 hours.

*a. m.*

7.30 Rises; breakfast.  
8.00 Housework.  
8.30 Goes to school.

*p. m.*

3.30 Free; goes up town from school.  
4.30 Arrives home; supper.  
4.45 Washes dishes.  
5.00 Practices on violin.  
5.30 Studies.  
7.30 Free; reads generally.  
9.30 Bed.

For almost all the girls (94 per cent) and for about three-fourths of the boys (74 per cent) the summer months when school was not in session brought the most free time on week days. The 237 boys and 60 girls who said they had more time for play during the school months were for the most part country children who worked long hours on their own or neighboring farms during the busy summer months. In fact, 19 per cent of the rural children said they had more leisure in school months, but only 6 per cent of the village and town children made this statement. Of the children having the greatest number of free hours during the summer months and reporting number of free hours, 72 per cent had six hours or more free time and 44 per cent eight or more.

#### Saturday.

The Saturday program for most children, no matter where they lived, included the traditional extra duties in preparation for Sunday. Even tiny girls of 10 said they scrubbed, washed windows, and cleaned porches and yards most of the morning on Saturday. Some helped with the baking and also with the washing and ironing. Company was often expected on Saturday afternoon or evening, or on Sunday, so the house had to be in order. The boys had their extra out-of-door chores to do, chicken coops to clean, fences to mend, wood to cut, and other farm chores for which there was little time on school days. Personal cleanliness, too, was a matter of special importance at the end of the week, for there were few rural children who failed to mention the Saturday bath as one of the time-consuming activities of that day.

Owing to these additional home duties and also to the fact that some of the older boys worked away from home for pay on Saturdays, considerably more than one-third of the children (38 per cent)

had less than six hours for their own use on Saturday. However, for the majority of children there was much more playtime on Saturday than on other week days, a half day or more being available to 64 per cent of the boys and to 60 per cent of the girls, while practically the whole day, 10 hours or more, was free for 20 per cent of the boys and for 11 per cent of the girls.

Again the young folks in villages and towns fared somewhat better as far as leisure time was concerned, because 71 per cent of these children, as compared with only 58 per cent of the country children, had as much as six hours for their own use on Saturday. However, the country children had their own special activities for that day, even though they had less spare time, and the younger children in particular seemed to enjoy them. One frequently mentioned event was the trip to town, which was commonly made in the afternoon by the women and girls and which combined business and pleasure. The boys went more often with their fathers to buy feed or to sell their eggs and poultry, some staying in town all day.

Saturday evening was the one time in the week that men, women, and children alike were bent on pleasure. The town stores and movies and the village shops were well patronized, and the main streets were filled with parked cars that had brought families from distant farm homes. Some of the country children who did not go to town—and many were denied this pleasure—said they visited friends and neighbors, and sometimes attended parties or dances. Others listened late to radio programs because they did not have to get up early the next morning.

#### **Sunday.**

There was one day in the week when the country child was just as free as other children, and that was Sunday. Farm work was suspended, except the necessary care of stock, and housework was reduced to a minimum in most country homes. Seventy-eight per cent of the country children reporting number of hours had 6 or more free hours and 19 per cent, 10 or more. Of the town children 73 per cent had 6 or more free hours and 18 per cent, 10 or more. This did not include time spent in attendance at church services or in going to and from church. Some of the young folks went walking, riding, or visiting on Sunday afternoon or evening, if the church service or Sunday school did not fill these hours. Some read and others, particularly in the rural districts, just sat around and talked with the family or with a neighbor who happened in. (See also church, p. 40.)

#### **Free hours weekly.**

Since some children who had little spare time on school days were free practically all day Saturday or Sunday, or both, and others who did little or no work on school days were busy over the week-ends, the total number of free hours per week during school months was computed for the 1,785 boys and girls who gave satisfactory answers to questions about their daily programs. The results of these tabulations only strengthen the conclusions reached in regard to their spare time on separate days. The boys still had more leisure than the girls, as shown in Table 6.



TABLE 6.—Percentage of boys and girls having specified number of free hours weekly during school term in five counties of West Virginia

Free hours	Percentage having specified number of free hours weekly		
	Total	Boys	Girls
Less than 12.....	5	4	5
12, less than 16.....	7	5	9
16, less than 20.....	11	8	14
20, less than 24.....	14	13	16
24 or more.....	62	70	55

The younger children, as would be expected, had more free hours weekly than the older ones. The percentage of all boys with as many as 24 hours for their own use during the week gradually decreased from 78 for those 10 and 11 years of age to 65 for those 16 and 17 years of age. Among the girls the corresponding percentages decreased from 68 to 44.

Whether a child lived in a rural dwelling or in a village or town house made some difference in the amount of free time he had weekly. Sixty-five rural children, all but 5 of whom lived on farms, and 18 of the village and town children had less than 12 hours free, but these were comparatively small percentages of each group—5 and 3, respectively. The majority of both groups of children had at least 24 free hours weekly, although the percentage was much larger for the village and town children. (Table 7.)

TABLE 7.—Percentage of boys and girls with permanent country or village or town residence having 24 or more free hours weekly in five counties of West Virginia

Place of permanent residence	Percentage having 24 or more free hours weekly		
	Total	Boys	Girls
Total.....	62	70	55
Country.....	57	64	50
Village and town.....	73	86	63

To determine the use made of this leisure time, not only at home but also in connection with church and school and with agencies organized wholly or partly for recreational purposes, was one of the principal objects of this survey. The results of this part of the investigation follow.

# RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE USE MADE OF THEM

## HOME

The home is the first important play center to the child, and certain conditions must be satisfactory if he is to spend his time happily there. Among these an atmosphere that encourages wholesome play is very important. Though this may be dependent somewhat on the financial resources of the family, it is dependent to a greater extent on the attitude of the parents toward play and the interest they take in the child's activities. The home that fulfills its function as a recreation center most satisfactorily is the one where playmates are encouraged to come, where some equipment is provided for indoor and outdoor activities, and where family participation in games, reading, and music, and in little excursions to the outside world is a part of the program planned by the parents.

## PLAYMATES

### Number and kinds.

One of the first questions asked of each child was whether he had any brothers or sisters living at home, and if so, the number and ages. Ninety per cent of all children replied that they had one or more brothers or sisters, but only 53 per cent had brothers or sisters within two years of their own age. Twenty-two per cent of the children said that they had no neighbors or friends near their own age with whom they could play, except friends that they saw only at school; these children were largely the younger ones who stayed more closely at home. (Table 8.) Eleven per cent said they had just one play friend, in most cases of their own sex. The majority of the children had several playmates, besides brothers and sisters; some had many, 28 per cent naming from two to four, and 38 per cent, five or more. One hundred and fifty-six of the children had neither brothers nor sisters within two years of their own age nor any other playmates; and 24 children (13 boys and 11 girls) had no brothers or sisters of any age and no neighbors. This meant that only 1 per cent of all the children interviewed had no playmates whatever and that 9 per cent had none very near their own age.

TABLE 8.—Per cent distribution of children attending rural and town schools having specified number of playmates other than brothers and sisters in five counties of West Virginia

Number of playmates	Per cent distribution of children having specified number of playmates					
	All children	Attending school located in—				
		Rural districts			Village	Town
		Total	Iso-lated	Access-ible		
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100	100
None.....	22	29	40	26	17	13
One.....	11	13	10	14	11	9
Two, less than five.....	28	30	32	29	28	24
Five or more.....	13	28	18	31	44	55

As the home surroundings, particularly the number and proximity of neighbors, are very different in towns and villages and in rural districts, the statements of the boys and girls as to the number of playmates other than brothers and sisters were analyzed from this standpoint. Twenty-eight per cent of the country children, as compared with only 9 per cent of those living in towns and villages, had no playmates outside the home.

The character of the neighborhood in which the children lived may be more clearly indicated, perhaps, by the type and accessibility of the school attended. This was especially true in the case of children who attended isolated rural schools, because the homes of these children were frequently more difficult of access than the school. In consequence, a very large proportion (40 per cent) of the 215 children of that group who reported on playmates said they had no neighborhood friends. The children who attended rural schools that were on or near main highways lived for the most part on more accessible farms or in small rural settlements; they were more likely to have neighbors, near by or within easy reach, than were the children in isolated districts. This seems to account for the fact that only 26 per cent of the children attending accessible rural schools, in contrast to the 40 per cent attending isolated schools, had no playmates other than their own brothers and sisters.

In like manner, the proportion of children who had no playmates outside their homes was perceptibly smaller among village-school pupils and was still smaller among those in the town schools. This was not due wholly to the fact that they lived in communities where there were more neighbors, because some of these children lived on farms outside the community centers, but they were brought in contact with others of their own age to a greater degree than in the rural schools, and they sought out these companions at other times besides school hours.

#### Frequency of meeting.

As it was presupposed that most boys and girls who had brothers and sisters spent some play time with them nearly every day, it was considered more important to ascertain the frequency with which children met other playmates besides those seen only at school.

About half of all the children (53 per cent of the boys and 45 per cent of the girls) said they met one or more playmates daily outside of school hours. Twenty-one per cent of the boys and twenty-seven per cent of the girls met friends at least once a week, but not every day. A rather large proportion (25 per cent of the boys and 29 per cent of the girls) either had no playmates besides brothers and sisters, or, if they had any, met them less often than once a week.

An examination of the statements made by children who had playmates other than brothers or sisters showed that the younger ones met their friends oftener than did the older ones, probably because they had fewer home duties and more playtime. Seventy-four per cent of the 10 and 11 year old boys who had playmates met them daily. The percentage gradually decreased as the age increased, so that in the 16 and 17 year old group it was 65. The girls who had play friends outside their homes met them less frequently than the boys met theirs. Only 61 per cent of even the youngest ones (those 10 and 11 years old) said that they played daily with

friends. Not much difference was noticed between the age groups of girls up to their fourteenth year; of the older girls only 53 per cent of those 14 and 15 years of age and 46 per cent of those 16 and 17 years of age saw their playmates daily.

A comparison of the statements showed that children attending rural schools met playmates much less frequently than those attending town and village schools. Only 36 per cent of the rural-school pupils, as contrasted with 60 per cent of the town and village school pupils, had friends with whom they played daily. Moreover, 36 per cent of the rural-school children either had no playmates at all or saw them less often than once a week, while only 19 per cent of the town and village school children were so lacking in companions or in opportunities to play with them.

#### Places of meeting.

Both boys and girls named their own or friends' homes as the most usual places for meeting. Homes were mentioned, however, by more of the girls (85 per cent) than of the boys (67 per cent). Woods, fields, hills, and roads near their homes attracted certain children, especially those under 16 years of age, 11 per cent of the boys and 3 per cent of the girls saying that it was in such out-of-door places that they usually met their friends.

As they grew older, the boys were more inclined to gather at public places, such as the village store or the railroad station, 6 per cent of all the boys who had special friends outside the home naming such places. The scarcity of playgrounds is evidenced by the fact that only 21 boys and 7 girls, or only 2 per cent of all children who had playmates, said they frequented playgrounds, and some of these were nothing more than baseball diamonds, or substitutes for them, which the boys alone used. A very few children saw their friends only on the way to and from school or at Sunday school. All in all, however, the home with its environs was the most important play center outside of school hours for the majority of boys and girls of all ages.

#### Activities.

The activities that boys and girls enjoyed with their companions, whether brothers, sisters, neighbors, or other friends, were numerous and varied. They may be classified as (1) games of all kinds, (2) free-play activities, and (3) social activities. Nearly one-half of all the boys and girls participated in more than one type of activity, although more than one-third of all the children spoke only of games. This indicated not so much that they did nothing in leisure time except play games, but that games were the first play activity thought of. The importance of games in the play program of these boys and girls, therefore, warrants giving them first place in the long list of activities enjoyed with friends and playmates.

*Games.*—The games named by the children interviewed were of two distinct types: (1) Those having very simple rules, which will be called games of low organization, and (2) those like baseball and hockey requiring a great amount of team work and called games of high organization. In the first group were included a great variety of simple games, principally of the out-of-door type, more than 100 kinds being named. They were mostly running or



active games, as hide and seek, prisoner's base, fox and geese, drop the handkerchief, run sheep run, and many variations of tag. Many boys and girls over 14 as well as the younger ones seemed to enjoy these games. A number of singing games were mentioned, but these were less popular than the running games, even though such well-known ones as Farmer in the Dell and London Bridge were included. Marbles were seen in nearly every community as spring advanced and dry play spots were found. They were by far the most popular pastime during May for the boys of one county who were practicing for a tournament. Jacks and croquet were occasionally named. Other games less frequently mentioned, but nevertheless appealing strongly to certain children, were those of a dramatic nature like cowboy and Indians.

Social indoor games, which were also included in games of low organization, were liked by some of the boys and girls. Card games were popular with the older girls who were in high school and whose leisure time was largely in the evening. Checkers and dominoes were played by children of all ages, sometimes with older members of the family. Billiards and pool were seldom mentioned as being played in the home, because few homes had equipment for them, but some of the boys when directly asked said that they played in pool rooms.

The popularity of certain games in the areas visited is evident from the following list, which gives the number of children naming each one. Although the total number of games named by all children was about 150, only 26 of these were popular enough to be mentioned by as many as 10 children.

Games	Total	Boys	Girls
<b>Outdoor:</b>			
Hide and seek	636	290	346
Tag	422	293	129
Prisoner's base	156	67	89
Marbles	101	84	17
Jump rope	88	12	76
Fox and geese	67	30	37
Run sheep run	56	20	36
Red light	45	26	19
Blackman	27	14	13
Hopscotch	27	1	26
Drop the handkerchief	26	7	19
Blind man's buff	23	9	14
Croquet	18	2	16
Andy over	15	6	9
Cowboy and Indian	15	13	2
Farmer in the Dell	15	3	12
Leap frog	14	13	1
Dodge ball	13	2	11
Jacks	13	1	12
Tap the ice box	12	7	5
Run through	11	4	7
<b>Indoor:</b>			
Dominoes	80	29	51
Cards	65	22	43
Checkers	55	23	32
Rook	51	20	31
Flinch	36	10	26

The second large group of games named as activities with playmates included those of a highly organized type and may be called competitive sports. While they were fewer in variety than those

in the low-organization group, certain ones were very popular, particularly baseball, football, and basket ball, which headed the list for boys. Basket ball and volley ball were most popular with the girls. The season of the year influenced the choice of sports to a certain extent; undoubtedly some of those named during the spring months when the survey took place would have been omitted, and a few others added, had the children been interviewed in the fall. For instance, football would probably have been more popular, although some school principals said it was not encouraged as was baseball, because of the difficulty in getting coaches.

It is probable that some of the younger boys and girls who said that they played baseball or football with their playmates merely played with the balls used in these games. In response to a more particular question about their favorite sports—that is, those in which they themselves took part, including team games played according to rule—541 boys named baseball as a favorite leisure-time activity. The younger boys as well as the older ones liked this game and spent their playtime in practice. A number of variations of baseball were found, as “one old cat” and “corners up.” Baseball, so-called, was also played by the girls in some localities, a total of 123 naming this as a sport which they liked particularly. Football was reported as a favorite sport of 229 boys.

The popularity of basket ball was about the same for both sexes, 214 boys and 210 girls stating that they played this game with some degree of proficiency. Since this was a game that was practically confined to schools having gymnasiums or playgrounds and to a few town churches, many boys and girls lacked the opportunity to play basket ball, particularly outside of school hours.

Practice for track events, such as races and the broad jump and high jump, seemed to be of special interest to only a few children, although many said they liked to “run and jump.” On the whole, track events were far less popular than team games, because field days and track meets were at most only occasional occurrences, and in many localities they were seldom heard of.

The total number of boys who took active part in one or more competitive sports (any kind of team game or track) was 681 (73 per cent of all the boys included in the study). Only about two-fifths (42 per cent) of the girls participated in team games. One reason for this small percentage was that the team games that girls usually play, such as basket ball and volley ball, require more equipment than baseball, and this was lacking in most of the rural-school districts. Team play was not as common in the rural sections as in town districts among either boys or girls, partly for this reason, but mainly because there was little time to play and fewer children of the same ages who could get together to form teams.

*Free-play activities.*—Almost as much variety was found in the kinds of free play that the children enjoyed with their playmates as in the games they played. Most of the free-play activities mentioned were based on the use of natural facilities and included such non-competitive sports as swimming, fishing, hunting, and skating, and simple childhood activities like climbing trees, hunting birds' nests, roaming the woods, and gathering flowers. Some included the use of toys and other play equipment such as kites, wagons, bicycles, hoops, swings, and seesaws. The remaining activities were divided between

dramatic play, which included stunts, acrobatics, playing house, school and store, and playing with dolls, and play that was an exhibition of physical strength, like running, jumping, and wrestling.

The number of children who mentioned swimming, fishing, and hunting as activities carried on with playmates was smaller than the total number who named them as their favorite sports. As such sports are usually enjoyed by children together, the replies to this question may be discussed here.

The most popular noncompetitive sport—the one that was named the greatest number of times by both boys and girls, no matter where they lived—was swimming. Even so, the total number of boys who said they particularly enjoyed swimming was only 200 and the number of girls, 168, or less than one-fifth (19 per cent) of the children interviewed. Swimming was not so much of a country sport as might be supposed; only 18 per cent of the boys and 13 per cent of the girls who lived on farms or in rural dwellings named swimming as one of their favorite free-time activities, as compared with 31 per cent of the boys and 25 per cent of the girls who lived in villages and towns.

As in the case of swimming, fishing was named more frequently by the town boys than by those living in the rural districts; 22 per cent of the former as compared with 10 per cent of the latter named this sport. There was practically no difference in the proportion of country and town girls indulging in this sport.

Hunting was named as a favorite pastime by 84 boys (9 per cent), country and town boys liking it equally well. Hunting was distinctly a boy's sport, as it was mentioned by only one girl, a farm child of 13 years. Trapping was popular with a few boys in certain localities; one boy said he sold the pelts and earned quite a little spending money during the winter and spring. Other free sports, like coasting, skating, hiking, and horseback riding, were enjoyed by varying numbers of both country and town children.

A total of 606 children (31 per cent) said they participated in one or more of the eight noncompetitive sports just named (swimming, fishing, hunting, trapping, coasting, skating, hiking, and horseback riding). Rural boys and girls found much of their fun "just playing" in the woods and fields near their homes, especially in the spring of the year when they could pick wild flowers, tap "sugar" trees, swing on grapevines, and wade in the creeks where a few months earlier they went skating.

*Social activities.*—The third group, which was the smallest in variety of interests, comprised such activities as going with friends to all kinds of social affairs and doing and making things together. Attendance at movies, parties, and picnics, visiting, and motoring were popular, as well as singing and dancing. The boys made kites and airplane models, and built cabins and shanties, and the girls liked to make candy, sew, read, and study together. It was largely the older boys and girls, principally the ones who lived in towns and villages, who named attendance together at social affairs.

The number of children naming each of the various types of activities is shown in the following list. Only forms of play or activity named by at least 10 boys or 10 girls were included.

Boys' activities with playmates:		
Games, low-organization—		Number of boys
Outdoor .....		497
Indoor .....		92
General (not otherwise specified) .....		51
Games, high-organization—		
Baseball .....		577
Ball not otherwise specified .....		278
Football .....		257
Basket ball .....		214
Volley ball .....		49
Track .....		29
Tennis .....		18
Soccer .....		10
Shinny .....		10
Free play—		
Swimming .....		119
Coasting .....		82
Hunting .....		68
Fishing .....		60
Hiking .....		41
Playing in woods, fields, creeks .....		30
Skating .....		34
Horseback riding .....		14
All other free play (with toys and animals, dramatic play, running, jumping) .....		70
Social activities—		
Going to movies .....		18
Going to socials .....		17
Talking .....		16
Making kites and ship and airplane models .....		13
Building cabins or shanties .....		11
Girls' activities with playmates:		
Games, low-organization—		Number of girls
Outdoor .....		527
Indoor .....		162
General (not otherwise specified) .....		89
Games, high-organization—		
Basket ball .....		210
Ball not otherwise specified .....		182
Volley ball .....		147
Baseball .....		124
Tennis .....		51
Track .....		12
Free play—		
Hiking .....		128
Coasting .....		88
Swimming .....		53
Playing in woods, fields, creeks .....		23
Skating .....		17
All other free play (with toys and animals, dramatic play, running, jumping) .....		126
Social activities—		
Music, playing piano, phonograph, or other instrument .....		69
Talking .....		57
Going to movies .....		49
Visiting .....		41
Dancing .....		40
Studying together .....		36
Going to socials .....		33
Reading together .....		29
Singing .....		25
Going to picnics .....		20
Car riding .....		15
Sewing .....		12
Embroidering .....		12
Making candy .....		12



## HOME FACILITIES

As was previously stated, the extent to which the home may be a recreational center depends somewhat on the facilities it provides for the use of leisure moments. Many family good times may be had with little or no equipment other than a few home-made devices, a game or two, or an open fireplace, provided a genial home atmosphere prevails; but facilities for indoor play, for reading, for making and enjoying music, and for taking little vacations or family outings together help to make the home a real recreation center.

**Games and indoor-play equipment.**

In connection with the present survey no attempt was made to take a census of the game material and other playthings possessed in the homes of the children interviewed. However, many of the forms of play that they named as activities with brothers, sisters, and other playmates presupposed such facilities as cards, dominoes, checkers, various other games and toys, and even an occasional tool chest.

The number of children who mentioned the use of games and other home-play equipment was a small proportion of the total number of children interviewed. Many rural boys and girls appeared to have little to occupy their free time when evening came, or on other occasions when out-of-door sports and games could not be indulged in. When questioned on this point, more than 100 children replied that they "just sat around." Some said they talked or visited with neighbors who had dropped in, and some said that they "looked at the funnies" in the Sunday paper. Other children cared for younger brothers and sisters, or just played with the dog. Often, however, "sitting around" seemed to have no other purpose than marking time until they should go to bed. One little girl, after being asked whether she ever did anything when she "just sat around," finally replied that she listened to the telephone conversations of her neighbors over the party line.

The daily program as outlined by the majority of the boys and girls did not seem to indicate much participation on the part of the parents in home-play activities. Very few children spoke of playing games with either of their parents as a part of their evening program, and some of those who did qualified the statement by "sometimes" or "once in a while." One boy and his father did woodwork together for recreation, spending Saturday afternoons as well as most evenings at the workbench. This boy was very enthusiastic over the inlay work that they had just attempted. A few other boys who had been provided with tools spoke with enthusiasm of their ship and airplane models, and others enjoyed experimenting with electrical sets or chemical outfits.

Though the proportion of boys and girls who had adequate home-play equipment and who used it can not be estimated, it is certain that many of the children in the areas visited either did not have facilities for play or else lacked the proper encouragement from parents for wholesome indoor recreation.

**Music.**

The part that music played in the home life of the boys and girls of the study was not easy to determine, since time did not permit evening visits to homes or other social contacts with the families

where observation could aid in the search for such information. Very few children, when asked what they did in the evenings, spoke of music as contributing much to family fun. However, only about 12 per cent of the children said there was no musical instrument of any kind in their home, and it is probable that at least a fair proportion of those who had them used and enjoyed them. On the assumption that this was true, each child was asked to name the different kinds of instruments possessed by various members of the household and the kinds he himself played.

Among the list of instruments named were the phonograph, radio, and player piano, which provide a passive form of recreation that seems to satisfy a large proportion of the people.

The most popular instrument of all was the phonograph, 56 per cent of the country children and 60 per cent of the town and village children reporting one in their homes. Although it was sometimes "out of order," its presence showed that an attempt had been made to have some music in the home. Radios were reported in the homes of about one-fourth of both town and country children. Some boys and girls found considerable fun in sitting up late Saturday nights listening to "barn dances," "old-fashioned songs," and other equally appealing programs because they "came in good" after midnight. Since the Sunday routine did not call for early rising, parents did not seem to object to this departure from the usual bed hour. Both a radio and a phonograph were found in the homes of 16 per cent of the children interviewed. Thus two-thirds (67 per cent) of all the boys and girls in the selected group had access to phonograph or radio or both.

Pianos and organs were almost as popular as phonographs, one or the other being reported by 58 per cent of all the children. Among the girls reporting one of these instruments in the home, 65 per cent said they used them, but only 23 per cent of the boys having a piano or organ made this statement. It is suspected that some of the organs were pieces of furniture rather than music-making instruments, since it was remarked about some of them as about some of the phonographs, "It is broken," or "No one can play it."

One or more instruments other than those named were said to be household possessions of a little more than one-third of the children. These included both wind and string instruments, such as cornet, saxophone, violin, guitar, banjo, and ukulele, and even the mouth organ, jew's-harp, and accordion. Only about one-third of the children who had these instruments played any of them.

The various instruments named, other than piano and organ, and the numbers of boys and girls professing to play each are as follows:

Instrument	Total	Boys	Girls
Ukulele.....	73	17	56
Violin.....	46	27	19
Harmonica.....	33	27	6
Banjo.....	31	18	13
Guitar.....	22	11	11
Cornet.....	13	12	1
French harp.....	14	9	5
Mandolin.....	7	2	5
Saxophone.....	6	6	--
Clarinet.....	4	4	--
Jew's-harp.....	3	3	--
Drum.....	2	2	--

Instrument	Total	Boys	Girls
Horn.....	2	2	--
Xylophone.....	2	--	2
Accordion.....	1	1	--
Bugle.....	1	1	--
Fife.....	1	1	--
Musical saw.....	1	1	--
Trombone.....	1	--	1
Trumpet.....	1	1	--

While no particular inquiry was made as to membership in orchestras and other musical organizations, it was apparently very small among the group studied, because only 9 children, when asked what instrument they played, volunteered the information that they belonged to an orchestra. All but one of these were in the high-school orchestra of one of the towns visited. In one family each of four children played a different instrument—piano, violin, guitar, and banjo—and they practiced together as an orchestra for Saturday night dances in summer. Several children mentioned their fathers as furnishing music for the family. One father in an isolated farming district played the violin and the mouth organ, and the family often had friends in for a social evening with music. Examples like these were few, however. Only 30 children mentioned singing as a pastime they particularly enjoyed with their companions, although in a number of the village and town high schools there were glee clubs to which some of the boys and girls interviewed belonged. Seventy-six children spoke of playing the piano, phonograph, or other instruments as activities enjoyed with playmates.

The apparent lack of interest in creative music may be partly explained by the presence of phonographs and radios in many homes. It may be true, as one long-time rural resident remarked, that "singing and fiddling sound inferior after the radio," and people are less eager to listen to their own or their neighbors' music after becoming accustomed to better artists.

#### Reading material.

Reading was one of the most frequently mentioned of the evening and other spare-time activities of the young people interviewed. The amount and kinds of reading done by an individual, especially a child, are difficult to determine through a short school interview; but it was felt that a few questions relative to the kinds of reading material available, and whether or not use was made of them, would throw some light on the general subject of reading among the children in the areas visited.

*Newspapers.*—More than 90 per cent of the boys and girls living in towns and villages had access to some kind of newspaper. Nine per cent of these children said their families took only the local newspapers—that is, those published in their own town or village or in the one nearest to them—but 35 per cent said they took both local papers and others, which for the most part were those of the larger cities like Wheeling and Pittsburgh. Nearly half (46 per cent) of the town and village children mentioned only these outside papers as being taken regularly by their families.

The percentage of country boys and girls who reported some kind of newspaper in their homes was just the same as for those living in town. The local small-town or near-by city newspapers seemed

to interest the rural people more than those published in the more distant cities, because 39 per cent of these children said their families took local papers only, 29 per cent said they had both local and outside papers, while 22 per cent, as contrasted with 46 per cent of the town and village children, reported only the outside papers in their homes.

*Magazines.*—A large amount of current reading was done in the homes of most of the children if the numbers of magazines, as well as newspapers, that were subscribed to or bought regularly by their families are a criterion. Only 251 (13 per cent) of all the children interviewed said they had no magazines coming into their homes.

The number and variety of magazines were large. An analysis of all the kinds named by the 1,250 from whom full reports were obtained (practically two-thirds of the entire number) revealed some rather interesting facts as to the type of reading matter most commonly found in the homes. Three hundred and twenty-six magazines were named 5,599 times by these children. A well-known women's magazine headed the list, being mentioned 306 times, and 16 magazines, of which 11 were farm journals or magazines for women, were named 100 times or more.

The following figures are based on the reports of 1,668 boys and girls, who, if they were not able to give the exact names of certain magazines, described their contents so that it was possible to classify them:

Type of magazine	Times named	Different magazines represented
Home -----	1,944	46
Farm -----	1,501	58
Fiction -----	921	39
Cultural (including music, nature, travel, current events) -----	531	34
Church -----	236	52
Juvenile -----	236	13
Fraternal -----	80	13
Technical -----	73	37
Miscellaneous (including sports, politics, advertising, photoplay) -----	77	34

The popularity of literature pertaining to home life and farm problems was beyond question, as far as the adult members of the many households were concerned, and it was these two types, together with fiction and church magazines, including all kinds of Sunday-school publications, that the boys and girls usually said they read.

Three-fourths (76 per cent) of the girls and a little more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of the boys said that they read magazines. One-fourth of the children spoke of reading one type of magazine, nearly one-fourth read two types, 15 per cent read three types, and 8 per cent read four or more. These figures do not show amount of reading done, because one type might include several magazines. Moreover, there was no way of knowing how thoroughly they were read except through occasional remarks by some of the children that they liked the stories or the children's pages and looked at those first.

*Books.*—Although the reading of books was done partly in connection with school work, it was largely an evening or other spare-



time occupation in the home. For this reason the findings concerning book reading are given in this part of the report.

Information concerning book ownership and home libraries could not be obtained easily, but questions were asked in regard to the use of school or other libraries and the kinds of books read during the previous year. Except for the books that may have been owned or borrowed, the schools furnished the greater part of the reading; 77 per cent of all the children interviewed said they used the school library, 70 per cent using it exclusively, whereas only 7 per cent obtained books from any other library. This meant that more than one-fifth (23 per cent) of the children took no library books whatever; these were principally children in the grades below the sixth, of whom outside reading was not required, although some were higher-grade rural children, who had probably already read everything there was on the small bookshelf at school. The fact that there were very few other libraries in or near the places visited is the chief reason for the small percentage using them.

Most of the reading of many of the boys and girls was done in connection with the West Virginia Pupils' Reading Circle,<sup>4</sup> a plan of reading for the upper grammar-school grades that was used extensively in the territory visited. Practically all the books read for the circle were borrowed from the school libraries—one reason why these libraries were used by three-fourths of the children.

The nature of the reading, whether required or not, was ascertained by asking each child to name the books he or she had read in the previous year. While such lists are not entirely accurate and complete they indicate the reading tastes of the children, because a certain amount of selection was possible even among the required books.

Book lists were obtained from 1,515 children. The number of different books named was almost 1,500. Including repetitions, 5,679 book names were given, or an average of 3.7 books apiece read during the previous year. West Virginia Pupils' Reading Circle books comprised 38 per cent of this total. Doubtless a few books not on the reading circle list but accepted by certain schools as their equivalent formed an additional percentage of the remaining books. The following classification according to type of book shows the popularity of fiction and juvenile books:

Type of books read	Times read	Per cent distribution
Total.....	5, 679	100
Fiction, other than juvenile.....	2, 371	42
Juvenile fiction.....	2, 350	41
Biography and history.....	468	8
Travel, nature, science.....	230	4
Miscellaneous (poetry, drama, essays, mythology).....	260	5

<sup>4</sup>The West Virginia Pupils' Reading Circle was founded by the State department of education, division of rural schools, as an aid to teachers in the selection of suitable books for pupils of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades of the elementary schools and as a means of stimulating interest among pupils in good reading and in ownership of books. Diplomas are granted to circle members for the reading of four books as a year's work, and for subsequent years a seal is attached. Special honor seals are granted if eight books in any list are read during a school year and if books are owned by the reader. Certificates are given to the school that enrolls 100 per cent of its eligible pupils, and coupons of credit are granted to teachers who have 100 per cent enrollment of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades and finish the reading in any one year, provided as many as six pupils earn honor.



Sixteen books, each named fifty times or more, constituted one-fourth of the 5,679 book names given. All but two of these, the Uncle Wiggily books and King of the Golden River, were reading-circle books. These books, in the order of the frequency with which they were named, were as follows:

	Times named
Rick and Ruddy books.....	148
Freckles.....	129
Biography of a Grizzly.....	114
Tom Sawyer.....	104
The Man Without a Country.....	92
Treasure Island.....	90
Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.....	89
Black Beauty.....	88
Robinson Crusoe.....	85
Little Women.....	81
Biography of Abraham Lincoln.....	73
Hoosier School Boy.....	68
Heidi.....	62
Little Men.....	60
Uncle Wiggily books.....	60
King of the Golden River.....	51

It must be taken into consideration in connection with the frequency with which these books were named that practically every school visited had them in the library, and some of them had few others.

It is interesting to compare these books with the favorites of two groups of Illinois children.<sup>5</sup> Three of the same books—Treasure Island, Tom Sawyer, and Little Women—were mentioned among the first 16 named as favorites by 784 boys and girls in high schools, while Treasure Island, Tom Sawyer, and Robinson Crusoe were among the first 16 named as favorites by 573 children in institutions.

#### Automobile.

The family automobile, whether used primarily for business purposes or not, must be included among the recreational assets of any home. Accordingly, each West Virginia child interviewed was asked the question, "Does your father or anyone else in the family have a car?" Seventy-three per cent of the country children and 55 per cent of the town and village children answered in the affirmative. These figures are lower than those given in a study made by the United States Department of Agriculture.<sup>6</sup> In reply to questionnaires distributed among children in the different States, 85 per cent of the children living on farms and 76 per cent of the children living in villages said that their parents had automobiles.

The family car reported by the West Virginia children was sometimes a truck, and as such it served the double purpose of carrying the family to town and the produce to market. A number of children said that their fathers had cars but no license tags. Sometimes it was because they could not afford tags, sometimes they were economizing by not buying them during the winter and early spring months when the car would have been of little or no use because many

<sup>5</sup> A Recreation Study of 1,357 Illinois Children, by Claudia Wannamaker, supervisor of recreation, Institute for Juvenile Research, p. 5. Department of Public Welfare, State of Illinois.

<sup>6</sup> Attitude and Problems of Farm Youth, A Preliminary Report, p. 15. United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Extension Service cooperating, November, 1926.

back roads were impassable. One-half of the tax could be saved by getting a license for summer and fall only.

When asked if they ever used an automobile alone, 173 children, 147 of whom were boys, replied in the affirmative; 50 made daily use of them and 56 used them once a week or oftener. More than half of the boys and girls who drove cars alone were under 16 years of age and 22 were under 14 years. Some of these children drove to school every day and often took friends with them. Others went to town regularly on Saturday. In two of the small towns visited, evening and Sunday automobile riding among boys and girls of high-school age was one of the most popular pastimes, according to the reports not only from the young folks themselves but from the adult community leaders.

#### OUTINGS

A pleasure trip or outing of any kind, whether it is a prolonged one in the summer time, or only a trip to a near-by town, has recreational value both for young folks and for adult members of the family. It may be an event of real importance to the farm boy or girl whose horizon is practically limited to the stretch of road and fields between home and the rural school. The extent to which trips, picnics, and other outings may be indulged in depends largely on the home circumstances. In the present survey, however, no inquiry was made into such features as the financial status of parents and their attitude toward recreation.

#### Summer outings.

The nature of the recreation that West Virginia young folks enjoyed in the vacation months was ascertained by asking each child to tell about the outings he or she had taken during the previous summer. Trips of all kinds were named, also visits to relatives, attendance at fairs, picnics, parks, and camps. Though the number of such events could not always be remembered, most of the boys and girls could tell whether they had had any trips and could name places visited. Ten per cent of the 1,921 children who replied to this question went nowhere, not even to a picnic. When the children were classified according to the type of school they attended, it was disclosed that 20 per cent of those attending remote rural schools, 10 per cent of those attending more accessible rural schools, and 8 and 6 per cent, respectively, of the village and town school children had had no outings.

One reason why a larger percentage of the town school children than of those attending rural schools had good times in summer was that many of them lived in the town itself and had more playmates and neighbors and therefore more opportunities for picnics and joint family affairs. In the case of the farm children attending town schools the larger summer program was probably due to the fact that their interests were multiplied when they began coming to town high school. By being brought in contact with boys and girls of their own ages they learned of new opportunities for good times, such as going to parks, fairs, or camps. They introduced younger brothers and sisters, and often parents as well, to new summer pastimes.

The club activities of all kinds that were found in the larger schools also provided group interests that found expression in the

summer time through hikes, roasts, and camping trips. At least this would seem to be the reason why only 4 per cent of the children who were club members had no summer outings as compared with 13 per cent of the nonclub members.

Nine-tenths of all the children interviewed enjoyed one or more summer outings, and in many cases other members of the family took part in them. The different kinds of outings named may be grouped under four main headings as follows:

(1) One-day outings of a purely social or recreational nature, such as picnics, family reunions, automobile trips, hunting or fishing trips, visits to parks, and circuses or carnivals.

(2) One or two day outings at places having educational features, such as State or county fairs, institutes, Chautauquas, and camp meetings.

(3) Camping out, individually or with companions, in woods or at organized camps like those for the 4-H clubs and the Boy and Girl Scouts.

(4) Overnight or longer trips to visit relatives or friends, or for sight-seeing purposes.

For convenience these four groups may be referred to as picnics, fairs, camp, and trips, respectively.

A little more than one-fourth (28 per cent) had only one kind of outing, about one-third (32 per cent) had two kinds, 22 per cent had three kinds, and 8 per cent had four kinds.

One-day outings of the picnic variety were the kind most frequently named by all children no matter where they lived or what kind of school they attended, overnight trips came next, and fairs and camps third and fourth. Table 9 shows what a small percentage of the children in isolated school districts, as compared with those in other school groups, enjoyed these different summer-time pleasures. The town school children enjoyed all kinds in greatest numbers.

TABLE 9.—Percentage of children attending rural and village and town schools having specified type of summer outings in five counties of West Virginia

Type of school	Percentage of children enjoying—			
	Picnics	Fairs	Camp	Trips
All schools.....	77	42	21	51
Rural.....	74	29	15	45
Isolated.....	63	22	12	33
Accessible.....	77	32	16	49
Village.....	79	51	23	51
Town.....	83	57	29	68

As outside contacts by other members of the family may contribute much to family life, the children were also questioned as to trips and various other outings made by their parents and by their brothers and sisters. Among rural children who answered this question, 90 per cent said that one or more members of their families had taken some kind of trip or outing the previous summer. Ninety-four per cent of the town and village children gave the same answer. The family car doubtless made possible many of these outings, especially

the 1-day trips. It was by no means a requisite, however, because nearly as many children whose families did not possess a car reported family outings as those who did have cars. (Table 10.)

TABLE 10.—Percentage of children in families having an automobile according to the kind of outing taken by some member of the family in five counties of West Virginia

Kind of outing	Percentage of children in families having—	
	Auto- mobile	No auto- mobile
Picnics (1-day trips).....	82	71
Fairs and institutes.....	52	48
Camp.....	22	24
Trips (overnight).....	59	53

### Trips to town.

For many rural children, whose lives were uneventful, a trip to town was a real recreational activity even though it was made primarily for shopping or other business purposes. The word "town" had different connotations for those living in different localities. To some boys and girls it meant one of the large industrial cities, like Wheeling, Moundsville, or Wellsburg. To those living farther away from the Ohio River, it usually meant one of the smaller rural towns whose stores and other enterprises catered largely to the farmers and near-by country residents.

If the trip was made only once a week or less often, it was usually on Saturday, because there was no school then, and the boys and girls could often be of assistance to their parents in selling produce and in bringing back the family groceries. A number of country boys, small ones included, spent the day in or about the city, either peddling eggs and poultry from trucks or wagons or tending a market stand with their fathers.

Both the boys and girls liked to shop, nearly one-third (31 per cent) of those who went to town at all giving this as their only reason for the trip. The younger children more often accompanied adult members of the family, who really did the errands while the children "just sat in the car" or "ran around the streets" and "watched the sights." Several children mentioned a visit to the five-and-ten-cent store as an event of special interest.

Shopping was often combined with other errands like music lessons and appointments with doctors and dentists. A movie or a call on a town relative or friend frequently added interest to the day. Some young folks, the boys more particularly, went to town solely for recreation. This usually meant either going to the movies or visiting friends. Occasionally it was to play pool or baseball or to attend a social affair, but more often it was just to meet the crowd and "fool around." The drug store with its soda fountain was a popular meeting place in the small towns.

Seventy-five rural children said they went to town only to attend school there; but like other children who came in from the farms, they probably attended some social affairs at the school, and without doubt did occasional errands for the family.



Church services attracted many families to town. Fifteen children said the church service was the only occasion on which they ever made the trip. There were many others, however, who named attendance at church or Sunday school as one of the several reasons for going to town.

For a few boys and girls it seemed that the only reason for going to town was to see the barber, the doctor, or the dentist. Even the dentist's office, however, was robbed of some of its terrors by the fact that window shopping could be indulged in afterwards. Moreover, a trip for such a purpose, as for others, often meant a ride, and this in itself was a source of pleasure.

About one-sixth (326) of the children in the survey lived within the limits of small towns or villages having stores, churches, schools, and recreational facilities that met most of the needs of the family. These towns were the centers to which many of the rural children of the survey came. Consequently the boys and girls living in them were not asked about trips to town. All other children, however, were questioned as to the frequency of their visits to the town where they and their families usually went for business and recreation. They were also asked about the distance from home to town and the means of transportation used.

Replies to the above questions revealed that 9 per cent of the children who lived on farms or in small country villages went to town daily; 17 per cent several times a week; 24 per cent weekly; 27 per cent from one to three times a month; 18 per cent once or only a few times a year; and 6 per cent less often, if ever.

Among the 1,473 boys and girls who reported going to town, a few lived in the outskirts, 4 per cent within 1 mile, and 12 per cent between 1 and 2 miles of the center. Nearly three-fifths (56 per cent) lived 5 miles or more from town, and 21 per cent, 10 miles or more. The frequency of trips to town, as might be expected, was determined to a great extent by the distance to be traveled. Of the total children interviewed, 346, or 18 per cent, either lived in town or remained in town for school, going home for week-ends. Ninety-three did not go into town at all, and 17 did not report. The percentage of children living within certain distances from town and the frequency of their visits is shown in the following table:

TABLE 11.—Percentage of children living within certain distances from town as related to frequency of visits to town in five counties of West Virginia

Frequency of visit	Percentage of children living within certain distances from town			
	Less than 2 miles	2 miles, less than 5	5 miles, less than 10	10 miles or more
Daily.....	43	8	1	—
3 to 6 times a week.....	19	14	6	4
Twice a week.....	14	11	4	6
Once a week.....	13	26	29	30
1 to 3 times a month.....	8	27	33	39
4 to 11 times a year.....	1	4	10	9
1 to 3 times a year.....	( <sup>1</sup> )	4	7	6
In summer but rarely in winter.....	1	6	11	6

<sup>1</sup> Less than 1 per cent.



The family car or truck, or that of a neighbor, was the most usual means of transportation for more than half the children who went to town. A horse and wagon served the purpose when roads were bad. Those living more than 2 miles away were especially dependent on the car or the horse, except a few whose homes were on or near the main roads out of the larger cities, where trolley cars, and sometimes trains, accommodated country residents. In a few rural communities bus lines or cheap taxi service was maintained, but children were not so apt to make use of these means of transportation. One-fifth of the boys and girls walked to town, when they went, although a number admitted that they "caught a chance on a ride" now and then, especially if the distance was great.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The two requirements for making the home a satisfactory recreation center are an atmosphere that makes wholesome play possible and some physical equipment.

A wider program of education is needed to teach parents the value of recreation for both their children and themselves. A wholesome play atmosphere is largely dependent on the attitude of parents toward play and playmates. Every child needs companions. Many of his activities are of a social type, and the rural boy or girl, especially if he has no brothers or sisters near his own age, should have the cooperation of his parents in the arrangement of his home program, so that there may be opportunities for play in his own home as well as in his friends' homes. If visitors are not welcome, the child will soon learn that his recreation must be sought elsewhere.

Not only should parents permit their children to play but they should also be interested in their activities and play with them frequently. Family participation in both quiet games and sports, in music and reading aloud, and a genuine enjoyment of leisure by the family group are the antidote for spare time spent "just sitting around," "rocking on the porch," or "just doing nothing."

A family picnic, a visit to the county fair, or even a trip to town is a delightful activity. While these excursions are outside of the home, they enrich family life through the sharing of new experiences and frequently through the discovery of unappreciated values in familiar pleasures.

Nature offers much to the country boy and girl, and the only equipment that is necessary for its enjoyment is the introduction of children to their natural surroundings. Children should be taught to observe trees, flowers, and birds, and, when they become sufficiently interested, to read books to learn more about them. Books for reading aloud or for individual enjoyment should be in every home. Inexpensive editions of standard books may be used as gifts, exchanged with friends, discussed, and enjoyed. The great number of children who named reading as their special interest (see p. 80) indicates the contribution a home library can make to their happiness.

Musical instruments may be costly and beyond the reach of some farm folks, but the presence of either a phonograph or a radio in the homes of two-thirds of the children indicates the ability of the majority of rural families to acquire some means of enjoying music. The value of creative music, as compared with mechanical, can not

be overemphasized. Youth is active, and the music that a child creates is the kind that brings the greatest satisfaction. A home that possesses musical instruments, no matter how simple, and encourages their use for family enjoyment is richer than the one that has the most costly radio set on the market or even a grand piano if it serves only as a piece of furniture. Playing and singing together should be encouraged in the home, particularly since little is done in the rural schools.

The home that has children in it also needs to make some provision for games. Equipment need not be expensive. A barrel hoop on the side of the barn for basket-ball practice, some horse shoes, a croquet set, discs and pushers for deck shuffle on the porch floor, the boards and men for chess or checkers, cards and other equipment for quiet games that can be used by the whole family at night—these are the things that make boys and girls contented at home, especially when father and mother also put their strength or skill into the game. Much of the equipment can be made by those who will use it. Handicrafts, especially the use of carpenter's tools, are one of the activities that a father can enjoy with his boys.

In order that directions for making equipment, rules for games, suggestions for music, trips, or family parties, and lists of good books for family use may reach interested parents, articles such as many of the household magazines carry should be put into the small-town and city newspapers that go to rural subscribers. The bulletin service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Sunday-school papers can also be of use in suggesting such material.

### CHURCH

The church is generally recognized as one of the most important channels through which social life can be provided for a community. In rural areas the church has the opportunity to fill a large place in community social life, because there are few other existing agencies for bringing rural folk together. Its degree of success or failure in the territory visited will be noted later. Most town and city churches provide a variety of social activities for their members, who now include not only townspeople but certain near-by farm folks, especially those living on good roads and possessing a family automobile. While it is often to find the denomination of their choice that farm people go to the city, it may be that some are attracted by the broader programs offered there.

In order that the extent to which the church enriched the social and recreational life of the boys and girls in the area visited might be ascertained, each child in the personal interview was asked about his or her affiliation with church and Sunday school and attendance at church social affairs during the previous year. In addition, as a check on the information given by the children, a special survey was made of the churches most frequently mentioned, the majority of which were located in or near the school communities visited.

#### THE SOCIAL PROGRAMS OF THE CHURCHES

##### Types of churches and services.

The number of churches about which data were obtained was 89. This was only about half the number named by the children, but it

included the churches attended by the majority of the boys and girls interviewed. The churches omitted from the survey were: (1) Remote ones mentioned by only one or two children; (2) some of the churches where there was no regular minister or where he could not be found; (3) certain city churches, each of which was attended by only a few of the children interviewed. The churches that were included, however, constitute a fair sample of all the types mentioned and consisted of 38 town, 22 village, and 29 rural or open-country churches.

The town and the village churches were more or less similar from the standpoint of organization and order of services. The country churches varied considerably; some had regular weekly services with both preaching and Sunday school, and a midweek meeting besides, and others, principally in remote sections, were limited to one or the other type of service, and this at irregular or infrequent intervals, as "Sunday school only," "preaching every other Sunday," or "prayer meeting when we can get a preacher." In eight rural communities where schools were visited, Sunday services were held in the school-houses; and in one isolated locality a Sunday school was conducted in a private home by a motherly woman who thought it was too bad for the little boys of the neighborhood to have nothing to do on Sunday but play marbles. These nine semiorganized groups were not included among the 29 rural churches, all of which occupied buildings erected for the purpose, though many of them were poor.

#### Physical equipment.

Few of the open-country churches had any equipment for carrying on social programs. Most of them had nothing but the church property itself, a 1-room frame building of the familiar type, with the barest necessities for furnishings. There was one notable exception in a fine 2-story brick church which had a seating capacity of 800 and had as a part of its equipment curtains for partitioning off classrooms, and cooking facilities for serving as many as 600 people. In another rural community an enterprising Ladies' Aid Society had built a separate social hall and kitchen, and this was frequently used not only by the church people but by other community groups. Only one other kitchen was found among the country churches visited, although several had makeshifts of various sorts for serving suppers to large numbers of people. Sometimes they borrowed the school-house for this purpose. Libraries were almost unheard of in rural churches. One church possessed a library of 35 volumes, but the circulation was said to be "small."

Village churches were typically rural in appearance and on the whole were of only a little better type than those found in the open country. Among the 22 included in the survey there were 5 exceptions, these being of brick construction with modern equipment, including electric lights, organ, and large Sunday-school room with movable seats and a stage. The average seating capacity of village churches was slightly larger than that of rural churches, and they sometimes had separate classrooms, but modern equipment was scant in most of them. One village church had made the basement into a social hall, and a union church in another village held social affairs in the old building that one of the societies had occupied before the consolidation. With a few exceptions, cooking facilities were poor

or lacking. Five village churches had libraries; only one contained more than 100 volumes.

Of the 38 town churches included in the survey, about one-third had regular cooking facilities, 4 had social halls, and 8 had libraries. As would be expected, the church buildings were larger and on the whole more attractive than the rural ones, and the majority had space and facilities for social programs of various sorts. There was a decided line of demarcation, as far as physical equipment was concerned, between town churches and those in villages and in the open country.

#### **Attitude of leaders.**

Certain denominations in both town and rural branches objected to social programs, some excluding musical instruments from their buildings, but in general the town churches encouraged recreation programs more than the rural ones. In some churches the feeling against social affairs was due to the minister's critical attitude, but in several places it was the congregation who criticized because he had tried to introduce athletics or a broader social program. In the majority of churches, however, there was no such feeling to overcome. The Ladies' Aid Society or other church organization was often the chief agency for bringing people together. The limit on social affairs in most rural churches was set by the church equipment and available leadership rather than by objections from the members.

#### **Social activities.**

Among the 89 churches included in the survey, 19 had 4 or more organized groups of various types, 15 of these churches being in towns, 3 in villages, and only 1 in the open country. Sixteen churches had 3 organizations each, 14 had 2, and 24 had only 1. Sixteen had none whatever; 7 of these were rural churches, 3 village, and 6 town churches.

Organizations for women were far more numerous than any other kind. The second in number were those for mixed groups of young men and women, such as the Epworth League and Christian Endeavor. In churches where but one organization was supported it was invariably one of these types, usually Ladies' Aid or Guild. Organizations for men or for boys were found in a few churches in towns or villages, but only one, a boys' basket-ball team, was found in rural churches. This team used the gymnasium of the consolidated school near by.

*Adult organizations.*—The Ladies' Aid or Women's Guild, by whatever name it was known, existed primarily to raise money for the church but had its social and educational purposes as well. Fifty-three of the 89 churches had such organizations. In many places the women met weekly to do quilting in addition to holding regular monthly meetings. The weekly quiltings, at which small groups sat around a wooden frame and set tiny stitches in a coverlet for which some one would pay a certain amount per spool of thread used, were very useful as social affairs. The area selected for the study seemed to have an insatiable demand for quilts, for they were being made by groups of church women everywhere. Besides quilting, the ladies' organizations served one or two annual dinners, frequently in connection with a bazaar or sale, gave plays, and sponsored the production of plays from other communities.



It was interesting to find such an organization acting in place of a parent-teacher club in one rural community, and in another combining its program with that of the rural farm women's club because the women wanted the information presented by such an organization but did not feel that they could support a separate club.

Other adult organizations were not so numerous. Missionary societies organized for welfare, educational, and social purposes usually met monthly and held one or two annual public programs. These organizations were more popular in the larger communities, 14 being found in the 38 town churches as compared with 5 in the 22 village churches and 3 in the 29 open-country churches.

Organized Sunday-school classes for men and women were found in many of the town churches but in few rural ones. Some of these undertook charity or other definite work; others merely held occasional business and social meetings in addition to their Sunday meetings.

*Young people's organizations.*—The Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, Young People's Union, and similar organizations that hold Sunday-evening religious services and occasional social affairs were found in about two-thirds of the city and village churches and in about two-fifths of the open-country churches. In two rural communities the young people of all the churches in the neighborhood met in a union organization, holding their services in the different churches in turn. In a report prepared by the American Country Life Association it is stated that a young people's society exists in 25 per cent of the open-country churches and in 47 per cent of the village churches.<sup>7</sup> This is a smaller percentage than was found in the present survey, 12 of the 29 rural churches visited having either an Epworth League or a Christian Endeavor Society. The programs of some of these organizations, however, consisted only of religious and business meetings, and added little or nothing to the recreational life of their members.

The societies that actually had social or club programs and were being attended by the children interviewed included 23 organized Sunday-school classes, 16 young people's societies (Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, Young People's Union, Girls' Friendly Society), 9 missionary societies, and 5 miscellaneous church clubs. In some places these organizations were responsible for most of the social programs of the young people, planning picnics and other outdoor affairs in summer and sponsoring plays and parties during the fall and winter.

All but two of the organized Sunday-school classes were in village and town churches. The small number of persons of any particular age group in rural churches made organization of such classes difficult. It was pointed out that the nature of farm work and the distances between homes militate against the attendance of young people at midweek evening affairs. The problem of leadership was also a serious one in many communities. Besides the usual Bible study hour on Sunday, 14 classes held regular monthly business meetings

<sup>7</sup>The Status of Farm Youth, p. 21. Prepared by the Washington Group of the American Country Life Association for use at the Ninth Annual Conference of the Association, Nov. 10-14, 1926. Washington, 1926.



and social affairs at which games and special features were enjoyed and refreshments were served. Three classes met twice a month for good times. The other seven met irregularly, but had several social gatherings during the year and raised money by means of various kinds of sales and entertainments.

*Whole-membership affairs.*—The social activities given for the whole church membership were principally of three kinds. First in popularity were the special-day programs in which the various departments of the Sunday school took part. These were planned to celebrate church holidays and were usually held on Sunday, although the Christmas celebration sometimes was given on a week day, when the program was based on fairy lore as well as Bible stories. In the larger churches pageants and short dramatic episodes were frequently given instead of the old recitation and song programs. Several ministers and church leaders said that help in selecting and preparing better numbers would be appreciated. Others said that individual churches would soon have to give up programs on such occasions as Christmas and Easter unless they could combine with the school to give one good one; under existing conditions the children were rushed with rehearsals and the adults were bored with poor programs.

The second type of popular entertainment was the church social; many kinds were mentioned, such as pie, box, penny, and pound socials, and numerous others. In some places a social had a set program of music and speeches, ending with the sale of the pies, boxes, or whatever refreshments were supplied, and in other places the first part of the evening was spent in games, followed by refreshments that sometimes were not sold but were served by the entertaining group. Such socials were very popular. One Sunday-school teacher said that her class attendance on Sundays was not good, but that she could "crowd the house" with a social. Several others said the young people seemed hungry for such parties. In summer the Sunday-school picnic was the principal social gathering for a number of churches. Some of the young people who were responsible for these socials had had training in game leadership and program planning, usually through 4-H camp experience.

The third type of activity was distinctly money making but ranked high as a social affair nevertheless. The church supper, with or without bazaar features, was the most popular means of raising money in rural communities. As in most of the programs, the women worked the hardest and seemed to enjoy the affairs most. In churches where adequate cooking facilities were available in the church building, the women gathered early and worked at the preparation of food all day. When the church had no kitchen, the various items on the menu were apportioned among the women, who prepared them at home and came in the afternoon to arrange the tables and visit one another. The annual or semiannual dinners of some of the rural churches were well-established affairs to which people came from all directions. Former members who had moved to town often returned to renew acquaintances, and people from other communities came to visit friends and attend the supper. Surprisingly large numbers were fed in small churches; this was fortunate, since the minister's salary frequently depended upon the

proceeds of the supper. Suppers and bazaars were common in the town churches also, but plays, entertainments, and concerts by home or outside talent were the more popular means for raising money in the town churches included in this survey.

One of the religious features of the year could almost be called a fourth type of social affair. This was the annual revival, in which all people, old and young, participated. The regular minister was frequently assisted at these meetings by an exhorter, who sometimes brought a musician with him. All-day meetings were held, and families living at a distance brought their dinners and spent the noon hour picnicking in the churchyard and visiting their friends. Several children mentioned attendance at the revival as one of the good times they had enjoyed during the summer.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHURCHES TO SOCIAL LIFE OF CHILDREN

##### Attendance at church and Sunday school.

Inquiries regarding church attendance revealed the fact that 230 children (12 per cent) had had no church contact during the year before the survey. Twenty-four others had been present only at some social program. Almost four-fifths of the children who never went to church lived in the country on farms or in very small settlements. The majority of all children, however (69 per cent of those living in the country and 80 per cent of those living in towns and villages), said they went to both church and Sunday school. A few went to but one service, 8 per cent to Sunday school only, and 6 per cent to church only. No systematic attempt was made to check the regularity of attendance, but it was evident from the children's own remarks that church-going for some, especially those living on isolated farms, was seriously interfered with during the winter months. "I go when the roads are not too bad," was a frequent remark. One 16-year-old boy living on a Webster County farm said he went to church and Sunday school in the summer time and as long afterward as he could get the car over the road. Others could go only as often as the church was open, "every other Sunday," or "occasionally when a student can come to preach." Several Sunday schools held sessions only in summer or at infrequent intervals.

In spite of such obstacles as inclement weather, bad roads, long distances, and lack of church privileges, it is safe to say that a large proportion of the children interviewed went to church quite regularly. It was not unusual for country young folks to attend two different churches, especially where services conveniently alternated. Some went to town for the morning services and in the afternoon attended a local mission Sunday school in a rural school near by. High-school students who lived on farms and attended city schools sometimes had two church affiliations. Going to church and Sunday school was an important part of the week's social, as well as religious, program for many boys and girls, because it was the occasion for meeting friends not seen on week days, and not infrequently it meant an automobile ride with the family or neighbors.

##### Membership in church organizations.

Few of the children interviewed belonged to young people's organizations that carried on social or club programs. Among the 617 children attending rural churches, of which 64 were represented, only

17 belonged to such organizations. Though children attending village and town churches had more opportunities for social activities in the churches, the numbers of children included in the study who belonged to any kind of young people's organization in these two types of churches were only 51 and 67, respectively.

Thus the church organizations for young people in the districts visited were able to make only a small contribution to the recreational life of the young people; a total of only 135 (7 per cent of the number interviewed) were connected with church societies that provided any social programs for their members.

#### **Attendance at social affairs.**

Church activities of an essentially social nature, such as suppers, sales, box socials, plays, and special-day programs, were not attended by the boys and girls to the same extent as the religious meetings, only 46 per cent of all children reporting attendance at any kind of church social affair during the previous year. Only one-third of the children 10 years of age went to such affairs, but the proportion gradually increased with age until it reached 61 per cent of those 16 years and over. These percentages are based on all children interviewed, whether or not they had any church affiliations.

Among boys and girls actually affiliated with churches as members of the Sunday school or congregation, 52 per cent reported attendance at church socials. The percentages varied somewhat according to the location of the home church, being 49, 52, and 56, respectively, in rural, village, and town churches. Since the number of such social events attended during the year could not be accurately obtained, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to what real contribution they made to the recreation of the young folks concerned. The quick response and the interest they showed when asked about parties, plays, and similar events were the best evidence that they thoroughly enjoyed these gatherings, many expressing regret that they "couldn't get to go."

Seventeen per cent of those affiliated with churches did not attend any socials during the year because none was held in their own church; this was one reason why the attendance at socials was smaller than that at Sunday services. Another reason was that many children living at a distance from the church were not allowed to go to evening affairs alone, while on Sunday morning or afternoon they were expected to go to the religious service. Moreover, the kind of programs offered did not always appeal to young children but were better suited to the later "teen age" and to adults. This was especially true in the rural churches where the organizations were mainly women's societies. The children who attended suppers and plays were principally the ones whose mothers had an active part in the preparations. The whole family went in such cases, because interest was strong. The fact that many social affairs were of a money-making nature, and admission was charged, doubtless kept the children of poorer families from attending.

#### **Participation in programs.**

When the children were asked about the part that they took in such affairs, only 18 per cent replied that they had done anything more than attend. The girls were more active than the boys, 22 per cent reporting some participation in the programs during the

previous year as compared with only 13 per cent of the boys. Recitations, singing in groups, and acting in plays and pageants were events of importance for the younger children, and the few who did take such parts were eager to tell of them. A few of the older boys and girls worked also on social committees, and sometimes the girls served at church suppers. These were practically the only kinds of activities mentioned except in a few churches where athletics had been encouraged and playing on the basket-ball team was a much-sought privilege.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The church through its various organizations has an opportunity to fill in large measure the social needs of a community, particularly in rural areas where few other agencies exist. It would seem that if the rural church is to finance a broad and continuous social program and provide adequate equipment for such a program, with a view to bringing together more people of the same ages and interests and making the best use of available talent for leadership, there should be some combination of forces among the numerous small congregations that now exist in many rural areas. Ministers employed in these communities were, for the most part, working toward consolidation.

Some of the ministers served 4 or 5 churches; one served 14. These men had very good reasons for advocating consolidation of churches. In the few cases where consolidation had taken place, satisfaction was expressed. In one community where a consolidated school had led the way, the women of the four churches met monthly in a joint Ladies' Aid. At a country-life conference the idea of consolidating the three Methodist Episcopal churches was considered as a possibility within the next decade. The consolidation of the young people's societies in several localities and of the Ladies' Aid in another had worked out very well. Many places need such a combination of forces because the number of people of the same age group and interests is small and when they are divided into several groups there are not enough in any one to make it interesting.

A second great need of the rural church is realization of the importance and value of good social programs. The majority of churches encouraged social affairs, and the large number of rural folk who patronized suppers, entertainments, and plays in churches where they were given was evidence that most people enjoyed this form of recreation. The programs given in many churches, however, were tiresome and stereotyped, as the leaders themselves frequently admitted. Some of the workers asked for suggestions as to where they could obtain new and better ideas. Suggestions could be obtained from the literature on program planning, plays, pageants, and socials, such as is published by various church and other societies. A regular bulletin service giving seasonal suggestions would be an immense help to leaders of young people. Some personal contact should be established. Once in the fall before the season for celebrations, the church, school, and club leaders of several communities might be called together for a day or several evenings to be assisted by an experienced person in producing some good, simple programs as demonstrations of what they themselves could accomplish. They



would then be interested in suggestions for other dramatic events, pageants, and dialogues that could be sent to them. Good party programs and money-making schemes, as well as special-day programs and plays, would be a great help to leaders in both rural and town churches.

### SCHOOL

The school as a factor in the recreational life of West Virginia boys and girls was viewed from the standpoints of physical features and program. Physical features considered were the location and type of building, inside equipment including space and materials for handicraft instruction, musical instruments, library, assembly halls, and playrooms, and also outside play facilities such as playgrounds and provision for team games. Answers were sought to questions like the following: How is the recess period conducted? Are children left to their own ingenuity and devices, or are they guided and encouraged by a competent teacher leader? What games do the children know and play? What attention is given to team play and competitive sports? What kind of social events and entertainments have taken place during the year, and what organization and other extracurricular activities of a combined educational and recreational nature are provided by the school? To what extent do the children participate in these?

The physical surroundings and equipment of the school buildings, and frequently recess activities also, were observed directly. The number and kinds of social events were ascertained from the teacher, and each child was questioned in the personal interview as to his attendance and participation in such events. Several social affairs were visited in various schools by the agents conducting the survey.

### LOCATION AND KINDS

Schools in which children were interviewed could be classified in the same manner as the churches. Seventy-five schools were visited; the majority were located in the open country, 41 being one-room buildings, 3 two-room buildings, and 7 modern consolidated schools principally of brick construction. Fourteen other schools were located in villages of less than 500 inhabitants and ranged in size from a 1-room frame building to a 2-story brick structure with 14 rooms. The remaining 10 schools were in towns and, with one exception, consisted of high-school grades only; these were necessarily larger because they had to accommodate both town and country children. Enrollment in the different types of schools varied from 11 in some of the 1-room rural schools to several hundred in the town schools.

### EQUIPMENT

#### Indoor facilities.

The physical equipment of the rural schools ranged from the 1-room building with its stove in the center and its desks and chairs that must be used whether they fitted their occupants or not, to the consolidated school, which in most places was well planned, had good light, and was equipped with comfortable furniture. The village and town schools varied according to age. In some places modern build-



ings were in use; in others makeshift arrangements were being tolerated, with small likelihood of immediate improvement.

*Provisions for domestic science and manual training.*—Only half of the town schools had equipment for domestic-science and manual-training courses. Cooking facilities were found in two of the village schools and in four consolidated ones. In other consolidated rural schools they were limited to a few pots and pans, dishes for serving hot lunches, and a smoky oil stove, the presence of which was invariably detected as one entered the building. The one and two room rural schools had practically no equipment. Little enthusiasm was shown over cooking as a school project except in one large consolidated school, where an excellent lunch was served by the cooking-class pupils. In this same school much interest was expressed in a home-economics club that had flourished during the previous year but had just been broken up because of the teacher's resignation.

Manual-training equipment was found in four of the consolidated schools and in three of the village schools. In one consolidated school very creditable manual-training work was done. The boys here were so enthusiastic over their projects that they stayed after hours. Rooms set aside for the purpose were rare. In a few schools where no regular training was given the boys made kites and toy airplanes in spare time, with some help from the teacher. In the 1-room rural schools there was little equipment beyond a few hand tools for emergency use, the boys being called upon to repair broken steps, chairs, or other furniture. No real instruction was given in any of these schools.

*Musical instruments.*—Every town school and every rural consolidated school visited had a piano, and most of them had phonographs as well. The village schools were not so well supplied, two having no musical instruments whatever and two having only phonographs. Twelve of the rural one and two room schools had no instruments, and although organs were seen in 21 other rural schools, 10 were said to be unused either because they were broken or because there was no one who could play them. Phonographs were owned by only 16 of the rural schools, and in the majority of cases not much could be said for the tone of the instrument or the selection of records. Except in a few of the larger schools in towns and villages where records were used in connection with music-appreciation and language courses, the phonograph was used principally at opening and closing times for marching purposes. Occasionally at recess it afforded amusement for the younger children, and in some schools it was used regularly for physical exercises. A few of the teachers said they taught new songs by borrowing records from the homes. The reasons sometimes given for the absence or disuse of a phonograph were that the school had not had money enough to buy one, that the machine or the records had been stolen, or that the records were too worn or cracked. Observation proved that the last reason was not always sufficient.

*Libraries.*—The number of books on the school-library shelves, their condition, and the quality of the reading matter varied with the general appearance of the school property and the resources of the community. Some excellent school libraries were found in the towns and in a number of the villages. Several of the consolidated

schools had good collections that were extensively used not only by the pupils but by members of their families and others. In the majority of the communities visited no other library existed.

The libraries of the rural schools need not be described at length. Fifteen of the forty-four 1 and 2 room schools possessed as many as 100 volumes, two having more than 200. Too frequently, however, a single shelf or the top of an unused organ held all the volumes in their small library. The meager collection often contained books too advanced or else too simple for the children's enjoyment, or reference books of little interest to juveniles, so that the teachers made such remarks as "not used a great deal," "children have read them all long ago," "the parents used to borrow them, but they are all read now," and "no reading is done to speak of." The explanation given for the shabby collections found in some schools was that no social affairs had been held to raise money for new books. (For the use made of school-library books see Reading Material, p. 31.)

*Auditoriums.*—Rooms set aside for assembly purposes were found in most of the town schools. A community building served the purpose in one town. In other places a large classroom was used for assembly during the day; evening affairs took place in the local masonic hall or in the town theater. Only 4 of the 14 village schools had auditoriums. In two of these they were in combination with a gymnasium. Classrooms, with extra chairs brought in, served the needs in other schools.

Auditoriums and gymnasiums were of special interest in smaller localities because of their value as recreational centers for the community as well as for the students. A combination of assembly hall and gymnasium had been worked out satisfactorily in three of the consolidated schools. Two had auditoriums without the gymnasium features, and in two others folding walls made it possible to throw two classrooms into one for use with a portable stage. All these schools were used for community programs as well as school affairs, amateur dramatics by adult groups being a popular activity in three of them.

One-room schools were sometimes adapted for special programs by the addition of extra seats, which were supplied either by placing planks across the aisles from seat to seat or by borrowing chairs. Stages and platforms were occasionally built, and temporary curtains were frequently arranged when a playlet or "show" was a part of the program. A few community affairs were said to be held in some of these buildings, but none was reported in the majority of the schools.

*Playrooms.*—Playrooms were built in four of the consolidated schools for use in bad weather. In three others the combination gymnasium-assembly halls were used during recesses. The activity in the latter during the winter months was usually basket-ball practice. Some of the playrooms were light and airy, but one adjoining inefficient chemical toilets was unventilated, dusty, and offensive in odor, while another was dark and unattractive.

A playroom was found in only one of the 1-teacher schools. The school had been built when the community's population was larger. As the school attendance decreased, the second teacher was dismissed, and the room thus vacated became a play and storage room.

Two village schools each had an extra room that had come into disuse in a similar way, and these, too, were used for rainy-day playrooms.

#### Playgrounds.

It was quite generally true that the schools, especially the 1-room ones, were built on land that was good for little else. On this account small buildings were found perched precariously on the edge of steep hills, bogged down in swamp land, or located in rough, rocky meadows cut by streams. In many cases the acre or more of play space was of little or no use to the children for this reason. In one case the teacher said the children gathered drain tile from a near-by factory and worked hard at building a drainage system, but they could not direct the water into it and had given up trying to get a place to play at the school. The farmer across the road was allowing them to use a fallow field until planting time. In several cases level land that could have been laid out for games was ruined by lack of planning, a woodhouse, well, or the schoolhouse itself being built in the center of it.

Thirty-three, or less than half of all the schools visited, had playgrounds that were equipped to any extent. In some cases this equipment consisted of a single piece of apparatus such as a giant stride or chinning bar; in others a baseball diamond had been rudely laid out. Only four of these schools had what could be called well-equipped playgrounds.

Lack of space and facilities for team games were handicaps that village and town schools faced quite as frequently as rural schools. In one community where a fairly well-equipped playground had been provided for the younger children, a baseball diamond for the older boys had been left out of consideration. The only place these boys had to play was on a narrow strip of rough, clay land by the railroad tracks, where such obstacles as old ties, broken pipe, and mud made play difficult. Another illustration is the case of one town high school whose athletic field was 2 miles away, adjoining the property of a consolidated school.

#### PROGRAM

The rural teacher faces problems demanding curtailment of all activities that can be considered nonessentials. The day's program is very full, especially when it has to meet the varying needs of six to eight grades. Besides preparing the children to meet the requirements established by the State department of education, the teacher must conform to the ideas of the local school committee. In one case this meant that all manual training had to be omitted. In another the arrangement of special programs was prohibited. In both cases the reason for these restrictions was the conviction among board members and parents that the preceding teacher had wasted school time and money in giving too much handicraft or too many social events. Several teachers deplored the fact that there was so little opportunity for the children to enjoy wholesome good times together and regretted their own inability to meet the recognized need.

The recreation program of the schools visited may be divided into:

- (1) Recess play;
- (2) team practice;
- (3) social affairs planned and

rehearsed to entertain the parents as well as to raise money for various school projects; (4) organizations, clubs, and special groups fostered either by students or by teachers.

#### **Recess play.**

Recess play is important; this fact frequently is not realized. The noon hour in a rural school offers a particularly good opportunity for constructive work because only a few of the children live near enough to the school to go home. When the teacher uses the recess time to prepare the afternoon program, clean the room, or read, or when she forgets to open the windows and take her flock outdoors, the children are missing not only a good time but an opportunity to learn wholesome health and play habits under wise supervision.

In 11 schools the teachers said they took no part in the recess; 15 merely observed the children, usually from indoors, going out if it was necessary to quell disorders; 21 sometimes made suggestions and helped to get the games started; and 22 sometimes played with the children. In a few schools the teachers who played baseball and volley ball said that they enjoyed themselves immensely. In another school the teacher, who had serious heart trouble, had trained the older children to lead games, give the drills, and conduct the rhythms recommended by the State department of education. One teacher had encouraged the boys to build tiny huts in which they sometimes pretended to camp and at other times dramatized Indian and cowboy battles.

Nearly all the younger children (10 to 14 years, inclusive) said that they spent their recess in group play. The activity that was reported upon and observed most frequently was tag. It appeared under various names and had extra features such as odd bases, as in iron or wood tag, or novelty rules, as in cross tag or rover. Tag is a self-starting game since children require little provocation to chase each other. While many other games of little organization were named, none achieved the general popularity of tag. Jumping rope and marbles made their appearances as spring advanced, and one old cat, knocker, and other variations of baseball came with them. Although the children and teachers mentioned games as recess activities, recesses were observed during which there was no group play. Then the majority of the children stood in small groups, while a few prankish ones galloped about bumping into them occasionally in evident endeavor to stir them into giving chase.

For the older boys and girls attending village and town high schools the noon hour was the only recess period. Many went home for lunch at this time, 20 per cent reporting that they had time for no other activity. The girls who did not go home generally paired off with chums or went with groups of special friends to a lunch room or drug store; the boys played ball or gathered in groups in favorite spots such as the restaurant or railroad station. Some few patronized the pool rooms, to watch, if not to play. A few of the high-school boys and girls chose to study, and others worked at odd jobs in the village, such as helping in stores and tending counters in lunch rooms.

#### **Team practice.**

When asked the question, "What kind of sports do you take part in and enjoy?" 57 per cent of all the children (73 per cent of the boys





*Junior leaders  
successfully direct  
games  
during recess*

*Shacks may  
harbor early settlers  
or border  
raiders, especially  
when the teacher  
encourages  
their construction  
as a recess  
activity*



*The younger  
children learn a new  
game during  
the supervised  
recess*



*Jumping rope  
on a narrow school  
walk 4 feet  
above the road*



*Homemade  
equipment in this  
village school  
yard is much used  
and enjoyed*



*Wood tag is  
played on the only  
level part  
of the school yard,  
a narrow strip near  
the road*

and 42 per cent of the girls) named ball games of all kinds, baseball predominating, and some track events as sports actively engaged in. The popularity of team games was decidedly greater among children attending the larger schools. The percentages of boys in the different types of schools who took part in competitive sports were as follows: One and two room rural, 57; rural consolidated, 73; village, 78; and town, 94. The corresponding percentages for girls were 25, 38, 45, and 58.

Team play is not a popular activity in the small rural schools, chiefly because there are too few children of the same age to form a team. Three of the consolidated rural schools, however, had teams; one played interclass games only, while the other two had schedules with other schools in basket ball for both boys and girls, and in baseball, football, and track for the boys. Team practice as a recess activity was reported by only 32 children, all but 4 of whom were pupils at these consolidated schools. Most of the real practice playing was done outside of the regular school hours.

The school teams in the village and town schools were often a community project; so much so that in one town the school principal felt relieved that inability to secure a hall for practice for a basket-ball team would remove the danger of habitual displays of poor sportsmanship on the part of the townspeople in case of defeat. Baseball and basket ball were the games played most commonly with other schools; football was popular only in the larger towns, partly because of difficulty in getting coaches.

Field days and track meets were held in a few places. In Hancock County the annual field days gave the boys and girls an objective to work for as well as an opportunity to meet others in competition. In Brooke County, at the time of the survey, the boys in one district were eagerly anticipating a marble tournament. Field days had been discontinued in Webster County; two of the teachers interviewed regretted this fact, as they felt that the field days had been of real educational and recreational value to the children.

#### **Social and special programs.**

The literary meetings, special-day programs, socials, and plays given in the rural schools seemed to be important events in some communities. A program was given every month or oftener in some of the schools, while one or two programs a year was the average in others. Twelve of the rural one and two room schools had had no social programs during the year, nine had had only one social affair, the others from two to five, one having had six. Of the seven consolidated schools, all but one had held some kind of social affair and three had had at least six in the course of the school term. The auditorium of one of these schools was in use every week-end during the winter for some community or school affair. During the season Friday evenings were devoted to basket-ball games which the whole community attended.

As to the value of these programs, the teachers had various opinions. In one small village the teacher hoped to be able to give many more affairs during the next year because no other amusement of any sort was available. Several teachers thought that special programs were a real contribution to the community social life. Other teachers said that the preparation of speeches and plays took too much

time from class work, and that the parents did not attend the programs anyhow, because of lack of interest, very bad roads, or the competition offered by near-by cities and towns.

The most popular events seemed to be socials of the box and pie variety and special-day programs prepared to celebrate church or patriotic holidays. These socials were the means of raising money for hot lunches, library books, a phonograph, or playground equipment. Box lunches, pies, and other refreshments were sold, sometimes at auction, after a program had been presented. In some places the usual program of speeches and songs was varied by games and square dancing, but this was not often the case. A social usually meant that some one must accept the responsibility of rehearsing a group of children and that person was most often the teacher. In several communities the church and school combined to present Christmas programs, the teacher preparing the program while the church supplied small gifts and a Christmas tree. Such a program was frequently given at the school in the afternoon and repeated in the church at night.

*Attendance of children at school social affairs.*—Socials and entertainments in schools were attended by a much larger proportion of the children than were similar affairs in churches. Of all the children interviewed, 87 per cent attended at least one such school affair during the year before the survey, while only 46 per cent attended one or more church social affairs. This difference in interest is not strange, since daily contacts were made with the school and school friends, and programs planned by the teacher, in which the children themselves frequently provided the entertainment, were bound to draw a large proportion of the school's enrollment. A few of the children (13 per cent) also enjoyed school parties in neighboring rural communities and in villages and towns where their older brothers and sisters or friends were attending high school. Eighty-four children (4 per cent of the total number) did not attend any social event at their own schools because none was given during the year, and only 13 of these children went to any other school for evening affairs. The schools that had no socials whatever were chiefly those in the isolated communities.

In the town schools musical and dramatic entertainment—that is, concerts, operettas, plays, and pageants—vied with socials and parties for popularity. The latter were more frequently mentioned in the rural schools, and the former proved a little more popular in villages. Each of these two types of entertainment was attended by 68 per cent of the children, a combination of the two types being found on the year's schedule of many schools. Educational programs consisting of lectures and exhibits were far less common, only 17 per cent of all children mentioning attendance at such affairs in their own or other schools during the year.

*Participation in programs.*—More of the boys and girls interviewed took part in school programs than in church activities, but the number was not large even so. Just one-half of the boys and three-fifths of the girls contributed to the programs by reciting, singing, taking part in plays, or working on committees. Many rural children found it difficult to come to rehearsals, especially in the evening. Some could not stay after school hours because of farm duties at home. Others were obliged to take the bus promptly when school closed.



Boys and girls with some club experience were more apt to participate in school and church programs than were other children, as was demonstrated by the fact that 69 per cent of the 4-H club members, 59 per cent of former 4-H club members, and 52 per cent of those who had never been members said they had taken active parts in church and school affairs in the course of the year.

Whether or not the children participated in the programs they enjoyed them immensely; in fact, they appeared hungry for them in the many places having few social events. A 16-year-old girl in a 1-room rural school said, when asked about attendance at such affairs, "I went to the Hallowe'en party outside the door. There wasn't room enough inside for all who came."

#### Local school clubs.

The fourth feature in the recreational program of schools visited was the club. Numerous school clubs existed in the village and town schools. In many cases they were merely extension classes or extra-curricular groups with some recreational features. Others, such as dramatic, glee, and oratory clubs, outside of the regular program of required subjects, gave children who had special interests an opportunity to develop them. Teachers volunteered as leaders for these groups. Frequently they met during school hours, some schools devoting the period immediately after the noon recess to club meetings. Others held their meetings outside of school hours. These organizations usually existed during the school year only and were reorganized each fall. In some of the village and town schools small groups, especially among the girls, formed clubs that were not sponsored by the school and might or might not have a teacher adviser. A few of these were said to meet during the summer vacation. They had features similar to secret societies, such as election to membership, and were not included in the teachers' reports as school organizations.

Only 21 of these groups came under the definition of a club in the sense used in this report; that is, in having a definite project, meeting at stated intervals outside of school hours, and having a social program. Six of these clubs were of a cultural nature—art, literary, and dramatic—5 were definitely organized for school betterment, 5 were domestic-science and handicraft clubs, 2 were athletic associations, 2 were primarily social, and 1 was a business club. All these clubs together had only 56 members among the children interviewed, and they were principally town and village boys and girls who were attending high school and were at an age when club interest is usually strong. Seven rural schools had local clubs, but only one, a literary society, was filling a real need in the community. This had been organized by a former 4-H club member with the hope that it would some time become a genuine 4-H club.

The 4-H clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, and similar organizations, although often led locally by school principals and made up chiefly of children in one school, were units of national organizations and as such carried on programs arranged by county, State, and national leaders. The activities of these clubs and their place in the recreational program of rural young folks will be discussed in the next section.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The physical facilities of the schools were generally found to be inadequate not only for a well-balanced school recreational program but for any kind of community social affairs. Several principals regretted their inability to accommodate such affairs, and in one neighborhood the community organization was working to raise enough money to add a gymnasium and a kitchen to a rather new consolidated school. When new schools are built their use for recreation should be kept in mind. This means that there should be provision for a gymnasium or assembly room, a kitchen, and clean, light, airy playrooms, as well as classrooms.

While it is possible for a clever leader to promote a good time in a classroom with stationary seats and desks, a floor space that can be cleared for games is really needed if boys and girls are to have a comfortable and companionable time. In planning new buildings, movable seats should be provided if funds do not permit the building of an assembly room. If there is to be an extra room available for play on rainy days or for evening affairs, adequate ventilation and lighting should be given consideration.

Outdoor play is an important consideration, but few rural schools had playgrounds. It is essential that an open space be provided that is level, dry, and large enough to permit the playing of games without danger to children or to property. It is true that games will be adapted to the space that is available. Children were found playing wood tag on a narrow, level strip between a road and a sharp slope, trying circle games in the drier part of a marshy field, and adapting baseball to long, narrow spaces along railroad tracks. The majority of rural schools and many of the village and town schools had no good play facilities, although, by planning, a play field could have been arranged when the school was built. Even now certain obstructions like stumps and woodhouses could be removed from some school yards, and simple drainage systems could be installed in others where mud seemed to be the chief hindrance to play.

Rural-school libraries were found to be exceedingly meager. Since a large part of the children's interest in reading seems to be due to the efforts made by the schools, it seems fitting that assistance be rendered through the State board of education or the county school board to the rural schools that can not secure funds for adequate libraries. The fact that these libraries will serve the adults as well as the children should be kept in mind when selections are being made. A traveling or loan library system such as is conducted by some States would be of inestimable value to rural schools.

Given adequate facilities, the success of a broad school program, which should include some of the fine arts, depends upon the teacher. It is sometimes not possible to employ specialists in physical education, dramatics, music, or community organization. It has been found satisfactory in some places to employ teachers who are qualified to promote special programs in addition to their classroom work, which is lightened to compensate for the extra service. Though this plan is not ideal, it offers a means of introducing the broader program to a community through its consolidated school. Another possible method of introducing the fine arts to the rural children would be for the county or some other unit of administration to

employ specialists who could visit the schools on stated days to give instruction and assist the teachers.

In the 1-room schools more outside help is needed by many of the teachers. They said they knew no good new games and had access to only meager program material. Many of the teachers appeared to be unacquainted with the manuals of physical education and special-day programs that have been prepared by the State department of education. Unless each teacher receives a copy of these manuals each year, a letter asking if the school copies need replacing and suggesting seasonal use of the material in them would help. The county superintendents might be the persons best fitted to advise upon these programs.

Because of the heavy program that is carried by the teachers in 1-room schools, the supervision of recess play and the preparation of special programs are sometimes very difficult. By inspiring and training the older boys and girls as game leaders, the teacher can delegate this work to the children, and her part then will be simply to keep interest alive. Weekly meetings could be held with these children to help them plan their programs. In the leading of recess play, an older 4-H club boy or girl may find an excellent community service project. Training for game leadership should be given with such a use in mind, and the attention of the clubs should be called to this opportunity.

The program-planning institute that has been recommended for church leaders (see p. 47) would be of great interest to school-teachers who in many cases seemed very anxious for help and direction. An itinerant worker or two who could conduct institutes and act as consultant upon community organization and, above all, who would inspire leaders in the communities to develop programs, would be of inestimable value to rural teachers. Such a person, working with the county superintendent of schools, as well as with the extension service and churches, should be able to unite the agencies in a community so as to develop a well-rounded program in which all might share. In one consolidated school district the sponsoring agency for various programs and meetings was very often uncertain because, as one woman said, "Everybody goes to everything, and I don't just remember who got up what." This is as it should be in a unified community. With some help in planning and some training for leaders, such generally attended affairs could be developed to fill a very real need in many of the communities visited.

## JUVENILE CLUBS

### KINDS AND NUMBER

Working with other boys and girls for a common purpose—an experience that characterizes club activities—is of great value in the development of children. Boys and girls belonging to the Scouts, 4-H clubs, and other national organizations were considered to have actual club experience.<sup>8</sup> Church organizations that met regularly on days other than Sunday and had as many as four social affairs during the year were called clubs, but classes and study groups that met for

<sup>8</sup> For statistical purposes in this study it has been necessary to make rather arbitrary rulings concerning the definition of a club and the elements constituting membership.

business only were not. Some school organizations were called clubs, but if their primary purpose was teaching and they rarely held social affairs they were not classified as clubs in this survey. Organizations existing independently of churches or schools were considered clubs if they had some project; bridge clubs, sewing clubs, and junior fraternities were typical independent organizations. Newspaper clubs to which a number of children belonged by virtue of writing one letter for publication were not clubs in the sense used in this study, because they had no social features nor any real project other than prizes. Only eight independent clubs were found and only nine of the children interviewed belonged to them.

The total number of clubs to which children of the survey belonged either at the time of interview or during the preceding year was 144; 62 of these were branches of national organizations, 4-H clubs predominating. Church societies numbered 53, school clubs 21, and independent social clubs 8.<sup>9</sup> Thirteen of the clubs were outside the selected territory; but they attracted certain children living near boundary lines, and since they corresponded to those within the area they were included in the number serving the boys and girls interviewed.

#### MEMBERSHIP

One-third of the boys and two-fifths of the girls were club members at some time during the year before the interview. Only 86 girls (9 per cent) and 30 boys (3 per cent) belonged to more than one club.

Considerable difference was noted between children living in the country and those living in towns and villages, 43 per cent of the latter having been club members within the year as compared with only 34 per cent of the country children. Among the town and village children the proportion who were club members was the same for both sexes (43 per cent), but it was greater among country girls (38 per cent) than among country boys (29 per cent). Some of the older country boys and girls who came to the town and village high schools found more opportunities for club work there than in the rural communities where they lived, so that the percentage of club members of all kinds among children of high-school age (over 14) was greater (45) than among those younger (31). Not a few children retained their membership in their own local farm clubs even while going to high school in town.

Membership in national organizations, foremost of which were the 4-H clubs, far outweighed all other types. This was particularly true in rural schools where membership in one club usually meant a 4-H club. Churches furnished many more club opportunities in towns than those in less populous places, and school clubs, especially for girls, seemed to flourish in a number of the villages visited.

Eighteen per cent of the boys and 25 per cent of the girls who belonged to clubs had held office at some time or other. Three boys and ten girls had been officers in more than one club. The percentage of club members of both sexes who had ever held office in any club was 22. In a study of 4-H club children in Middlesex County,

<sup>9</sup> For discussion of church clubs see p. 43, school clubs, p. 55.



Mass.,<sup>10</sup> the findings were similar, 24 per cent of the rural club children having been officers.

#### THE 4-H CLUB

The 4-H club, fostered by the extension service of the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the State colleges of agriculture and under the direction of State club agents, county farm agents, home-demonstration agents, and local club leaders, was the only juvenile organization encountered at all generally in the rural communities. The chief purpose of this club is to stimulate interest among farm boys and girls in better farming and home-making. It has been organized in West Virginia largely through the schools and to a small extent through local leaders or older club members; and since it is primarily intended to reach farm children, its greatest growth has been in rural districts, particularly in rural villages and in communities sufficiently well organized to have established consolidated schools. In the more remote farming areas and in the unorganized communities of the territory visited few clubs were found.

Because there was a special interest in the effectiveness of the 4-H club and the extent to which it reached the boys and girls in the territory visited, it will be considered in some detail in this report.

#### Number of clubs.

At the time of the survey clubs were functioning in only eleven of the forty-one 1-room schools visited, and in one of the three 2-room schools. In two other 1-room schools clubs had broken up during the previous year because of lack of leadership. One had completely disbanded, while the other, inactive during the fall and winter because the leader had gone away to college, was looking forward to renewed activity upon her return to the community at the end of the school year. Each of the seven rural consolidated schools visited had good clubs, all but two of which had been functioning for several years.

Active 4-H clubs existed in 10 of the 13 villages where schools were visited. One had previously existed in another village but had been dying a slow death in the past few years, as its older members gradually left to attend high school in a neighboring town. In one of the villages where there was no 4-H club, the work of three other national organizations was being carried on, Boy Scouts, Hi-Y, and Girl Reserves. In the other village no club of any kind was found; this was probably because of the difficulty of starting any community enterprise on account of two factions which continually opposed each other.

Only one town 4-H club was found in the territory covered, although schools were visited in nine towns and cities. This club was not a typical one, as the number of former members was much greater than the number of active ones, and the active membership was decreasing because of general dissatisfaction with the leadership and competition from other clubs, including three well-organized troops of Boy Scouts.

<sup>10</sup> The Effectiveness of 4-H Club Work; a study of boys' and girls' club work in a cross section of Middlesex County, Mass., 1925, p. 24. United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, 1925.

**Club leaders.**

In organizing 4-H clubs the chief problem is leadership. Teachers were not considered the best choice if any local leader could be secured. One reason given was that teachers and children needed a change from each other in spare time. On the other hand, one man said that he had a much more interested and congenial atmosphere in his school since he and his wife had begun to devote some time to club work.

Frequently the meetings of clubs, which were led by teachers, stopped when school was over and the leaders left town, in spite of the fact that members of the clubs could have arranged interesting and wholesome activities. Both children and teachers lamented the fact that riding in automobiles, visiting, and a little tennis and swimming comprised the leisure program. "A good leader could render wonderful service here in the summer by working up plays for there is a keen interest in dramatics, and by planning picnics and parties and helping the boys and girls to help themselves," the high-school principal said.

The third point brought out in discussions with teachers was that a lay leader who works in cooperation with the teachers makes it possible to enrich the program, bringing the practical experience of the home maker or the farmer to add to the teacher's theoretical knowledge.

The leaders of the 4-H clubs were teachers in 23 of the 30 clubs included in the survey. Some had spent several years with their groups, but the majority were undertaking the work for the first time. Some excellent clubs were led by teachers. In Webster County the 8 clubs visited were led by teachers; 5 of these were former club members, and 2 others, although having no club experience, had become convinced that the 4-H program would fill the needs of their schools. This record is rather exceptional, however, as in the remaining counties only one teacher leader had been a 4-H club member.

**Program.**

The program carried out by 4-H club members followed two general lines, educational and social. The project work selected by each boy and girl consisted of one or more definite tasks to be performed, in the nature of gardening, stock raising, or home making, and included also the preparation of reports on the subject and the exhibition of results at a county or State fair. The project work was so heavy in West Virginia clubs that a boy or girl was rarely allowed to carry more than one a year. Local club leaders had immediate supervision over this work, and county farm and home demonstration agents gave advice on special problems. The social life of the club consisted of the regular meetings, usually held weekly at the school house, the occasional socials or other money-making events, the out-of-doors activities like roasts and hikes, and, last but not least, the summer camp, which nearly every boy and girl expressed a desire to attend.

All but 7 clubs had some social event of special importance during the year. Activities such as sales, box socials, plays, and popularity contests were held by 17 clubs to raise money for camps or special equipment for their schools during the year. Special-day

programs, parties, and picnics were considered to be the outstanding events in 8 clubs. The exhibits placed in local, county, or other fairs were the chief interests of three groups and the annual initiation to which families and friends were invited was named by two.

While special events added interest to the program, it was the regular meetings, the project work, the summer camp, and the feeling of belonging to the group that made the club important in the child's life, and it was one of these features he usually mentioned when he was asked what he liked best about club work.

#### Membership.

Some idea of the extent to which the 4-H club program reached rural young folks in the area visited can be formed from the number of members found, the percentage of the children who were members in schools where clubs existed, and the length of time they had been in club work.

One-fourth, or 477, of the 1929 children interviewed had been 4-H club members during the previous year, and one-fifth, or 386, were active members at the time of the survey. The girls were better "joiners," 280 (28 per cent) having been connected with a 4-H club at some time during the year, as compared with 197 (21 per cent) of the boys. The number of active members at the time of the study was somewhat smaller, 161 boys and 225 girls.

Fifty-seven boys and 82 girls had previously been club members, but had left more than one year before the survey. Twenty-seven per cent of the boys and 36 per cent of the girls, therefore, had had 4-H club experience at some time.

Table 12 shows that the largest percentage of club members among the children interviewed were in consolidated schools. The next highest percentage was among pupils of village schools. The percentage of those in one and two room schools was still lower, and the smallest percentage was in town schools. The percentage that dropped their membership during the year was the same for all types of school except the rural consolidated. It should be noted that 46 out of 58 club members attending town schools belonged to 4-H clubs in rural communities or in villages where they previously attended school, so that the percentage of children belonging to rural and village school clubs was actually greater than is shown.

TABLE 12.—*Children attending rural, village, and town schools and number and per cent who were members of 4-H clubs in five counties of West Virginia*

Type of school attended	Children attending school who were members of 4-H clubs						
	Total	During year of study		At date of interview		Dropped out during year	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total.....	1,929	477	25	386	20	91	5
Rural.....	903	246	27	205	23	41	5
1 and 2 room.....	476	102	21	80	17	22	5
Consolidated.....	427	144	34	125	29	19	4
Village.....	678	173	26	140	21	33	5
Town.....	348	158	17	241	12	17	5

<sup>1</sup> Of this number 46 belonged to clubs in rural or village schools where they previously attended.

<sup>2</sup> Of this number 33 belonged to rural or village clubs.

<sup>3</sup> Of this number 13 belonged to rural or village clubs.

The real interest of children in rural communities in 4-H clubs is shown, in Table 13, by the large proportion of children eligible for club membership who joined a club whenever one had been organized in the school.

TABLE 13.—*Children attending rural, village, and town schools in which there were 4-H clubs and number and per cent who were members in five counties of West Virginia*

Type of school with 4-H club	Total	Children attending schools with 4-H clubs who were members					
		During year of study		At date of interview		Dropped out during year	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
All schools .....	1,359	405	30	347	26	58	4
Rural.....	577	222	38	192	33	30	5
1 and 2 room.....	150	78	52	67	45	11	7
Consolidated.....	427	144	34	125	29	19	4
Village.....	554	164	30	140	25	24	4
Town.....	228	19	8	115	7	4	2

<sup>1</sup> Of this number 4 belonged to clubs in rural schools and 3 to clubs in village schools where they previously attended.

In nearly all the 32 one and two room schools with no club, one or more children expressed a wish to be a 4-H boy or girl, and a number were so interested that the lack of a club in their own community could not defeat their desire to be members. Here are a few examples:

Two children attending rural 1-room schools where there were no clubs worked independently on 4-H projects. A girl was working on her third-year sewing project, the club under which she started having disbanded after her first year's work. A boy of 12 "signed up" in a 1-room school where a feeble attempt had been made to organize a club, and even though he was the only boy to take up a project he carried it through successfully. The county agent went to see him once a month, and when it came time for the State fair he had a fine dairy calf to exhibit which won third prize.

Thirteen other children who were pupils in one and two room rural schools where no club existed sought membership in the club nearest to them, 11 being active members in these clubs at the time of the survey. Although they were not able to attend all meetings in the winter because of the distance they were obliged to walk over bad roads, they expressed interest in club work and looked forward to the summer meetings.

This marked response of rural children to a club that affords both educational and recreational opportunities shows what an important part it could be made to play in the lives of many more country boys and girls if only capable leaders could be secured to carry the work into more remote districts.

#### Age of members.

The average age of all active 4-H club members who were interviewed was 13.4 years, with practically no difference shown by sex.



The United States Agricultural Extension Service found the average age for both sexes to be 13.8 years in 10 States<sup>11</sup> and 14.3 years in rural areas of one county in Massachusetts.<sup>12</sup> In the club group studied in West Virginia 38 per cent of all members were 12 or 13 years of age, one fourth were younger, another fourth were 14 or 15 years, and one-tenth were 16 years or over.

The average age for joining 4-H clubs among the 477 boys and girls who belonged during the year prior to the study was 12 years. One hundred and fifty children, or nearly one-third of the whole group, began their club membership at 10 years or younger. Only 62 became club members after they were 14, and only 5 after their sixteenth birthday.

#### Length of membership.

The average length of membership up to date of interview of all children who were then attending a 4-H club was 1.8 years. This was the same as the average found by the United States Department of Agriculture for 10 States, but a little above the average (1.5 years) found in the Massachusetts county.<sup>13</sup>

More than one-half of the West Virginia children who were active club members were doing their first year's work. One reason for this was the fact that 9 of the 30 clubs visited were practically new, having been in existence less than one year. On the other hand, 34 girls and 15 boys had been in club work more than three years. Twenty-seven children had been active club members for between four and five years and 15 for five years or more, which explains why the average length of membership was more than a year and a half.

The comparative length of time the boys and girls who were active members had been in club work is shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14.—Length of membership in 4-H clubs of boys and girls who were members at time of interview in five counties of West Virginia

Length of membership	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total .....	386	100	161	100	225	100
Less than 6 months .....	52	13	24	15	28	12
6 months through 1 year .....	161	42	72	45	89	40
More than 1 year to 2 years .....	85	22	42	26	43	19
More than 2 years to 3 years .....	39	10	8	5	31	14
More than 3 years .....	49	13	15	9	34	15

The girls showed a slightly greater tendency than the boys to drop out of club work, but those who did persevere for at least two years were more apt than the boys to continue over a still longer period. The findings showed that 29 per cent of the girls who were still active club members had belonged more than two years, and 15 per cent more than three years, whereas only 14 per cent of the boys had

<sup>11</sup> Club Data from Extension Studies, p. 9, Extension Service Circular 4. United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, April 15, 1926.

<sup>12</sup> The Effectiveness of 4-H Club Work; a study of boys' and girls' club work in a cross section of Middlesex County, Mass., 1925, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 20.

been members more than two years, and only 9 per cent more than three years.

#### Reasons for leaving club.

Ninety-one children, 36 boys and 55 girls, dropped their membership in the 4-H club during the preceding year. Twenty-five had been members less than 6 months, 32 from 6 months to a year, and 32 for more than a year. Two children did not report the reason for leaving their club. Twenty children said that their club "broke up," 11 moved away from the community, and 19 others were unable to go to meetings for reasons they could not control, as too great a distance, bad roads, unsuitable hour, ill health, too great expense, or parental objections. Seventeen children said that it took too much time, some of these being high-school students who were obliged to go to town to school and had more studying to do than formerly. Ten children said they were uninterested, one of these frankly admitting a dislike for the leader, while five had become discouraged over their projects. There should have been within the club itself some means for helping these last 15 boys and girls when lack of interest and discouragement were the only reasons for giving up their projects.

#### Activities liked.

The question "What do you like best about 4-H club work?" was answered by 450 boys and girls who had been members during the year of the study. The project work of the club was named by 202 children as the feature they most enjoyed. It was also mentioned as one of several activities best liked by 77 other children, making a total of 279, or 62 per cent of these 4-H members, who said they particularly enjoyed their projects. Only a little more than half of the members spoke of the recreational activities either as the only side of club life they cared for or as one of several. This included the meetings, programs, the special entertainment features occasionally offered, and camping. Only 4 per cent said they especially liked club mechanics; that is, any kind of organization work, planning meetings and directing others.

Children who belonged to other kinds of clubs and were never 4-H members more often named the recreational features of their various clubs as contributing most to their pleasure. It is a significant fact, therefore, that among 4-H club members it was the educational features, the farm work and home-making projects, that made the strongest appeal. A desire to make their project the best in the county, if not in the State, and to gain recognition at annual fairs doubtless was a spur to their zeal, but it was a healthy one and accomplished results of a very tangible nature. One 16-year-old boy in an isolated community had a pig as a second-year project on which he won first prize at his own county fair and second prize at a neighboring fair. "There was nothing like that pig," his sister declared. "He washed it every day for two weeks before the fair." Another boy, 13 years old, who belonged to the 4-H club in another community because there was none in his own school, had won a trip to the State camp at Jackson's Mill through the excellence of his project, a dairy calf.

Other possible results of the educational program of the 4-H clubs were suggested by the remark of a farmer in one community visited

that the young folks were marrying and settling down near home. He said it was largely due to 4-H club work and the pride and confidence it gave the boys and girls in farming.

#### Club projects selected.

The most popular project among the boys was raising poultry; raising hogs ranked a close second and growing potatoes came third. Manual training had fourth place, because it was the principal project for boys in a large consolidated school where there was an enthusiastic club. The boys worked on their assigned tasks, principally woodworking, at noon hour and before and after school, and received much help from the teacher, who was the local club leader. In one rural 1-room school a type of manual training was given by the teacher to a 4-H boy of 11 who was very backward in school work, but who had much talent in using tools and paintbrush. He had built several bird houses and benches for the school yard and also decorated the blackboards and painted the school furniture. Although his real 4-H project was chicken raising, the teacher allowed him to do these tasks as a part of his club work, substituting them for other activities for which he showed less aptitude.

Sewing, as might be expected, was by far the most popular project among the girls, being reported by 209 out of 280 club girls. The only other project undertaken to any extent by girls was chicken raising and only 24 reported this.

Below is a list of all projects undertaken by the 477 boys and girls who were 4-H club members at some time during the year.

Projects of 4-H club boys	Times named <sup>14</sup>	Projects of 4-H club girls	Times named <sup>14</sup>
Total.....	200	Total.....	283
Poultry.....	58	Sewing.....	209
Hogs.....	44	Poultry.....	24
Potatoes.....	22	Calf.....	8
Manual training.....	20	Baking.....	6
Calf.....	17	Canning.....	5
Gardening.....	13	Home beautification.....	4
Sheep.....	9	Sheep.....	2
Corn.....	1	Potatoes.....	1
Bees.....	1	Corn.....	1
Home beautification.....	1	Gardening.....	1
Not reported.....	14	Not reported.....	20

#### Summer-camp attendance.

Attendance at a 4-H summer camp was the climax of club experience for 23 per cent of the children who had been club members during the year of the study. This included 73 girls and 35 boys. County camps attracted the majority, although 3 boys and 9 girls won distinction enough in club work to merit a week at the State camp at Jackson's Mill. All but 1 of these latter children were 15 years of age and over, but those attending county camps were all ages from 10 to 17, although only 6 were under 12 years.

Considering the fact that two of the counties included in the survey maintained no 4-H camps, and also the fact that the majority of club children were only first-year members, the percentage of attendance at summer camps is not so small as it appears at first. Moreover, many other children whose parents had not yet been converted to the idea that staying overnight at camp was a good and

<sup>14</sup> The total number of projects is greater than the total number of boys and of girls because 3 boys and 3 girls followed 2 projects each.

wholesome thing to do were permitted to "picnic" for a day at Camp Cæsar, Oglebay Park, or Middle Grave Creek, where their more fortunate club playmates were enjoying the fun and frolic of a whole week.

Practically one-third of those attending summer camp had ability as leaders, or at least they had been clubs officers at some time, occasionally in two clubs. While this was not always 4-H experience, it was in the majority of cases.

#### OTHER NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

##### Kinds and number.

The national organizations, other than 4-H clubs, to which the children interviewed had belonged during the year prior to the survey included 13 troops of Boy Scouts, 3 of Girl Scouts, 1 group of Camp Fire Girls, 5 of Girl Reserves, and 4 of Hi-Y for the boys. One Girl Scout troop and one group of Girl Reserves were outside the selected area, but only two girls of the study belonged to these particular groups.

The Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association of Wheeling sponsored Hi-Y and Girl Reserve clubs in local and other high schools in the panhandle. The Young Women's Christian Association had formed an Ohio County council that assisted young business women as well as students to organize in the smaller towns. Similar services were rendered by the Wheeling Boy and Girl Scout executives. The Boy Scout executive secretary served the whole panhandle as far north as Weirton and a part of Ohio as well. All of these organizations worked chiefly through the schools or churches in the towns.

The Young Men's Christian Association secretary in Wellsburg served the boys in the near-by country, especially those in the Franklin community. His chief contribution was through the direction of their local sports, since few of the rural boys came to the building or were interested in the camp. He refereed basket-ball games for the near-by consolidated-school team, both on their floor and at the "Y," and organized a county-wide marble tournament that included six of the rural schools.

Several other branches of these same organizations were found in the other counties visited, including one group of Camp Fire Girls in Webster County. The extent to which rural boys and girls were affected by their program was slight, because all of these organizations were located in towns and villages, none being found in rural-school districts, not even where there were consolidated schools. This is one respect in which they differed greatly from the 4-H clubs, the most successful of which were connected with rural schools.

##### Membership.

The combined membership in these various organizations was only a little more than one-fourth the membership in 4-H clubs among the children visited. There are two obvious reasons for this small percentage. First, membership was limited almost entirely to children living in towns or villages where such clubs existed and to the rural children who came to these towns and villages to school. Second, these other groups were frequently organized through churches rather than through schools, and the rural children attending town schools but not town churches did not come in contact with



such clubs. Besides these reasons, there were doubtless many others of a more subtle nature which only the boys and girls themselves could account for. The fact remains that national organizations other than 4-H clubs contributed but little to the recreation of country boys and girls, although their programs were unquestionably enjoyed by those who did belong.

Out of the 123 members of these organizations who were attending town and village schools only 36, or less than one-fourth, lived in the country. Only eight members were found among children who actually attended rural schools, all of these being Boy Scouts who, with the exception of one Lone Scout, lived near enough to town to attend the weekly or biweekly meetings that the scouts usually held.

The total membership in each of the organizations mentioned was as follows:

Organization	Members during year of study	Members at date of interview
Boy Scouts.....	89	78
Girl Scouts.....	5	4
Camp Fire Girls.....	15	15
Girl Reserves.....	14	11
Hi-Y.....	8	8
Total.....	131	116

#### Boy Scout activities.

As will be seen from the above figures, the Boy Scouts attracted more children than any other national group except 4-H. Further analysis showed that 36 of these 89 scouts were members in one town, where there were three troops, each connected with a different church. One of the principal undertakings of these three troops was the cleaning up of the town playground, a rough piece of property in a hollow. At the time of the survey they were planning under the direction of the Woman's Club to take the responsibility for keeping this playground in good condition during the summer. It was the purpose of the leader to interest the boys in finding wholesome activities not furnished by the community. Overnight hikes every few weeks in summer were the special recreational features of these troops, as well as of several others. One energetic young leader was planning an employment bureau to assist scouts in finding temporary work to earn money for a summer camp.

The majority of the remaining scouts, 41 out of 53, were evenly distributed among three other troops in three different villages, none of these being affiliated with churches. In one of these a troop had just been organized three months previously, and a school principal was the scout master. In the second village where a small college was the center for social activities and furnished a large part of the leadership in civic affairs, a college student was acting as scout master until a local person could be found who was sufficiently interested to take a part, at least, in troop management. This troop had no outstanding events during the year. The third troop had been without a leader for two months since the death of its scout master. About a dozen boys were still interested and were trying to carry on their program by themselves until another leader could be found. The scouts were thus confronted with problems of leadership just as were the 4-H clubs.

All but 1 of the 12 remaining scouts, this one being a farm boy, who was a Lone Scout, belonged to various troops in other towns, no one of which had more than 2 members among the children of the survey. All of these boys had to make considerable effort to keep up their membership, as none of them lived in the community where the troops held their meetings; several were obliged to travel 2 or 3 miles over country roads, the condition of which in winter frequently prohibited trips to town even on foot.

The activities named by the Boy Scouts, in the order of their popularity, were: First, recreational features, then project work, and last of all, club mechanics. The first, which included such answers as "outdoor life" or "meetings," was named by 75 boys, 11 of whom also named the project work, such as passing badge tests and making reports. There were just 9 boys who mentioned only the project work as their best-liked activity. One boy said he enjoyed club leadership most and 4 of the above 11 included this feature of club work with recreation and project. These boys were patrol leaders or wished to be.

#### Other organization activities.

The other national organizations combined reached only 42 of the children interviewed, and as far as could be discovered contributed very little to their recreation. One possible exception was a group of Camp Fire Girls recently organized in one of the small towns visited, the total membership of 15 girls being interviewed in connection with the survey. The guardian, who had had three years' camp-fire experience in another town, was an enthusiastic worker and was earnestly hoping to provide the girls with wholesome activities, especially during the summer months when a little tennis, occasional parties, and evening auto riding were about the only amusements the village afforded. While the regular headquarters program had been followed during the few months the organization had existed, special emphasis had been put on outdoor activities, wood lore, and hiking, and most of the girls expressed keen interest in this phase of their camp-fire work.

The Girls Scouts, Girl Reserves, and Hi-Y, in the few places where they were found, followed the program of activities prescribed for their respective organizations. In one village, however, the Girl Reserves were not affiliated with the national organization, but they carried on the major part of the Girl Reserve program. None of the rural school children had any contact with these organizations.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the limited social programs of the rural and small-town churches and schools there seems to be little doubt of the value of club activities. There are leisure hours to be filled. There are vocational interests to be served through projects, merit badges, and similar methods. There is a great need for wholesome social affairs. The organizations for boys and girls can fill these needs. There is ample room for the expansion of all club programs in the territory that was visited.

When the extension of the 4-H club is considered, it must be remembered that it was found only to a limited degree in isolated

rural areas. This was due to several causes. First of all, it happened that home-demonstration agents, who have much of the responsibility for organizing 4-H clubs, were either very new on the job or not employed in the counties that were visited. There was difficulty in securing adequate leadership in some of the sections, and in others the agents had not attempted to form clubs because of bad roads, too much other work, or the belief that cooperation could not be obtained. Since it was found that interest was keen and that the children were eager for the work, it seems that a strenuous effort should be made to take the club program into the isolated communities.

Two phases of 4-H club work seem to present the most obvious problems to one who looks at the work from the recreational rather than the vocational point of view. The first is the type of leadership, the other the recreation features of the program.

The advantages and disadvantages of the teacher as a leader have been discussed in the preceding pages. The importance of an adult with vision can not be overemphasized. Since these workers are volunteers, their services must be employed whenever they are offered. Yet the selection and training of these workers is of utmost value to the whole program and frequent, well-planned meetings for them would have made the club work more effective in the sections that were visited.

Since the 4-H club programs are planned to enrich daily life, their appeal is in their immediate effect upon the experiences of a child's day. It is largely because of the obvious value of improved home and farm practices that the project work is popular. The æsthetic side of daily living does not seem to receive the same attention although it is just as interesting to the children who have had an opportunity to become acquainted with it. Music, good books, nature study, etiquette, and similar subjects are of real interest to boys and girls. It is true that leaders need some innate ability as well as special training to present such work and also that the county agents are frequently not equipped to train them. The specialists and those who are drawn in to assist with the summer camps and special courses should be selected with the idea of supplementing the abilities of the employed workers. The camp programs offer an excellent opportunity for presenting subjects that are not usually a part of the regular program. Special classes should be planned for leaders who are capable of carrying on any of the artistic or non-project lines in order that they may take such subjects into the regular meetings of their clubs. Older boys and girls can also successfully make such a contribution.

The need for help in planning program events was apparent everywhere. The children who gave recitations, songs, and reports showed the need of direction and help in selection of material. There seemed to be no idea of planning the program six months or a year ahead in any of the groups that were observed. The State extension service could assist in solving this difficulty in two ways. Bulletins containing timely suggestions for making meetings and social affairs interesting should be prepared and sent to the county agents who in turn may adapt them to meet their local needs, have them mimeographed, and sent to the club leaders. Training courses for club officers and

leaders should also be given. These could be directed by county agents assisted by the State specialists who would give suggestions not only upon projects and programs but also upon club mechanics.

The training for future leadership among club members is an important piece of work. Boys and girls in their enthusiasm for a club program will develop their own capabilities to the utmost if such an effort is expected of them. For this reason, the leader should place responsibility upon them and let them make decisions for themselves. It is this sense of their own place in a program that holds the members after their first enthusiasm wears away. It was interesting to find that all of the 12 students who had undertaken leadership in various clubs in the selected area had formerly been active members and officers of the organizations in which they worked.

### ADULT ORGANIZATIONS

Other social groups must be taken into consideration in summing up the recreational facilities that a community affords its boys and girls. This is especially true in the country where certain organization meetings and social events are affairs that the whole family attends. The activities of women's clubs and other adult groups were therefore inquired into in each community visited. The characteristics of leaders, their training, and sources of inspiration were also noted in order to help determine needs in connection with leadership training among the younger people.

### WOMEN'S CLUBS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

In eight of the rural communities visited there was some kind of women's club or community organization, sometimes both. These were formed for the most part through the efforts of the county and home demonstration agents and were a definite part of the cooperative agricultural extension service of the State and county. It was principally in the consolidated-school districts that these organizations were the most flourishing. It was not always easy to say whether a fine community spirit was the cause or the result of consolidation, but the two went together. In one rural area having four 1-room schools much urging was evidently necessary to keep the community organization alive, although a good pike running the entire length of these four tiny ridge settlements made them easily accessible to one another. This was the only community organization found outside of a consolidated-school district, unless possible exception be made in the case of a 1-room school district in Brooke County that had held one farm-bureau meeting during the year.

Besides these last-named rural organizations and those in six consolidated-school districts, one village women's club was quite active in civic affairs. A farmers' organization, which met twice a year for dinner or some other affair, contributed in a small way to the social life of another village.

The scarcity of farm women's clubs in the territory visited can probably be explained by the fact that four of the five counties had no woman agent. One county that had recently lost its home-demonstration agent, and the one county that had an agent, were the only ones in the selected territory having clubs for women under the agricultural extension service.



**Program.**

The farm women's clubs usually met twice a month. One meeting followed the program recommended by the entertainment section, and the other was often a demonstration of some household activity, such as candy making, canning methods, or the adaptation of dress patterns. These meetings also included special recreational features in which children and young people frequently took active part. Some of the women from these clubs went to county and State camps not only for special training in club activities but also for recreation. Besides their regular programs the clubs undertook the support of such community projects as the purchase of a curtain for the school stage, the support of needy families, the school soup fund, preschool and baby clinics, and the student loan fund. One club hired a music director for the school.

The community organizations as well as the women's clubs were largely social. The community meetings were usually held monthly at the school. A program which included an educational talk by the county agent or some one secured by him and an entertainment number prepared by the school or by a program committee was followed by a social hour. In one consolidated school community games and square dancing frequently filled this hour, and in other centers the people sat around and talked. The three community meetings visited by the Children's Bureau agents were well attended and seemed to be much enjoyed both at the time and as material for conversation afterward. Among the children interviewed, 141 spoke of community meetings as events of interest that they had attended during the year.

In four of the communities country-life conferences, developed under the auspices of the State university, were being held. The purpose of these conferences is to arouse interest in improving the social resources of the community. Score sheets for each aspect of community life have been prepared and are used by each community in evaluating its activities and resources. These annual self-inspections seemed to equip the leaders in the communities with aims and incentives. Interest ran high in the standing of the schools, churches, and homes, and apparently some of the standards set for accomplishment were achieved by means of the stimulation given at the monthly community meetings.

**Leaders.**

The men and women interviewed as community leaders, who were not preachers or teachers, were for the most part members of old-established families to whom the community looked for leadership. Some of this group had special ability through personality or training, or both. Thus one young man who had had an especially successful career as a club member grew into the leadership of club and community affairs, not only because his family had standing but also because he was well fitted by interest and training.

All the leaders, past and present, of the farm women's clubs were home makers. A number had attended State or county camps and used the material thus acquired in planning their community work, and some had gained experience and confidence through taking an active part in church organizations.

### PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

Parent-teacher organizations were found in 11 school communities. In five of them the group used this name; in the other six a civic club, a ladies' club, grange, or one of the community organizations just described had the care of the school as an important if not major interest. In some schools where no organization existed the teachers said that it was impossible to interest the parents because of bad roads, unwillingness to associate with the foreign born, general indifference to community affairs, or lack of education along cooperative lines.

The program followed by the parent-teacher groups was similar to those of the women's organizations. A group in one village furnished milk for underweight children and also sponsored an art exhibit. In another village the parent-teacher organization took care of the needs of the school and offered prizes in the poster contest conducted by the school citizenship club. A monthly program in which school children took part was an entertainment feature of several of these parent-teacher clubs. In two of the rural schools 30 children reported these meetings as the most important social events attended during the year. In another small rural community a dinner given by the parent-teacher organization on school-closing day was the chief event of the year.

### LODGES AND FRATERNAL ORDERS

Lodges are important in the recreational program of a community through their social programs and through the facilities that their buildings make available for community use.

#### Program.

The Masons, Odd Fellows, Grange, and other orders were found throughout the territory visited. They owned buildings equipped with auditoriums, kitchens, and recreation rooms. Their meetings were important social affairs in the lives of many of their members. This was particularly true of the Grange, American Legion, and Masonic orders. Though only 84 children mentioned lodge affairs, young teachers and community leaders often referred to Grange and lodge parties. In one town the Grange held two dances a month at which the people from the near-by rural communities were said to "enjoy themselves together." These were in addition to its semi-monthly meetings for social programs, held in another small town of the county, where the suppers, dances, and open meetings were mentioned as part of the winter's program by 21 of the boys and girls of the survey. Men and women belonging to the Masonic orders in one place found a great part of their social program growing out of their meetings. In one town the American Legion held dances throughout the winter season, and these were attended regularly by a score or more of the children interviewed. In the same town children also attended parties given by the Maccabees.

In two towns lodge members, in discussing the scarcity of recreation centers available for the older boys of their communities, regretted the fact that they had no facilities to accommodate a junior lodge that would benefit by the use of clubrooms and fellowship with the men of the town. An attempt was being made by the Masons in one village to start a De Molay organization.

Most of the orders aided charity and rendered other community service. In one small town the Odd Fellows as part of their service program sponsored community (not school) basket-ball teams for boys and girls.

#### **Buildings.**

The lodge halls were not always available for community use. In some cases the activities of the organization left no time available for other meetings. Some of the halls were unsuitable for parties, plays, or dinners, but others had been planned with such use in mind. In communities where schools and churches were inadequately equipped for large dinners a lodge hall sometimes filled the need and in the majority of cases no charge was made for charity affairs. In two places the lower floor of the lodge hall was used for a schoolroom, the Grange hall in one village being planned for this purpose. Lodge halls were available for community use in only 11 of the 21 places where they were found, and in 3 of these communities no other building was adequately equipped for such a purpose.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The women's club, the parent-teacher organization, the farm bureau, or some similar rural club frequently furnished the only community social life that all members of the family could enjoy together. In these groups, as in churches, some consolidation of interests is desirable. In localities where joint meetings were held by several small groups there was fine spirit, and genuine good times were had. The results were manifestly better than in the small local group meetings where attendance was small and enthusiasm slight.

Another need of adult community organizations is assistance in leadership training and program planning. The same institute that has been suggested for recreational leaders of churches, schools, and clubs could be attended by other community leaders. The extension-service workers who promote many of the adult organization activities in rural districts would be the logical promoters of such an institute.

It is not in the province of this report to make recommendations concerning the civic and welfare projects of lodges and secret organizations; yet it may be suggested that valuable service could be rendered by such societies if those having lodge halls would make them more generally available for community use when occasion demands. It is probable that in some rural communities the schools could be encouraged to plan better social programs and give occasional plays if they could be assured the use of a hall instead of a schoolroom with stationary desks and chairs.

#### **OTHER RECREATIONAL AGENCIES**

##### **COMMERCIAL AMUSEMENTS**

Although commercial amusements did not exist in the rural sections visited, the movies, pool rooms, dance halls, and bowling alleys of the near-by towns were frequently patronized by the adults and older boys and girls. The attraction of near-by amusement places was said to compete with school and church affairs in certain locali-

ties, and their popularity was proved quite generally in the answers to inquiries concerning the use of Saturday afternoon and evening. For this reason an attempt was made to discover what kind of amusements were offered by the towns, how they were supervised, and to what extent minors patronized them.

#### **Motion-picture theaters.**

In 13 of the towns and villages visited by children of the survey regular motion-picture theaters were in operation, and in 3 other villages movies were shown in a school building once a week. In 7 of these places the Western, or "thriller," picture was usually shown; in 5 a better grade of film was used; and in 1 city a variety of types was shown. A description of the programs of the remainder, two of which were in schools, was not obtained. In some of the larger towns and cities extra features, such as children who sang and danced, or comedians, were occasionally secured. There seemed to be little or no supervision of the theaters.

The answers to the questions, "Do you attend the movies?" and "How often?" brought to light some interesting facts. It was discovered that 47 children (18 boys and 29 girls) had never seen a motion picture. All but 6 of these were country children, although none lived more than 10 miles, and the majority not more than 5 miles, from a town or village where pictures were shown regularly. Twenty-six were under 12 years of age, but 3 were 15 or over. Twenty-nine children said they had been to the movies once in their lives, and 705 others only a few times, 545 of these latter not having attended for more than a year. Thus 781 children, or two-fifths of the entire number reporting, saw motion-picture shows very rarely, if ever. Those who said they went to the movies occasionally, that is, "several times" or "off and on" during the year, but less than once a month, numbered 286. The remaining 857 (45 per cent) said that they attended movies quite regularly, at least once a month; 187 of these said they went two or three times a month, 388 once a week, and 82 twice a week or oftener. Of the boys and girls living in towns and villages, 68 per cent patronized the theaters as often as once a month, compared with 34 per cent of those living in the country.

Age also made considerable difference. Of all children 16 years of age and over, 70 per cent were more or less regular theatergoers. Among those 14 and 15 years old, the percentage was 55; among the 12 and 13 year olds, 40; and among the 10 and 11 year olds, 29.

#### **Public dance halls.**

Public dance halls visited by the children included in the survey were found in six of the towns and in one village and two rural communities. Both round and square dances were popular, a hall sometimes being used for round dancing five nights a week and for square dancing on Saturday evenings. Halls for square dancing only were seldom open more than two nights a week. The two square dances that were visited seemed to be jolly, wholesome affairs. The dancers were acquainted with one another, the manager and his wife acted as hosts, and both dances had the atmosphere of family parties. No criticism of either was made by the neighborhood leaders.

In two of the larger towns dance halls had recently been converted into roller-skating rinks because, the managers said, interest in dancing had fallen off in the spring. The manager of one of these halls



had employed a city policeman to act as supervisor when he was off duty. This was the only supervised hall discovered in the territory visited.

Only 177 of the children interviewed said that they had attended public dance halls during the previous year. Two-thirds of these were rural children, 40 of whom said they went to public dances once a month or oftener. Age made some difference, because the number of children attending public dances increased from 5 per cent of the youngest group, those 10 and 11 years of age, to 12 per cent of the oldest children interviewed, those 16 and 17 years of age. More young children went to dances in the country, however, than in the towns. The rural dance halls, which specialized in square dances, were largely patronized by the whole family. Even infants in arms were brought, and small toddlers were seen running about the floors even when the dancing was going on.

Neighborhood house and barn dances were quite often mentioned as being attended by the rural boys and girls. These were not gotten up with the idea of profit, but the men contributed enough to pay the musicians. Sometimes old schoolhouses were used for parties and dances by school and social clubs. In one rural locality where there was much community spirit, the men arranged for dances, both square and round, under a cement viaduct where the sheltered bit of roadway furnished a very good dance floor. Several of the boys and girls interviewed attended these dances. These neighborhood affairs were not at all like public dances in commercial halls, yet they satisfied the desires of the young people for dancing, and they explain in part the rather small patronage of public halls by the children of the study. The attitude of many churches toward public dances is another reason why few children attended them.

#### Pool rooms.

Every town and a half a dozen of the villages visited had pool rooms, the majority having more than one. No personal investigation was made of the pool rooms, but as many as possible were observed, especially at night, to ascertain, if possible, the use made of them by the younger boys. The State law prohibits boys under 18 from playing or loitering in pool rooms, but many boys of high-school age were seen loafing in or about such places in 10 of the 16 towns and villages where they existed. No small boys were seen playing pool, although some said they did occasionally. Slot machines and soft-drink counters were added attractions for the young boys in some places.

Pool rooms were supervised in two towns by the policemen on whose beats they were located, but in the other places they seemed not to be supervised at all. Opinions varied as to the way in which the business was run. Leaders in some communities said the pool rooms were badly run, bootlegging and gambling being allowed, while in other places they were said to be conducted satisfactorily. Because they paid for both State and local licenses it was considered difficult to control them. As long as the State requirements were met the managers were not likely to be annoyed by local authorities.

Among the boys included in the survey 124 said that they visited pool rooms, but 51 of these said that they "only watched." All were

under 18 years of age, but 15 of those who played were under 14 and 6 under 12. Seventeen boys under 12 went to watch. It was not only the boys living in town near the pool rooms that patronized them, for 33 of the 73 boys who played pool lived in the country. Twenty-seven of the town boys and 17 country boys said they played pool at least once a week, oftener in many cases. These numbers are probably conservative, because much hesitancy was shown in answering the question about playing pool. It was frequently apparent that a youngster felt he could save his reputation only by saying "No," since he knew the attitude at home and in the church was strongly against such amusement.

#### PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Very few of the towns and villages visited had any parks or public recreation grounds that could be used for picnics and other summer activities. The 122 children who mentioned a day at the "park" as one of their principal summer outings were for the most part residents of Hancock County, where several small parks in the northern area seemed to be well patronized by those living near by.

At the time of the survey Oglebay Park, about 4 miles from Wheeling, was only beginning to function as a recreation center for all the people of the northern panhandle. The children who said they went there for 4-H camp or community events lived in the immediate rural neighborhoods or were club leaders in Ohio County. Some others whose older brothers and sisters had spent one or more days at the camp spoke of it with enthusiasm and were looking forward to a summer when they, too, could participate in some of the park activities.

Little need be said here concerning Oglebay Park and its unique and far-reaching recreation program. It showed every evidence of becoming popular, not only as a camp and a training center for club leaders but as a place where picnics, sports, nature study, and social and dramatic events were to constitute an almost daily program the year round. However, it was probable that only a small percentage of the boys and girls interviewed would come in direct contact with the park's activities, unless some inexpensive means of transportation were made available.

Many rural children would find much pleasure in a small park or picnic grove somewhere near their homes. In such a spot family outings or church and school picnics and athletic meets could be held.

What has been said of parks may also be said of playgrounds. Supervised play spaces were rare in the 17 villages and 11 towns that were visited. It has been explained in the school section that playgrounds at the schools were usually unattractive and unequipped but they were the only playgrounds that were used by children in 6 villages. Four villages had no adequate play space, even at the school, and in four villages and two towns there was no space other than unsupervised and unequipped vacant lots used for baseball and other sports. Some space had been set aside for a park or a playground in three villages and in seven towns and cities. In a few cases the donor of the land, a club or an industrial firm, had placed some equipment on it. In two towns where there were equipped playgrounds, provision had been made at one time for their supervision during the



*This school in the woods (left) has no cleared level space for games*



*All that is level is usually muddy from underground springs*



*This 2-room rural school has plenty of space for volley ball and other games but has neither equipment nor supervised play*

*A narrow strip by the railroad tracks serves as the only ball ground in one community*



*A small town playground equipped but unsupervised*

*A small village school with a good playground that is used the year round*





summer vacation. At the time of the visit clubs in both places were discussing the possibility of again arranging for such supervision for the coming summer.

Moundsville and Wheeling were the only cities in the selected area having programs on regular supervised playgrounds. In Wheeling a superintendent of recreation was employed the year round; in Moundsville provision was made for summer supervision only. None of the children interviewed, however, even in the communities nearest Wheeling, said he went to the playgrounds there even in summer, and only two children mentioned the Moundsville playground as a recreation center.

#### COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Community buildings were found in four centers. Two of these were outside the selected territory, but were patronized by children and adults who were interviewed.

In one of the northern towns of the panhandle was a community building that was widely used. It was equipped with a combination gymnasium-auditorium, a stage, a shower room, and a kitchen. The high-school athletic events and larger social affairs were held here; weekly dances were arranged by the Grange and by a group of musicians from a neighboring town. Church dinners and sales, also plays and institutes, were a part of the year's program. No other adequate hall was available in the town.

A hall in one rural community was built and owned by the Ladies' Aid of the local church. It was equipped with an assembly hall, electric lights, piano, and basement kitchen. The hall was used not only for church affairs but for the meetings and dinners of the law and order league of the community, and for the suppers, meetings, and social affairs of other churches and organizations which young people as well as old attended. Like the first-mentioned hall, it was the only one with adequate equipment in the community.

One of the residential suburbs of Wheeling had a hall that was built by the volunteer fire department primarily to house its engine. It had a small auditorium without a stage, a pool room with four tables in the basement, and a well-equipped kitchen. A community organization used it for a clubhouse, holding meetings and giving card parties and an annual turkey dinner. The men and boys spent their evenings in the basement, and groups from the country near by sometimes rented the hall for parties, dinners, and dances. It was to such affairs that some of the young people came.

The fourth hall was built by a lumber company for the use of its employees in a small town in Nicholas County, adjoining a part of Webster County that was included in the study. The hall had a large combination gymnasium-auditorium with a stage and dressing rooms. It was used for basket-ball games and dramatics. A play prepared and presented there was largely attended by the boys and girls in the rural schools near by, who also went to the games and other affairs given in this community.

#### LOAFING PLACES

In numerous small settlements the cross-roads store or a highway gas station is the only center, and these were used in the evenings as the gathering places of the young men of the neighborhood.

In the small towns offering several centers a certain group patronized the drug store, another the post office, and still another the cigar store. Thus in one village the high-school set were to be found after school and in the evenings at the drug store; the older boys and those who were not popular with girls frequented the pool room; and the small boys and the rougher youths hung around the railroad station. The men sat in comfort in the hotel lobby. A vacant lot on the main street of one village was used by small boys for playing marbles, and they were found there even after dark. The older boys and men in this village lined the main streets every evening; some congregated on the bank steps, others by the hardware store, where a radio with a loud speaker was nightly in operation.

In the larger towns and the cities the pool rooms as well as the street corners and certain stores seemed to be common loafing places. In one city each of the pool rooms attracted its own following, one drawing the school and young clerk group, while the other was used by the mill workers and foreign men. A very popular pool room in one town where there was much unemployment attracted the boys and young men during the day as well as in the evening, and it proved also a hang-out for the high-school boys at the noon lunch hour as well as after school and at night.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Commercial amusements, parks, and playgrounds made little contribution to the recreation of rural children in the selected areas. It was principally those living in or near towns who used such facilities.

The movies, however, were important enough in the lives of certain children to make them worth considering as one type of amusement that should be made available in better form to rural children. Those who did go to the movies had only poor pictures to see in many of the small towns. A better grade of films would be helpful in these places. An especial plea is made for the Saturday program, since that is the one most generally patronized by children. The three localities where movies were shown in the schoolhouse had an excellent opportunity to present good entertainment to their communities. While it is not suggested that the schools go into the motion-picture business, it seems evident that a responsible agency should undertake the presentation of some kind of interesting dramatic events in communities where such programs are needed. Movies are a popular form of entertainment that adolescents are bound to seek. The occasional showing of good films in the home community would help to satisfy their desires for this form of entertainment and lessen the likelihood of attendance at poor small-town shows.

Such activities as neighborhood basket-ball games, dances, and barn parties may serve to interest boys and girls in their own communities. It hardly needs to be said that a wholesome restraint is imposed by familiar faces and places upon the sort of youthful mischief that leads to serious harm. While the movies, dances, and games in a rural community may not be so well directed as those in the near-by city, yet the fact that young people are required to meet the behavior standards of their own families and friends in the

home community makes the local affair a better form of recreation than the majority of amusements that they would find away from home.

To what extent the commercial amusements in the area visited needed supervision can not be definitely stated. There was not enough time to study thoroughly the attendance and management of the dance halls and pool rooms. Although minors were excluded by law from the pool rooms, they were known to patronize them and to loaf around them, even if they did not play. The opinions of community leaders varied as to the harm such attendance might do. It was claimed that the divided responsibility for these places, which paid both a State and a local tax, made their supervision difficult. Regular inspection by county officials would remove the reputation for bootlegging and gambling that had been acquired by some of them. A more adequate program of sports and community affairs would lessen the attraction of the commercial amusements and furnish a more wholesome type of recreation to country youth.

Playgrounds were used by very few rural children. While a well-planned, supervised playground near the rural school is of importance during the school year, its use by farm children during vacations is limited to those living near by, since children can not be expected to walk more than half a mile to find a place to play.

A community park is a recreational asset in a rural neighborhood. One including a playground, a picnic grove, and a baseball diamond probably would attract family, church, and club groups from a distance of 20 miles or more. There were many lovely spots in the sections visited that could be made into attractive picnic grounds and would be preferable to the church grounds commonly used. The planning and preparation of a community park is an excellent means of stirring up interest in outdoor affairs for families and organizations. It may be thought that such a park is not needed for people who can picnic in their own wood lots. The answer is that going away to some definite place adds an air of festivity to a basket-lunch party that would seem commonplace near home.

## SPECIAL INTERESTS EXPRESSED BY THE CHILDREN

When the children were asked to name the activity they would choose if they could do exactly as they pleased, some quickly mentioned several and others had difficulty in thinking of any specific thing. Vocational interests were keen. They found expression not only through the choice of such leisure-time pursuits as raising chickens, sewing, or carpentry but also in the plans for the future that the opportunity to do as they pleased seemed to suggest to some children.

Farm work headed the list of interests mentioned by the boys. This included specific activities such as raising chickens, tending stock, or working in the garden or field, as well as the general term "work on the farm." There were 185 boys who mentioned one or more kinds of farm work as a special interest. While it may be true that some boys chose the activity that they knew they would be required to follow in case they had some free time, and others named the only out-of-school pursuit they could think of whether they enjoyed it or not, yet the interest expressed by the children in the raising of stock and crops indicated that many of them found real pleasure in agricultural pursuits.

Although fewer girls than boys selected farming, 67 named one or more farm activities as favorite leisure-time pursuits. Sewing was named by 188 girls and cooking by 78.

It may be thought that these activities stand high because of the interest created in them through the 4-H club projects. This is not the case. Of the 185 boys who named one or more kinds of farm work as a special interest, 125 had never been members of a 4-H club. Of the 188 girls choosing sewing, 117 had had no club experience, while 47 of the 67 girls enjoying farming and 54 of the 78 who liked cooking had never been club members. The fact that the children enjoyed the work found in their homes indicated instead that the club projects follow a natural interest and that the extension of the club program to reach the children who were not members would find a ready response.

Reading ranked highest in the interests of the girls, being named by 26 per cent of the 1,002 girls. It would seem that rural girls do not differ from city girls in this respect; in a questionnaire study of leisure-time activities of 1,600 girls in upper elementary and high school grades in Brooklyn, N. Y., reading<sup>15</sup> headed the list of activities that they said they would most enjoy if they could make a choice. Reading stood sixth with the boys. Eighteen per cent of all the children interviewed selected it as a favorite activity. The effect of reading was shown to some extent in the choice of vocational interests expressed by some of the children, who mentioned desires

<sup>15</sup>And What of Leisure? by Henrietta Additon. *Journal of Social Hygiene*, June, 1930, p. 332.



concerning professions with which they could have had little acquaintance except through books.

Baseball was the second choice of the boys, while other games and free-play activities followed it in the third and fourth places. For the girls games and free play stood third and fourth. The need of leadership and facilities, in order that a broader program of play activities may be offered to rural children, is discussed elsewhere.

One popular means of self-expression for adolescents is found in the fine arts, but unless they are well presented they do not have a general appeal. Music was named as a pastime greatly enjoyed by 78 girls, thus standing sixth on their list; but it was named by only 6 boys. Art was named by only 5 boys and 16 girls, writing by 3 boys and 12 girls, and dramatics by no boys and only 7 girls. The reason so few children mentioned such activities is that the clubs and schools in the rural areas visited were not giving children the best possible introduction to the fine arts.

Nature study is another closed door that the school and club may open. It was specifically mentioned by only a very few boys and girls as a direct answer to the question as to what they would like best to do, but a real interest was indicated in the conversations concerning pursuits enjoyed in the fields and woods and also by the number who enjoyed camping, hiking, and similar activities. The boy who was fascinated with ferns, the girl who liked to "explore along the creek," the numerous youngsters who spent the early spring days "hunting sugar trees" and "roaming the woods for flowers," are but a few of the many boys and girls who would thoroughly enjoy a broader introduction to the wonders of the country in which they live.

Following is a complete list of special interests of the boys and girls of the study and the number of times each was named. This should form a fairly accurate index to the desires and aspirations of young folk in the rural areas visited.

## SPECIAL INTERESTS OF BOYS

	Times named		Times named
Farm work (care of stock, garden- ing, and general farm work)-----	185	Work, other than farm (in mill, pottery, on roads, etc.)-----	24
Baseball <sup>10</sup> -----	172	Horseback riding-----	20
Games (all except ball)-----	139	Nature and nature study-----	18
Free-play activities (in woods, fields, with toys and animals)--	95	Driving horses-----	16
Hunting and trapping-----	93	School and study-----	16
Reading-----	92	Driving automobile-----	15
Fishing-----	84	Visiting friends or relatives-----	12
Swimming-----	78	Bicycling-----	11
Carpentry and construction-----	75	Skating-----	9
Sports and athletics (not other- wise specified)-----	69	Movies and shows-----	9
Mechanics (automobile, electric, etc.)-----	62	Club work-----	8
Travel and trips-----	41	Chemistry and scientific experi- ments-----	8
Basket ball-----	35	Automobile riding-----	8
Football-----	35	Home chores-----	8
Hiking-----	33	Aviation-----	6
Camping-----	30	Music-----	6
Coasting-----	26	Art-----	5
		Radio construction-----	5
		Picnics-----	5

<sup>10</sup> Includes 60 ball not otherwise specified.

## LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF RURAL CHILDREN

	Times named		Times named
Fair or circus	4	Church or Sunday school	2
Cutting wood	4	Eating	2
Listening to radio	4	Attending lectures	1
Going to town	3	"Clerking"	1
Writing	3	Dancing	1
Sleeping	3	Printing	1
Just loafing	3	Visiting a factory	1
Tennis	2	No ideas	10
Boating	2		

## SPECIAL INTERESTS OF GIRLS

	Times named		Times named
Reading	263	Raising flowers	12
Sewing	188	Horseback riding	9
Games (all except ball)	172	Coasting	9
Free-play activities (in woods, fields, with toys and animals)	161	Going to town	8
Hiking	105	Dramatics and elocution	7
Music	78	Work, other than house or farm	6
Housework	78	Skating	5
Cooking	78	Handicraft	5
Farm work	67	Fishing	5
Ball, basket and other	66	Tennis	4
Travel and trips	58	Church or Sunday school	4
Swimming	53	Entertaining company	4
Sports and athletics (not otherwise specified)	49	Driving automobile	4
Picnics	42	Lectures or plays	3
School and study	39	Recreation leadership	2
Camping	36	Socials	2
Visiting relatives or friends	32	Typing	2
Nature and nature study	24	Making candy	2
Club work	17	Social work	2
Care of children	17	Rowing	1
Movies	16	Hunting	1
Art	16	Bicycling	1
Automobile riding	16	Science	1
Dancing	14	Taking pictures	1
Writing	12	Sleeping	1
		No ideas	10

## SUMMARY

The rural children in the section of West Virginia that was studied had an average of 2.6 hours daily in which to do as they pleased. These hours of leisure offer the opportunity for a broader type of education, one that will create such a genuine interest and delight in books, music, dramatics, nature study, sports, and creative activities that no child or adult, when asked what he does in his spare time, will blankly say, "Just sit around," or "Nothing." The home, church, school, and club can all contribute to the education of young people in a constructive use of spare time. At the end of each chapter on recreational agencies in this report, recommendations are made for the immediate improvement of the spare-time programs in rural districts.

The home is the place where the child first learns to play. Parents, therefore, need to be educated to the idea that it is their responsibility to make home a place where wholesome play is possible. Companions should be welcome there, and there should be equipment for games, handicrafts, music, and reading. Parents not only should encourage children to use these facilities but should frequently join them in their home play. There should be summer outings and other trips taken together whenever possible. The home life is enriched by the sharing of experiences in the outside world.

The church filled an important place in the lives of most of the rural people, but in many localities it was handicapped by the weakness of its organization. It would appear that the members and community would be better served in some places if the numerous small congregations were to combine. A community church large enough to support its minister properly and insure a regular schedule of religious and social meetings would be more of a social force among rural people than several small ones in the same area could ever hope to be. Such a church would bring together more people of the same age groups, and there would be a greater opportunity for young people to organize and carry on worth while activities. In the few places where this had been tried, satisfaction was expressed.

While some consolidation of rural churches is a thing to be desired and looked forward to, there are present needs to be met in the small churches as they exist to-day and even in many of the larger ones that serve rural folks. Some general education is needed as to the importance and value of the social life that the church can promote, particularly in localities where there are few or no other agencies to bring people together. Social programs were in need of improvement, as was admitted frequently by the leaders themselves. The literature on the planning of programs, socials, and special-day events which is published by some of the denominational houses and other societies, would be helpful to leaders of young people in the churches if they could be made acquainted with it. A regular bul-

letin service giving seasonal suggestions for parties and programs would be still better.

An annual institute of church and other leaders interested in recreational activities in their communities would also be worth while not only because of the instruction that could be given by actual demonstration of programs and plays but because of its stimulating effect. It would give an opportunity for people interested in the same problems to meet and exchange ideas. A competent recreation leader assisted by an efficient committee should be in charge of such an institute.

Because leisure-time activities are a part of the educational program, it seems beyond question that training for them should be a part of the school's curriculum. Hence the school as the third agency and one of the most important ones in the recreational life of rural children has been discussed at some length.

The immediate needs of the school are, first, more adequate physical equipment and, second, better training for teachers.

Although it may not be possible to add assembly-room gymnasiums to all rural schools not having them, the need of some sort of adequate room for school and community use should be kept in mind when new buildings are planned. The playrooms that were visited needed better ventilation and some treatment of the floor to keep down dust. Many school yards needed to be leveled and drained, being useless for play as they were.

The libraries in many schools were very meager. A better and larger collection of books was needed. The fact that the books are used by adults as well as children should be taken into consideration in the selections made.

More important even than equipment is a staff of teachers who are well trained. Rural teachers need special training for work in two lines that may fall outside the ordinary school curriculum.

The first need is for a background in the arts that will make it possible for them to introduce their students to good music, drama, and art. Many rural children have few opportunities for the enjoyment of music, drama, and art outside the school and should therefore be offered a chance in school to discover their interests and talents. Because the presentation of such subjects requires a great deal of assistance unless the teacher has some natural talent, specialists who could visit the schools and give instruction on stated days should be employed by the county or other units of administration. Normal schools and colleges should make their courses in the arts very practical.

The second kind of special training needed by rural teachers is in recreation. The rural community looks to the teacher for much guidance and help in leisure-time activities. The planning of socials and parties as well as the direction of recess play at school often falls to the school-teacher. Some teachers said they would lead games if they knew what games to use. Others said they had in their classes older children who could serve as leaders if simple, effective game material were put in their hands. Here, as in the churches, an annual institute for recreation leaders and a good bulletin service would be of great assistance. Both should be a means of enriching the work given by the teachers to their students.



It was suggested that specialists are needed in order that the schools may be able to introduce the rural child to the fine arts. Specialists employed by the county or other unit could inspire the programs of the teachers and could also render valuable assistance to the communities in which they worked if their territory was not too large to serve well. For instance, the supervisors of music not only could assist the teachers in selecting and presenting their daily music programs but might also develop community choral and orchestral organizations. The supervisor of physical education and social programs, besides helping the teachers, could foster whole community programs and when requested could advise with the local groups that have social interests as a part of their programs.

These suggestions are made for improvements in the programs of schools as they were observed during the study. When it is considered that spare time is likely to increase in amount as better farm and home practices come into use in this part of West Virginia, it is evident that extensive changes should be made in the work of the schools, since they reach parents as well as children.

Club work, as a fourth type of recreational activity, was found to be very important in the lives of some of the children, but the program of the 4-H club, which is well suited to rural children, should be extended to the more remote neighborhoods. Boys and girls liked farm activities. They were proud of the products they raised. More than half of all club members interviewed said their chief interest in 4-H club work was their project. Farming was named more often than any other activity by the boys, whether club members or not, when they were asked what they liked to do best in spare time. With the girls, sewing, one of the principal club projects, was the activity mentioned as the favorite by the second largest number. Therefore, an extension of the 4-H club program to more remote areas would help to satisfy the wholesome desires of many rural youngsters.

Since the club leader is largely responsible for the success or failure of a club, the selection and training of these leaders are of first importance. Some of the club meetings visited were not well planned. The social programs were especially poor, being a medley of recitations and songs that the children had obviously heard again and again. The group singing was badly led and evidently unplanned. The institute and bulletin service that has been mentioned before would be of great assistance to club leaders and to the junior officers also.

Other agencies through which social contacts are promoted among rural people are the women's clubs and community organizations. Better cooperation among the smaller groups would result not only in better programs at social meetings but also in a greater material service to a larger group of people. Leaders of these organizations would be benefited by attending the institutes recommended for church and school leaders.

The Grange, lodge, and other societies having halls could further the general cause of recreation in rural communities by making these halls available for public use when needed.

Not only do country people need places for indoor recreation but they also need places in which to play out of doors, such as parks, public playgrounds, and athletic fields. The countryside abounds in

woods and fields—"plenty of space to play," some will say—yet there may be no picnic grove or play field within a distance that invites the family, school, or church group to enjoy a day's outing there. The development of natural resources for public enjoyment is one of the responsibilities that rests on civic authorities, town, city, or county.

If the country youth are given more facilities for play and better-trained leaders to guide them in school, club, and outdoor pursuits, their recreational life will be greatly enriched and questionable city amusements will lose some of their attractiveness.

In every section visited in West Virginia in connection with the present survey many adults and young people were interested in the extension of the social activities of the churches, schools, and clubs, but few individuals knew how to acquire new material or introduce new and better programs into their organizations or communities. Some individuals were encountered who were unaware of the importance of a program of wholesome activities for leisure time, but the responsiveness of most persons to any helpful suggestion was assurance enough that any real assistance along these lines would be appreciated. If some provision could be made for the training of leaders in the rural areas visited, it is certain that the program of recreational activities of all agencies would be extended to an interested and enthusiastic people.

