

1949

## A follow-up study of the class of 1944, Amherst High School.

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE CLASS OF 1944  
AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE CLASS OF 1944  
AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL

BY  
ELEANOR C. FILLMORE

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A problem submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree

University of Massachusetts

1949

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Modern Guidance--Guidance has come a long way since the appearance of Frank Parson's book Choosing A Vocation published in Boston in 1909. This book, now referred to as the classical "bible" for guidance, recommended a study of the individual for his vocational possibilities followed by the furnishing to him of occupational information.<sup>1</sup> This idea was sound but in the absence of scientific methods of analyzing the individual not as much progress was made as seemed likely at first.

The two decades following the appearance of the book by the father of guidance, Frank Parsons, have seen the development of many techniques for the analysis of the individual. Studies started before and continued during World War I, Army personnel work during the war, and research after the war, all produced tools destined to cause the guidance movement to make a great contribution to American education. Some of these tools, to mention only a few, are: intelligence testing, cumulative record card, rating

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(1) Paterson, Donald G. "The Genesis of Modern Guidance". Ed. Rec. XIX (Jan. 1938) pp. 36-46.



scales, achievement tests, aptitude tests and interest tests.

From this wealth of techniques plus the very recent emphasis on counselling, we see that the concept of Guidance today has become much broader than the earlier Vocational Guidance of the early 1900's.

Definition of Guidance--Because the Guidance of today is more inclusive much confusion exists over the meaning of the term. In an attempt to clarify the situation, the Occupational Information and Guidance Division of the United States Office of Education accepted a few years ago the following definition of Guidance: "Guidance is the process of acquainting the individual with various ways in which he may discover and use his natural endowments, in addition to special training available from any source, so that he may live, and make a living, to the best advantage to himself and to society".<sup>2</sup>

At a meeting of State Supervisors of Occupational Information and Guidance held in 1947 in Denver, Colorado a definition was agreed on part of which is: "The Guidance

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(2) Pattern for the Guidance Program, Being a Report of the Cooperative Committee Survey of Guidance Services for Gloucester, Massachusetts Public Schools, February, 1947, p. 5.

Program is a set of activities which provide for the counseling of pupils and the data and services necessary for the counsellor to do his work".<sup>3</sup>

Functions of Guidance--These definitions become more meaningful when translated into services or practices. Programs vary but the characteristic activities usually include the following:

1. Individual inventory to help students know more about themselves. This is usually in the form of a cumulative record.

2. Collection and dissemination of occupational and educational information to help students plan their future intelligently.

3. Counseling which in guidance programs means interviewing and advising students individually.

4. Placement service which attempts to bridge the gap between the school and the job.<sup>4</sup>

5. Follow-up which means not only a statistical report or study showing what the graduates are doing, types

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(3) Ibid

(4) State Dept. of Education, Baltimore, Maryland, A Basic Program of Guidance, XXV (Nov. 1943) pp. 11-12.



of jobs held, etc. but also it includes a follow-up service to graduates or non-graduates to render further assistance if necessary.<sup>5</sup>

This problem is a follow-up study of the graduates of the class of 1944 of Amherst High School, as already stated in the title of this paper.

Objectives of a Follow-up Study--Follow-up has been termed the "step-child of the Guidance Family".<sup>6</sup> However, the interest in curriculum revision has promoted more activity in recent years in follow-up studies. Usually one of the first steps taken to discover needed changes in the curriculum is to determine the needs of students of today. A common method of getting that information is to conduct a follow-up study. Additionally, the information secured will show how satisfactorily former students are equipped to meet occupational adjustments. The two objectives can be classified under the heading of research.

There are additional objectives which may be classed

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(5) Kitson, Harry D., "Meditations on Follow-up." Occupations, XX (Dec. 1941) pp. 203-204.

(6) Myers, George E. "Follow-up: The Stepchild of the Guidance Family." Occupations, XXVII (Nov. 1948) pp. 100.

under service. The follow-up study serves to "form closer ties between the school, the individual and the community".<sup>7</sup> It is useful also in finding those students who need help in making after school adjustments. Thirdly, the employment information obtained is helpful in indicating job possibilities to present students. Wherever a program such as this is in operation we see that the school personnel is not bidding an abrupt farewell at graduation time but rather is continuing to maintain contact, to the advantage of the graduates and the present students.

Data on Other Follow-Up Studies--Reports on follow-up studies are now found quite frequently in Guidance publications. In St. Joseph, Missouri the results of a study of the 1947 graduates of three high schools gave valuable suggestions. To make school more useful, they urged that schools offer:

- (1) more English
- (2) more vocational guidance
- (3) training in how to study

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(7) Pattern for the Guidance Program. op. cit. p. 22



- (4) instruction on sex, marriage, and family relations problems<sup>8</sup>

The Guidance Department in Arlington, Massachusetts, has carried on follow-up studies for many years. They also contact employers and from these two sources Arlington educators have learned to put more stress on penmanship and spelling and the alphabet for use in filing correctly.<sup>9</sup>

From Kalamazoo, Michigan comes an illustration of a practical application of findings in a study made there. Because they discovered that 72 per cent of graduates in the past 6 years did not go to college a steering committee was organized using community and school personnel to conduct a survey of job opportunities, set up a placement bureau and an apprenticeship training program.<sup>10</sup>

There are many other good illustrations not only of results of studies but also of the later practical application of these results, but these three will be sufficient to demonstrate what is meant. The question of procedure and of the particular problem being treated in this paper can now be considered.

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(8) Guidance Newsletter, Science Research Associates (Nov. 1948) p.4.

(9) Cook, Theodore N., Arlington Schools Carry Individual Guidance Far. Chr. Sci. Mon. (Nov. 20, 1948.)

(10) "Michigan Blue-prints a Follow-Up Study". Occupations. XXII (Feb. 1944) p. 327.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE



## CHAPTER II

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

Statement of the Problem--One of the first steps in the problem of conducting a follow-up study is to determine the limits. Should the study include graduates and non-graduates? Should one or several classes be polled? Before answering questions as to scope, we must also consider the resources available as to amount of funds needed, amount of clerical work involved and the time required. Finally we must also keep in mind the method to be used in gathering the information. Should it be a personal interview, by telephone or by questionnaire?

Limits of this Study--After due reflection on these points and after some deliberation in regard to the local situation, the author concluded that a study of the graduates of the class that has been out five years would be most profitable. This meant a group of 88 students which from point of view of time, clerical help and expense would not be too great. Selecting the 5 year class would include some from the college group who would be on their first jobs and that might make their suggestions more useful. The 1 year class was quickly rejected because Amherst is a fairly small high school and many of the college group go to nearby colleges. We are able to maintain during the first year informal but fairly close contact with them and with the



many who find employment in this vicinity.

Subjects--The class of 1944 which graduated from Amherst High School five years ago was composed of 90 members. Accurate addresses were obtained for all but two. One of these two, a boy, was a member of the class for only 4 months. The other, a girl, moved with her family from Amherst soon after her graduation. None of the class seemed to know anything of her whereabouts today.

The remaining 88 of the class for whom accurate addresses were obtained was made up of 38 boys and 50 girls. Of the boys 36 replied and of the girls 45, or a total of 81 students returned their questionnaires. This constitutes a 90% return of the whole class and 92% of those who were reached. (See Table I).

Materials Required--The method chosen was the circulation of a simple questionnaire by mail. An explanatory letter accompanied the questionnaire. When the returns lagged, a reminder post card was sent and later, in some cases, a contact by telephone was made. Exhibits of the forms used are in Appendices I, II and III.

In addition to these forms a list of the class of 1944 was obtained from the school records. Numerous changes had to be made in addresses and married names. Students and parents were the most helpful sources for

TABLE I

Number and Percentage of Graduates  
Returning the Questionnaire

	Total	Per cent	Boys	Per cent	Girls	Per cent
Number of graduates	90	100	39	43.3	51	56.7
Number of questionnaires returned	81	90.0	36		45	
Number unable to locate	2	2.2	1	1.1	1	1.1
Number not returned	7		2		5	

this. All but two members of the class were located.

Organization of the Data--As soon as each questionnaire was returned, the information it contained was tabulated, and the name of the student was checked on the list. In this way, it was easy to see what students still had not returned their questionnaire. Tabulating the results as they came in was helpful because it was easy to see the trends or themes in the responses build up over a period of weeks. The results of the study are found in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

VITAL STATISTICS



## CHAPTER III

### VITAL STATISTICS

Analysis and use of the data collected in the questionnaires used in this follow-up study will enable us to answer several questions such as: What are the present activities of the class? Where are most of them living? How many are married? How many were in service?

Present Activities in General--An examination of Table II shows that over half the group is employed. Another quarter of the class is in school and a group which includes a little less than a fifth is listed at home. In these three classifications we have included all of the class but two members. Both are boys one of whom is still in service and the other is combining work and education in an 'on the job training' assignment. We can make further interpretations by studying the figures in the columns for boys and for girls.

Present Activities for Boys--Five years after graduation from high school we find exactly half the boys are still in the process of obtaining their education. This would seem to be a clear reflection of the war and its interruption of the educational plans of many, unless most of them are in graduate school. A later table will give us exact information relative to this point. In addition

TABLE II

Activities of the Class at Time Questionnaire Returned

	Total	Per cent	Boys	Per cent of boys	Girls	Per cent of girls
Employed	44	54.3	15	41.6	29	64.4
Further education	20	24.7	18	50.0	2	4.4
Armed service	1	1.2	1	2.8		
At home	15	18.5	1	2.8	14*	31.1
Miscellaneous	1	1.2	1	2.3		

\*All are housewives.

to the large number in education we note that 41% are employed. The one boy listed 'at home' is unemployed at the moment but is a recent graduate of a teachers' college and is expecting an opening momentarily.

Present Activities of the Girls--As might be expected the figures for the girls are quite different from the boys. Almost two-thirds of them are employed and only two girls are still in school. Either fewer girls continued their education as long as the boys, or many of the boys were de-



layed in completing theirs as suggested above. It is of interest that there is no unemployment in this group which includes 14 at home but all are housewives, many with children.

Residence--Turning now to a consideration of residence, Table III, we find that although the members of the class are scattered through many states east of the Rocky Mountains, and although one boy is even abroad studying in Sweden, nevertheless almost two-thirds have remained in or recently returned to Amherst and its immediate vicinity. (Because students from outlying small towns with no high school come into Amherst for the high school years, for use in this paper, we have defined Amherst and vicinity as including these places: Pelham, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Leverett. All other towns and cities in this state are included in the category headed 'Massachusetts'.) With 63% residing in or near town we have a factor of real usefulness and significance to a school interested in aiding in the placement of its graduates. Help and interest of this kind goes beyond the scope of a follow-up study and comes under the classification of follow-up service as was explained in Chapter I, page 3.

The only other figure of consequence in Table III is that for residence in Massachusetts. Adding the 12%

TABLE III

Residence of the Class by States at the Time  
of the Questionnaire

	Total	Per cent	Boys	Per cent of boys	Girls	Per cent of girls
Amherst and vicinity	51	63.0	25	69.4	26	57.8
Connecticut	1	1.2			1	2.2
Florida	1	1.2			1	2.2
Maine	1	1.2	1	2.8		
Massachusetts (other than Amherst etc.)	10	12.3	5	13.9	5	11.1
Michigan	2	2.5			2	4.4
Minnesota	1	1.2	1	2.8		
New Hampshire	1	1.2	1	2.8		
New Jersey	2	2.5	1	2.8	1	2.2
New York	4	4.9			4	9.1
Ohio	1	1.2			1	2.2
Pennsylvania	1	1.2			1	2.2
Rhode Island	2	2.5	1	2.8	1	2.2
Tennessee	1	1.2			1	2.2
Texas	1	1.2			1	2.2
Sweden	1	1.2	1	2.8		



for this group to the 63% of the group above (Amherst and vicinity) we get 75% living within the borders of the Bay State. That this is also a figure of significance is true but we must bear in mind that it includes a few still in colleges in this state, some of whom very likely may find employment elsewhere. If this class is typical of others from Amherst High School in respect to residence, it would seem that a study of local employment and educational opportunities would be of value to students now in school.

Marital Status--Table IV shows the number that were married at the time of the questionnaire. From this evidence it is quickly seen that approximately 1/3 is married. One would perhaps expect this figure to be larger but the delayed education of many of the boys may be one factor. Also three of the girls have announced their engagements very recently. A questionnaire a year from now would probably show quite an increase in this figure. As might be expected more of the girls are married and they account for more children.

The reader may remember that Table II listed 14 girls as 'at home'. We note from Table IV that 19 girls are married so we can conclude that 5 of the wives are working. The number of married women who work today is much higher than it was a few years ago. Those who think

TABLE IV

Marital Status of the Class at the Time of the Questionnaire

	Total	Per cent	Boys	Per cent of boys	Girls	Per cent of girls
Number unmarried	53	65.4	27	66.6	26	57.7
Number married	28	34.6	9	33.3	19	42.2
Number of children						
None	10		4		6	
One	11		5		6	
Two	7				7	

that woman's place is in the home cannot find much to criticize here, where 74% of the married girls devote full time to home-making.

Military Service--It would be expected that a sizeable number of the boys who graduated from any high school in the United States in 1944 would go into military service. The figures in Table V indicate that 75% were in service or in the Merchant Marine. This group seemed more partial to the Navy than any other branch. The table is devoted entirely to boys because no girls joined the WACS, WAVES or any other organization of this kind.



TABLE V

Number and Percentage of Those in Military Service

Branch	Boys	Per cent
Total number of boys reporting	36	100%
No military service	9	25%
Military Service and Merchant Marine	27	75%
Army	7	
Air Force	3	
Navy	14	
Marines	1	
Merchant Marine	2	

Summary--Eighty-one questionnaires in a class of ninety were analyzed from the class of 1944 from Amherst High School. These reveal that 54% are employed, 24% in further education and 18% at home. Most of those still in school are boys, many of whom were perhaps delayed in starting because 75% of them were in military service. All but one of those listed "at home" were housewives. The class, in regard to residence, is confined mostly to



the eastern half of the United States but this includes only a small proportion because 63% are still in Amherst. Finally, 34% are married. This is the picture of the present activities of the five year class. It would be of interest to examine in greater detail the type of education the group obtained beyond the high school level. In the next chapter we will investigate this point.

CHAPTER IV

FORMAL EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

## CHAPTER IV

### FORMAL EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Size of This Group--That these boys and girls appreciated the value of further training seems evidenced by the fact that 68% took some kind of formal education after graduating from high school. This was done during the war and post-war period when jobs were easily obtained and it is therefore of even more significance that 55 out of 81 did go on with their schooling. Table VI gives the complete picture.

College Education--Turning to the section of Table VI pertaining to those having college and graduate work we see that 23 are in college or have already completed their work and an additional 3 are at present doing graduate work. This is 32% of the class, almost a third. It is noticeable that more boys are in this college group than girls. This relationship holds true in graduate work also because, although the information was not requested, three of the boys still in college indicated that they intended to do graduate work upon completion of their four year course. (The reader may recall that more girls in the class are married and this may be one factor.)

Vocational Education--From Table VII we can see the kinds of training obtained in the non-college category. By the very nature of the kind of training offered at all but



TABLE VI

Number and Percentage of Graduates who Continued Their Education

	Total	81	55	67.9	17	9	3	R.N.	Degrees			Total	No further education	
									Completed	Incomplete	No.			
			Further education	%	Only one year	More than year		B.A.	M.A.	B.A.	M.A.		%	
TOTAL	81	55	67.9	17	9	3	3	9	0	14	3	26	26	32.1
BOYS	36	25	69.4	3	4	0	0	3	0	13	2	18	11	30.5
GIRLS	45	30	66.6	14	5	3	3	6	0	1	1	8	15	33.3

TABLE VII

Type of Training Taken by Those who Continued  
Their Education After High School

	Training completed	Training dropped	Now in training
<b>College and University:</b>			
Graduate School			3
College of liberal arts or science	9	5	14
Teachers' College	1		
Jr. College and Prep School	3	1	1
<b>Vocational:</b>			
Nursing Training (RN)	3		
Secretarial School	9		
Hairdressing School	4		
Agricultural School	3	1	1
Radio School	1		

the agricultural and radio schools, we can infer that girls accounted for most of this group. By actual count they numbered 17 out of the total of 22 and this includes one girl at the Agricultural School. Thus we see that, al-



though the per cent of girls continuing their education is close to that of the boys, (see Table VI) the majority of the boys did college work but in the case of the girls, their majority is found in the vocational group.

Suggestions Relative to Further Schooling--A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is found in Appendix II and it shows that the members of the class were asked to indicate any suggestions they might have. These suggestions are analyzed in Chapter VI with the exception of a small group of eight that concern further schooling. These will be discussed briefly here.

A number of answers were received to question VII, page 2 of the questionnaire: "If you could have a chance to go through high school again, what, if anything, would you do differently?". Those answers having to do with further education were five in number. Three stated definitely that they wished they had taken the college course. One wished she had taken subjects required for entrance into nursing training. The fifth wished he had "mapped out a more definite plan for preparation for further schooling". Perhaps the significant point here is that there are only five expressing regret over their choice of course in high school, leaving us to assume that the remaining 76 members are at least moderately satisfied



with their choice. Yet these five should not be dismissed too lightly because, although it is too late to help these individuals, nevertheless what is true of them is quite possibly true of some students now in school. The author recognizes that it is not within the powers of educators, even with the modern testing instruments available, to accurately measure every student and then fit him into an educational plan exactly tailored to him. There are economic, health, social and other factors that effect a decision on further schooling. In spite of all these difficulties, it should be the constant aim of those advising students to reduce the number of cases of those with educational plans either above or below their abilities.

Summary--In this chapter on formal education after high school we have noticed first that 68% of the class continued on in some kind of education. This seemed especially significant in view of the fact that in the war and post-war years jobs were easily obtainable with a high school education. Statistics in the tables clearly showed that boys formed the larger group in the college training section and girls had the lead in vocational education. Of the numerous suggestions made only five fit into this discussion on plans of further education. This group of five evinced some regret that they had not made and carried out more

substantial plans.

Many of the people reported as still in school at the time of the questionnaire will join the hunt for a job in June. While we cannot report on their activities, we can inspect in the next chapter the reports of those now employed.

CHAPTER V  
OCCUPATIONS



CHAPTER V

OCCUPATIONS

Classification of full time jobs held at the time of reply to the questionnaire is given in Table VIII. The classifications used are those of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

TABLE VIII

Occupations Represented by the 44 Members  
of the Class Now Working

Types of work	Total	Boys	Girls
A. Professional & Managerial	13	5	8
B. Clerical & Sales	19	3	16
C. Service Occupations	3	1	2
D. Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry	3	3	0
E. Skilled Occupations	1	1	0
F. Semi-Skilled Occupations	4	1	3
Working-no information given	1	1	
Total	44	15	29

Types of Jobs Held--Unusual occupations range from the girl on the road in show business to the professional baseball player who is employed in the farm system of the Brooklyn Dodgers. The largest single group is found in Clerical and Sales, with Professional and Managerial next. The former includes among others a telephone operator, secretaries, a salesman, both a boy and a girl as post office clerk, and a grocery clerk. The Professional and Managerial group includes three girls as teachers, a nurse, laboratory technicians, two store managers and a time study engineer. The remaining classifications include the following: waitress, beautician, bus boy for Service Occupations; shade tree, tobacco workers, and farmers for Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry; a diemaker for Skilled Occupations; three factory workers for the last group, Semi-Skilled Occupations. All are girls. One is a coil winder and the other two work as assemblers. Table IX lists the individual occupations using the same classification headings as in Table VIII.

Salaries Reported--The amount of one's salary is usually considered a private matter, not something to be reported to a stranger. Since the practice of a follow-up study is new to this group, it is not surprising that many do not realize the objective use made of the salary figures.



TABLE IX

Occupational Distribution of the 44 Members of the Class  
Working at the Time the Questionnaire was Returned

Occupation	Boys	Girls	Total
A. Actress		1	1
Auto Parts Manager	1		1
Baseball Player	1		1
Hardware Store Manager	1		1
Laboratory Technician	1	2	3
Nurse		2	2
Teacher		3	3
Time Study Engineer	1		1
B. Grocery Clerk	1		1
Office Clerk		5	5
Post Office Clerk	1	1	2
Sales Clerk	1	1	2
Secretary		8	8
Telephone Operator		1	1
C. Beautician		1	1
Waiter, Waitress	1	1	2
D. Farmer	2		2
Shade Tree Worker	1		1
Tobacco Worker	1		1
E. Diemaker	1		1
F. Assembler		2	2
Coil Winder		1	1
Lumberman	1		1



If follow-up studies become a regular feature of the Guidance Department at Amherst High School, most of the reluctance to report this will probably be overcome. All answers on the questionnaires are confidential and this is promised in the covering letter. In this present study, out of 44 working, only 25 reported their earning. This is shown in Table X. The range of those reporting is from \$1200 to \$3000 but because so many failed to report their earnings, any comparisons, averages or a median are of little value. There is room for some kind of inference in that of the 19 not reporting a salary figure, 15 are girls!

Aid In Securing Jobs--The last question on the first page of the questionnaire was: "How was your present job obtained?" The response to this was so small that the results have not enough significance to be included in this report. The one idea the author had in mind in seeking this information was that it might yield something useful to present students. Too often students, especially the present group which has only seen the abundance of employment opportunities during and immediately following a war, think that a job seeks them while they wait around. Successful studies of this question have shown that more jobs are obtained through friends, through one's own efforts, through relatives, than through placement agencies. Again,

TABLE X

Annual Wages of Those Employed at the Time the  
Questionnaire was Returned

Wage	Number	Boys	Girls
\$1200-\$1399	1		1
\$1400-\$1599	2		2
\$1600-\$1799	4	1	3
\$1800-\$1999	6	2	4
\$2000-\$2199	2	2	
\$2200-\$2399	2	1	1
\$2400-\$2599	1		1
\$2600-\$2799	3	3	
\$2800-\$2999	4	2	2
Did not report earnings	19	4	15
<b>Total full time jobs</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>

as in the case of the last question, more complete information will be forthcoming in future studies of this sort when there has been an opportunity to see the use to which the information is put.



Summary--As has already been stated earlier, questionnaires were received from 81 members of this class. Forty-four of them, 29 girls and 15 boys, reported that they were employed. Classification of the occupations represented in this group showed that most of them are in Clerical and Sales Occupations and Professional and Managerial. Replies to the salary question and the question on how their jobs were obtained were too few to have very much significance.



CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTIONS OFFERED BY THE GRADUATES

## CHAPTER VI

### SUGGESTIONS OFFERED BY THE GRADUATES

Because five years after high school graduation seems ample time in which to test that education against the needs of the world outside, the second page of the questionnaire asked for suggestions from these boys and girls. Many of the group took advantage of this request and offered advice and also expressed appreciation of what the school had done for them. Any criticism set forth was usually self-criticism for not having studied enough or taken advantage of the opportunities when they were available. The suggestions were spontaneous and unprompted because no check list of possible answers was included. It was felt that any general agreement among the graduates would be of greater significance under this arrangement than in a plan which offers suggested answers. The following paragraphs contain an analysis of the suggestions included in the returns.

Suggested Additions to Regular Courses--More suggestions were made concerning additions to the subject of English than were made for any other one topic. In all, 28 suggestions were offered with some papers supplying two and even three of them. By English, the students had in mind not the narrow departmentalized point of view which considers that good writing, good spelling, and correct

grammatical construction belong only in this class. Rather they were thinking of the enrichment of the curriculum as a whole when teachers of all subjects recognize that they are also teachers of English. Table XI contains a list of the points mentioned. As is indicated there, vocabulary and grammar were mentioned most frequently with more emphasis suggested also on composition and public speaking. In

TABLE XI

Suggestions Received Regarding Changes and  
Additions in the English Course

Suggestion	Number
More Emphasis on Grammar	6
More Emphasis on Vocabulary	6
More Composition Stressing Clarity and Organization of Thought	5
Public Speaking	4
Increase Reading Rate: Learn to Scan	3
Have More Outside Reading	2
More Practice in Answering Essay Questions	2
Total	28



connection with the last subject mentioned, one student wrote, "Speech courses are needed at Amherst High School to keep up with the other schools". It is of special interest to mention here that a public speaking teacher was hired recently to begin work in the fall.

The next group of suggestions mentioned most frequently is that related to Modern Problems. Appreciation of this course was indicated frequently with one non-college student remarking, "Modern Problems was to me the most valuable subject taught in high school". Fifteen students in all suggested that more time be spent on the study of government, politics, current events, and modern world history.

In the subject of Biology five graduates suggested that the human being be studied. One response was, "more study of humans, less of flies and their habits". Others wanted sex education and family living taught some place in the high school. Four more offered suggestions somewhat related, in that they suggested a course of an introductory nature that would include some philosophy, human relations, psychology, and history of religion. This group of suggestions shows some activity in reflective thinking by some of the graduates at least.

Other miscellaneous suggestions recommended more

practice with carbons in typing, the use of Gregg instead of Script Shorthand, and, by three graduates, more time spent on conversation in French.

All these suggestions discussed so far are the kind that were not made lightly but show serious thinking. Whether these people, when in school, would have seen the value is impossible to prove. Nevertheless, they provide some helpful hints for those planning the curriculum and courses of study.

New Subjects Suggested--Most often mentioned new subjects were Spanish and German, with each receiving ten votes. The remaining suggestions in this category were more in the nature of special short courses. Seven students felt the need of a course in "How to Study" and one wanted some work in Remedial Reading added. Since this group has graduated from high school a short unit has been added in the freshman year dealing with study habits. Five people would include more guidance, particularly career planning and aptitude testing. Finally, two graduates suggested the teaching of good note taking and the occasional use of the lecture method of instruction.

"If I Could Go Through High School Again"--There was the least variety in response to the question, "If You Could Have a Chance to Go Through High School Again, What



Would You do Differently?" Twenty people replied, "Study more". Some of these were among those suggesting the teaching of "How to Study" as discussed above. The number of replies on this topic of studying seems impressive and holds some significance for the teaching staff.

All the suggestions so far have come about equally from boys and girls. This next one was made by five boys. They wished they had participated more in school and social activities. Whether this proves anything about the participation in social activities of boys and girls would have to wait further study but it is the only group of suggestions made only by boys.

One other group of suggestions was made in response to this question, but since they dealt with changes in educational plans, they were discussed in Chapter Four.

Subjects Thought Valuable--Since a direct question on relative value of subjects was not asked in the questionnaire, the answers that were given cannot be considered as forming a complete picture by any means. However, some significance can be attached to the responses of graduates out five years who voluntarily indicated the value of some subjects. In the absence of any criticism of English and Modern Problems, it is implied by the many suggestions of additional emphasis for these two subjects that they are



of great value to graduates. The suggestions did not stop here. Fifteen boys and girls felt so strongly concerning the importance of typing that they suggested that it be required. One student reported, "I took the typing course, but not too seriously. I wish I had now for it would be a great asset in college". Three girls felt that the Home Economics work should be increased and should include more child care. Mathematics, Senior Arithmetic and Bookkeeping came in for their share of attention in this list of valuable subjects. The Chemistry course was singled out for special praise by three graduates, one of whom said, "Chemistry was an excellent course at Amherst High School. I passed one year of College Chemistry with no study!" Before we jump to any conclusions regarding subjects omitted from this list, let us remember that the question was never put directly to the graduates. If it had been, it is quite likely that practically every subject would be listed as being useful by someone, although some subjects would be mentioned more frequently than others.

Advice to Present Students--Suggestions in answer to this question were not quite so numerous as in the previous two. Usually the responses reflected a regret on the part of the person giving the advice. Therefore, in many cases it duplicated the idea expressed in answer to

the previous question, which asked what the person would do differently if he had a chance to go through school again. The advice in general implored the students to recognize the value of the education and to take full advantage of it. The other point stressed was to urge the students to make long range educational plans. Some of the suggestions are as follows:

"Stress the point that education will help one get along in life."

"It's best to get the most out of your school studies. While in high school you don't realize this, but you do after you are out in the business world."

"Take school to heart. Realize the importance of a high school education."

"Use some of these nameless statistics to stress the importance of high school."

"Show students our answers to these questions. It might help to wake up students and make them pay attention."

"Get students to think of their future plans after high school and set a goal and thus look at school work more objectively."

"Have students try out on a part-time basis the occupation they think they want. Then they might discover they would rather get more schooling and a better job."



Summary--The many suggestions spontaneously made were classified under suitable headings. Analysis showed that more interest and value were placed on many subjects after a few years out of high school, than was felt at the time the subject was studied. English, Modern Problems, and Typing came in for special emphasis. It was recommended by several that courses in Spanish, German, Human Relations, Family Living, and How to Study be added to the curriculum. If graduates were to go through school again the majority of them claim they would study harder and a few boys would take part in more social activities. Advice to today's students is to pay attention in class and make careful plans for further education. These numerous suggestions, seriously and earnestly made, are certainly very human and in a general way repeated the country over. How to implement them, how to make them meaningful to the students now in school, is the real problem. Some things we learn from personal experience only as did many of these graduates. Nevertheless, there is a definite challenge contained in these suggestions.



CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

A total of 81 questionnaires constituting 90% of the total class and 92% of those reached have been analyzed from the Amherst High School class of 1944. The results have been tabulated and reported in the preceding chapters. As was stated in Chapter I, the purposes briefly of a study of this sort are twofold. In the first place, there is the objective of research wherein the study may reveal the need of changes in the curriculum. Secondly is the objective of service wherein the school continues to show its interest and offer any possible help to its graduates. Now let us consider what conclusions can be formed from this particular follow-up study.

Importance of Local Orientation--The statistics in Table III showed that 63% of the graduates were now living in Amherst and vicinity and another 12% were within Massachusetts. These figures include graduates who are working and those still in school. Because three fourths of the class is represented, it therefore follows that the orientation of high school education should emphasize educational and employment conditions in Massachusetts.

Educational and Occupational Information--Table V presented the information on the education beyond high



school of this class. Over two-thirds of the class had further training of at least one year in length. The group was quite evenly divided with 36% in vocational training and 32% in college work. Therefore, in view of the experience of this class and in spite of the fact that there are two colleges in Amherst, it would seem advisable to spend as much time on investigating, visiting and advising concerning vocational school opportunities as on ones at colleges.

Conclusions Formed From Suggestions--Chapter VI contained an analysis of the many suggestions submitted on the questionnaires. As was indicated, there was general agreement on many points. Some of the points mentioned most often were briefly: stress the importance of English and strengthen the course; stress the importance of Modern Problems and perhaps lengthen it; add to the courses now taught another foreign language, either Spanish or German; add also a course which would include some elementary psychology, simple philosophy, and a short study of human relations; urge or require everyone to take typewriting; spend some time teaching students how to study and give them more educational and career planning. It would not be wise to make all these changes and additions without more study, nor would all of them be possible. Nevertheless, unless further investigation revealed otherwise, it

is very likely that many of these suggestions if incorporated into the curriculum would enhance the value of the high school course to those students now entering.

Appreciation of High School--Beneath the facts and figures that have been compiled and analyzed here there is revealed a real appreciation of the value of a high school education. This conclusion is supported by the suggestions grouped under advice to students where the importance of education and the value of real studying is stressed. More support is found in the answers to the question asking what the graduates would do differently were they to repeat their high school days. The responses here were again to study harder and to make long range career plans. The conclusion is upheld further in the discussion of additions to the courses. Many suggestions reflected appreciation of the material by asking for more grammar, more composition, more vocabulary, more civics and current events. The graduates seemed to still have a personal interest in the school, some added long notes on the back of their questionnaire, some hoped to see the results of the study, and some added a definite word of appreciation of what the school had tried to do.

Reactions Of This Class Seem Typical--Is it unusual for a group of graduates to produce the suggestions that



they did? One would not expect to find another study which closely paralleled this one. However, let us review an example used in Chapter I. As was reported there, a study was conducted in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1947. The results show that to make the school more useful the graduates of three high schools urged that schools offer:

- (1) more English
- (2) more vocational guidance
- (3) training in how to study
- (4) instruction on sex, marriage and family relations problems.<sup>1</sup>

Dan Stiles, formerly a teacher and now a lecturer to school assemblies, has had unusual opportunity to make comparisons, ask questions of many students and educators in many states. In his recent book High Schools For Tomorrow<sup>2</sup> he discusses the emphasis for the schools of the future. He says that, "The object of such a school will be to train a young person to be a competent citizen; to train him to

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(1) Guidance Newsletter, Science Research Associates (Nov. 1948) p. 4.

(2) Stiles, High Schools for Tomorrow, p. 3.



make the best possible career in the adult world in every respect; to fit him to become a satisfactory family member; to provide him with some foundation for enjoying life; to teach him what his elders mean by the American way and how to preserve it; to give him a philosophy; and finally to foster in whatever ways are feasible the development of character and personality and idealism." The evidence contained in these two examples cited is not offered as conclusive proof that the reactions of this group seem typical. Nevertheless, it closely parallels what the results of this study revealed.

Limitations of This Study--The full values of follow-up can never be achieved by one study. A more inclusive and continuing picture is obtained when graduates are contacted for a period of a few years. It is then possible to make comparisons and to watch for trends. Furthermore, if additional studies are conducted, graduates and undergraduates will become better acquainted with the purposes and will be more likely to supply complete information. For example, many were reluctant to report their earnings. When they learn that the figures are used impersonally in the form of a table, many more will be willing to include this information another time. In spite of these limitations, which could be overcome in

time, this first follow-up study of one class that graduated five years ago from Amherst High School would seem a worthwhile step in the right direction.



APPENDICES

LETTER ASKING COOPERATION IN THE STUDY

COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

REMINDER POSTCARD FORM

APPENDIX I

LETTER ASKING COOPERATION IN THE STUDY

OFFICE OF GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT

Amherst High School

Amherst, Massachusetts

March 4, 1949

Dear Class Member:

We are making a follow-up study of some of the recent classes from our high school in an attempt to improve what we are doing here in school. As you probably know, it has long been a practice of businesses to test their products after they leave the factory. Education has been slower to do this but in recent years it has become more common. One large high school near Boston boasts of 100% return from students in these follow-up studies.

We would like to point out that all replies are confidential and will be used only to compile a statistical report. Also if there are any questions anyone does not wish to answer, they may be omitted. We have tried to use questions which will provide information from former students that will help the school to do a better job with the young people here now.

The enclosed questionnaire will take you only a short time to complete. We hope everyone will cooperate. And we urge you to drop into school to visit us whenever you can.

Sincerely yours,

Eleanor C. Fillmore  
Director of Guidance  
and Placement

Enclosure



APPENDIX II

COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

OFFICE OF GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT  
Amherst High School  
Amherst, Massachusetts

March 1949

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE \_\_\_\_\_

I. SCHOOLING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: Day? \_\_\_\_\_ Night? \_\_\_\_\_

	<u>School</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Date Entered</u>	<u>Length of Course</u>	<u>Date Left</u>	<u>Reason for Leaving</u>	<u>Diploma or Degree</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

II. EMPLOYMENT RECORD SINCE GRADUATION:

	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date Entered</u>	<u>Date Left</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Type of Work</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

III. SERVICE RECORD:

Date entered \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Courses or training \_\_\_\_\_

Record \_\_\_\_\_

IV. HOW WAS YOUR PRESENT POSITION OBTAINED? \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up Questionnaire  
(continued)

V. ARE THERE ANY SUBJECTS NOT OFFERED IN HIGH SCHOOL THAT YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE HAD? \_\_\_\_\_

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VI. IN THE SUBJECTS LISTED BELOW CAN YOU MENTION ANYTHING THAT YOU WISH HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE COURSE? \_\_\_\_\_

English

Latin

U.S. History

French

History of Civilization

Bookkeeping

Mathematics

Office Practice

Physics

Typing

Biology

Shorthand

Chemistry

VII. IF YOU COULD HAVE A CHANCE TO GO THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AGAIN, WHAT IF ANYTHING WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY? \_\_\_\_\_

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VIII. CAN YOU ADD ANY SUGGESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP US IN TEACHING THE YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY? \_\_\_\_\_

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IX. MARRIED? \_\_\_\_\_

X. NUMBER OF CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX III

REMINDER POSTCARD FORM

AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL  
March 17, 1949

To date we have not received the questionnaire which was sent you early this month. In order to make our follow-up study meaningful, we should have 100% return from your class. Won't you please try to get yours in as soon as possible.

If you have mislaid the questionnaire, please let me know at once so I may send you another.

At present more than half of your class has responded and we hope the other half will do so this week. We want to feel justified in spending the time and money on another follow-up study of a different class next year.

Eleanor C. Fillmore  
Director of Guidance

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Date May, 1949





