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A Way of Living Study of Thirty Families in Divernon, Illinois

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Lucy A. Parkey entitled "A Way of Living Study of Thirty Families in Divernon, Illinois." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Human Ecology.

Elizabeth Speer, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Jessie W. Harris, Ella J. Day

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Committee on Graduate Study:

I submit herewith a thesis written by Lucy A. Parkey and entitled "A Way of Living Study of Thirty Families in Divernon, Illinois," and recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Home Management.

Leslie E. Speed
Major Professor

At the request of the
Committee on Graduate Study,
we have read this thesis,
and recommend its acceptance.

Jessie W. Harris
Ella J. Day

Accepted for the Graduate Committee

T. C. Smith
Dean

A WAY OF LIVING
STUDY OF THIRTY FAMILIES
IN DIVERNON, ILLINOIS

- o -

A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee
of
The University of Tennessee
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science

- o -

by
LUCY A. PARKEY

August 1940

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Appreciation is also expressed to the Mayor, Tax Collector, Supervisor and the thirty families.

L.A.P.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of thirty families living in Divernon, Illinois and the surrounding area. The aim is to picture the homes; their furnishings; the size of the families; the education, religion, social and physical conditions; the incomes and their savings and investments.

The subject was selected because the investigator felt the information learned might help her when planning a course of study in home economics for the Divernon Township High School. She felt that her teaching might become more effective if the home economics course of study was planned to meet the needs of the particular community.

The families studied were chosen for three reasons. First, they represented homes of the students of the investigator in twenty-five cases and the other five were homes of particular interest to her. Second, the investigator felt they were representative of the families of the town in nationality, religion, education and financial status. Third, they were families the investigator thought would cooperate in giving, freely, information about their homes and families.

Twenty-seven of the families studied lived in Divernon and the other three lived on farms in the township and sent their children to the Divernon Township High School.

The data for the study were obtained by all of the following means: personal interview, statistics, questionnaire and class problems. The information was collected over a period of two years.

The mayor of the town furnished information about the origin and development of the town. Data in regard to those on relief and federal employment were secured from the files of the Township Supervisor, father of the investigator. The Township tax collector was glad to supply the needed information about the tax conditions.

One of the high school boys was hired by the investigator in June, 1938 to take a census of the town and determine the population and nationalities of the families.

The investigator planned her own questionnaire, using one that had been formulated by the School of Home Economics of the University of Tennessee as a basis.

Fifteen of the thirty questionnaires used in the study were filled out by the investigator in the presence of the mother or mother and father. The other fifteen were filled out by the parents themselves and the investigator checked the questionnaire with a member of the family when

he or she returned it. In all cases the parents knew why the information was being secured.

The information about the food consumption of the thirty families was secured by a class problem in twenty-five cases and by personal interviews in the other five cases. In each case menus for a whole day were secured.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY

The investigator found Divernon, Illinois to be a small town, located sixteen miles south of the Capitol city, Springfield, on route 66.

The late Mr. Ed Lewis was the first settler. He and his family came to what is now known as Divernon in 1887. The community continued to grow and in 1912 the Madison Coal Company opened a coal mine there. People moved in from many districts in order to secure employment and the once open prairie grew to be a prosperous mining town with a population of 3,500. The financial depression came at the close of the World War and with it all of the labor difficulties that usually accompany a period of depression. The miners were not satisfied with their pay or working conditions and several strikes resulted. On May 5, 1925 the mine was closed and never opened again.

Many of the miners continued to live in Divernon because they owned property that could not be disposed of, many were foreign by birth and did not have the education necessary to secure employment in other fields of work, and the financial depression that was prevalent all over the nation made it hard for anyone to secure a job.

The closing of the mine had a hazardous effect upon the community in many respects. Some of the results were: the value of property decreased, property owners had to sell in order to pay their taxes, many taxes remained unpaid although the people continued to live in the houses, the Madison Coal Company sold their buildings and the purchasers wrecked and moved them away, and a large percentage of the families had to resort to public charity for a living.

At the time this study was made there were 947 individuals, representing 317 families, living in Divernon. These families represented fifteen nationalities and five religions. Table No. I represents the findings made possible by a census the investigator had taken in June, 1938. The percentage of foreign born was over one-third of the total population.

Of the 317 families 186 were self-supporting and 131 were on the relief roll to receive aid in some form. Sixty-five families were dependent upon direct relief as their only means of securing a living, 50 were securing their income from the Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps jobs. The remaining 16 families received aid only occasionally in the form of doctor bills, hospitalization and only for short periods of time when they were without gainful employment.

TABLE I

CENSUS OF DIVERNON, ILLINOIS
TAKEN IN JUNE, 1938

Nationality	Families	Adults	Children
American	140	203	235
English or Welch	66	105	49
Hungarian	43	79	81
German	23	42	30
Scotch	14	28	11
Irish	6	8	6
Italian	7	11	3
Lithuanian	7	11	5
Polish	4	6	7
Dutch	2	3	3
Russian	1	1	3
French	1	2	1
Swedish	1	2	1
Bohemian	1	3	1
Austrian	1	1	6
Totals	317	505	442

Divernon Township contained several large farms. The owners paid large sums in taxes upon these farms and the whole township depended for support chiefly upon the taxes collected from them plus the small amount of taxes paid into the treasury by property owners in town.

The town had a capable marshal who was responsible for taking care of the streets and alleys as well as for the police protection. He had been assisted by Works Progress Administration and National Youth Administration projects with the result that Divernon had good streets and sidewalks, clean alleys, well pruned trees and a well kept village green that was known as the park. The park, a block square in size, was located in the center of the town and had a band stand in the center to be used for band concerts and open air services of different kinds.

The village hall housed the jail and fire truck. The fire department was composed of eight unpaid men appointed by the town board.

The city water system was supplied by Lake Springfield and could be used by anyone who would pay for having connections made and a fee of \$1.20 per month.

There were three grocery stores, two combination grocery and dry goods stores, one dry goods store, a drug store, hotel, barber shop, beauty salon, telephone office, second class post office, three garages, a blacksmith shop,

ice house, grain elevator, railway station, and lumber company located in the town.

The Illinois Central Railroad had a line through the town that was used more for freight and express than for passenger transportation. For other means of transportation the inhabitants depended upon the Santa Fe bus, a privately owned taxi and their own automobiles.

The town had four churches. The Catholic had the largest membership as approximately one-third of all the religious affiliations of the town were Catholic. There were three protestant churches; Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist. Each church had at least two services every Sunday and all of the protestant churches had an active Sunday school. The Baptist and Presbyterian churches had active young people's organizations that met each Sunday evening.

There were separate buildings for the high and graded schools and each school had its own board of directors. Both buildings were two-story brick structures with eight class rooms. The high school had an assembly hall with a seating capacity of 135 and a spacious gymnasium that was used by both schools for basketball games and various programs. The gymnasium was the community center and the various organizations such as: Farm Bureau, Alumni Association

and Rural Electrification Administration held their regular meetings in it. The teachers taught nine months and their annual salaries were divided into twelve payments. The graded school employed eight teachers and a janitor-and-yard-superintendent while the high school employed seven teachers and two janitor-and-yard-superintendents. The janitor at the graded school worked ten months and those at the high school worked eleven months. The high school teachers' salaries ranged from \$1,150.00 to \$2,700.00 paid to the principal. The average salary paid the teachers, other than the principal, was \$1,315.00. The enrollment in the graded school for the term 1939-40 was 155 while the high school had 129 for the same period of time.

The Works Progress Administration recreation center and library, billiard hall, bowling alley, a reservoir that had been used by the mine but was being used as a swimming pool, and an organized baseball league were the forms of public recreation available for the young folks. There were three taverns where the young middle aged men spent much of their leisure time visiting and playing cards. The investigator is of the opinion that the taverns are detrimental forms of amusement in that they take young men into a poor environment and there they drift into the expensive habit of card playing.

The adults had several organizations that could be used to occupy some of their leisure time. The Womans' Club was one of the strongest organizations and probably did more for the community than any other one organization. It sponsored a baby clinic, had all of the graded and high school children vaccinated for smallpox, tested for tuberculosis and given the Schick test. It had sponsored an annual physical examination of all school children for a period of six years previously. It sponsored the Works Progress Administration hot lunch project at the graded school and the Works Progress Administration library.

There were active organizations of each of the following: Modern Woodmen, Masons, Anti-Horse Thief, American Legion, Eastern Star, Progressive Miners of America, and some of the towns people belonged to the Farm Bureau and met with the rural people in the high school gymnasium once a month.

For other forms of commercial amusement the inhabitants went to nearby small towns and to Springfield.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS STATUS OF THIRTY FAMILIES

The study of thirty families living in Divernon, Illinois revealed the average size of the families in the particular group to be 4.6. The usual family was composed of parents and two or three children. There were two broken families. In one case the parents were separated and in the other the mother was dead. This situation seemed consistent with other studies made by Iseley¹ in 1937 and Groves.² Statistics on marriage and divorce in the United States reported one divorce out of seven marriages in 1932,³ therefore, the study appears to imply that Divernon homes are relatively stable.

The fathers in the study were older than the mothers. Their average ages were 51.2 years and 48 years respectively. The ages of the children ranged from two to thirty-nine years with an average age of fifteen for both boys and girls. Data concerning the age and education of members of the

-
1. Helen Maywood Iseley, Living Study of Home Economics Girls in Pinellas County, Florida, Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1937, p. 10.
 2. Ernest R. Groves, The American Family, p. 265.
 3. Marriage and Divorce Census, 1932, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., p. 1.

households in this particular group are shown in Table No. II.

The education of the mothers was better than that of the fathers. The range in grades completed by the fathers was from the fourth grade to high school and that of the mothers was from the eighth grade to two years of college training. The most usual grade completed by the fathers was the eighth while an equal number of mothers completed the eighth grade and high school. The fact that the mothers were better educated than the fathers is characteristic of the education of parents in the studies made by Mercer⁴ and Iseley.⁵ Forty per cent of the families studied were of foreign birth and the parents had not attended American schools. Ten fathers and eleven mothers attended foreign schools only.

The children of this particular group of families were securing a better education than their parents had received. There were forty-three boys and thirty girls at home. Thirty-eight of the boys and twenty-nine of the girls were above six years of age. Nineteen of the boys had

4. Mrs. Frank A. Mercer, Survey of Family Living Conditions in Madison County, Tennessee, Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1935, p. 13.

5. Iseley, op. cit., p. 11.

TABLE II

MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD LIVING AT HOME
WITH AGE AND EDUCATION OF EACH

Item	Father	Mother	Son	Daughter
Member of Household				
Age range	36-79	32-75	2-28	2-39
Average age	51.2	48	15	15
Education of Member				
Grade range	4-H.S.	8-2 yr. College	Nursery: to Bus.Col.	Nursery: to M.S. Deg.
Grade most usually completed	8	H.S. & 8	H.S.	10
Foreign Education only	10	11		

completed high school and one had taken a business college course. Eight girls were high school graduates, two had taken business college courses, one had completed two years of college training at a State Normal and one had a Master's degree. Again the study revealed the females to be securing a better education than the males.

One-third of the families studied were Catholics. One family did not profess to have a religious preference. The remainder belonged to protestant churches.

Twenty-one males and seven females were gainfully employed in private work. Seventeen males and four females were receiving some form of relief. Twelve males and one female were employed on Works Progress Administration projects while four males and two females were doing National Youth Administration work. One man was receiving Old Age Assistance. This study revealed 41.6 per cent of the individuals employed were receiving relief in some form and 45 per cent of the families studied were on relief. (Table No. III).

Of the thirty families 66.6 per cent had less than \$1,500.00 annual income, 46.6 per cent less than \$1,000.00 and 10 per cent less than \$500.00. The report made by the National Resources Committee⁶ revealed 65 per cent of the

6. National Resources Committee, "The Consumer Spends His Income," Report, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., 1939, pp. 4, 7, 8.

TABLE III

OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THIRTY FAMILIES

Occupations	Male	Female
Private Employment		
Machinist	5	
Farmer	4	
Garage	2	
Road Commissioner	1	
Janitor	1	
Tavern Keeper	1	
Township Supervisor	1	
Railroad Section	1	
Postmaster	1	
Merchant	1	
Blacksmith	1	
Miner	1	
Clerk	1	1
Teacher		2
Bookkeeper		1
Typist		1
Telephone Operator		1
Housekeeper		1
Relief Work		
Works Progress Administration	12	1
National Youth Administration	4	2
Old Age Assistance	1	
Total		
Privately Employed	21	7
Receiving Relief	17	3

incomes of the 39 million incomes received in the United States to be less than \$1,500.00, 42 per cent less than \$1,000.00 and 14 per cent less than \$500.00. Table No. IV shows the main contrast between the two studies to be: five per cent more in this study were receiving incomes less than \$1,500.00; three per cent more were receiving less than \$1,000.00; and four per cent less were receiving less than \$500.00 than in the 39 million families.

Further study of the incomes of this study revealed one-third of the families receiving between \$234.00 and \$754.00, one-third between \$754.00 and \$1,200.00 and one-third between \$1,200.00 and \$3,050.00 income in the year 1939. The National Resources Committee found the first two-thirds to be grouped below \$780.00 and \$1,450.00 respectively. (Table No. V).

The greatest contrast between the two studies was in the percentages of the families in the different income groups that were receiving relief some time during the year. Ninety per cent of this study's lower third was on relief in contrast to 30 per cent of the 13 million families in the National Resources Report. Forty per cent of the middle third and 10 per cent of the higher third in this study were receiving relief while 13 per cent of the 13 million found in the middle third were receiving aid.

TABLE IV

INCOMES OF DIVERNON FAMILIES

Incomes	Families	Per Cent
\$ 234.00 - \$ 500.00	3	10
234.00 - 1000.00	14	46.6
234.00 - 1500.00	21	66.6
1500.00 - Up	10	33.3

TABLE V

INCOMES OF THIRTY FAMILIES
AND PERCENTAGE ON RELIEF

Lower Third 90 Per Cent	Middle Third 30 Per Cent	Upper Third 10 Per Cent
\$ 234.00 *	\$ 800.00	\$ 1500.00
350.00 *	805.00 *	1500.00
350.00 *	882.00 *	1500.00
500.00	960.00 *	1500.00
535.00 *	1000.00	1845.00
580.00 *	1025.00	1950.00
580.00 *	1080.00	2120.00 *
588.00 *	1105.00	2160.00
704.00 *	1137.00	2880.00
754.00 *	1200.00	3050.00
* On Relief		

Five families in this study did not spend anything for health during the year 1939; fourteen spent less than \$20.00; twenty-two less than \$50.00; and six spent between \$60.00 and \$300.00. The two largest amounts were \$190.00 spent by a mother for an operation and \$300.00 spent for the hospitalization of two brothers after a serious automobile accident. There were 138 individuals included in this study and therefore, medical care cost \$9.03 per capita in contrast to \$20.00 per capita as shown by the National Resources Committee's report.⁷

The fathers and mothers spent about the same for clothing, the average cost being \$30.00 and \$29.50 respectively. The clothing for the children ranged in cost from \$2.00 to \$150.00. The average spent by the boys was \$37.00 and by the girls was \$34.40. Some clothing was given to the relief families by the Illinois Emergency Relief Committee and by relatives and friends. The clothing that was given to them was not considered. Contrasting this study with that of the 39 million the following interesting facts are revealed: the lower third in this study spent \$24.28 per capita, the middle third \$26.93 and the upper third \$49.26 in contrast to \$16.00, \$32.00 and \$73.00 spent by the 39 million. Thus

7. National Resources Committee, op. cit., p. 37.

we are led to believe that the lower third of Divernon's population dressed almost as expensively as the middle third and that the upper third were in accord with the National Resources Committee's report.⁸

Life insurance was the major form of saving found in this study. (Table No. VI). Individual policies were carried by 50 per cent of the fathers, 46.6 per cent of the mothers, and 41 per cent of the children. They ranged from \$350.00 to \$8,000.00 in value. The usual policy was \$500.00 in the case of the mothers and children and \$2,000.00 for fathers. One daughter, a school teacher by profession, had an annuity policy that will be paid up in 1942.

Seven families reported bank accounts and one had a postal savings account. The savings accounts ranged in amount from \$150.00 received by a high school girl for injuries received in an automobile accident to \$3,000.00 owned by a farmer family. The farmer was the only one to report more than \$800.00 cash savings.

Five families had invested money in real estate ranging in value from \$200.00 invested in a garage to \$40,000.00 for a farm.

Seventeen automobiles and one Model T Ford truck were owned by the thirty families. Seven of the automobiles were

8. National Resources Committee, op. cit., p. 28.

TABLE VI

INSURANCE SAVINGS AND PROPERTY OWNED BY
THIRTY FAMILIES STUDIED

Item	Number	Per Cent	Range
Personal Insurance	62	44.9	\$350.00 - \$8000.00
Bank Accounts	7	23.3	150.00 - 3000.00
Postal Savings	1	3.3	500.00
Real Estate	5	13.3	200.00 - 40,000.00
Automobile	17	56.6	35.00 - 850.00
Truck	1	3.3	10.00
Without Savings	7	23.3	
Without Insurance	14	46.6	

purchased new and the other ten second hand. One Pontiac sedan was purchased new in 1939, while two Fords and four Chevrolets were purchased second hand in the same year. The estimated value of the automobiles ranged from \$35.00 to \$850.00 and the owner of the Ford truck estimated its value to be \$10.00. The Chevrolet car was the most popular make of automobile and the Ford was the second most popular. A 1937 Dodge and 1940 Pontiac were the most expensive models to have been purchased new by any of the thirty families.

Table VI revealed seven families without any form of savings or investment other than house furnishings and houses and fourteen without any kind of life insurance. This seemed to be consistent with the conditions found by Iseley in Pinellas County, Florida.⁹

Listening to the radio seemed to be the most usual type of home recreation with reading running a close second. Other recreational activities engaged in at home were sewing, cards, visiting, and gardening.

Church, Sunday school, and ball games were the forms of community recreation enjoyed by the families of this particular group. This survey did not include the various programs presented by the schools but the investigator knew that almost all of the families included in the study attended

9. Iseley, op. cit., p. 32.

the various school activities if they had a son or daughter taking part in the program. (Table No. VII).

The moving picture show was the most popular form of commercial recreation enjoyed by the family as a whole. The boys and girls enjoyed dancing, bicycling, skating, and bowling. One family did not report any form of recreation and said, "We do not have time."

Twenty-five of the thirty families studied enjoyed the use of radios. The fathers enjoyed listening to news flashes, ball games, political talks, and comedy and the mothers were most interested in comedy, orchestral music and dramatics. The children enjoyed orchestral music much more than any other type of program with ball games and comedy ranking second. The latter situation was probably due to the fact that so many of them enjoyed dancing.

Daily newspapers were subscribed to by twenty-seven of the thirty families. Three families subscribed to two daily newspapers and two families received neither a newspaper nor magazine. The Illinois State Journal was the most popular newspaper. Its popularity may have been due to the fact that it was delivered before breakfast and the others were not delivered until later in the day. Three families received foreign papers and three a local weekly paper. The conditions were similar to those found by Iseley.¹⁰

10. Iseley, op. cit., pp. 33-36.

TABLE VII

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ENJOYED MOST
BY FAMILY MEMBERS

Types of Recreation	Recreations Used	Father	Mother	Children
Home	1. Radio	17	15	10
	2. Reading	10	11	11
	3. Gardening	6		
	4. Sewing		6	2
Community	1. Ball Games	7	7	22
	2. Church	17	19	35
	3. Visiting	4	3	
Commercial	1. Movies	4	5	19
	2. Automobiling	3	3	2
	3. Dancing			17

Sixty-three per cent of the families subscribed for one or more magazines. The number of magazines found in the homes ranged from none to eight and the usual number was four. (Table No. VIII).

Twelve families owned books of fiction; six, non-fiction; seven, classics; and eighteen owned religious books. The religious books were read most by fathers, and mothers were about equally divided in interest between religious books and fiction. The children did not report reading anything except fiction.

All of the thirty families had vegetable gardens and grew such vegetables as tomatoes, potatoes, peas, beans, lettuce, onions and radishes.

Twenty-four families had one or more kinds of fruit growing upon their premises. Cherries and grapes were the usual fruits found with peaches running a close second.

Twenty-seven families did home canning. The usual estimated numbers of jars filled were 100 and 200 and there were more vegetables than fruits canned. The total estimated number of jars filled by the twenty-seven families were 1726 of fruit and 2135 of vegetables.

Seventeen families raised chickens. Twelve of the seventeen reported their chickens as supplying all the eggs needed, fifteen that they supplied all the chickens desired

TABLE VIII

NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
AND MUSIC ENJOYED BY THIRTY FAMILIES

Newspapers and Magazines	No. Homes	Type of Books	No. Homes	Music in Home	Individual Preference		
					Father	Mother	Children
:Ill. State Journal	: 19	: Fiction	: 12	:1. Study Music	:	:	: 5
:Ill. State Register	: 7	: Religious	: 18	:2. Radio	:	:	:
:Chicago Tribune	: 3	: Classics	: 7	: Preferred Program:	:	:	:
:Divernon News	: 5	: Non-Fiction	: 6	: Sacred	:	: 3	:
:Red Book	: 4	:	:	: Orchestral	: 3	: 7	: 23
:Ladies Home Journal	: 4	:	:	: Foreign	: 2	: 4	:
:Farmers Wife	: 3	:	:	: Political Talks	: 7	:	:
:Foreign Paper	: 3	:	:	: News Flashes	: 9	: 1	: 5
:Liberty	: 3	:	:	: Comedy	: 7	: 7	: 12
:American	: 2	:	:	: Ball Games	: 8	: 4	: 9
:Country Gentleman	: 2	:	:	:3. Piano	:	:	:
:Prairie Farmer	: 2	:	:	: Played by	:	:	: 7
:Look	: 2	:	:	:4. Other Musical	:	:	:
:Good Housekeeping	: 2	:	:	: Instruments	:	:	:
:Woman's World	: 2	:	:	: Violin	:	:	: 1
:	:	:	:	: Guitar	:	:	: 1
:	:	:	:	: Accordion	:	:	: 2
:	:	:	:	: French Horn	: 1	:	:

to eat, and three sold chickens and eggs.

Five families owned one or more cows that supplied all of the milk necessary for family consumption. One family sold sour cream. (Table No. IX).

A day's menus were secured from each of the thirty families and scored by the Food Selection Score Card* found in the Appendix of this volume. The following interesting facts were found: all of the families served an abundance of meat; all except one family had at least two vegetables in the day's diet, potatoes were the most popular vegetable; seven families failed to include either fresh or canned fruit in their diets; eight families failed to use milk as a beverage and twenty-one omitted whole grain cereals from the diet. The range in points received by the menus was from 25 to 80. Fifty-five and sixty points were the most usual, and six families' menus scored between 60 and 80 points.

The conditions may have been due to the fact that the menus were collected in May when the gardens were supplying green onions, lettuce and radishes, and the families may have been using them instead of buying fruits.

Further study of the families revealed that forty-one children were away from home. Thirty-two of them left in order to secure labor, five to secure a higher education,

* Adapted from Score Card of the United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics.

TABLE IX

FOOD SCORES RECEIVED BY MENUS
OF THIRTY FAMILIES

Credits	Perfect Score	Range	Average
Milk	20	0 - 20	11.3
Vegetables	20	0 - 20	16.5
Fruits	20	0 - 20	10.0
Whole Grain Cereals	15	0 - 10	3.0
Cheese, Eggs, Meat, Dried Beans or Peas	15	0 - 15	14.8

and four to marry. They were located in seven different states, Panama, and the United States Navy. At the time this study was made ten were homemakers, six machinists, four maids, three were in college, two in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and each of the remaining eighteen were pursuing different occupations. Thirteen boys and fourteen girls were married. The interesting point about those married was that the girls married at an older age than the boys. The usual age for boys to marry was 23, 25, and 27, and of the girls the largest number married at the age of 28.

Tables No. Xa and Xb reveal the findings about the children away from home.

TABLE Xa

CHILDREN AWAY FROM HOME, REASON FOR LEAVING,
AND MOST USUAL AGE AT MARRIAGE

Item	Number	Reason for Leaving			Married	Usual Age At Marriage
		Work	College	Warry		
Girls	21	19	1	1	14	24
Boys	20	13	4	3	13	23, 25, 27, 28

TABLE Xb

LOCATION AND OCCUPATION OF CHILDREN
AWAY FROM HOME

Item	Sons	Daughters
Location		
Illinois	9	13
Michigan	4	7
California	1	
Wisconsin	1	1
Idaho	1	
Missouri	1	
Texas	1	
Panama	1	
U. S. Navy	1	
Occupations		
Homemakers		10
Maid		4
Machinist	6	
College	3	
Stenographer		3
Highway Commissioner	1	
Baseball Player	1	
Salesman	1	
Lumber Jack	1	
Sailor	1	
Government Dynamitist	1	
Captain	1	
W.P.A.	1	
Waitress		1
Beautician		1
Factory		1
Truck Driver	1	
Inspector	1	
C.C.C.	1	

CHAPTER IV

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF HOMES AND HOME CONVENIENCES

Two-thirds of the families in this study owned their own homes (Table No. XI). Taxes were due on 30 per cent of the owned homes and ranged from \$30.00 to \$400.00. In one case the taxes due exceeded the value of the property. The consumer purchases study as summarized in the Public Affairs pamphlet, How We Spend Our Money,¹ revealed the following interesting facts that were used for comparison with these families: one out of five Chicago white families owned their own home and the proportion ran over 50 per cent in smaller places such as Boone, Iowa; New Philadelphia, Ohio; and Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. All of these were mid-western towns and so was Divernon, Illinois, and therefore, they afforded a good comparison. The comparison proved the percentage of home ownership in this study to be similar to that in other small mid-western towns.

In 1939 five families paid between \$60.00 and \$90.00 rent while three paid between \$120.00 and \$180.00. One tenant farmer received the use of a four-room house, two cows, 100 pounds of meat, feed for all the chickens he wanted to

1. Maxwell S. Stewart, How We Spend Our Money, Pamphlet No. 18 (Revised), Public Affairs Committee, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 12.

TABLE XI

HOMES OWNED AND RENTED BY THIRTY FAMILIES

Item	Number	Range in Cost	Usual
Renting	10	\$ 60.00 - \$ 180.00	\$ 60.00
Owning	20	300.00 - 2500.00	\$500.00 - \$1000.00
Taxes	9	30.00 - 400.00	



raise and \$40.00 a month for his labor. Another family rented a farm and all the buildings and gave a portion of the crops produced for the rent.

The condition of the homes owned was described as 36.6 per cent good, 23.3 fair and 6.6 poor in contrast to 13.3 per cent fair and 20 poor in the case of the rented ones. (Table No. XII.)

The houses ranged in size from three to seven rooms. Twenty-seven of the houses had five and six rooms. Twenty-five had separate living rooms, twenty-one separate dining rooms, five combination living and bedrooms and seven bathrooms with flush toilets (Table No. XIII).

The study made by Sneed² in 1937 was contrasted with this study and revealed that the homes in this study had more rooms, more separate living and dining rooms, and more baths. At the time the study was made Eagen, Tennessee, had only four bathrooms with flush toilets and none of the families studied had one.

There were seventy separate bedrooms. The range was from one to five per family and two and three were the usual numbers found. There was one case in which a family consisting of father, mother and children of both sexes occupied

2. Ruth Sneed, Way of Living of 25 Homes in Eagen, Tennessee, Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1937, p. 21.

TABLE XII

CONDITION OF HOMES OF THIRTY FAMILIES

Homes	Good	Fair	Poor
Owned	11	7	2
Per Cent	36.6	23.3	6.6
Rented		4	6
Per Cent		13.3	20.0

TABLE XIII

NUMBER AND KIND OF ROOMS
IN HOMES OF THIRTY FAMILIES

Item	Separate Living Room	Separate Dining Room	Separate Kitchen	Bedrooms				Bath	Closet	Pantry	Basement	Porch
				1	2	3	4					
Number	25	21	21	2	17	10	1	7	55	15	22	59
Per Cent	83.3	70	70	6.6	56.6	33.3	3.3	23.3		50	73.3	
Range									1 - 5			1 - 3
Usual									1 & 2			2

the same bedroom. One family of nine lived in a home that had two bedrooms and three beds. For the standard family composed of parents, two daughters and one son, three bedrooms are needed in order to provide privacy.

The investigator found the storage space to be inadequate. There were fifty-five clothes closets in the thirty homes. The usual number per home was one and two. Three homes did not have any clothes closets while one had five. Of the personal clothing 83.3 per cent was stored in clothes closets. Five families reported hanging their clothing behind the door or on the wall (Table No. XIV).

Canned foods were stored in the basement by 76.6 per cent of the families. There were twenty-three basements. Their conditions were described: 36.6 well constructed, ventilated and dry; 23.3 well constructed but with poor ventilation or damp; and 23.3 that water raised in them and they were poor storage space. The large percentage of basements was probably due to the cold winter climate.

Meat and dairy products were stored in a refrigerator by 76.6 per cent of the families. Three families hung their butter in the well during the warm months. One family said, "We let the groceryman keep such supplies until we are ready for them."

Fifty per cent of the homes had pantries where staples

TABLE XIV

STORAGE AND WORK AREA IN HOMES

Item	Stored Most Usually	Number	Per Cent
Storage			
Personal Clothing	Closet	25	83.3
Bedding	Closet	15	50.0
Canned Foods	Basement	23	76.6
Staples	Pantry	15	50.0
Meat	Refrigerator	23	76.6
Dairy Products	Refrigerator	23	76.6
Work Area			
Kitchen with Floor Covering	Linoleum	29	96.6
Kitchen with Pantry		15	50.0
Screened porches		16	53.3
Basement		22	73.3

were stored and bedding was stored in the clothes closet in the same number of cases.

The storage places, as a whole, were similar to those found in family studies made by Mercer³ and Iseley.⁴

The windows and exterior doors were all screened but six families reported them as being in poor condition and needing repair. Fourteen homes had one or more enclosed porches that were used for work centers in all except two cases. All except two of the living porches were open.

Eighty per cent of the walls were papered and the floors varnished. The paper was good in twenty homes and the varnish good on fifteen floors. Only one family reported no floor coverings and in that instance they had a very poor linoleum on the kitchen floor. Eighty per cent of the living room rugs were fabric and 60 per cent were in good condition. Fifty-four per cent of the dining room rugs were fabric and in good condition. All of the kitchens and remaining dining and living rooms had linoleum rugs on the floor in good condition. Only one of the thirty homes had unpainted bare floors. When compared to a similar study made by Sneed⁵ in 1937 the study revealed a larger percentage of homes with

3. Mercer, op. cit., p. 25.

4. Iseley, op. cit., p. 17.

5. Sneed, op. cit., p. 20.

fabric floor coverings and a smaller percentage of homes with bare floors than was found to be true in the study made at Eagen, Tennessee.

There were twenty-four living room suites in either good or fair condition, seven studio couches of which four were in good condition and eighteen dining room suites with six good, eleven fair and one in poor condition.

One family did not have a dresser and the most usual numbers found were one and three. Seventeen of them were in good condition and the others needed refinishing.

The number of chairs ranged from three to fifteen. There was one family that did not have enough chairs to seat all of the family at the table at one time.

There were ninety beds in these homes. They ranged from two to five to the home. Twenty of the thirty families had three beds each. The number of beds appeared to be ample in all except three cases. In one there were two beds for six individuals, in another there were nine members of a family to occupy three beds and a divan. The third instance was in the home of a family who had the misfortune of having their home and practically all of their furnishings destroyed by fire in January, 1940. In the latter case the family was living in a temporary home and had three beds and a divan to satisfy the needs of seven individuals. The beds

were all described as good or fair. (Table No. XV).

Seventeen of the families used coal ranges, three electric ranges, six kerosene, one gasoline, and four had both a coal range and a kerosene stove for cooking purposes. Possibly more people would use electric stoves if the cost of the electric current would permit.

Twenty-three families had some form of refrigeration of which fourteen were ice boxes and nine were electric refrigerators. The percentage of electric refrigerators was low when compared to the study made by Sneed.⁶ This situation was probably due to the cheap current the Tennessee Valley Authority made possible for the Tennessee communities.

The number of vacuum cleaners found in this study was interesting when one considers the fact that 45 per cent of the families studied were on relief and 40 per cent of them were foreign families. Of the thirteen vacuum cleaners found two belonged to families having less than \$754.00 annual income, three to families with incomes less than \$1,200.00 and nine to families with incomes of more than \$1,200.00. Only one family in the upper third did not have a vacuum cleaner. (Table No. XVI).

All of the homes were very well kept except two. In one case the mother did not stay at home much of the time and in the other the family was a large one living in crowded conditions. The foreign families appeared to be very thrifty.

6. Sneed, op. cit., p. 26.

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS AND BEDS
OF THIRTY FAMILIES

Number In Family	Total Families	Number of Bedrooms				Number of Beds			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2	1	1					1		
3	6		3	2	1		1	3	1
4	10		6	4			1	8	1
5	8	1	5	2			1	7	1
6	1			1			1		
7	1			1				1	
8	2		1	1					2
9	1		1					1	

TABLE XVI

HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES ENJOYED BY
THIRTY FAMILIES

Item	Number	Per Cent
Vacuum Cleaner	13	43.3
Electric Washer	26	86.6
Electric Refrigerator	9	30.0
Electric Stove	3	10.0
Ice Box	14	46.6
Telephone	2	6.0

The fathers spent much of their leisure time working in the gardens and repairing objects around the house. The foreign mothers did not do much visiting but stayed at home almost all of the time and spent the time keeping house and cooking.

Only two families in the study had telephones which might have been accounted for by the fact that the cost of telephone service was \$2.00 a month and the families felt they needed their money for other things. The postmaster and the largest real estate owner, a farmer, were the two families that had telephone service.

Twenty-six of the families owned washing machines and one family hired the washing and ironing done. The study revealed a larger number of washing machines and fewer people hiring their laundry done than the study made in Florida by Iseley.⁷ The average cost of the laundry done away from home was \$1.50 a week for a family of three, which included washing and ironing.

There were twenty-one wells, fifteen cisterns and eight using city water. The well water in the town was very hard and that accounted for the large number of cisterns which were necessary if laundry was to be done with a minimum of cost and labor. Seventeen of the homes had running water

⁷. Iseley, op. cit., p. 17.

in the kitchens and seven had running water in bathrooms. When compared to the study made by Sneed⁸ the percentage of homes with running water in the homes appeared high.

Electric lights were enjoyed by all except one farm family which proved to be a condition similar to the study made by Sneed.⁹ Electric current was made possible for the farmers of this study by the Rural Electrification Administration. The average cost of electric current for the families was \$30.00 for the year 1939. This included the operation of lights, washing machines, electric irons, radios, three electric stoves and other electrical appliances.

Coal stoves were used by nineteen of the families for heating purposes, ten had furnaces heated by coal and one family used an oil circulating heater to heat a five room house. The oil heater proved to be more expensive than the coal heaters. It cost \$75.00 for the year 1939 while the average cost of coal heaters was \$55.33. The oil heater burned twenty-four hours per day, however, while the coal stoves were banked or allowed to go out at night. The average coal heater was \$1.67 cheaper to operate than the furnace and was not as satisfactory because fewer rooms were heated. Ninety-six per cent of the homes used coal for

8. Sneed, op. cit., p. 27.

9. Sneed, op. cit., p. 27.

heating purposes. (Table No. XVII). This situation was due to the fact that Divernon was located in the coal fields of Illinois and coal could be had for \$4.00 or less per ton and because many of the fathers had been miners and had never used anything else.

A study of the exteriors of the thirty homes revealed fourteen of them had well-kept lawns that were mowed regularly. Thirteen of the lawns had a poor stand of grass and were not mowed as carefully as was necessary to give a good appearance. Three lawns were recorded as poor because chickens were allowed to run in them and the grass was very poor.

There were not any shade trees in one case, sixteen had shrubbery, eight had flowers, twenty-five had concrete walks of which nineteen were in good condition and thirteen had fences either in the back, front or around the lawn. Of the thirteen fences six were in good condition and two were in very poor condition. To the passerby the homes gave a good impression of the mothers as housekeepers because almost all of them were neat and clean although a large proportion of the houses would have been improved by a coat of paint and minor repairs.

TABLE XVII

WATER SUPPLY, LIGHTING, HEATING AND SANITARY CONDITIONS

Item	Number	Per Cent	Average Cost Per Year
Water Supply			
City	8	26.6	\$ 14.40
Well	21	70.0	
Cistern	15	50.0	
Water in Kitchen	17	56.6	
Lighting			
Kerosene	1	3.3	5.00
Electric	29	96.7	30.00
Heating			
Warm Air	9	30.0	56.00
Hot Water	1	3.3	75.00
Coal Stoves	19	63.3	55.33
Oil Circulating Heater	1	3.3	75.00

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The usual conditions among the thirty families living in Divernon, Illinois were:

The average size of the family was 4.6.

The average father was three years older than the average mother.

The mothers were better educated than the fathers.

Over 41 per cent of those employed were working on W.P.A. and N.Y.A.

Seventy per cent of the families received less than \$1,500.00 income and 10 per cent less than \$500.00 income in 1939.

Fathers and mothers spent approximately the same amount for clothing but the children spent an average of about \$7.00 more.

Forty-one children were away from home and widely scattered.

The parents spent most of their leisure time reading and listening to the radio while the children enjoyed dancing and moving pictures most.

Only three families failed to receive a daily newspaper or magazine and the newspaper was the most commonly mentioned reading matter.

Life insurance was the major form of saving.

Seventeen automobiles and one Model T truck were owned.

Two-thirds of the homes were owned and taxes were due on nine of them.

The usual rent paid for a four to six room house was \$60.00 in 1939.

Less than a third of the houses were modern or had adequate storage space.

All of the exterior doors and windows were screened.

Coal was used for fuel in all but one of the thirty homes.

Twenty out of 34 cook stoves were coal ranges.

Over two-thirds of the families had some means of refrigeration.

Eighty per cent of the homes had separate living rooms with living room suites and fabric rugs.

Ninety per cent of the lawns were in good or fair condition.

All of the families had vegetable gardens and almost all of them had one or more kinds of fruit trees from which ninety per cent canned fruit and vegetables.

Whole grain cereals, more milk and fruit were needed in the diets.

The following list includes the greatest needs of the families:

- (1) More private employment.
- (2) More and better storage.
- (3) More fruit, milk and whole grain cereals in the diet.
- (4) The use of cheap cuts of meat and meat substitutes to take the place of expensive cuts of meat.
- (5) Running water for over 43 per cent of homes.
- (6) Refrigeration for over 23 per cent of homes.
- (7) More social activities within the family group.

The investigator feels that many of these needs can be met by educational programs. The study could be sponsored by the home economics department or done privately. If a study of living conditions of this same group of families could be made several years hence the value of effort to improve conditions could be determined.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Part A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON LIVING CONDITIONS

- I. Family. No. ____ Nationality ____ Religion ____.
Ages. Father ____ Mother ____ Daughters ____ Sons ____
- II. Education. Father ____ Mother ____ Daughters ____
Sons ____.
- III. Occupations. Father ____ Mother ____ Daughters ____
Sons ____.
- IV. Salaries received in 1939. Father ____ Mother ____
Daughters ____ Sons ____.
- V. Cost of health in 1939 ____ Reason ____.
- VI. Cost of Clothing in 1939. Father ____ Mother ____
Daughters ____ Sons ____
- VII. Leisure time activities. Father (1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____
Mother (1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ Children (1) ____ (2) ____
(3) ____.
- VIII. Radio programs enjoyed. Father (1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____
Mother (1) ____ (2) ____ (3) ____ Children (1) ____ (2) ____.
- IX. Magazines and newspapers subscribed for. (1) ____ (2) ____
(3) ____ (4) ____ . Read most by Father ____ Mother ____
Children ____.

X. Books owned by family. Fiction _____ Non-Fiction _____
 Classics _____ Religious _____. Read most by Father _____
 Mother _____ Children _____.

XI. Musical instruments owned by family. (1) _____ (2) _____
 (3) _____. Played by _____.

XII. House rented _____. Rent paid \$_____. Owned _____.
 Value \$_____. Condition of exterior of house, Good _____
 Fair _____ Poor _____. Taxes due \$_____. Rooms in home.
 Living room _____ Living-bed room _____ Bed rooms _____
 Dining room _____ Kitchen _____ Pantry _____ Clothes
 closets _____ Cleaning closet _____ Bath _____ Inclosed
 porch _____ Open porch _____. Finish of walls. Paper _____
 Paint _____ Unpainted _____ Plaster _____. Condition of
 walls. Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____. Finish of floors.
 Varnish _____ Paint _____ Unfinished _____. Condition.
 Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____. Floor covering. Living
 room _____ Condition _____ Dining room _____ Condition _____
 Kitchen _____ Condition _____.
 Basement. Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____. Screen
 doors _____ Windows _____ Condition _____. Heating
 system _____ Cost in 1939 \$_____. Artificial lights _____
 Cost in 1939 \$_____. Water system. City _____ Well _____
 Cistern _____. Running water in kitchen _____ Bath _____
 Outside toilet.

Labor saving devices. Ice box ____ Electric Refrigerator ____ Washing machine ____ Vacuum cleaner ____ Telephone ____.

XIII. Furnishings: Living room suite ____ Condition ____.
 Studio Couch ____ Condition. Dining room suite ____
 Condition ____ . Chairs ____ Rockers and easy chairs ____ .
 Type of kitchen stove ____ Condition ____ . Storage.
 Staples ____ Canned goods ____ Dairy products and meat
 ____ Clothing ____ Bedding ____ .

XIV. Exterior of House. Lawn ____ Condition ____
 No. shade trees ____ Shrubbery ____ Flowers ____
 Walks ____ Fence ____ Condition ____ .
 Vegetable garden ____ Vegetables raised (1) ____ (2) ____
 (3) ____ (4) ____ . Fruits on the premises (1) ____
 (2) ____ (3) ____ . No. of cans. Vegetables canned ____
 Fruits canned ____ . Chickens ____ Do they furnish all
 the eggs needed ____ All of chickens eaten ____ .

XV. Savings. Life insurance. Father \$ ____ Mother \$ ____
 Daughters \$ ____ Sons \$ ____ . Annuities ____ Bank
 accounts \$ ____ Postal Savings \$ ____ Loans \$ ____
 Real estate \$ ____ Automobile ____ Model ____ Value \$ ____ .

XVI. Children away from home. Girls ____ Boys ____ .
 Reason for leaving Girls ____ Boys ____ . Occupations
 Girls ____ Boys ____ . Married Girls ____ Boys ____

Age when married. Boys ____ Girls ____ . Location at
present. Girls ____ Boys ____ .

Part B

FOOD SELECTION SCORE CARD*

	Credits	Column for Daily Check
20	Milk Adults: 1/2 pint, 10; 3/4 pint, 15; 1 pint, 20 Children: 3/4 pint, 10; 1 pint, 15; 3/4-1 quart, 20	
40	Vegetables and Fruits Vegetables 1 serving, 5; 2 servings, 10; 3 servings, 15 Potatoes may be included as one of the above servings. If leafy vegetable is in- cluded, extra credit, 5 Fruits 1 serving, 10; 2 servings, 15 If raw fruit or vegetable or canned tomato is included, extra credit, 5	
15	Whole grain products 1 serving, 10; 2 servings, 15	
15	Cheese, Eggs, Meat, Dried Beans Or Peas 1 serving of any one of above, 10; 1 serving of any two of above, 15;	
90	TOTAL CREDITS	

* Adapted from Score Card of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture
Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home
Economics.