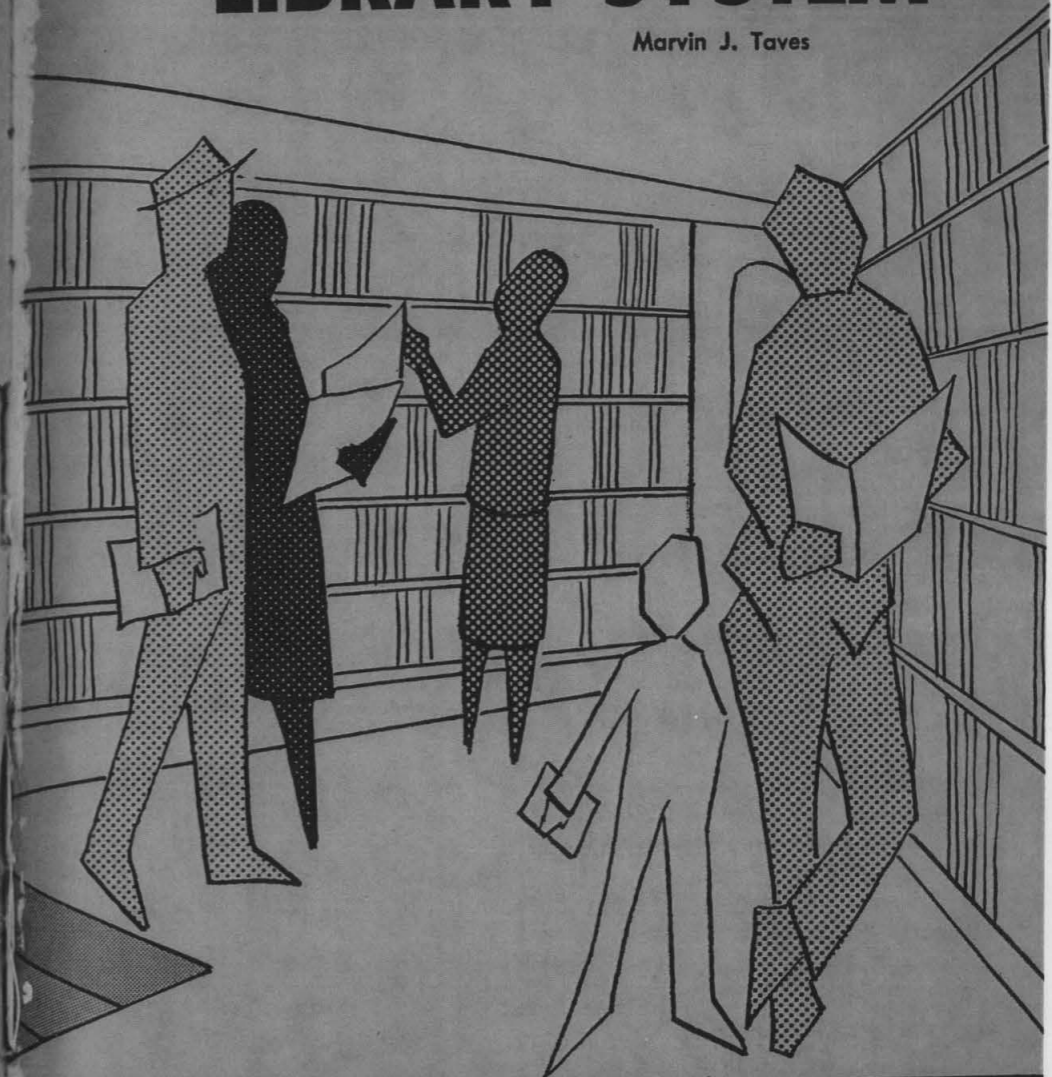


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# Public Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding A RURAL MINNESOTA LIBRARY SYSTEM

Marvin J. Taves



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# Public Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding A Rural Minnesota Library System\*

Marvin J. Taves  
and

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**R**URAL LIFE IS UNDERGOING rapid and constant change in response to urbanization, growing industrial technology, increased superhighway transportation, and mass communication media. Educational opportunities also are improving in rural areas; this is of great importance both to those remaining there and those migrating to urban and metropolitan centers.

By bridging formal and informal education and by preserving our literary heritage, libraries play a vital role in rural life. Library functions and uses varied over the years, as have social characteristics and needs of the people served. Progressive library service responds to today's changes. Imaginative analyses of roles of communication systems and information sources help assess current usefulness and establish future objectives and priorities of libraries.

The librarian's pride is serving the public's reading, visual, and personal needs. To achieve this demands professional librarians and an efficient institution—and a keen awareness of reader interests and attitudes. Librarians, when they compare the services available in most rural areas with their urban counterparts, are convinced that rural people need, want, and would use more adequate library services.

The East Central Regional Library (ECRL) was started in 1959. To learn

how to serve the public better, the library board asked a University of Minnesota research team to find out what people in the region thought about the library. From this study came many interesting facts: some favorable and some less favorable; some expected and some unexpected.

Of particular significance is that an overwhelming majority of the 1,000 persons interviewed considered the library, new as it was then, important to the community. As expected, registered library patrons and those who made greater use of its services felt this more strongly than others interviewed.

### Purpose of the Study

Ultimate purposes of the study were to:

1. Provide stimulus and guidance for fitting the tricounty library system to public needs.

\* A study conducted for the East Central Regional Library, a tricounty regional library system in east-central Minnesota, established through local cooperation and with the help of the Minnesota State Department of Education rural library development program under the Library Service Act.

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2. Establish a frame of reference for similar evaluations elsewhere.

Specific objectives were to assess:

- Current use of the ECRL.
- Attitudes of the area's population toward ECRL functions and services.
- Variations in use and attitudes by different population categories (men versus women, registrants versus non-registrants, open-country versus town residents, and Isanti - Mille Lacs - Pine County comparisons).
- Awareness of, and interest in, different services (technical versus self-improvement versus recreational reading; books versus films versus magazines).
- Potential demands and use of additional materials and library services according to various population categories.

## Methodology

The interview schedule used was developed by the project staff, with assistance from state and tricounty library staffs. Secondary guidance was obtained from other studies (Texas Research League, 1956; Schenk, 1956; Smith, 1954; Bundy, 1960; Houser and Gallo-way, 1949; and Turbeville and Schuler, 1949).

**Sampling Procedures**—Two separate samples were drawn for the study—the registrant and nonregistrant samples. Registrants were registered borrowers of ECRL. (Membership was obtained by completing a data sheet at the first instance of library use.) Nonregistrants were from a random sample of county households not appearing on the registered borrowers list. Obviously, a number of secondary library users (those using materials borrowed by a registrant) could be included in this group.

**Registrant Sample**—The registrant sample was restricted to adult (age 18

and over) library registrants living in the three counties served by the ECRL system—Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine. The population was stratified on residence and the library service outlet used.

For comparison, effort was made to obtain from each county predetermined portions of: (1) men and women; (2) persons 35 or over and persons under 35; (3) town and open-country residents; and (4) bookmobile, branch library, and headquarters library borrowers. After the number desired in a category was determined, every Nth name (every 10th or 15th name in order to secure the desired number) as needed was drawn.

Oversampling allowed for possible deaths, mobility, refusals, and other dropouts.

**Nonregistrant Sample**—The nonregistrant sample was drawn from tax assessment lists. Town and country residents were drawn from village and township lists in purposive proportions. The proportion of nonregistrants needed in each county, village, and township, and the total population from which these could be drawn, were determined. Nth names desired were established.

Names and identifying information were transferred to sample cards used for arranging and controlling interviews. Thus, samples were random within major categories indicated but not necessarily in the proportions that each category occupied in the population.

**Interviewing Procedures**—Interviews were conducted by selected University students and community residents after special training. Field supervisors continuously evaluated interviewing techniques to assure uniformity. Interviewers and supervisors also edited work to assure accuracy.

Data obtained were coded and summarized by machine tabulation and percentage computations. Statistical significance of differences between proportions was assessed by a nomograph based on the *t test*. Some chi-square analyses

Table 1. Distribution of interviewees by county

County	Interviewees	Population	
		Over 18	Total
Isanti	317	8,710	13,350
Mille Lacs	337	9,053	14,560
Pine	346	10,738	15,032
Total	1,000	28,501	42,942

were also used to determine statistical significance. Generalizations reported are statistically significant at the 5-percent level.

Data reliability in an interview survey depends on several factors. One is accuracy of respondents' reports. An evidence of the sample's validity is that nonregistrants unanimously reported no borrowing of films, records, or magazines from the library. However, 5 percent of them reported borrowing books. These persons, although not registered as borrowers, may have obtained books from listed registrants. Or an individual interviewed late in the study may have filed for membership after samples were

drawn. Or a respondent may have consciously or otherwise answered falsely.

**Sample Characteristics**—In spring and summer 1961, 1,000 respondents from the three counties were interviewed (tables 1 and 2).

About 3 in 10 of all respondents had attended or completed grade school. About 4 in 10 had attended or finished high school. Approximately one-fourth had been to college; remaining persons had some other specialized training.

Respondents were well distributed across the adult age span of 18 to 64 years: less than 40, 34 percent; between 40 and 59, 42 percent; over 60, 23 percent. There was no information concerning the remaining 1 percent. For analysis, those between ages 18 and 24 made up one group and those between 50 and 64 made up another. People between 25 and 49 years were grouped in 5-year-age intervals, each having between 6 and 13 percent of the respondents. Thus, no age category lacked substantial representation.

Most respondents were married (83 percent). About 1 in 10 was single and 1 in 10 widowed. None were separated and only 1 percent were divorced.

Table 2. Stratification characteristics of respondents

County	Sex		Status of registration		Residence	
	Male	Female	Registrant	Non-registrant	Town-village	Open country
Isanti	131	186	178	139	192	125
Mille Lacs	146	191	175	162	196	141
Pine	172	174	185	161	188	158
Total	449	551	538	462	576	424

## History, Background, Current Operation

The ECRL became a reality in January 1959 when Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties agreed to establish and support a library.

Limited library service had been available in each county. Isanti, for example, had a tax-supported county library since 1947 with headquarters in Cambridge and 12 stations in villages. However, there were no facilities for open-country residents.

Women's clubs in Milaca, Isle, and Askov promoted and supported small local libraries. There was also a publicly supported library at Sandstone. The library in Hinckley was supported at 5 mills, the legal tax limit for cities and villages, and had 3,000 to 4,000 volumes. It was open 25 hours per week.

The boards of commissioners voted to support the ECRL in this manner:

In 1959, each county was to supply 1 mill; in 1960, 1½ mills; in 1961, 1½ mills; and in 1962, the legal limit of 2 mills. Isanti County, which was already taxing 2 mills for library services, was to provide the same millage as the other counties. The remainder of Isanti's library fund was to be used for library improvements within the county. A federal-state grant of \$58,150 was received in 1959, with smaller grants allocated for 1960 and 1961.

The commissioners established a library board consisting of three members from each county. Miss Emily Mayne, of the State Library Division, began selection of books. A building was erected by the City of Cambridge and Isanti County jointly. The money for the building was over and above that allotted for library service. For 10 months, while the new library building was being completed, the ECRL was housed in the Isanti County Courthouse. At that time the library had 10,000 volumes and was open 29 hours per week.

Many problems had to be faced in establishing a tricounty library. These in-

cluded: securing personnel, setting up routines, determining library hours, planning bookmobile stops, establishing branch libraries, and determining registration and circulation procedures.

The library headquarters was open 51½ hours per week, including 3 evenings. Service was continuous during lunch and dinner hours. The original bookmobile schedule called for 39 stops (11 in Isanti County, 11 in Mille Lacs, and 17 in Pine) for periods varying from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Location and length of bookmobile stops were changed as warranted by demand. At the time of the study there were 40 stops: 9 in Isanti, 12 in Mille Lacs, and 19 in Pine County. In March 1960, the first full month of operation for the bookmobile, 2,997 volumes were issued.

The library headquarters included a children's section and young-adults' and adults' sections. A children's summer reading program was established in 1960 but was discontinued due to lack of funds. Audio-visual materials, originally a part of the Isanti County Library collection, were available and the library held membership in the Minnesota Library Film Circuit. Reports of library statistics and affairs were available to the public and the librarian spoke about the library to various groups.

The number of books and services available continue to expand and improve: At the beginning of 1962 the ECRL had 24,000 volumes and many records, magazines, pamphlets, pictures, and 790 filmstrips. Films were also available through the ECRL's membership in the Minnesota Library Film Circuit. A pamphlet entitled "East Central Regional Library: Isanti, Mille Lacs, Pine" was issued by the library in March 1962. It covers the location of service outlets, number of borrowers, size of the collection, services available, staff, circulation statistics, reference resources, and financial report. This booklet is available.

## Library Registrants and Nonregistrants

### Reading Habits

To plan personnel requirements and activity programs, a librarian should know how much time people in the community spend reading in a week or even a year. This reading time relates to and competes with participation in other activities.

No attempt was made to determine amount of time spent in reading newspapers. For those who read only a short time (from nothing to 5 hours a week), season of the year was relatively unimportant. However, for those reading 6 or more hours a week, there was significant variation by season. It was not surprising that more people read this much of the time in the winter than in other seasons, but the difference was not great (table 3).

The reading material concerned usually requires more free time and a longer attention span than needed for newspapers. Apparently, such reading is done more by rural people when there is freedom from farmwork and by all readers when there are fewer outdoor sports or other recreational activities.

When men and women of the same residential areas were compared, little difference was found in the proportion of time spent reading during the four seasons. However, reading habits of men and women in the open country differed from people in town. Reading 6 or more hours a week was consistently reported by about 10 percent more town than open-country residents for each season.

The proportion of those who read materials other than newspapers was not significantly associated with age. Yet there was a noticeable positive association between age and amount of time spent reading. During the summer 45 percent of those under 40 read 6 or more hours a week, 57 percent of those 40 to 59, and 68 percent of those 60 and over.

Proportions of those reading from 1 to 5 hours a week were complementary: 47 percent, youngest group; 40 percent, middle group; and 26 percent, oldest group.

Men exhibited a pattern similar to that of the whole group. Men who reported reading 6 or more hours a week were 42 percent of the under 40 group, 39 percent of the middle group, and 63 percent of the 60-and-over group. Those who read only 1 to 5 hours a week were 53 percent of the youngest group, 39 percent of the middle group, and 31 percent of the oldest group.

Although some variations existed in reading habits by season, residence, sex, and age, it may be concluded that:

- All people read more during the winter.
- Open-country women more often read more hours than open-country men.
- Town residents read more hours than those in the open country.
- Persons 60 years of age and over more often read for greater amounts of time.

However, differences were not great. Another question related to time of day or week when people read most. The majority of people preferred Monday

**Table 3. Proportion spending specified hours per week reading (other than newspapers) by season of year\***

Hours	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	percent			
0	6	8	6	4
1 to 5	46	48	44	38
6 or more	47	43	49	57
No information	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100

\* N = 1,000



**Table 4. Distribution of responses by time of day and week to the question: "When do you most often do such reading?"\***

Portion of week	Portion of day		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
	percent†		
Monday through			
Friday .....	7	14	73
Saturday .....	3	6	27
Sunday .....	3	11	29

\* N = 1,000

† Percentages add to more than 100 as some respondents designated more than one period in which they read most.

through Friday evenings (table 4), but a significant proportion read most on Saturday and Sunday evenings (27 and 29 percent, respectively). Data comparing time of reading by sex showed that men's reading was somewhat more frequently concentrated in evening hours.

More significant are differences in reading habits of library registrants and nonregistrants. For example, two comparisons may be made using the nonreader at one extreme and those reading 6 hours a week or more at the other. Among registered library borrowers, nonreaders constituted no more than 4 percent. About two-thirds of those who reported reading 6 or more hours a week were library registrants.

Among nonregistrants, the nonreader ranged up to 12 percent. The number of those in this group who read 6 or more hours a week was less than one-half. This indicates that more library registrants read other than newspaper materials and do so for more extended time periods.

### Sources of Information

How many books, magazines, records, and films did people in these three rural counties buy or borrow during the 3 months before interviews? Was there a difference between library registrants and nonregistrants, between men and women, between farm residents and those in town?

Data consistently showed a greater use of each media by library registrants than the rest of the population (table 5). Also, among those who bought or borrowed these media, more were obtained by library registrants than nonregistrants. This, therefore, supports the assumption that the tricounty library registrant is a heavier consumer than his counterpart of such informational and recreational materials.

The majority of interviewees obtained books, magazines, records, or films during the 3 months preceding interviews. More interviewees obtained magazines than any other item. Almost all (97 percent of registrants, 94 percent of nonregistrants) reported purchase or borrowing of one or more magazines.

**Magazines**—Most respondents obtained their magazines from a bookstore, mail-order house, or publisher (table 5). For the library registrant, the next most frequent source was the grocery store and drug store, then the church, friends, and the ECRL which ranked fifth. The pattern was similar for nonregistrants, but for them the church was a more frequent source than the grocery or drug store. Other sources were less frequently utilized.

**Books**—As with magazines, books were purchased or borrowed by the great majority of registrants (8 out of 10) during the 3-month period before interviews (table 5). Almost two-thirds of the library registrants obtained books from the ECRL; of this number, two-thirds obtained more than five books.

Library registrants in sizeable proportions also obtained books from a bookstore, mail-order house, publisher, friends, and many other sources. Nonregistrants who obtained books depended most heavily upon the bookstore, mail-order house, or publisher. Less than 10 percent obtained books from any one of the other sources listed.

**Records**—Twice as many registrants as nonregistrants (20 percent compared to 10 percent) obtained phonograph re-

**Table 5. Percent of registrants\* and nonregistrants† who obtained information from specific sources**

Source of information	Bookstore, mail-order house, publisher	Grocery store, drug store, and the like	ECRL	Local school	Church	County agent, home agent, or 4-H agent	Book club	Friends	Total—all sources	
										percent
<b>Books</b>										
Registrants .....	26	15	63	10	9	2	11	25	80	
Nonregistrants .....	11	7	5	4	8	1	5	9	31	
<b>Magazines</b>										
Registrants .....	84	48	12	5	29	8	.....	19	97	
Nonregistrants .....	83	29	.....	1	34	7	1	16	94	
<b>Records or tapes</b>										
Registrants .....	11	9	2	1	.....	.....	1	2	20	
Nonregistrants .....	3	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10	
<b>Films</b>										
Registrants .....	1	1	4	1	1	.....	.....	1	6	
Nonregistrants .....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	

\* N = 538

† N = 462

cords or sound tapes. For registrants, the most significant sources were the bookstore, mail-order house, or publisher, with the grocery store, drug store, and the like ranking second. Only 2 percent of the library registrants and none of the nonregistrants obtained recordings from the regional library (table 5).

**Films**—The ECRL has 16 mm. films and 35 mm. filmstrips but no slides. Films were obtained less frequently than magazines, books, or records. Only 6 percent of the registrants and 2 percent of the nonregistrants borrowed or purchased films in the 3 months preceding the survey (table 5). Among registrants who obtained films, the regional library was the most frequent source. Of the 4 percent who obtained films from the library, 16 persons obtained three or more films.

However, film circulation differs from book circulation. First, films are not shown in the library building. Second, when one person obtains a film to show to a group, most of the audience does

not know from where the film came. Therefore, those in the audience would not report contact with the library. But the number of persons actually served by the library was greater than study percentages indicate.

**Sex and Residence Differences**—When sources of reading, listening, and viewing materials were compared by sex and residence of the readers, no significant differences in proportions obtaining magazines were found. However, a slightly higher proportion of town (20 percent) than open-country residents (14 percent) obtained 40 or more magazines. On the other hand, considerably higher proportions of women than men (63 and 50 percent) and of town more than open-country residents (62 and 51 percent) obtained books during the preceding 3 months of the survey.

These same differences were apparent in the purchasing or borrowing of greater numbers of books. Town residents more frequently than open-country residents (18 and 10 percent) ob-

**Table 6. Percent of women by age who obtained magazines, books, records, or films from the ECRL during the 3 months preceding interviews**

Item obtained	Age		
	18 to 39 (N=226)	40 to 59 (N=204)	60 and over (N=72)
	percent		
Magazines .....	99	95	94
Books .....	83	80	71
Records .....	28	17	3
Films .....	9	5	0

tained records, and obtained them in somewhat greater quantity. A similar pattern was evident with reference to films.

This study found no significant differences between the three counties on the consumption of reading, listening, or viewing materials.

**Age Differences**—The proportion of individuals who obtained magazines, books, records, or films was significantly related to age. The proportion obtaining each type material was highest among those under 40 years of age and lowest among those 60 years or over. The only exception was that the middle age group (40 to 59 years) obtained greater quantities of magazines than the younger age group. Among the women alone, however, little difference existed between various age groups in quantity of magazines obtained (table 6).

### Number and Purpose of Library Visits

Approximately equal numbers of respondents used each of the three service outlets of the regional library in the 3 months prior to interviews. Of the registered borrowers, 25 percent visited the headquarters exclusively, 26 percent the branch libraries, and 17 percent the bookmobile one or more times during this period (figure 1). Comparatively few persons visited more than one service outlet. Each library facility was visited

by 2 percent of the nonregistrants. Variation by sex and residence was negligible.

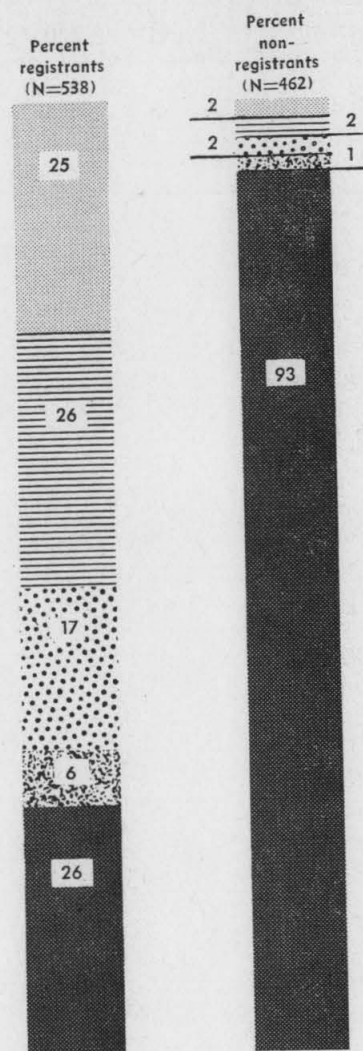
When asked if distance to the library ever discouraged use of library headquarters, branch, or bookmobile, 88 percent of respondents replied, "never." Yet variation seen in the amount of library visiting by county indicates that distance may be a greater factor than realized.

More registrants in Isanti County than those of the other counties visited library headquarters: 74 percent in Isanti, 11 percent in Mille Lacs, and 4 percent in Pine County. This was probably not due only to headquarters being in Isanti County but also because Isanti had countywide library service since 1947—12 years before the ECRL was started—and the other counties did not. Thus, the habit of library use, which takes time to develop, was already established in Isanti County.

Because there was no branch library in Isanti County only 5 percent of the respondents had visited a branch, compared to 41 percent in both Mille Lacs and Pine. More than one-fourth of the registrants in Mille Lacs and Pine, 28 and 27 percent respectively, had been to the bookmobile, compared to 9 percent in Isanti. The bookmobile made 9 stops in Isanti County, 11 in Mille Lacs, and 19 in Pine—the largest of the three counties.

In response to the question, "For what purpose do you go to the library?" respondents indicated that they most often went "for recreation or to pass time" (19 percent) and "for specific information" (17 percent). Other frequent responses were, "for education and learning, professional, or self-improvement," "to pick up materials," and "for new ideas and inspiration." Those interviewed said they rarely, if ever, went to the library just to "be with people," or "to browse." Curiosity may have drawn some to the library but this was not a measured factor.

Since more women than men used the library and visited it for a greater variety of purposes, these purposes were exam-



- Visited headquarters exclusively
- Visited branch exclusively
- Visited bookmobile exclusively
- Visited more than one unit
- Have not visited any unit

Fig. 1. Percent of sample visiting library service outlets in the 3 months preceding the interviews.

ined closely. At least one in six women, regardless of educational achievement, claimed they went to the library most often for recreation or to pass time. Yet, no more than 3 percent, no matter what their education, went to the library just to be with people. Less than 1 in 25 went to the library most often to browse.

Although not statistically significant, it is interesting that women who had no more education than the eighth grade went to the library more often for new ideas and inspiration than did women with more schooling. More women with 3 or more years of college (27 percent) than those with only 1 or 2 years (17 percent) went to the library for education, learning, and professional or self-improvement. Women with at least some college tended to go to the library for specific information more often than those with less schooling.

### General Fields and Specific Subjects of Interest

In a library, distribution of funds is based upon many factors. Included are: total budget, reader and circulation demands, professional evaluation and selection, and availability of materials in social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. In short, an attempt must be made to satisfy reader demands and yet maintain a representative collection of printed and audio-visual materials in various fields. Knowing preferences of registrants and nonregistrants greatly helps the librarian and staff make these decisions.

Respondents were asked if they would be very interested, somewhat interested, or not interested in having books, information, and materials in general fields of knowledge and on specific topics made accessible through the public library. It was expected that some important questions would be answered:

How do library registrants compare with nonregistrants?

How do men compare with women in reading interests?



Are expressed interests similar in each county?

How do people in the country compare with their neighbors in town?

In general, how interested are people in having different subjects supplied them through the public library?

In what subjects are people most interested?

**General Interest Level**—For the sample as a whole, the general fields of highest interest were: (1) travel, biography, and history; (2) fiction; and (3) religion and religious novels (35, 33, and 31 percent, respectively). The next two general fields of greatest interest were (1) music and art, and (2) social problems and issues. Finally, just over 10 percent of respondents said they would be very interested in the library supplying information in philosophy and psychology; literature and languages; business, economics, and financial problems; and science and technology.

Of the specific topics, 40 percent of the sample expressed very high interest in home and family living and health and medical care. About 30 percent were very interested in how to live better, sports and hobbies, how-to-do-it books, and gardening. Less interest was shown toward foreign countries and people currently making news headlines. Electronics and rockets and space travel attracted the smallest number of the interviewees.

These answers revealed the connotation of certain terms in the public's mind. For the combined group concerning general fields, science and technology were considered to be of little interest. Yet, when asked about special topics, 40 percent reported that health and medical care, which are in the science field, were of very high interest. Most how-to-do-it books are in the general field of technology. But the term science, in respondents' minds, was apparently interpreted as pure science—largely in the engineering field. Technology was probably more closely associated with engineering, electronics, and technical applications of pure science than with more familiar crafts and useful arts.

**Interests of Registrants and nonregistrants Differ**—More registered borrowers than nonregistrants apparently were very interested in most general fields included in the study (table 7). The two groups almost equally expressed a very strong interest in business, economics, and financial problems; science and technology; and religion and religious novels. But almost twice as many registrants indicated very high interest in most other general fields. For some fields such as fiction, social problems and issues, and philosophy and psychology, the proportion was almost three times as great.

Among the least popular general fields, as judged by the high proportions of respondents who were not interested, were philosophy and psychology; science and technology; literature and languages; and business, economics, and financial problems.

**Interest in Specific Subjects**—Farm management, crops, soils, and livestock; and mechanics were the only specific topics in which a higher proportion of nonregistrants than registrants were *very interested* (table 7). Similar proportions of registrants and nonregistrants expressed interest in sports and hobbies, rockets and space travel, and electronics. On all other topics, library registrants more often expressed *very high interest*.

Proportions of registrants and nonregistrants expressing *some interest* in specific topics were approximately the same. Larger proportions of nonregistrants were *not interested* in having information supplied through the public library in all subjects except farming and mechanics. Thus, the extreme rather than middle range interest levels discriminate between registrants and nonregistrants.

**Interest of Men and Women Differ**—More women than men expressed very high interest in: books for children, materials to guide children's reading, fiction, religion, and music and art. Men expressed proportionately higher interest in the general fields of: science and technology; and business, economic, and fi-

nancial problems. Women more than men generally expressed strong interest in having books, information, and materials supplied through the public library in most general fields.

The survey verified the assumption that women are more concerned than

men with choosing books and guiding children's reading. Although women were more likely to express *very high interest* in these fields, men did express *some interest*. Over half of the men were not interested in music and art, philosophy and psychology, literature and languages,

**Table 7. Proportions of registrants and nonregistrants interested in information to be supplied through the public library\***

Subject	Very interested		Some interest		Not interested	
	Registrant	Non-registrant	Registrant	Non-registrant	Registrant	Non-registrant
	percent					
<b>General fields:</b>						
Fiction .....	46	16	33	30	20	52
Travel, biography, history .....	46	23	37	33	16	42
Social problems and issues .....	26	9	26	34	29	56
Music and art .....	24	13	33	25	42	37
Philosophy and psychology .....	23	8	31	20	44	70
Religion, religious novels .....	22	†24	37	35	26	40
Literature and languages .....	21	9	38	25	39	62
Business, economics, and financial problems .....	15	13	39	29	42	55
Science and technology .....	14	12	33	21	51	65
<b>Specific topics:</b>						
Books for children .....	54	29	13	21	32	47
Guiding children's reading .....	48	26	18	21	34	52
Home and family living (such as cooking, care of the young, and remodeling house) .....	44	31	33	33	23	34
Health and medical care .....	41	34	37	38	20	28
How to live better .....	37	26	38	38	25	33
Gardening .....	36	29	33	31	31	38
How-to-do-it books .....	34	22	34	33	32	43
Personal improvement .....	33	19	37	40	28	39
The United Nations .....	32	18	46	40	21	41
Sports and hobbies .....	27	24	43	36	28	39
Personal problems .....	25	15	39	35	35	48
Politics (local, state, national) .....	24	16	36	30	39	53
Cuba .....	24	11	41	34	35	54
Scandinavian countries .....	24	14	39	35	36	52
Congo and Africa .....	23	10	40	30	35	58
Russia and the Russians .....	22	11	39	30	38	56
Farm management, crops, soils, and livestock .....	19	†30	19	17	59	†50
Career and job information .....	19	12	30	26	50	61
Laos and adjoining countries .....	17	8	41	32	40	58
India and her people .....	15	8	44	32	42	59
Great Britain .....	15	6	42	35	42	58
Mechanics .....	13	†16	25	26	62	†57
Algeria and France .....	12	6	42	33	45	60
Rockets and space travel .....	10	8	30	23	62	67
Electronics .....	9	8	22	23	68	68

\* Rank order is based upon registrants "very interested." Percentages have been rounded-off and thus do not always total 100 percent.

† Denotes that nonregistrants showed higher interest than registrants.

and guidance for children's reading. In contrast, over half of the women were not interested in the subject of business, economics, and financial problems.

Twice as many women as men reported very high interest in materials on home and family living being supplied through the public library—50 versus 25 percent. But twice as many men as women showed high interest in farm management materials. Women were more interested in information about health and medical care, personal problems and improvement, and how to live better. Men were more interested in career and job information, sports and hobbies, politics, Russia and the Russians, how-to-do-it books, rockets and space travel, mechanics, and electronics.

Women were least interested in electronics, mechanics, rockets and space travel, and farm management, but some of these same subjects were also of least interest to men. A high proportion indicated they were *not interested* in rockets and space travel, electronics, foreign countries, and career information. These findings are similar to those of other studies on readers' interests (Bundy, 1960).

Average ( $\bar{X}$ ) scores (table 8) showed the intensity of interest in general and specific information and clearly indicated higher total interest among registrants than nonregistrants. For example, registrants, on the average, were very interested in nine categories of information whereas nonregistrants averaged only six. Women on the average were very interested in eight categories compared to seven for the men. Women also indicated more subjects in which they were not interested. Averages for open-coun-

**Table 8. Average ( $\bar{X}$ ) number of respondents by interest in having information on general fields and specific topics supplied by the public library**

	Registrant	Non-registrant	Male	Female	Open country	Town
Very interested .....	9.05	6.17	7.16	8.18	7.64	7.53
Some interest .....	11.85	10.65	11.70	11.66	11.20	11.38
Not interested .....	12.89	17.41	15.50	18.17	15.19	14.84

try residents and town residents were very similar.

Only a few countries and people were included in questions on interests. Because of ethnic identity in rural Minnesota, the largest proportion of very interested responses listed Scandinavian countries. Cuba was second choice, perhaps because it seemed the closest overt communistic threat. The Congo and Africa followed and Russia and the Russians was a close fourth. Least interest was expressed in Algeria, France, and Great Britain, with slightly more interest in India and Laos.

Totaling the number of respondents who were very interested in specific topics and general fields and considering them in rank order suggest priority levels for budget allocations and purchases (table 9).

Judging by those *very interested*, regardless of occupation, four general fields were the most popular:

1. Books for children.
2. Guiding children's reading.
3. Travel, biography, and history.
4. Fiction.

Although these four were most popular among almost all occupational groups, proportions choosing them varied considerably. For example, among those choosing books for children in largest proportions, the range was from 32 percent for craftsmen, foremen, and operatives to 60 percent for professionals and semiprofessionals. This group, professional and semiprofessional, expressed most interest in almost all other general fields. Two exceptions showed proportionately more proprietors, managers, and officials in-

**Table 9. Priority groupings of general fields and specific topics**

GENERAL FIELDS					
Priority group I.	N	Priority group II.	N	Priority group III.	N
Books for children .....	426	Religion and religious novels .....	310	Literature and languages.....	155
Guiding children's reading .....	375	Music and art .....	191	Business, economics, and financial problems .....	130
Travel, biography, and history .....	351	Social problems and issues .....	181	Science and technology.....	119
Fiction .....	325	Philosophy and psychology .....	164		
SPECIFIC TOPICS					
Priority group I.	N	Priority group II.	N	Priority group III.	N
Home and family living.....	397	How-to-do-it books .....	282	Politics .....	199
Health and medical care.....	397	Sports and hobbies .....	256	Career and job information .....	170
Gardening .....	330	United Nations .....	242	Mechanics .....	144
How to live better .....	321	Personal problems .....	227	Rockets and space travel.....	94
Personal improvement .....	304	Farm management, crops, soils, and livestock.....	221	Electronics .....	84

terested in business, economics, and financial problems; and clerical and sales people showed more interest in music and art.

A comparison of the average number of general fields and specific topics selected by occupational groups showed more general fields chosen by the professional and semiprofessional group (table 10).

**Specific Subject Interests According to Occupations**—Are occupations and reading interests similar or complementary—do farmers want to read about farm or nonfarm subjects?

Proportionately many more farmers and farmhands than any other group wanted materials on farm management, crops, soils, and livestock. Craftsmen, foremen, and operatives expressed highest interest in mechanics, how-to-do-it books, and sports and hobbies. Housewives and homemakers selected materials on home and family living, health and medical care, gardening, and how to live better. Choices of service and clerical workers were similar to those of housewives.

Unemployed, disabled, and retired persons perhaps revealed many anxieties in their major choices of library reading materials: personal problems and per-

sonal improvement. Laborers, excluding farm and mine, reflected strongest interest in career and job information. This interest may be rooted in job insecurity and higher occupational aspirations. Other subjects with strong attraction for them were sports and hobbies and mechanics.

Proprietors, managers, and officials were most interested in health and medical care, how to live better, and sports and hobbies. Professional and semiprofessionals were unique in their high in-

**Table 10. Comparison of average ( $\bar{X}$ ) number of general fields and specific topics chosen by respondents with different occupations**

Occupational group	General fields	Specific topics
Professionals and semiprofessionals .....	4.30	5.99
Housewives and homemakers.....	3.07	4.95
Clerical and sales workers .....	3.05	4.73
Laborers, excluding farm and mine .....	2.87	6.09
Proprietors, managers, and officials .....	2.37	3.85
Service workers .....	2.33	4.15
Farmers and farmhands .....	1.76	4.15
Unemployed, retired, and disabled people .....	1.69	4.75
Craftsmen, foremen, and operatives .....	1.64	4.18



terest in other countries and societies, giving top priority to the Congo and Africa, Russia and Russians, and Scandinavian countries. They also gave high priority to how-to-do-it books and the various domestic interests selected by homemakers, service, and clerical workers.

Data showed that less educated readers thought of their reading interests by specific topics and usually did not associate them with general fields. The professional or semiprofessional apparently knows more exactly what his reading interests are (table 10).

Other studies also show that the library registrant's occupation influences his choice of reading subjects. H. B. Chandler and J. T. Corteau (1940) reported in their study of rural reading that the professional group preferred philosophy, social science, literature, biography, and history. Those engaged in trade and transportation were most interested in travel. Farmers and those in manufacturing expressed higher interest in applied and natural sciences.

### Knowledge, Interest, and Use of Available Services

A library serves its public—the individual and organized group—in many ways. It makes available a variety of services besides providing books. Many people are not aware of this. This study attempted to discover:

- To what extent is the public aware of ECRL services?
- Who uses them?
- Is there a difference in use by sex and residence?
- Are organizations interested in using library services?

In considering these questions, keep in mind that the ECRL was a new library and had been operating for only 18 months at the study time. Services were being expanded and new services added. It is understandable then that data indi-

cated a lack of knowledge about services provided. Many respondents either were misinformed about availability of services or were not sure whether they were available.

The ECRL provided 17 of the 24 services listed in the schedule (tables 11 and 12). When asked about the seven not offered, most library users claimed correctly that either these services were not offered or that they were not sure. Among registrants proportions who stated that these various services were not available ranged from 24 to 54 percent and proportions "not sure" ranged from 42 to 62 percent. On the whole, approximately 1 in 10 interviewees was misinformed on availability of services, while about half were not sure.

The service provided of which library registrants were least often aware was that of keeping the public informed on what the library was doing through newspaper and radio reports; 24 percent claimed the library was not providing this service and 28 percent were not sure. However, data also shows that approximately one-third claimed to have been informed about library activities through this service.

Other services about which less than half of the registrants were positively aware included: maintaining local and regional history files, maintaining files of current newspapers, publishing lists of materials of topical interest (actually lists of new acquisitions), film projector services, film loan service, the children's storytelling hour, availability of vocational guidance materials, and existence of reference materials, particularly for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers.

Among nonregistrants incidence of unfamiliarity with services was considerably higher (table 12). Only scattered individuals claimed to have used any service, except for those who reported having been kept informed about the library through news reports and radio. The majority of nonregistrants were either misinformed or in doubt about availability of services. Over three-fourth reported that they did not know

Table 11. Percent of registrants (N=538) claiming knowledge and use of library services

Library service	No	Not sure	Never used	Yes				No information
				Used once	Used two to four times	Used five or more times	Total used once or more	
Collect information on specific topic requested by adult .....	2	36	36	12	10	3	25	5
*Provide film projector loan service .....	13	64	19	2	1	1	4	.....
†Show educational or cultural films or movies for adults.....	27	62	8	1	1	1	3	.....
†Show films or movies for children .....	24	55	15	1	2	3	6	.....
Maintain film loan service.....	13	48	31	2	3	2	7	1
‡Have children's storytelling hour .....	19	31	38	1	5	3	9	3
Provide material on wide variety of nonfiction subjects.....	5	17	38	7	18	15	40	.....
Keep on hand educational and reference material for school age children .....	4	21	58	2	8	6	16	1
Keep on hand educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives .....	4	33	47	5	9	2	16	.....
Maintain vocational guidance material for young people and adults .....	5	55	35	2	1	1	4	1
Keep on hand educational and reference material for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers .....	5	51	35	4	3	1	8	1
Prepare displays to interest people in library use .....	24	33	26	5	8	4	17	.....
†§Provide instruction in adult reading skills .....	37	58	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Publish lists of materials available on matters of topical interest .....	16	47	21	4	4	6	14	2
†Carry on adult education classes	54	42	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	2
Help library users find references and materials in the library .....	2	6	45	12	23	11	46	1
Borrow material not on hand from other libraries when requested .....	4	28	43	12	10	3	25	.....
†Provide space for meetings of book discussion groups .....	41	50	7	.....	.....	1	1	1
†Provide discussion and demonstration on how to use library .....	35	51	12	1	.....	.....	1	1
†Maintain calendar of local events, officers of local organizations .....	31	61	5	.....	2	1	3	.....
Maintain files of current newspapers .....	17	45	33	1	2	1	4	1
†Maintain local-regional history file .....	14	64	15	2	1	.....	3	4
Maintain file of magazines .....	8	24	48	5	7	6	18	2
‡Keep public informed through newspaper and radio reports on what library is doing.....	24	28	18	5	12	13	30	.....

\* Community groups bought movie projector for library use in Hinckley and Princeton. Filmstrip projector—Isanti County use mainly.

† Services not offered by library.

‡ Once a month at headquarters and branches. (This service was discontinued in August 1961.)

§ Books on the subject but no instruction.

|| To date only one such list on art. Otherwise, acquisitions lists in subject fields.

Table 12. Percent of nonregistrants (N=462) claiming knowledge and use of library services

Library service	No	Not sure	Never used	Yes			No information
				Used once	Used two to four times	Used five or more times	
Collect information on specific topic requested by adult	7	59	32	1			1
*Provide film projector loan service	18	69	12				1
†Show educational or cultural films or movies for adults	21	71	7				1
†Show films or movies for children	18	68	11	1			2
‡Maintain film loan service	18	67	14				1
‡Have children's storytelling hour	16	63	19			1	1
Provide material on wide variety of nonfiction subjects	4	50	42	1	1		2
Keep on hand educational and reference material for school age children	5	46	45		1	1	2
Keep on hand educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives	4	59	35				2
Maintain vocational guidance material for young people and adults	5	69	23				3
Keep on hand educational and reference material for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers	6	65	26				3
Prepare displays to interest people in library use	17	57	21	1	2		2
†§Provide instruction in adult reading skills	24	69	5				2
Publish lists of materials available on matters of topical interest	13	67	15	2	2		1
†Carry on adult education classes	33	60	4				3
Help library users find references and materials in the library	3	36	56	1	1	1	3
Borrow material not on hand from other libraries when requested	4	53	41				2
†Provide space for meetings of book discussion groups	25	67	6				2
†Provide discussion and demonstration on how to use library	22	65	13				2
†Maintain calendar of local events, officers of local organizations	16	74	8				2
Maintain files of current newspapers	14	63	22				1
¶Maintain local-regional history file	9	74	16				1
Maintain file of magazines	8	61	29		1		2
#Keep public informed through newspaper and radio on what the library is doing	29	48	14	2	3	2	7

\* Community groups bought movie projector for library use in Hinckley and Princeton. Filmstrip projector—Isanti County use mainly.

† Services not offered by library.

‡ Once a month at headquarters and branches. (This service was discontinued in August 1961.)

§ Books on the subject but no instruction.

¶ To date, only one such list is available.

Table 13. Use of library services in rank order

Services provided by library	Percent of registrant sample reporting use of service
Help library users find references and material in the library	46
Provide material on a wide variety of nonfiction subjects	40
Keep public informed through newspaper and radio reports on what library is doing	30
Collect information on specific topic requested by adult	26
Borrow materials not on hand from other libraries when requested	25
Maintain file of magazines	18
Prepare displays to interest people in library use	17
Keep on hand educational and reference material for school age children	16*
Keep on hand educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives	16†
Publish lists of materials available on matters of topical interest	14
Have children's storytelling hour	9‡
Keep on hand educational and reference material for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers	8
Maintain film loan service	7§
Maintain vocational guidance material for young people and adults	4
Maintain current file of local newspapers	4
Provide film projector loan service	4
Maintain local-regional history file	3

\* The use made of these materials by children is a considerable underestimate since the respondents (all adults) were asked, "How often have you used each service?"

† This figure would be higher if computed only for the occupational category for which the material was intended—namely, housewives. Men wouldn't be expected to greatly use these materials.

‡ This figure would be expected to be lower than many others because the service is offered only once a month, and of course, occurs only at the headquarters and branch libraries.

§ See page 9 for explanation of percentages of film loan service.

whether most services were being offered. This unfamiliarity may partly explain this group's failure to use the library.

Comparison of respondents by sex and residence showed that women more often than men, and town more often than open-country residents, were sure of available services. On the whole, open-country men were least certain while town women were most certain.

This lack of familiarity, particularly by nonregistrants, suggests the need to explore more ways to spread information about the library. The brighter side is that many services were available in a library so recently organized, and that they were used by a sizeable portion of the population.

**Utilization of Library Services**—The extent that some services were used during the 3 months preceding interviews was also assessed. The reported use of different services varied considerably (table 13): services frequently used, 25 percent or more of the total registrant sample; services less frequently used, 10 to 24 percent; and services occasionally used, less than 10 percent.<sup>1</sup>

That the public regarded and used the library mainly as a book supplier is a not-too-surprising generalization derivable from data. The more frequently used services concerned supplying or securing information from books. On the other hand, occasionally used services were almost entirely nonbook-supplying services:

<sup>1</sup> A few responses regarding use of library services were obtained from nonregistrants. However, the proportion was so small that they have been omitted here. A few services which the library did not provide were reported as having been used. This finding probably reflected a tendency, noted in other studies, for respondents to give the socially acceptable answer. The occurrence of this phenomenon was minimal (never over 3 percent of the total respondents) and did not materially bias results. These persons may actually have received a service so similar to the listed nonexistent service that they placed it in this category.

Services which, although not offered, were reported as having been used were: (1) showing educational or cultural films or movies for adults; (2) showing films or movies for children; (3) providing space for meetings of book discussion groups; (4) providing discussions and demonstrations on how to use the library, library catalogues, and reference materials; and (5) maintaining a calendar of local events and officers of local organizations.



children's storytelling hour, film loan service (see page 9 for percentages on film loan service), newspaper files, and film projector service.

General services such as help with finding library materials and provision of nonfiction subject matter were more frequently utilized than such specialized services as provision of educational and reference materials for homemakers, businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers; and provision of vocational guidance materials.

Two variables, sex and residence, were thought to possibly influence type of services utilized. These were given special consideration.

**Sex**—Statistically significant differences existed between men and women in type of library service used. A greater proportion of *women* interviewed reported using each of the following services during the 3 months preceding interviews.<sup>2</sup>

1. Educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives.
2. Educational and reference material for school age children.
3. Displays to interest people in use of the library.
4. News reports on what the library is doing.

A greater proportion of the *men* interviewed reported using:<sup>3</sup>

1. Educational and reference materials for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers.
2. Local-regional history file.

It was not expected that both men and women were more likely to use services related to their occupational roles than any other services.

Women seemed more influenced by, or more cognizant of, services encourag-

ing or informing about library use. They, more than men, "used" displays and news reports.

Another finding, apparent in other, not statistically significant data, showed that men interviewed had used nonbook-related services: the magazine file, newspaper file, and the local and regional history file.

**Residence**—Some differences existed between town and open-country residents in type of library service used. More *town* residents reported using each of the following services during the 3 months preceding interviews:

1. Lists of materials recently acquired.
2. A children's storytelling hour.

This second difference may result because town families were more likely to be within walking distance of the library. Storytelling hours were held only at headquarters and branch libraries while many open-country library registrants patronized the bookmobile. The storytelling hour was discontinued in August 1961.

More *open-country* than town residents reported obtaining help in finding references and materials in the library. This may result from less familiarity with the library by open-country residents. They visited the library less frequently than town residents.

**Services That Should be Dropped or Added**—None of the 17 services offered was listed by more than 3 percent of either registrants or nonregistrants when they were asked which available services they would just as soon see dropped (table 14). Each service would have been dropped by from 1 to 2 percent of respondents.

Sizeable numbers also volunteered information about certain services that they would not drop. For instance, although 2 percent of the registrants reported that

they would drop the service of helping library patrons find references and materials, 82 percent said they felt this service should not be dropped. For each service in the schedule, approximately twice as many registrants as nonregistrants said it should not be dropped.

Many of the total sample felt they would benefit from adding each service if it was not available (table 14). Of course, this question was pertinent only for those who thought the service was not available. They, in essence, replied either, "I think the service is not avail-

Table 14. Percent of registrants (N=538) and nonregistrants (N=462) who would continue or discontinue specific library services

Library service	Registrants			Nonregistrants		
	Would drop service	Would benefit during next year by adding service	Would recommend adding service	Would drop service	Would benefit during next year by adding service	Would recommend adding service
	percent					
Collect information on specific topic requested by adult	2	25	20	2	32	22
*Provide film projector loan service	1	34	35		37	32
†Show educational or cultural films or movies for adults	1	56	44		57	37
†Show films or movies for children		38	38	1	32	36
Maintain film loan service	1	28	27	1	34	32
‡Have children's storytelling hour	1	12	13	2	18	24
Provide material on wide variety of nonfiction subjects	1	11	9	2	12	11
Keep on hand educational and reference material for school age children	2	9	12	2	16	19
Keep on hand educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives	1	16	15	2	23	21
Maintain vocational guidance material for young people and adults	1	25	28	3	23	27
Keep on hand educational and reference materials for businessmen, farmers, or skilled workers		23	24	2	30	27
Prepare displays to interest people in library use	2	24	22	2	22	22
†§Provide instruction in adult reading skills		35	32	1	20	20
Publish lists of materials available on matters of topical interest	1	36	31	1	31	26
†Carry on adult education classes		41	34		28	27
Help library users find references and materials in the library	2	4	4	2	15	11
Borrow material not on hand from other libraries when requested	1	18	14	2	19	18
†Provide space for meetings of book discussion groups		26	23	1	21	18
†Provide discussion and demonstration on how to use library	1	28	27	2	16	24
†Maintain calendar of local events, officers of local organizations	1	30	24	1	24	23
Maintain files of current newspapers	1	16	14	1	18	16
¶Maintain local-regional history file	1	39	34	1	27	27
Maintain file of magazines	2	12	10	2	17	17
‡Keep public informed through newspaper and radio reports on what library is doing	2	25	19	1	32	28

\* Community groups bought movie projector for library use in Hinckley and Princeton. Filmstrip projector—Isanti County use mainly.

† Services not offered by library.

‡ Once a month at headquarters and branches. (This service was discontinued in August 1961.)

§ Books on the subject but no instruction.

|| To date, only one such list on art. Otherwise, acquisitions lists in subject fields.

¶ Inadequate to date but file begun.

‡ No radio programs.

<sup>2</sup> Differences significant beyond .02 level.

<sup>3</sup> Differences significant beyond .01 level.

able, but would benefit from it during the next year if it was offered."

The service most respondents felt they might benefit from if it was added was the showing of educational or cultural films or movies for adults (registrants = 56 percent, nonregistrants = 57 percent). Over a third of the registrants also listed services involving maintaining local-regional history files, showing films or movies for children, publishing lists of materials available on matters of topical interest, providing instruction in adult reading skills, and a film projector loan service. Fourteen of the 24 services listed were indicated by one-fourth or more registrants as services from which they would benefit during the next year. The same percent of nonregistrants listed 10.

Respondents stating that they would benefit from a service they thought was not offered were asked, "Which of the services from which you would benefit would you like to see added even if that might require an increase in taxes?" The majority of those asked recommended adding most services even with increased taxes. Thus, of the 56 percent of registrants who felt that they would benefit from the service of showing educational and cultural films or movies for

adults, 44 percent made this recommendation even when reminded about additional taxes.

Similar willingness to extend library services even at additional public cost also existed among sizeable proportions of nonregistrants. But data obtained in this study do not allow firm conclusions regarding proportion of total citizenry who would approve such extension.

**Possible Interest of Organizations in Library Services**—One interview item stated: "Listed below are some of the services which libraries can give to community groups and organizations. How interested would be the groups or organizations of which you are a member in having any of the services? (a) very interested, (b) somewhat interested, (c) little or not at all interested." Data evaluating responses could have been presented to show either:

1. Proportion of those belonging to an organization who thought their organization might be interested in the specified service.
2. Proportion of all registrants and/or nonregistrants who would be so interested.

**Table 15. Percent of registrants and of nonregistrants who thought their organizations would be interested in specified library services**

Library service	Registrants			Nonregistrants		
	Very interested (N=241)	Interested (N=348)	Total (N=589)	Very interested (N=97)	Interested (N=208)	Total (N=305)
	percent					
Supply selected books and printed materials of interest to your group	19	37	56	7	27	34
Help group plan programs	14	32	46	6	23	29
Suggest available books, films, recordings of interest	22	39	61	10	28	38
Provide adult education courses	14	24	38	7	18	25
Supply or display to group exhibits of selected book collection(s) and reading lists	14	32	46	5	21	26
Supply or show educational films to groups	31	37	58	14	27	41
Obtain speakers or supply a list of people willing to speak	20	32	52	10	21	31
Give talks on books of interest	12	31	43	6	18	24

The latter course was chosen. The question was asked only of the 74 percent of the registrants and 60 percent of the nonregistrants who indicated membership in a community organization. However, to make possible generalizations, data are presented in terms of proportion of all registrants and all nonregistrants who thought their group would be interested in the specified service.

Degree of interest expressed in the eight services inquired about varied considerably (table 15). Almost half of the registrants and one-fifth of the nonregistrants thought their group would be very interested in at least one service. This greater degree of interest by library registrants was reflected consistently for each specific service.

Services rated most often as of interest or much interest to both groups were those: (1) suggesting books, films, and recordings, (2) supplying or showing educational films to groups, and (3) supplying selected books and other materials of interest to the group. These each received a very interested or interested response by over half of the registrants and one-third of the nonregistrants.

The most significant fact may be that, on the average, two-thirds of all registrants and approximately half of all nonregistrants who were members of a local organization thought their organizations would be interested in the eight services listed. Among the nonregistrants there were no significant differences by sex, residence, or county. But among library registrants considerably greater interest was shown by women than men and interest was most frequently expressed by residents of Isanti County—least frequently by residents of Pine County. No differences were very pronounced.

### Interest in Bookmobile Service

This study also inquired into the satisfaction of respondents with the bookmobile service.

Twenty percent of the library registrants patronized the bookmobile during

**Table 16. Responses of open-country respondents to: "Can you tell us where the nearest bookmobile stop is?"**

Response	Registrant (N=152)	Non-registrant (N=206)
	percent	
Yes	74	64
No	26	36
Total	100	100

**Table 17. Percent aware of bookmobile stop by county**

County	Percent
Isanti (N=317)	40
Mille Lacs (N=337)	64
Pine (N=346)	66

the 3 months prior to interviews. Thirteen percent of them had visited the bookmobile four or more times during that period.

Approximately one-third of those to whom the question applied, largely open-country respondents, did not know the nearest bookmobile stop. As might be expected, a greater percentage of registrants than nonregistrants knew the location (table 16). By county, the study showed relatively greater awareness of bookmobile stops among Mille Lacs and Pine than Isanti County respondents (table 17). With headquarters in Isanti County, there was less necessity for its residents to use the bookmobile service. By sex, difference in awareness of stops was not significant.

When asked about convenience of the bookmobile stop, 9 of every 10 of those aware of its location and concerned with bookmobile service considered the stop convenient for themselves. Similar proportions considered it convenient for their neighborhoods. Although more men thought that stops were convenient, more men than women also felt that they could be made more convenient. In response to various choices for a bookmobile stop, significant proportions of both women (21 percent) and men (16 percent)



wanted the bookmobile to come to a different place than it did.

Nonregistrants (21 percent), regardless of sex, preferred some other bookmobile stop only slightly more often than registrants (17 percent). But it is unlikely that a significant number refrained from using the bookmobile primarily because it did not stop at a place of their choice or at convenient times. Interviewers concluded that lack of motivation was more apt to be a predominant reason.

Besides the 19 percent who gave other places as their first choice for the bookmobile stop, 23 percent gave no information (this included those who never used the bookmobile). Fifty-seven percent gave no second choice, 64 percent no third choice, and 69 percent no fourth choice. Most respondents apparently had only one alternative in mind.

Interviewers noted that respondents appeared to be answering the question in terms of convenience for: (1) family members who would usually pick up books, (2) the type of errand or trip they would make in conjunction with the bookmobile visit, and (3) frequency with which such trips would be made. But it cannot be definitely stated that many preferred a place because of its proximity to their home without geographical and ecological studies of certain localities. However, from this study, it is possible to say that schools, village or town halls, or neighborhood stores and cafes were preferred among bookmobile patrons.

Interviewees also volunteered several comments on the bookmobile. Many supported the bookmobile service, or the idea of such service, even though critical of some specific phase of operation. Some comments were openly critical, but most were given as suggestions for improvement.

#### Examples of Comments Received

##### ● Approval by registrants:

"It is a good service to have."  
"We are thankful for bookmobile service."

"The bookmobile provides a very necessary part of our community life that we did not have available before."

"Both librarian and driver are very helpful. We love the service. Very important in the wintertime."

"The mobile unit is an asset to the community."

##### ● Approval by nonregistrants:

"I haven't used the bookmobile but it is encouraging to see it in the areas that don't have such facilities."

"Be sure they don't stop the bookmobile. Next year we are going to be using it."

"Dissatisfied with the present service here (a women's club library) . . . We prefer bookmobile service."

##### ● Disapproval by registrants and nonregistrants:

Most of those who opposed this service objected to it as too expensive and a waste of money. They felt it was inconvenient or a luxury item not worth the cost.

"The mobile visits a town once or twice a month, and when a person wants a book he wants it immediately."

"I'd like to see a small library in each town open 1 day a week instead of the bookmobile."

"We should have a stationary library because it costs less."

"The bookmobile service should be stopped."

"The library is a big waste of money in this area. Doubling up in manpower (driver and librarian) is ridiculous."

**Areas of Improvement**—Although most respondents favored the bookmobile, the number and variety of suggestions given reveal areas for improvement. However, quality and feasibility of suggestions should govern their acceptance by the library staff more than number and variety. Many suggestions were of such a nature that change for the convenience of one person or family would raise the same criticism from someone else. Re-

quests for a different day of the week, a different time, and different material are typical of this kind of comment.

Many bookmobile users felt that the rural school would be a good stop. However, this practice has not been the policy of the rural library development program because it might discourage development of the school library.

Implementation of some suggestions, however, might benefit users. Stores were frequently suggested as bookmobile stops, as were other buildings open at a time more convenient to shoppers. Some people also wanted the bookmobile to be larger, to come more often, and to stay longer.

Suggestions for cutting cost by having only one person rather than two on the bookmobile recurred frequently. Many persons felt that the library should let them know in some way when the bookmobile was coming, either by broadcast, by a notice in the rural paper, or by a schedule posted in a nearby store. Again, more publicity may be the answer. The following are a few of many constructive criticisms.

"The Encyclopedia Britannica should be available in the bookmobile. More counselling books for particular fields (in my case for church and choir work). Keep general knowledge books up to date."

"The library (bookmobile) should leave books in the store as in the past. It's much more convenient to the farm folk who can pick up materials when they come in to shop."

"Bookmobile comes only on Fridays. Earlier in the week would be better."

"The bookmobile should have a special horn . . . blow it and everyone would come running. It comes at noon, and people forget it."

"The bookmobile could stop once a month on a schoolday when the children get out of school."

"Some people wonder if the cost of a bookmobile would not be best divided between each high school library. Also, let adults use it."

"It should stop at rural schools . . . this way expense of mobile would accommodate both children and parents."

"Bookmobile people should see to it that children don't get books too advanced for them."

"Bookmobile does not benefit myself or family unless films are more available there, and it should stop at the country schools."

"I recommend a larger bookmobile."  
"The bookmobile does not stay long enough."

"The bookmobile should broadcast its services and the day it is coming. Cost is too high for the people that are using the service here (8 people)."

"It is a good thing that we have it. A schedule should be posted in the store so we'd know when it is coming to town."

## Public Attitudes Toward the Library

The public's attitude toward the library strongly affects its professional, personal, and informational services. The public influences the kind and amount of support the library receives in the community. Therefore, interviewees were asked whether they thought the public had a very favorable, favorable, or unfavorable attitude toward the ECRL.

A large majority (86 percent) of respondents expressed very favorable or favorable opinions. Only 3 percent expressed unfavorable attitudes and about 10 percent were noncommittal. Proportionately more registrants than nonregistrants reported very favorable attitudes. Nonregistrants were much more ambiguous; four times as many of them were noncommittal.

Town residents more often reported a very favorable opinion of the library. Men and women differed slightly. Thus, those reporting the least favorable attitudes toward the library were nonregistrants from the open country. Most favorable attitudes were reflected by registrants living in town.

**How Important Are Library Services to You? Your Family? Your Community?**

—The public's image of the library differs for themselves, their families, and their community. Respondents indicated how important they thought library services were on these levels.

Ninety-two percent of the total respondents said the ECRL was highly important or important to the community—over half said it was highly important. They felt that the library contributed greatly to community welfare or status. Respondents also generalized its value to their families as slightly greater than to themselves. Sixty-nine percent said it was either highly important or important to them personally, but almost 77 percent said it was of importance to their families. Two-thirds or more said that library services were important to themselves, their families, and the community.

Registrants more often than nonregistrants consistently said that the library was *highly* important to themselves, their families, and the community (figure 2). Slightly higher proportions of nonregistrants in towns than in the open country evaluated the library as highly important or important. Women more often than

men ranked library services as highly important; they were the most laudatory.

Sixty-nine percent of nonregistrants said that library services were of little importance to them personally. Only 11 percent said that the library was of little importance to the community. Such differences in attitudes might lead to the assumption that there would be substantial variation in support of library tax and bond issues. However, overwhelming proportions of the total sample (97 percent of registrants, 86 percent of nonregistrants) indicated the public held the library to be either *important* or *highly important* to the community.

**How Many People Talk About the Library?**—Perception—and perhaps experience—of registered borrowers was revealed in their statements about the number of people talking about the library. For example, only one-fifth of the registrants but more than one-fourth of the nonregistrants said no one ever talked about the library. On the other hand, over one-third of the registrants and less than half as many nonregistrants said that *many* people talked about it. Eight percent of the registrants and 1 percent of the nonregistrants said, "most people talk about the library."

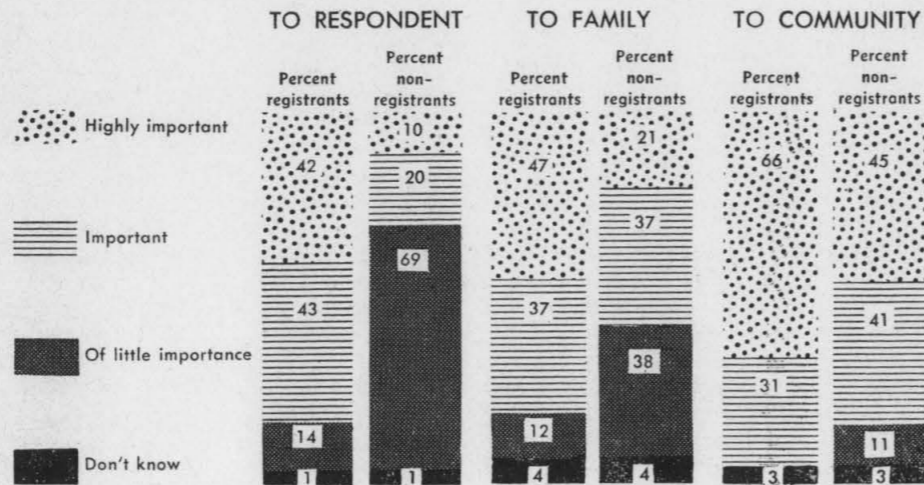


Fig. 2. Importance of library services to respondents, their families, and the community.

Town and open-country registrants did not differ on this question. But nonregistrants in town were more likely to report that *many* people talked about the li-

brary, whereas higher proportions of open-country residents said that *nobody* did. Differences by sex were slight and insignificant. These findings reflect significantly different values and evaluations among respondents.

**Are you Now Better Informed Because of the Library?**—Respondents were asked if they were better informed because of the regional library. Of the total, 4 in 10 gave an unqualified "yes;" 2 more in 10 said they were somewhat better informed; 3 in 10 said they were not better informed. The remaining were undecided. However, these total proportions hide many important differences between registrants and nonregistrants.

Three times as many registrants as nonregistrants said they were better informed because of the library—59 and 19 percent, respectively (figure 3). Registrants from the open country and from town gave similar responses. Nevertheless, the usual pattern prevailed among nonregistrants in that those in town reported more favorable attitudes and higher use of the library. In this case, 37 percent of them, but only 24 percent in the open country, felt they were better informed because of the library services.

It may be concluded that the library increased the number of informed people in the community. However, it was reaching more town residents than rural farm or nonfarm residents.

**Is the Library Duplicating Services Available from Other Sources?**—Does the regional library duplicate services available from the school library, personal home libraries, or magazines and newspapers? The great majority (80 percent) of all respondents said that it was not (table 18). Again, higher proportions of registrants gave this reply—87 and 73 percent respectively. Very slight differences existed between men and women and open-country or town residents.

With such a small amount of judged duplication, the ECRL appears to play a complementary rather than competitive role in the tricounty area. The librarian

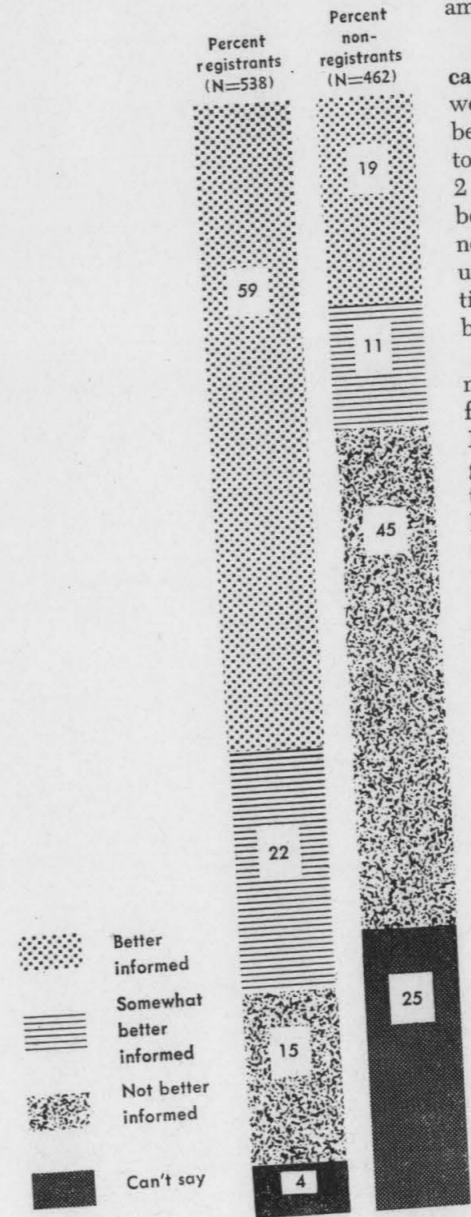


Fig. 3. Distribution of responses to "Are you now better informed because of the library?"



**Table 18. Responses to whether the library duplicates services from other sources**

Response	Registrants (N=538)	Non- registrants (N=462)	Total (N=1,000)
		percent	
No .....	87	73	80
Yes, no further information .....	2	3	3
Yes, school library facilities .....	4	6	5
Yes, books people already own .....	2	1	2
Yes, magazines and newspapers .....	2	4	3
Yes, film loans .....	1	.....	.....
Don't know .....	2	11	6
No information .....	.....	2	1
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

and staff were in uniquely important positions to serve the public.

**How Often Has a Librarian Helped You Find Materials?**—One in four of the 1,000 persons interviewed had been helped by the librarian. Sixty-nine percent of these indicated assistance once or twice and 13 percent indicated assistance three or more times. Residents of Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties, in equal proportions, said they received assistance from the librarian.

In each county, more town than country residents had had assistance six or more times. Eighty-three percent of the men and 58 percent of the women in Mille Lacs reported no assistance. In Isanti and Pine the percentage was 74 and 60 respectively.

Of the total sample, significantly more men than women (76 percent and 61 percent, respectively) said the librarian never helped them. As expected, almost 100 percent of the nonregistrants reported no help from the librarian, compared to 45 percent of the registered borrowers.

Ten percent of the registrants received help from the librarian six or more times and an additional 10 percent had help three to five times. Contrary to previous patterns, registrants from the open country in slightly higher proportions than those from town reported receiving assistance. This may have been because of

less familiarity with library resources, services, or facilities.

**Public Opinion Concerning the Librarians**—Librarians of the ECRL apparently made favorable impressions upon the public. Of the total sample, one-fifth expressed no evaluations about library people. But almost all of the rest considered them to be helpful, efficient, and democratic (78 to 80 percent). Only 1 percent of the total felt that library personnel were indifferent, slow, lazy, or authoritarian. These evaluations did not vary between registrants and nonregistrants, men or women, or open-country or town residents. Thus, residents interviewed gave an almost unanimously favorable evaluation of library personnel.

Of the 1,000 questioned, only 12 persons said the personnel were authoritarian, only 11 said they were slow or lazy, and 10 said they were indifferent. These respondents could have been the same individuals.

Many reasons could account for their negative evaluation; *i.e.*, having to pay for a lost book, being delayed, or being unable to get desired books. Or perhaps it was a "bad day" for them or for the librarian. Nevertheless, the staff should use these reactions for self-examination.

Respondents were also asked if they could remember anyone receiving other than friendly or cooperative service at library headquarters. Of the total 93 percent said no, 5 percent did not answer

the question, and only 2 percent said yes. Slightly more women than men reported poor service. Open-country and town residents did not differ.

Almost 9 in 10 respondents said that they had not heard of anyone receiving unfriendly or uncooperative service at branch libraries; the remaining 12 percent did not answer the question. No one said that they themselves had received unfriendly or uncooperative service at branch libraries. Only 1 percent reported unfriendly or uncooperative service at the bookmobile; 87 percent had not heard of any. Thus, ECRL librarians and their services were rated very favorably and rarely invoked criticism.

**Favorable and Unfavorable Comments**—Another barometer of public opinion about the library was the last item in the interview schedule: "That finishes the questions. Are there any additional comments about the library that you would like to report? Have you any suggestions you want to make?"

Of the 1,000 respondents, 470 offered one or more comments. Favorable evaluations on the adequacy of present library

service were given by 428 persons (table 19).

● Some of the 236 unqualified favorable statements given were:

"Very satisfactory service."  
"Good service at branch library and fine location."

"Library necessary to community; we need culture."

"Very happy with library service because it is bringing culture and enjoyments to the rural communities."

"Regional library service is a definite improvement over the old system."

"Don't stop the service."

● Some of the 275 favorable comments which included suggestions for improvement were:

"Works okay to suit me, but my husband would like more history, geography, and biographies."

"We would like the library open more hours than it is."

"The bookmobile should stay longer."

"Wish the library would be open 1 night a week, at least."

"Happy to see it here. We need more books."

**Table 19. Distribution of favorable evaluations of ECRL by county\***

County	Favorable unqualified	Favorable with suggestions	Total
Isanti .....	83	82	165
Pine .....	86	100	186
Mille Lacs .....	67	93	160
<b>Total responses</b> .....	<b>236</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>511</b>

\* Of the 1,000 respondents, 428 offered the 511 comments.

**Table 20. Distribution of neutral and unfavorable comments on ECRL by county**

County	Neutral with suggestions	Unfavorable* with suggestions	Total
Isanti .....	14	12	26
Pine .....	15	32	47
Mille Lacs .....	9	17	26
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>38</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>99</b>

\* Of the 1,000 respondents, 42 offered the 61 comments.

- Among the 27 comments pertinent to family use of library were:
  - "Family likes it well."
  - "Good for those families that have children or like to read."
  - "I couldn't afford the books my family reads, so we really use and enjoy the library."
  - "Wonderful for the children."
  - "Serves a good purpose, especially for the young."

- A sample of favorable community-oriented responses follows:
  - "An asset and upgrading to the community."
  - "Very good for the town."
  - "Public would be lost without it."
  - "A must for every community."
  - "Public has educational benefits from the library."
  - "Public enjoys library as community center."

- Neutral or unfavorable comments were reported also but in much smaller numbers (table 20). Neutral comments mainly indicated insufficient time to use the library. Some comments included were:
  - "Hope to use it in the future."
  - "No time but would love to."
  - "Glad when I can make use of it."
  - "Plan to use it next year."
  - "Wish I could make more use of it."
  - "Haven't had time. Going to use it next time."
  - "Forgot about it, but should use it."

- Unfavorable comments about the library or the inadequacy of present services included:
  - "Don't care about using the library."
  - "Not interested."
  - "Don't know too much."
  - "Won't bother with it."
  - "Library not much use here."
  - "Mobile should be stopped, because it's never used here."
  - "Library duplicates services received from others."
  - "Regional system duplicates services."
  - "School library gives same services."

- "Use the church library—don't need regional."
  - "Library is a waste of tax money."
  - "I'm concerned about library costs rising."
  - "Stationary library is cheaper."
  - "Nonregional system is less expensive."
  - "Drop all regional services—too high."
- Note that only 61 unfavorable comments were made and these came from only 42 people. The largest number of unfavorable comments came from Pine County where previous opposition had been encountered. The least came from Isanti which houses the library headquarters and where countywide library service had been available for over a decade.

### Factors Discouraging Library Use

In order to improve library services, one must know what hinders more frequent use. Respondents, therefore, were asked to indicate which factors often, sometimes, seldom, or never discouraged them from using library services. Analysis of responses showed that the most frequently discouraging factor was: being too busy (figure 4). Thirty-seven percent said this discouraged them more than any other reason, 19 percent listed it as sometimes, 5 percent as seldom, and 37 percent as never. Of the other items, only one was listed by as many as 5 percent as often discouraging. This was: library is not open at convenient hours. The excuse of lack of time may partially have been used by respondents as a face-saving device to avoid admitting disinterest in an activity approved by society. Responses did not vary significantly by sex. However, slightly more women than men complained about returning library material on time. Residence—Slightly more open-country respondents than town respondents reported these factors as discouraging:

distance to the library, inconvenience of library hours, inconvenience of its location, being too busy, and returning library material on time. Slightly more town than country respondents listed the following two factors as discouraging: (1) library does not have what they want, and (2) material is not up-to-date. These responses may indicate more sophistication among town respondents. Problems of travel and nature of occupation possibly explain the

greater frequency with which open-country residents gave the other factors. **Registrant versus Nonregistrant**—Being too busy was reported more frequently by nonregistrants (46 percent) than by registrants (28 percent) as a discouraging factor. The factor that the library does not have what was wanted was more discouraging to nonregistrants. But they were shown to know, far less often than registrants, what the library offered.

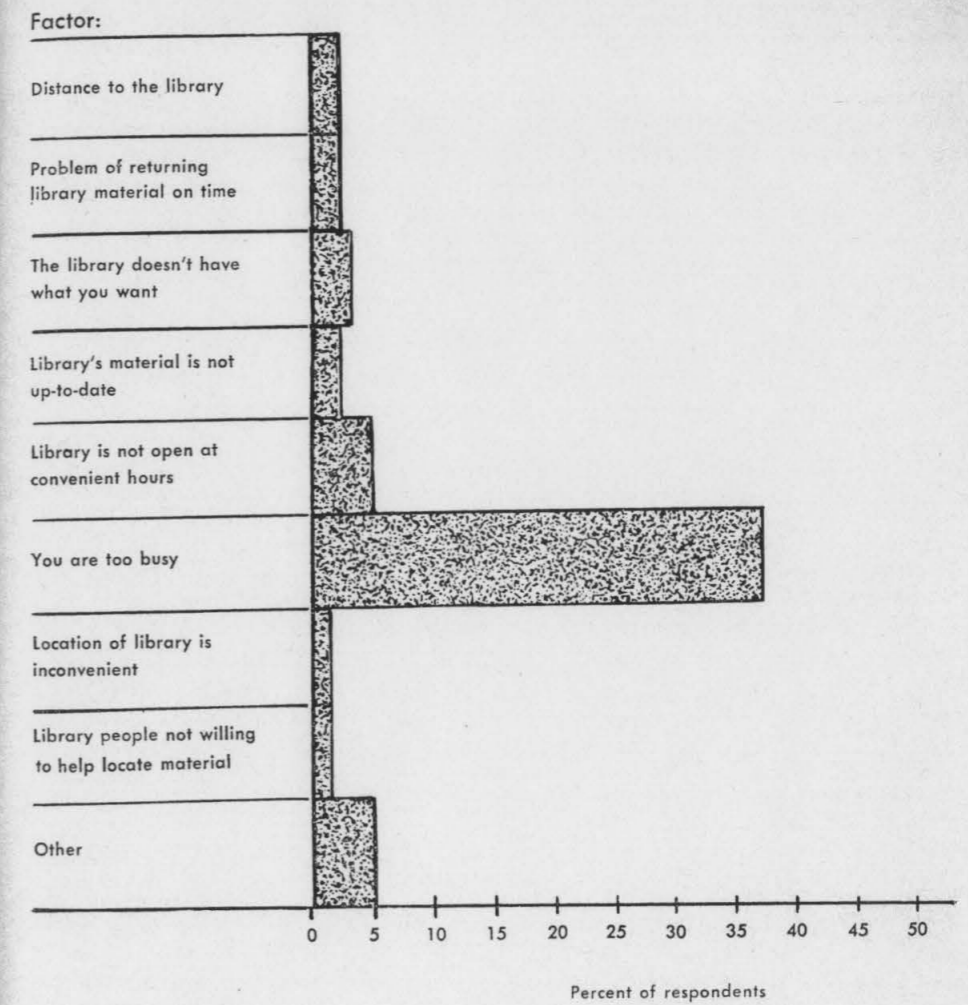


Fig. 4. Factors often discouraging library use (N = 1,000).



## Summary

An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the ECRL contributed importantly to total community welfare or status. Registrants, more than nonregistrants, said the library was highly important to themselves—42 to 10 percent, respectively. Women more than men consistently ranked library services as highly important. There also was an almost unanimously favorable attitude expressed toward library personnel.

Nonregistrants were more doubtful and vague than were registrants about evaluating public attitudes concerning the library. This undoubtedly showed their own unfamiliarity with the library and its service. This, in turn, partially accounted for lack of interest and use.

Fewer men than women were aware of available services, and open-country residents had less accurate information about services than did town residents. This partially explains why least favorable attitudes were expressed by open-country nonregistrants while most favorable attitudes were expressed by town registrants.

Respondents felt that the library contributed importantly to the number of informed people in the community. Four in 10 gave an unqualified yes to this question. An additional 2 in 10 said they were somewhat better informed.

In the 3 months preceding interviews, the three types of service outlets—headquarters, branches, and bookmobile—were visited by an almost equal proportion of registrants.

Approximately one-third of those to whom the question related (mostly open-country residents) did not know the bookmobile stop. However, 9 of every 10 who knew its location and used the service considered the stop convenient for themselves. Many persons requested that the bookmobile stop at rural schools, not realizing that this is contrary to pol-

icy of the rural library development program. Other locations requested were town halls, neighborhood stores, and cafes.

Reading habits of respondents varied only slightly by season, residence, and sex. Greatest variation was found in season, with winter claiming a higher percentage of hours. Most people devoted more hours to reading during the week than on the weekend.

Of these four media—books, magazines, records, and films—the most heavily used by registrants and nonregistrants were magazines. Most registrants obtained magazines from a bookstore, mail-order house, or publisher. The ECRL ranked fifth as a source of this reading material.

General fields of highest interest to most people were: (1) travel, biography, and history; (2) fiction, and (3) religion and religious novels. Specific topics of highest interest were home and family living and health and medical care. Nonregistrants more than registrants were interested in farm management, crops, soils, and livestock; and mechanics. Registrants more often than nonregistrants expressed very high interest in home and family living, personal problems, personal improvement, how-to-do-it books, and foreign countries and their people.

Women were particularly interested in materials pertaining to their children, their homes and family life, personal problems, personal improvement, and health and medical care. Men showed proportionately higher interest in farm management and business or financial problems.

The following variables appeared to affect library use:

**Sex**—More women than men used the library. However, men who used the library used it as frequently as women.

**Age**—Up to 50 years of age, the proportion of registrants was higher than nonregistrants. Beyond 50 years of age, the trend was reversed.

**Education**—The higher the educational level, the greater the library use.

**Occupation**—A greater proportion of white collar than blue collar workers were library registrants.

**Distance**—The greater the distance from home to the library, the less library use.

**Marital Status**—Library registrants were more often single.

The factor which most often discouraged library use was being too busy. This was more true for nonregistrants than registrants.

Among library registrants, the best known and most frequently used services were concerned with the supplying of, or securing information from, books. Those used only occasionally were almost entirely nonbook-supplying services.

The ECRL, like most modern libraries, functions beyond the traditional provision of books for the public. But unfortunately many people were not aware of its many other interesting and valuable services.

## Appendix I: Population in Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties

### Composition of the Counties

Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties are almost entirely rural. Only Isanti County has one town, Cambridge, which has been counted as urban since 1950. In 1960, Cambridge had a population of 2,728.

According to the 1950 Census, the rural farm and rural nonfarm population in Mille Lacs County were nearly equal—51 percent farm and 49 percent nonfarm (figure 5). Isanti had a ratio of almost three to one, 55 percent farm to 20 percent nonfarm (the remaining 25 percent being the urban population of Cambridge). In Pine County the farm population was almost one and three-fourths times that of the nonfarm population (63 percent and 37 percent).

Farm population has generally decreased in Minnesota; since these counties are rural, a decrease in their population was expected. Between 1940 and 1950 the population of all three counties decreased: Mille Lacs by 3 percent; Isanti, 6 percent; Pine, 15 percent. However, between 1950 and 1960, Isanti

County increased in population by 12 percent and the Pine County decrease dropped from 15 to 7 percent (table 21).

In 1960 there were 24 incorporated places in the three counties: 3 in Isanti, 8 in Mille Lacs, and 13 in Pine County (figure 6). These represented less than half of the total population of Mille Lacs (42 percent) and Pine (36 percent), and just over half (54 percent) of Isanti.

There is a small percentage of nonwhite residents mainly concentrated in Kathio Township, Mille Lacs County; in Orema Township, Pine County; and more generally distributed throughout Isanti County. This nonwhite population is probably Indian (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1961). The question of race, however, is purely academic since all borrowers receive the same service.

The 1950 Census figures showed that 9 percent of Isanti's, 8 percent of Mille Lacs', and 10 percent of Pine's total population were foreign-born—mostly from Scandinavian countries. Their reading interests might vary somewhat from those of native-born Americans to include histories and stories of their native lands or books in their native languages.

## Age, Education, and Occupation

Comparison of the 1960 population of these counties with the total state population by age showed that the number of young people was lower than the state average, particularly in the 25- to 34-year age group. But the percent of persons age 45 years and over was greater than the state average. A study covering two decades, 1940 to 1960, showed that in all three counties the younger group, to age 14, increased; the 15 to 44-year-olds decreased; and those of 45 years and older increased (table 22). In fact, in 1960, the dependent population (15 years and under or 65 years and over) represented almost half of the total population of these counties.

The greatest increase in population occurred in Isanti County in the 5- to 14-year-old group; of those 65 years or over, the largest increase was in Pine

County. Because the population drop in the three counties was in the 15 to 44-year-old group, it might be assumed that these persons left for reasons of marriage, college, or jobs. Moreover, since the greatest number leaving were between 25 and 44 years, they most probably left for work. Only a special survey could verify this.

The three counties are very similar in the number of school years completed by persons 25 years of age or older (table 23). Almost half of the population had not gone beyond the eighth grade (Isanti, 44 percent; Mille Lacs, 43 percent; and Pine, 43 percent). Approximately 12 percent in each county had completed high school, 5 percent had attended 1 to 3 years of college, and about 3 percent (2 percent in Isanti) had finished college. The median number of school years completed is slightly lower

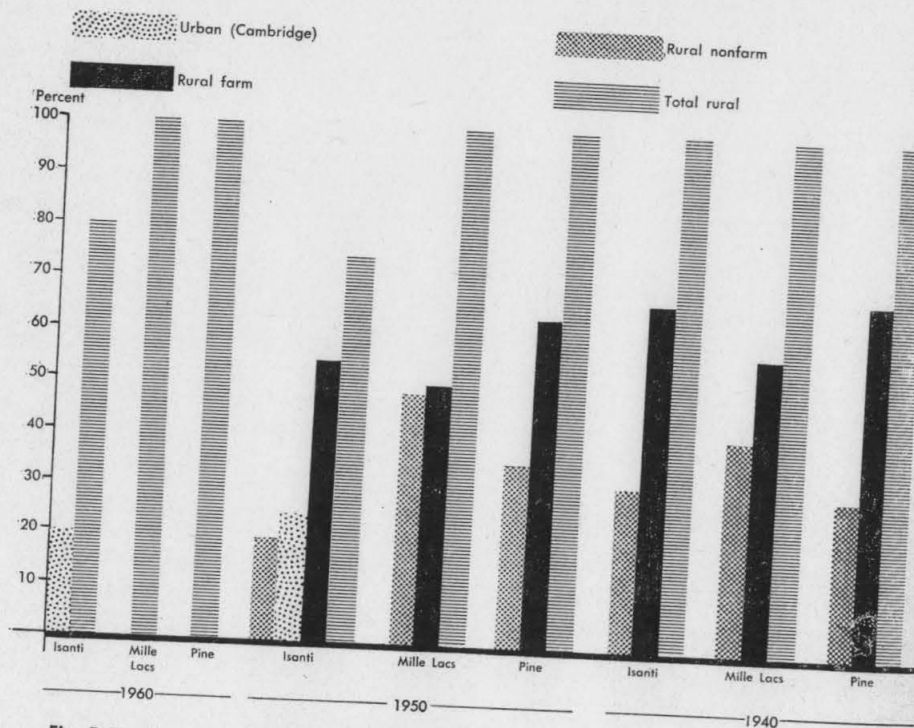


Fig. 5. Population by residence of Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties: 1940, 1950, and 1960.

Table 21. Change in total population of Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties: 1940, 1950, and 1960

Counties	1940		1950		1960	
	Number	Number	Percent of change 1940-1950	Number	Percent of change 1950-1960	Percent of change 1940-1960
Isanti	12,950	12,123	-6	12,520	12	5
Mille Lacs	15,558	15,165	-3	14,560	-4	-6
Pine	21,378	18,223	-15	17,004	-7	-21

Table 22. Percent of total population by age in Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties: 1940, 1950, and 1960

Age	Minnesota	Isanti			Mille Lacs			Pine		
	1960	1940	1950	1960	1940	1950	1960	1940	1950	1960
Under 1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1 to 4	9	6	7	7	8	9	9	7	9	8
5 to 14	21	17	17	21	19	20	21	19	19	21
15 to 24	13	18	13	13	17	13	12	17	13	11
25 to 34	12	14	12	10	13	12	10	13	12	10
35 to 44	12	13	14	12	12	12	11	13	12	11
45 to 54	11	12	13	12	11	12	11	11	12	12
55 to 64	9	9	11	11	9	9	16	9	10	11
65 to 74	7	6	8	8	6	7	9	6	7	9
75 to 84	3		3	4		3	4		3	4
85 and over	1		4*	1		3*	1		3*	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Dependent population†	43	34	37	42	38	42	46	37	41	45

\* U. S. Census for 1940 lists 75 and over in population tables.

† Under 15 and 65 and over.

Table 23. Years of school completed by persons 25 years of age and older in Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties: 1950

Years of school completed	Isanti		Mille Lacs		Pine	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Elementary						
None	390	5	105	1	125	1
1 to 4	550	8	460	5	715	7
5 to 6	640	9	785	9	925	9
7	570	8	710	8	795	8
8	3,190	44	3,640	44	4,225	43
High school						
9 to 11	535	7	940	11	1,070	11
12	885	12	1,085	13	1,180	12
College						
13 to 15	355	5	480	6	540	6
16	145	1	250	3	285	3
Total	7,260	100	8,455	100	9,860	100
Not reported	130		105		190	
Median years of school completed*	8.5		8.6		8.6	

\* Median year of school completed for Minnesota was 9.0.



than that for the state, but these are rural counties and the state median is raised by urban areas.

The majority of people in these three counties were engaged in agriculture: Isanti, 51 percent; Mille Lacs, 49 percent; and Pine, 57 percent. This far out-ranked the next nearest occupation, retail trade, which employed only about 10 percent. Manufacturing occupied from 5

to 9 percent, with most of its employees in foods industries. Undoubtedly because of the state school and hospital located in Cambridge, Isanti County employed about 5 percent in medical and health service. Only 1 percent were engaged in such service in the other two counties. Except for construction, each other industry employed less than 5 percent of the working population.

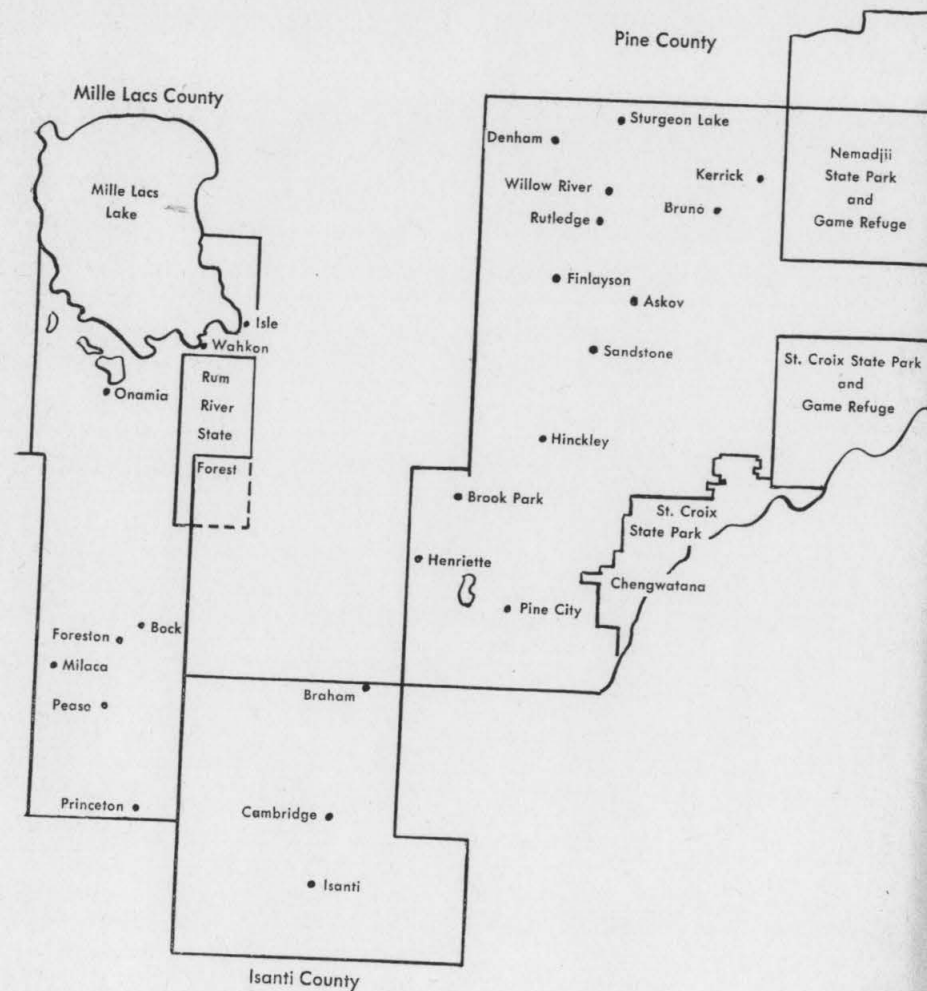


Fig. 6. Incorporated places in Isanti, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties: 1960.

## Appendix II: Minnesota Library Survey 1961

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_, F \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Coders \_\_\_\_\_ Open country \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

- About how many books, records and art prints and pictures do you have in your home?  
 Books \_\_\_\_\_  
 Records \_\_\_\_\_  
 Art prints and pictures \_\_\_\_\_
- To how many newspapers do you subscribe? \_\_\_\_\_
  - To how many magazines do you subscribe? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do you subscribe to a book club?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_: (which one(s)) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do you subscribe to record clubs?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_: (which one(s)) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do you subscribe to art print clubs?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_: (which one(s)) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
- About how many movies do you see in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
- About how many hours a week do you read, other than newspapers,  
 (Present)  

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
a. for pleasure and recreation?	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. for self-improvement?	_____	_____	_____	_____

 IF NONE, SKIP TO NO. 6
- When do you most often do such reading?  
 (Check )  

	A.M.	P.M.	Evening
Monday to Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____
- About how many hours a week do you listen to radio? \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
 Watch TV? \_\_\_\_\_ hours
- Have you attended musicals, plays, or folk dances in the last three months?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Different people obtain information from different sources. From which of the following sources have you obtained reading materials, or other library type materials, during the last 3 months? Specifically, *how many different items* (books, magazines, films, records, etc.) have you bought or borrowed, or otherwise received, from each?

How many from:

- A bookstore, mailorder house, or publisher
- A grocery store, drug store or similar business place
- The East Central Regional Library (headquarters, branches, and bookmobile)
- A local school
- A church
- County agent, home agent or 4-H agent
- Book club
- Friends
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

	Books	Magazines	Records	Films
a.	_____	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____	_____
d.	_____	_____	_____	_____
e.	_____	_____	_____	_____
f.	_____	_____	_____	_____
g.	_____	_____	_____	_____
h.	_____	_____	_____	_____
i.	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. How many times did you visit the library headquarters, branch, or bookmobile within the last 3 months?

*Number of times visited*

The Headquarters Library \_\_\_\_\_

A Branch Library \_\_\_\_\_

Bookmobile \_\_\_\_\_

10. How often in the last 3 months has a librarian helped you find books, information, or other library materials? \_\_\_\_\_

11. IF HAVE CHILDREN: Do your children ever go to the East Central Regional Library? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

When your children go to the library, is it most often done on their own initiative \_\_\_\_\_, because of parental encouragement \_\_\_\_\_, from school pressure \_\_\_\_\_, to meet with friends \_\_\_\_\_, or what \_\_\_\_\_? No \_\_\_\_\_

12. For what purpose do you go to the library:

1) most often PUT A 1 BY ITEM  
 2) next most often PUT A 2 BY ITEM  
 3) third most often PUT A 3 BY ITEM

*Purpose or object*

- a. For specific information \_\_\_\_\_
- b. For recreation, to pass time \_\_\_\_\_
- c. For education, learning, and professional or self-improvement \_\_\_\_\_
- d. To be with people \_\_\_\_\_
- e. To browse \_\_\_\_\_
- f. To pick up materials \_\_\_\_\_
- g. For new ideas and inspiration \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Other \_\_\_\_\_

None (Don't go) \_\_\_\_\_

13. About how far away is your home from the nearest public library, branch, or bookmobile stop?

	Headquarter	Branch	Bookmobile Stop
Miles	_____	_____	_____
Blocks	_____	_____	_____

14. Can you tell us where your nearest bookmobile stop is? \_\_\_\_\_  
 SKIP TO NO. 16 IF BOOKMOBILE STOP IS NOT KNOWN.

15. Is that a convenient stop for you? \_\_\_\_\_ For your neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you think the bookmobile stop should be made more convenient for your neighborhood? No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

17. Rank the following places in order of your choice in having the bookmobile come so that you can most conveniently pick up books. PUT A 1 BY FIRST CHOICE, 2 BY SECOND CHOICE, AND SO ON:

- 1st, \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd, \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd, \_\_\_\_\_ 4th, \_\_\_\_\_
- a. Near a village or town hall
  - b. Near a church
  - c. Near where we bank
  - d. Near the place we deliver our produce
  - e. Near the neighborhood store or cafe
  - f. Near a school
  - g. Other (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_

18. How often have each of the following discouraged you from using the library headquarters, branches, or bookmobiles?

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
a. Distance to the library				
b. The problem of returning library material on time				
c. The library doesn't have what you want				
d. The library's material is not up-to-date				
e. The library is not open at convenient hours				
f. You are too busy				
g. The library is inconveniently located				
h. The library people are unwilling to help locate library materials				
i. Other reasons _____				

19. Do you belong to any organizations in your community? No \_\_\_\_\_: Skip to No. 20  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are some of the services which libraries can give to community groups and organizations. How interested would be the groups or organizations of which you are a member in having any of the services?

Services which libraries can give to groups	Estimate of group's interest		
	Very interested	Some interest	Little or no interest
1. Supply or show educational films to groups, etc. Supply recordings			
2. Supply selected books and printed materials of interest to your group			
3. Help group plan programs			
4. Give talks on books of interest			
5. Supply or display to group, exhibits of selected book collection(s); reading			
6. Suggest books, films, recordings, etc., of interest and available to the group			
7. Provide adult education courses			
8. Obtain speakers or supply lists of people willing to speak			

20. How interested would you be in having books, information and materials in the categories listed below supplied through your public library?

A. General fields:	Extent of Interest		
	Very interested	Some interest	Not interested
a. Business, economics, financial problems			
b. Social problems and issues			
c. Books for children			
d. Guiding children's reading			
e. Fiction			
f. Literature and languages			
g. Religion, religious novels			
h. Philosophy and psychology			
i. Travel, biography, history			
j. Music and art			
k. Science and technology			



(Question 20 cont.)

B. Specific topics:	Extent of Interest		
	Very interested	Some interest	Not interested
a. Farm management, crops, soils, livestock			
b. Sports and hobbies			
c. Home and family living (cooking, care of the young, remodeling house, etc.)			
d. Health and medical care			
e. How to live better			
f. Personal problems			
g. Personal improvement			
h. Career and job information			
i. Politics (local, state, national)			
j. Russia and the Russians			
k. Scandinavian countries			
l. India and her people			
m. Laos and adjoining countries			
n. Congo and Africa			
o. Cuba			
p. Great Britain			
q. Algeria and France			
r. The United Nations			
s. "How to do it" books			
t. Rockets and space travel			
u. Mechanics			
v. Electronics			
w. Gardening			

21. Would you please indicate to the best of your knowledge whether each service mentioned below is available?

	Yes	21 Not sure	No	22 Frequency used	23 Drop	24 Would benefit	25 Recommend adding
a. Collect information on a special topic requested by an adult							
b. A movie projector or slide projector loan service							
c. Showing of educational or cultural films or movies for adults							
d. Showing of films or movies for children							
e. A film loan service							
f. A children's story telling hour							
g. Beside supplying fiction, provides materials on a wide variety of non-fiction subjects							
h. Keep on hand educational and reference materials for school age children							
i. Keep on hand educational and reference material for homemakers or housewives							
j. Maintain vocational guidance material for young people and adults							

(Question 21 cont.)

	Yes	21 Not sure	No	22 Frequency used	23 Drop	24 Would benefit	25 Recommend adding
k. Keep on hand educational and reference material for businessmen, farmers or skilled workers							
l. Prepare displays to interest people in use of the library							
m. Publish instruction in adult reading skills							
n. Publish lists of materials available on matters of topical interest							
o. Carry on adult education classes							
p. Help library users find references and material in the library							
q. Borrow materials not on hand from other libraries when desired by a library user							
r. Provide space for meetings of book discussion groups							
s. Provide discussions and demonstrate on how to use a library, library catalogues, reference materials, etc.							
t. Maintain file on calendar of local events, officers of local organizations, etc.							
u. Maintain current files of local newspapers							
v. Maintain local and regional history file							
w. Maintain file of magazines							
x. Keep public informed through news reports and radio programs on what the library is doing							

22. IF YES IN 21: How often have you used each service in the last 3 months?

23. IF YES IN 21: Might any of the above services in your opinion best be dropped? That is, which services may not be worth their cost in your opinion?

24. "NOT SURE" OR "NO" IN 21: From which of the services *not* now offered would you benefit in the next year if they were to be offered?

25. IF CHECKED IN 24: Which of the services from which you might benefit would you like to see added, even if that might require an increase in taxes for the library?

26. Do you think you are now better informed because the regional library is available?  
 a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Yes, somewhat \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. No \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Can't say \_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you think the library is duplicating services which people already receive from other sources:  
 No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_; Which services? \_\_\_\_\_

28. How important are library services to you? To your family? To your community?

	Evaluation of Library Service		
	Highly important	Important	Of little importance
To you			
Family			
Community			

29. Can you remember anyone not receiving friendly cooperative service at the headquarters library, branch libraries or bookmobile?

	Headquarters library	Branch	Bookmobile
Yes			
No			

: IF YES, EXPLAIN

30. What do you think about the library people who serve you? Would you say they are:  
 A (Check one)                      B (Check one)                      C (Check one)  
 Helpful \_\_\_\_\_                      Efficient \_\_\_\_\_                      Democratic \_\_\_\_\_  
 or  
 Indifferent \_\_\_\_\_                      Slow, lazy \_\_\_\_\_                      Authoritarian \_\_\_\_\_

31. In general, what is the public's opinion of the regional library?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Very favorable                      \_\_\_\_\_ Favorable                      \_\_\_\_\_ Unfavorable

32. How many of the people you know ever talk about the regional library?  
 Most \_\_\_\_\_, Many \_\_\_\_\_, A few \_\_\_\_\_, None \_\_\_\_\_.

33. Now there are just a few questions left.  
 1. Are you: Single (\_\_\_) Married (\_\_\_) Widowed (\_\_\_) Separated (\_\_\_) Divorced (\_\_\_)  
 2. In what year were you born? (Wife) \_\_\_\_\_, (Husband) \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Do you have any children now living with you? What are their ages?  
 Ages of boys \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ages of girls \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. (a) What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) What is your spouse's occupation? \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. Do you (or your immediate family) own any real estate in this area? \_\_\_Yes, \_\_\_No.

34. What is the last school you attended? What is the last grade you completed there?  
 Wife \_\_\_\_\_, Husband \_\_\_\_\_

35. Group participation:  
 Of what group(s) or organization(s), if any, are you (or your husband/wife) a member?  
 We are thinking of parents' organizations, informal local clubs, adult groups, missionary and church groups, women's clubs, study and reading clubs, cultural organizations, farm or business organizations, fraternal groups, etc:

Name of group or organization	Who attends? Write below HW	Attendance		H or W Member of committee	H or W hold office	Hours per week spent on group's activities:	
		Less than half of the meetings	More than half of the meetings			Wife	Husband
Self: 1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
Spouse: 1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							

36. Do you \_\_\_\_\_ own or \_\_\_\_\_ rent your home?  
 37. What is the construction of your house?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Brick or stucco                      \_\_\_\_\_ Painted frame                      \_\_\_\_\_ Unpainted frame

38. How many automobiles does your family own?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Year and make \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Pick-ups

39. Do you have: \_\_\_\_\_ telephone  
 \_\_\_\_\_ deep freeze at home  
 \_\_\_\_\_ a town locker  
 \_\_\_\_\_ both an automatic washer and dryer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ an automatic washer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ television  
 \_\_\_\_\_ stereo  
 \_\_\_\_\_ hi-fi  
 \_\_\_\_\_ regular phonograph (record player)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ indoor bathroom  
 \_\_\_\_\_ water piped into the house  
 \_\_\_\_\_ insurance on your household furnishings

40. That finishes the questions. Are there any additional comments about the library you would like to report? Have you any suggestions you want to make?

EVALUATION OF CENTRAL INTERVIEWERS

1. How do you feel about coming here to be interviewed?

1a. Did you feel hesitant or reluctant about coming?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes: Very hesitant \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat hesitant \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly hesitant \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No

1b. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Would you prefer coming to a central location to be interviewed or would you prefer having the interviewer come to your home? \_\_\_\_\_ Central \_\_\_\_\_ Home

2a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did you decide to come in for an interview? (PROBE FOR MOTIVATIONS; HOW DID THE CALLER PERSUADE THE RESPONDENT TO PARTICIPATE?)  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. How far did you travel for this interview? (DISTANCE TRAVELED) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you travel here today solely for the purpose of being interviewed? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

5a. Total time devoted to preparation for, travel to, and participation in interview? (ESTIMATED) \_\_\_\_\_  
 How much would you estimate this participation has cost you:  
 for your time? \_\_\_\_\_ for your travel? \_\_\_\_\_



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