OUT-OF-SCHOOL RADIO LISTENING HABITS OF THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES IN PRINCETON, INDIANA

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the Faculty of the Department of Education
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Master of Science

by
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Radio programs for children are the youngest of the broadcasting industry's undertakings. In fact, radio itself is a comparatively new device. Nothing in the economic life of the American people has paralleled its rapid growth. In less than twenty years, radio has taken over much of the average citizen's daily routine making him return to ear-mindedness. It possesses the possibilities of enlarging and enriching the interests of old and young alike. Radio programs good, bad, and indifferent take up from one to three hours of a child's day. To these programs boys and girls listen attentively and from them they learn many things.

Children learn to listen before they learn to read. As they grow older they often fail to listen because they expect to read. . . . Books and print will always be important. Yet few thoughtful teachers can doubt that the radio and motion picture are now taking over many of the functions of the spoken word.1

Since teachers have assumed responsibility for reading tastes, listening tastes will surely come next. Without necessarily trying to do so, the teacher can influence

constructively the out-of-school radio listening tastes of the children in the classroom. Out-of-school programs are rich sources of curricular material--news analyses, round-table discussions, forums, dramatic adaptations of history and of literature, and music of all varieties. Radio offers an entire library of information, of enjoyment, and of stimulation. Radio also provides blood-and-thunder shockers along with hair-raising episodes. To which do children listen? Are they truly getting the most out of this great tool? The future influence of radio as a means to a more complete realization of all that democracy holds for the youth in America is something to take into consideration.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this research to study (1) the listening habits, (2) the program and star preferences, and (3) the reactions to radio programs heard at home of the children of the intermediate age-grade level of the city schools of Princeton, Indiana. No attempt was made at any time to investigate the activities and preferences of the children in educational broadcasts for schools, and no distinctions or preferences were made for any particular sponsors nor products, nor between children's programs and so-called adult programs.
Importance of the study. There has been spasmodic criticism of the programs being broadcast to which children listen. Newspapers, magazines, and organizations have charged the radio industry with having a hand in juvenile delinquency as well as causing sleepless nights, hurried meals, and poor study habits. Since this new intruder can not be locked out, let the listening habits of children be investigated and see whether such habits can be termed good or bad.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Intermediate grades. The term intermediate grades was interpreted as meaning those boys and girls in grades four, five, and six at the age level of nine, ten, eleven, and twelve in the elementary field of education.

Out-of-school-listening. Such listening was interpreted to mean the hours before and after school when the child had free access to the radios in the home. This was not to include any assigned listening which might have been suggested by the school.

III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The remainder of this thesis is divided into three chapters with bibliography and appendix. Chapter II presents
a review of the literature on children's radio programs and previous studies. In this chapter is also found the method of procedure, sources of data, and the treatment of findings.

Chapter III presents the results of the two-page questionnaire which was given to 266 pupils in the intermediate grades of the elementary schools in Princeton, Indiana.

Chapter IV contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the writer on radio listening habits of the children in the intermediate grades in Princeton, Indiana.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written for and against radio programs in general and the programs children listen to in particular, especially since public attention has been concerned with juvenile delinquency. There can be little doubt in the minds of the American people about radio's emotional effect since the broadcast of the radio program "Men from Mars" by Orson Wells a few years ago. How much effect on children has never been determined. Whether it is active or passive is not known. Some critics have been quoted as believing there can be no real harm done by these chiller-thrillers which, contrary to popular belief, children do stay up to hear. Many feel the programs leave much to be desired, and some say they create an unappeased appetite for crime and violence. A brief summary of many of the various comments both pro and con will be given here.

\[\text{Literature on children's radio programs.}\] In a recent forum, Dr. Julius Yourman\(^1\) says that when children's needs are examined as children themselves sense them, considerable disagreement with adult definitions is found.

\[^1\] Educational Consultant, National Self-Government Committee, New York City.
Superficial surveys revealed that over 90 per cent of school-age children listen to radio programs frequently. The average child spends more time at the radio than at other leisure time activity; also the child spends as much time at the radio each week as is spent in school. Some 50 per cent of a large group of children studied preferred to listen to radio friends than to visit with real friends. Others indicated that life would be empty without radio.

Radio programs are personalized, directed to the individual, and thus meet needs that should have been met by family, school, and community programs. Since children's programs are rare it is not surprising that many children prefer adult programs. Dr. Yourman feels that enough scattered research has been done and enough conferences held to know that children's radio programs are merely part of the complicated social scene, and that children's needs are complex, varied, and changing; so it is obvious that a total approach by all agencies is required to begin to meet their needs. Radio listening, like practically all activities, separates the family, interferes with home discipline, work duties, eating and sleeping schedules. Radio programs create new problems and intensify others. Many radio programs contribute to unhealthy attitudes.¹

¹ O. Joe Olson, editor, Education on the Air (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1948), pp. 297-9.
Dr. Iago Faldston¹ says that, according to Saint Augustine and Sigmund Freud, the younger the child the less innocent it is. Hence this consideration is relevant to any evaluation of the children's radio program. Then he gives two reasons for this assertion. First, that in the light of the given description of the child, it can be seen that the radio program, seething with tales of horror, is not likely to corrupt the little savage. "There is more hate and murder in the hearts of our alleged innocents than can be purveyed even over the radio."² He qualifies this by saying that their lust and interest in murder are totally different from such feelings in adults. Secondly, there is a much more serious charge to be made against the radio program for children.

It holds the child down at its primitive level, and does not serve—as education should—to aid and hustle the child along the pathway toward maturity. Since attaining maturity is not an easy task and involves much learning and experience so there must be a great deal of integration of conflicting drives, and the sublimation of unacceptable or destructive impulses. All education is subsumed in these goals. Anything that delays or thwarts the achievement of these goals is anti-social, and must be so regarded. In these perspectives, a good deal of what is presented on the children's radio program is, therefore anti-social.³

¹ New York Academy of Medicine, New York.
² Olson, op. cit. pp. 301-2
³ Loc. cit.
Dr. Galdston made a special point of listening to children's programs and found them "objectionable, shallow, vulgar, stereotyped, and full of fake and artificial excitement." He recommends use of the famous fairy tales, stories of adventure, of exploration and of wonder; stories of humor and of pathos. These stories have stood the test of time; and because they were originally told by word of mouth, they lend themselves most readily to radio adaptation because of their very form and substance. He concludes:

I would urge you to contrast a day's experience of the pre-radio child, such, for example, as is portrayed by William Allen White of Emporia in his autobiography—a day full of real life's adventures—with the experience of the present-day child, sitting for hours on end, literally glued to the radio, its little body inactive, and its mind sopping up the drivel that comes through the loudspeaker.\(^1\)

Mr. Edward M. Brecher from station WQQW, Washington, collected all the in-coming complaints of the to-be-continued thrillers and listed them under nine different headings.\(^2\)

Professor William A. Orton of Smith College offers as the chief criticism to be made of the average juvenile radio play the vacuity rather than its venality. The professor feels that most children's programs are relatively harmless, but are also "relatively useless."

\(^1\) Olson, *loc. cit.*

\(^2\) Appendix
Professor Smith says children and young people listen to "the unspeakable drivel because they love action, movement, and conflict, and because they have not learned to be critical of the illusion so carelessly and even contemptuously created for them."\(^1\)

It is held by one author that there is nothing to fear about a child's temporary enthusiasm for the cheap and vulgar, for if he has the intelligence and background to grow to more discriminating tastes, the temporary ones will pass. Instead, parents should be finding and pointing out the good material to meet the actual needs and interests of the child.\(^2\)

Dr. Harcourt Peppard of the Bureau of Child Guidance of the New York City Board of Education reported to a group of radio executives that of the 14,000 children examined not one child had a problem that could be laid at radio's door.\(^3\)

As Director of the Child Guidance Home in Cincinnati for the past twenty-seven years, Dr. Louis A. Lurie of the University of Cincinnati has studied thousands of

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 210-11.

problem children and he has yet to find a case where the finger can be pointed at radio, the movies, or the comic strip.¹

In a magazine column, Richard Williams has said that the bang-bang type of program fills a need in the child. The very violence of the entertainment gives the child a sense of security sitting in his own protected home. Mr. Williams says:

Children look at these things differently from us who have had experience with the cruelty of the world and its abnormalities. Children's imaginations overleap the reality of the programs, of the banging, crashing, slamming, as easily as they leap over a small puddle. Danger and darkness become pleasant specters, pleasant just because they are fictional and far away.²

Leslie Spence has reported that children are listening to the radio outside of school, and this includes the vacation time, 1,275 hours each year. When one compares that figure with the 990 hours, the average time spent in school, Mr. Spence feels that the study of the content of this education should be the concern of every good citizen.³

¹ Olson, op. cit., p. 307.
Literature on review of previous studies. In December, 1931, a questionnaire was submitted to about nine hundred pupils of the seventh and eighth grades of the Peoria, Illinois, public school system by Felicia M. Ryan. The children were asked to state (1) whether they had a radio at home, and the kind; (2) tell when they listened; (3) from a given list, which they liked to listen to; (4) and name their favorite station, favorite announcer, and favorite local program. Her findings were that about two-thirds of the homes had radios, and that the children preferred dramatized skits, dialogues, and stories rather than musical programs.¹

Another study was a group enterprise conducted by the PTA of the Fox Meadow School of Scarsdale, New York, in grades three through seven, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Alma M. Ernst.² In this study, programs designated by the children were rated by teachers and parents as good, fair, and poor. In general the parents' rating agreed with the teachers' rating.

About this time the Children Study Association asked a number of study group members to reply to a simple questionnaire. This covered children from the age of two

² Ibid., p. 22.
to fifteen years. They found that intensive interest extends from ten to thirteen years and listening time extended from one to three hours per day.¹

In Chicago in 1933, over Station WMAQ, Ernest W. Burgess, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, undertook a study at the request of the Radio Committee of the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers. In conjunction with the Institute for Juvenile Research, three things were investigated: (1) radio listening habits of boys and girls of different ages; (2) attitudes of parents towards the children's programs; (3) effects of different types of children's programs upon the emotional reactions and upon the sleep of young children. Generally speaking almost every family had a radio, in one-third the son was most interested in the radio; in one-fourth the father was the most interested and in the remaining five-twelfths the mother and daughter were the ones most interested in the radio. Twenty-five different valuable effects of the radio were noted. Almost all of the parents presented interesting and significant suggestions for changes in present programs.²

An investigation carried on entirely by interview was handled by A. T. and C. L. Jersild, of The Institute

¹ Ibid., p. 23.
² Ibid., p. 24.
of Child Guidance, Teachers College, Columbia University, with 210 children aged six to thirteen. The children were asked to name as many programs as they could recall having listened to, the names of any sponsors, their favorite character of the air, etc. No single program stood highest on the list. "Orphan Annie" was popular with the girls as was "Buck Rogers" with the boys.¹

Two studies of similar nature in regard to interest and reactions of students in secondary schools were conducted, one in the East by R. K. Hewes and one on the Western Coast by I. Keith Tyler.²

One can see that there are few related studies. Through the years the programs have changed so greatly that some have disappeared entirely while titles of others have been altered.

Method of procedure. In this study information concerning out-of-school radio listening was obtained via questionnaire.

A two-page questionnaire was carefully prepared. The first page dealt with (1) the number of radios in each home (2) hours per day spent in listening to a radio (3)

² Ibid., p. 27-9.
who selects the programs (4) types of programs preferred (5) name of program most enjoyed (6) name of the most exciting program (7) preferred listening hours (8) name of favorite radio star (9) effect of programs (10) habits while listening (11) radio as a positive influence (12) radio as a negative influence.

The second page of requested information checked on (1) radio and dreams (2) new words, songs, games learned via radio (3) actor types preferred by audience (4) radio's rank with other amusements (5) favorite radio station.

Source of data. The two-page questionnaire was given personally by the writer to 266 pupils in grades four through six in the intermediate grades of the Princeton, Indiana city schools. Each question was read and discussed fully before each child filled in his own answer. The children represented approximately 38 per cent of the town's population.

Treatment of the findings. The information secured from the questionnaire was tabulated and then figured to the nearest one per cent in the tables showing the final results and opinions.
CHAPTER III

THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaire was presented to the various grades in home room groups by the writer. Each child was asked to answer as truthfully as possible and to give his honest reaction to each question.

I. RADIOS IN THE HOME

In the short span of time from 1912, when crystal sets brought radio into a few dozen homes, to the present time, when television is knocking on our doors, millions of radio sets have rolled on and off the market in kaleidoscopic array. Few there be who have not purchased at least one radio. In this survey only one child reported the absence of a radio. The average home has 1.69 sets. In Table I homes having one radio made up the highest percentage of the group.

II. LISTENING HOURS PER DAY

In some homes the radio is seemingly never turned off and yet no one listens. It was the purpose of this question to determine the actual time spent in attentive listening as judged by the individual child without any parental help or aid from the teacher. How many hours per
TABLE I

NUMBER OF RADIOS IN HOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One radio</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two radios</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three radios</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four radios</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five radios</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
day were actually spent in listening to radio programs on the part of the pupil? According to Table II the average pupil spent three hours listening each day.

III. WHO CHOOSES PROGRAMS IN THE HOME

Some parents consider radio sets too expensive to allow children to operate them. In other homes parents select the program they think most suitable for their children or the children must endure the parents preference because the adults usurp the set for the evening. Are children allowed to enjoy the radio as they see fit? Do parents aid in program selecting? In Table III on page 19 it is evident that an overwhelming majority of the children select the programs to which they listen.

IV. TYPES OF PROGRAMS

There are many types of programs on the air, each catering to a hoped-for public. Various polls are set up to check the listening public of a program. Few of these however, have the child in mind. What are the types preferred by children? Only by asking children can the need be met. In response to this question it was learned that comedy was preferred, with cowboy music and quiz programs next in popularity. See Table IV on page 20.
TABLE II
ACTUAL RADIO LISTENING TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE III
PERSONS SELECTING PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowboy music</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story hours</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance music</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical music</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. BEST LIKED PROGRAM

The children wrote in the name of their favorite program and there were many. No one program gained more than a 15 per cent preference. The top five are listed in Table V with their percentages.

VI. MOST EXCITING PROGRAM

Each child recorded the name of the program which seemed most exciting to listen to over the air. There was not much agreement on this question either, as none gained a majority. Percentages are shown in Table VI on page 23. Sam Spade and Mr. District Attorney were popular with the group.

VII. PREFERRED LISTENING PERIODS

The pupils were asked to check the time when they enjoyed listening to their favorite programs. In Table VII on page 24 the various periods are listed. Saturday morning and Saturday night were the favorites.

VIII. FAVORITE RADIO STAR

There was no majority agreement on a favorite radio star. Many were listed only once. The five shown in Table VIII received the highest percentages from the group.
TABLE V
FAVORITE PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blondie</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archie Andrews</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Skelton</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date with Judy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Rogers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE VI

**MOST EXCITING PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Spade</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. District Atty.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Town</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Story</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Sanctum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE VII
LISTENING PERIODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week-day Evenings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week-day Nights</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Mornings</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Afternoons</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Nights</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday mornings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Afternoons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Nights</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE VIII
FAVORITE RADIO STAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roy Rogers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Skelton</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Hope</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Benny</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bendix</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IX. DO PROGRAMS FRIGHTEN YOU

In response to this question 64 per cent of the group of 266 said that radio programs do frighten them, while 34 per cent said they were not frightened. No reply was given by 2 per cent. Turning off the program or chewing fingernails were the most common reactions.¹

X. HOW DO YOU LISTEN

This question was asked in order to check how attentively the pupils listened to the radio. One offered the reply that he read comic books while sitting quietly listening to the radio. In Table IX are to be found the many things a child does while listening to the radio. The majority of them sit quietly and pay attention to the program.

XI. RADIO AS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

There are spasmodic outbursts concerning the bad effects of the radio which die down and the public then assumes that all is well. What do children think about this new medium of learning? The response was a positive one. In the group 75 per cent felt that the radio helped one to do good things. Only 25 per cent felt it did not.

¹ Appendix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sit quietly</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing, play, dance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter radio contests</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play radio games</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XII. RADIO AS A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE

In answer to the question from a negative standpoint 2 per cent felt that sometimes the radio made one do bad things. There were 30 per cent that were sure the radio was a bad influence, whereas 68 per cent felt that it had no negative effect.

XIII. RADIO PROGRAMS AND DREAMS

Since children do listen to exciting murder mysteries and crime stories, what effect do they have on the individual child? The answer to this inquiry brings out the fact that 72 per cent of the children dream about things heard over the air. Some 28 per cent said they did not.

XIV. LEARNING VIA RADIO

The pupils were asked whether or not they had learned any new words, songs, or games, while listening to the radio. Of the group 36 per cent had learned new words, 1 69 per cent had learned new songs, and 24 per cent had learned some new games. 3

1 Appendix
2 Appendix
3 Appendix
XV. KINDS OF ACTORS

The children preferred listening to a program whose cast was made up of both grown-ups and children. Of the group 78 per cent expressed that opinion. A cast of grown-ups alone received votes from 15 per cent while 7 per cent liked just children in the show.

XVI. RADIO AND OTHER INTERESTS

Here the pupils were asked to choose between the radio and other types of amusements. Radio was preferred with the exception of the movies and playing ball as shown in Table X.

XVII. RADIO STATIONS

The children listened most often to a nearby local station which is affiliated with the NBC network. See Table XI on page 31.
TABLE X
RADIO VERSUS OTHER RECREATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Phonograph</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Read a book</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Play ball</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Go to movies</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Play instrument</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear adventure story</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Read adventure story</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XI
RADIO STATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WJPS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAOV</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLW</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIKY</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGBF</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOSAI</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research were neither startling nor alarming. Children's radio programs need to be given time to develop. In the meantime, children are not being harmfully affected.

I. SUMMARY

A two page questionnaire was given to a group of 266 intermediate grade boys and girls in the city schools of Princeton, Indiana. This group represented about 38 per cent of the town's population. Being a typical small mid-western city it gave a local bird's eye view of the radio listening habits, the program and actor preferences, and the reactions to radio programs which American children might have toward radio.

In questions I and II it was learned that only one home out of the 266 did not have a radio. The rest of the 265 spent from one-half hour to nine hours per day listening to their sets. The majority listened from two to four hours with the average standing at three. This seems to be typical with the growing child in most communities.

The children in the home are permitted to select the programs to which they listen. In question III 92 per cent
had that privilege. This shows that children themselves need to be given guidance in the value of radio and how to get the most from it. Since adult selection is not desired, the help should be given in a subtle manner.

From questions, IV and V, it was learned that the children use the radio as a means of entertainment rather than learning. Comedy programs, cowboy music, and quiz programs proved most popular. This gives the radio producers an opportunity to introduce a higher level of humor and music for the juvenile group. Plays and story hours hold interest for a few. These should bring out a better type of adventure story to increase the listening audience. Comedy was the preferred type, and it can be seen in the choice of "Blondie" as one of the best liked programs. In fact the top four selections were of the comedy type with the cowboy type being fifth in the group.

The murder mystery and crime drama has brought out more comment perhaps than any other type of radio broadcast. Some networks have moved these dramas to an hour when the children are in bed. In question VI each child listed the thriller preferred, and each had a preferred one. More than half of the group agreed on five programs. Sam Spade, Mr. District Attorney, Big Town, Big Story, and Inner Sanctum are all scheduled for broadcast at eight o'clock or later. This is an hour when growing children should be in bed for
the night. It is evident from this survey that if in bed they still listen or else stay up to listen which would make sleep prohibitive until almost ten o'clock. Some have said that such broadcasts were "so good" but they "didn't understand the story". Surely this means that the programs are too adult and are not for children.

Question VII should be a guide for broadcasters. The children would like to be able to listen to their own favorite programs on Saturday morning or Saturday night. At this time they are free from school and perhaps free to remain up longer to listen. A concentration on programs for boys and girls would seem ideal at this time.

There was no general agreement on a favorite radio star. Everyone seemed to have an individual preference. Roy Rogers and Red Skelton were rather popular but many were listed in response to question VIII.

The majority of the group were frightened by the various mysteries being broadcast. A few gave no answer, but 64 per cent were frightened and listed the things that were done such as chewing nails, turning off the program, turning on all the lights, and crawling under the bed or a chair. In question XI 34 per cent said they were not afraid.

Attentive listening was checked in question X. The common American approach to radio listening is that of turning on the set and letting it ramble day and night. How
much time is spent in actual listening is a guess. The group as a rule sat quietly and listened, 17 per cent either sang, played, or danced. Only 3 per cent studied with the radio on.

In questions XI and XII the group felt that radio is a positive influence. Approached from the positive standpoint 75 per cent felt that one was helped to do good things while 25 per cent felt that radio was not helpful in that respect. In reversing the viewpoint and stating it negatively the stand was much the same. There were 68 per cent who felt that it had no negative effect, 30 per cent were sure that radio was a bad influence, while 2 per cent said sometimes.

Of the group questioned it was learned that 72 per cent dream about things heard over the radio. Question XIII in this way brings out the fact that pleasant honest programs are indeed necessary for growing children.

Learning from radio listening is a coming feature, even if it is making little headway now. In question XIV songs seemed to be the one thing the group agreed on having learned from the air, only a few words and games were listed.

Most of the children preferred programs cast with adults and children. This is in harmony with the choice of comedy types which was already advocated.
The radio was the choice in entertainment in preference to the phonograph, books, musical instruments, and ran a close second to playing ball. However, in question XVI the movies outranked the radio by a great majority.

The final question attempted to find which station in Southern Indiana was tuned to most often. The 1,000 watt network affiliated station WGBF was the most popular.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In drawing conclusions it might be well to present a composite picture of the child as viewed from the findings of the given questionnaire.

The average intermediate grade child tunes in on the family radio to station WGBF after school and listens about three hours to programs of his own choice; preferably comedy, cowboy music, or quiz. The child enjoys grown-ups and children in the cast so he sits quietly and enjoys Blondie. Once a week Sam Spade is tuned in, the program probably becomes frightening, but he has to see how it ends, so he chews his nails and maybe dreams about parts of it when asleep. He likes Roy Rogers and learns one of the current popular tunes being sung. Saturday morning and Saturday night are spent in listening to the radio, which he finds interesting and thinks a good influence. However, time is taken out for a movie and a game of ball.
The preceding picture is a rather wholesome one and can not be criticized very much. The radio listening habits, preference, and reactions to programs of growing children do not appear to be alarming. There is a hint of the need of parent interest and guidance with cooperation of other adult agencies. Home listening programs can contribute a great deal to education in general. Adults should keep in touch with what is available and encourage children to listen. Newspapers and periodicals could be very helpful in supplying lists of current radio series. Both agencies could serve a very useful purpose between broadcasters and families, for broadcasters should appeal to the entire family if they would succeed.

Suggestions for further research. With the advent of television and the change-over in network programs a research of a similar nature could be carried on soon.

Evaluating popular radio programs by children and parents would prove interesting.

The comparison of children's radio listening time with that of their outdoor recreation time might be enlightening.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Frankel, Lou, "In One Ear," The Nation, 164:481, April 26, 1947.


COMMONEST CRITICISMS OF THE TO-BE-CONTINUED THRILLERS

1. They build up too much excitement and suspense. They destroy in an hour’s ordeal the sense of security which parents and teachers seek to instill.

2. They establish the concept and expectation of effortless success. Supermenschlich daydreams thus become a substitute for the gradual acquisition of skills through hard work and patience.

3. They neither illuminate the real world nor present a world of true fantasy and vivid imagination. Instead, they deal with a distorted reality in which guns shoot farther and planes fly faster, in which chasing criminals is the highest occupation, and in which good triumphs over evil not because it is good, but because it is armed with deadlier weapons.

4. Sadism is rampant. Victims are tortured before your very ears to the accompaniment of vicious laughter and groans of mortal agony.

5. There is approval of vigilantism—the taking of law into private hands. The hero is permitted in his might to act above the law.

6. Young listeners are left, over long stretches of time, in a wholly passive role. Programs should elicit active and constructive responses not collection of box tops.

7. Commercials are too long, too frequent, too loud, too insistent, and too nerve-wracking.

8. Programs are designed primarily for older children whose urging and insistence can more effectively influence family buying habits. Younger children are left without.

9. Too many children's programs still stress racial or national stereotypes, especially in their villains. "Half-breeds", "natives", persons with foreign accents and other stigmata of being different are still ridiculed or presented as objects of fear and loathing.1

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1 O. Joe Olson, editor, Education on the Air. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1948), p. 304.
WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN PROGRAMS FRIGHTEN YOU

1. Turn off the radio
2. Bite my fingernails
3. Listen to see what happens
4. Get a different program
5. Get close to someone big
6. Get scared
7. Hide under the bed
8. Wiggle until it's over
9. Lock the doors and windows
10. Turn on the lights
11. Pull down the blinds
12. Get away from doors or windows
13. Get under the covers and grab someone's hand
14. Stop up my ears
15. I squeal
16. Get under the chair
17. Hold my ears
18. Try to sit still
19. Curl up in a chair and shake
20. Jump up and down
21. I do not know what to do
22. Try not to listen and cover up my ears
23. Take hold of the table
24. Have bad dreams
25. Close all the doors
26. I am stiff
27. Go in a room with someone else
28. Run to my mother
29. Stay and listen
30. Clinch my fists
31. Act like a mad man
32. Shake
33. Go to bed
NEW WORDS

draft
vice versa
concentrate
pyramid
perspiration
library
attorney
consequences
supersonic
NEW SONGS

Voices of the Woods
April Showers
You Belong to My Heart
Wagon Wheels
Tumbling Tumbleweeds
She's Too Fat for Me
Slow Boat to China
Get Along Little Doggie
Boogie Woogie
Cora Bell
A Little Bird Told Me
Four Leaf Clover
Don't Gamble with Romance
Now Is the Hour
Let's go Down to Albany
My Two Front Teeth
Floating Down the River
The Darktown Poker Game
Army and Navy Song
Sunflower State
Twelfth Street Rag
Lavender Blue
You Call Everybody Darling
Buttons and Bows
It Had to be You
Chickery Chick
Peg O' My Heart
Down by the Station
Manana
Back in the Saddle Again
My Love to Keep Me Warm
My Happiness
Woody Woodpecker
Nature Boy
NEW GAMES

Hide the Coke
Football
Blind Man's Bluff
Sheep in the Meadow
Making kites
Baseball
Basketball
Quiz
Pop Goes the Weasel
Hockey
Carem
RADIO ROUND-UP

The Radio Division of Indiana State Teachers College is very much interested in radio programs for boys and girls. We would like to know the programs to which you listen and what kind you might enjoy. Will you help us by answering these questions? You need not sign your name. Just answer as well as you can.

Boy______ Girl_______ Age_______ Grade_______

1. Have you a radio in your home? ______
   If more than one, how many are in working order? ______

2. About how many hours per day do you really listen to a radio? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Who usually chooses the program to which you listen?
   Father    Mother    Sister    Brother    Myself

4. Which one of these types of programs do you like best? Choose only two:
   ____ plays
   ____ story hours
   ____ talks
   ____ dance music
   ____ news reports
   ____ comedy programs
   ____ variety programs
   ____ religious programs
   ____ question and answer
   ____ classical music
   ____ cowboy music
   ____ singing

5. Name the program you like best. ____________________________

6. Name the program which you think is most exciting. ________________

7. If you could have the programs you like best at one time, when would you want to hear them?
   ____ Week-day afternoons  _____ Saturday night
   ____ Week-day evenings  _____ Sunday morning
   ____ Saturday morning  _____ Sunday afternoon
   ____ Saturday afternoon  _____ Sunday evening

8. Name your favorite radio star. ________________________________

9. Do some of the programs frighten you? Yes ( ) No ( )
   If yes, what do you do? ____________________________________

10. When you listen to a radio program do you usually:
    ____ sit quietly and listen
    ____ enter radio contests
    ____ talk with others
    ____ play radio games
    ____ sing, play or dance
    ____ study

11. Do you think that listening to the radio makes one do good things? Yes ( ) No ( )

12. Do you think that listening to the radio makes one do bad things? Yes ( ) No ( )
13. Do you sometimes dream about the things you hear on the radio?  Yes ( )  No ( )

14. By listening to the radio have you learned any:
   new words  Yes ( )  No ( )
   If yes, list some of the new words you have learned.

   new songs  Yes ( )  No ( )
   If yes, list some of the new songs you have learned.

   games  Yes ( )  No ( )
   If yes, list some of the games you have learned.

15. Do you like a program in which the actors are: (Choose one)
   grown-ups
   children
   grown-ups and children

16. If it were up to you, what would you rather do?
   listen to the radio  or the phonograph
   listen to the radio  or read a book
   listen to the radio  or go to the movies
   listen to the radio  or play ball
   listen to the radio  or play a musical instrument
   listen to an adventure story over the radio  or read the adventure story

17. Place a check mark after the name of the station to which you listen most often:

   WJPS  WGBF
   WAOV  WSON
   WLW  WHAS
   WGN  WLS
   WIKY  WOAI
   Others
