

SOME INFLUENCES OF RADIO
ON RURAL KANSAS PEOPLE

by

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INTRODUCTION

The compass of radio is beyond the comprehension even of many who are employed in the industry. Few persons have given enough thought to this newest and greatest of all media of communication to realize that in the two decades from 1920 to 1940 radio broadcasting to public listeners grew from nothing to a vast series of transmitter towers circling the earth in every direction. Radio messages, traveling with the speed of light rather than sound, now reach into arctic waste and equatorial jungle with like facility. The only requisite to make radio a reality for any human being in the world is a radio receiving set and the electrical energy to operate it, for radio waves are everywhere.

The feasibility of speaking around the world has been recognized by leaders of the governments of most nations, and particularly by those who have international aspirations. Indeed, radio broadcasting has been utilized most effectively by international propagandists.

Radio's usefulness as a medium of communication is so well appreciated by producers of goods for public consumption that the owners of broadcasting stations and organizations in the United States take in annually more than \$237,000,000 from the sponsors of commercial programs (3). Hundreds of institutions and organizations spend millions more annually preparing and distributing material in script and recorded form for use as "sustaining" or filler features, that is, programs not paid for by the agency providing the programs.

In return for providing such features to the radio stations, such agencies receive the publicity value of having their names mentioned as the donors of the programs.

Radio's dependence upon electricity has been referred to previously. It is unnecessary to recount the history of its discovery and development. Several inventions applying the principles of electricity, however, were basically important to the development of the radio receiver of today (1). Those were Samuel F. B. Morse's invention of the telegraph which he demonstrated in 1836, showing the application of the principle of the controlled electric circuit which could be opened and closed at will; Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, employing electrical current to reproduce the sound of the human voice in 1876; the discovery, by the German Heinrich Hertz, in 1887 of the sympathetic waves generated in one wire hoop by a spark jumping across a gap in a similar hoop some distance away and the disclosure that these waves, later called "Hertzian" waves, traveled faster than sound waves; the application of the principles of these inventors in a single device for transmitting sound through space by Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian, who patented his "wireless" telegraph in England in 1896; and the invention of an instrument with which to transmit the human voice by "wireless" telegraph by R. A. Fessenden in 1902.

Four years after Marconi's invention was patented in England it was recommended by the Secretary of the United States Navy in his annual report for use in ship to ship and ship to shore communications (1). The wireless telegraph was for years used more by ships at sea to keep in touch with each other and

with continental points than for any other purpose. However, the United States Weather Bureau sponsored research beginning in 1900 to utilize the wireless in reporting weather conditions and storm warnings.

Lee deForest developed the audion tube, which made possible modern radio reception, and obtained a patent on it in 1907. Three years later he broadcast experimentally a program of music in which Henry Caruso sang from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York City.

All broadcasting up to that time had been done experimentally. The inventors were the broadcasters. They arranged with individuals to perform and with other individuals to listen experimentally. It was not until 1916, when David Sarnoff, an employee of the American Marconi Company, described his idea for a "Radio Music Box" that a plan of broadcasting to the public began to crystallize.

The first World War interrupted the plan of public broadcasting, but immediately afterward commercial companies began to think about the idea. Station KDKA, licensed to the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, began operation with the broadcast of returns on the election of Warren G. Harding to the Presidency of the United States, November 2, 1920. With that program, radio had its "world premier." That was the first time the general public had heard anything other than a purely experimental broadcast. It was estimated that fewer than 1,000 listeners heard that program.

On January 1, 1922, 30 stations were operating in the United States. By March 1, 1923, the number had jumped to 556. Since then the increase has been gradual (3). In 1922, 100,000 radio receiving sets were sold in the United States. The next year 550,000 sets were sold.

Although official confirmation by the 1940 census is lacking because a complete report has not been published by the Census Bureau, it was estimated that over 50,000,000 receiving sets were in use in the United States alone when the census was taken (3).

Into those receiving sets 923 broadcasting stations in this country alone were sending programs from dawn in some instances until midnight in almost every case, operating 16 to 18 hours a day and appealing to every interest for which man's ingenuity had been able to frame a public appeal.

Archer (1) described radio as "the miracle of the ages," saying:

Aladdin's lamp, the Magic Carpet, the Seven League Boots of fable and every vision that mankind has ever entertained, since the world began, of laying hold upon the attributes of the Almighty, pale into insignificance beside the accomplished fact of radio. By its magic, the human voice may be projected around the earth in less time than it takes to pronounce the word "radio."

With radio reaching into the homes of millions, it is logical to presume that the lives of those millions are affected by what they hear. However, few persons have done more than presume. Few have tried to measure the extent or nature of the influences which radio has exerted on its listeners.

The purpose of this study was to discover the nature of some of the influences of radio programs on listeners living in rural areas of Kansas, and to determine how the radio medium of communication might be employed, and to what extent, by educational institutions specifically and by other agencies in general to influence listeners.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An advertising card distributed by the National Broadcasting Company in 1940 carried the message from David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board: "The richest man cannot buy for himself what the poorest man gets free by radio." The longer one considers that statement the more meaningful it becomes. All types of people are reached by radio, and their lives are affected by it in a multitude of ways.

The rural listener gains more from his radio than the urbanite. With very few exceptions, the city listener's programs are some form of entertainment. However, the farmer and his family have their own special occupational programs, programs of information covering a variety of phases of the farm and home activity, in addition to the same programs of entertainment broadcast to city audiences.

Hasselmann (7) described the situation in these words:

Radio entertainment and amusement are greater gifts to the farm home than to those in immediate proximity to the varied recreational opportunities of the city... In the educational or informational fields, the business side of farm radio, we find farmers a group whose needs are easily understood. The technical subject-matter of interest and value to the agriculturist is quite definite.

H. Umberger, director of extension, Kansas State College, said, "Application of scientific facts to our agricultural industry encourages good farming and enriches rural living. Radio assists in the dissemination of these facts."¹

In February, 1939, it was reported (13) that rural radio families listened on the average a total of 4:47 hours a day. Numerous radio surveys have shown that the bulk of that listening is done during three distinct periods: early morning, noon, and late evening. These facts would suggest that if much influence is to be exerted over the rural audience the programs must be planned on a rather concentrated formula.

Benton (2) pointed out that radio provided a paradox for the educator. He wrote:

The medium which involves the least effort for the adult is radio — a turn of the knob from the chair by the fireside and the program comes in. Yet the program itself, if it is to qualify as adult education, must extract some intellectual effort from the auditor.

Benton believed that radio was the most potential vehicle for adult education, but that it was not used to the full extent of its possibilities because educators did not know or would not use the techniques of enticing and holding listeners, sometimes only because these techniques violated established taboos.

Radio, to do the job it could do for rural listeners, should adopt all the technique known to the program builders during the four and three-quarters hours when rural people listen most.

1. KSAC program guide, 1941-1942.

This influence extends to other fields than the practical. It has cultural, social, and political aspects. Benton stated, "It is essential to the future welfare of this country that we learn how to focus the enormous power of radio into the field of adult education..."

Landry (8) said, "Radio's future lies with the future of Democracy, as does the future of every American endeavor, but indeed, the future of Democracy lies with radio."

In the matter of cultural influences, radio's fingers reach far. In 1932, Arthur Capper (5), speaking before the Ohio Institute for Education by Radio, said:

I feel that radio undeniably has tended to raise rural standards of living. The farm talks alone, presented over radio, give a vast amount of attention to details which make for greater comfort in farm homes. In the course of a single day, broadcasts for farm families will describe household conveniences, inexpensive short-cuts, details of home decoration, clever ideas in home planning, and for the farmers themselves, ideas in soil fertility, seed selection, conversion of farm by-products into cash, and better farm system. All this cannot help but have a tendency to make for improvement on the farm and in the farm home.

All this would seem to indicate that broadcasters were long also conscious of the desirability of broadcasting programs designed to influence rural listeners. But whether or not they were being successful was a matter of speculation.

Most statements about the effects and influences of radio up to the time of this study were generalizations, mostly theoretical. Few attempts had been made to measure the effects of radio programs on rural audiences, beyond the nu-

merous checks on program popularity or station popularity conducted for commercial advertising purposes.

One of the closest approaches to a study of this sort was a report by Umberger (16) on two two-county surveys on the effectiveness of Extension Service teaching. Actually, however, even in that report, the picture of radio's influences was limited. This was due to the breadth of the extension program and the necessity of keeping small the number of items on each phase to avoid unwieldiness in the survey.

In 1927, a group of extension workers went into Clay and Sedgwick counties to determine the effectiveness of extension work and to measure the relative effectiveness of various extension methods in changing rural practices. The workers went from farm to farm in representative areas over each county including members of the local extension organization (farm bureau) as well as non-members. Such personal interviews were obtained with persons living on 532 farms. Umberger reported that 89 per cent of the farms and 40 per cent of the homes in those two counties indicated some change in practice due to extension teaching. Radio was given credit by the respondents in that study for influencing the changes in practice in only 5.9 per cent of the instances. Thus, in those counties in 1927, radio was eighth in importance as a means of influencing rural people to adopt or change practices.

In 1930, a similar study was conducted in Ford and Pawnee Counties, Kansas. One of these counties is 200 miles, the

other 300 miles from Manhattan, where Station KSAC is located. It was reported by Umberger (16) that 70 per cent of the 343 farmers reached in that survey had radios, and that 93 per cent of those having radios used them to secure useful farm information.² It was found further that, even though Station KSAC did not cover western Kansas satisfactorily, 44 per cent of all the farmers in the area heard extension programs over that station regarding the wheat-belt program (a specific topic under consideration in the survey), and 14 per cent had adopted practices pertaining to wheat production as a result.

As Umberger pointed out in his report on these two surveys,

The most valuable part of this comparison is the relative number of farmers exposed to radio teaching who were influenced. The percentages were about the same in the two studies, 35 per cent in 1927, and 32 per cent in 1930. The fact that 30 per cent of those exposed to radio information will adopt practices recommended thereby is an indication of the value of radio as a teaching agency.

Umberger summarized his report by saying,

As a means of changing farm practices, it (radio) is superior to many of the older and more established extension methods. It is particularly superior as a means of transmitting timely information and possesses many advantages in teaching by means of related lectures... It is one of the most effective means of supplying the demand of the American people for information.

In essence this same idea was expressed in a statement by F. D. Farrell, president, Kansas State College, when he wrote, "As a means of quick distribution of information, radio broad-

2. Note similarity to Fig. 75 in this study.

casting has become an important factor in the increase of public enlightenment."³

A more recent study of the influences of radio was made by Robinson (9) among some Illinois and Nebraska farm families.

As a result of his study, Robinson concluded that radio is more efficient in forming than in changing opinions; that radio ownership apparently causes some increased interest in national affairs; that radio listening is indirectly responsible for increased newspaper reading, because of the increased interest in national affairs; that news bulletins are more popular than commentators, all the people listening to the news, and about two-thirds listening to commentators; that Pike County, Illinois, farm people were influenced by radio to adopt new ideas in farming, but that the influence of the radio in practical education appears to be small; that listeners liked the National Farm and Home Hour because it dealt with matters of direct practical importance to its listeners and rarely failed to indicate some appropriate path of action; that the prestige-value of talks by important officials and agricultural leaders is important; that rural people are apparently more likely to form opinions when possible action is involved than when a question is theoretical; and that radio ownership tends to decrease church attendance.

These brief references indicate the available studies

3. KSAC program guide, 1941-1942.

related to this problem. Much more research should be done in this field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data used in this report were obtained almost entirely by questionnaire during the month of November, 1941, and the months of January, February, and March, 1942. Some items of lesser significance to the problem were obtained from the files of the Department of Extension Publicity and Information, Kansas State College, and from published works containing information related to the field of study.

Two questionnaires were used.⁴ The first, which was employed to obtain data from the population sample representing the rural radio audience in Kansas, was designed to secure a picture of radio station and program preferences, social cultural, and practical influences of radio programs on the listeners, and certain information essential to the satisfactory classification of the respondents and evaluation of the data pertinent to the study proper.

The second questionnaire was used to obtain information from agricultural leaders for the purpose of checking the reliability of the data from the listener survey. The reports from the leaders yielded certain significant information not originally anticipated, but which was subsequently incorporated in the study.

Questionnaires were distributed to the listeners in four

4. See Appendix

ways. The first lot was handed out to the farm men and women who attended the annual Farm and Home Week conference at Kansas State College, Manhattan, during the first week in February, 1942. The questionnaires were given to the delegates as they assembled for four major sessions of the conference on Thursday, the third day of the conference, with instructions to fill out the blanks and leave the questionnaires at the registration desk in Recreation Center. Approximately 1100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in this way. Forms were filled out and returned by 247 individuals. Four of these had to be discarded, as the respondents failed to indicate their sex, age, place of residence, and other facts necessary to their classification. Replies from 243 persons, therefore, were used from this group.

The second lot of questionnaires was distributed through teachers of vocational agriculture courses in Kansas high schools selected from over the state in such a way as to give a representative sample of the whole rural population. The questionnaires were mailed to the teachers in packages of 100, with the request that one pupil from each family represented in each school be given a questionnaire to take home, have his parents fill out, and return to the teacher. The teachers were instructed to return the questionnaires to Manhattan, "Express Collect." Forty-one teachers were solicited in this way. Twenty-two cooperated to return usable data from 839 respondents.

A similar procedure was followed in distributing question-

naires to 24 cooperative association managers selected to give a representative coverage of the state. One hundred questionnaires were sent to each manager with the request that he hand a copy to each of his customers during the week of March 8 to 14, 1942, and return the filled-in forms on March 16, "Express Collect." Only two managers returned useful replies. Three others reported but returned no data.

Copies of the questionnaire were sent to 491 members of the Collegiate 4-H Club at Kansas State College with the request that they enclose the forms in their next letters home and ask their parents to fill out the questionnaires and return them. Forty-seven questionnaires were returned in time to be tabulated and included in the study.

Thus, returns were obtained from a population sample totalling 1154 listeners. It was thought that by using these methods of distribution a representative cross-section of rural Kansas people might be assured. In meeting this purpose, the methods used were successful, with the possible exception of the group including the patrons of cooperative associations. In this case, the number of respondents was so small that when separated into age groups they provided too few samples to give reliability to the results. It definitely was not possible to generalize for that part of the population of the state represented by the cooperative associations on the basis of the replies from the two associations returning samples. However, with the data obtained from the leaders of this group,

certain conclusions were drawn which supported the returns from the listeners, supplying reliability which otherwise would have been lacking.

Returns from the other listener groups showed definite evidence of reliability. A large enough sample of each of the three population groups was obtained to yield figures from which generalizations might reasonably be drawn. Returns from the leader groups also bore out the data obtained from the listeners in each case.

Vocational agriculture teachers, county extension agents (agricultural, home demonstration, and 4-H club workers), and cooperative association leaders, 152 altogether, filled out leader questionnaires. Eighteen teachers of vocational agriculture returned the questionnaires which were included for them in the packages along with the forms for the listeners to answer. The county agents answered their questionnaires, 69 men and 39 women, at the time of Extension Conference Week, the first week in November, 1941, at Kansas State College, Manhattan. The forms were handed out at two meetings, one for the women and the other for the men agents, held simultaneously on the third day of the meeting. The agents were asked to fill out the forms and leave them with the chairman in each meeting before leaving the room. The two chairmen assumed the responsibility for returning the answered questionnaires to the Extension Publicity office.

Copies of the same questionnaire were also distributed at a meeting of cooperative association managers at Kansas State

College, Manhattan, November 22, 1941, and at the Farmers' Union convention in Topeka, Kansas, the week of November 24, 1941. From these individuals, 26 answered questionnaires were returned.

Replies of the respondents in all groups were carefully recorded for every item in both questionnaires. When the tabulation of data was completed, a master summary was compiled for each phase of the study. From these it was a fairly simple procedure to draw comparisons, make observations, study trends, and chart the results.

	Group I ⁵		Group II ⁶		Group III ⁷		Group IV ⁸		Total ⁹	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total respondents	47	4.07	243	21.06	839	72.70	25	2.17	1154	100.00
Men	24	51.00	90	37.00	416	49.59	23	92.00	553	47.92
Women	23	49.00	153	63.00	423	51.41	2	8.00	601	52.08
Farm	35	74.47	173	71.79	543	64.72	13	52.00	764	66.20
Non-farm	12	25.53	70	28.81	296	35.28	12	48.00	390	33.80
Farm Bureau	30	63.83	243	100.00	159	18.95	9	36.00	441	38.21
Non-Farm Bureau	17	36.17	-	-	680	81.05	16	64.00	713	61.79
Low income level	6	12.76	57	23.45	215	25.63	3	12.00	281	24.35
Medium income level	27	57.45	122	50.20	551	65.65	11	44.00	711	61.61
High income level	14	29.79	48	19.75	73	8.72	11	44.00	146	12.65
Not indicated	-	-	16	6.60	-	-	-	-	16	1.39
Low living standard	-	-	-	-	174	20.80	10	40.00	184	15.94
Medium living standard	-	-	75	30.87	293	34.90	2	8.00	370	32.06
High living standard	47	100.00	168	69.13	372	44.30	13	52.00	600	52.00
Owning radios	47	100.00	236	97.12	787	93.80	25	100.00	1095	94.89
Radios working ¹⁰	47	100.00	230	97.46	733	87.28	23	92.00	1033	94.34
Still using first set	11	23.43	66	27.16	157	20.00	5	20.00	239	21.83
Battery electricity	11	23.43	82	34.74	354	44.98	5	20.00	452	41.28
High line current	28	59.56	126	53.39	331	42.06	20	80.00	505	46.12
Private plant	8	17.02	28	11.87	102	12.96	-	-	138	12.60
First radio before 1924	8	17.02	28	11.87	40	5.04	4	16.00	80	7.31
1924 to 1929	22	46.81	73	30.93	174	22.19	7	28.00	276	25.20
1930 to 1934	9	19.15	62	26.27	156	19.78	2	8.00	229	20.91
1935 to 1939	8	17.02	48	20.34	178	22.64	6	24.00	240	21.92
Since 1939	-	-	17	7.20	71	9.01	3	12.00	91	8.31
Not indicated	-	-	8	3.40	168	21.33	3	12.00	179	16.35
Preferences										
Radio	42	89.36	145	67.44	714	87.50	22	95.65	873	83.06
Magazines	5	10.64	70	32.56	102	12.50	1	4.35	178	16.94
Radio	24	51.06	116	52.22	647	85.40	12	52.17	799	69.24
Newspapers	23	48.94	104	47.78	134	14.60	11	47.83	355	30.76
Radio	23	48.94	96	43.64	460	57.79	13	59.09	592	64.56
Telephone	24	51.06	124	56.36	336	42.21	9	40.91	493	45.44
Radio	2	4.26	17	7.49	63	7.88	-	-	82	7.47
Automobile	45	95.74	210	92.51	737	92.12	23	100.00	1015	92.53
Radio	7	14.90	34	14.98	196	24.97	-	-	237	21.90
Electric lights	40	85.10	193	85.02	589	75.03	23	100.00	845	78.10
Radio	9	19.15	33	14.73	271	34.31	5	21.74	318	29.27
Running water	38	80.85	191	85.27	519	65.69	18	78.26	765	70.73
Radio	11	23.42	133	59.60	121	15.52	3	13.00	288	26.35
Read a book	36	76.58	90	40.40	659	84.48	20	87.00	805	73.65
Radio	38	80.85	191	86.64	677	85.91	22	91.66	928	84.29
Play music	9	19.15	41	18.36	111	14.09	2	8.34	173	15.71
Radio	16	34.04	130	59.09	143	18.26	5	21.74	294	27.40
Picture show	31	65.96	90	40.91	640	81.74	18	78.26	779	72.60
Radio	18	38.32	82	37.28	314	39.10	1	4.35	415	38.07
Play (drama)	29	61.68	138	62.72	489	60.90	19	95.65	675	61.93
Radio	21	44.68	134	68.31	62	7.76	1	4.17	218	20.27
Football game	26	55.32	62	31.69	737	92.24	23	95.83	848	79.73
Radio	11	23.42	153	70.83	97	12.53	-	-	261	24.65
Baseball game	36	76.58	63	29.17	677	87.47	22	100.00	798	75.35
Radio	39	82.98	194	90.65	541	72.71	16	76.18	790	77.00
Political meeting	8	17.02	20	9.35	204	27.29	5	23.72	236	23.00
Radio	3	5.38	48	21.15	131	15.49	6	26.09	188	16.44
Church	44	94.62	179	78.65	715	84.51	17	73.91	955	83.56
Radio	3	5.38	18	7.97	196	25.79	2	9.10	219	20.68
Talk with friends	44	94.62	208	92.03	564	74.21	20	90.90	836	79.32
Radio	37	78.73	164	72.24	640	81.74	13	56.52	854	79.07
Play cards	10	21.27	63	27.76	143	18.26	10	43.48	226	20.93
Listen alone	24	51.06	130	58.56	313	39.77	15	65.22	482	44.58
With someone	23	48.94	92	41.44	474	60.23	8	34.78	597	55.42
Station preferences with first radio ¹¹										
Before 1924	WLB WDAF KFNF KDKA WHO KMMJ	KFNF WDAF KMMJ WLW KOA	KFKB ¹² KMMJ WLS KFNF KOA	WLS WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW
1924 to 1929	KMMJ KFNF WDAF WAAW ¹³	WDAF KMMJ KFH WHO KFNF	KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW	WLB WDAF KMMJ KOA WOW
1930 to 1934	KMMJ KFNF KMA KSAC WDAF WFAA	WDAF WLBW KOA KMMJ KFBI KFNF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF
1935 to 1939	WLB WDAF KMMJ KFNF	WLB WDAF KFH KOA KMMJ KMMJ	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KOA KMMJ KFBI WDAF
Since 1939	KSAC	WLB WDAF KFBI	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA
Stations preferred										
Now	WLB WDAF KSAC KFNF KFBI WDAF	WLB WDAF KSAC KFNF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA	WLB WDAF KOA
Program preferences with first radio ¹⁴										
Before 1924	As many ¹⁵ Weather Markets News As far B. D. Music Bands Comedians Hymns Old songs	Weather As many News As far Comedians B. D. Music hymns	As many As far ¹⁶ Markets Hymns Old songs B. D. Music	Markets As many As far News B. D. Music ¹⁷	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music	As many Markets As far Weather News B. D. Music
1924 to 1929	Weather Markets News Hymns As far Farming ¹⁹ Old songs Organ B. D. Music As many Hom'k'g ²⁰ Sermons	Weather News Old songs As far hymns	News B. D. Music Weather Markets Old songs	Markets Com'tors ¹⁸ As many As far B. D. Music	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	Weather News Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming
1930 to 1934	News Weather Markets Farming Comedians Amateurs	News Weather Hymns B. D. Music Old songs	News Amateurs As many Hymns Markets Weather Bands	B. D. Music Markets News Weather	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming
1935 to 1939	M. D. Music ²¹ Weather Markets News B. D. Music Farming Amateurs Hymns Bands As many	News Weather B. D. Music Hymns Comedians	News Weather B. D. Music Amateurs Comedians Hymns Bands	News B. D. Music Markets Weather Amateurs	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming	News Weather Markets Old songs As far Hymns B. D. Music Com'tors Farming
Now	News Markets Com'tors Weather Farming Hymns	News Com'tors Weather Quiz Comedians Farming	News Markets Weather Quiz Comedians Hymns Amateurs B. D. Music Serials	News Markets Weather Com'tors Bands	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns	News Markets Com'tors Weather Hymns
Radio ideas tried ²²										
None	15	31.91	29	16.66	57	51.35	-	-	101	30.06
One	2	4.26	9	5.18	5	4.51	2	50.00	18	4.76
Many	30	63.83	136	78.16	49	44.14	2	50.00	217	65.18
Most useful station										
KSAC	11	64.70	11	50.00	5	33.33	-	-	27	48.21
All others	6	35.30	11	50.00	10	66.67	2	100.00	29	51.79
Plan work to listen	38	80.85	118	48.56	495	59.06	7	28.00	658	57.02
Listening times										
Early morning	22	46.79	94	38.68	366	43.62	5	20.00	487	42.17
Mid-morning	16	34.03	41	16.87	96	11.41	-	-	153	13.25
Noon	27	57.45	109	44.85	270	32.22	7	28.00	413	35.76
Mid-afternoon	14	29.79	37	15.22	90	10.75	1	4.00	141	12.21
Late afternoon	9	19.14	12	4.94	45	5.37	2	8.00	68	5.89
Early evening	22	46.79	81	33.53	311	37.05	5	20.00	419	36.28
Night	31	65.94	136	55.96	557	66.44	10	40.00	734	63.56

5. Parents of Collegiate 4-H Club members, Kansas State College.

6. Farm men and women who attended Farm and Home Week, February, 1942.

7. Parents of students in Kansas high schools where vocational agriculture is taught.

8. Patrons of Kansas farmers' cooperative association businesses.

9. All listener respondents.

10. Percentages on this and the next four items are based on the number of radios owned.

11. Stations are ranked from left to right and down in each group with those having the highest frequency of mention listed first.

12. Station KFKB is now Station KFBI.

13. Station WAAW is now Station WOW.

14. Items are ranked according to frequency of mention; brackets indicate items receiving the same number of checks.

15. Tabular brief for "as many stations as possible."

16. Tabular brief for "stations as far away as possible."

17. Barn dance music.

18. Commentators.

19. Talks on farming.

20. Talks on homemaking.

21. Modern dance music.

22. Percentages are based on the number of responses to this item.

THE INVESTIGATION

Classification of Respondents

Listeners who reported in this study were divided into groups according to the method used to obtain their replies. Throughout the remainder of the report they will be referred to as: Group I, the parents of members of the Kansas State College 4-H Club organization; Group II, delegates to annual Farm and Home Week at Kansas State College, 1942; Group III, respondents reached through teachers of vocational agriculture in Kansas high schools; and Group IV, patrons of Kansas cooperative association businesses (Fig. 1).

Altogether, 1154 respondents provided usable data for this phase of the study. In age, these individuals ranged from the 'teens to over 50 years, with the bulk between 35 and 45 years old. The 'teen-age respondents consisted of a small group of high school students who filled in questionnaires that were left over after a copy had been given to each family represented in the schools. In most respects, the returns from these high school youth closely paralleled the returns from their parents. Hence they were not given much consideration, although in a few cases in which they varied significantly from those of the older respondents they received special mention.

In a sense, the population sample used here to represent rural farm and rural non-farm radio listeners was selected; but it was selected to obtain a true cross-section of rural Kansas people. It is probable, however, that the respondents were

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Fig. 1. The distribution of listener
respondents by groups:

PLATE I

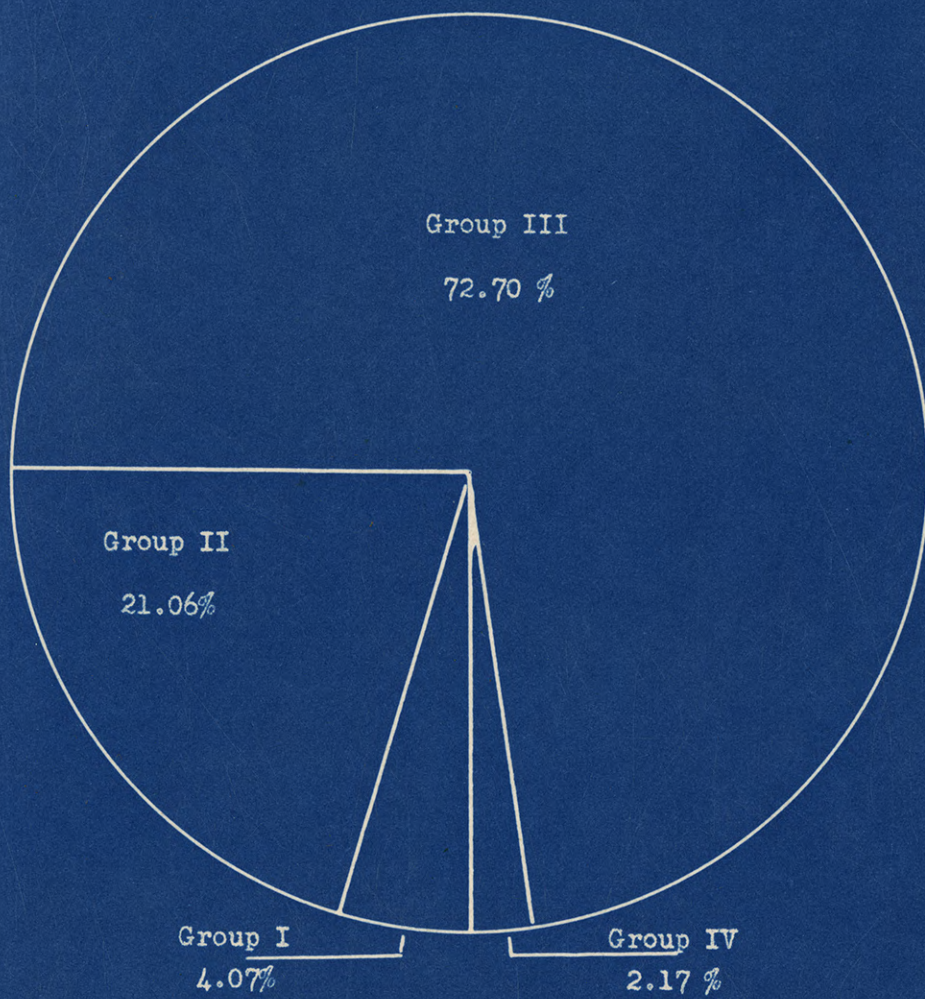


Fig. 1

above the average in their interest in education and culture, and possibly, in their standards of living. The group which was expected to complete the picture, Group IV, by providing the non-school element in the population sample, returned only 25 usable reports from two associations. The only indication of reliability in the data obtained from this group came from the tabulation of returns from the cooperative association leaders, from whom more reports were received than were received from the patrons. Both leader and patron reports showed marked similarities. Moreover, cooperative association leaders' reports compared favorably with reports from the other leader groups studied. It was assumed, therefore, that the returns from the cooperative patrons had a fairly high correlation with returns from the other groups.

Approximately 52 per cent of the respondents were women and 48 per cent men. The distribution between sexes is shown by groups in Figs. 2 to 5.

Almost exactly two-thirds of the respondents were residents on farms. The remainder lived in towns and villages ranging from 2,500 down in population. The distribution of the respondents by place of residence in each group is shown in Figs. 6 to 9.

Another method of classifying the respondents was used to determine the likelihood of pre-disposition toward the teachings of such organizations as the Extension Service of the State College. The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were members of their county farm bureaus. The distribution on this item is indicated for each group in Figs. 10 to 13.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

The distribution of sexes by groups

Fig. 2. Group I

Fig. 3. Group II

Fig. 4. Group III

Fig. 5. Group IV

PLATE II



Fig. 2

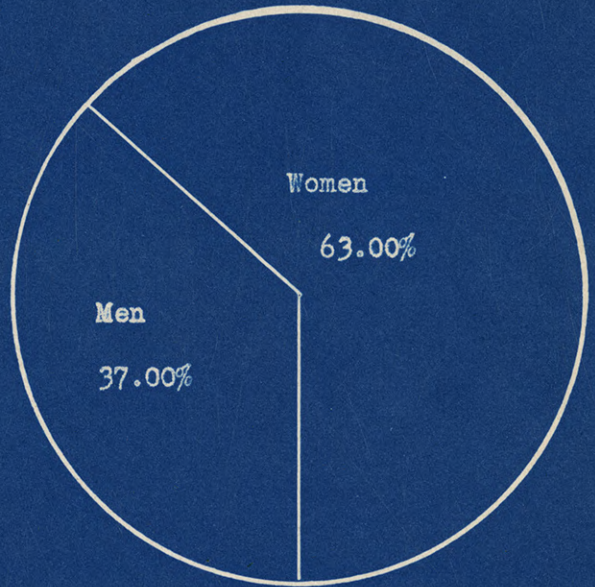


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

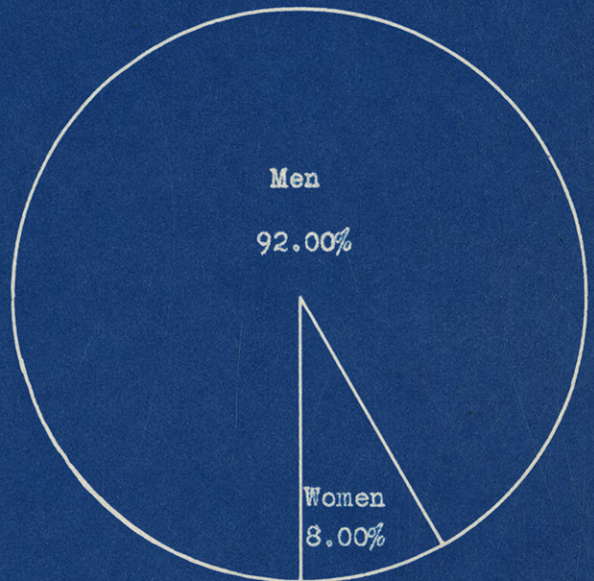


Fig. 5

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III

The distribution of respondents by place of residence

Fig. 6. Group I

Fig. 7. Group II

Fig. 8. Group III

Fig. 9. Group IV

PLATE III

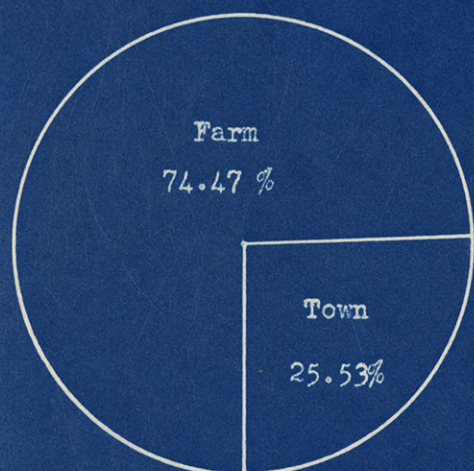


Fig. 6

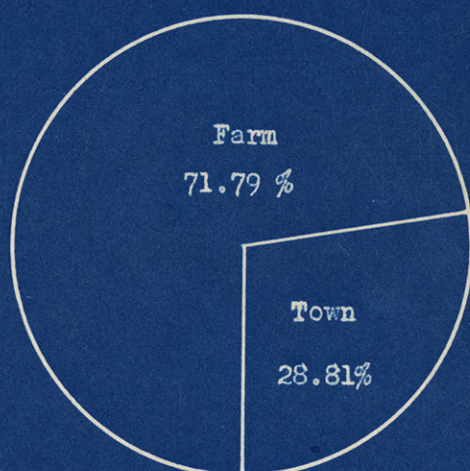


Fig. 7

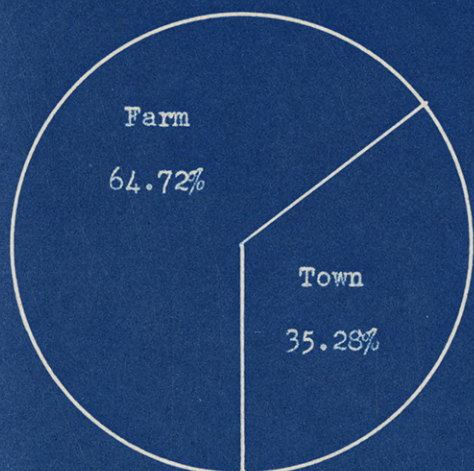


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

PLATE IV

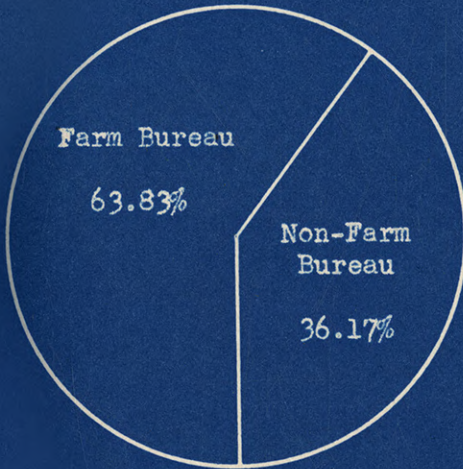


Fig. 10

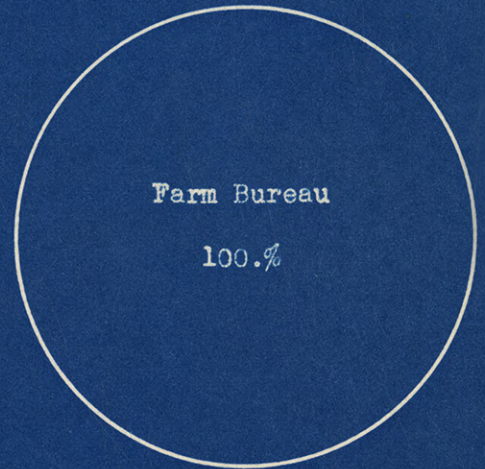


Fig. 11

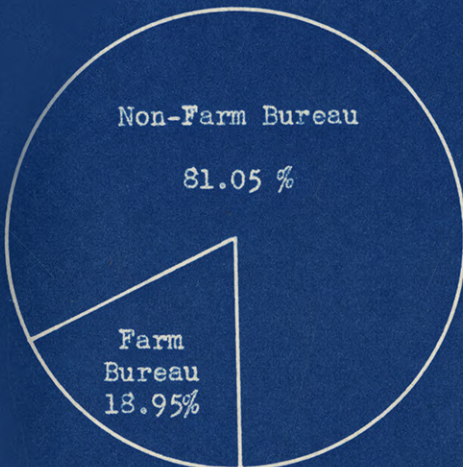


Fig. 12

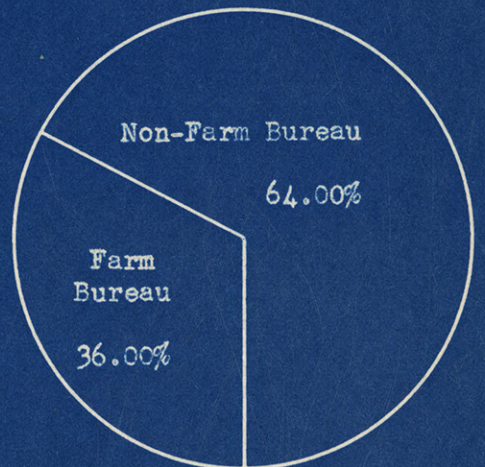


Fig. 13

Taking all groups together, it was found that only 38.21 per cent were members of the Farm Bureau, leaving 61.79 per cent as non-members. It was interesting to note that the respondents in Group IV, the patrons of cooperative association businesses, more nearly fitted the average over-all pattern than any other single group. This, along with other instances of almost perfect conformity, gave reliable significance to the findings on more controversial items in the study of this particular group.

Still further classification on the bases of income and of standards of living showed that the population sample on which the study was based was clearly representative of the total population of the state. Examination of the data obtained from the income check gave a distribution of 24.35 per cent in the low income level, 61.61 per cent in the medium income level, and 12.65 per cent in the high income level. The distribution by groups is shown in Figs. 14 to 17.

In this classification, data supplied by the National Resources Planning Board (9) were used to group the respondents. Those having cash incomes under \$500 a year were classed as low income families; those having incomes ranging between \$500 and \$3,000 a year were classed as medium families; and those with incomes of over \$3,000 a year were classed as high income families. To determine the level of income, Planning Board data again were used. The Board, in its report on family expenditures in the United States, shows that farm families with incomes of less than \$500 annually spend less than \$120 a year

EXPLANATION OF PLATE V

Distribution of respondents according to income

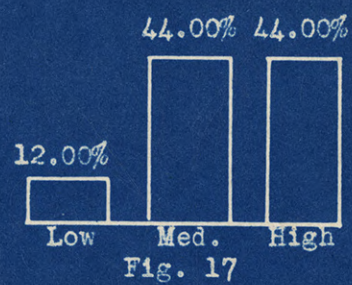
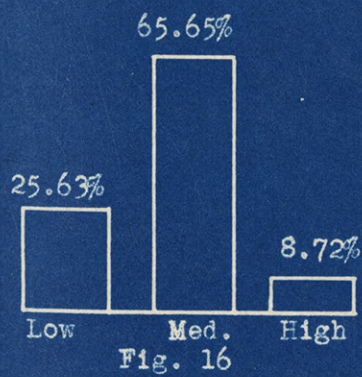
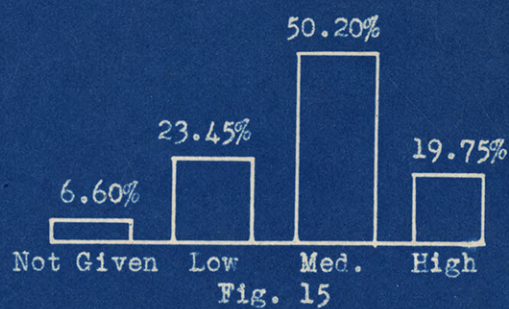
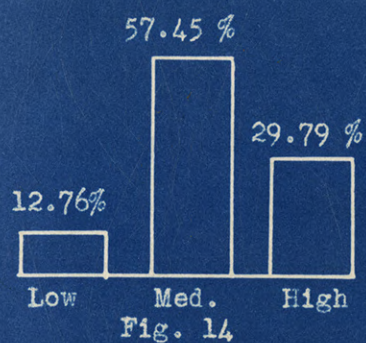
Fig. 14. Group I

Fig. 15. Group II

Fig. 16. Group III

Fig. 17. Group IV

PLATE V



for all purchased food, while rural non-farm families with cash incomes of less than \$500 a year spend under \$160 of that income for all purchased food. Both groups produce a considerable portion of their family food in home gardens.

Farm families with cash incomes between \$500 and \$3,000 a year normally spend between \$120 and \$300 for all food bought; the rural non-farm families in the same income level average between \$160 and \$600 annually for all purchased food. Again, both groups produce much of their own food in family gardens.

Farm families of the high income level, that is, with incomes above \$3,000 annually, spend over \$300 each year in normal times for food purchased, with rural non-farm families in the same income class spending approximately twice as much.

It should be noted that the data used in this study were obtained before the war had greatly affected food costs for Kansas people.

With the respondents classified according to income, a check was made of their ownership of certain household appliances and of their activity in the keeping of farm account books. Workers in the field of farm and home accounting in the Kansas State College Extension Service stated²³ that rural Kansas people were more likely in 1941 to have a telephone than a power washing machine; more likely to have a power washing machine than a mechanical refrigerator; more likely to have a mechanical refrigerator than to keep accounts; and that if they

23. Information obtained in an interview with Karl Shoemaker and J. H. Coolidge, extension economists, November, 1941.

kept account books on their enterprises they were above the average in living standards.

It was therefore determined that if listeners subscribed to telephones but had neither power washers no mechanical refrigerators and did not keep accounts, they belonged in the low standard of living group, regardless of income. If the respondents indicated ownership of either power washers or mechanical refrigerators and subscribed to a telephone, or owned both washers and refrigerators, they were classed as having a medium standard of living, except in cases of lower than average income. In cases in which incomes were lower than would seem to warrant ownership of these appliances, such ownership was assumed to indicate a high standard of living. Put another way, the term "standard of living" was considered as a relative, or a comparative, expression in this study; more as a socio-economic attitude than as a strictly practical or material condition.

Respondents who subscribed to telephones and owned both power washers and mechanical refrigerators, or who had any combination of one or more of these and kept account books, were placed in the high standard of living class. The distribution of the respondents according to standards of living on this basis of classification is shown by groups in Figs. 18 to 21.

Radio Ownership

A factor indicating that the population sample included

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VI

Distribution of respondents by living standards

Fig. 18. Group I

Fig. 19. Group II

Fig. 20. Group III

Fig. 21. Group IV

PLATE VI



Fig. 18

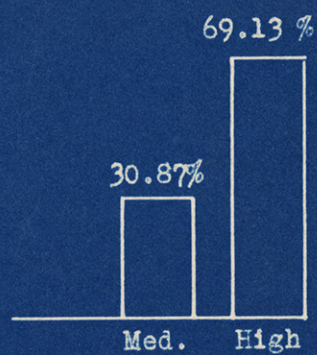


Fig. 19

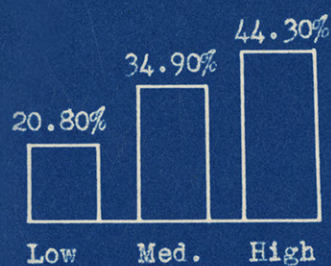


Fig. 20

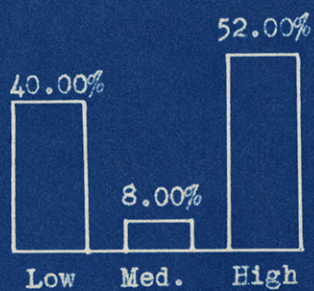


Fig. 21

in this study was possibly slightly above average compared with the rural population of the state as a whole, especially in regard to standards of living, was the high percentage of radio ownership. Census figures for 1940 (4) showed only 73.2 per cent of the rural farm dwelling units in Kansas equipped with radio sets, and 82.4 per cent of the rural non-farm dwelling units so equipped. Adding to these figures the 8.31 per cent of the respondents included in this study who had purchased their first radios since 1939 (Figs. 30 to 33) the total was still below that obtained in this study. Actually, 94.89 per cent of the respondents owned radios. The distribution by groups is given in Figs. 22 to 25.

A remarkably high percentage of the radios owned by these listeners was reported in working condition (Figs. 22 to 25). Of the total radios owned, 94.34 per cent were being used regularly. A negligible number of respondents indicated "poor reception," or "batteries low," or other minor faults in the operation of their radios, but only 5.66 per cent said their sets were not in working order.

A finding which on the face of it might give the casual reader an impression almost directly contrary to the existing condition was the fact that 21.83 per cent of the respondents reported that they were still using their "first" radio sets. In view of the fact that a significant number of the respondents obtained their first radios before 1924 (Figs. 30 to 33), it might be assumed that there were in 1941 and 1942 many 20-year

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII

Distribution of receiving sets

Fig. 22. Group I

Fig. 23. Group II

Fig. 24. Group III

Fig. 25. Group IV

PLATE VII



Fig. 22

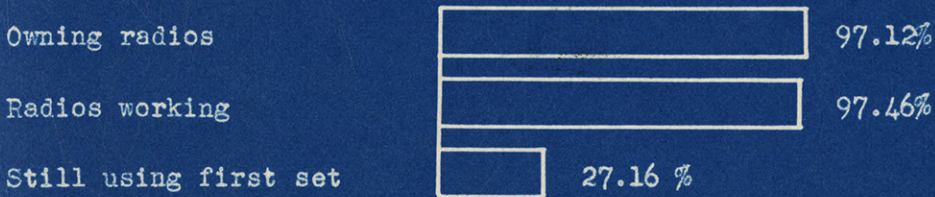


Fig. 23

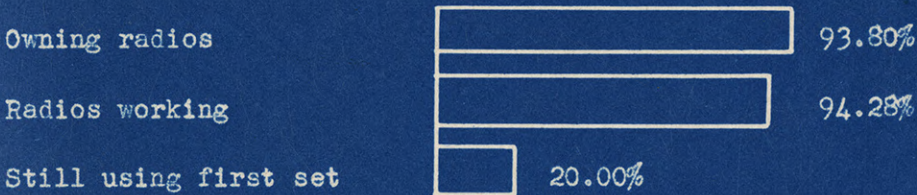


Fig. 24

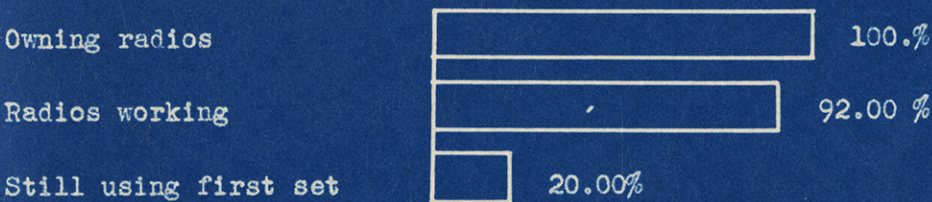


Fig. 25

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VIII

Sources of electricity for radio operation

Fig. 26. Group I

Fig. 27. Group II

Fig. 28. Group III

Fig. 29. Group IV

PLATE VIII

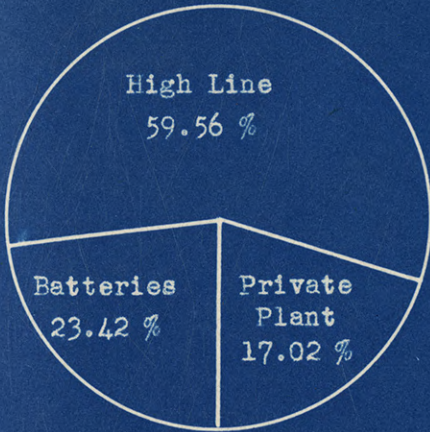


Fig. 26

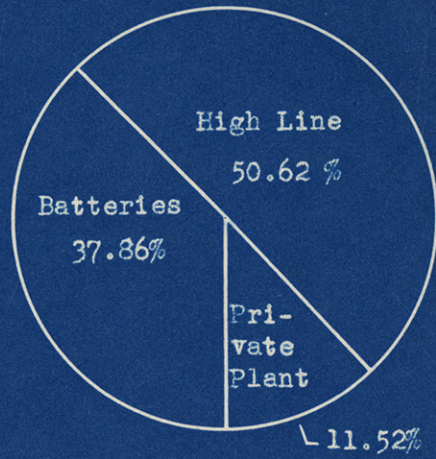


Fig. 27

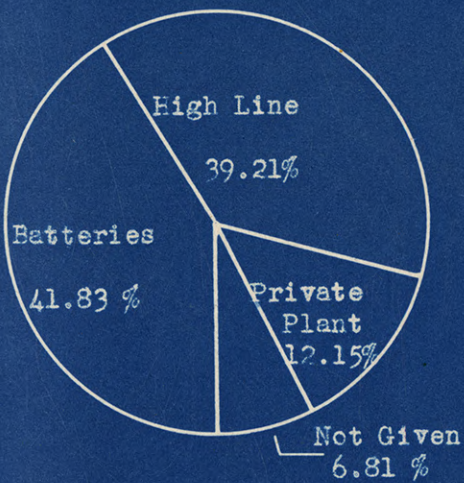


Fig. 28

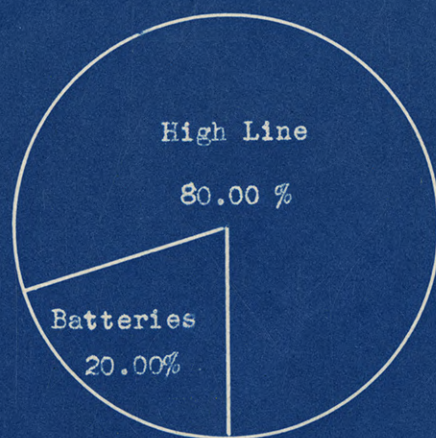


Fig. 29

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IX

Chronological distribution of the purchase of first radios

Fig. 30. Group I

Fig. 31. Group II

Fig. 32. Group III

Fig. 33. Group IV

PLATE IX

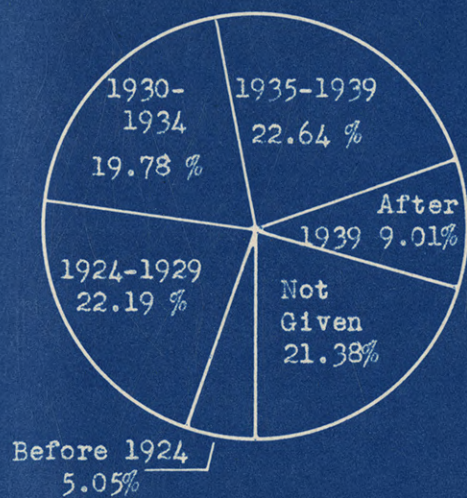


Fig. 30

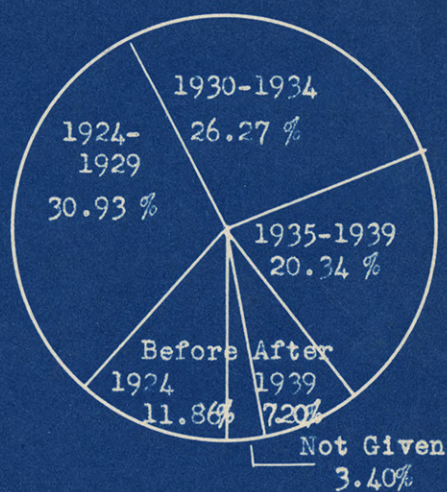


Fig. 31

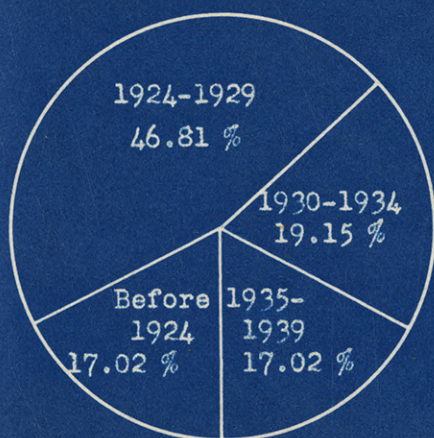


Fig. 32

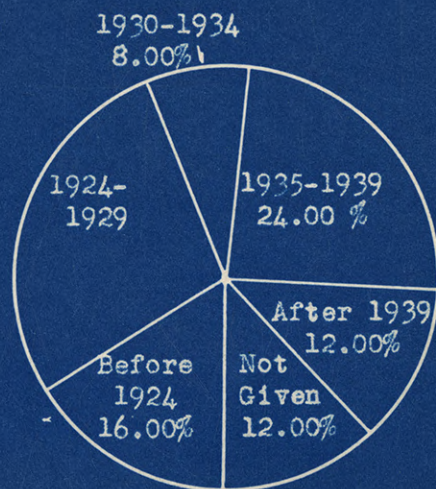


Fig. 33

old radio sets in use. This was not the case. Listeners bought radios throughout the 20-year period covered in this study. The fact that only slightly less than 22 per cent were still using their first sets was an indication that there was a rapid turnover in radio ownership, especially since 30 per cent of the radios owned by these listeners in 1942 were obtained after 1935 (Figs. 30 to 35).

The source of electricity used in the operation of these radio sets was of no particular importance in the study. A fairly high per cent of high line current was used by the respondents, but this had no special significance other than possibly to explain in part the high per cent of radio ownership. It was not determined whether radio had any influence on the attainment of electrical service by the respondents. This would make an interesting item for investigation.

Radio Influences Noted

On the basis of figures obtained in this survey, the radio was highly favored over magazines. The ratio in all four groups of listeners was 83.06 to 16.94. This choice occurred in almost exactly these proportions in Groups I and III. In Group II, the ratio favoring radio was less pronounced, radio getting 67.44 per cent of the choices to 32.56 per cent for magazines. In Group IV, radio was favored 22 to one, or 96.18 per cent for radio to 3.82 per cent for magazines (Figs. 34 to 37).

These variations were due to the predominant preference of men for radio over magazines, while the choice with women was

EXPLANATION OF PLATE X

Preferences between radio and six other facilities

(By groups)

Fig. 34. Group I

Fig. 35. Group II

Fig. 36. Group III

Fig. 37. Group IV

PLATE X



Fig. 34



Fig. 35

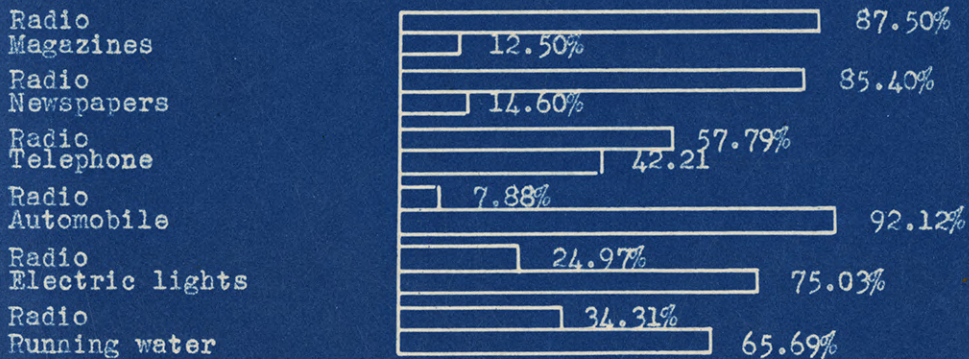


Fig. 36

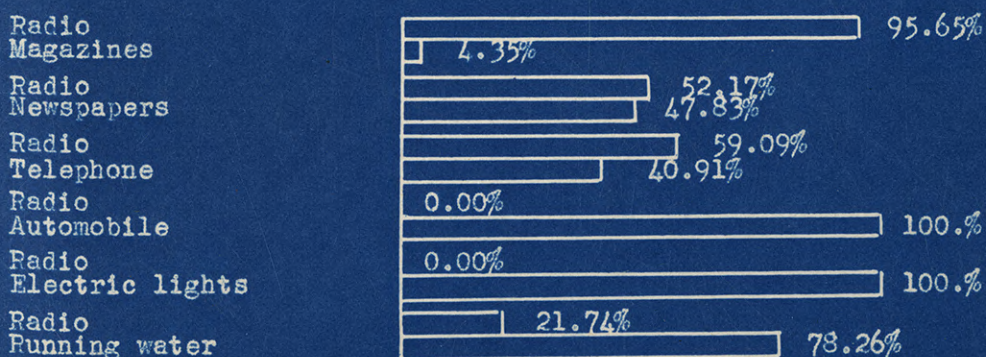


Fig. 37

more nearly even, although radio was preferred. In Groups I and III, the respondents were almost exactly half men and half women. In Group II, women outnumbered men approximately three to two. In Group IV, men outnumbered women 11 to one. The over-all distribution on this choice is shown in Fig. 38.

That most persons still regarded the newspaper as a necessary source of news at the time this survey was made is shown Figs. 34 to 37 and 39. This was true probably because with the newspaper the individual could read the items in a more leisurely manner and take as much time as necessary to digest the material presented. With the exception of the high school age group, listeners were only 52.41 per cent predominant in their choice of radio over newspapers. In Group III, which included the high school youth, radio was the choice over newspapers by a percentage of 77.12 to 16.07, the youth voting almost solidly for radio.²⁴

The choice of radio over newspapers on the part of high school youth was probably due to a lack of real, deep interest in current events on the part of school children. Their interest is on the surface and quickly passes. This observation was substantiated by the fact that only 43.6 per cent of the high school students who filled out questionnaires checked news as an important radio program choice. It is likely that those who

24. These two percentage figures do not total 100 because some of the persons included in the survey failed to check this item. This same policy was followed throughout this portion of the study to give a true picture of listener preferences. The percentages given are "of population sample" in each group, and not "of persons checking the item."

did check the newscast liked it because it was short, covered a wide range of interests in a hurry, and left the listeners free to use their time to listen to popular dance music or comedians, both of which were strong choices with this class of listeners.

The situation with respect to the preference between radio and telephone was almost exactly reversed from that of the radio versus the newspaper in Groups I and II (Figs. 34 and 35). In Groups III and IV, however, results were almost identical, with radio outranking the telephone by over 15 per cent. High school youth and men preferred the radio in the majority of cases. On the basis of a study conducted in 1941, Robinson (10) concluded that rural families with insufficient income to pay for both telephone and radio tend to give up their telephone, and that in communities where the prevailing economic level is low, an increase in the number of radios will result in a decrease in the number of telephones. He concluded further that such a decrease in telephones would automatically decrease the total amount of social visiting done by telephone. This is a logical deduction, since on the basis of figures obtained in this study of Kansas listeners it was determined that the majority of women prefer the telephone to the radio. Since they are the ones who employ the telephone most for social visiting, they would likely be the ones to choose the telephone if the necessity for a choice arose.

As was anticipated, the farmer regarded his automobile as

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XI

Preferences between radio and six other facilities
(Among all respondents)

Fig. 38. Radio and magazines

Fig. 39. Radio and newspapers

Fig. 40. Radio and telephone

Fig. 41. Radio and automobile

Fig. 42. Radio and electric lights

Fig. 43. Radio and running water

PLATE XI

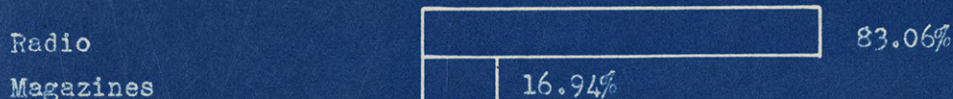


Fig. 38



Fig. 39



Fig. 40

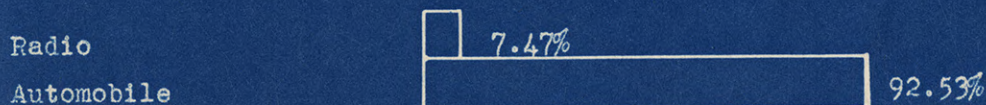


Fig. 41



Fig. 42



Fig. 43

a practical necessity. In fact, a number of respondents wrote in on the margins of their questionnaires a statement to that effect. There was, therefore, little to be said for radio in this comparison. The overwhelming odds in favor of the automobile are shown in Figs. 34 to 37 and 41.

Electric lights were considered more desirable than radio by approximately five of every six persons, averaging all four groups together. The ratio was lowest in Group III and highest in Group IV (Figs. 34 to 37 and 42).

Running water received essentially the same number of choices as electric lights, with Group II giving the highest percentage of choice for running water over radio. It is interesting to observe that men and women were evenly divided in their choice on this item, indicating that Kansas farm men were at least as considerate of the water pumping problem as the women were (Figs. 34 to 37 and 43).

Radio fills definite needs in many aspects of the farm family's social and cultural lives. This was brought out in the results of questions asking listeners to indicate preferences in 11 choices in which radio programs were compared with real life performances of similar activities. It should be noted at the outset that radio programs were not preferred by the majority of respondents in some instances, but the number indicating a preference for radio was high enough to substantiate any theories existent up to the time this survey was made that radio had an important part to play in the social and cultural lives of Kansas rural people.

In many communities, and homes, for example, books of all kinds are scarce; the ability to perform musically is undeveloped and musical entertainment "in person" is scarce; the motion picture theater is usually considerable distance away even with a car; and dramatic stage presentations are infrequent and limited in kind largely to simple productions by local schools. Athletic contests are also for the most part involvements of the local schools, although in this case a son, a nephew, or the neighbor's boy are often central characters, making the performances of definite interest to the farm family.

Political meetings, with the exception of local community school board affairs, are generally far removed from the average farm home. The social pastime of card games, which occupies an important place in the leisure-hour lives of city dwellers is of much less importance to the country family, which tends to be more self-sufficient and isolated socially than the city family.

In all these aspects of life for the farmer and his wife, the radio has assumed a most important role.

In two other important phases of rural living, the radio has not yet reached, and may never reach, a position even approaching equality — in competition with the church and with social conversation (Fig.44).

Robinson (10) studied the effect of radio listening on the custom among rural people of calling at each other's homes for

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XII

Eleven comparisons showing cultural and social preferences with respect to radio listening

(All respondents)

Fig. 44

PLATE XII

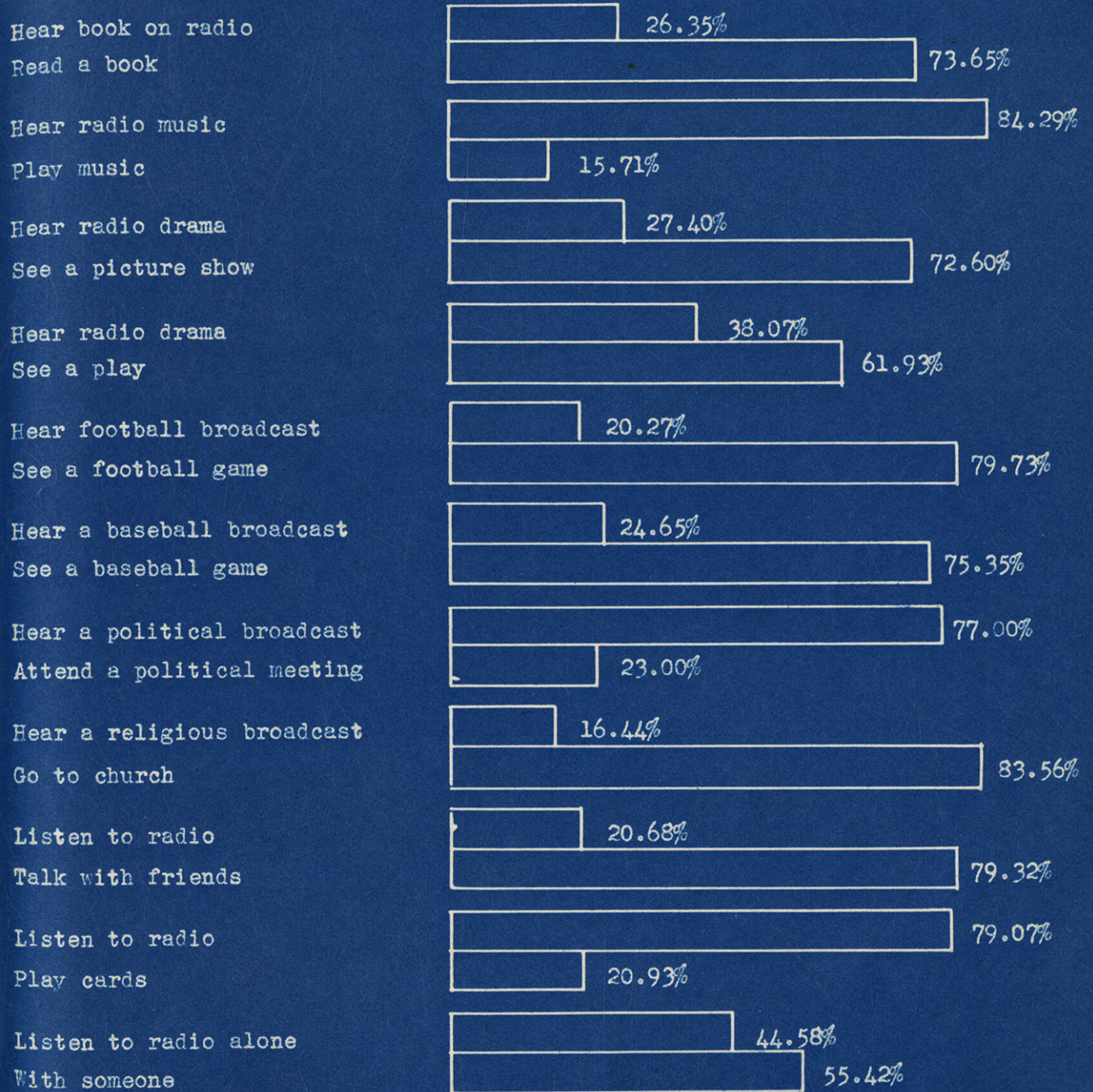


Fig. 44

short informal visits.²⁵ On the basis of his findings he concluded that, "Apparently buying a radio causes a light decrease in social visiting, but the evidence was so sparse that little faith can be put in this conclusion."

It takes but little reasoning to arrive at the explanation for this condition. Rural people like to talk with each other; they have the time and ability to think, which in turn means that they develop ideas and form opinions. Tabulation of the returns in this study showed that farm people of all ages, both sexes, and all levels of income and living standards, preferred to talk with friends rather than listen to the radio. The preference was preponderant. It was interesting to note that older persons were more decided in their preference for social conversation than were high school youth, who probably were somewhat self-conscious socially.

In 1938, Fritts and Gwinn (6) observed that city dwellers, under the continual stress of a quickened tempo of living and narrowness of their occupational interests, had lost or were rapidly losing the ability to carry on interesting social conversation. On the other hand, the farm way of life, with the breadth of interests it offered those engaged in it, the fact that one farmer's problems were in many respects like those of his neighbors, and the many-sided aspects of the problems with which the farmer had to cope required the exercise of judgment

25. His investigation was limited to a small number of radio listeners in Pike County, Illinois, and a similarly small number of listeners in Burt County, Nebraska. However, he used the direct interview method of obtaining his information and had a more extensive questionnaire than was used in this study.

and the development of thought processes and analytical ability that made farm people capable and interesting conversationalists. It would be interesting to make a comparative study of the effects of radio listening upon city dwellers, and ascertain if this analogy holds. If so, the city dweller should prefer listening to the radio to social conversation.

In the matter of church versus radio religious services, the listeners gave the church their vote by five to one. On the other hand, in the section of this study dealing with program preferences, hymn singing programs ranked in the upper third of all program features in all groups, and sermons received enough mention to make them worthwhile from the radio program manager's point of view. This showed that religion was a deep-set part of the rural way of life — important enough to be sought out in the many offerings on the radio, but not of sufficient importance in its radio form to replace the real thing in the little country or small town church. In the case of religion, then, it was shown that the radio had proved a valuable complement to a phase of living already important in the lives of country people in Kansas.

This was true also in the cases of athletic contests, dramatic entertainment, and the reading of books. Radio presentations were not preferable to the majority of listeners, but they were important as supplements to the actual diversions.

Stated differently, the majority of listeners would have preferred to read a book for themselves, but not having books or time to read were happy to have books read or dramatized for

them on the radio; most listeners preferred to see a play or a picture show but wanted radio drama because in most instances dramatic entertainment on either stage or screen was less available to them.

Most women preferred radio broadcasts of athletic contests to seeing the contests themselves. This was probably true because most of them did not understand the games and enjoyed the radio descriptions more, delivered all neatly done up in easily interpreted packages complete with instructions, so to speak.

On the question of music, the choice was radio's by over 80 per cent of the listeners. This was not particularly significant as a choice. It did not indicate a particular preference as much as it did a condition. A pertinent observation might have been substantiated if the following question had also been asked, "Can you perform musically?" As it turned out however, many of the respondents wrote marginal notes saying, "Can't play," or something similar. This indicated that radio was supplying a need for something that could not be met in any other way. Rural people liked music and wanted it as a part of their cultural atmosphere. If it had not been for radio, the desire for music in the lives of these people would have had to go unsatisfied. This is most significant. It is the one cultural aspect of all radio's many contributions in which the farmer and his wife have probably benefited most. The phonograph was indeed a trivial invention in comparison. With radio, the listener can obtain his favorite kind of music from several stations at almost any time of day or night, and

with the vast number of stations to select from the listener can amplify the nature of his musical entertainment to include as much variety as it is his wish to hear.

An interesting variation in attitudes was obtained by using a little different wording of the questions in the section on cultural and social items in the questionnaires distributed to the respondents in Group II. In these questionnaires the respondents were asked, "Would you rather listen to the radio or read a book?" Through the entire list of choices the first line always read "listen to the radio." Results for this section of the study are shown for Group II only in Fig. 45.

That radio wields momentous influences over its audiences was evidenced by the fact that in all groups of respondents, 50 per cent or more had tried farming or homemaking practices they had heard recommended over the radio (Figs. 46 to 50). The proportion was highest among Farm and Home Week respondents, Group II, of whom almost 80 per cent had tried such ideas many times. Among parents of 4-H Club members, Group I, 64 per cent had tried such ideas many times. Over 94 per cent of the respondents reached through vocational agriculture teachers, including the high school students filling out questionnaires, had tried such ideas one or more times. Exactly 50 per cent of the respondents in Group IV who answered this item in the questionnaire had tried such suggestions many times, and all had tried some suggestion which they had heard recommended in radio programs.²⁶

26. Attention is called to the report of leaders on this item.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIII

Eleven comparisons showing cultural and social preferences with respect to radio listening

(Group II)

Fig. 45

PLATE XIII

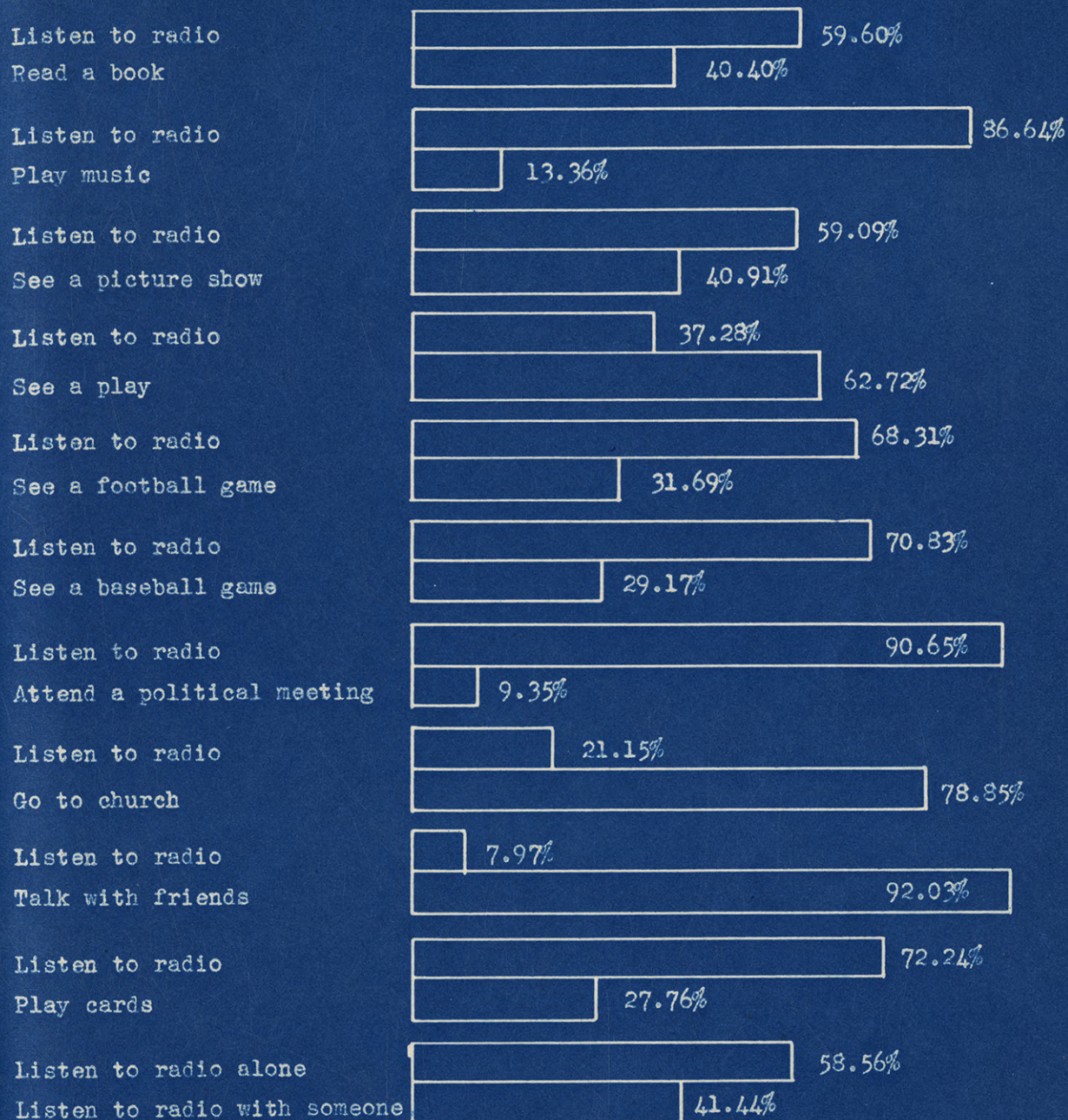


Fig. 45

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIV

Listener report on the use of radio suggestions

- Fig. 46. Group I
- Fig. 47. Group II
- Fig. 48. Group III
- Fig. 49. Group IV
- Fig. 50. All groups

PLATE XIV

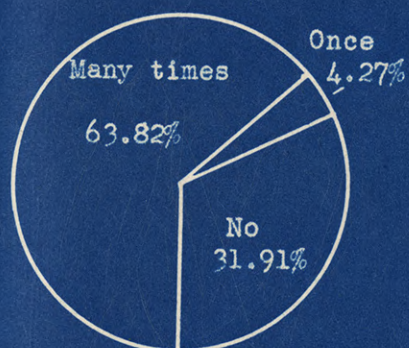


Fig. 46

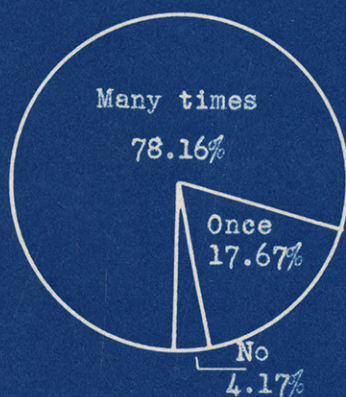


Fig. 47

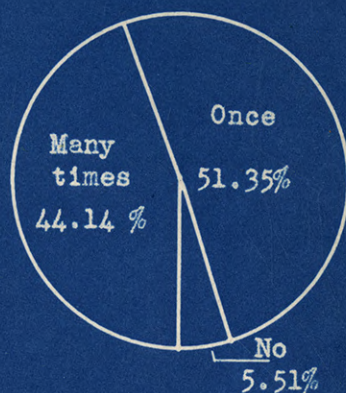


Fig. 48

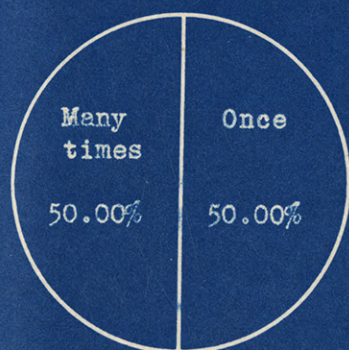


Fig. 49

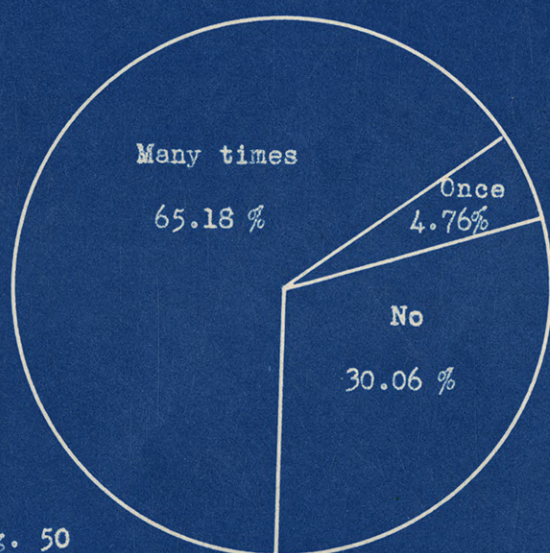


Fig. 50

Kansas people gave their strongest approval to radio programs telling them how better to produce, feed, and handle their livestock and manage their poultry flocks. Equally strong was their approval of discussions of market trends and simple day-to-day market reports. This was in answer to the question, "What was the most useful suggestion you ever heard over the radio?" On the homemakers' side of the picture were food preparation, gardening and flowers, chicken raising, and home decoration and improvement. Those general classifications received the highest frequency of mention.

Under each of these general classifications, there were numerous items listed which for sake of brevity in this report were simply grouped together. A typical example of this was in the general class of "food preparation." Under this heading were placed all tallies for recipes, cooking, school lunches, uses for honey, canning, using canned goods, cooking school lessons, baking, menus, and all other home activities that might logically be put there.

General over-all analysis of the returns in this phase of the study showed that the farmer and his wife were most interested in practical things. Suggestions of the "what to do and how to do it" type were most preferred. They were interested also, though to a lesser extent, in "why" certain things should be done. Robinson (10) included in his study a section on radio as an instrument for practical instruction. He reported that men in Pike County, Illinois, who had bought radios only a short time before the survey was made ranked radio second in importance in the list of sources for new ideas, the county agricul-

tural agent being ranked first. Men who had had radios for a longer time ranked them fifth in importance as sources of new ideas. "New-radio women" placed radio first, and "old-radio women" rated it third. He pointed out further that "practically all of the new ideas reported by men came under the heading of farming, and nearly all the new ideas reported by women under the heading of cooking. Important topics such as family health, child-training, and budgeting received little or no mention." On the basis of these reports, Robinson concluded, "... the influence of the radio in practical education appears to be small."

Some confusion results in Robinson's article when he uses the terms "practical" and "technical" interchangeably as in the following passage: "The facts present a strong case against radio as a means of communicating specific practical ideas. The radio is probably inefficient here because these matters require a type of explanation that radio cannot give. Technical instruction usually involves question and answer, pictorialization, and reference to particular conditions. Radio fails because it cannot make things clear without these helps."

He comments that this limitation has caused the United States Department of Agriculture to make little effort to broadcast detailed instructions on technical matters, although it does find the radio useful in stimulating application to competent local advisers.

In this Kansas study, the truly practical radio suggestion was the most popular of all. Every phase of farming and

homemaking in rural Kansas was included in the list compiled from the reports by the respondents, some much more often than others, but all there.

In answer to the question asking what station they had heard these most worthwhile suggestions over, respondents in both Groups I and II ranked KSAC, owned and operated by Kansas State College, Manhattan, first; respondents in Group III ranked KSAC second; and from the nature of the replies received from respondents in Group IV, KSAC influences could be inferred, although the station was not listed. It should be pointed out here that no station call letters were placed anywhere on the questionnaires, nor was any other item included that might bias in favor of any one station the answers made by the listeners. The distribution on this item in the questionnaire is shown in Figs. 51 to 55. Other stations named by respondents to this item included WIBW, Topeka, which shares the same frequency with KSAC; WDAF, Kansas City, Missouri; KFH, Wichita; WOW, Omaha, Nebraska; KFAB, Lincoln, Nebraska; KMMJ, Grand Island, Nebraska; KOA and KLZ, Denver, Colorado; KMA and KFNF, Shenandoah, Iowa; KVOO, Tulsa, Oklahoma; and WFAA, Dallas, Texas.

As might be anticipated from the answers to the other parts of the questionnaire preceding, a majority of the respondents planned their work so that they might listen to certain radio programs. This was true for the women more than for the men (Figs. 56 to 60). The most important listening times for rural people were, in the order of popularity and amount of time devoted, night, noon, early morning, and early evening

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XV

Most useful radio station to rural Kansas listeners

Fig. 51. Group I

Fig. 52. Group II

Fig. 53. Group III

Fig. 54. Group IV

Fig. 55. All groups

PLATE XV

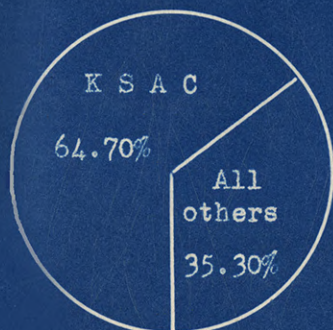


Fig. 51

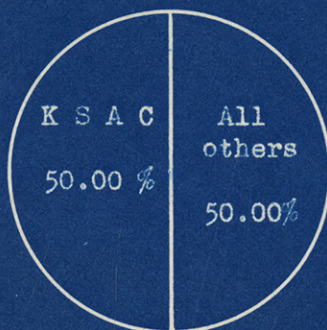


Fig. 52



Fig. 53



Fig. 54

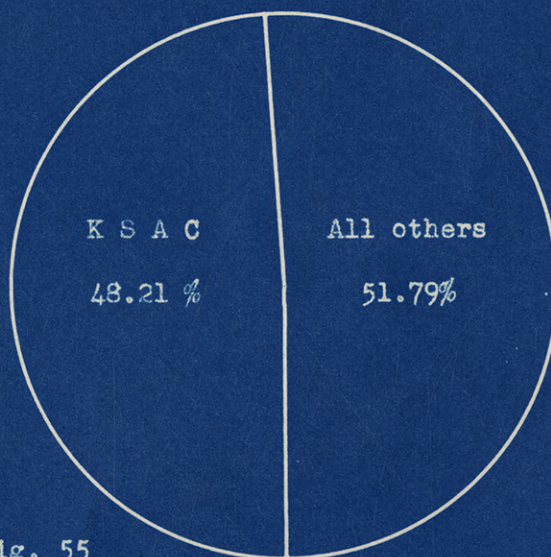


Fig. 55

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVI

Listener attempts to plan work to hear certain
radio programs

Fig. 56. Group I

Fig. 57. Group II

Fig. 58. Group III

Fig. 59. Group IV

Fig. 60. All groups

PLATE XVI

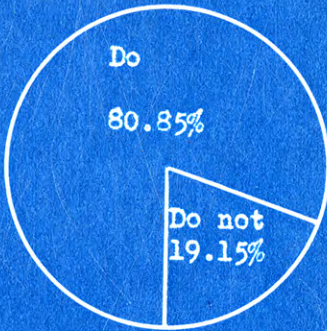


Fig. 56

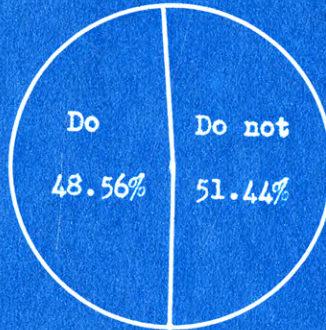


Fig. 57

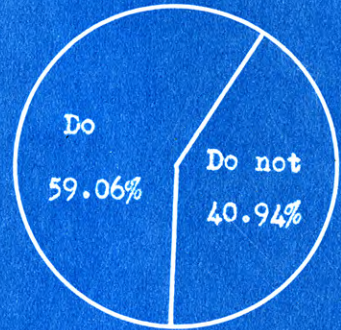


Fig. 58

Fig. 56

Fig. 57

Fig. 58

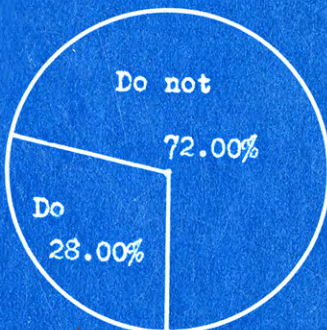


Fig. 59

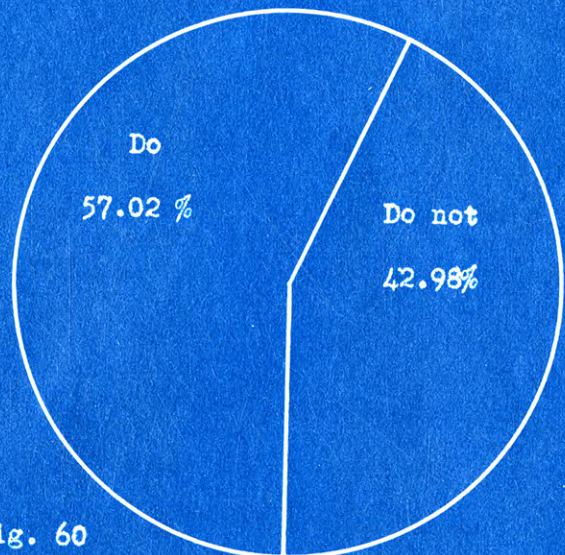


Fig. 60

(Figs. 61 to 64). Among women, mid-morning and mid-afternoon were also important listening times, each receiving about the same frequency of mention. Only a very small number of men indicated listening during these periods. Late afternoon was the poorest time of all for all groups. However, it was more used by men than either the mid-morning or mid-afternoon periods.

These facts were not new or startling. They had been divulged through many previous studies of the radio audiences throughout the country. The fact that they checked accurately with the results of these earlier studies, however, added definite authenticity to the other results obtained in this study. If certain facts obtained in this study corresponded with generally established facts obtained by other workers in impartial studies of the radio audience, it was reasonable to assume that all the facts brought to light in the study were dependable and gave a true picture of conditions existing.

Station and Program Likes

Since the purpose of this study was to determine the nature and extent of radio influences in social, cultural, and practical aspects, no great amount of time or effort was devoted to analyzing the likes or dislikes of the respondents with respect to stations. The only significance which information obtained on this item had in the study was to indicate the type of radio programs the respondents liked to listen to, since most stations have some characteristic quality in their programs which distinguish them from some and class them with

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVII

Times when rural people listen

Fig. 61. Group I

Fig. 62. Group II

Fig. 63. Group III

Fig. 64. Group IV

PLATE XVII

Early morning
Mid-morning
Noon
Mid-afternoon
Late afternoon
Early evening
Night

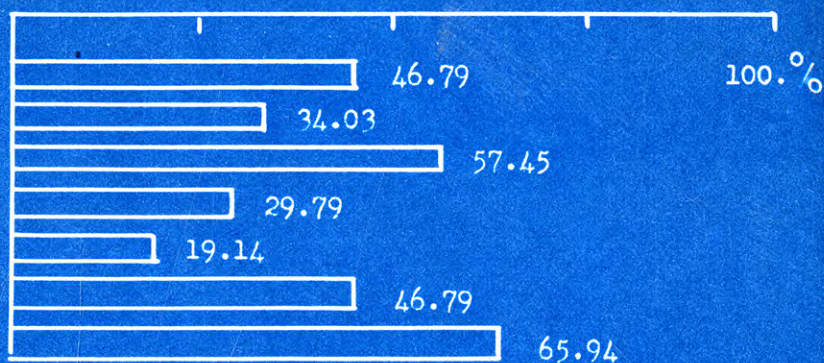


Fig. 61

Early morning
Mid-morning
Noon
Mid-afternoon
Late afternoon
Early evening
Night

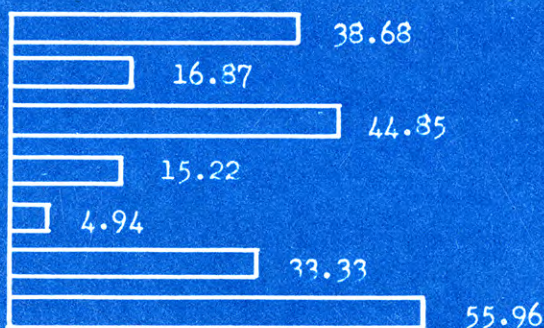


Fig. 62

Early morning
Mid-morning
Noon
Mid-afternoon
Late afternoon
Early evening
Night



Fig. 63

Early morning
Mid-morning
Noon
Mid-afternoon
Late afternoon
Early evening
Night

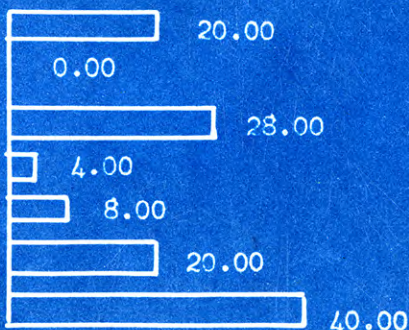


Fig. 64

other radio stations. For example, except for the Columbia Broadcasting System programs it carries, WIBW's program schedule does not differ greatly from that of KMMJ in Grand Island, Nebraska. However, WIBW enjoys the benefit of a better reception on Kansas farms because of its better frequency (580 kilocycles) and its location. Similar parallels and contrasts might be made between other stations.

Information was obtained from all the stations listed by the respondents to clarify the observations on station and program likes for each of the five-year periods from 1920 to 1940. With this information it was possible to describe certain trends in the evolution of the radio audience through the first two decades of radio.

Where KFKB, WLW, KDKA, WDAF, and KFH were the stations to which radio dials in rural Kansas were most often turned before 1924, in the period from 1924 to 1929, inclusive, the most popular stations were KMMJ, WDAF, KFNF, KFH, WOW, WLW, KOA, and WHO, in that order.

Weather, news markets, and music were the order of the day on the "first" program schedules. Letters from WDAF, WFAA, KFH, WOW, and KFBI, all indicate essentially the same pattern. A quotation from a letter received from Vernon E. Reed, program director at Station KFH, Wichita, will illustrate this situation. It is typical.

During the early days of broadcasting over WEAH (early in 1923) we had a steady diet of phonograph records plus the grain markets. Now and then we would present a vocalist or a local jazz band.

From 1930 to 1934, KMMJ and WDAF remained popular along with KFH and KOA. KFNF dropped almost out of the picture as a station competing for popularity. KFKB was sold to the Farmers' and Bankers' Life Insurance Company of Wichita, and became KFBI, located in Abilene, Kansas. Its popularity during that period was chiefly among people of low incomes and low standards of living.

Station WIBW, owned by the Capper publishing interests in Topeka, began broadcasting in November, 1929, sharing time on the same frequency as KSAC, Manhattan. The frequency used by these stations, 580 kilocycles, was and continued to be one of the best on the broadcast band, because it was near the bottom. It was possible with low power to get better reception on this frequency than several times more power could get near the other end of the wave band. Partly because of this coincidence, and partly because from the very beginning WIBW made the most of popular interest in simple folk music, weather, market, and news reports, that station forged rapidly to the front in the parade of stations across the horizon of the rural Kansas listener.

In the period from 1935 to 1939, the six most popular individual stations with Kansas' rural audience were WIBW, WDAF, KMMJ, KFH, KOA, and KFAB, in that order.

From 1939 on the picture was dominated over much of the state by WIBW, with WDAF and KFH ranking second and third over the state as a whole. KFBI, by this time had been moved to Wichita, with a lightly altered program set-up, had begun to

come back into popularity. WOW in Omaha had regained mention. KFAB and KOA were sectionally popular. By this period also, KSAC had reached a position of considerable popularity, receiving what might be termed a surprisingly large frequency of mention, whereas in previous periods it had been listed by so few listeners as to warrant no mention at all.

Examination of the questionnaires explained this point. In the first place, KSAC uses the same frequency as WIBW, the most popular station in the state. Many listeners do not differentiate between the two, it is all one and the same to them. Many persons wrote "WIBW-KSAC" as a single entry in answering their questionnaires. Others wrote in such remarks as "WIBW, including Manhattan, when it is on." The large number of such entries led to recognition of the fact that a certain number on the dial is more important to the listener than the station behind the number so long as that number brings satisfactory programs.

Moreover, KSAC had succeeded in attracting a growing number of listeners through the years on the merits of its own informational programs, planned almost entirely for rural listeners. The interest in practical farming and homemaking ideas broadcast over the station was evidence of that; and the fact that talks on farming ranked fifth in program feature popularity among farm bureau members and parents of Collegiate 4-H Club members, though not quite so high among the other two groups of respondents, is further evidence that the station enjoys a certain popularity among the more cultured people of the

state and the people who aspire to higher standards of cultural attainment.

Program likes changed somewhat during the 20 years covered in this study. To the markets and music which made up most of the first schedules soon were added weather and news. Story tellers had a more or less quick rise and fall, giving away to dramatic productions involving several voices. However, they were popular enough, especially with children, to be kept even until today on some stations.

Comedians, the variety program, long dramatic broadcasts, amateur programs, quiz programs, dramatic serials in 15-minute (or shorter) installments, news analysts and commentators, all have come into the schedule, all have assumed a place in the modern radio fare of the average Kansas farmer and his wife.

Table 1. Program features by popularity²⁷
(All listeners)

1. News	13. Symphony orchestras
2. Markets	14. Sermons
3. Commentators	15. Talks on government
4. Quiz programs	16. Organ music
5. Weather reports	17. Sports broadcasts
6. Comedians	18. Barn dance music
7. Hymn singing	19. Recipes
8. Modern dance music	20. Opera music
Talks on homemaking	Talks on travel
9. Talks on farming	21. Contests
10. Dramatic serials	22. Talks on science
11. Amateur programs	23. Talks on books
Old time songs	24. Talks on music
12. Band music	25. Advertising

27. See questionnaire in Appendix.

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	All Groups
Total leader respondents	18	69	39	26	152
Reporting listener inquiries ²⁹	94.44	88.40	94.87	96.15	92.10
Radio advertised products	88.23	63.94	72.96	68.00	70.00
Marketing farm products	82.35	65.57	27.03	80.00	60.00
Government farm programs	70.59	70.49	29.73	60.00	57.86
New, or better, crops	64.70	62.29	16.22	52.00	47.86
Improved methods	70.59	39.34	40.54	52.00	45.71
Home improvements	52.89	18.03	45.95	52.00	35.71
Keeping books	23.53	8.20	8.19	28.00	13.57
Budgeting	17.65	3.28	5.40	16.00	7.86
Weather	64.70	50.82	35.13	64.00	52.14
Menus	-	13.12	45.95	32.00	23.57
Recipes	5.88	18.03	62.16	44.00	32.86
Fashions	-	3.28	43.25	16.00	15.72
Bulletins	64.70	59.01	51.35	24.00	45.00
Circulars	52.89	34.43	18.90	12.00	23.57
News	70.59	52.46	56.75	38.00	58.57
Tours	41.18	39.34	5.40	20.00	27.14
Meetings	35.30	34.43	27.03	36.00	34.39
Music	11.75	9.84	29.73	48.00	22.14
Drama	5.88	-	16.22	16.00	7.86
Radio suggestions practiced ³⁰					
Often	41.18	20.00	5.40	28.57	20.02
Sometimes	41.18	49.23	59.47	52.38	51.48
Rarely	17.64	24.62	29.73	14.28	23.50
Never	-	6.15	5.40	4.76	5.00
Leaders having broadcast	23.53	36.88	78.36	28.00	59.43
Having listeners comment ³⁰	100.00	86.79	100.00	100.00	92.47
Inquiries about suggestions	50.00	54.72	51.72	42.85	52.69
Following recommendations	-	45.28	20.68	14.29	33.33

28. A report on the extent to which listeners inquire about and follow suggestions and recommendations heard on farm radio programs. (Group A, vocational agriculture teachers; Group B, county agricultural and 4-H club agents; Group C, home demonstration agents; Group D, cooperative association managers.)
29. Percentages are based on total replies in each group.
30. Percentages based on number of responses to this item.

Radio Influences Noted

Several interesting and significant facts were discovered in the replies to the leader questionnaire. The first of these was the exceptionally high percentage of affirmative responses to the question, "Do people ask you about things they have heard over the radio?" The average for the four leader-groups on this item of the questionnaire was 92.10 per cent, or 140 of the 152 persons reporting (Figs. 65 to 69).

One of the most significant findings in this phase of the study was the frequency with which the public inquired of such educational leaders as the vocational agriculture teachers and county extension agents concerning the numerous products advertised by radio for rural consumption. Ten per cent more responses were recorded for this item than for the next highest, the marketing of farm products.

The skepticism on the part of the rural consumer concerning the validity of the claims made for the various radio advertised products is positively evidenced by the facts brought out in this study. Incidentally, large numbers of KSAC listeners wrote during the winter and spring months of 1941 and 1942 to the Kansas State College station asking for "consumer buying information."³¹ One woman wrote: "As a source of really helpful information, the talks on home finance or consumer buying I rate highest."

³¹. See map in Appendix.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVIII

Leaders reporting inquiries about radio programs

Fig. 65. Group A

Fig. 66. Group B

Fig. 67. Group C

Fig. 68. Group D

Fig. 69. All leaders

PLATE XVIII

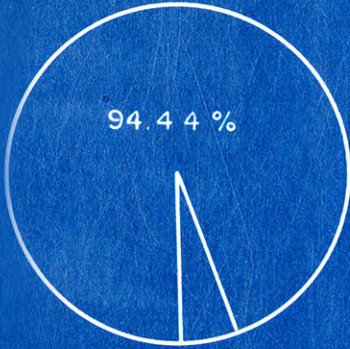


Fig. 65

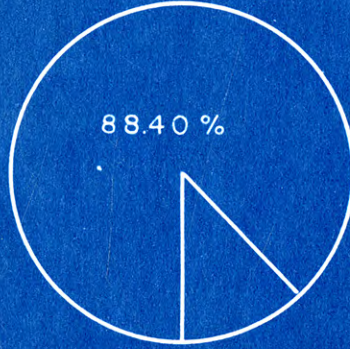


Fig. 66

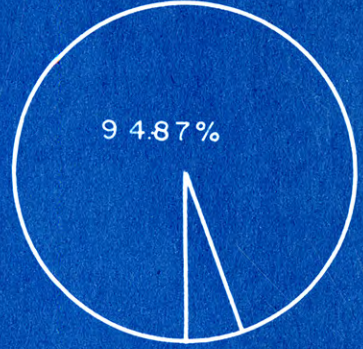


Fig. 67

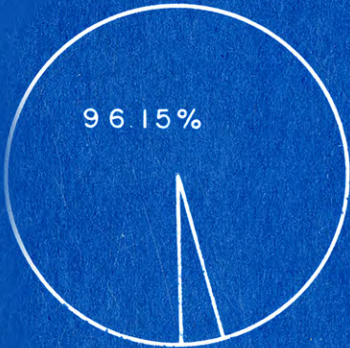


Fig. 68

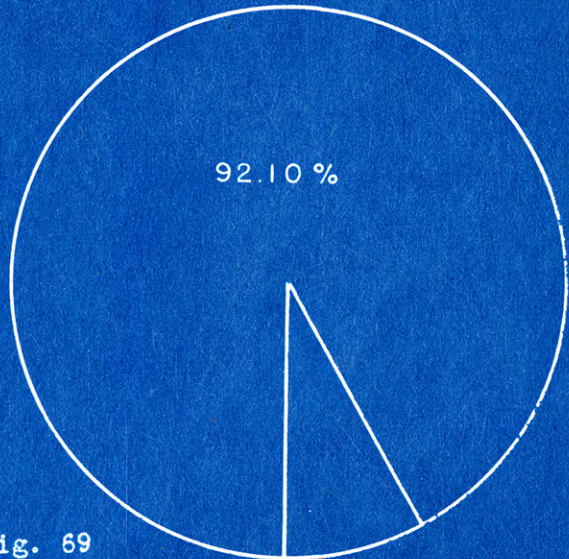


Fig. 69

This indicates a distinct phase of educational broadcasting that has not been exploited to its fullest possibilities. It further indicates that there is room for improvement in the advertising features of radio programs.

The inclination of radio listeners to question the advertising they heard carried a number of other implications. Among these was the fact that the United States Department of Agriculture which, operating through the State Extension Service, helps sponsor the work of the county agents, prohibits its employees from recommending any commercial products to the exclusion of others that might be similar and thus compete for consumer trade. This probably caused embarrassment for the county agents to whom such listeners went. They were likely faced with the problem of approving or disapproving certain articles, depending upon the answers they gave. Inasmuch as commercial stations might hesitate to broadcast consumer information, which in some cases might be detrimental to some commercially sponsored product on the stations' programs, it should have been the place of educational stations long since to broadcast such programs. With the wide and positive interest in such information, and the field clearly open for the educational broadcaster, here is an opportunity for the educational broadcaster to cultivate favor with the listening public.

The marketing of farm products was another particularly popular topic of inquiry, especially among the men. This was

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIX

Listener inquiries of farm leaders concerning
radio programs

(All leaders)

Fig. 70

PLATE XIX

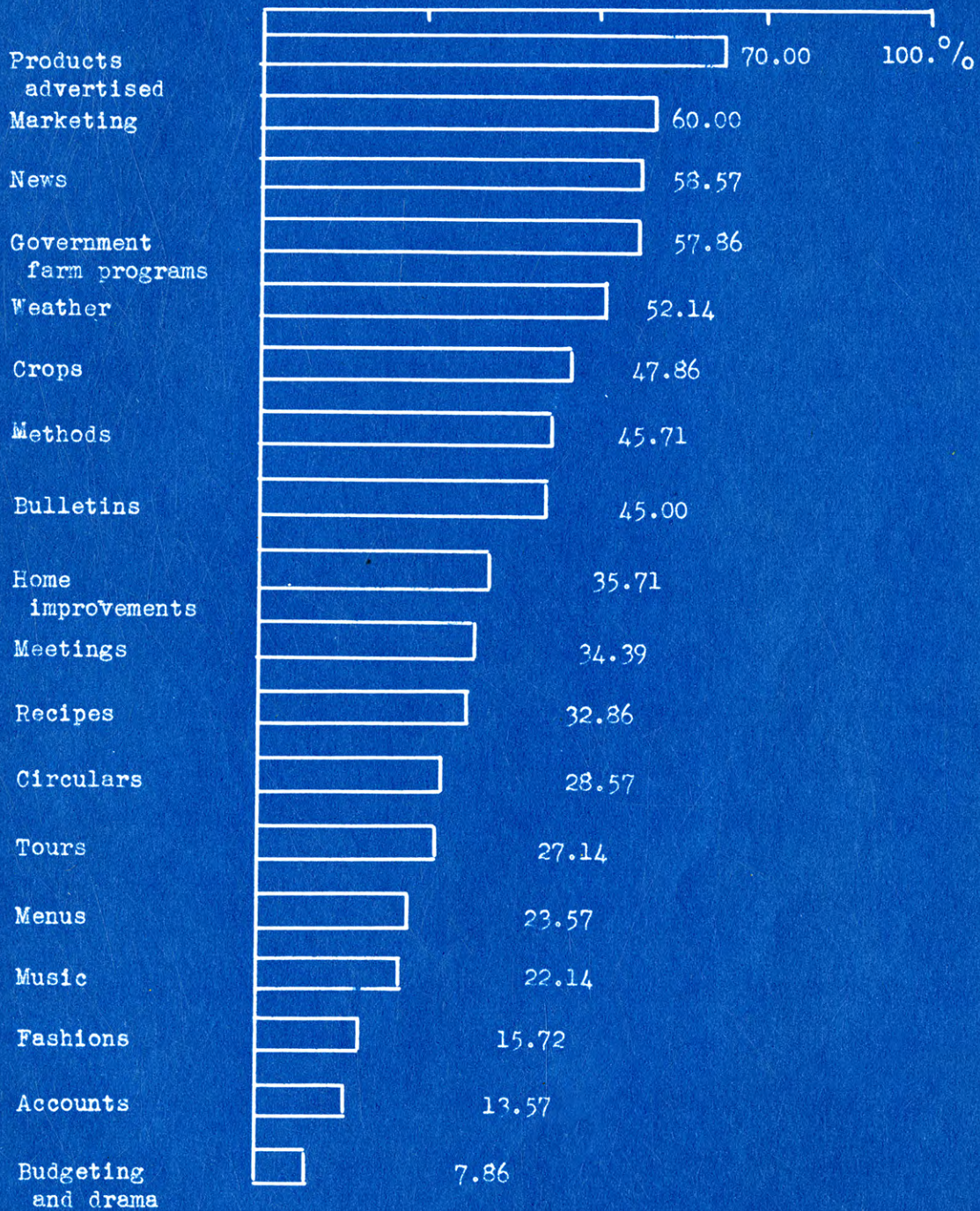


Fig. 70

shown by the fact that except for an extremely low frequency of response on the questionnaires filled out by home demonstration agents, whose work is almost entirely with farm women, this item would have ranked ahead of consumer interest in products advertised by radio. The home demonstration agents, Group C, recorded a frequency of only 27.03 per cent for the marketing of farm products, whereas the average for Groups A, B, and D was 76.97 per cent.

Another item which drew a heavy response was that on "Government farm programs," about which rural people inquired with essentially the same frequency as the marketing of farm products. In both instances, Group C had a much lower response than the other groups. News broadcasts had a high over-all average frequency of mention, 58.57 per cent. The frequency reported by Group C was less than two percentage points below the average for this item, indicating that about the same number of inquiries came from women as from men, and that all groups of leaders were queried about the same with respect to this item.

New, or better adapted crops, improved methods of farming, and bulletins each received 45 to 48 per cent frequency of mention, indicating a relatively high interest on the part of radio listeners in programs broadcast about these items.

Lowest in the extent of listener inquiry were budgeting, keeping books, fashions, and radio drama, with less than 20 per cent of the respondents recording inquiries on budgeting and fashions, and less than 10 per cent reporting inquiries

on radio drama and the keeping of account books.

Exactly 95 per cent of the leaders replying to the question, "Have you ever heard of a farmer, housewife, boy, or girl who tried an improved practice which they heard recommended over the radio?" answered in the affirmative. Dividing these 133 affirmative responses into the three classifications listed, 20.02 per cent stated they had heard of such instances "often," 51.48 per cent reported "sometimes," and 23.50 per cent "rarely." Five per cent, or seven respondents, reported they had "never" heard of such acceptance of radio recommended practices (Figs. 71 to 75).

This reported tendency of rural people to adopt radio suggestions to their own particular activities was much higher than that reported by the listeners themselves (Figs. 46 to 50).

It was assumed, however, that a large portion of those who did not answer this item in the listener questionnaire simply could not recall at the moment any occasion on which they had used some radio suggestion and could not answer the item positively. On the other hand, being in some doubt, they hesitated also to give a negative reply, and left the blank unfilled for that reason. It was reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the number of listener respondents who had followed some radio suggestion in their work was actually much higher than the number that answered this item in the questionnaire. This would bring the results of both the listener and the leader studies more nearly in correlation.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XX

Leader report on listener adoption of radio
recommendations

- Fig. 71. Group A
- Fig. 72. Group B
- Fig. 73. Group C
- Fig. 74. Group D
- Fig. 75. All leaders

PLATE XX

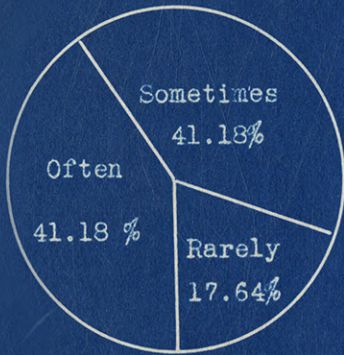


Fig. 71

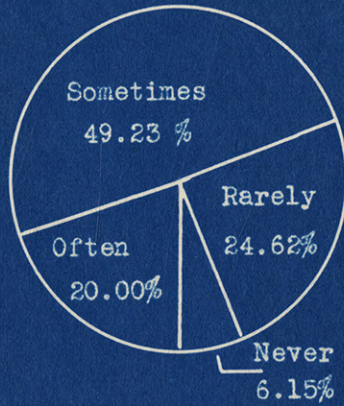


Fig. 72

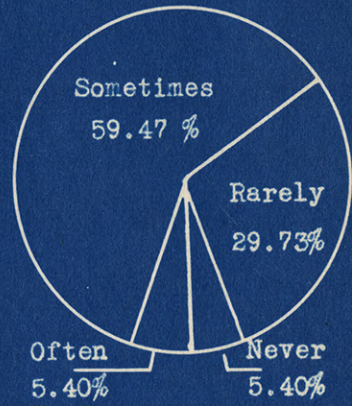


Fig. 73

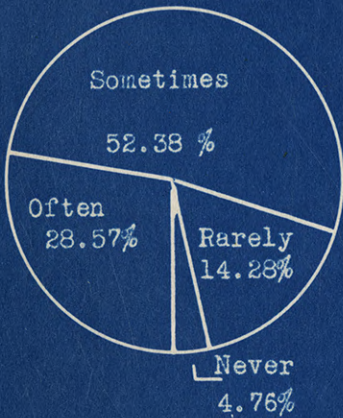


Fig. 74

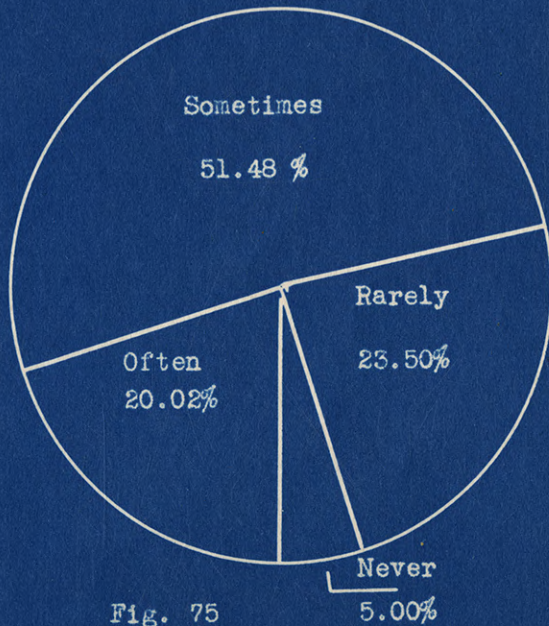


Fig. 75

Evaluation of Radio as an Educational Medium

The significant finding in this connection was that radio was an important medium through which rural people might be influenced to adopt improved methods. This observation was of particular pertinence to the State College Extension Service, and other similar organizations not only in Kansas but also in other states. On the basis of this information, it was possible to justify a continued program of education by radio and even to extend the program in many respects. This decision was reached on the argument that if a range from the minimum of 49 per cent of the listeners reporting in listener Group III to the maximum of 95 per cent reported by all the leader groups may be influenced through radio programs to adopt recommended practices in their farming and homemaking activities the efficiency of radio as a medium for carrying on the educational program of the Extension Service is higher than most other media available to Extension workers.

It was estimated that the total cost of maintaining and operating the radio station for one year, including the salaries of the program director, the chief engineer and the one assistant extension editor who devoted a major portion of his time to the radio project at Kansas State College, was \$7,100 for the year 1941.

With a minimum average of two persons each listening once each day over each of the 29,791 receivers tuned regularly to

KSAC's daily broadcasts³² the approximate number of contacts through radio over the College station alone was 18,172,210 in the 305 days the station operated in 1941. This number of contacts distributed over the estimated total cost of broadcasting at the College figured \$0.00039+ per contact. A certain practice was not recommended on every program broadcast, but a careful estimate by the program supervisor at the station, who was present at practically all broadcasts during the period included in this reference, was that taking into consideration all programs and all times when practices were recommended, there was an average of at least three practicable suggestions made each day of station operation. Using the reports for all leader and listener groups, it was determined that approximately 75 per cent of those listening tried at least one, and the major portion many, of the suggestions they had heard over their radios. With 75 per cent of the 18,172,210 contacts resulting in adoption of recommended practices, it is logical to infer that the influence of radio in the practical aspects of rural living in Kansas is extraordinarily great. Stated on the basis of the 59,582 persons who were estimated as listening to the College station regularly, it was determined that the lives of at least 44,683 rural men and women were influenced in a practical way by radio.

This picture did not allow for the influences of other radio stations, through which many such contacts were undoubtedly

32. Estimate obtained by projecting onto the total rural radio sets in Kansas the percentage of respondents in this survey who reported listening regularly to KSAC.

extended to those same rural people. If the commercial stations, of which there were approximately 16 for every educational station which could be heard satisfactorily in Kansas during the period of this study, and the influences of the four major national radio networks were allotted even a fraction of the influence of the educational station, radio probably had a greater practical influence on the lives of rural Kansas people than any other single medium of communication.

The significance of these influences is more striking when consideration is limited to the Extension Service program at Kansas State College. No other educational station heard satisfactorily in the state conducted as intensive an informational program as KSAC; certainly the commercial stations did not. The figures on other activities of the Extension Service are readily available for comparison.

In contrast to the number of radio contacts estimated on the basis of the proportion of the total Kansas radio audience indicating KSAC as one of the stations to which they listened regularly, the report of the director of the Extension Service (15) for the year 1941 showed only 1,677,634 total contacts through meetings held by county agricultural and home demonstration agents, Extension Service agricultural specialists, home demonstration leaders and home economics specialists. This figure was the total attendance for the year in all counties at all meetings conducted by all such leaders, and represented in a sense the same doubling on individual farm and housewife participants as the radio figure on total contacts made. Many

of those farmers and farm women attended several meetings, having their attendance counted anew each time, thus constituting the total contact, or attendance, figure of 1,677,634. The actual cost of making these contacts was not available, but one of the major items involved was travel which varied from only a matter of a few city blocks in a comparatively small number of cases to as much as 350 miles two ways in other cases. Using an estimated average attendance of 50 persons at each such meeting and an average of 50 miles of travel for one leader, gave a total number of miles traveled by leaders equal to the number of persons attending the meetings. Figured at the rate of four cents a mile, each contact thus effected cost four cents. Compared with radio's \$0.00039+, this cost was extremely high. Even if 100 per cent positive response to the suggestions these leaders made were obtained at such meetings, the cost of the program was high in comparison with radio's cost of \$0.00039+ for each positive response from its listeners; besides, radio effected almost 11 times more contacts.

Another indication of the usefulness of radio was obtained by summarizing the replies of the leader groups to four questions dealing with their own experiences in broadcasting. Of the 152 leaders answering questionnaires, 59.43 per cent had broadcast. Of those, 92.47 per cent reported having had listeners comment to them about their programs. As a matter of fact, all respondents in Groups A, C, and D reported listener comment. In only the county agricultural and 4-H club agents'

group, Group B, were there any respondents who reported having broadcast without hearing about their programs from their co-operators. Over half, 52.69 per cent, of those having broadcast reported having had their listeners inquire about certain suggestions made during the broadcast. Exactly one-third of them reported knowledge of actual adoption of the suggestions by listeners.

GENERAL SUMMARY

Figures obtained in this survey show that radio has assumed a role in the lives of rural Kansas people significantly more important than any of three other major media of public communication; namely, the magazine, the newspaper, and the telephone. More than this, radio with its wealth of entertainment, inspirational features, practical and cultural information, and the many opportunities it offers the listener for keeping up with important happenings of the day locally, nationally, and internationally, has probably displaced many things that were considered important to a high standard of living only a few years ago.

The farmer obtains through his radio much needed entertainment. He gains some inspiration. Moreover, he keeps abreast of the world through radio's news. In all these things, however, the farmer merely shares with the rest of the world — his city brother, his country cousin, his fellow citizens in other parts of the state or other states of the nation, and his fellowmen in other nations of the world. In

one respect the farmer's radio means much more to him than to anyone else. He gets a wealth of practical information which is useful to him in carrying on his work. This cannot be said for the city dweller; but it can be said for the farmer.

Radio exerts many influences on its rural listeners. From advertising, at the head of the alphabet, through to weather reports, these influences run. Sometimes they are weak, sometimes strong, but always they are there, and always felt.

They affect not only the farmer and his wife, but the farmer's children, too. Most high school youth who answered questionnaires could not remember when their families had acquired their first radios. They wrote, simply, "We've had one as long as I can remember."

One can only speculate as to the real changes radio has wrought in the social, cultural, economic, and political lives of these people. It is known that there were comparatively few radios, and consequently few radio influences, before 1924. But, during the prosperity years from 1924 to 1929, radios were bought literally by the thousands in Kansas, as elsewhere. Approximately one-fourth the rural homes in Kansas acquired radio's social, cultural, and practical influences during this period. Of these, the social and cultural effects were most important at first, the practical influences growing in importance gradually.

With a radio, as with almost any possession when first acquired, the owner tends to toy, coddle, and experiment; to

explore its varied possibilities. This was shown by the fact that respondents in this survey used their first radios, no matter in what year obtained, to see first how many stations they could hear, and then to try to tune in stations as far away from their own four walls as their radios would reach. First, the individual listener explored his radio's capabilities, later settling his listening habits on a few stations which could be heard readily. Eventually he selected from those he could hear well those which provided him with the programs he liked best or from which he received the most benefit.

In general, the programs of the pioneer radio stations consisted mainly of recorded music, or music performed by "barn dance" orchestras, or simple vocal groups singing hymns or "old favorites." Supplementing this musical menu were frequent garnishments in the way of weather and market reports. The news early came into the program, too. These same program features are still popular choices.

With the educational stations, the story was slightly different. The programs offered by these stations were of a type that filled a certain need for authentic practical information, supplied some of the cultural needs of the rural audience, and provided some limited entertainment, usually of a rather high class. Apparently, it was not a part of their purpose to try to build a program exceedingly popular with the common man by playing down to his level, but to lift him as much as possible, even if only little by little, to a

higher level of living, both culturally and practically.

It should be some comfort to these "martyrs of educational broadcasting" to know that listeners of all groups covered in this study, when asked to name what they considered the most useful services radio had to offer the rural listener, did not name music, news, or comedy entertainment; but named farming and homemaking helps, suggestions for doing their work more efficiently, more profitably, more satisfactorily to them.

The listeners' admission that radio's greatest worth lay in the field of the practical was almost enough to make one think that the farmer and his wife lived "by bread alone." This, of course, was not the case, but it did indicate that radio to the farmer and his wife had more than pure cultural and social value. It showed that radio, to the farmer, was a vital thing, worth much to him in his home life. It filled voids in his social and cultural existence. It rounded out his knowledge of the world in which he had to deal with the physical elements, economic influences, and political powers over which he could exercise little or no control. These things became, through the farmer's radio-gained knowledge of them, merely parts of a pattern into which he could fit his own small piece of land with all its fixtures and potentialities. By virtue of his own manipulation, then, he was enabled to maintain his place in a world which to his forebears was, comparatively speaking, a "vast unknown."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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APPENDIX

PART I

PART II

(over)

PART III

11. What was your favorite station when you got your first radio? _____
12. Name below three stations to which you listen most often now? _____
13. In the following list, check five important reasons why you listened to the radio when you got your first set, and five reasons why you listen now:

<u>Reasons for listening</u>	<u>With first set</u>	<u>Now</u>
Advertising.....	_____	_____
Amateur programs.....	_____	_____
Barn dance music.....	_____	_____
Band music.....	_____	_____
Commentators.....	_____	_____
Comedians.....	_____	_____
Contests.....	_____	_____
Dramatic serials.....	_____	_____
Hymn singing.....	_____	_____
Markets.....	_____	_____
Modern dance music.....	_____	_____
News.....	_____	_____
Old time songs.....	_____	_____
Opera music.....	_____	_____
Organ music.....	_____	_____
Quiz programs.....	_____	_____
Recipes.....	_____	_____
Sermons.....	_____	_____
Sports broadcasts.....	_____	_____
Symphony orchestras.....	_____	_____
Talks on farming.....	_____	_____
Talks on government.....	_____	_____
Talks on homemaking.....	_____	_____
Talks on books.....	_____	_____
Talks on music.....	_____	_____
Talks on science.....	_____	_____
Talks on travel.....	_____	_____
To hear as many stations as possible.....	_____	_____
To get stations as far away as possible.....	_____	_____
Weather reports.....	_____	_____

14. Have you ever tried out on your farm or in your home an idea you heard suggested on the radio? No _____ Once _____ Many times _____. If so, what was the most worthwhile suggestion you ever heard on the Radio? _____

If you can remember, on what station did you hear it? _____

15. Do you plan your work so you may listen to the radio? Yes _____ No _____
- If so, check the time, or times, of day when you listen most:
- Early morning _____ Mid-morning _____ Noon _____ Mid-afternoon _____
- Late afternoon _____ Early evening _____ Night _____

That's all! Thank you very much for your time and trouble.
Return to: Jim Chapman, Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas

Leader Questionnaire

99

We are checking on some of the influences of radio in rural Kansas. You can help us immensely by giving us your answers to the questions below.

- Do people ask you about things they have heard over the radio? Yes ☐ No ☐
- If they do, are their questions about:
- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| a. products they have heard advertised? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. marketing farm products? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. government farm programs? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. new, or better adapted crops? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. improved ways of doing things? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. home improvements? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Keeping books? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. budgeting? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | i. weather? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| j. menus? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | k. recipes? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| l. fashions? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | m. bulletins? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| n. news? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | o. circulars? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| p. tours? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | q. meetings? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| r. music? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | s. drama? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

List below any other things inquired about not included above:

- t. _____
- u. _____
- v. _____
- w. _____
- x. _____
- y. _____
- z. _____

Have you ever heard of a farmer, housewife, boy, or girl who tried an improved practice which they heard recommended over the radio? Often ☐, sometimes ☐, rarely ☐, or never ☐.

Have you ever broadcast over the radio? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have ever broadcast,

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. have people mentioned hearing you? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. have they asked about things you mentioned? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. have they done the things you suggested? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Let's all, thank you! Would you mind signing your name?

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XXI

Fig. 76. Kansas counties reached through vocational agriculture teachers, cooperative associations, and Collegiate 4-H Club members.

Fig. 77. Geographical distribution of KSAC writers during January and February, 1942. Each symbol (*) represents five writers.

PLATE XXI

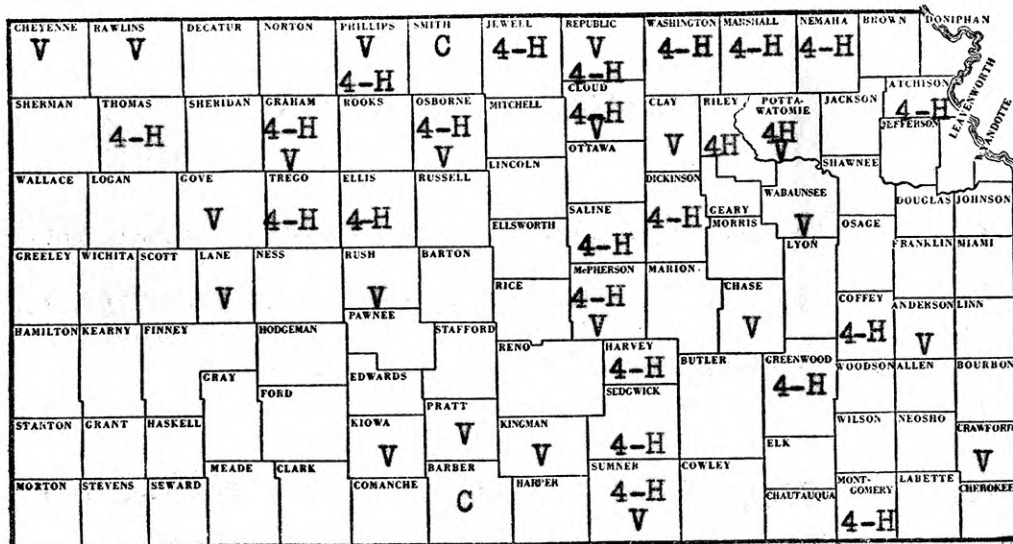


Fig. 76

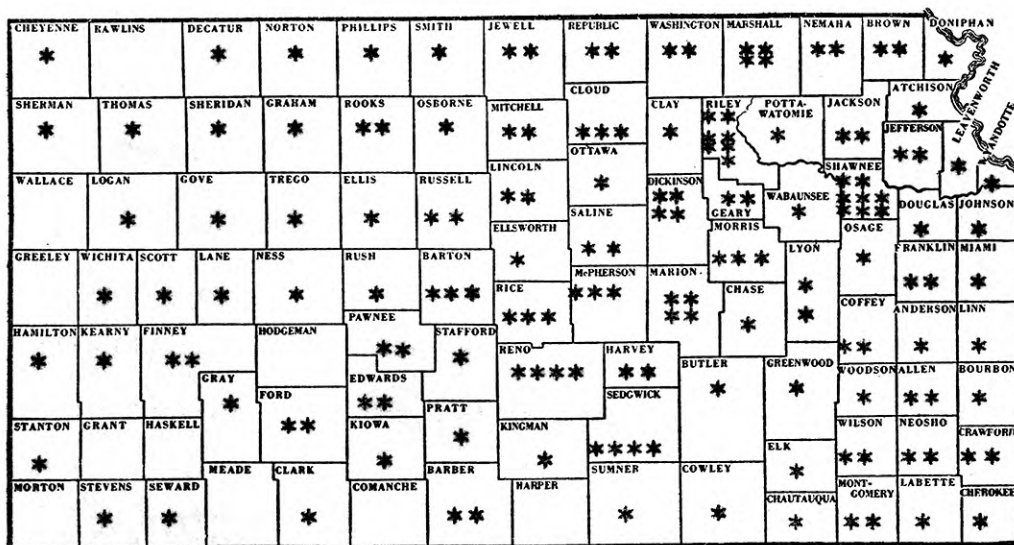


Fig. 77