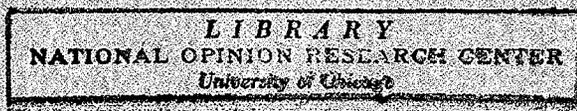
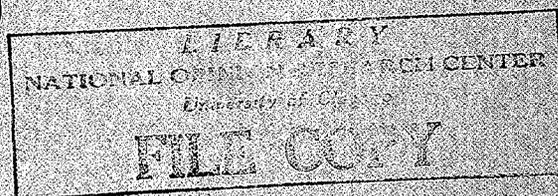


What . . . Where . . . Why . . . Do People Read?

**Highlights of a Survey Made for
The American Library Association
and 17 Cooperating City Libraries**



**NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**

Report No. 28



50 cents

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SURVEY AIMS AND SCOPE

To study the functioning of the public library as a personal service organization and as a civic institution, the National Opinion Research Center, University of Denver, in January, 1945, made a 17-city survey for the American Library Association and 17 cooperating city libraries. The cities where public libraries cooperated with the American Library Association in sponsoring the survey are: Atlanta, Baltimore, Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Hartford (Connecticut), Houston, Kansas City (Missouri), Louisville, Milwaukee, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland (Oregon), St. Louis, San Francisco, and Seattle.

To obtain a scientifically accurate cross-section of opinion in each of the 17 cities, trained NORC interviewers talked with a typical miniature of the civilian adult population in each city (excluding suburban areas), including the proper proportion of men and women, adults under and over 40, and persons in every standard-of-living bracket. The total number of interviews conducted in the 17 cities was 2,114. This number is sufficient to be statistically reliable within 3.5 per cent in 997 surveys out of 1,000.

Summary

Reading is a favorite diversion for two out of every five adults in the 17 cities included in the survey, NORC found. Most people spend more time reading newspapers and magazines than reading books. When popular reading interests and preferences are studied more closely, it is found that adults say they prefer non-fiction to fiction (though adults who get most of their reading matter from public libraries prefer fiction) and are more interested in subjects such as human behavior and interesting personalities than in more specialized areas like politics or poetry.

A third of the public — the largest single group — say they buy most of the books they read, while about a fourth get most of their books from libraries. Branch libraries are somewhat more popular than main libraries. About a third of adults interviewed in the 17-city survey have library cards, and about the same proportion have visited the public library during the past year. The major reasons why people do not use public libraries more, the survey shows, are lack of time, lack of interest, inconvenient library location, or because they secure reading material elsewhere.

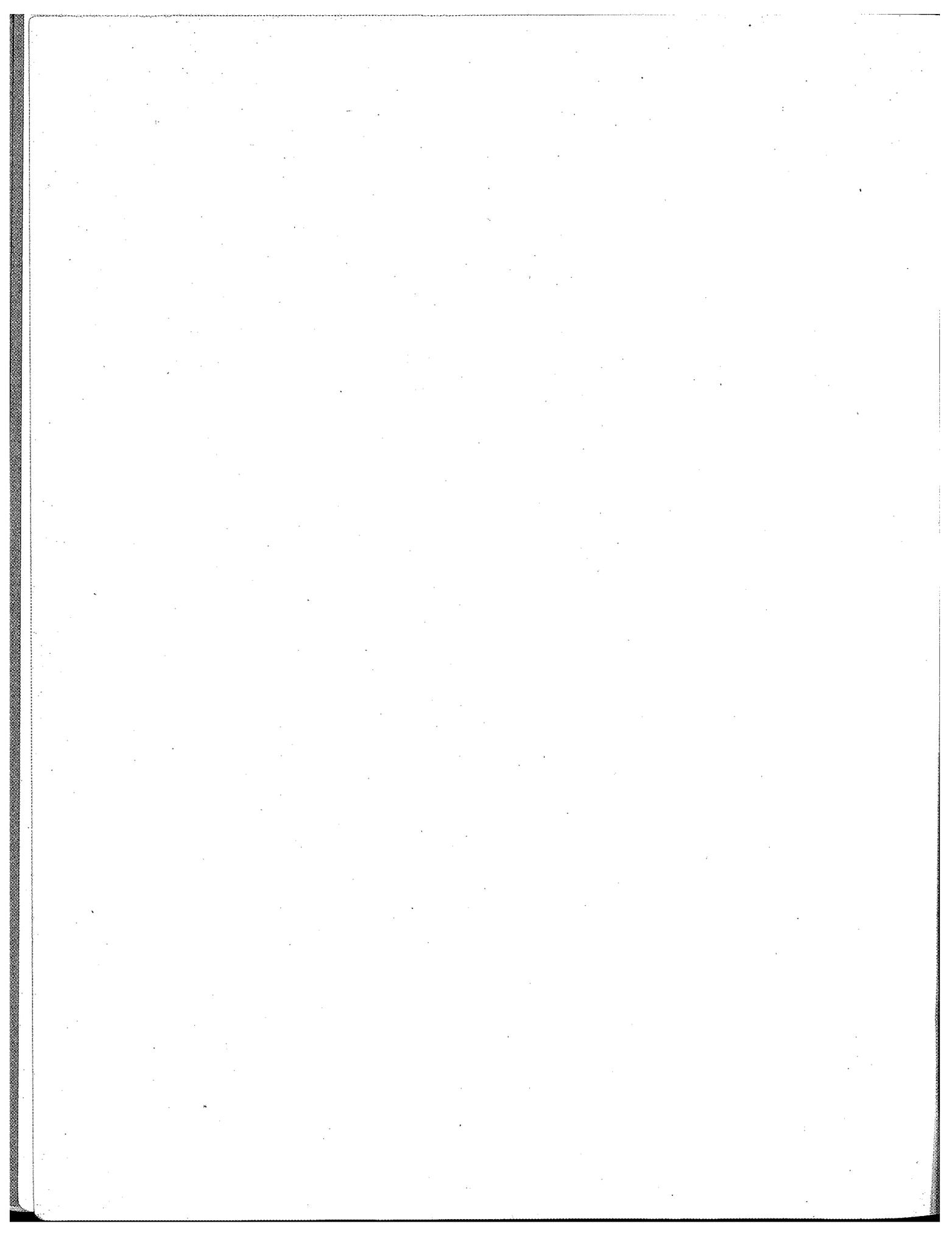
Typical of a marked lack of popular information about public libraries and their services is the fact that only one adult in five is familiar with "pay books," and only two in five know that some types of information can be secured by telephoning the library. (Only half of these have actually used the library telephone service.) Two persons in five know that public libraries offer services other than lending books, with reference resources most often mentioned, followed by newspapers and periodicals, educational services, and those services designed especially for children. A majority of adults have, at some time or other, used public library book lending services. Only a minority have availed themselves of any other single service. Replies to another question indicate that people would rather look for their own books than ask a librarian's help.

People know comparatively little about library finances, the 17-city survey shows. Almost two out of three do not know whether or not their public libraries need more money, and almost half will not even hazard a guess as to where their public libraries secure their revenue.

Only a minority of those interviewed report that they have ever been unable to get something they wanted from the library. The most common difficulty seems to be that too few copies of popular books are available at public libraries. Asked what changes they would like to see made in the public library, people most frequently mention the need for more and newer books, both fiction and non-fiction, and for more or enlarged branch libraries.

Library publicity, either newspaper or radio, reaches only a minority of adults in the cities surveyed. And, while a majority believe the public library to be a valuable civic institution, most consider the library to be of only minor importance in their personal lives.

The effect of wartime conditions which prevailed at the time the survey was made is reflected in people's reactions to several of the questions asked in the survey.



Part I

What Are People's Reading Interests and Habits?

A number of questions included in the survey were designed to explore the reading habits and preferences of adults. Significantly:

41% of adults consider reading one of their favorite spare-time activities.

56% spend an average of an hour a day or more reading newspapers.

32% say they spend at least an hour a day reading books.

Adults who buy their books tend to prefer non-fiction to fiction, as does the general public; library patrons like fiction slightly better than non-fiction.

Reading as a Diversion

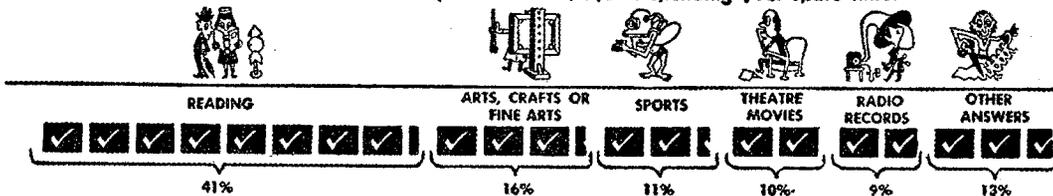
This study reveals that more than two-fifths—41 per cent—of the adult cross-section interviewed in the 17 cities name reading as one of their favorite ways of spending their spare time. More people name reading than any other single type of spare-time activity. The question:

"What is one of your favorite ways of spending your spare time?"

Reading	37%
Reading combined with other activities.....	4
	41%
Art and music interests, handcrafts.....	16
Sports and out-of-door activities; dancing, gardening.....	11
Theatre, movies, concerts.....	10
Listening to the radio, playing records.....	9
Other activities, including church and club work, lectures, study courses, etc.	13
	59%
	100%

READING FAVORITE SPARE TIME DIVERSION OF MANY AMERICANS

QUESTION: What is one of your favorite ways of spending your spare time?



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Approximately the same percentages of men, women, and adults under and over 40 consider reading a favorite spare-time activity, the survey shows. Persons in the more privileged educational, economic, and occupational strata indicate a considerably stronger interest in reading than do those less privileged. For example, reading is listed as a favorite diversion by 62 per cent of those who have attended college but only 43 per cent of those who have attended high school and 33 per cent of people with no more than an eighth grade education or no formal schooling at all.

Every person interviewed in the survey, regardless of whether or not he considered reading to be one of his **favorite** spare-time activities, was asked to estimate the approximate amount of time he devoted to reading **newspapers and magazines** and to reading **books**.

A 56 per cent majority of adults report that they spend at least an hour a day on the average (7 or more hours per week) reading newspapers and magazines.

Only 22 per cent spend as much time reading **books**, and **almost half the public—44 per cent—spend only a negligible amount of time** (no more than ½ hour per week on an average) reading **books**.

NORC asked:

"In an average week, about how much time do you usually spend reading newspapers and magazines? And about how much time do you usually spend reading books?"

	Newspapers and Magazines	Books
½ hour a week or less.....	3%	44%
1-2 hours per week ¹	12%	19% ²
3-6 hours per week.....	29	15
Total percentage reading from 1 hour per week to 1 hour per day.....	41%	34%
7-13 hours per week.....	39	14
14 hours per week or more.....	17	8
Total percentage reading 1 hour per day or more	56%	22%
	100%	100%

It is significant that 41 per cent of those with a college background—but only 13 per cent of those who have never gone beyond grade school—say that they spend at least an hour a day reading **books**.

On the other hand, 57 per cent of persons who have never gone beyond the eighth grade, 37 per cent of those with some high school training, and 21 per cent of the college-educated say they **never** read books or devote no more than half an hour a week to such reading. However, more than half of those in all three educational groups spend at least an hour a day reading **newspapers and magazines**.

While women tend to spend somewhat more time reading books than men do, men devote considerably more time than women to reading newspapers and magazines. For example, 21 per cent of the men interviewed—in contrast to 14 per cent of the women—spend two hours a day or more perusing the press and periodicals. Persons 40 and over spend somewhat less time reading books and somewhat more time reading newspapers and magazines than do younger adults.

Interests and Preferences

Of the adult public as a whole in the 17 survey cities, more people say they prefer **non-fiction** than say they prefer fiction. **Fiction**, however, is more popular with women, younger adults, the high-school educated, and people who depend on the public library for most of the books they read.³ The question included a brief explanation of the terms "fiction" and "non-fiction":

¹The "One-half-hour-a-week or less" group includes many replying "None." Persons estimating their reading at from 35 minutes to an hour and a half per week were counted in the "One hour" category, those reading from one hour and 35 minutes to two hours and a half were counted in the "Two hour" category, and so on.

²Includes 2 per cent who answered "Very little."

³Many frequently used reference books (non-fiction) cannot be taken from the public library. As already mentioned, the present study covered adults, that is, persons 21 years and over, only. All findings, including those regarding users of public libraries, refer to adults only. The younger clients of public libraries—persons under 21 years—are not covered by the survey.

"Which do you read most often . . . FICTION, such as novels or short stories . . . or NON-FICTION, such as articles or books that deal with facts?"

	Non-Fiction	Fiction	Both about the Same	Undecided	
All adults interviewed.....	45%	35%	16%	4%	=100%
Those buying most of the books they read	51	35	12	2	
Those getting most of the books they read from the public library.....	38	41	21	*	
Men	58	24	13	5	
Women	33	44	19	4	
Adults 40 and over.....	52	27	16	5	
Adults 21-39	35	45	17	3	
Attended college	51	30	20	*	
Eighth grade or less.....	47	30	14	8	
Attended high school.....	39	42	17	2	

Another question was designed to ascertain what subjects, aside from fiction, people are most interested in. Interviewers handed each respondent a list of topics from which to choose the most interesting subject and the least interesting, in his opinion. The adult cross-section indicated that they considered the **most** interesting subjects to be "Human behavior," "Interesting personalities," and "Homemaking"; the least interesting—"Politics" and "Poetry." The question:

"Which one of these subjects do you think you would find the MOST interesting? Which one do you think would be the LEAST interesting?"

	Most	Least
Human behavior.....	20%	3%
Interesting personalities	19	1
Foreign countries	11	6
Information about your work.....	9	2
Homemaking	18	8
Politics	7	27
Religion	10	6
Poetry	2	26
Science and invention.....	8	14
Undecided	4	7
	108% ¹	100%

A comparison of the answers of the various population groups studied shows that people with a limited education are more apt to be interested in homemaking and religion, while those with a more extensive educational background tend to prefer books on human behavior, interesting personalities, or vocational subjects. Further analysis indicates that, as might be expected, men tend to be much more interested than women in such subjects as politics, foreign countries, vocational information, and science and invention. Women are somewhat more interested than men in human behavior, interesting personalities, and religion, and—naturally—very much more interested in homemaking. Although adults of all ages have many tastes in common, the older group show a greater preference for politics and religion.

*Less than 0.5 per cent.

¹Because a number of respondents make more than one suggestion, the percentages total more than 100.

Part II

How Much Do Adults Use the Public Library?

Does the library satisfy people's reading needs? How much do people use the public library? Why do some people use the library while others do not? In an effort to answer these and other pertinent questions regarding the library reading habits of the **adult** public in the 17 cities surveyed, NORC asked questions on several aspects of the problem.

Where Do People Get Their Books?

The largest single group of the adult public buy the books they read, and the second largest group depend chiefly on libraries, according to this question:

"Do you usually get most of the books you read from the library, borrow them from friends, buy them, or get them some place else?"

(If "Library") **"Do you usually get them from a public or rental library?"**

- 32% **buy** the books they read.
- 26 use **libraries**. These include:
 - 18% who get most of their books from the **public library**,
 - 5 who usually use **rental libraries**,
 - 1 who use **both**, and
 - 2 who secure part of their books from the library and part from other sources.
- 18 **borrow** most of their books from friends.
- 4 get the books they read somewhere else.
- 20 say they don't read books.

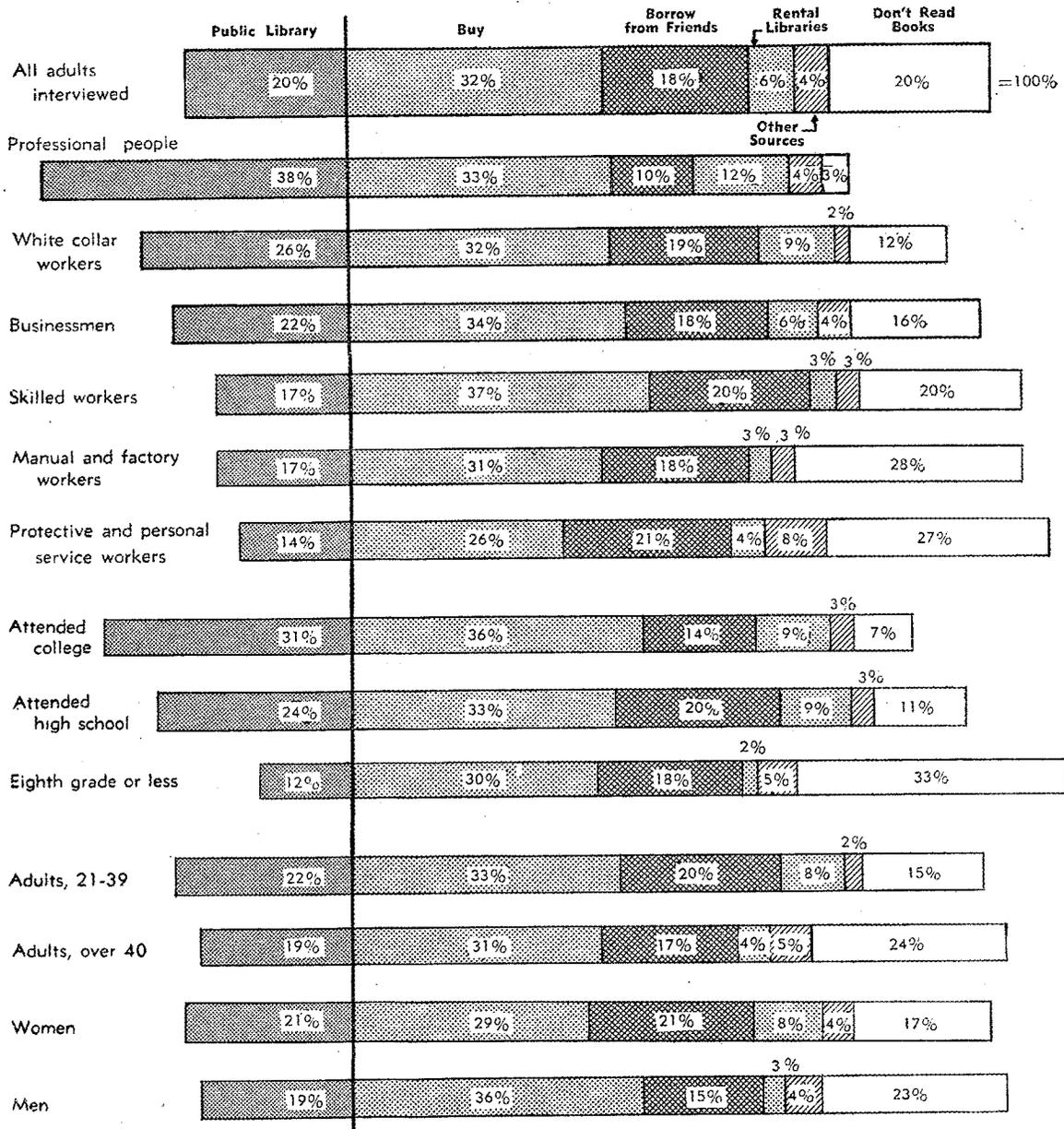
100%

On a previous question (see page 6) 44 per cent of those interviewed said they read books either very little or not at all. On the present question less than half of the 44 per cent—20 per cent of the total—reply that they never read books; the remainder—24 per cent—indicate where they get books on the rare occasions when they read them.

Of this 24 per cent who may be termed "occasional readers," about one in ten depends on the library for reading material.

Among people who habitually spend two hours a day or more reading books, more than half get most of their books from the library.

WHERE DO ADULTS GET MOST OF THEIR BOOKS?



HOW POPULAR ARE BRANCH LIBRARIES?

Branch libraries, perhaps because there are more of them, prove to be somewhat more popular than the main libraries. NORC's question read:

"Do you usually go to the main library or to one of the branch libraries?"

Branch library	37 %
Main library.....	29
Both	5
Neither one	2
Don't use library.....	27 ¹
	<hr/> 100 %

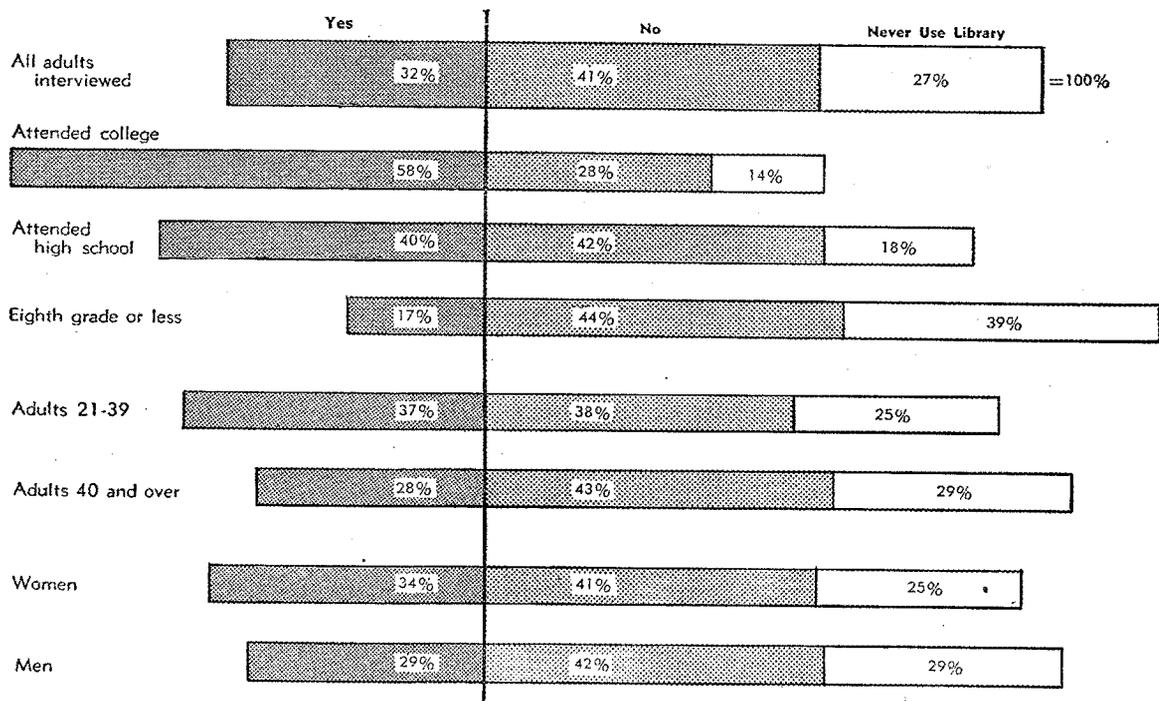
In contrast to the adult public as a whole, persons more privileged educationally, economically, or occupationally use the main library oftener than branch libraries. More women patronize branch libraries than use the main library, but about as many men use one as the other. Of younger adults, 41 per cent use branch libraries, while 28 per cent patronize the main libraries; among those 40 and over the difference is much less—33 to 31 per cent.

WHAT ADULTS HAVE LIBRARY CARDS?

In analyzing people's reading habits, especially in relation to the use of the public library, NORC found that 32 per cent of the adult cross-section report that they hold library cards. Had the survey included persons under 21 years of age, the proportion holding library cards would doubtless have been larger. Percentages holding library cards vary widely among the various population groups studied with the sharpest contrast between the 58 per cent of the college educated and the 17 per cent of those with an eighth grade education or less.

The question:

"Have you a library card?"



¹This question was asked only of library patrons.

Those replying that they did not have cards were asked:

"What would you say is one of the main reasons you don't have a card?"

Don't need a card, do reading elsewhere, gets books from other sources.....	19%
Don't have time to read, too busy to go to the library	21
Don't read books, don't want a card, don't like to read	16
Other members of the family have cards, use family members' cards	13
Procrastinated—will get one; card expired and has not been renewed, lost card.....	7
Too inconvenient to use library—time limit on keeping books, not open Sundays, evenings, etc., get poor service or cannot get books wanted.....	4
Too inconvenient to get to library, because of location, transportation	5
Prefer magazines and newspapers at home.....	3
Prefer other activities: recreation, work.....	1
Other reasons.....	9
Undecided	2
	<hr/> 100% ¹

How Often Do People Visit the Library?

Replies to another NORC question indicate that 33 per cent of the adults interviewed in the 17 survey cities had visited the public library in their city within the past year:

"When was the last time you were in the public library in this city?"

Within the last year.....	33%
From 13 months to 5 years ago.....	16
From 5 to 10 years ago.....	9
10 years ago or longer.....	15
Never	27
Don't know.....	*
	<hr/> 100%

It will be noted that this question asked respondents when they were last "in the **public library in this city.**" Therefore, it is possible for a person to have patronized either some other library in his city (privately run, university library, etc.) or a library in a previous place of residence and still reply "Never" to this question.

Those replying "Within the last year" were asked:

"About how often do you go to the library . . . about twice a year, once a month, or how often?"

Once a week or oftener.....	17%
From once a week to once a month.....	36
From once a month to once a year.....	44
Less than once a year.....	3
Don't know.....	*
	<hr/> 100% ¹

Why Are Libraries Not Used More?

In an attempt to ascertain the answer to the all-important question "Why don't more people use the public library?" adult library patrons who said that they had not been in the public library

¹Less than 0.5 per cent.

²Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of 100 per cent for purposes of easy comparison.

during the preceding month were asked why **they as individuals** did not use the public library more often. Earlier in the survey every respondent was asked a similar question posed in terms of why **people in general** do not use the library more.

When the responses to the two questions are compared, it is seen that people are more prone to give as their **own reasons** that they are **"too busy"** or **"secure books from other sources."** But people are more likely to attribute to **others** such reasons as **disinterest**, finding the **library location inconvenient**, or **dissatisfaction with library services**. The comparison:

"What do you think is one of the main reasons that YOU¹ don't use the library more than you do?"

"What do you think is one of the main reasons that MORE PEOPLE¹ don't use public libraries?"

	Individual Respondent	Other People
Too busy: don't have time to read; work odd hours..	35%	16%
Other sources: get reading material elsewhere; read magazines and newspapers at home.....	22	10
Lack of interest: don't like to read; haven't formed library habit, lazy	11	22
Inconvenient location: of library or branch; undesirable location; restricted transportation.....	12	12
Library service unsatisfactory:		
Number or type of books available inadequate....	4%	4%
Inconvenient time schedules, library not open evenings, Sundays, holidays.....	1	1
Loan periods too short.....	1	3
Staff or reference materials inadequate.....	*	1
Too few branches; branch service inadequate.....	*	3
	6%	12%
Prefer other activities: movies, radio, sports, dancing, etc.	4	8
Unfamiliar with library and its services.....	*	9
Other reasons	9	3
Undecided	1	8
	100% ²	100%

In Their Own Words

What people think and believe about a situation often affects their actions far more than do the actual facts of the situation itself. For example, if a person thinks there is a danger of catching a contagious disease from a book borrowed from a public library, that idea determines his actions, no matter what the truth of the situation may be.

Some of the individual remarks reported in this section may have little or nothing to do with the actual situation, but these ideas are of interest and **importance** because they are what people think and believe—what determines action.

Responses to these questions, as well as to several others, suggest that wartime conditions prevailing at the time of the survey apparently reduced to a considerable extent adults' time for reading, and that wartime working schedules, specifically, made it difficult for many people to patronize public libraries.

Because so many explanations as to why people **themselves** do not go to the library oftener fall into definite patterns, and because this question was asked of only a part of the cross-section, the majority of the answers quoted represent ideas regarding **other people's** failure to make greater use of the public library.

¹Less than 0.5 per cent.

²Capitalization did not appear on original NORC questionnaire.

³Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section (those not visiting the public library during the month preceding the survey), they are presented in terms of 100 per cent for purposes of easy comparison. Multiple answers were allowed on this question.

LACK OF TIME

"I don't have time to read," "I'm too busy," and "I work odd hours," were the reasons most frequently given by persons asked why they did not use their public libraries more. When speaking of other people, respondents replied in terms such as these:

"People haven't the time to go to the library. Most people are working every day and are too tired at night to go there."	Clerk, San Francisco
"People just don't have the time. People are working split hours and the radio is taking the place of books. Also the movies film all the good books."	Telephone company trouble shooter, St. Louis
"People just haven't got the time these days. Then, too, there are a lot of other amusements and they haven't gotten acquainted with the library."	Housewife, Hartford
"Folks are too busy making money these days. The war's the main reason, when you come right down to it."	Janitor, Louisville
"It is lack of time right now with so much work and war industries going on. People don't have so much time to go after and take back books."	Hospital maid, Portland, Oregon
"Few people have the time now to read. My reading time is spent over the laundry tubs—no servants."	Wife of government inspector, Atlanta
"Men don't have time to go. Libraries are all right for women and children."	Barber, Philadelphia

LACK OF INTEREST

People who answer that the public as a whole or they themselves are not interested in libraries or in reading give reactions such as these:

"I just don't read enough. I don't care much for it. I can't get interested in books."	Post office clerk, Chicago
"If the people are like me, they don't read much. I just lost interest in it since I left school."	Butcher's wife, Portland, Oregon
"People are not interested in reading. They have to be taught to like to read and a lot of us were not."	Wife of cleaning establishment owner, San Francisco
"I suppose other interests take people away from the good that books can give. It's the night life."	Steel worker, Philadelphia
"People 'think' they don't have time, but really they aren't interested in the library."	Wife of garage mechanic, Detroit
"I think it's lack of interest. People are too lazy to go to the public library when there are rental libraries on each corner."	Wife of druggist, Newark

OTHER SOURCES OF READING MATERIAL

Many people prefer to get their reading material from sources other than the public library—they buy their books from stores or **book clubs**, they **borrow** from friends, or they patronize **rental libraries**, according to the replies of respondents in the 17 cities included in the survey:

"People buy their own books, they belong to a 'book-of-the-month club,' or they use rental libraries."	Wife of retired civil engineer, Baltimore
"People don't have occasion to use the public library. They buy or borrow books."	Advertising man, Philadelphia
"Because of book clubs. Present education is directed toward more modern reading than they have in the public library."	Registered nurse, Philadelphia
"There are too many other sources of reading matter handier than public libraries."	Druggist, Seattle

Some people are satisfied with reading **newspapers and magazines**, replies such as the following suggest:

"I think too many people read only newspapers and magazines and don't get the library habit."	Daughter of factory fireman, Buffalo
"There are magazines covering any subject one is interested in. People like the variety of subjects covered in most magazines."	Oil pipe line telegrapher, Houston

INCONVENIENT LOCATION

This point is raised by some of the people interviewed in every one of the 17 cities. Answers stress the inconvenience or distance of the main library and branch libraries with frequent reference to the need for more branches. Transportation and parking difficulties are also mentioned. For example:

"The libraries are inconvenient to reach. If there were more branches, more people would take advantage of them."

Wife of oil company attorney,
Houston

"There are too few libraries. The distance is too great for many people."

Bomber plant worker, Kansas City

"Mostly I'd say because the libraries are in out of the way places. In other words, they're not distributed well in the city, and people can't get to them—lots of people at least."

Newspaper advertising man,
Chicago

"I think people don't use the libraries more because of the distance they have to travel from their homes to the libraries."

School janitor, Louisville

"I think people don't go to the library because of its location. We are a bit lazy and would like it near our doorstep."

Grocer, Milwaukee

"I think people don't use the library more because of the inconvenient location and lack of parking facilities, both at the main building and our neighborhood branches."

Accountant, Buffalo

"Transportation is too bad to get to the libraries. Private libraries are nearer."

Artist, San Francisco

"I think people don't use the library mostly because it's downtown in a congested area and is inaccessible—no parking space."

Garage owner, Portland, Oregon

LIBRARY SERVICES

Many different suggestions for improved library services are implied in answers explaining why people don't use the library more. Some replies emphasize the need for **more and newer books**:

"New books aren't at the library when you want them. There are a lot of cheap editions available. A lot of people don't read the kind of books they have in the library."

Wife of business executive, Hart-
ford

"People are earning more money and can afford to buy the latest books without waiting, as they would have to do at the library."

Lawyer's wife, Buffalo

"Libraries don't carry enough present-day literature of interest to the public in general."

Wife of druggist, Pittsburgh

"Most people read fiction and it's rarely available at the library. They don't have enough copies of new books."

Mining engineer, St. Louis

Other people think that library **restrictions** and so-called "red tape" discourage some potential users:

"There are too many restrictions at the library, such as fines and time limits on books."

Rooming house manager, Houston

"Most people prefer to buy their own books; then they can keep them as long as they want and loan them to their friends."

Nurse, Hartford

"People are afraid they will neglect to take their books back and then will have a big fine to pay."

Shell grinder, Detroit

"You have to be a home owner to get a card or have a home owner sign for you. It's too much trouble."

Wife of shipyard worker, San Fran-
cisco

Still other phases of library service are mentioned in answers such as these:

"The libraries are not open late enough for people who work in the daytime."

Candy store owner, Milwaukee

"I think people don't use the library because of sanitary reasons. They are afraid of contagion. The books are frequently very soiled."

Retired engineer, Newark

"There aren't enough branches to accommodate people."

Air craft plant inspector, St. Louis
Housewife, Detroit

"There is not enough help from librarians. There is too much 'shush' atmosphere."

Electrician, Seattle

"People didn't get in the habit of going to the library when they were children. Then, too, most libraries are not open on Sunday."

Insurance clerk, Hartford

"It's confusing to look for books in a large library."

OTHER REASONS

Among the additional reasons mentioned for people's failure to use the library more are many answers suggesting the need for wider and better **library publicity** and some type of **educational program** to familiarize the public (not necessarily the respondents!) with the library facilities available. For example:

"People are not familiar with the good things they can get out of the library. The library needs more publicity."	Jeweler, Milwaukee
"I should say the reason people don't use libraries more is that the libraries don't publicize themselves enough. They make an insufficient appeal to the public."	Florist, Philadelphia
"The library is not advertised to the public enough. They should give locations of branch libraries in the newspapers and over the radio."	Real estate salesman, San Francisco
"People are not educated enough to what libraries have."	Service station operator, Seattle
"Schools neglect teaching the advantage of the library."	Waitress, Newark
"Lots of people don't know what the library is. They think it's a place where you have to pay out money."	Negro carpenter, Atlanta
"A lot of people don't know how to use the library. They don't realize that anyone can use it."	Airplane factory worker, Detroit
"There is not enough advertising. People don't know what you can get at the library."	Wife of postman, Buffalo

Some people believe that **other diversions** have a greater appeal than the public library:

"People would rather listen to the radio or to go to shows than read."	Comptometer operator, Kansas City
"The libraries have too much competition from organized amusements."	City janitor, Newark
"These days I think people get more up-to-date information over the radio."	Department manager, printing company, St. Louis
"Reading or going to the library isn't most people's idea of having a good time. They would rather do something else."	Engineer, Milwaukee

Scattered replies present such widely varying explanations as these:

"When I used to go to school, I went to the library. Now I don't go to school and I don't have any reason to go."	Truck driver, Chicago
"People never got started using the library—like me. They don't realize how much pleasure they can get from it."	Streetcar motorman, Atlanta

Part III

How Much Do People Know about Their Public Libraries?

How familiar are people with the public libraries in their cities—the working routine, the various services offered, the financing? The high percentages of "Don't know" and incorrect answers given in response to various questions in this group suggest that **many adults are poorly informed regarding their public libraries.** For example:

- 60% of the people do not know that their public libraries offer **services other than the lending of books.**
- 80% do not know whether or not their libraries have collections of **"pay books."**
- 61% do not know that some kinds of information are available from most public libraries by **telephone.**
- AND
- 63% do not know whether or not their public libraries **need more money** for proper maintenance and operation.

What Library Services Do People Know and Use?

NORC used several types of questions to discover how familiar the adult public in the 17 survey cities was with the various services available at the modern public library. It is significant that persons with a college background—the group who, according to an earlier question, also use the library most—are more familiar with its services and program than are people who have never gone beyond high school. Younger adults, too, evidence greater knowledge of the public library than do persons 40 and over.

RENTAL COLLECTIONS AND TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICE

Although rental collections are taken as a matter of course in almost all city libraries today, only one adult in five is familiar with "pay books." Even among persons who have attended college, only a minority answer correctly. The question:

"From what you know about the public library in this city, can you take out any book free of charge, or do you have to pay to take out some books?"

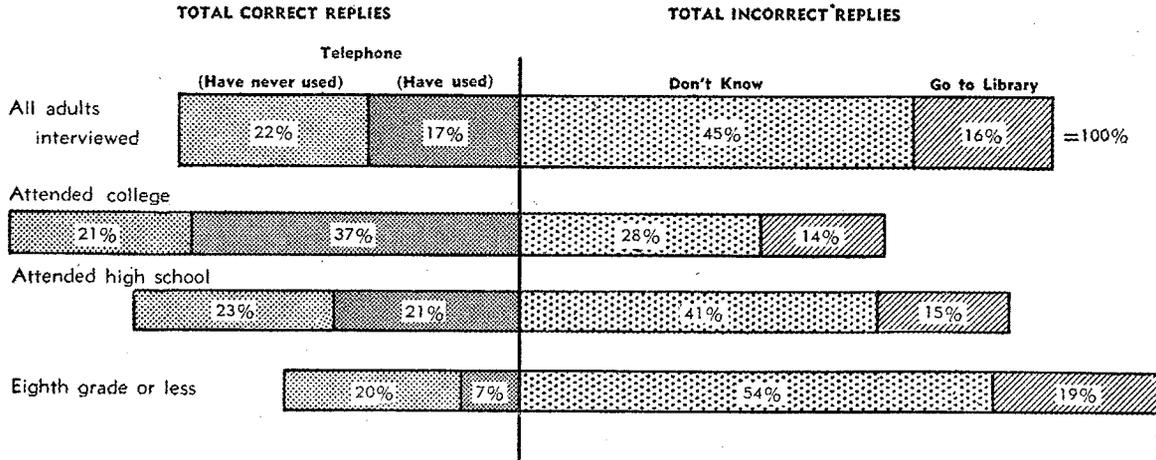
Any book free.....	54%
Don't know	26
Total incorrect replies.....	80%
Pay for some books (correct).....	20
	<hr/>
	100%

Almost twice as many—39 per cent—are familiar with the library telephone service, although less than half of these have actually secured information from their public libraries by telephone.

NORC asked:

"Do you know if you can get some kinds of information from the public library in this city by telephoning, or do you always have to go to the library to find out what you want to know?"

(If "Telephone") **"Have you ever telephoned the library for information?"**



KNOWLEDGE OF LIBRARY SERVICES.

A more general question reveals that only 40 per cent of the adult public included in the survey know that their public libraries offer services other than lending books. Among these additional services available, the reference room and related research and technical services are best known, followed by the provision of newspapers and periodicals. NORC first asked this question:

"Besides lending books, does the public library in this city offer any other services, as far as you know?"

	All Adults Interviewed	Attended College	Attended High School	Eighth Grade or Less
Don't know	42%	18%	35%	55%
No	18	11	16	23
Total incorrect replies	60%	29%	51%	78%
Yes (correct)	40	71	49	22
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Those replying "Yes" were asked:

"What are they?"

Reference room and service, research, technical and advisory services	50%
Newspapers, periodicals	23
Classes and instruction, lectures, book reviews, radio broadcasts.....	17
Children's programs, games, stories, drama, toy lending.....	14
Reading room, outdoor reading roof garden, use of rooms for meetings	15
Art museum, music.....	10
Aid in selecting books, study courses, outlines.....	6
Exhibitions, old books, historical material.....	4
City tours, travel bureau, general city information.....	1
Directories: Who's Who , buying guides, and others.....	3
Mobile branches	2
Braille books, records, and other materials for the blind.....	1
Clipping service	*
War bulletins, world news.....	1
Other answers	2
Undecided	3
	152% ¹

*Less than 0.5 per cent.

¹Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of a 100 per cent base for purposes of easy comparison.

USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Another question was designed to ascertain what library services people had actually used. **Persons previously saying that they had never used the public library in the city surveyed may have answered this question from experience gained either in other libraries in their city, such as university or other privately-run libraries, or in libraries elsewhere.** A card listing library services was handed each respondent, and the interviewer asked:

"Will you look over this list of library services and tell me which ones you have used?"

	All Adults Interviewed	Attended College	Attended High School	Eighth Grade or Less
Book lending.....	73 %	86 %	84 %	57 %
Reference department	39	76	48	17
Magazine section	24	45	29	13
Children's department	22	29	27	15
Newspaper room	18	38	21	10
Reading advisory service.....	10	22	10	6
Other services	4	9	5	2
Undecided	1	*	*	1
None	17	3	7	31

Because many people had used more than one library service, the percentages total considerably more than 100.

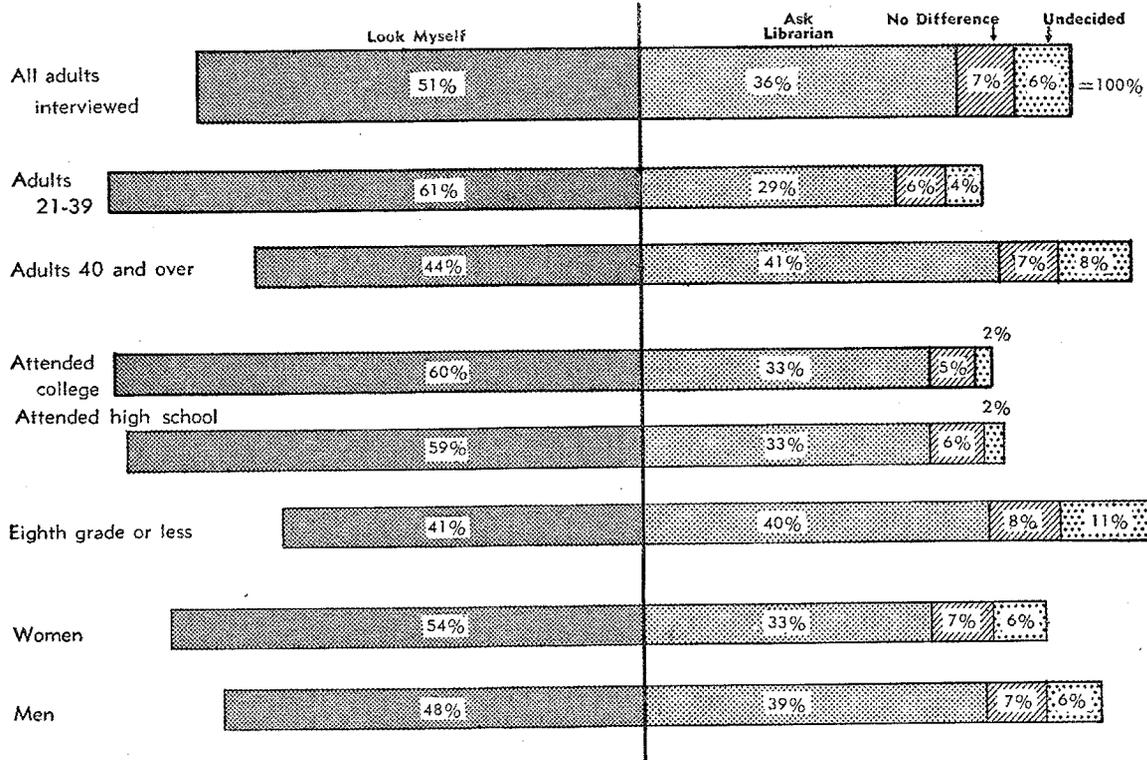
Perhaps because of school training, significantly larger proportions of younger (21-39) than of older (40 and over) adults have used the book-lending, reference, magazine, and children's department facilities of the public library in their city. Some 77 per cent of women library patrons and 67 per cent of the men have borrowed books from a public library. More than twice as many women as men—30 to 11 per cent—have used the children's department of their public library, while men make greater use of the newspaper room. However, almost two-thirds of **all** the men interviewed and more than half of the women do not know that the library offers services other than the lending of books.

SELF SERVICE ?

In every population group studied more people prefer to look for their own books in the public library than like to depend on a librarian's help. Younger adults, however, are much more apt to be independent in this respect than are those 40 and over. Persons who have attended high school or college are also more apt to like to look for their own books than are those who have not gone beyond the eighth grade in school. The question:

*Less than 0.5 per cent.

"In a library would you rather look for a book yourself, or would you rather ask a librarian to help you find it?"

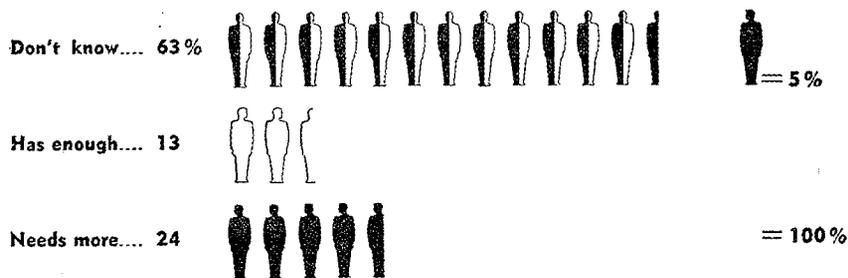


What about Library Finances?

A majority of the adults interviewed in the survey are uncertain as to whether or not their public libraries need more funds. Many do not know what sources of revenue support current library budgets.

The first question in the series read:

"As far as you know, does the public library in this city have as much money as it needs, or does it need more money?"



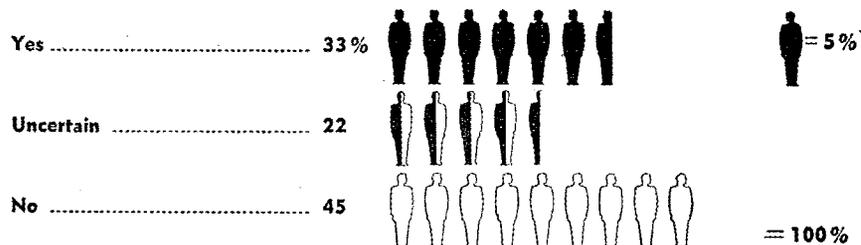
While age and sex make little difference in answers to this question, economic status and educational background exert considerable influence. "The public library in this city **needs more money**" is the answer given by:

- 40% of the college-educated;
- 25% of those with high school training; and
- 19% of persons with an eighth grade education or less.
- 32% of the wealthy and prosperous;
- 28% of the middle class standard-of-living group; and only
- 15% of the poor.

In Baltimore a number of those who answered that they believed their city library was in need of money mentioned the fact that during the previous year it had been necessary to close some of the branches because of lack of funds. The wife of a distributor for bottled drinks comments: "Libraries were closed part time last fall because of a shortage of funds." A Negro dentist refers to "the predicament that occurred in Baltimore last year." "I have read that the library needs more money. Some branches have been closed because they lack funds," remarks the wife of a Navy man.

The second and third question on library finances show that, while only a minority in most groups think they know definitely where their public libraries get their money, others will hazard a guess:

"Do you know where the public library in this city gets its money?"



Of persons who have attended college, 53 per cent say they know how their public libraries are supported, 14 per cent more are uncertain but hazard a guess, and 33 per cent give a definite "No, I don't know" answer. In contrast, 52 per cent of those with no more than an eighth grade education will not even speculate on the sources of library revenue. Thirty-one per cent of the wealthy and prosperous but 57 per cent of those in the lowest standard-of-living group make no attempt even to guess as to where their public libraries get their funds.

Most public libraries are supported by city taxes, frequently supplemented by private gifts. A rather satisfactory degree of information on this point is evidenced by those who, having replied "Yes" or "Uncertain" to the previous question, were asked more specifically where their public libraries secured their funds. Many people mentioned more than one source of library revenue.

The distribution:

- 43%¹ think that their public libraries are supported by **city taxes** and city funds.
- 34 say **taxes** or **public funds** without specifying the unit of government administering them.
- 33 answer **donations, charity, endowments, or gifts.**
- 9 specify **state or federal taxes.**
- 2 say **county taxes.**
- 5 give other answers.

TO SUMMARIZE:

Although persons in all walks of life indicate a shocking lack of information about library routine and financing, those people who actually use their public libraries (including a high proportion of the better-off and better-educated) are more familiar with their libraries than are people who do not get their books from the library or those who say they do not read books at all. For example:

Of those who patronize the library:	Of those who read but secure books elsewhere:	Of those who say they do not read books:
68% do not know that charges are made on some books.	82% are not familiar with "pay books."	91% are not familiar with "pay books."
33% will not even hazard a guess on how their libraries are financed.	44% will not even hazard a guess on how their libraries are financed.	62% do not know how their libraries are supported.

¹Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of 100 per cent base for purposes of easy comparison.

Part IV

How Could Public Libraries Be Improved?

Since the survey reveals such a high degree of ignorance concerning libraries, it is not surprising that only a minority of those interviewed have helpful suggestions or constructive criticisms of library services. The suggestion most frequently offered—implied also in many answers to the questions on why the library is not used more—is that **public libraries need a better supply of new and modern books, both fiction and non-fiction.** Other answers touch on the need for **more and better-equipped branches and improved organization, equipment and services.**

Only 18 per cent of the adult public (about a third of those who actually use the library) say they have on some occasion been unable to secure what they wanted from the public library in their city. NORC interviewers asked:

"Have you ever tried to get anything from the public library in this city and not been able to get it?"

Yes.....18% No.....55% Never use library.....27%¹=100%

Of those who had been unable to get what they wanted at the library, almost half reported that the book they wanted was out when they asked for it and almost a third more replied that the library did not carry the book they were interested in. The distribution:

The library did not have . . .	
A sufficient supply of books (book wanted was out at the time)....	42%
The book desired (no specific type specified).....	28
Technical books requested.....	11
The desired reference material, periodicals, or biographies.....	6
Requested fiction, popular books, latest and most recent books....	5
Books on art, crafts, plays, or music; records.....	3
Religious books, philosophy, etc.....	1
The library did not give other services, such as equal service to Negroes and/or poor people.....	2
Don't know	2
	<hr/>
	100% ²

A somewhat more comprehensive questioning finds only 17 per cent of the adults interviewed with specific suggestions for changes they would like to see in their local libraries. College-educated people, the library's best customers, volunteer about four times as many suggestions as do persons with no more than an eighth grade education. The question:

"Can you think of any changes you would like to see made in the public library in this city?"

Yes.....17% No.....83%=100%

¹The question itself was asked only of library patrons.

²Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of 100 per cent for purposes of easy comparison.

A third of those replying "Yes" would like to see **more books and different kinds of books** available to library patrons. Another third would like to see **more or enlarged branches**. The question read:

"What would you like to see done?"

1. Books	
More . . .	
Modern, up-to-date books, best sellers.....	17%
Reference, technical, religious, text books.....	6
Children's books	3
Magazines and newspapers.....	1
Get rid of . . .	
Obsolete material and books.....	1
Books on communism, religion and others: indicat- ing censorship of free press.....	1
Other suggestions	4
	33%
2. Branches	
More branches, or enlarge present ones.....	26
Better equipment, renovation, different and more modern books, clean up present supply, new de- partments	2
Other suggestions, including mobile branches, branches for Negroes.....	2
	30%
3. Organization	
System enlarged, made more extensive, to cover more fields	14
Entire system modernized, simplified, elimination of "red tape"	2
Other suggestions, including making cards good at all branches, allowing Negroes to get books.....	4
	20%
4. Buildings	
Entire new buildings needed.....	10
Improvements such as better lighting, rest rooms, elevators, renovating	3
More comfortable chairs and other furnishings needed	1
Other suggestions, including moving to new location, better parking facilities, etc.....	4
	18%
5. Services	
More efficient operation; better grouping guide or index, better service in reference room, quicker acquisition of new books.....	4
Keep open evenings, Sundays, holidays, mornings.....	4
More advertising of books and services.....	3
New departments added: music, art; lectures and speakers	3
New or larger children's department.....	1
Other suggestions.....	3
	18%
6. Staff	
Personnel increased, better paid.....	2
More efficient or specially qualified for certain de- partments	2
Other suggestions, including Negro librarians.....	1
	5%
	124% ¹

¹Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of a 100 per cent base for purposes of easy comparison. Because some respondents make more than one suggestion for improvements, the answers total more than 100 per cent.

In Their Own Words

Many people who suggest changes they would like to see instituted in the public libraries of the 17 cities surveyed brought out the same points mentioned in explaining why the libraries were not used more, particularly requests for more and better books and branches. More emphasis, however, is placed on suggestions regarding library organization and physical equipment.

BOOKS A third of those making suggestions as to desirable changes want to see the libraries carry more or different types of books. A personnel director in Louisville is one of a number to answer simply: "I wish the libraries would have **more books**." An office building janitress in Houston suggests "more copies per book."

The largest group of respondents request that **more modern and up-to-date books** be placed on library shelves. Representative replies include:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| "I wish more popular new books could be purchased." | Real estate man, Baltimore |
| "I would like to see more up-to-date books in every field." | School principal, Louisville |
| "They need more copies of books more currently popular." | Auditor's wife, Pittsburgh |
| "I think the library could carry more best sellers." | Beauty operator, San Francisco |
| "I would like to see more new books in the library." | Retired railroad engineer, Buffalo |
| "I never can find a book I want. I wish they would set up a better system in best sellers." | Secretary, Atlanta |
| "I would like to have them get more copies of new books." | Grocery salesman, Kansas City |

Also emphasized is the need for more books of specific types—**reference, technical, children's books**, and others:

- | | |
|---|---|
| "I would like to see the library more adequately stocked with reference books." | Union organizer, Hartford |
| "The reference books are quite out-dated." | Druggist, Milwaukee |
| "I wish the library would have more technical books." | Electrical worker, Hartford |
| "The libraries don't have enough books on crafts and trades." | Steel worker, Philadelphia |
| "If the library carried more children's books, it would be good." | Wife of Navy yard employee, Philadelphia |
| "I wish they would put in a lot of real good books for children instead of detective stories." | Wife of shipyard worker, Portland, Oregon |
| "I would like to see the library have more religious literature. Also there are not enough cultural books and best sellers provided." | Minister, Detroit |
| "I'd like more magazines in the libraries." | Clerk, Louisville |

A few people would like to see their libraries **get rid of obsolete and undesirable books**. A rope company employee in Kansas City, for instance, answers: "I think they ought to take some of the obsolete technical stuff out and get up-to-date material." A telephone company trouble shooter in St. Louis suggests: "I wish the library would take out those old, worn-out books that no one ever reads and put in more new up-to-date books."

MORE BRANCHES From respondents in almost every city covered comes the request for **more and better equipped branches**. Many feel that the distribution of branches throughout the city could be improved. These answers are typical:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| "I think we should have more and better branches." | Insurance agent, Baltimore |
| "I think we need more branch libraries." | Surgeon, Houston |
| "I'd like to see more libraries in the communities. We have so far to go to get to one." | Machine shop worker, Chicago |
| "I think there ought to be more branches so people wouldn't have so far to go." | Building contractor, Detroit |

"I would like to see more libraries so people wouldn't have to travel all across town to get books."

"I wish we could have a branch library in our neighborhood."

"I think we should have more branches for easy accessibility. Branches don't have enough books on facts. They refer you to the main library."

"I wish they would just make the branch near here larger."

"I would like to see reading rooms with quiet in the branch libraries as in the main libraries."

"I think there should be second floor branches in the shopping district."

School janitor, Louisville

Wife of merchant seaman, San Francisco

Wholesaler, Milwaukee

Wife of retired streetcar motorman, Atlanta

Arms plant foreman, Kansas City

Proprietor of electrical supply store, Philadelphia

BUILDINGS Many respondents believe that their cities are much in need of **new and larger library buildings in better locations.** Such suggestions include:

"I'd like to have a new building for the central library."

"I would like to see a larger and more modern building."

"The library needs a new building."

"I would like to see the library moved to a better location and have a new building."

School custodian, Seattle

Carpenter's wife, Buffalo

Machine shop owner, Hartford

Loan company official, Kansas City

Suggestions for **renovation and modernization** are made also. The wife of a Buffalo businessman, for instance, says: "I think the library should have a great deal of modernization." A Seattle man recommends: "I would like to see the library building fixed up in front, made into a better looking building, more up-to-date."

Other people mention specific **physical improvements in facilities and furnishings.** For example:

"I would like to see the libraries modernize and clean up some of the shelves."

"The libraries should have better lighting and pleasanter reading rooms. They are so drab and dismal."

"I wish they would open up the windows in the library and get fresh air in and turn the lights on. It's so dim."

"I'd like to have comfortable chairs in the library, and the branches enlarged."

"I'd like to see them put in escalators instead of stairs."

Advertising man, Philadelphia

Retired automobile dealer, Chicago

Brewery clerk, St. Louis

Electrician, Seattle

Warehouse employee, Portland, Oregon

ORGANIZATION A number of those interviewed think that public library systems need **enlargement** to include more departments and fields of service. (Some of these answers are closely related to suggestions regarding the need for more branches.) An Atlanta woman, for instance, replies: "Civic pride makes me want the library enlarged." A Baltimore lawyer thinks: "The library should have more funds to do a wider scope of work." A Hartford bus driver says: "I think the library ought to be larger and have a bigger reading room and better reference room."

In Buffalo one of the suggestions most frequently made was that the two large libraries in the city be combined to form one central institution. An insurance claims adjuster put it: "I think the Public Library and the Grosvenor Reference Library should merge."

Scattered suggestions regarding organization cover a number of different points:

"I would suggest better organization."

"I would like to see the whole system modernized."

"It would be nice if you could get a book without so much red tape."

"I wish they would group the books better at the library; some books are under different categories."

"In the main library I wish they would have a more adequate guide conspicuously placed. I have difficulty finding what I want."

"The libraries have too many things kept in the stacks that are difficult to get to."

Wife of city fireman, Newark

Wife of businessman, Seattle

Wife of textile worker, Philadelphia

Riveter, aircraft plant, Seattle

Shipyards employee, Portland, Oregon

Engineer's daughter, Seattle

SERVICES Suggestions regarding improved services touch on almost every phase of library work. A number feel that their public libraries should **operate more efficiently**. A corporation lawyer in Chicago, for example, says: "I'd like to see faster services in getting books to use in the reading rooms. I've waited as long as 15 minutes to get a book through."

Changes in **library hours** are frequently suggested:

"It would be nice if the libraries were open more nights a week."	Wife of Merchant Marine officer, Newark
"I think the library should stay open on Sundays and holidays for people who can't go there week days or nights."	Retired musician, San Francisco
"I would like to see the libraries stay open some mornings so that night workers can read books too."	Brakeman's wife, Baltimore
"I wish the branch libraries would stay open longer hours."	Wife of electrical engineer, Kansas City

Another common suggestion concerns the **extension of time limits on borrowed books**. A cashier in Baltimore is one who suggests: "I would like to see them permit us to keep books out longer than two weeks." The wife of a chemical worker in Newark answers: "Children should be allowed to keep a book more than two weeks."

Often emphasized, too, is the need for more effective and far-reaching **library publicity**:

"I think the libraries should advertise a bit and let people know about them."	Businessman, St. Louis
"There should be more publicity given to the library services available."	Locker plant manager, Milwaukee
"There should be more information given or more publicity about library services."	Aircraft machinist, Detroit
"All the library facilities should be expanded and advertised in some way so people know what is available."	Army captain, Chicago

Scattered replies suggest the desirability of adding **new departments and services** to the library program. For example:

"I think reading should be better guided for children. Also adult education should be improved. Branches should have more books."	Housewife, Milwaukee
"I think the library should have a special department for boys from 12 to 20 to help keep their minds off of theft and the road to the reform schools."	Landlady, St. Louis
"I would like to see more recreation planned for children, more plays, stories, etc."	Primary teacher, Louisville
"I wish the library would have art reference rooms."	Woman artist, San Francisco
"I would like the library to have music practice rooms and library phonograph records."	Wife of sales executive, San Francisco
"I would like to have the library more of a literary center with lectures and outstanding speakers."	Retired rabbi, Newark
"New courses should be made available in any new line that comes up."	Butcher's wife, Milwaukee

PERSONNEL Some people make suggestions regarding the number, qualifications, and **remuneration** of the library staff. A few answer simply in terms of the library's need for "more help" or "a larger staff." Others are more explicit:

"Librarians' salaries should be made more attractive so that more trained workers would be available."	Wife of business executive, Pittsburgh
"I think they should pay the employees a little more. The work calls for high education and pays low wages."	Businesswoman, Seattle
"The people working in the library always seem to be too busy. I would suggest a little more friendly attitude."	Housewife, Hartford
"The library should have better informed librarians."	Salesman's wife, San Francisco
"I'd like to see more efficient people in the research department. I'd like to see young, attractive people who can speak a child's language in the children's department."	Wife of Army man, Philadelphia

NEGROES Negroes interviewed in several cities pointed out the special needs of their group for better library accommodations. On the earlier question as to why public libraries are not used more, Negroes in Atlanta and Baltimore gave answers of unusual interest. Samples are:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| "Most of my race don't know nothing about libraries. We have to work." | Wife of Negro cabinet maker, Atlanta |
| "We colored people have less facilities. We don't have many libraries. Everything at the central library is not open at all—not even the courses they offer." | Negro dentist, Baltimore |
| "I wouldn't know about others, but we feel if we had more libraries we would use them more. We don't have the use of certain branches." | Negro porter, Baltimore |
| "I don't know how to read." | Negro airport employee, Atlanta |

When asked regarding changes or improvements, Negroes make a number of very specific suggestions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| "There should be more branches. Negroes should be able to use any library in their neighborhood." | Wife of colored pharmacist, Louisville |
| "Colored people should be permitted to have books in all libraries in the city. Some places they don't let us have books. That should be changed." | Negro housewife, Chicago |
| "We need more libraries for colored people and more colored librarians." | Wife of Negro laborer, Baltimore |
| "I wish the library would carry more books, both fiction and non-fiction, about the colored race." | Wife of Negro police officer, Milwaukee |
| "I wish they would have more books available for minority groups. They could also sponsor discussions." | Wife of colored pullman porter, Seattle |

NO CHANGES While most of the majority who have no suggestions for specific changes are non-committal, answering "No," "None," or "No changes," a few volunteer the comment that they know too little about the public library to make any suggestions. Some individuals, however, express **positive satisfaction** with the public libraries in their home cities. For example: "I think public libraries do wonderful because they have everything a person would want to have." "Our library is very well organized." "Our public library is exceptionally well run." "I think our public library is good. I always enjoy going there." "I wish that all city, county, and state libraries were as helpful as our library." "The service there is fine. They have a very nice staff, I'd say." "No, I can't think of any changes I would like to see made. The library is pretty efficiently run, and they will even send away for a book for you if they don't have it."

Part V

The Library and the Community

The 17-city survey sponsored by the American Library Association and 17 cooperating city libraries and conducted by the National Opinion Research Center endeavored to determine how important people in these cities believe their public libraries to be, to themselves and to the city, and how effectively library publicity programs are reaching adult citizens.

How Far-Reaching Is Library Publicity?

Only about one adult in every five interviewed in the 17-city sample is reached by radio or newspaper announcements regarding library services and programs. Among the public as a whole, newspaper publicity is more effective, although among the groups least privileged educationally, economically, and occupationally the radio seems more effective.

The first NORC question read:

"Have you ever heard over the radio or read in the newspapers anything about the services the public library in this city offers?"

No.....79% Yes.....21% = 100%

Those replying "Yes" were asked:

"Did you hear it on the radio or read it somewhere?"

Read it.....49% Radio.....36% Both.....12% Don't know.....3% = 100%¹

Adults of all ages and of both sexes are reached better by newspaper than by radio publicity. However, men more often than women and younger adults more than those 40 and over read library announcements in the newspapers. Conversely, women hear library programs on the radio oftener than men do, and older people are more aware of radio publicity than younger people are.

The survey findings reveal that:

Even of those who use public libraries, 69 per cent say that they have not heard over the radio or read in the newspapers anything about the services of the public library in their city.

Of those who read books but secure them from other sources, 80 per cent are not reached by library publicity.

Of those who say they do not read books, 90 per cent are not reached by such publicity.

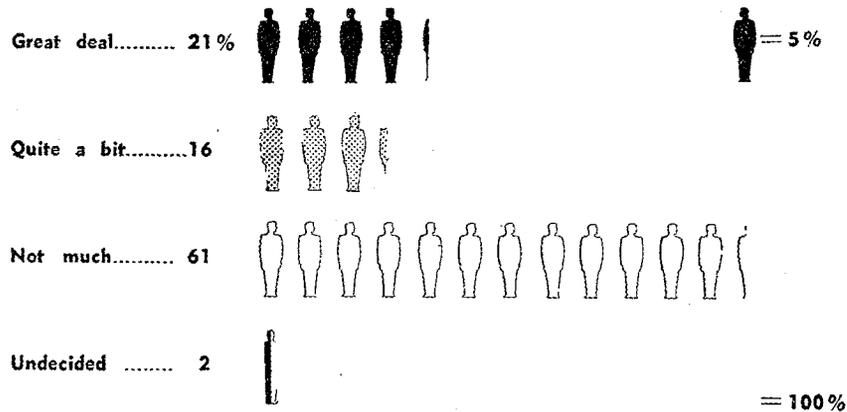
How Important Are Libraries?

A good test of the actual place any institution really has in people's lives is to ask them to imagine what their lives would be like without that institution. To this end, NORC asked two questions, one designed to determine how important people feel the library is to **them personally** and another designed to find out how important people feel the library is to **their community**.

¹Although these figures are based on only a segment of the total cross-section, they are presented in terms of 100 per cent for purposes of easy comparison.

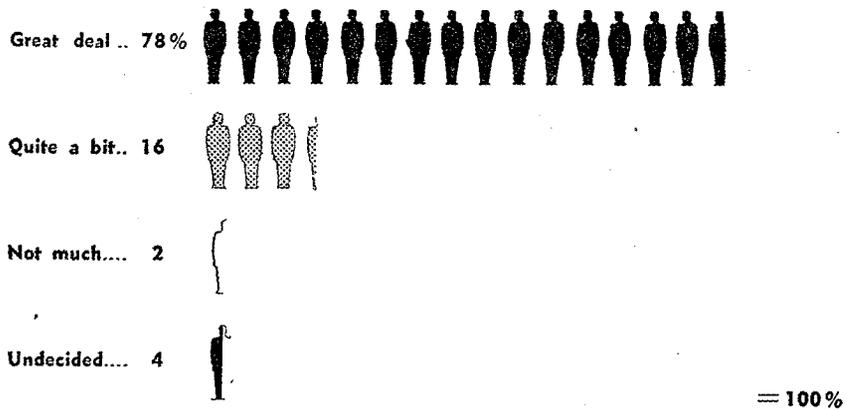
Except for those who have attended college, a majority of every population group studied consider the library of only minor importance in their personal lives. The question:

"If there were no public library in this city, how much difference would it make to YOU PERSONALLY . . . would it make a great deal of difference, quite a bit, or not much difference?"



A majority in every group, however, believe that the public library is a valuable civic institution:

"If there were no public library in this city, how much difference do you think it would make to the CITY . . . would it make a great deal of difference, quite a bit, or not much difference?"



The shades of opinion to be expected on this question provide evidence that women somewhat more than men and adults under 40 slightly more than those older consider the library an important civic institution. Likewise the better-off and the better-educated a person is the more likely he is to feel that the public library is very important to the city. The highest percentage replying "Great deal"—93 per cent—appears among persons who have attended college; the lowest—68 per cent—is reported for persons in the "poor" standard-of-living group.

Of those who say that it would not make much difference to them if their city did not have a public library, 72 per cent, or the majority, still feel that the library is important to the city itself.

Of those who say that if their city had no library it would make a great deal of difference to them, 96 per cent consider the library a valuable civic asset.

In Their Own Words

Some of those interviewed make exceptionally interesting comments as to why they believe the public library is valuable either as a civic institution or to them as individuals. In replying to both questions many people seem to think first of the value to **children** of public library services. Respondents as far apart as a government inspector in Pittsburgh, a St. Louis creamery clerk, and a Seattle Army wife answer in almost identical phrasing: "**School children need the public library.**" Other representative remarks include:

"The library is a big help to the school children I know."	Wife of department store employee, Hartford
"The school children haunt the libraries."	Income tax deputy, Philadelphia
"It is necessary for reference work for school children."	Plumbing superintendent, Baltimore
"If we did not have public libraries, it would make a great deal of difference, especially for the children in school. Housewives can get along without reading."	Wife of Dodge plant foreman, Chicago
"If we had no public library, the children would have no place to go and would be more destructive like they were years ago. It should be maintained at all cost."	Owner of tailor shop, Milwaukee
"The city needs the library for the children. Children love books."	Housewife, Philadelphia
"It would make a great deal of difference to me personally if there were no public library. I have my little girl going to it. It's a fine idea to have a library."	Machine shop employee, Portland, Oregon
"My children use it all the time."	Aluminum company supervisor, Kansas City
"My girls use library books. It is a great help and advantage to a city."	Contractor's wife, Atlanta

A number of persons emphasize the **educational value** of the public library. A retired portrait painter in Portland answers: "It would make a great deal of difference to the city if there were no public library, because I believe that some people depend entirely on the library for their education." Others who say that the library "makes a great deal of difference" add remarks such as: "For educational reasons if for no other," "Culturally and every other way," and "Because they do have technical information which is helpful."

Some point out the value of the library to those who simply **enjoy reading**. The wife of a Negro furnace fireman in Atlanta comments: "Lots of people like to read and can't buy books." In Philadelphia a retired motorman expresses the view: "Libraries are a good thing. Lots of people enjoys them."

Still others comment in more general terms:

"I think the public library is a wonderful thing!"	Welder's wife, Milwaukee
"Not to have a public library would be a serious handicap to the city."	Remington employee, Kansas City
"It would be detrimental if our city had no public library. It's a great help to those who utilize it."	Manufacturing inspector, Newark

A few adults mention specifically how much the library means to them **personally**. A newspaper editorial writer in Atlanta, for example, comments: "I like to know the library is there if I want to go for references. I go often." A retired railroad employee in Portland, Oregon, replies: "It would make quite a bit of difference to me if there were no library because I go there and study financial subjects. That's my main interest."

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- 1 . . . to establish the first non-profit, non-commercial organization to measure public opinion in the United States. Through a national staff of trained investigators, representative cross-sections or samples of the entire population are personally interviewed on questions of current importance.
- 2 . . . to make available to legislators, government departments, academicians, individuals, and organizations a staff of experts in the science of public opinion measurement and a highly trained nation-wide corps of interviewers.
- 3 . . . to analyze and review the results of surveys made by other polling organizations.
- 4 . . . to create a research center to discover, test, and perfect new methods, techniques, and devices for ascertaining the status of public opinion.

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