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A STUDY OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE BOYS AND GIRLS
OF WAXAHACHIE SPEND THEIR LEISURE TIME

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Leisure and Human Happiness - there is a significant and more than casual relationship between these two. It is only with leisure that we are able to measure in any human terms at all the value of living.

The training of youth and adults alike for constructive use of their spare time is surely one of the major objectives of modern education. Recreation and education are parallel needs.¹

A study of literature shows that the capacity of individuals to properly use leisure time has not kept pace with the increasing amount of leisure time. Leisure time and its use can be adapted to so many things. Commercial methods of spending leisure time were first used. Leisure time activities of little value, and sometimes of great detriment, were made attractive by advertising. The following statement is found in the Nineteenth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators:

Just as youth has been faced with enforced idleness, so the unemployed and the family whose members, while working, are now enjoying more free time and leisure than ever before, are faced with the same necessity of finding something to do in their free time. If the adults and children seek all manner of distractions and entertainments that are at best trivial and at the worst demoralizing, it is not helpful to scold them and deplore the use that families are making of this sudden new free time and leisure.²

¹Arthur N. Pack, The Challenge of Leisure, p. 108.

²Education for Family Life, Nineteenth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators, p. 52.

The educational task is to give adolescents and adults some awareness of the many and varied resources for richer living that are so often provided in the communities, but which are unused because people have never had any introduction to the agencies or activities or any help or guidance in using them.

Preparing for the use of leisure, in a wise manner, is a challenge to the schools of the nation. It is one of the great tasks yet to be accomplished. The use of such leisure time, in a wise manner, will lead to a richness and joy of living.

Definition of Terms

In the past, leisure was identified with trivial idleness. Now it is generally known as those periods of freedom afforded by exemption from occupation or business. A better definition is, "that time, when an individual is free from employment, study, and performance of mandatory duties."³

Statement of the Problem

This is a study of the ways in which the boys and girls of Waxahachie Public Schools spend their leisure time.

Purpose of the Study

The study will attempt to show how the boys and girls of Waxahachie spend their leisure time. It will also

³Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, p. 1414.

indicate the need for more direction in the proper use of leisure time. Furthermore, it will show that much should be done by the adults of Waxahachie to help these boys and girls live a fuller, happier life, and prepare healthy minds and bodies to carry on life in a democratic society.

Need for the Study

The need for the study came from the realization of the fact that the homes, the schools, the churches, and the community of Waxahachie are not adequately providing for the wise use of the leisure time of its boys and girls. Adults are slow to realize that leisure time has fast increased. It has increased beyond their ability to guide its proper use. Youth is discussed, but little is done to help it.

Method of Procedure

The questionnaire method was used to collect data. The questionnaires were issued to a cross section of the children of Waxahachie.

Another method used was the actual checking on the results of misused leisure time. Visits were made to the City Librarian, the Scout Executives, the Optimist Club members, the school administrators, and fathers and mothers, in an effort to gain information that would be of interest.

Treatment of Data

The data were tabulated and presented under the following divisions:

Chapter I presents the definition of terms, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the need for the study, the method of procedure and the treatment of data.

Chapter II presents the beginning of the City of Waxahachie, and its past and present relation to the leisure time of its boys and girls.

In Chapter III is found a discussion of the way the movies are used by the boys and girls of Waxahachie.

Chapter IV gives a study of the use of the radio and its relation to the boys and girls of Waxahachie.

Chapter V discusses the interest of the boys and girls of Waxahachie in reading.

Chapter VI presents the school activities of the boys and girls of Waxahachie.

Chapter VII tells of the interest of the community in the recreation of the boys and girls of Waxahachie.

Chapter VIII includes the summary and gives conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE CITY OF WAXAHACHIE; ITS PAST AND PRESENT RELATION TO THE LEISURE TIME OF ITS BOYS AND GIRLS

From the birth of the human race, the sons and daughters of men have shown a preference for each other's society, and developed a tendency not only to go in pairs, but to congregate in numbers. At first this was for protection rather than for social reasons. As people became more enlightened and civilization advanced, the social inclination grew stronger, and as a result towns and cities were built. The pioneers understood all of this and, both for protection and other reasons, laid out towns and built up villages. This human tendency on their part is illustrated by the organization of Waxahachie, Texas. At the time of the beginning of this town there were barely one hundred people in Ellis County.

Waxahachie, the county seat of Ellis County, received its name from the creek which passes through a portion of the town, and in Indian tongue means "cow creek."

Among the many things that the pioneers did not have, that modern society has, was leisure time. Practically every waking hour was spent by everyone in some kind of work.

The children, born into the homes of that period, were, unlike children of today, born inside the "work home of humanity."¹ They rolled out of their cradles into a society organized to make use of them at any age, as industrial society cannot make use of youth. Their first uncertain child steps took them directly into an organic relationship with creative, constructive production and distribution. In pioneer times the little boy just able to walk could carry his small basket out to the dooryard where the men were chopping, splitting, and sawing wood, and could pick up chips to help fill his mother's kindling box. This was not an imitative play such as is now provided in nursery schools; it was a genuinely useful contribution to the family needs. The little girl, far too young to undertake the vital work of spinning thread or weaving, could go out to help her mother gather plants needed to dye the thread when spun. Of course, nature walks with a good teacher are a far better medium for learning botany, but they lack the authentic connection with usefulness which tied the little pioneer girl in with needed productive work as she gathered sassafras leaves.

Even so, as early as 1880 the people of the little villages of Waxahachie sought to use their small amount of leisure time in a beneficial way. In that year a meeting was held for the purpose of organizing a literary society, and

¹Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "What the Situation of Youth Was," Our Young Folks, (1943), p. 9.

procuring a reading room in Waxahachie. Sixty people joined this organization. Some months later another society was organized. About this time the new Opera House was formally opened. Churches of every denomination were being organized.

Today Waxahachie is a town of approximately fifteen thousand inhabitants.

In contrast to the boy and girl of yesterday, the boy and girl of today, because of so many labor-saving devices, wake up each day to many hours of leisure time.

To face and recognize the existence of this free time, and to assume the responsibility for its proper use, are among the most vital lessons that modern young people need to learn for their own good and for the good of society. Practically no attention is paid to the subject in the education that is given to them. The change came so suddenly that grown people are still staring, pretending it is not there and refusing to admit its importance because they do not know what to do with it.

Modern educators are striving to prepare the youth of today for one thing--to do work that will bring in enough money to pay bills. They make little effort to prepare boys and girls for the certainty of many hours of free time in his or her day, the use of which will largely determine the quality and quantity of the satisfaction of their lives as adults. Essential to their happiness and usefulness is to learn how to protect that leisure time from trivial waste, and how to use it to make for a happier, richer life.

Waxahachie has taken this into consideration to just about the same degree as most other towns have.

It is the purpose of this thesis to list the leisure time activities available to boys and girls in Waxahachie; to show how these activities are used; and to determine in some measure their value, their advantages and their disadvantages. From this study the activities that are needed will be determined. In establishing these facts information gained from private interviews and questionnaires will be used.

For a study of the use of leisure time, in Waxahachie, one hundred nine boys and girls from the public schools were chosen. Table 1 shows the age-grade distribution of the boys and girls that were used.

There were eighteen boys in the seventh grade, four of whom were twelve years of age, eight of whom were thirteen years of age, three were fourteen years of age, and three were fifteen years of age. The eighth grade contained seventeen boys. Eight of these boys were thirteen years of age, eight of them were fourteen years of age, and one was fifteen years of age. The twelfth grade contained fifteen boys. Nine of them were sixteen years of age, two were eighteen years of age and one was twenty-one years of age. The total number of boys in the three grades studied was fifty.

There were twenty-one seventh-grade girls that were used in the study. Eleven of them were twelve years of age,

TABLE 1

THE AGE-GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS, OF
WAXAHACHIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, USED IN THIS STUDY

Age	Grade Placement		
	7th	8th	12th
12.....	15	..	..
13.....	17	19	..
14.....	4	14	..
15.....	3	1	..
16.....	..	..	16
17.....	..	..	15
18.....	..	..	4
19.....	..	..	..
20.....	..	..	..
21.....	..	..	1

nine were thirteen years of age, and one was fourteen years of age. In the eighth grade seventeen girls were used. Eleven of them were thirteen years of age, and six were fourteen years of age. Of the twenty-one twelfth-grade girls that were included, seven were sixteen years of age, twelve were seventeen years of age, and two were eighteen years of age.

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF THE MOVIES BY BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE

For the purpose of making and influencing public opinion and thought, the motion picture in its present stage is the most powerful influence now known, and as its use increases and its field of operation develops, its power to influence the public will increase.¹

"Tommy! Let's go to the show."

"What's showing?"

"I don't know and don't care, let's go."

This is typical of the conversation between two children of this day. They do go, and take what comes.

The movies are a kind of Pied Piper, with marvelous clothes and beautiful tunes which are irresistibly alluring to the youth of the present age. They have become a super-imposed system of education for the young. The old established social institutions, such as the school and the church, even the home, cannot compete with the movies in attraction or appeal.

Of course all movies are not bad, neither are the effects of all movies bad. Many are of the very highest type, and should be a source of pride to the industry and a great boon to the public.

¹Henry James Forman, Our Movie Made Children, p. 1.

The movies in education have scarcely begun. It is stated by educational authorities that where the moving picture, of the talking variety, supplements the textbooks in class that the knowledge of the pupil increases twenty to forty per cent. Children have been found to retain an average of seventy per cent of what an intelligent adult would carry away from a dramatic film. This visually attained knowledge carries with it an expansive quality, so that in many cases after a lapse of months the children actually remember more than they remembered directly after seeing the picture. It goes without saying that it behooves parents to know what their children are seeing.

Of course the movie is primarily an agency for amusement, but it is no less important as an influence in shaping attitudes and social values.

Movies have propaganda value, they can change the mental attitudes of children, and affect the social patterns of young people. If this is true, they are a powerful educational influence, and will do harm as well as good.

Movies affect sleep and emotions. Therefore, the child's health, both mental and physical, will be either made better or worse.

In these introductory paragraphs an attempt has been made to show how far reaching are the effects of "just going to the movies."

One hundred fifteen million people in the United States go to the show every week.

Table 2 indicates how the children of Waxahachie attend the movies.

TABLE 2

THE NUMBER OF TIMES THAT THE 159 BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE, USED IN THIS STUDY, ATTEND THE SHOW

Number of Times Attended Show	Boys	Girls
Never.....	1	0
Occasionally.....	1	8
Once a month.....	3	0
Once a week.....	16	15
Twice a week.....	26	25
Three or more times a week.....	3	6
Did not answer.....	0	5

Of the fifty boys studied, one reported that he never attended a show, one reported that he went occasionally, three boys said they went once a month, sixteen boys said they went once a week, twenty-six said they attended a show twice a week, and three boys said they attended shows three or more times a week.

From these facts it is seen that the boys of Waxahachie attend the shows very frequently.

Of the fifty-nine girls studied, none reported that they never attended a show, eight girls said they went occasionally, there were none who reported that they went once a month, fifteen girls said they went to a show once a week, six said they went to a show three or more times a week, and five girls did not answer the question.

This table also shows that the girls of Waxahachie regularly attend the picture shows.

It is agreed, then, that movie attendance is a widespread activity of children and young people all over the country and in Waxahachie. It, then, is very certain that movies color behavior patterns.

Since it is agreed that children do go to the movies, a study of the shows attended has been made by Edgar Dale, who classified fifteen hundred movies and their contents.² He took five hundred pictures. These included feature pictures produced by leading companies. He found that out of the five hundred pictures eighty-two per cent dealt with the three major themes of crime, sex, and love. Drinking in the movies is a subject of great discussion. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church, and the Federal Grand Jury have recommended that drinking scenes be partly or totally eliminated from the movies. They base their arguments on the fact that social approval seems to go with the movies.

In the movies children too often see such professions as that of Law, Journalism and the Ministry made subjects of scorn. Teachers and college professors are painted in a most uninteresting fashion. The effect of these things on the youth is, of course, bad. It drives them away from a desire to enter these fields of service.

²Ibid., p. 29.

The home and marriage are undermined. Divorce is the commonplace thing.

Racial prejudice is often a direct result of a movie.

Villains and dishonest people are made heroes. Most of them are wealthy. The joys of this wealth, and the dishonesty of the methods of attaining it, are clearly shown.

In this study an attempt was made to determine the types of shows that the boys and girls enjoy.

"Gone with the Wind" got the majority of the votes from the girls. Scarlet O'Hara, her infidelity, her ugly disposition, and her desire for male attention, were all portrayed in such beautiful settings that she became a heroine to the girls. Next in their choice was "Apartment for Peggy." This was an interesting love story, but was certainly not a show for young boys and girls to see.

The boys of Waxahachie liked "Fighting Squadron," "Frankenstein," and "The Best Years of Our Lives."

These boys saw such shows as "Frankenstein." They saw this horrible monster. A girl's agonizing scream filled the air. The monster had her and all was over. The boys went home. They could not sleep. A scientific check shows that by means of instruments attached to the beds of children it was found that following such a movie the rest periods of children were so broken and so far apart that they would have been better off if they had been up and dressed.

Thirty-eight per cent of the girls in a home for

delinquents gave this succession of steps in their careers: wild parties, patterned after parties seen in the movies; sexual delinquency; running away from home; and last the reform school or a home for delinquents.

Facts must be faced and they are grave. Once the public, the mothers and fathers face this issue, something will be done.

Movies can and should be a force for good. A European proverb states that from the same timber may be hewn either a cross or a shovel. It is the use that is made of a great invention that determines its service to the world.

CHAPTER IV

RADIO AND THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE

"Radio is an art, and it is also an industry. Radio is also a public trust. We have a right to expect radio to take children seriously."¹

Radio attracts children in a way that is very good, yet may be alarming. It is a difficult thing for parents to manage. It cannot be confined to a particular listener--it reaches everyone within earshot, young and old, sensitive and robust, those who are willing to listen and those who are not. It demands no effort. Parents complain that children sit for hours letting the sound waves pour into their ears and even try to study while listening to their favorite programs.

Children's radio programs have developed in many directions. Improved skills and techniques have raised the level of performance. Today children can turn the dials to a wide variety of programs of especial interest to children. These include quiz shows, Bible stories, music, nature programs, and fairy tales. Often times these programs are on local stations, however, and are overshadowed by major networks.

In radio listening, children's tastes differ. Some boys

¹Josette Frank, Comics, Radio, Movies--and Children, Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 148, p. 22.

and girls like the "chillers and thrillers." Some, on the other hand, prefer music, comedy or quiz programs. There can be no doubt, however, that the majority of children prefer the "blood and thunder" adventures. A recent offer of an "atomic ring" on one adventure serial--in return, of course, for the usual box top--brought three and a half million responses.

These programs are not all alike as one might suppose. Some are poor in form, others are imaginative and sincere, with an authentic background. Some stress attitudes on social problems. "Terry and the Pirates" is one of these. It helps to build ties of sympathy and understanding between the people of America and those of the Orient. In "Superman" the minority groups of our country are championed. In "The Lone Ranger" children receive a good idea of frontier life. Thus, some programs serve to entertain and instruct, while others offer little beyond suspense and excitement. It is these that parents and teachers object to, and justly so.

With these facts in mind it is the purpose of this study to determine which programs the boys and girls of the Waxahachie Public Schools prefer. Fifty boys and fifty-nine girls answered questionnaires.

The data in Table 3 show the results of a questionnaire concerning the types of programs that the boys of Waxahachie prefer. Each boy selected his three favorite programs and

TABLE 3

THE TYPE OF RADIO PROGRAMS THAT THE BOYS
OF WAXAHACHIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREFER

Type of Program	Number of Boys
Comedy.....	50
Music.....	32
Mystery.....	34
Sports.....	1
News.....	0
Adventure.....	22
Quiz.....	8
Plays.....	4

they were classified as to the type of program.

The boys selected fifty programs dealing with comedy, thirty-two involving music, and thirty-four concerning crime or mystery. One boy chose a program dealing with sports. Programs of adventure were chosen twenty-two times. Quiz programs were chosen eight times. Programs of dramas and plays were chosen four times. Only once was a sports program chosen.

From these facts it can be seen that boys prefer humorous and crime programs.

The data in Table 4 show the results of a questionnaire concerning the types of programs the girls of Waxahachie prefer.

Sixty times the girls chose comic programs of one kind or another. Music was chosen thirty-seven times. Mystery was chosen thirty-three times. Sports and news programs were not chosen. Adventure programs were chosen ten times.

TABLE 4

THE TYPE OF RADIO PROGRAMS THAT THE GIRLS
OF WAXAHACHIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREFER

Type of Program	Number of Girls
Comedy.....	60
Music.....	37
Mystery.....	33
Sports.....	0
News.....	0
Adventure.....	10
Quiz.....	4
Plays.....	30

Four quiz programs were selected and thirty programs in which plays of some length are used.

From this it can be seen that girls enjoy a different type of program to that enjoyed by the boys.

Responding to pressure from parents, the networks and some producers of children's adventure serials have made efforts to tone down the excitement of their programs. Some parents still complain that the programs are too exciting and the children complain that they are not exciting enough.²

As a result of this lessening of horror and suspense, children often turn to such adult programs as "The Shadow" and "Inner Sanctum." Children like it rough and they will take their thrills where they find them.

A surprising number of children listen to "soap operas." These children know that in the adult world there are things that they do not know about. On such programs as "Ma Perkins," "Judy and Jane," and "Road of Life," these things are

²Ibid., p. 16.

discussed. Often times it is in a very poor way as far as children are concerned. Here, if children just will listen, the parents should listen with them. "Many a good family discussion has been inspired by a bad radio program!"³

Along with all the fury and noise of adventure, mystery, and crime, the young people of today listen to quiz programs, music, history, religion, sports, and news. Some of it is fine and some of it is worthless. Such programs as "The Aldrich Family," "A Date with Judy," "Baby Snooks," "Charlie McCarthy," and "Our Miss Brooks" are entertaining and draw children of all ages. They laugh and relax and enjoy themselves. Of course children need more than these in order to have a "balanced diet" of radio listening.

Often parents may help with this problem by listening with the children and offering suggestions. It is often, on the radio, that children and parents find a common ground of interest. If the father and mother appreciate the better things, often a child will become more discerning.

Radio often cuts too heavily into a child's time schedule. The parents should help the child budget his time. There should be a few musts in a child's time schedule, a time for play, for homework, for household chores, for music practice, for eating, resting, and sleeping. Often good planning will leave time for a child's most desired programs.

³Ibid., p. 17.

Some programs may accompany some of the chores. Doing homework to the accompaniment of radio seems to be a thing that is done by children in all parts of the country, and parents as well as teachers are concerned with this. Some children may be able to do this and their school not suffer; to others it will prove a definite handicap. Here the case of the individual child must be considered.

Since listening is easier than reading it is to be expected that many children will not become acquainted with books, especially the classics. With this problem in mind one juvenile program, "Adventure Parade," offers excellent programs on a wide range of classic stories from Dickens to "The Arabian Nights." The programs accent the adventure of these stories. Time spent in enjoyment of these programs is well spent.

Many parents complain that children sit by the radio and do not play in the sun and get the proper amount of exercise.

One phase of this study reveals the amount of leisure time the boys and girls of Waxahachie spend listening to the radio. Table 5 shows the number of hours that boys and girls of Waxahachie spend in listening to the radio.

Of the fifty boys studied, one boy reported that he never listened to the radio. Nine boys said they listened less than an hour each day. Fourteen boys reported that they listened one hour each day. Eleven boys said that they

TABLE 5

THE NUMBER OF HOURS THAT THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE
SPEND IN LISTENING TO THE RADIO EACH DAY

Number of Hours Listened to Radio Each Day	Boys	Girls
None.....	1	0
Less than one hour.....	9	8
One hour.....	14	9
Two hours.....	11	15
Three hours.....	6	13
More than three hours.....	8	11
No certain time.....	1	3

listened two hours each day. Six boys said they listened three hours each day. Eight of the boys said that they listened more than three hours a day and one boy reported that he had no definite length of time to listen.

Of the fifty-nine girls that were used in this study none of them reported that they never listened to the radio. Eight girls said that they listened less than an hour and there were nine who said they listened an hour a day. Fifteen girls said they listened two hours a day. Thirteen girls said they listened three hours a day, and eleven said they listened more than three hours a day. Three girls said they had no certain length of time in which they listened.

The data given in Table 5 show that the boys and girls of Waxahachie spend much time in listening to the radio.

The use of the radio in classrooms has been sadly neglected. Although some cities and a few states have developed excellent teaching programs for the schools, educators

and school administrators in most places have been slow to recognize radio as a tool for teaching. In a recent address, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission Wayne Coye said:

We are faced with the chilling fact that this tool is largely unused by the nation's educators. . . .Every schoolroom in America should be equipped with its own radio set. It should be freely integrated with classroom work as a major educational tool. As soon as television becomes available in a community, every schoolroom should be equipped with a television screen--the electronic blackboard of the future.⁴

Radio is an art--and an industry--and a public trust. As to whether radio has discharged its responsibility, there are wide differences of opinion. Parents and educators say, "No"; the industry says, "Yes."

The facts are somewhere in between these two assertions. Some stations have considered children, others have ignored them. Some fault lies at the door of commercialism--children do not pay off as "advertising victims" as well as grown-ups. To some extent the fault lies with the public. It has offered little constructive guidance. Parents and educators have criticized, but have not tried to help. The public has been too much concerned with the programs that are on the air, and too little with the ones that are not. The invention of radio is at the service of the world, but it has not learned to use it. Programs are needed for pre-school children. Teen-age boys and girls need programs to tell them of their dignity and worth.

⁴Wayne Coye, quoted in Josette Frank, Comics, Radio, Movies--and Children, p. 21.

CHAPTER V

READING AND THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Book Houses

I always think the cover of
A book is like a door
Which opens into someone's house
Where I've not been before.

A pirate or a fairy queen
May lift the latch for me;
I always wonder, when I knock,
What welcome there will be.

And when I find a house that's dull
I do not often stay;
But when I find one full of friends
I'm apt to spend the day.

I never know what sort of folks
Will be within, you see,
And that's why reading always is
So int'resting to me.¹

"You have taught me the most wonderful thing in the world--how to read books," an eight-year-old said happily to his teacher.

Whether children are predestined bookworms or whether they are to find their chief delight in occupations that involve physical activity, there is joy in books for all of them, though some may need more help than others in finding it.²

In a novel of years ago, Ethel Thorneycroft Fowler

¹Annie Fellows Johnston, Open Road to Reading, p. 13.

²Anne T. Eaton, Reading with Children, p. 11.

specified a love of reading as one of two gifts which she would choose above all others for the fairies to bring to a baby's christening.

When more than twenty years ago the world was again at war, many of the boys wrote, over and over again, about the reading being done in the trenches, and of the meaning of books to the boys at the front.

Many adults confess that they cannot understand the reading tastes of the present generation. This is no new thing, it is as old as children's reading. Contemporary records show that when Scott and Dickens were new writers they were not recommended reading for the young.

From time to time well-meaning attempts are made to banish the fairy tale. It is just possible that the cave-man said to his son: "If you spend so much time listening to the old men around the fire telling tales of monsters and witch doctors, how do you expect to face the realities of life and bring in meat for the tribe?"

In the seventeenth century the Puritans disapproved of folk tales and fairy tales because of religious and moral reasons. But lovers of folk and fairy tales need not be disturbed. Folk tales have a thousand years behind them, their roots are deep in the history of every race; it is not likely that educators, or parents, or government can do away with these.

No one will deny that there are fairy tales that are not

suitable for children. Yet the fact remains that all children are different and no standardization of effect of any kind of literature on children is possible.

Of course the major problem of parents and teachers today seems to be the comic book. The word "comic" means "relating or belonging to comedy, as distinct from tragedy."³ Add an "s" and, to judge from the groans and sighs that greet the word at any parents-teachers' meeting, the entire meaning changes. There is trouble immediately.

There are arguments for and against this youngest and most popular child of the juvenile reading world. "As the furor over comics waxes, and great minds debate their merits and demerits, my children, and yours, go right on reading them."⁴

Many parents condemn comic books who have never seen one. Here, as with the radio, parents should share this experience with the children, and help them to choose the better ones. Some comics are trash. So are some of today's best sellers. But all books are not destroyed because of a few poor ones. Some publishers are truly trying to provide the proper kind of comics.

It is all too true that children often read comics because it is all they have to read. Very often children are

³Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, p. 536.

⁴Katherine Clifford, "Common Sense about Comics," Parent's Magazine, XXIII (October, 1948), 30.

not provided with reading material. Books are too expensive for them to buy. A ten-cent piece will purchase nearly any comic book--so they do the natural thing--they buy a comic book.

Like it or not, comics are as much a part of growing up as baseball, muddy feet, and arithmetic. There's a sensible program for eliminating the evils so widely discussed: Encourage the good comics, improve the poor ones. As long as our children won't give up their comics--and they won't--we might as well concentrate on providing them with the best.⁵

On the other hand, some teachers say that reading comics dulls a child's sensitiveness to the beauty of our language. They say that they do not require prolonged concentration. Other teachers say that children do not read them. They look at the pictures and get the run of the story.

Some parents say that the language in comic books is crude. One father said that his children talked like a mob of gangsters after they read the funny books. Another parent said that the information in comic books is crude and inaccurate.

Some social workers say that, "some forms of juvenile delinquency come straight from the comics."⁶

A psychologist said, "Abnormal or subnormal children are often not equipped with the normal sense of right and wrong, and the unrealistic moral concepts reflected in some of the comic books aggravate an already bad situation."⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 57.

⁶Anne Duff, "An Inquiry into the Comic Problem," Counsel, I (April, June, 1948), 26.

⁷Ibid., p. 30.

That there is a definite age where comic books are most popular and another age where they have lost their interest for boys is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

THE GRADE LEVEL OF FIFTY BOYS OF WAXAHACHIE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE INTEREST
THEY HAVE IN COMIC BOOKS

Number of Boys	Grade Level	Interested	Not Interested	Occasionally Interested
18.....	7	17	0	0
17.....	8	17	1	0
15.....	12	6	6	3

Of the fifty boys that were studied all of the seventh-grade boys, or seventeen, reported that they enjoy comic books. In the eighth grade seventeen boys said they enjoy them and one said, "No." But in the twelfth grade only six boys said they enjoy them, six said they did not, and three said they occasionally read them.

This table shows that, as boys grow older, their interest in comic books is not as great as when they were younger.

The facts in Table 7 give the grade levels of the fifty-nine Waxahachie Public School girls that were studied and the interest that they showed in comic books.

Fifty-nine girls answered the questionnaires. Of the fifty-nine girls, twenty of the seventh-grade girls reported

TABLE 7

THE GRADE LEVEL OF FIFTY-NINE GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE INTEREST
THEY HAVE IN COMIC BOOKS

Number of Girls	Grade Level	Interested	Not Interested	Occasionally Interested
21.....	7	20	1	1
17.....	8	13	2	1
21.....	12	8	8	5

that they enjoyed comic books, one said she did not read them, and one said, "Occasionally." Of the sixteen eighth-grade girls, thirteen said, "Yes," two said, "No," and one said, "Occasionally." In the twelfth grade, eight girls said they read them, eight said they did not, and five said, "Occasionally."

The data reveal the fact that girls, as well as boys, lose their interest in comic books as they grow older.

All of the boys and girls of Waxahachie do not read comics to the exclusion of other books. During the last year 16,317 books, or an average of 54 books a day, were issued to the boys and girls of the elementary school age. One-half of the books issued were fiction and the other half non-fiction. There are no comic books in the library.

After a child has been made conscious, through fairy tales and legends, that there is a world outside himself and

his affairs, fiction peoples it for him with characters more thrilling than the giants and fairies. The importance, to a child, of the trips into this world of fiction cannot be over-estimated.

Stories must be alive. They must have the qualities of courage, loyalty, kindness, qualities without which man's existence is inconceivable.

When one contemplates the richness of the reading available to children today, both the old and the new, he seems to be looking on a world filled with books. The choice of what to read is wide.

From Table 8 will be gained some idea of the types of books that boys enjoy the most.

In answer to the request to "Name the five books that you have read during the last year, and enjoyed most," the answers were catalogued as to types of books. Nineteen times mystery books were listed. Books dealing with sports were chosen by sixteen boys. Adventure stories were listed forty-four times. Books about animals were chosen twenty-three times. Only two boys chose books telling about radio. Six religious books were chosen. Seven books about airplanes, one about music, two dealing with Scouts and three humorous books were included in the list. Six true stories, eight stories dealing with love, six concerning historical romance, and one book telling about war, completed the list.

TABLE 8

THE TYPES OF BOOKS THAT THE BOYS OF WAXAHACHIE PREFER
AND THE NUMBER OF TIMES THESE TYPES WERE CHOSEN

Types of Books	Number of Boys
Mystery.....	19
Sports.....	16
Adventure.....	44
Animal.....	23
Radio.....	2
Religion.....	6
Airplanes.....	7
Music.....	1
Scouts.....	2
Humor.....	3
True Stories.....	6
Love Stories.....	8
Historical Romance.....	6
War.....	1

The largest number of books, chosen by the boys, was in the field of adventure.

Table 9 shows the kind of books preferred by the fifty-nine girls included in this study.

Forty-six mystery stories were listed by the girls when they gave their favorite books. None of the girls listed a book dealing with sports. Books of adventure were chosen thirty-six times, and animal stories were chosen twenty-five times. Six religious books were named, four about airplanes, and two about music were selected. Four of the girls gave the name of humorous books, and seven mentioned true stories. Stories of love took a place near the top with forty-four being chosen. One girl chose a fanciful tale and thirty girls chose books that deal with the lives of young girls.

TABLE 9

THE TYPES OF BOOKS THAT THE GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE PREFER
AND THE NUMBER OF TIMES THESE TYPES WERE CHOSEN

Types of Books	Number of Girls
Mystery.....	46
Sports.....	0
Adventure.....	36
Animal.....	25
Radio.....	0
Religion.....	6
Airplanes.....	4
Music.....	2
Scouts.....	0
Humor.....	4
True Stories.....	7
Love Stories.....	44
Historical Romance.....	0
Classics.....	0
Fanciful.....	1
Stories about Girls.....	30

While the boys were more interested in adventure and animal stories, the girls were more interested in stories of mystery and love.

And so it goes. Along with a little nine-year-old girl, the boys and girls of Waxahachie seem to say:

But if you'll take my good advice
You'll find that reading's very nice.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE

The emphasis in the earlier days of formal education was upon knowledge and ideals, with little attention being given to the establishment of those habits that actually made these function. . . .The school of the new day stresses doing. It holds that there is no being apart from doing; that it is impossible to be good except by doing the acts which represent goodness; that it is impossible to be a good citizen apart from doing the acts which the good citizen does. When these are performed the being comes as a by-product of the doing.¹

The school is interested in what the good citizen does. Extra-curricular activities present a very important and challenging setting for developing the good citizen, because they offer so many opportunities for the learning of appropriate knowledge, the establishment of desirable ideals, and the actual practice of functional habits.

There are a number of logical objectives of extra-curricular activities, some of which are more applicable to certain types of activities than to others. Not the least of these is to prepare the child for active life in a democracy.

If the school is so organized and administered that the student has opportunities and responsibilities somewhat similar, in a small way, to those he will have later on as a grown-up citizen, he will be better able to meet and discharge these responsibilities as they occur.²

¹Harry C. McKown, Extra-Curricular Activities, p. 11.

²Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Other objectives of extra-curricular activities are:

1. They help to make a child independent.
2. They teach social cooperation.
3. They increase the interest of the student in the school.
4. They develop school morale.
5. They foster sentiments of law and order.
6. They help to discover and develop special qualities and abilities.

All extra-curricular activities should have a teacher adviser and not one who dominates. The activities should be organized only after much consideration.

An increasingly important objective of education is the humanizing and improvement of recreation. The amount of leisure at the disposal of the individual is becoming greater every year and the methods of using this time are becoming more commercialized and diversified. It is, therefore, very necessary that a sense of values on the part of the individual be developed. Here the assembly program offers great opportunities. These programs of music, dramatics, and speech give an opportunity for use of these various talents that are developed during the leisure time of boys and girls.

In far too many schools success in athletics appears to be the only achievement that is recognized. It should be needless to state that any activity in which there is an

outstanding accomplishment should be recognized before the entire school.

Many different types of activities are needed in a school system. Waxahachie has a rather large program of athletics. There are clubs of various kinds, including the Y Teens, Hi Y's, Pan-American, Home Economics, Business, 4 H Clubs, and Spanish Club.

A well known leader in the field of physical education, Jesse Feiring Williams, evaluates athletics in these words, "Of all the activities of the school curriculum, none is as rich with educational outcomes as the play, games, sports, and athletics of physical education."³ The growing student needs a vigorous developmental program, and football, basketball, baseball, and similar types of activity provide the settings for this. It is by no mere chance that the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education named health as its first cardinal principle. Other values of athletics are the mental and social training they afford, the good feeling that they foster, the advertisement that they give the school, and the wise use of leisure time that they make possible.

The band is also one of the outstanding extra-curricular activities of the Waxahachie Schools. There are sixty-five members. This type of organization brings interest, morale,

³J. F. Williams and W. L. Hughes, Athletics in Education, p. 36.

and dignity to music. Such an organization is profitable to its members.

Table 10 shows how well the boys and girls of Waxahachie take part in these two extra-curricular activities.

TABLE 10
THE NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN THIS STUDY
WHO ENGAGE IN ATHLETICS AND BAND

Activities	Boys	Girls
Band.....	3	1
Athletics.....	23	0

It is evident that very few boys and girls belong to the band. As the classes studied were cross-sections of the school, this shows that Waxahachie boys and girls do not enjoy this way of spending their leisure time.

It is also seen from the facts revealed in this table that less than fifty per cent of the boys engage in athletics.

That very few of these children are spending their leisure time in these two extra-curricular activities is revealed by this table.

Children of school age love clubs. They occupy an important place in the lives of the students of the school. This "belonging to a club" satisfies the desire of children to get together and work for a common cause.

In the elementary schools of Waxahachie there are no clubs.

In the high school the boys and girls are allowed to choose two clubs, of which they may become members. All of the boys and girls of this level--there were thirty-six of them--belong to two clubs. The attendance is good and one teen-age boy said of these organizations, "Yes, we like them. We feel like adults and can express our opinions."

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNITY RECREATION AND THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF WAXAHACHIE

Churches, church societies for youth, vacation and week-day schools, as well as organizations of various types, offer an extraordinary array of opportunities to American youth. Here may be found facilities and leadership for all. Nevertheless a large proportion of youth is not reached at all, and many of these through only casual contacts. Cooperation among the various movements and groups is fast becoming a critical need, as the aims of church, school, clubs, community draw closer together. . . . Strong community leadership is needed to devise a community-wide program which shall include every child, young or old.¹

In recreation, as in every other activity, the adult world has been slow to realize that children and youths are people. Most youths resent adult domination of their leisure time activities. They want self-expression and they enjoy most doing what they themselves have planned. Finding a happy place between complete freedom and acceptable guidance is a delicate task. The solution, widely tried in the organization of Youth Centers or Teen Centers in World War II, seems to be a maximum of youth participation in planning and leadership but with an indispensable minimum of adult advice and help.

¹Elizabeth H. Pendry and Hugh Hartshorne, Organizations for Youth, p. 6.

With all of this, a successful leisure-time program for youth will not run itself. It requires trained leaders and leaders with imagination. Space and equipment are not enough. A large California city had a beautiful play ground including baseball diamonds and tennis courts, lighted for night use, and a supervisor in charge. The supervisor was not trained and the children were checking in with him and leaving to commit unlawful deeds of all kinds. A trained youth supervisor was hired and the situation became better.

The United States blundered into the era of leisure time for all, while still having a strong suspicion that play and enjoyment were sinful. "As late as 1944 some communities in Texas were lacking in a recreation center because the churches objected to dancing and swimming."²

The City of Waxahachie has, through its organizations as well as its city government, done much toward the recreation of its youth. Like many other towns there is much yet to be done.

Play-parks, where children may play safely, are of great value. As early as 1912 Getzendaner Memorial Park was given to the City of Waxahachie. It was donated with the understanding that it was to be used by the boys and girls of Waxahachie, without charge.

In the beginning this park was a wooded area of

²John R. Ellingston, Protecting Our Children from Criminal Careers, p. 74.

fifty-seven acres. There was no play apparatus in the entire acreage. As years went by the people of Waxahachie began to see a need for a place for boys and girls to play. The city included in its budget money to equip the park site. At present it is a very beautiful and much used place. There are groups of swings, see-saws, merry-go-rounds, sand boxes, croquet sets and tennis courts. There is a small wading pool for the tiny children. During the summer months a play-ground supervisor is hired by the city. It is her duty to direct the use of the equipment when it becomes necessary. The park is cared for by a custodian whose home is on the property. It is patrolled regularly by the city officers to insure the safety of the children.

The city has provided another park. This one is in the section of town where the children are under-privileged. Known as "The Hot Well Park" it is near to the homes of these children. It is used constantly. Mexican and white children of the poorest people play here. These children have nothing to play with at home. Many of them have very small front and back yards. This park is small, but well kept, and furnishes a place that helps to keep these children off of the streets.

In this study twenty-five adults were asked to tell the one thing that they thought the boys and girls of Waxahachie need in the way of recreation. Of the number consulted, nineteen said, "A swimming pool."

Of the one hundred nine boys and girls who were questioned only three said they did not swim. When asked if they could use the Country Club swimming pool, only thirteen said that they could. The rest of the children are forced to drive from fifteen to thirty-five miles before they can swim. The highways on which these children must travel are heavily congested with traffic.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have organizations in Waxahachie.

The Boy Scouts of America is an organization that uses the interests and activities common to boys of ages twelve to eighteen years, and the environment and lore of home, city, or country life, the open trail, and camp life as bases for growth in character.³

Boy Scouting was incorporated February 8, 1910, through the interest of W. B. Boyce, who had observed the good work of the Scouts in England under Robert Baden Powell and other public-spirited men. In June, 1916, Congress granted the Boy Scouts of America a Federal charter, a distinction which has occurred but a few times in history. Through the generosity of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, a three-year study was made of the character and interests of boys nine, ten, and eleven years old, and a program developed for this age group. Boys in this age group are called Cub Scouts. Boys of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years of age make up the regular Scout troupes. For boys of fifteen years

³Ibid., p. 11.

through eighteen years, there are Sea Scouts or Senior Units. After this age the boys go into Scoutmaster work.

In Waxahachie there are three active Scout troops. One troop is sponsored by the Lions Club, one by the Rotary Club, and one by the Baptist Church. There is one Cub Troop. It is sponsored by the Baptist Church. One Senior Unit is sponsored by the Central Presbyterian Church.

The boys of these Scout troops meet in regular session once a week. They are financed through local contributions. Annually about four thousand dollars is spent on the Boy Scouts of Waxahachie.

The girls have a larger organization of Scouts than do the boys in Waxahachie. There are twelve Brownie and Girl Scout troops in the city. The enrollment is about one hundred seventy-five girls.

The Optimist International, like the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions, is a service club of men which is taking an interest in the better development of the boys of today, in order that they may be splendid men in the future.

In 1923, the Optimist International adopted as a slogan, "Friend of the Delinquent Boy." During the 1924 convention a group met to discuss and formulate a program. The word delinquent was then deleted from the slogan, and a program was formulated which would help the members to give understanding guidance to any boy.

Such an organization is the Waxahachie Optimist Club.

This club of businessmen is sponsoring a group of boys, from seven through seventeen, called the Junior Optimist Club. There are two hundred fifty boys who belong to this organization. They meet once a week under the guidance of a trained youth leader and several business men.

Plans are now in progress for the establishment of a Youth Center. This is a project of the Optimist Club. When completed, the Center will cost about seventy-five thousand dollars. It will include a swimming pool, club rooms, game rooms, an assembly room, and ball courts of all types. It will be used by both boys and girls. Trained supervisors will be in attendance at all times.

As time goes on, and as these plans are carried out, the boys and girls of Waxahachie can truly say, "We have a place to play."

That the town of Waxahachie sees the need of bettering recreational facilities for boys and girls, and is attempting to do something about it, is shown in the facts given in this study.

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been reached:

1. The boys and girls of Waxahachie use the picture show extensively in their leisure time. A large part of the pictures that these children see are not carefully selected for youth.
2. The radio is the most popular method of spending leisure time of the Waxahachie boys and girls. The great possibilities of radio have not been realized.
3. Reading consumes a large part of the time of the boys and girls of Waxahachie.
4. Very few children take part in school athletics, and very few belong to the band. There are no clubs for boys and girls of the elementary school age.
5. The City of Waxahachie realizes the needs of its boys and girls.

Recommendations

These recommendations are offered:

1. Since the moving pictures are so powerful in their influence, parents should demand the best in pictures for their children. Enlist the cooperation of the local motion

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this study of the ways in which the boys and girls of Waxahachie spend their leisure time it is shown that, as the situation now is, all of the boys and girls are not adequately provided with suitable ways to spend their leisure time.

Facts given further show that the motion picture industry is a powerful force in the lives of boys and girls. The picture show does much to shape the attitudes of boys and girls.

Additional data show that the radio is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, consumers of the leisure time of boys and girls. Evidence was given to show that there is great need for capitalizing on the great invention for the welfare and education of children.

Reading is shown to be a leisure-time activity of great importance. It, too, is a factor of great influence in the daily living of children.

Evidence that too few of the children enter into sports and band is given. That clubs are needed during the elementary school age is a fact that is shown.

picture exhibitors in offering programs of special interest and value to children and young people.

2. Because radio is so popular with the boys and girls, it should be used to benefit them. Help them to budget their time, allowing for their favorite radio programs. Listen with them. Help them to develop critical standards by pointing out values.

3. Know what children are reading. Introduce them to the best in reading materials, and encourage them to read much.

4. The City of Waxahachie should continue to provide more and better recreational activities for its future citizens. All children of all people should be provided for.

APPENDIX

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____

Sex _____

Nationality _____

1. What school do you attend? _____
2. What grade are you in? _____
3. Do you belong to the band? _____
4. Do you belong to the regular football team? _____
5. Do you belong to the regular basket ball team? _____
6. How often do you go to the picture show? _____
7. Name three picture shows you enjoyed the most. _____

8. Do you like to read? _____
9. Name five books you have read in the last year, and enjoyed. _____

10. Do you enjoy comic books? _____
11. Name three you enjoy most. _____
12. Do you go swimming? _____
13. Where do you go to swim? _____
14. How far is it? _____
15. How long does it take you to get there? _____
16. Do you enjoy the radio? _____
17. How many minutes do you listen to the radio each day? _____

18. List the three programs you enjoy the most. _____

19. If you had only one hour each day of leisure time how
would you spend it? _____

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