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A SURVEY OF THE GRADUATES
OF THE ELKTON, MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL
FOR THE YEARS 1945 TO 1954

by

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B. A., Luther College, 1950

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1955

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Aug 15 1955
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

One way to find out whether or not a product is good is to ask the consumer. He need not be an expert to tell what he likes or does not like about a certain kind of automobile, television set, or a can of soup. Big business sponsors consumer surveys to learn how to improve a product, a package, or a service.

Educators make consumer surveys too. Since consumers are former students and the product is the education they received, the purpose of such a study is to obtain information which might aid in improving the quality of the educational program.

THE PURPOSES

The purposes of this study were to determine:

- (1) the present location of the graduates of Elkton High School;
- (2) the occupations pursued by them since their graduation;
- (3) the additional education and training acquired after completing high school;
- (4) their opinions concerning the usefulness of high school training in present occupations;
- and (5) their suggestions of ways of improving curricular offerings of the Elkton High School.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The community. Elkton, Minnesota, is located in Mower County, fourteen miles east of Austin adjacent to U. S. Highway # 16. Three miles north of Elkton lies the village of Dexter. These two villages have a combined population of about 500 people, composed chiefly of merchants, retired farmers, and employees of the Hormel Meat Packing Plant at Austin.

Surrounding the villages of Elkton and Dexter is a rich agricultural area widely known as a corn and hog producing region. Agriculture is the only occupation which exercises any holding power over the graduates of the high school.

The two villages have seventeen business establishments. Broken down into type they are: three grocery stores, four cafes, two grain elevators, three service stations, one lumberyard, one hardware store, one feed store, one produce, and a bank. These businesses are unable to provide many jobs for the graduates. Thus the students are forced to find employment elsewhere, often in nearby Austin or Rochester. After graduation, most of the students are soon separated from their home town.

The school. The Elkton High School draws its students from the aforementioned community. Dexter maintains an elementary school for the first eight grades. Upon entering the ninth grade, the Dexter pupils are transported to Elkton High School. The school district employs six busses to bring the

high school students from Dexter and the elementary and secondary students from the rural area in to the Elkton School.

The school is the largest single employer in the community with twenty-one full or part time employees. The school is housed in a plant which was built in two different sections. Four grade and five high school classrooms, the cafeteria and heating plant are in the older section which was built in 1919. The new addition, completed in 1952, consists of a gymnasium-auditorium, home economics, and industrial arts departments. Included also are a teachers lounge, a small music equipment room, and a room for storage. The auditorium stage is used for band and chorus rehearsals. At present the classroom space is adequate.

The enrollment in the elementary school has shown a gradual increase since World War II and now numbers 115 students. The high school increase has been more recent with 132 students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 during the 1954-55 school year.

The Elkton Public School is fully accredited by the Minnesota State Department of Education.

Faculty. The faculty of Elkton High School consists of six classroom teachers, and a superintendent and principal who do some teaching. The departments are industrial arts, home economics, English, mathematics, science, social science, commercial, physical education, and music. All the teachers employed at the time of this study were fully qualified.

Six held bachelor degrees and two, including the superintendent, had obtained masters' degrees.

Curriculum. The following courses have been offered each year for the years 1945 through 1954: four years of English, American history, world history, American government and economics, general science, biology, general mathematics, algebra, two years of home economics, and two years of industrial arts. General business has been a part of the curriculum since 1946. Physics and chemistry have been offered in alternate years as have plane geometry and economic geography. Higher algebra was an elective until 1951 when it was dropped as a regular course. Typing was first added to the curriculum in 1949 and has been offered each year since that time. Bookkeeping has been given alternate years starting in 1949 and business law in alternate years since 1951.

Band and chorus, a regular part of the curriculum, are open to all students. The State Department of Education requires physical education through grade ten. Elkton is a member of the State High School Athletic League and offers football, basketball, and baseball. Among the other organizations to which the students might belong are: letterman's club, pep club, Y-teens, and the class and student government organizations. A school newspaper and an annual provide practical experience for those with journalistic interests.

PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was developed after a thorough study of the needs to be fulfilled by such a questionnaire. The major considerations in its construction were to secure information which would be of maximum benefit to the school and to secure the maximum number of returns from the graduates. The following precautions were observed:

1. The questionnaire was kept as short as possible.
2. The questions were kept as simple and clear as possible in order that the results might be more valid.
3. Most of the questions could be answered easily by merely filling in a blank or by checking the answer of the graduate's choice.
4. A letter of introduction and information was included with the questionnaire.
5. The graduates were informed that it was not necessary for them to sign their names to the questionnaire.
6. The graduates were asked for their suggestions of ways in which Elkton High School might be improved. Space for free comment was provided on the back page of the questionnaire.

The next step was to locate the addresses of the graduates. These were secured with the help of local citizens, relatives, the Post Office, school records, and the students in school. Questionnaires' were then sent out to

all the available addresses, accompanied by a letter of explanation of the survey being attempted.

When sufficient time had been allowed for the returns to come in, the questionnaire was again sent out to all those who had not returned the first copy. Again a letter of explanation was enclosed. This second mailing resulted in an additional ten per cent return of the total number of students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED MATERIAL

Review of related studies. Ralph F. Berdie¹ made a study of 25,000 seniors of Minnesota high schools of 1950. The express purpose of his study was to investigate the factors determining college attendance with particular attention to a comparison of determinants related to economic status and those related to cultural and educational status. One year later a follow-up was made from a sampling of 2735 of the original 25,000 subjects. The results of this follow-up study throw light upon the validity of the generalizations based on the analysis of students' plans. A close relationship was found to exist between the plans made by students during their senior year in high school and their subsequent behavior during the following year.

Anderson and Berning² conducted a follow-up study of 22,306 graduates of Minnesota high schools in 1938 to discover what they were doing a year later. In this study they were interested in knowing how large a per cent of the

¹Ralph F. Berdie, After High School--What? (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), 240 pp.

²G. L. Anderson and T. J. Berning, "What Happens to Minnesota High School Graduates," Studies in Higher Education, University of Minnesota Committee on Educational Research, Biennial Report, 1938-40. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1941), pp. 15-40.

graduates were employed; the per cent unemployed; and the per cent in colleges, universities, and other schools. A somewhat similar study of Minnesota high school graduates was made on the class of 1945, one year after graduation, by Robert J. Keller.³ The figures obtained in 1938 and in 1945 indicated that one year after high school graduation, approximately one quarter of male high school graduates in Minnesota and approximately one fifth of female high school graduates were in college.

Whereas the aforementioned studies include large groups of graduates, the present study covers a comparatively small number of graduates. The purposes of this study as listed in Chapter I are quite different from the purposes of previous Minnesota studies.

More closely related to this study are the seven follow-up studies of Montana high school graduates completed at Montana State University in recent years.

Hokanson⁴ conducted a follow-up study of the graduates of Libby High School. His purposes were to determine if the curriculum was adequate; if the high school had met the educational and vocational needs of its students; and

³Robert J. Keller, "The Minnesota Public High School Graduates of 1945--One Year Later," in Higher Education in Minnesota, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1946), pp. 81-101.

⁴Raymond Hokanson, "A Follow-up Study of the Graduates of the Libby, Montana High School for the Years 1946-1950." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1952), p. 1.

if the present educational procedures were fulfilling the present aims and objectives of the school.

Fisher⁵ made a survey of the Hot Springs graduates. His purposes were to see if the high school had properly prepared its graduates for problems of every-day life; to determine areas where the high school was deficient in training its students; and to receive recommendations for the improvement of Hot Springs High School.

Fitschen⁶ in his Ronan survey attempted to discover how effective the Ronan High School was in guiding its graduates; to find out the graduates' opinion of the value of their high school training; and to obtain a basis for curriculum revision.

Munson⁷ made a follow-up study of the graduates of the Victor High School from 1947 to 1953. His purposes were to determine the adequacy of the curriculum; the needs to be met in establishing an enlarged guidance program; and to discover the weaknesses of high school teachers as measured by the graduates.

⁵Earl Fisher, "A Survey of the Graduates from the Hot Springs, Montana, High School for the years 1946-1950 Inclusive." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1952), p. 1.

⁶Stuart Elmer Fitschen, "A Follow-up Study of the 1942-1951 High School Graduates of Ronan, Montana." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1952), p. 1.

⁷John F. Munson, "A Follow-up Study of the Graduates of Victor, Montana, High School for the Years 1947-1953." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1954), p. 1.

Lagerquist⁸ in his follow-up of the Bainville graduates stated as his purposes: "(1) to evaluate the guidance program of Bainville High School, (2) to evaluate the instructional program of Bainville High School, (3) to evaluate the extra-curricular activities of Bainville High School."

Gaynor⁹ made a survey of the Grass Range graduates from 1920 to 1952 to ascertain how well the curriculum had met the student's needs; to determine the opinions of the graduates as to the value of individual subjects; and to make recommendations for program changes.

The purposes of the seventh follow-up study which was surveyed were very similar to the purposes of this study. Roger Christianson¹⁰ conducted a survey of the graduates of Fairfield High School from 1940 to 1951. His expressed purposes were to determine the present location of the graduates; the occupations pursued by them since their graduation; the additional education and training acquired by them since high school; their opinions concerning the usefulness of their high school training in their present occupation; and

⁸Eugene V. Lagerquist, "A Follow-up Study of the Graduates of Bainville, Montana High School for the Years 1948-1953." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1954), p. 2.

⁹George C. Gaynor, "A Follow-up Survey of the High School Graduates of Grass Range, Montana, 1920-1952." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1953), p. 1.

¹⁰Roger W. Christianson, "A Survey of the Graduates of the Fairfield, Montana High School for the Years 1940-1951." (Unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1953), p. 1.

their suggestions for ways in which the educational offerings of Fairfield High School might be improved.

Christianson concluded as a result of his study that the graduates recommended the following:

1. That the academic studies be emphasized to a much greater degree by the school personnel as being of the greatest importance to the students in their later life.
2. That the school should increase its program of educational and vocational guidance.
3. That the possibility and practicability of offering trade school training in high school by the teachers be investigated further.
4. That the course of study in English be revised to include more time on practical English including composition, letter writing, penmanship, spelling, and public speaking.
5. That mathematics should receive greater emphasis in the school program, and provision be made to teach advanced mathematics to those who will need it for college.¹¹

The conclusions of Christianson and the other studies reviewed are compared with the findings of the Elkton study in Chapter III.

Limitations of this study. The results of this survey should provide valuable data for curriculum revision in Elkton High School, and provide a basis for future studies of the graduates. Limitations of the study which should be considered in the survey and use of the data are as follows:

1. The results of this survey are limited to opinions of graduates responding to the questionnaire.
2. The recommendations and conclusions are based upon the opinions of the graduates of the years, 1945-1954.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 48-49.

The needs, as expressed by the graduates of the years, 1945-1954, may not coincide with the needs of the current students.

3. The opinions of the graduates may be influenced by discussions with graduates of other schools or with students presently enrolled in school. The strength or weakness indicated would not then be a true picture.

4. No provision was made in the questionnaire to determine how many of the graduates had enrolled in the various elective courses. If the courses had been rated on a basis of percentage of the students who had enrolled, the rank order of courses selected as most and least valuable might not be the same.

5. No provision was made in the questionnaire to determine how many of the graduates participated in the various extra-curricular activities. If the percentage of participation in each activity could be determined, the rank order of activities most helpful might not be the same.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Returns of the questionnaire. Altogether, 91 questionnaires were returned from the 136 students who had graduated from Elkton High School over the ten year period between 1945 and 1954. Reliable addresses were obtained for 129. One graduate was deceased. The addresses of the remaining six were unknown. The rate of reply ranged from 37.5 per cent from the class of 1945 to 100 per cent reply from the class of 1953. A total of 66.9 per cent of the graduates returned the questionnaire. The graduates of 1950 through 1954 returned a larger percentage of questionnaires than the graduates of the period from 1945 through 1949.

Location of the graduates. Graduates who were attending college or who were in the armed forces at the time of this study, were not considered to have a permanent address, and were listed separately in Table II. Of the remaining 98 graduates for whom residence was established, 60 per cent still lived in the Elkton community within a twenty-five mile radius, an additional 14 per cent lived within a 100 mile radius, and 7 per cent lived in Minnesota beyond a 100 mile radius. Nineteen per cent had left Minnesota to reside in some other state. A large number of graduates were attracted to the near-by city of Austin with the result that 16 per cent

TABLE I
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES FROM EACH
CLASS WHO RETURNED THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Class	Number of Graduates	Number of returns	Per cent of returns
1945	8	3	37.5
1946	11	7	63.6
1947	12	6	50.0
1948	13	8	61.5
1949	16	9	56.3
1950	16	12	75.0
1951	14	10	71.4
1952	18	13	72.2
1953	11	11	100.0
1954	17	12	70.6
Total	136	91	66.9

TABLE II
PRESENT LOCATION OF GRADUATES BY STATES AND NUMBER
OF GRADUATES IN COLLEGE OR IN THE ARMED FORCES

Location	Addresses of graduates who returned questionnaire	Additional reliable known addresses	Total Addresses
Minnesota			
Elkton--25 mile radius	38	21	59
25 mile to 100 mile radius	10	4	14
Remainder of Minnesota	3	3	6
Total in Minnesota	51	28	79
California	2		2
Colorado	1		1
District of Columbia	1		1
Georgia	1		1
Illinois	1	1	1
Iowa	3		3
North Dakota	1		1
New York	1	1	2
Oregon	1		1
Virginia		1	1
Washington	1		1
Wisconsin	3		3
Total out of state	16	3	19
Graduates in college	10		10
Graduates in the Armed Forces	14	7	21
Total addresses	91	38	129

of the graduates lived in that city. Austin is 14 miles from Elkton and is the trading center for the people of the Elkton community. Graduates living in Austin and in the 25 mile radius area are close enough to Elkton so that they have considerable contact with home and with their alma mater.

The graduates who left Minnesota to live in another state are widely scattered. Three have made their homes in each of the neighboring states of Iowa and Wisconsin. Nine other states and the District of Columbia claim one or two residents who were former Elkton graduates.

Occupations of the graduates. The replies show that sixty-seven of the graduates were in twenty-three different occupations. Three married women listed two present occupations, one of them being that of a housewife. Twenty-two of the sixty-seven were housewives. Following in order of frequency were eleven farmers, six teachers, four secretaries, three bookkeepers, three salesmen and others as shown in Table III. The ninety-four total was distributed as follows: seventy in occupations (including three who listed two occupations), ten were in college, and fourteen were in the armed forces.

Factors which should not be overlooked in a study of this nature are the occupations other than the present ones in which the graduates have worked. Table IV shows the number of secondary occupations listed by the graduates. Making comparisons with the primary occupations is difficult since

TABLE III
PRESENT OCCUPATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES
OF ELKTON, MINNESOTA, 1945-1954

Occupation	Frequency
Housewife	22
Farmer	11
Teacher	6
Secretary	4
Bookkeeper	3
Salesman	3
Machinist	2
Packing house worker	2
Stenographer	2
Waitress	2
Cashier	1
Caterpillar operator	1
Clerk (billing)	1
Clerk (store)	1
Custodian	1
Dietician	1
Engraver	1
Laundress	1
Mechanic	1
Nurses aide	1
Paper factory worker	1
Pastor	1
Registered Nurse	1
Student	10
Armed Forces	14
Total	94

TABLE IV
NUMBER OF SECONDARY OCCUPATIONS LISTED BY HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES OF ELKTON, MINNESOTA, 1945-54

Occupation	Total
Farmer	11
Construction worker	8
Secretary	5
Bookkeeper	4
Clerk (store)	4
Clerk (Post Office)	1
Receptionist	4
Housekeeper	3
Carpenter	2
Dietician	2
Stenographer	2
Truck driver	2
Waitress	2
Assistant store manager	1
Bank teller	1
Buttermaker	1
Cashier	1
Grain elevator employee	1
Highway maintenance worker	1
Laboratory technician	1
Machinist	1
Mechanic	1
Printer	1
Salesman	1
Service station operator	1
Telephone operator	1

some graduates listed several secondary occupations while others listed none. However, the list of secondary occupations shows twenty graduates had at one time been employed in the clerical field, sixteen of which were women who held clerical positions before marriage.

The graduates were asked at what age they decided upon their present vocations. As revealed in Table V, 65 per cent of the respondents' reached their decisions from the age of fifteen through eighteen, which would closely approximate their high school years. By age twenty-one, an additional 20 per cent had decided upon their present vocations. Eighty-five per cent reached their decisions between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one. This may indicate the importance of occupational counseling and guidance at the high school level.

The graduates were asked to indicate sources of help in selecting occupations and in making educational and vocational plans. Parents were credited with helping most, being mentioned by 41 per cent of the graduates. Thirty-three per cent indicated they had received help from subjects they studied or something they read. Twenty per cent of the respondents had received help from school personnel. There is some indication the counseling program in the school could stand considerable improvement. At present the Elkton High School does not employ a counselor or counseling services.

As revealed in Table VII, 77 per cent of the graduates were content with their present vocations. This does

TABLE V
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF AGE AT WHICH THE GRADUATES
DECIDED UPON THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATION

Age	Frequency
Thirteen	1
Fourteen	2
Fifteen	2
Sixteen	8
Seventeen	21
Eighteen	28
Nineteen	9
Twenty	7
Twenty-one	2
Twenty-two	5
Twenty-three	3
Twenty-four	1
Twenty-five	2

TABLE VI
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF SOURCES FROM WHICH GRADUATES
RECEIVED HELP IN CHOOSING THEIR OCCUPATION

Source	Frequency
Parent	37
Superintendent	5
Principal	7
A Teacher	6
Subjects Studied	18
Something Read	12
Friends	19
Employer	10
Other	16

TABLE VII
 NUMBER OF GRADUATES WHO WOULD OR WOULD NOT
 LIKE TO BE DOING SOMETHING ELSE
 AS THEIR MAIN VOCATION

Year Grad.	Girls		Boys	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1945		2		1
1946	1	3	1	2
1947		3	2	1
1948		6		2
1949	2	4	1	2
1950		5	3	4
1951	1	1	5	3
1952	3	6	3	1
1953	1	4		6
1954	1	2	3	6
Total	9	36	18*	28

*Includes eight boys in the armed services, who indicated dissatisfaction with present vocational fields.

not include eight boys in the armed services who were dissatisfied with their present occupations.

Would increased vocational counseling at Elkton High School succeed in increasing the degree of satisfaction? This would be an interesting question in a later study.

The graduates were asked to indicate the value of their high school training in their present occupations. Twelve per cent indicated they had received specific preparation for their present jobs, while 7 per cent thought their high school training was of little or no help in relation to their present occupations. Eighty-one per cent said it gave them a general background.

Additional education and training. Of the graduates returning the questionnaire, 33 per cent either attended or were currently attending college; another 15 per cent enrolled in additional training other than college, making a total of 48 per cent who received additional training beyond high school. Of this group, 23 per cent were currently enrolled, 43 per cent completed a course of study, and 34 per cent had dropped out.

Of the forty-four graduates who started college or other additional education, fourteen dropped out before completing the course of study. Twenty-seven per cent dropped out to enter the armed services and 27 per cent dropped out for lack of funds. Other reasons for discontinuing advanced training are shown in Table X.

TABLE VIII
EXTENT THAT HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING HELPED
GRADUATES IN PRESENT OCCUPATION

Value of High School Training	Boys (46) %	Girls (45) %	B&G (91) %
No help at all	10.9	2.2	6.6
General background	76.1	86.7	81.3
Specific preparation	13.0	11.1	12.1

TABLE IX
GRADUATES WHO HAVE ENROLLED, COMPLETED, OR DROPPED
OUT OF COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND ADDITIONAL
EDUCATION OTHER THAN COLLEGE

	College or University	Business College	Trade Schools	Nurses Training
Currently enrolled	9	0	1	0
Completed course	10	4	3	2
Dropped out	11	0	4	0
Total	30	4	8	2

TABLE X
NUMBER OF VARIOUS REASONS FOR LEAVING UNIVERSITIES,
COLLEGES, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF ADDITIONAL
EDUCATION OTHER THAN COLLEGE

Reason	Girls	Boys	Total
Completed course	12	6	18
Lack of funds	3	1	4
To accept employment	1	2	3
Because of marriage	1	1	2
Discontented	1	1	2
Entered armed services	0	4	4
Total	18	15	33

Opinions pertaining to educational program. The graduates were asked to list in order of importance the three subjects which had been most helpful to them in their present occupations. English was mentioned most frequently by all graduates. Twenty-four per cent of the respondents selected English as being most important. Thirty-eight per cent of the girls indicated home economics was most helpful, and 17 per cent of the boys chose industrial arts as being most valuable to them in their occupations. Other subjects which were most frequently mentioned were general mathematics, typing, bookkeeping, physics, and general business. Thirteen other subjects were cited as being important as shown in Table XI.

Table XII shows the ranking of subjects least helpful to graduates in their present occupations. Thirty per cent indicated world history had been of least value. Algebra was listed in second place and plane geometry third. Twenty other subjects were singled out as courses of least value in their occupations, by from one to eighteen graduates.

The graduates were asked to indicate subjects most helpful in other phases of life. Again, English, general mathematics, and home economics led the list with English being mentioned almost three times as often as the second ranking subject. Altogether twenty-two subjects were indicated as valuable.

Algebra was indicated most frequently as the subject of least value to graduates in non-vocational aspects. The

TABLE XI
 SUBJECTS SELECTED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE
 AS BEING MOST HELPFUL TO GRADUATES
 IN THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATION

Subject	Order of Importance			Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	
English	22	13	12	47
General Mathematics	7	10	8	25
Home Economics	17	4	3	24
Industrial Arts	8	8	5	21
Typing	7	9	5	21
Bookkeeping	6	6	7	19
Physics	2	6	8	16
General Business	3	5	7	15
Biology	1	7	1	9
Plane Geometry	1	4	3	8
Chemistry	3	2	2	7
Algebra	2	3	2	7
Physical Education	2	0	5	7
Business Law	1	2	4	7
Social Science	2	3	1	6
Speech	1	1	3	5
General Science	0	2	2	4
Economic Geography	1	1	1	3
Higher Algebra	2	0	0	2
American History	0	0	2	2
World History	0	0	1	1

TABLE XII
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF SUBJECTS LEAST HELPFUL TO
GRADUATES IN THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATION

Subject	Frequency
World History	27
Algebra	21
Plane Geometry	20
Biology	18
Economic Geography	17
Chemistry	16
Physics	15
American History	14
Social Science	11
General Science	8
English	7
Typing	6
Physical Education	5
Band	4
Bookkeeping	4
Higher Algebra	3
Industrial Arts	3
Home Economics	3
Speech	2
Business Law	2
General Business	2
Chorus	1
General Mathematics	1

frequency of mention of algebra and related subjects (53 times) and the sciences (54 times) indicates a need for study in these fields in an attempt to make these courses more meaningful and useful to the students. Twenty-one subjects were listed by students as being of little help in everyday living.

Table XIV shows the courses which graduates stated they wanted but did not have an opportunity to take. Commercial subjects were mentioned most often with shorthand at the top of the list. Thirty-one per cent indicated they wanted typing and bookkeeping. Twenty-four per cent found that more advanced industrial arts training would have been useful, while 11 per cent expressed need for a foreign language. A total of thirty-two subjects were listed from one to twenty-four times. In 93 per cent of the cases the reason given for not taking the course was that it was not offered.

The graduates were asked to suggest the degree of emphasis placed on academic studies, music, and athletics. Seventy per cent indicated a proper emphasis was placed on academic studies while 30 per cent thought there was not enough emphasis. Forty-two per cent favored more stress on music while 58 per cent indicated it was about right. In athletics 19 per cent favored more emphasis, 79 per cent said it was about right, and 2 per cent thought there was too much emphasis in this area.

From this study it appears that Elkton High School should attempt to put more emphasis on academic studies and

TABLE XIII

FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF SUBJECTS MOST HELPFUL AND THOSE
LEAST HELPFUL TO GRADUATES IN OTHER PHASES OF
LIFE BESIDES THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATION

Subject	Most helpful	Least helpful
English	56	2
General Mathematics	22	1
Home Economics	19	0
Typing	18	5
Social Science	17	3
Industrial Arts	14	2
General Science	13	8
General Business	12	2
Bookkeeping	11	1
American History	11	9
Business Law	9	0
Physics	8	11
Physical Education	8	7
Speech	7	4
Chorus	7	4
Band	6	4
World History	6	17
Biology	5	18
Algebra	4	29
Economic Geography	4	4
Chemistry	1	17
Plane Geometry	1	15
Higher Algebra	0	8

TABLE XIV

SUBJECTS THE GRADUATES STATED THEY WANTED TO TAKE
BUT DID NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE

Subject	Number	Reason not taken	
		Not offered	Other
Shorthand	24	24	
Typing	18	16	2
Bookkeeping	11	10	1
Foreign Language	10	10	
Industrial Arts:			
Auto mechanics	9		
Advanced shop	4		
Welding	3		
Electricity	2		
Metal shopwork	2		
Machine shop	1		
Mechanical drawing	1		
	22	22	
Speech	8	8	
Agriculture	6	6	
Business Law	6	5	1
Chemistry	4	2	2
Driver Training	3	3	
Higher Algebra	3	3	
Accounting	2	2	
Advanced Typing	2	2	
Art	2	2	
Business Machines	2	2	
Advanced Home Economics	1	1	
Band	1		1
Drafting	1	1	
Chorus	1		1
General Business	1	1	
Health	1	1	
Organic Chemistry	1	1	
Plane Geometry	1		1
Psychology	1	1	
Solid Geometry	1	1	
Trigonometry	1	1	
Total	134	125	9

TABLE XV
 OPINION OF GRADUATES ON THE DEGREE OF EMPHASIS PLACED
 ON ACADEMIC STUDIES, MUSIC, AND ATHLETICS
 IN THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Year	Academic studies			Music			Athletics		
	Not enough	About right	Too much	Not enough	About right	Too much	Not enough	About right	Too much
1945	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
1946	3	4	0	4	3	0	1	5	1
1947	3	3	0	1	5	0	0	6	0
1948	2	5	0	5	2	0	3	4	0
1949	5	4	0	3	6	0	1	8	0
1950	6	6	0	5	7	0	2	10	0
1951	1	9	0	6	4	0	1	8	1
1952	2	10	0	4	8	0	2	10	0
1953	1	10	0	5	6	0	3	8	0
1954	3	9	0	4	8	0	4	8	0
Total	27	62	0	37	52	0	17	70	2

music activities while keeping athletics at or near its present level. Perhaps a good guidance program would be able to help increase the emphasis upon academic studies and music by making their value more apparent to the students.

Opinions pertaining to extra-curricular activities and other school experiences. Of all the extra-curricular activities, sports were listed most often as being helpful to graduates, followed in order of preference by band, glee club, school paper, and dramatics. Ten other activities were named from one to nine times and are included in Table XVI.

There were few responses to the question: "Were there any extra-curricular activities you wanted to take that you did not have an opportunity to take?" Future Farmers of America was mentioned three times, band and Future Homemakers of America twice each, and ten other activities were named once.

Twenty-five per cent of the graduates indicated they had other school experiences that were of special help to them. Dramatics were of most help to six students while four others thought participating in speech contests was especially helpful. Other experiences listed as being of special help are shown in Table XVIII.

Comments of the graduates. The graduates were asked for their comments and suggestions for the improvement of Elkton High School. A large number of these comments were received. Since many of these comments were substantially

TABLE XVI
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES MOST HELPFUL TO GRADUATES

Activity	Frequency
Sports	20
Band	11
Glee Club	10
School paper	10
Dramatics	10
Speech activities	9
Cheerleading	6
Annual	4
Basketball	3
Student council	3
Football	2
Library assistant	2
Music	2
Piano accompanist	2
Office assistant	1

TABLE XVII
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES IN WHICH GRADUATES HAD NO
OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

Activity	Frequency
Future Farmers of America	3
Band	2
Future Homemakers of America	2
Chorus	1
Class plays	1
Dramatics club	1
Forensics	1
Girls Athletic Association	1
Glee club	1
Library club	1
Rifle team	1
Swimming	1
Track	1

TABLE XVIII
FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF OTHER SCHOOL EXPERIENCES
THAT WERE OF SPECIAL HELP TO GRADUATES

Experiences	Frequency
Dramatics	6
Speech contests	4
School paper staff	3
Field trips	2
Teacher-student conferences	2
Achievement tests	1
Annual staff	1
Movies	1
Music contests	1
School parties	1
Student council president	1

the same even though the wording may have been different, they have been grouped together.

In evaluating these comments, the reader should be aware of prejudice and short-sighted views. Therefore comments with only one or a few mentions may well be considered only as interesting or as a subject for a future study, but cannot be considered to have particular significance. There are some areas, however, which have a frequency of mention numerous enough to merit attention.

In the following evaluation all the comments are included in an outline form under general areas, with the number of graduates who commented on each particular item listed to the right of the comment.

The following general comments on the high school seem to indicate that Elkton High School was a better than average school:

1. Elkton High School was a better than average school. (6)
2. The Elkton school system continues to show improvement from year to year. (4)
3. The Elkton school system leaves much to be desired. (1)

The comments on the administration and teachers were as follows:

1. The administration was good. (2)
2. The administration was poor. (1)
3. There was a lack of discipline (1)

4. The teachers should be better trained. (2)
5. The turnover of teachers is too great. (2)
6. The teaching was very good. (3)
7. Teachers show favoritism. (1)
8. Music and athletics should be scheduled at different times. (2)
9. There should be more teacher student conferences. (2)

The comments pertaining to students were as follows:

1. Students should be taught how to study and budget their time. (3)
2. Students should be taught how to use the library. (1)
3. More students should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities. (2)
4. Students at Elkton show good sportsmanship. (2)
5. There is poor morale among the students. (1)
6. There should be more school parties for all students to attend. (1)

The comments on guidance indicate the need for a better guidance program in Elkton High School.

1. More educational guidance is needed. (4)
2. More vocational guidance is needed. (4)
3. Elkton High School needs a counselor or guidance person. (2)

4. Students who plan to go to college should receive some orientation on what to expect. (1)

The following comments on the curriculum in general show a great deal of interest in this area.

1. The curriculum is adequate for the size of the school. (2)
2. There should be a larger selection of courses. (9)
3. A course in agriculture should be offered. (6)
4. Driver training should be offered. (2)
5. A course in music appreciation would be good for all students. (1)
6. There should be more vocational courses. (3)
7. There should be more emphasis on college preparatory courses. (1)
8. Students with ability should be urged and allowed to take a greater number of subjects. (1)

The comments on the English department indicates a need for a more useful English course.

1. English courses could be improved. (2)
2. More training on letter writing and penmanship is needed. (2)
3. Students should have more practice in public speaking. (2)
4. Spelling should be emphasized more. (5)
5. Too much time is spent on literature. (1)

The following comments indicate the importance of mathematics to students planning further educational training:

1. More stress should be put on mathematics and algebra. (3)
2. Advanced algebra should be required of all college preparatory students. (2)
3. Geometry and trigonometry should be available to students who plan to attend college. (1)
4. Advanced algebra is a waste of time. (1)

The comments pertaining to the science department were as follows:

1. Put more stress on importance of physics. (1)
2. Physics or chemistry should be a prerequisite for any student who anticipates a college career. (1)
3. There should be more laboratory work in all science classes. (1)

There were a number of comments relating to the commercial department, most of them urging that more commercial courses be offered.

1. The commercial department was very good. (2)
2. A course in shorthand is needed. (8)
3. There should be more commercial courses. (4)
4. There should be a course in business machines. (1)
5. Typing and bookkeeping should be required of all students. (2)

The comments for the social science department were as follows:

1. Courses in history should be made more interesting. (2)
2. There should be more movies for history and geography classes. (1)
3. History has proven to be of more value to me than I had anticipated while in school. (1)

The comments about home economics were as follows:

1. Home economics should be taught through the 12th grade. (2)
2. Home economics should include training in baby care. (1)
3. Home economics courses should be made more practical. (1)
4. Home economics has proven to be very helpful. (2)

The comments on industrial arts indicates a growing need for enlarged shop facilities.

1. Electricity and welding should be offered. (4)
2. There should be a course in mechanics. (3)
3. More metalwork and less woodwork is needed. (1)
4. Industrial arts should be offered through the 12th grade. (1)
5. More and better equipment is needed in the shop. (3)

The comments about athletics and physical education were as follows:

1. Athletics are over-emphasized. (1)

2. Boys in athletics should meet the academic requirements. (1)
3. There should be more physical education activity for girls. (1)
4. Install lights on the athletic field. (2)
5. There should be a swimming pool and lessons for swimming. (1)

The following comments pertained to music:

1. There should be more boys in music activities. (2)
2. Elkton High School should have a mixed chorus. (1)
3. The school should provide more band instruments. (1)
4. The Elkton band should have new uniforms. (1)
5. Elkton should have a marching band. (1)

Comparison with other studies. A comparison of the findings of this study with those of the seven studies in Montana high schools, as described in Chapter II, showed the following similarities:

1. Insufficient vocational and educational guidance services were available.
2. Expansion of the curriculum to include a wider range of subjects was desired.
3. A need for more useful English courses was indicated by suggestions for including composition, penmanship, spelling, and public speaking.
4. A need for revision of the social science program was indicated.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary. The purposes of this study were to determine the present location of the graduates of Elkton High School; the occupations pursued by them since their graduation; the additional education and training acquired by them since high school; their opinions concerning the usefulness of their high school training in their present occupations; and their suggestions of ways in which the educational offerings of Elkton High School might be improved.

A questionnaire was prepared and sent to all the graduates from the class of 1945 through the class of 1954. Reliable addresses were obtained for 129 of the 136 graduates surveyed and revealed that 60 per cent resided in the Elkton community within a 25 mile radius, 81 per cent lived in Minnesota, and 19 per cent had left the state. Questionnaires were answered by 66.9 per cent of the graduates.

The survey revealed that 24 per cent of the graduates were housewives, 12 per cent were employed in agriculture, 11 per cent were currently attending college or other advanced training, 15 per cent were in the armed forces, and the remainder were employed in a total of twenty-one different occupations.

College was attended by 33 per cent of the graduates, while additional education other than college was attended by 15 per cent. Forty-four students had some training beyond high school. Forty-three per cent of this group had completed a course of study, 34 per cent had dropped out, and 23 per cent were currently enrolled.

The subject fields thought to be of the greatest benefit in their present occupations were English, commercial, and mathematics. Commercial was the leading area of subjects the graduates wanted but did not have an opportunity to take.

The graduates suggested that academic studies and music were not sufficiently emphasized, while the emphasis on athletics was about right.

Conclusions. The following conclusions were drawn, based on the responses of graduates of Elkton High School:

1. Inadequate guidance service had been offered to high school students.
2. A weakness was reported in teaching of spelling, speech, and penmanship.
3. More emphasis should be given to the music program.
4. The academic studies did not receive enough emphasis.
5. More commercial and industrial arts courses were desired.
6. Algebra and advanced science courses appeared to be of little value to many graduates.
7. Subject offerings in general too restrictive.

Recommendations. The following recommendations were made from an analysis of the findings of this study:

1. The school should provide more educational and vocational guidance for its students. The possibility of securing a counselor, or providing time for counseling for some other staff member should be investigated further.
2. English courses should be revised to put more emphasis on speaking, penmanship, and spelling.
3. All courses should stress good English habits in all class work.
4. The music activities should be expanded to include more students.
5. The academic studies should be emphasized to a greater degree and related to "real life" problems.
6. More commercial and industrial arts courses should be offered.
7. A study should be made of the algebra and science courses toward the end of making them more meaningful and useful.
8. Curriculum in general should be expanded by adding another teacher.
9. The high school should offer as many extra-curricular activities as possible to give all students choice in their field of interest.
10. This study should be followed by a survey of parents' opinions and discussion in local organizations such as the Parent-Teachers Association.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO GRADUATES
ACCOMPANYING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Elkton High School
Elkton, Minnesota
November 10, 1954

Dear Graduate of Elkton High School:

There has been considerable discussion during recent years concerning the courses offered at Elkton High School.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to find out what you think of some aspects of our curriculum in the light of your experience since graduation.

In order for the results of this questionnaire to have meaning, it is extremely important that your answers reflect your true feeling towards the school. You do not need to sign your name, and no effort will be made to find out who sent in any particular answer. We are asking only for your honest opinions.

You will find the questions are provided either with blanks to fill in, or with boxes in which to place a check for your choice of an answer. Questions which do not apply to your particular situation may be left blank or you may write "none" after the question.

I will appreciate it very much if you will find the time to answer this as soon as possible and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and best wishes to you now and in the years to come from the present faculty and student body of Elkton High School.

Sincerely,

Verdie L. Ellingson
Principal

APPENDIX B

SECOND LETTER TO GRADUATES

Elkton High School
Elkton, Minnesota
March 2, 1955

Dear Graduate of Elkton High School:

Perhaps you mislaid or did not receive the questionnaire which I previously sent to you. In either case, here is another copy. I would consider it a great favor if you would take a few moments to fill it out as completely as possible and mail it to me in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

I have received replies from more than half of the graduates of 1945 to 1954. They are living in widely scattered places all over the United States and have varied and interesting occupations. In order for this study to have much value, it is necessary that I hear from as many of you as I possibly can contact.

I would particularly like to have your comments on our school on the last page of the questionnaire. They are most valuable.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

V. L. Ellingson

Enclosures 2

APPENDIX C

**QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN
SURVEY OF GRADUATES**

PERSONAL DATA

- 1. Present age _____ 2. Sex M _____ F _____ 3. Year graduated from Elkton High School _____

OCCUPATION

- 1. What is your present occupation? _____

- 2. Have you worked at any other occupations since graduation from high school?

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Length of time employed</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- 3. At what age did you decide on your occupation? _____

- 4. Check the following which helped you most in selecting an occupation and in making your educational and vocational plans.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Your parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subjects you studied | <input type="checkbox"/> Your employer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Something you read | <input type="checkbox"/> Others. Explain Briefly _____ |

- 5. Would you like to be doing something else as your main vocation? If so, what? _____

CURRICULUM

- 1. Check the relation of your high-school training to your present occupation?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No help at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Gave me specific preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gave me a general background | |

Using the numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicate in order of importance the three high-school courses that have helped you most in your present occupation.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Chorus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Algebra | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech & Dramatics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Plane Geometry | <input type="checkbox"/> General Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physics | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Algebra | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> General Math. | <input type="checkbox"/> Typing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop (Ind. Arts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World History | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Econ. Geography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American History | <input type="checkbox"/> Band | <input type="checkbox"/> Mention others, if any _____ |

- 2. What three subjects have been least useful in your job or occupation? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

- 3. What three subjects have been most helpful in other phases of life besides your job? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

- 4. What three subjects have been least helpful in other phases of life besides your job? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Are there any subjects you wanted to take that you didn't have an opportunity to take? List them. _____

Why couldn't you take them? Please check, and write in the name of the subject following the reason.

- Not offered in high school _____
- Schedule difficulties _____
- Did not have the prerequisites (required courses) _____
- Former grades in similar subjects too low _____
- Other reason. Please explain. _____

Which high-school extracurricular activities have helped you most? _____

Were there any extracurricular activities you wanted to take that you didn't have an opportunity to take. If so, please list them. _____

Were there any other school experiences that you remember as being of special help to you? If so, please name them. _____

Does Elkton High School place the proper emphasis upon academic studies, the music program, and the athletic program?

	<u>Not Enough</u> <u>Emphasis</u>	<u>About</u> <u>Right</u>	<u>Too Much</u> <u>Emphasis</u>
Academic studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Athletic Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

College attended _____
Name of school _____ Address _____

Quarters completed _____ OR Semesters completed _____

Degree earned: _____ Major _____ Minor _____

Trade school attended _____
Name of school _____ Address _____

Trade studied _____

Other special training _____

What was your reason for leaving college or trade school?

- Graduated
- Lack of funds
- Other. Please specify _____
- Called into armed forces
- Unsatisfactory grades

Please use the remainder of this sheet and the other side for comments or suggestions you might have for the improvement of Elkton High School.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS: