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Orientations Toward Occupation and Residence A Study of High School Seniors in Four Rural Counties of Michigan

Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station

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*Orientations*  
Toward  
Occupation and Residence

A Study of High School Seniors in Four  
Rural Counties of Michigan

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## HIGHLIGHTS

**T**O OBTAIN INFORMATION on the occupational, educational, and residential plans of rural youth and the influence of professional persons in the rural community on these plans, a cooperative study was conducted by the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and the Farm Population and Rural Life Branch of the Agricultural Marketing Service in the spring of 1958. Questionnaires were administered to seniors at all but one of the 15 high schools located in Clare, Gladwin, Missaukee, and Osceola Counties of Michigan. Personal interviews were also conducted with a sample of professional persons in the communities.

This report deals with that part of the study relating to the plans and aspirations of the high school students. Information on the high school age youth not in school was obtained from other sources. Highlights of the study are:

1. About one-fifth of the high school age youth in the area had terminated their education prior to high school graduation.

2. About 70 percent of all seniors said that they planned to leave the community after the summer following their graduation. Most male students living on farms said they planned to remain in their home community and most female students living in towns or villages reported they planned to leave their home community.

3. Despite plans to leave the community, about six of 10 students said they would like the community as a place to live after graduating and getting married. Farm males had the most favorable attitudes toward their home community and village females the least favorable attitudes.

4. Well over half of all students said they would remain in their home community, if jobs were available.

5. "White-collar" jobs were the preferred occupational choices of both males and females.

6. Occupations considered seriously by the students were either in the white-collar or skilled category. Farm operator was considered by about 10 percent of the students, all but four of whom were farm residents.



7. About one of three males and one of five females planned to go to college. Of the 33 students who named farming as the occupation they are considering, only one planned to attend college.

8. No association was found between annual family income as reported by the student and plans for college attendance.

9. The education of the father was directly related to the student's plans to attend college.

# Orientations Toward Occupation and Residence

## A Study of High School Seniors in Four Rural Counties of Michigan<sup>1</sup>

By JAMES COWHIG, JAY ARTIS, J. ALLAN BEEGLE,  
and HAROLD GOLDSMITH<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

TO ANYONE CONCERNED with the far-reaching changes in U. S. agriculture and with the effects of these changes on rural people, perhaps no questions are more important than those dealing with rural youth. There is abundant evidence that the rural-farm community cannot supply places for all young people reared there.<sup>3</sup>

Rural-farm population has been decreasing steadily, while the urban and rural-nonfarm segments of the population have been increasing. The decrease in farm population has been largely a result of net outmigration and changes in the classification of residence rather than changes in birth and death rates. High levels of economic opportunity in nonfarm areas and increased participation of farm youth in advanced education, coupled with changes taking place in agriculture, have meant that outmigration is an expected and appropriate pattern in most rural areas of the United States. More mechanization, corporate farming, vertical integration and other factors leading to fewer farms of larger size will probably continue to be the trend. Under these conditions, net outmigration, particularly of young people, is "normal" and is—outside of sharp and very unlikely reversals

<sup>1</sup>The research on which this bulletin is based was a cooperative project between the Mich. Agr. Expt. Sta. and the Farm Population and Rural Life Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S.D.A. The project was under the general direction of J. Allan Beegle and Jay W. Artis of the Mich. Agr. Expt. Sta. and the department of sociology and anthropology, respectively, Mich. State Univ., and Margaret Jarman Hagood, Chief, Farm Population and Rural Life Branch.

<sup>2</sup>James Cowhig, member of the Farm Population and Rural Life Branch, agricultural economics division of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington, D.C.; Jay Artis, J. Allan Beegle, and Harold Goldsmith are associate professor, professor, and instructor, respectively, department of sociology and anthropology, Mich. State Univ. In addition, valuable assistance was given by Gladys K. Bowles, Farm Population and Rural Life branch of the Agricultural Marketing Service and Rolf Schulze, graduate assistant in the department of sociology and anthropology.

<sup>3</sup>Bowles, Gladys K. and Conrad Taeuber, August, 1956. "Rural farm males entering and leaving working ages, 1940-50 and 1950-60," *Farm Population*. Series Census-AMS, (P-27), No. 22.

in vital rates—a way in which some balance between population and agricultural resources is achieved.<sup>4</sup>

The farm youth about to graduate from high school today is confronted with alternatives which graduates of a generation ago did not face. He may find that agriculture—or at least agriculture in his home community—is an occupation that is increasingly difficult to enter. To take advantage of alternative opportunities, he may have to select another type of occupation within the community, or he may have to leave the community and seek work elsewhere.

This bulletin presents some results of research conducted to: (1) provide information on occupational and educational plans and aspirations of rural high school graduates; (2) discover reasons these young people give regarding their intentions to leave or stay in the community; and (3) determine the influence of professional people in the rural community on these decisions. This report deals only with the first two objectives and is limited to a brief description of the plan and conduct of the study; a discussion of the plans and expectations of rural high school graduates; and an analysis of the factors which are associated with these plans and expectations. Particular attention is paid to those factors which distinguish farm from nonfarm youth. Forthcoming reports will present in detail the findings of the research and will deal with the influence of professional people in the rural community on high school students' decisions.

### Plan of the Study

Since World War II Michigan has been characterized by rapid population growth and increasing urbanization and industrialization.<sup>5</sup> The effect of these changes on the rural segment of the population has been marked.

The purpose of the research reported here was to determine which high school seniors in rural communities intended to migrate after graduation and why. Decisions made at the time of graduation influence the future both of the graduates and the communities in which they live. Upon graduation, decisions to enter college, or to become a full-time member of the labor force, as well as many others, must be

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<sup>4</sup>Migration is an important process in U.S. society. For example, between March, 1957 and March, 1958, about one of every five persons in the U.S. changed residence. Among rural-nonfarm residents, 9.1 percent moved to a different county during the same period, and 5.8 percent of rural-farm residents moved to a different county. See: *Current Population Reports*. "Mobility of the population of the United States, March 1957 to 1958." Series P-20, No. 85, October 13, 1958.

<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of these changes, see: Beegle, Allan J. and Donald Halsted. (1957) "Michigan's changing population." Mich. Agr. Expt. Sta. Spec. Bul. 415. 47 pp.

made. If these decisions also involve leaving the community, the community itself is directly affected, particularly if a large proportion of the young people leave.

### The Study Area

The group studied consisted of high school seniors in four contiguous counties selected for the following reasons:

- (1) They were completely rural and had no urban population in 1950.
- (2) All the counties had had sharp declines in rural-farm population between 1940 and 1950.
- (3) Between 1950 and 1957, there was net outmigration from the four-county area and from three of the four counties within the area.
- (4) They were sufficiently distant from any metropolitan area so that urban influence would be only indirect. Not only was the metropolitan influence minimal, but there are only six urban places in the adjacent counties; the largest had a population of 14,300 in 1950.
- (5) Agriculture was the dominant industry, but the counties were neither as depressed agriculturally as some of the Rural Development Counties of the Upper Peninsula nor as subject to urbanization and suburbanization influences as those counties in the southern part of the state.

Clare, Gladwin, Missaukee, and Osceola counties were selected as the study area. In addition to meeting the above criteria, their location facilitated field work and minimized travel and interviewing costs.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present pertinent information on the agricultural and population characteristics of the counties, which is summarized below.

### Agriculture

As shown in Table 1, about three of four farms were classed as commercial in 1954. The dominant type of commercial farm is dairy, and the average size of all farms in the four-county area is 173 acres. In these contiguous counties, the number of farms decreased about 13 percent between 1950 and 1954. About four of 10 farm operators had worked for 100 days or more off their farm in 1953.

**TABLE 1—Selected agricultural characteristics, 1954, for counties studied and for the state**

Area	Number of farms, 1954	Average size of farm	Percent change in number of farms 1950-54	Percent commercial farms, 1954	Percent farm operators with 100 days or more off farm work, 1954
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Clare.....	723	191	— 6.9	67	37
Gladwin.....	1,074	143	— 6.2	59	45
Missaukee.....	868	183	—16.4	76	32
Osceola.....	1,246	180	—17.4	75	36
Total.....	3,911	173	—12.5	73	38
State.....	138,922	118	—10.6	71	40

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. *U. S. Census of Agriculture: 1954*. Vol. I, Counties and State Economic Areas, Part 6. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1956. County Table 1.

## Population

Table 2 shows the sharp decline in the rural-farm population between 1940 and 1950 and the accompanying decrease in the proportion of the labor force employed in agricultural industries. About one-half the population lived on farms in 1950, and the total population had increased only slightly from 1940 to 1950, compared to a 21 percent increase for the entire state. The farm operator family level-of-living index was about the same as that of the state as a whole in 1954.

Table 3 presents more recent estimates of population and net migration for the area. Net outmigration between 1950 and 1957 represented about 7 percent of the 1950 population, and was characteristic of all but one of the counties. In view of the decrease in the number of farms (Table 1), it is very likely that the rural-farm population had also decreased.

## Method

In the Spring of 1958, a questionnaire designed to obtain information on students' plans following graduation was submitted to high school seniors of all but one of the high schools in the four-county area.<sup>6</sup> Emphasis was placed on intentions to remain in or leave the

<sup>6</sup>One high school with 25 senior students did not cooperate in the research. In the other schools, approximately 90 percent of the seniors enrolled were in attendance at the time of the survey.

TABLE 2—Selected population data, for counties studied and for the state

Area	Population, 1950			Percentage change, 1940-50(a)			Percent rural-farm	Percent of employed persons working in agriculture		Farm-operator family level-of-living index 1954(b)
	Total	Rural-nonfarm	Rural-farm	Total	Rural-nonfarm	Rural-farm		1950	1940	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Index</i>
Clare.....	10,253	6,601	3,652	11.9	60.3	-27.6	35.6	26.1	44.0	150
Gladwin.....	9,451	4,070	5,381	.7	49.9	-19.3	56.9	39.5	55.5	150
Missaukee....	7,458	3,007	4,451	-7.2	43.2	-25.0	59.7	49.1	64.0	143
Osceola.....	13,797	7,230	6,567	3.7	40.0	-19.4	47.6	37.5	54.3	145
4-county total..	40,959	20,908	20,051	2.7	48.3	-22.3	49.0	37.1	54.1	147
State.....	6,371,766	1,173,940	694,742	21.2	67.4	-18.9	10.9	6.7	11.7	148

Source: Population data taken from Beegle, J. Allan and Donald Halsted, (1957) *Michigan's changing population*. Mich. Agr. Expt. Sta. Spec. Bul. 415. Level-of-living index from: *Farm Operator Family Level-of-Living Indexes for Counties of the United States, 1945, 1950, and 1954*. Spec. Bul. No. 204 (March, 1957) USDA, AMS. Washington 25, D. C.

(a) These percentage changes are influenced to some extent by changes in the definition of the rural-farm and rural-nonfarm population between 1940 and 1950.

(b) U. S. county average for 1945 equals 100. In developing farm-operator levels-of-living indexes, certain combinations of counties were made due to the small number of farms. Clare and Gladwin were combined as were Lake and Osceola.

TABLE 3—Population and net migration, 1950-1957 for counties studied

County	April 1, 1950	July 1, 1957	Percent change	Net migration
	No.	No.	Pct.	No.
Clare.....	10,253	11,620	13	184
Gladwin.....	9,451	9,810	4	-614
Missaukee.....	7,458	7,320	-2	-807
Osceola.....	13,797	13,400	-3	-1,545
Total.....	40,959	42,150	3	-2,782

Sources: Thaden, J. F. January 15, 1959. "Population growth components and potential in Michigan." Institute for Community Development and Services, Continuing Education. Mich. State Univ. (Mimeo).

community, and the reasons for their decision. Information also was obtained on occupational aspirations, the type of community preferred, and on the social and economic characteristics of the family. These schedules were completed by students in the classroom, and 545 schedules were obtained.

The students were about evenly divided between males and females, with an average age of about 18. About half of them lived on farms, approximately one-fifth were open-country nonfarm residents, and the remainder lived in towns or villages. There were no urban residents in the area. Four of 10 students reported their fathers primary or secondary occupation as that of farm operator. Almost all (94 percent) of the parents of these students were born in the U.S., and a substantial proportion was born in Michigan. The median grade of school completed was 9.0 for fathers and 9.7 for mothers. Average annual family income was \$4,100. The religious preference was predominantly Protestant, and Methodists comprised the largest single denomination.

From this very general description, it can be seen that this group of high school students is relatively homogeneous. They all live in the same area, are all about the same age, and their general social environment is quite similar. There are no important ethnic, religious, or racial differences in these communities, and the dominant industry is agriculture. The average student had received more formal schooling than did the average parent; that is, all of the students completed 12 years of formal schooling.

Although all but one of the high schools in the community were included in the study, this group of young people is a select one, in

that the students have completed high school.<sup>7</sup> There is a substantial number of persons in the high school age group who are not in school.

If it is assumed that the age distribution of high school graduates in the general population is the same as that of the students who are high school seniors, then about 26 percent of the persons aged 17 or 18 in the communities had terminated their education prior to graduation from high school. This percentage compares very closely with that for the entire state.<sup>8</sup>

In the analysis of the results of this study, particular attention is paid to the differences in the way males and females and farm and non-farm residents answered questions. This latter distinction is based on the response of the student to the question, "Do you live on a farm?", and is not based on the occupation of the father. Data are presented on the occupation of the father elsewhere in this report. It must be remembered that not all persons who live on farms engage in farming as an occupation, and that the two classifications are not the same.

### Limitations of the Study

In assessing results presented in the following pages, it must be remembered that this report deals only with a portion of the complete study and that the information was obtained from the young people themselves. It may be that their plans and expectations will change; or that the ones they have at present are quite unrealistic; or even that they have not thought very seriously about their future and that their knowledge of available alternatives is rather limited.

Information on family characteristics was obtained from the students, and in some cases this information may differ from that which would have been given by the parents. For example, the father would undoubtedly be able to supply more specific and complete information on his occupation than would his child; the student's estimate of net family income, to use an extreme example, might differ widely from that supplied by the parents.

No claim can be made that the students interviewed are "typical" or "representative" of all rural students in the state and none is im-

<sup>7</sup>It is assumed that the students responding did graduate from high school, even though the interviews were completed shortly before graduation.

<sup>8</sup>*School Census*. Michigan Department of Public Instruction, 1957. For comparative purposes, note that for the entire state the number of students enrolled in the ninth grade in 1954 declined by about 28 percent by 1957 when they were in the twelfth grade. (See: "Enrollment by Grades at Close of Year." Michigan Department of Public Instruction. No date.) These data were made available by Dr. John F. Thaden of the Institute for Community Development and Services, Continuing Education, Mich. State Univ.



plied. It can be said, however, that these students comprise about 87 percent of all the senior students in high school in the four counties studied.

These, as well as all the limitations which apply to any survey research, should be recognized. Nonetheless, the plans and expectations that these students have now are important in determining what they do in the immediate future, and have important implications for them and for their community.

### A Note on Statistical Analysis

The hypotheses which guided the analysis of data presented in this report were: (1) that there are significant differences between the plans, expectations, and aspirations of high school seniors who live in rural-farm areas and those living in rural-nonfarm areas or towns and villages; (2) that there are also significant differences between male and female students in this regard; and, (3) that certain social and economic factors are significantly associated with occupational and educational plans.

The statistic used to test these hypotheses was the chi-square test of independence. The chi-square test indicates the probability that responses actually obtained would have been obtained if there were no association between the variables considered.<sup>9</sup> For example, if it were found that all students were equally likely to say that they planned to go to college, regardless of the income level of the family, then it could be said that there was no statistically significant association between the family income and educational plans of the student.

The data presented in this report were analyzed by applying the chi-square test of independence to the relationship between Sex (S), Residence (R), and a Dependent (D) variable. If this test showed that there was no significant relationship among the three variables, no further tests of significance were used. If the relationship between the three variables was significant, then the same test was applied to the relationship between Sex and the Dependent variable, and the relationship between Residence and the Dependent variable.

The results of the tests are presented in footnotes to the appropriate tables in the text. The notation used is that indicated above:

<sup>9</sup>For a more complete discussion, see: Mood, A. M., 1950. *Introduction to the Theory of Statistics*, New York, McGraw-Hill, p. 280; and Lancaster, H. O. "Complex Contingency Tables Treated by the Partition of  $X^{2*}$ ", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, XIII: 1 (1951) pp. 242-249.

"X<sup>2</sup> SRD" indicates the relationship between Sex, Residence, and the Dependent variable; "X<sup>2</sup> SD", between Sex and the Dependent variable; and "X<sup>2</sup> RD" the relationship between Residence and the Dependent variable; "d.f." is the abbreviation for degrees of freedom; and "p" indicates the probability that the observed relationship could have occurred by chance.

In general, only those associations which proved to be significant are discussed. However, in a few cases, the nonsignificant relationships are examined, particularly when the results are contrary to what would be expected on the basis of available knowledge. For example, in Table 16 the nonsignificant association found between family income and educational plans of the student is discussed.

As in the case of any statistical analysis, statistical significance should not be confused with substantive significance. Also, the statistical test does not indicate anything about the accuracy or truthfulness of the responses. Nor does the test demonstrate a causal relationship between the variables.

## FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

While primary interest centers on the comparison of farm with nonfarm students, there are other factors associated with farm residence which have considerable importance for the student. In this section, information is presented on the important social and economic characteristics of the families of the students.

### Occupation, Income, and Education

In Table 4 data on the occupation of the students' fathers, family income and the fathers' schooling are presented. As mentioned earlier, the dominant occupation is that of farm operator. Characteristic of information obtained about the father from the children is the rather large proportion of unclassifiable or "don't know" responses. Table 4 also shows the median family income and the median year of school completed by the father. Farm operator families as a group have the lowest family income, and rank slightly below the median in years of school completed by the father. White-collar workers (a category which includes professionals, managers and proprietors, as well as clerical and sales workers) have a higher income and substantially more years of schooling than the other occupational groups.

The importance of agriculture in the economy of the area and for the members of the communities is illustrated by the information

**TABLE 4—Median family income and median years of school completed by father by fathers' occupation for high school seniors**

Occupation of father	High school seniors		Median family income	Median years of school completed by father
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Years</i>
White collar.....	132	24	4,755	12.0
Farm operator.....	168	31	3,530	8.7
Skilled worker.....	94	17	4,412	10.1
Semi- and un-skilled worker....	58	11	3,850	8.8
Unclassifiable and don't know...	93	17	4,343	8.8
Total.....	545	100	4,076	9.0

presented in Table 5, where the type of secondary occupation held by the father is classified by the primary occupation of the father. Three of 10 students reported that their fathers held more than one job. When both primary and secondary jobs are considered, about 45 percent of all families are seen to be engaged in agriculture.

Multiple job holding has generally been assumed to be more prevalent among farm operators than among other occupational groups. However, in this area, it is evidently an important part of the occupational pattern. One explanation, of course, is that this is one way in which members of lower paid occupations can supplement their income. The effect of this is to narrow economic differences between occupational groups by adding income from several sources to the family income.

**TABLE 5—Number of fathers with secondary occupation by primary occupation of father for high school seniors**

Primary occupation of father	High school seniors		Secondary occupation of father					
			Total		White collar	Farm operator	Skilled worker	Semi- and un-skilled worker
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
White collar.....	132	100	39	30	10	16	6	7
Farm operator.....	168	100	44	26	7	..	19	18
Skilled worker.....	94	100	32	34	3	23	2	4
Semi- and un-skilled worker....	58	100	26	45	4	15	7	..
Unclassifiable and don't know...	93	100	31	33	5	23	2	1
Total.....	545	100	172	32	29	77	36	30

Answers to a question on the labor force status of the mother show that 30 percent of the mothers held either a full or part-time job. These mothers of high school age children may have free time which can be utilized in work outside the home. The proportion of working mothers was lowest for farm operator families, possibly because of the demands on their time and energy made by the farm enterprise, and the unavailability of jobs.

### **Ethnic Background**

Since the attitudes of parents toward education and their aspirations for their children may be influenced by the ethnic background of the parents,<sup>10</sup> data were obtained on the place of birth of both father and mother. The great majority of parents (94 percent) were born in the U. S. In 63 percent of the families both parents had been born in Michigan. This is another indication of the relative homogeneity of the population, and may be a result of the low level of immigration to the area.

These data indicate that whatever influence different nationality backgrounds may have must be relatively indirect. In the analysis to follow, an important point to remember is that whatever differences are observed between students cannot be attributed to the effect of parents with a foreign background.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Plans to Migrate**

Graduation from high school generally means that the young male has reached the point where he must decide whether to enter the labor force as a full-time worker, continue his education in college, or obtain other further training. For the female, the decision may be either one of the above or it may be to marry and become a housewife. Recent trends in U. S. society have shown that these alternatives may be combined, *i.e.*, college attendance *and* marriage; or full-time employment or service in the Armed Forces for several years followed by college.

While decisions must be made by the high school graduate these decisions are by no means irreversible, nor do they commit him to one course of action. Nonetheless, the period is one during which

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<sup>10</sup>For a report of a study in which nationality was found to be important in influencing school attendance, see: Marshall, D. G., W. H. Sewell and A. O. Haller. (Sept. 1953.) "Factors associated with high school attendance of Wisconsin farm youth." *Rural Sociology* 18:3. pp. 257-60.

he must make certain decisions for the first time—it is probably the first time, for example, when leaving his home and community and establishing his own household becomes a real possibility.

One of the things this research was designed to discover was the proportion of rural-high school graduates who plan to leave the community, and to determine the reasons for this decision. In this section, information on the plans of the high school students studied is presented and particular attention is paid to the plans of rural-farm residents.

The students were asked where they expected to be living: (1) during the summer, and (2) after the summer. About two-thirds of all students expected to remain in the community for the summer. Neither residence nor sex was significantly associated with these plans.

The second question, "Where do you plan to live after this summer?" refers to a period following the summer which had been associated with vacation and anticipated return to school in the fall. In Table 6, the replies to this question are summarized.

The most striking conclusion from the data presented in Table 6 is the fact that seven of 10 students say that they plan to leave the community after the summer. Males are more likely to say that they

TABLE 6—Residence plans of high school seniors by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Remain in community	Leave community	No answer, don't know
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	32	65	3
Farm.....	142	100	38	58	4
Open country...	71	100	30	69	1
Village.....	71	100	24	76	..
Female.....	261	100	20	76	4
Farm.....	124	100	23	73	4
Open country...	53	100	21	77	2
Village.....	84	100	17	81	2
Both sexes.....	545	100	27	70	3
Farm.....	266	100	31	65	4
Open country...	124	100	26	72	2
Village.....	155	100	20	79	1

$X^2$  SRD = 21.39; d.f. = 7;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  SD = 9.84; d.f. = 1;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  RD = 7.04; d.f. = 2;  $p < .05$

(The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

plan to remain in the community than are females, and this difference is most marked for farm residents. For both males and females, a higher proportion of students who live in open country and farm areas say that they will remain in the community than do those who live in a village or town.

The different pattern of responses to the questions concerning residential plans during the summer and after the summer are partly explainable on the basis of the time period involved; that is, the longer the period covered by the question, the greater the chance of leaving the community. Secondly, those students who planned to enter college would not enroll until the fall, and would be likely to remain at home until that time.

Students may leave the community for a variety of reasons. The one which comes to mind immediately is attendance at college, which means that in most cases the college student would be living outside of his home community. Attendance at college also has other important implications for the student and for the community. In the first place, it means that the student has delayed his entry into the labor force. It probably means that the college student will continue to return to the community in the summer and that he will continue to be considered a member of the community. The student who leaves the community for military service or to take a job has entered the labor force on a full-time basis. For females the intention to be married and live in some other community generally means a permanent change of residence.

### **Attitudes Toward Present Community**

Before the reasons given by these students for saying that they will leave the community are examined, the attitude expressed toward the present community as a place to live immediately after graduation from high school and after marriage is discussed. These questions were asked in order to obtain an evaluation of the community on a short-run and a long-run basis, since it is quite possible that the student may have a different evaluation of the community in the two cases.

Table 7 shows the distribution of responses to two questions concerning the community as a place to live after graduation from high school and after marriage. The responses have been combined into three categories: those expressing a positive attitude, those express-

TABLE 7—Attitudes of high school seniors toward community by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Community as a place to live after graduation			Community as a place to live after marriage		
			Like	Indif-ferent(a)	Dis-like	Like	Indif-ferent(a)	Dis-like
Male.....	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Farm.....	284	100	67	21	12	64	17	19
Open country.....	142	100	71	18	11	75	11	14
Village.....	71	100	66	25	9	55	22	23
Female.....	71	100	61	21	18	51	24	25
Farm.....	261	100	58	20	22	54	15	31
Open country.....	124	100	60	22	18	55	13	32
Village.....	53	100	66	13	21	59	13	28
Both sexes.....	84	100	50	23	27	51	17	32
Farm.....	545	100	63	20	17	59	16	25
Open country.....	266	100	66	20	14	65	13	22
Village.....	124	100	66	20	14	56	19	25
	155	100	55	22	23	51	20	29

(a) Includes "indifferent", "don't know", and "no answer" responses.

Chi-square values based on community as a place to live after graduation.

$X^2$  SRD = 23.67; d.f. = 12;  $p < .05$

$X^2$  SD = 10.36; d.f. = 2;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  RD = 8.39; d.f. = 4;  $p > .05$

Chi-square values based on community as a place to live after marriage.

$X^2$  SRD = 30.51; d.f. = 12;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  SD = 10.57; d.f. = 2;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  RD = 9.26; d.f. = 4;  $p > .05$

ing a negative attitude, and those indicating indifference. The "no answers" account for about 1 per cent of all answers to both questions, and are therefore treated in the same way as those responses indicating indifference.

Generally, these high school students have a favorable attitude toward their present community as a place to live in after graduation and as a place to live in after marriage, and presumably as a place in which to raise a family.

The same sex differences observed earlier again appear; that is, females have a less positive response to the community than do males, and farm males are the most favorably disposed of any group. Somewhat over half the females say they would like to live in the community after graduation and after marriage, while about two-thirds of the males respond in this way. The proportion of all groups classed as indifferent is about one-fifth.

Although students were favorably disposed toward the community,

most of them said that they would not be living in their community after the summer. They were then asked about the type of community in which they would like to live.

All students were asked to specify the size of community in which they would prefer to live. Their responses to this question are presented in Table 8.

It is hardly surprising that the students respond to the question in terms of their own experience. That is, those students who presently live in a village or town prefer to live in the same type of area later; while the open country and farm residents prefer that type of area. The majority of all students would prefer to live in the open country. Females are less likely to name open country than are males, and females show a stronger preference for suburban living—that is, living close to a large city. Farm males show a stronger preference for open country living than do farm females. For the most part, students said that they prefer to continue to live in the same type of area in which they now reside.

TABLE 8—Preferred size of community for high school seniors by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Preferred size of community					
			Open country	Under 2,500	2,500-9,999	10,000 and over	Suburbs	No answer
Male.....	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	62	11	12	6	6	3
Farm.....	142	100	75	4	8	3	6	4
Open country.....	71	100	70	16	8	6	..	..
Village.....	71	100	30	20	22	14	11	3
Female.....	261	100	51	9	18	6	14	2
Farm.....	124	100	62	11	11	4	11	1
Open country.....	53	100	59	9	13	4	11	4
Village.....	84	100	30	7	32	10	19	2
Both sexes.....	545	100	57	10	15	6	10	2
Farm.....	266	100	69	7	10	3	8	3
Open country.....	124	100	65	13	10	5	5	2
Village.....	155	100	30	13	28	12	15	2

$X^2$  SRD = 110.94; d.f. = 22;  $p < .01$   
 $X^2$  SD = 15.39; d.f. = 4;  $p < .01$   
 $X^2$  RD = 77.95; d.f. = 12;  $p < .01$   
 (The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)



A related question dealt with the place where the student expected to live after the summer; that is, if he did not intend to live in his home community, in what area would he be living. The places named by the students were classified as to whether they were in or out of Michigan, and if within Michigan, whether they were metropolitan or nonmetropolitan areas. In interpreting these data there are two factors to be kept in mind. (1) About one-fifth of both males and females either named no specific place or did not answer the question.

In Table 9, the "no answer" responses are combined with those which did not name a specific place. This was done on the assumption that both answers indicated uncertainty about place of residence after the summer. (2) "Military service" was the response for nearly four of 10 males. One important implication of the fact that well over

**TABLE 9—Residence plans of high school seniors leaving community by sex and residence**

Sex and residence	Total		Place of residence			Don't know	Military
			Michigan		Non-Michigan		
			Metropolitan	Non-metropolitan			
No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	
Male.....	192	100	17	20	5	20	38
Farm.....	88	100	13	19	4	28	36
Open country.....	50	100	16	14	10	14	46
Village.....	54	100	24	26	2	13	35
Female.....	208	100	35	2	36	23	4
Farm.....	96	100	32	2	34	28	4
Open country.....	42	100	41	2	31	24	2
Village.....	70	100	34	3	45	14	4
Both sexes.....	400	100	26	11	21	22	20
Farm.....	184	100	23	10	19	28	20
Open country.....	92	100	27	9	20	18	26
Village.....	124	100	30	13	26	13	18

Chi-square values based on Michigan, non-Michigan, and military and excluding "unspecified" and "don't know" responses:

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 \text{ SRD} &= 118.24; \text{ d.f.} = 12; p < .01 \\ X^2 \text{ SD} &= 106.12; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p < .01 \\ X^2 \text{ RD} &= 3.23; \text{ d.f.} = 4; p < .05 \end{aligned}$$

Chi-square values based on metropolitan and nonmetropolitan responses only:

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 \text{ SRD} &= 41.97; \text{ d.f.} = 7; p < .01 \\ X^2 \text{ SD} &= 40.47; \text{ d.f.} = 1; p < .01 \\ X^2 \text{ RD} &= 0.53; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p < .05 \end{aligned}$$

one-third of all males named military service as determining their residence is that this is a larger proportion than that which would be drafted into service. The inference is that these students plan to satisfy the requirement for some type of military service as soon as they can.

Sex differences in response to expected place of residence are also apparent. A much larger proportion of females named metropolitan areas within Michigan than did males. However, the males who named military service will most probably be located outside of Michigan, and it is impossible to determine what their answers would have been without this alternative. Of equal importance, is the fact that about one-third of all females who intended to live elsewhere named an area outside of Michigan as the most probable place of residence. Females living in villages were more likely to name an area outside the state than were either of the two resident groups.

It is difficult to assess the significance of military service for males. It should be noted that the fact of a military obligation may constitute — for the male student — an important duty of which he is fully aware and which he wishes to discharge as soon as possible. About 4 percent of the females gave military service in answer to the question on residence. For them, this clearly represents a voluntary choice — there is no legal obligation to be fulfilled. In this case, the effect is very probably to remove them from the community of residence.

Whether or not this decision will be made is another question. It is sufficient to note that this is a rather high proportion of females to select military service. An additional indication that females have a stronger desire than males to leave the community can be seen from the fact that only 2 percent of the females name nonmetropolitan areas in Michigan as places in which they intend to live. Since none of the communities studied are in metropolitan areas, this means that a very small proportion of the females who intend to leave the community intend to live in rural areas within the state.

### Plans and Preferences

In addition to the questions concerning the community as a place to live following graduation and marriage, questions were also asked to obtain information on: (a) the student's eagerness to remain in the community; (b) the necessity to leave the community to lead the kind of life he wishes to lead; and (c) the willingness to return to or remain in the community if a suitable job were available.

The questions used are admittedly very general ones and do not supply information on the specific factors on which the student bases his answer.<sup>11</sup> However, as described below, the pattern of answers to the three questions indicates that the students did differentiate between the meaning of the questions.

(a) **Eagerness to remain in the community.** The question was asked: "How eager are you to stay or move from your community after graduation?" The alternatives provided were: "Eager to leave; probably stay but not eager to stay; probably leave, but not eager to leave; eager to leave." Two of the alternative answers contain two different aspects; one is that concerning eagerness, the other is that concerning the probability of staying or leaving. While this construction introduces some ambiguity, it does have the virtue of permitting a relatively "realistic" response. Table 10 summarizes the results of answers to this question.

On the assumption that those who say that they are *eager* to or *probably will* stay or leave will do so, it can be seen that a majority

<sup>11</sup>A modified form of the Vernon Davies scale of community satisfaction (See: Davies, Vernon, September, 1945). "Development of a scale to rate attitude of community satisfaction," *Rural Sociology*, 10:3 pp. 246-255 was also employed to determine those factors which the student considered to be important about his community. The results of the analysis of the replies to this scale will be presented in a bulletin now in preparation.

**TABLE 10—Eagerness to remain in present community for high school seniors by sex and residence**

Sex and residence	Total		Staying in community			Leaving community			NA
			Eager to stay	Stay, but not eager	Total	Leave, but not eager	Eager to leave	Total	
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	19	21	40	40	17	57	3
Farm.....	142	100	23	27	50	32	15	47	3
Open country.....	71	100	14	15	29	51	14	65	6
Village.....	71	100	17	15	32	45	23	68	..
Female.....	261	100	15	16	31	40	27	67	2
Farm.....	124	100	16	15	31	42	26	68	1
Open country.....	53	100	19	26	45	34	17	51	4
Village.....	84	100	12	11	23	40	35	75	2
Both sexes.....	545	100	17	19	36	40	21	61	3
Farm.....	266	100	20	21	41	37	20	57	2
Open country.....	124	100	16	20	36	44	15	59	5
Village.....	155	100	14	13	27	43	29	72	1

$X^2$  SRD = 44.38; d.f. = 17;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  SD = 10.39; d.f. = 3;  $p < .05$

$X^2$  RD = 13.62; d.f. = 6;  $p < .05$

(The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

of all males and all females will leave the community. In general, females are more likely to leave than are males; farm males are least likely to leave and village females are most likely to leave. Once again, farm males are seen to be more favorably disposed to the community than are farm females. Thus, while less than one in seven farm males is "eager to leave", slightly more than one in four farm females is eager to leave.

The expressed attitude of these high school students indicates that well over one-half of them are either eager to leave the community, or feel that they probably will leave.

It should also be noted, however, that the majority of students in every group say either that they are eager to stay, or *not* eager to leave. This emphasizes the necessary distinction between what the student may wish to do, and what he may feel he must do.

(b) **Necessity to leave the community.** The question, "Now, considering the kind of job and the way of life you *eventually* wish to have, do you think it is necessary for you to move from your present community?" was asked in order to obtain an idea of how the student evaluated his community in relation to his own desires and expectations.

There are several aspects of the data presented in Table 11 which should be noted. One is the substantial proportion of "don't know" responses. About one-fifth of the females and one-fourth of the males answered the question in this way. Another is that only among farm males does a greater proportion answer that they would *not* have to leave the community; for all other groups a substantially larger proportion believes that they would have to leave the community.

(c) **Willingness to return to the community.** The students were asked to assume that jobs would be available in their community, and if they would remain (or return) under this condition. The picture presented in Table 12 is quite different from that discussed above. While there is an even larger proportion of "don't know" responses, the students in general are more favorable to the idea of remaining if there were jobs available. None of the differences between groups are significant. It bears repeating, however, that the substantial proportion of "don't know" responses probably indicates that the question was difficult to answer and that the situation presented in the question had not been seriously considered by the students.

**To summarize:** From the responses to three questions concerning a general evaluation of the community and the students' plans and attitudes toward remaining in the community, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Most of the students (with the exception of farm males) were eager to leave the community or thought that they would probably leave; (2) most of them also felt that they could not lead the kind of life they wished to in the home community, and would have to go elsewhere; the exception here was farm males; (3) despite these ideas, the majority of all groups said that they would remain, or return to the community if jobs were available. A large proportion of the students replied that they didn't know what they would do or would like to do in response to the latter two questions.

At this point, it might be well to attempt to interpret more thoroughly some of these facts. The differences found between the attitudes of males and females certainly is in the expected direction. The career patterns of males and females are quite different; the female is not expected to be a full-time member of the labor force—at least

*TABLE 11—Necessity to leave community for high school seniors by sex and residence*

Sex and residence	Total		Necessity to leave community		
			Yes	No	No answer, don't know
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Male.....	284	100	42	32	26
Farm.....	142	100	39	41	20
Open country.....	71	100	44	22	34
Village.....	71	100	45	23	32
Female.....	261	100	52	26	22
Farm.....	124	100	48	28	24
Open country.....	53	100	45	28	27
Village.....	84	100	61	24	15
Both sexes.....	545	100	47	29	24
Farm.....	266	100	43	35	22
Open country.....	124	100	44	25	31
Village.....	155	100	54	23	23

$\chi^2$  SRD = 21.08; d.f. = 7;  $p < .01$

$\chi^2$  SD = 4.11; d.f. = 1;  $p < .01$

$\chi^2$  RD = 7.02; d.f. = 2;  $p < .01$

(The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

TABLE 12—Percent of high school seniors who would remain in or eventually return to the community if jobs were available by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Remain in community		
			Yes	No	No answer, don't know
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	57	8	35
Farm.....	142	100	63	9	28
Open country.....	71	100	52	9	39
Village.....	71	100	49	7	44
Female.....	261	100	58	11	31
Farm.....	124	100	61	8	31
Open country.....	53	100	64	13	23
Village.....	84	100	50	14	36
Both sexes.....	545	100	58	9	33
Farm.....	266	100	63	8	29
Open country.....	124	100	57	11	32
Village.....	155	100	50	11	39

$X^2$  SRD = 8.08; d.f. = 7;  $p < .05$   
 (The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

not for very long—but is expected to marry and go wherever her husband goes. The male, on the other hand, is expected to become a full-time member of the labor force and to support his family in a satisfactory style of life. Ideally, it is his occupational choice which determines, or strongly influences, where he will live and what he will do.

Farming may be considered as an acceptable occupation for the male, but it is not so considered for the female. It may be that the female sees herself as the wife of a white-collar male and somewhat removed from the rural-farm community. The ties that hold the male to the community or area are most likely to be occupational ties, while those holding the female are non-occupational.

### Occupational Plans

It has been pointed out that the high school graduate is in a position where he must make certain decisions and choices concerning his vocational plans. Often, these choices must be made on the basis of very limited knowledge of the labor market and with no clear understanding of the importance and long-range consequences of

the choice. Nonetheless, some decision must be made, and it is assumed here that this decision is influenced by the attitudes and opinions he has concerning the desirability of various occupations.

In this section, information obtained from the students on their occupational plans and preferences is presented. Included is information on the jobs most and least preferred, the job being considered seriously at the time of the study, and the relationship between occupational choice and the social and economic characteristics of the family.

The students were asked to name the one job they would choose if they could select any one they wished. The response to this question is summarized in Table 13. For both males and females in all residential categories, "white-collar" jobs were by far the most often named. This category of white collar includes not only the traditional professions such as physician, lawyer, and clergyman and teacher, but also includes various technical, managerial, clerical, and sales occupations.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>The classification used in coding the responses was that of the U. S. Bureau of the Census. If a response could not be objectively classified into a specific response category, it was classified as unclassifiable. Of those responses classified, in the tables as "don't know and unclassifiable" about one half belonged in the sub-categories unclassifiable.

TABLE 13—Occupation preferred by high school seniors by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Occupation preferred						
			White collar	Farm operator	Skilled worker	Semi- and unskilled worker	Don't know and unclassifiable	Housewife	Military
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	50	6	15	7	22	..	..
Farm.....	142	100	42	12	13	8	24	..	1
Open country.....	71	100	61	1	17	6	15	..	..
Village.....	71	190	55	..	17	6	22	..	..
Female.....	261	100	80	..	3	4	11	2	..
Farm.....	124	100	75	1	4	6	11	2	1
Open country.....	53	100	87	..	2	2	9	..	..
Village.....	84	100	82	..	1	3	11	3	..
Both sexes.....	545	100	64	3	9	6	16	1	1
Farm.....	266	100	57	7	9	7	18	1	1
Open country.....	124	100	72	..	10	5	13	..	..
Village.....	155	100	70	..	8	4	17	1	..

$X^2$  SRD = 94.91; d.f. = 17;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  SD = 55.61; d.f. = 3;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  RD = 22.53; d.f. = 6;  $p < .01$

(Chi-square based only on classifiable occupations, other than "military" and "housewife.")

A detailed examination of the responses included in the white-collar category reveals that about 10 percent of both males and females selected one of the traditional professions, but the largest proportion of males selected "other professional" occupations, consisting largely of semi-professional and related occupations, while the modal response of females was that of clerical and sales workers. The white-collar occupations generally provide higher status and income than do other occupations, and are also becoming more widely available as the structure of the labor market changes.

As an "ideal" job, that of farm operator was named by only 6 percent of the males, all but one of whom was a farm resident. About the same proportion of farm males named skilled jobs as named farming as their most preferred occupation.

Information was also obtained on the negative aspects of occupational evaluation by asking the student to name the job least preferred. The replies to this question indicated that the meaning of this question was difficult for the student to understand, that he had not given much thought to this rather negative view or that he had given much thought but still had a negative view. For all groups of students, "don't know" or "unclassifiable" answers were the most frequent and accounted for 40 percent of all responses. White-collar and semi- and unskilled jobs were about equally disliked by both males and females. About as many farm males (12 percent) named farming as the least desired occupation as named it the preferred job.

The students were also asked to name the job which they were seriously considering taking after graduation, that is, the job which they actually planned to take rather than the one they might prefer to have. In Table 14 the answers to this question are summarized by sex and residence of the student. These data show that slightly more than one-fifth of all males were undecided about their occupation, and this proportion of undecided students was highest for farm males. A lower proportion of females replied that they did not know or were in an unclassifiable fashion. For both males and females the most frequent answer was some kind of white-collar job; this preference is particularly marked for females.

Since this white-collar category is a heterogeneous one, the choices which fell into this classification were examined. About 18 percent of both males and females chose the occupation of clergyman, lawyer, physician, or teacher. Males were most likely to choose an occupation classed as one of the other professions or semi-professions, such as



**TABLE 14—Occupation being considered seriously by high school seniors by sex and residence**

Sex and residence	Total		Occupation considered seriously						
			White collar	Farm operator	Skilled worker	Semi- and unskilled worker	Don't know and unclassifiable	Housewife	Military
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Male.....	284	100	42	10	18	4	22	..	4
Farm.....	142	100	33	20	15	3	27	..	2
Open country.....	71	100	49	1	20	4	19	..	7
Village.....	71	100	52	1	23	4	17	..	3
Female.....	261	100	69	1	4	2	13	10	1
Farm.....	124	100	66	2	6	2	14	8	2
Open country.....	53	100	66	2	2	4	15	11	..
Village.....	84	100	74	..	5	2	8	11	..
Both sexes.....	545	100	55	6	12	3	18	4	2
Farm.....	266	100	49	11	11	2	21	4	2
Open country.....	124	100	56	2	12	4	17	5	4
Village.....	155	100	64	1	13	3	12	6	1

$X^2$  SRD = 124.17; d.f. = 22;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  SD = 63.30; d.f. = 4;  $p < .01$

$X^2$  RD = 30.78; d.f. = 12;  $p < .01$

(Chi-square based only on classifiable occupations, other than "military" and "housewife".)

engineer, architect, etc. Females were most likely to select those jobs such as clerical and sales positions.

The occupation of farm operator was selected by about 10 percent of the males, all but two of whom resided on a farm. Even for farm males, farming was selected less often than occupations in the white-collar category.

Since the occupational choice of the student may be influenced by the occupation of his father, this comparison was made for both male and female students. This comparison showed that there was no statistically significant association between the occupation being seriously considered by the student and the occupation of the father. Some type of white-collar job was named by about 8 of 10 males and 9 of 10 females who answered the question.

Only among farmers' sons did a substantial proportion, one-fifth, name farming as the occupation they were seriously considering. The white-collar occupations named by females were those such as clerical and sales workers, rather than those occupations which require considerable training and education. The relatively small proportion of females who named "housewife" as the job they were considering

seriously may indicate that these females anticipate working before marriage, or combining marriage with work—a pattern which has become increasingly common.

Most students, both males and females, said that their parents approved of their occupational choice; about one-half of all males and two-thirds of all females responded in this way.

### **Plans to Attend College**

One of the important changes in the pattern of U. S. education since the end of World War II has been the increasing number and proportion of the population which attend college. The full implications of this development have yet to be analyzed, and perhaps cannot be analyzed fully for some time. The interest here is focused on the proportion of the students studied who planned—in the spring of 1958—to attend college.

The significance of further schooling for the individual involved and the community in which he resides is not easy to assess. However, several consequences are likely. One is that a college education will probably—for males at least—remove them from agriculture, and quite probably from their home community. Likewise, a college education is often a means by which other avenues—both occupational and social—are opened and very often followed. Another is the fact that by attending college the student has left his community. He may return during the summers and the holidays, but most of his time is spent out of the community.

In this section, the plans of students to attend college are examined. Attention is paid to the differences in plans between farm and non-farm residents, and an attempt is made to determine the family characteristics of the students who do intend to go to college.

Table 15 summarized the data on college attendance. About three of 10 high school seniors say that they plan to attend college. This proportion is about one in five for females but well over one in three for males. For every residential category except farm, a greater proportion of males than females plans to enter college. Town and village residents are more likely to attend than residents in any other category, regardless of sex.

The great majority of all students who plan to attend college plan to go to tax-supported institutions in Michigan; about three-quarters of the males and two-thirds of the females.

The association between income, educational attainment of the

father, and occupational status of the father was explored to discover the relationships between these variables and the expressed intention to attend college.

As shown in Table 16, there is no statistically significant association between net family income and the students' college plans. For example, approximately the same proportion of students from families with an annual income of at least \$6,000 plan to attend college as that from families with annual incomes of between \$2,000 and \$2,999 per year.

The relationship between father's occupation and plans for college attendance was also found not to be significant.

Since the amount of education received by the parents would seem to be of some importance in influencing the student's decision, the plans of the high school seniors to attend college were compared with the years of school completed by the father. The data presented in Table 17 show a clear and consistent relationship between father's education and the educational plans of the student. Only about one-fifth of the students whose fathers received eight or less years of schooling plan to attend college. The proportion increases to about

TABLE 15—College plans of high school seniors by sex and residence

Sex and residence	Total		Plan to attend college	Plan to attend tax-supported Michigan college
	No.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Male.....	284	100	35	26
Farm.....	142	100	23	18
Open country.....	71	100	42	28
Village.....	71	100	49	41
Female.....	261	100	26	17
Farm.....	124	100	25	19
Open country.....	53	100	19	13
Village.....	84	100	32	18
Both sexes.....	545	100	30	22
Farm.....	266	100	24	18
Open country.....	124	100	32	22
Village.....	155	100	40	28

X<sup>2</sup> SRD = 27.95; d.f. = 7; p < .01  
 X<sup>2</sup> SD = 4.58; d.f. = 1; p < .05  
 X<sup>2</sup> RD = 11.99; d.f. = 2; p < .01  
 (Chi-square based on responses concerning attendance or non-attendance.)

**TABLE 16—College plans of high school seniors by net family income**

Net family income	College plans			
	Total		Attend	Not attend
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Under \$2,000.....	47	100	28	72
\$2,000—2,999.....	65	100	34	66
\$3,000—3,999.....	108	100	28	72
\$4,000—5,999.....	171	100	36	64
\$6,000 and over.....	75	100	33	67
No answer and don't know.....	79	100	19	81
Total.....	545	100	31	69

$X^2 = 2.78$ ; d.f. = 4;  $p < .05$

(The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

four of 10 for those whose fathers have any high school education, and to over one-half for those whose fathers have attended college.

Since certain occupations normally require training or education beyond high school, those students who name one of these occupations as the one they are considering as a career should also plan to attend college. An examination of the relationship between educational plans and the occupation being considered shows that this is, in fact, the case. For instance, nine of 10 of those students who name one of the

**TABLE 17—College plans of high school seniors by fathers' education**

Father's education	College plans			
	Total		Attend	Not attend
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than 5 years.....	11	100	18	82
5-7 years.....	27	100	19	81
8 years.....	207	100	23	77
9-11 years.....	81	100	35	65
High school graduates.....	94	100	43	57
1-3 years college.....	30	100	53	47
College graduate.....	21	100	52	48
No answer and don't know.....	74	100	23	77
Total.....	545	100	31	69

$X^2 = 26.00$ ; d.f. = 6;  $p < .01$

(The "no answer" and "don't know" responses were excluded in the computation of chi-square.)

traditional professions as the occupation seriously considered also say that they plan to attend college. On the other hand, of the 33 students who name farming as the occupation they are considering, only one plans to attend college.

Of all the females who say that they intend to enter college, 69 percent also say that they intend to enter one of the professions, generally teaching; and 96 percent name some kind of white-collar job as their occupation. For males, 58 percent of all those who intend to go to college name a profession as the job they are most seriously considering, and 73 percent of them name some kind of white-collar occupation. The difference between males and females is largely accounted for by the fact that about one-fifth of the males who intend to enter a skilled occupation also intend to go to college, while none of the females respond in this way.

Of the four factors examined, only the educational status of the father and the occupational choice of the student were significantly associated with the students' plans to attend college. The lack of a significant association between family income and father's occupation and the students' college plans is unexpected and requires some discussion.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps most important are the reservations concerning the accuracy of the students' reports of net family income. Valid data on income are difficult to obtain even from the head of the household, and much more difficult to obtain from the child. The same comment may be made in regard to occupational data; although in the latter case, the greatest difficulty is the relatively large proportion of unclassifiable and "don't know" responses.

A second qualification has been mentioned earlier: The data refer to the plans of the student, and not to actual enrollment in college. Neither do the data supply any information on the *amount* of further education.

Some speculative comments may be made concerning the reasons why income and occupational status — both of which bear a functional relationship to college attendance — were found not to be significant for the students studied. One suggestion is that the desirability of college attendance is clear to high school seniors—regardless of the social and economic position of their families. The increase in the proportion of the population which attends college, together with

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<sup>13</sup>For some contrary findings, see: *Costs of Attending College*. Bulletin 1957. No. 9. U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. 1957.

changes in the occupational and industrial structure of U. S. society, as well as the current emphasis on the importance of technical and scientific training, have probably served to emphasize the social and economic benefits which are generally assumed to be associated with higher education.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the finding that family income and occupation of the father are not significantly associated with the students' college plans, the importance of the educational status of the father is clear. Also evident is the students' relatively realistic assessment of the necessity for college training for entry into certain occupations.

## SUMMARY

This bulletin is the first report on the results of a study of the educational, occupational, and residential plans of high school seniors. The research, conducted in the spring of 1958, was a cooperative project between the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The results reported here deal with the first part of the study, that concerning the high school seniors in four counties (Clare, Gladwin, Missaukee, and Osceola) in Michigan. Information on the students' expectations and aspirations was obtained from a schedule administered to seniors in all but one of the high schools in the four-county area. The 545 seniors who completed the class-room-administered schedule comprised about 83 percent of all seniors enrolled in the area high schools.

The area in which the study was conducted was completely rural. It was sufficiently removed from urban areas to minimize the direct effect of urban influences. Agriculture was the dominant industry, but the area had been characterized by a declining number of farms between 1950 and 1954, and by net outmigration between 1950 and 1957.

About one-half of all the students were farm residents, about one in five lived in towns or villages, and the remainder lived in rural-nonfarm areas. The median income of the students' families was about \$4,000 in 1957. About 3 of 10 of the students' fathers were farm

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<sup>14</sup>It should be pointed out that the meaning and significance of a college education have also changed. As the proportion of the population with a college background has increased, the meaning and distinction attached to a college degree have changed.

operators, and comprised the largest single occupational group. The great majority of all parents were native born—about two-thirds were born in Michigan.

Despite the fact that most of the students were favorably disposed toward their community as a place to live following graduation and after marriage, seven of 10 of the students reported that they planned to leave the community following the summer. In general, farm males were most favorably disposed toward the community, and town and village females were least favorable. The reasons most often given for leaving the community were attendance at college, and (for males) military service.

While the majority of all students reported either they were eager to leave the community or would probably leave the community, a majority also said that they would be willing to remain in the community if jobs were available.

Information on the type of community preferred showed that they generally preferred to live in the same type of area as that in which they were presently living. Most of the students who named a specific area in which they planned to live named an area within the state.

When asked about the job they were considering seriously, about four of 10 males named some type of white-collar job, as did almost 7 of 10 females. Only one in 10 of the males named farming as the job they were considering seriously.

Thirty percent of the students said that they planned to attend college, and for the most part the college named was a tax-supported Michigan college or university. Neither the income level of the student's family, as reported by the student, nor the occupation of the student's father was significantly associated with plans to attend college. However, there was a close association between the education of the father and the occupational choice of the student on the one hand and plans to attend college on the other. Male students were more likely to plan to attend college than females, and farm residents were less likely to report plans to attend college than either open country or town and village residents.

