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An Analysis of Children's Interests in Comic Books

Louise A. Volker
Municipal University of Omaha

AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S INTERESTS IN COMIC BOOKS

A Thesis

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by

Louise A. Volker

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

This thesis for the M. A. Degree, by

Louise A. Volker

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L. A. V.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS GENERAL SCOPE

The last fifty years have witnessed a widespread public interest in comic strips published as special features in daily newspapers, magazines, and advertisements. The past ten years have shown a rapid growth in popularity of a similar type of reading matter - the comic book.

Both the comic strip and the comic book appeared in the field of current publication rather recently, but they have had a pronounced effect on the public. Gruenberg, director of the Child Study Association of America and author of We, the Parents, recognized the far-reaching influence of comics when he wrote:

> "They" (the comics) "constitute a social force that goes beyond the differences in 'taste'. For better or for worse, they are more potent than many of our other instruments for influencing people's understanding and attitudes." 1

> "The comics deserve the serious consideration of statesmen and educators, politicians and publicists, psychologists and sociologists; for they reflect what millions are thinking about, what they want, what they fear, and how they feel about matters of social significance." 2

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1 Sidonie M. Gruenberg, "The Comics as a Social Force," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 18, December, 1944. p. 208.

2 Ibid., p. 213.

Although many groups of people have criticized the comics in rather severe terms, a recent Gallup poll showed that funnies stand in third place among 70,000,000 newspaper readers;[3] while Marston[4] reported that 100,000,000 people read the daily funnies and bought approximately eighteen million comic magazines every month.

> "According to competent surveys, four or five persons read each magazine. We, thereby, reach the startling total of 70,000,000 or more monthly readers. Research indicates that nearly half these readers are adults." 5

Children's interest in the comics has been more pronounced than among adults.[6] Sones[7] found in his survey that ninety-five percent of the children ranging in years from eight to fourteen read comics regularly. Hecht,

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3 E. C. Sherburne, "Serious Business, the Funnies," Christian Science Monitor (Weekly Magazine Section), May 2, 1942. p. 4.

4 William M. Marston, "Why 100,000,000 Americans Read Comics," American Scholar, Vol. 13, Winter, 1943-44. p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 35

6 Paul A. Witty, "Children's Interests in Reading the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 10, December, 1941.

7 W. W. D. Sones, "The Comics and Instructional Method," Journal of Educational Sociology,,Vol. 18, December, 1944.

publisher of Parents Magazine, reported "that comic magazines absorbed seventy-five percent of the leisure time of children nine to fourteen years of age."[8]

The Problem

In the title of this thesis, the problem has been stated as an analysis of children's interests in comic books. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine which comic book children liked best and which one they liked least together with the reasons for their respective choices; (2) to discover the extent of outside influence in determining their selection of comic books; (3) to find out whether any relationship existed between the selection of comic books and each of the following: sex, age, race, general economic status, and intelligence.

Need for the Study

The war years have shown how vital the comic magazine could be as a medium of communication, social influence, and education.[9] This influence has been exercised upon

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8 George J. Hecht, "Book Week Audience Hears About Comics," Publisher's Weekly, Vol. 140, November 22, 1941. p. 1953.

9 Paul A. Witty, "Some Uses of Visual Aids in the Army," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 18, December, 1944.

adults as well as children. Although several studies were made to determine the extent of vulgarisms and slang and to reveal the number and kinds of words used in comics, there were many other important aspects involved in comic book selection that these studies did not include. The many criticisms leveled at comic magazines and their promoters have been left unanswered. This circumstance has been due, in part, to a lack of information and scientific evidence needed to refute these accusations. In this study, an attempt has been made to collect some data that may serve, in the future, to enlighten the critics as well as the promoters of comic books.

Delimitations

This problem was limited to include the comic book interests of children ranging in age from nine to thirteen years which corresponded to the school grades fourth through eighth. This five year period was chosen as being most representative.[10] The Goodenough Scale of Intelligence by Drawings, used in this study to determine the intelligence ratings of the children interviewed, also set limitations on the age factor.[11]

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10 W. W. D. Sones, op. cit., p. 233.

11 Florence L. Goodenough, Measurement of Intelligence by Drawing, p. 40. New York: World Book Co., C. 1926.

The study was further limited to include the responses of 336 Omaha Public School children. These children were selected for an interview according to a plan of stratified random sampling. They were representative of the four elementary schools that were surveyed during the week, February 25 through March 1, 1946. The plan of selection as well as the numerical limitations mentioned above will be explained in another portion of this paper.

Before any study is contemplated, it has been suggested that the work of other researchers in the field should be examined and an attempt should be made to understand what they have accomplished.[12] A brief summary of this previous research is presented in the next chapter.

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[12] Frederick L. Whitney, Elements of Research, p. 92. New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1942.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In 1929, Johnson[1] made a study to determine the reading interests of children as related to sex and grade in school. A preliminary questionnaire was given to 108 pupils in grades five through ten in the schools of Cambridge, Minnesota. Several items on the first form were revised and a second questionnaire was given on December 3, 1929 to 1,856 children in grades five through eleven in Duluth. These children were selected from nineteen different schools and were representative of all sections of the city. Each pupil was asked to write answers on the form and indicate how much time he spent reading newspapers, magazines, and books (other than school books) during the month preceding the survey.

The results of the study showed that 100 percent of the boys and girls read newspapers and magazines while 89 percent read books. It also revealed that girls read more books than boys; and in regard to their interests, it was discovered that boys preferred books of adventure while girls selected stories concerned with home, school, and children.

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[1] B. Lamar Johnson, "Children's Reading Interests as Related to Sex and Grade in School," School Review, Vol. 40, April, 1932. pp. 257-272.

A study had been made of adult reading interests the year before; and in comparing children's reading with that of adults, it was found that both children and adults spent about thirty-five minutes each day reading newspapers. Another comparison showed that "recommendations of friends are the most important factor in selecting books among both children and adults."[2]

Hill and Trent[3] were pioneers in the study of children's interests in comic strips. The study made by Johnson[4] had revealed that boys girls considered the comic section as the most important part of the newspaper. In an attempt to discover reasons for this choice, a preliminary survey was made in the elementary schools of Philadelphia in grades four, five, and six. The 240 children selected were asked to write answers to the following questions.

1. What comics do you like best?
2. Why do you like these comics best?

After a tabulation of the answers received, it was found that fifty-seven different comics had been mentioned.

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2 Ibid., p. 270.

3 George E. Hill and M. Estelle Trent, "Children's Interest in Comic Strips," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 34, September, 1940. pp. 30-36.

4 B. Lamar Johnson, op. cit., p. 269.

Another questionnaire was devised on which the names of these fifty-seven comics were arranged in random order in the form of a check list.

In the Spring of 1938, the second questionnaire was given to 256 children in grades four, five, and six of Smith School and Bywood School, both in or near Philadelphia. The children were asked to check the comics they read all the time, those they read sometimes, and the five they liked best. Space was provided on the form so that they could state the reasons for their choice.

Of the 256 children that responded, there were 115 boys and 141 girls. It was found that girls read fewer comics than boys and that the white children read more than the Negroes. The average number of children claimed that they read twenty-three comics all the time, ten more sometimes. The study indicated that reading the comic strips was one of the most common leisure time interests of children in grades four, five, and six; and children liked comic strips primarily for adventure, excitement, and action - secondarily for humor.

In 1941, Thorndike[5] made an intensive study of comic magazine vocabulary. Four magazines, whose circulation was

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5 Robert L. Thorndike, "Words and the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 10, December, 1941. pp. 110-113.

among the highest and all products of one publisher (D. C. Publication), were selected for this investigation. After a careful count of words in each book, Thorndike tabulated his findings.

Superman	Number 9	10,300 words
Superman	Number 11	9,300
Batman	Number 6	10,600
Detective Comics	Number 53	9,500

Each book studied was found to contain "about 1,000 different words other than those falling in the commonest 1,000 of the Thorndike Word List."[6] The study revealed that ninety-two percent of the words appeared in the most common 1,000 of the same list. The various selections studied showed a fifth or sixth grade reading difficulty according to the calculations of the Lorge formula.[7]

Another study of children's interest in comics was made by Witty[8] in 1941 in which 2,500 children participated.

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6 Ibid., p. 113.

7 Ibid., p. 112. (Also the following reference) Irving Lorge, "Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children," Elementary English Review, Vol. 16, October, 1939. pp. 229-233.

8 Paul A. Witty, "Children's Interest in Reading the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 10, December, 1941. pp. 100-104.

A questionnaire was devised and administered to children in grades four, five, and six in eight schools in Evanston, Chicago, and Milwaukee.

In Evanston, the questionnaire was used as a basis for an interview and 334 boys and girls in Dewey and Lincolnwood Schools responded. The results indicated that boys read more comics than girls but that the average for both sexes was thirteen. Witty claimed this to be evidence that "attests to the popularity of comic magazines;"[9] but in the report, no period of time was mentioned. Both boys and girls selected Superman as their first choice, and the study indicated that comics appeared to be the most popular of all reading pursuits.

As part of the same survey described above, a comparative study was made in Chicago.[10] Samples of one hundred each were made at random by including reports of every twentieth child in the first sample and proportionate numbers of reports in the other samples.

Again the results indicated that boys read more comic books than girls, but girls read more comic strips than boys. Interest in comics was found to be general and consistent from grade to grade and interest was well

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9 Ibid., p. 104.

10 Paul A. Witty, "Reading the Comics - A Comparative Study," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 10, December, 1941. pp. 105-109.

defined in children of the fourth grade. Many children reported a fondness for making their own comics. Of this group, fifty-five percent of the boys revealed interest in this activity, while forty-five percent of the girls indicated that they enjoyed making comics.

Another comparative study in grades seveh and eight was conducted by Witty and his assistants in April and May of 1941.[11] Nine hundred pupils in grades seven and eight were given check lists of widely read comic strips and books. Two hundred and twenty-four of these seventh and eighth grade pupils were selected for a final and complete study, and it was found that they read slightly fewer comic books than younger children.

Kessel[12] attempted to discover the assumptions that were made in regard to society as revealed in newspaper comics. " 'Assumption' was defined as those attitudes, values, and beliefs which if critically considered might be questioned."[13] A careful survey

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11 Paul A. Witty, Ethel Smith, and Anne Coomer, "Reading the Comics in Grades 7 and 8," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 33, March, 1942. pp. 173-181.

12 Lawrence Kessel, "Some Assumptions in Newspaper Comics," Childhood Education, Vol. 19, April, 1943. pp. 349-353.

13 Ibid., p. 349.

was made of four newspapers: Chicago Daily Tribune, Chicago Daily News, Chicago Herald American, and Chicago Daily Times during the period June 24, 1941 through October 30, 1941.

During this period of seventeen weeks, Kessel found several assumptions expressed in three different ways.

1. Soliloquies by characters
2. Conversations between or among characters
3. General intimations that were not verbally expressed but were implicit in attitudes underlying action or were expressed in the drawings [14]

These findings were classified into five main groups. Under group one, race and nationality, the following assumptions were made.

"That the English are the most honorable of European people."
"That America is the greatest country in the world."
"That Negroes are inferior."

Morality and ethics represented group two, and the following were a few of the assumptions made.

"That it is right and natural for those who have been wronged to seek revenge."
"That we should obey laws, because if we don't, we shall be punished."
"That all people are either good or bad."

Under the heading, government and politics, the assumption was made "That America is the land of equal

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[14] Ibid., p. 350.

opportunity for all people."

Education represented the fourth group and under this heading several assumptions were found.

> "That education is worthwhile because those who have it reap greater financial returns."
> "That education helps one get ahead."
> "That higher education, outside of professional training, is interesting but useless."

The last group included the socio-economic assumptions.

> "That if a man really wants to work, he can find a job."
> "That it is shameful to accept charity."
> "That rich people are snobbish, lazy, and have bad habits and manners."

The assumptions found by Kessel as a result of this study were used to describe the comics as a "mirror of our times,"[15] in which public opinion was reflected.

Hill,[16] in a study of the vocabulary of comic strips in the daily newspapers, compared his findings to those of Thorndike.[17] Sixteen comic strips were selected. Samples of comics taken the first weeks of February, May, August, and November of 1942 were representative of the five daily issues of Philadelphia. All the words used in the 384 strips were recorded.

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15 Ibid., p. 349.

16 George E. Hill, "The Vocabulary of Comic Strips," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 34, February, 1943. pp. 77-87.

17 Robert L. Thorndike, op. cit., pp. 110-113.

The total count was 28,808 running words. These were classified so that there were 9,302 different words. A separate word count was made for each of the sixteen comics, and these were grouped into the following seven classes.

1. Gates' Primary Word List
2. Thorndike's Teacher's Word Book
3. Words found in standard dictionaries but not in the above
4. Slang
5. Misspelled words
6. Onomatopoeia
7. Foreign words

The study showed that the vocabulary of daily comic strips was somewhat simpler that that of the comic magazines. According to Hill, seventy-eight percent of all the words used in the comics that were studied were included in the Gates' Primary Word List of fewer than 2,000 and nearly eighty percent appeared in the first 2,000 words of Thorndike's list. "That the comic strips major in action, more than in words, is suggested by evidence that only ten percent of the words are nouns."[18]

Both Thorndike and Hill studied language vulgarisms and Hill found that five percent of the total vocabulary used in comic strips could be classed as slang or word distortions. To express it another way, "only one word

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18 George E. Hill, op. cit., p. 86.

in twenty was not a standard, properly spelled word."[19]

Hill did not try to analyze the grammatical construction of the sentences used for his attention was limited to words in the comic strips. The "linguistic corruption" of comics as described by Brumbaugh[20] was partially refuted by this study.

At the suggestion of the pediatricians of Duluth, Minnesota and under the auspices of the Women's Institute, a survey was undertaken in 1943 "to determine the magnitude of the comic magazine problem in the schools of Duluth, both public and private."[21] This study included the responses of 8,608 children in grades four through nine, who answered a questionnaire that was given orally in the classroom by the teacher in charge.

Of the group questioned, 935 children reported that they did not read comic books. The remaining 7,673 children indicated that they read 25,395 comic magazines during the week preceding the survey. The peak of interest in comic book reading was sixth grade in public schools

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19 George E. Hill, "Word Distortions in Comic Strips," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 43, May, 1943. pp. 520-525.

20 Florence Brumbaugh, "Stimuli Which Cause Laughter," (Unpublished Doctor's Thesis, New York University, New York, 1939.) p. 63.

21 Marion W. Smith and M. Katharine McCarthy, "The Much Discussed Comics," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 43, October, 1943. pp. 98-106.

and fourth grade in private schools. The maximum number of comics read by boys in one week was forty-seven, while for girls, the maximum was forty-two.

A second questionnaire was given to 350 children in two schools, one in Chicago and one in Minneapolis, to find out why children liked the comics. They were asked to write their answers to the question, "Why do you like comic magazines?"[22]

The reasons given included the following:

Humor	121
Adventure	90
Easy to read	52
Various reasons	87

The first four choices of comic books as indicated by the complete study were: (1) Batman, (2) Superman, (3) Donald Duck, and (4) Tip Top.

Sones[23] conducted an experiment with comics as a method of instruction and found that ninety-five percent of the children between the ages eight to fourteen read comic books, and sixty-five percent of the children between fifteen and eighteen years read comics. The main reasons children liked comics were (1) they liked the

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22 Ibid., p. 100.

23 W. W. D. Sones, "The Comics and Instructional Method," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 18, December, 1944. pp. 233-234.

stories and (2) the books were easy to read.

Although the studies mentioned above have reported many interesting comparisons between comic strips and comic books and have revealed much data that has been pertinent to comic book interests of children, there were still many questions that remained unanswered and unsolved. The material, presented in this thesis, was an attempt to contribute, in a small way, to the store of evidence and information available on the subject at present and to interest other researchers in the further study of this problem.

The importance of comics as a medium of social influence has been recognized by leaders in many fields of human endeavor. Zorbaugh, in 1944, pointed out that,

> "it is time that the amazing cultural phenomenon of the growth of the comics is subjected to a dispassionate scrutiny. Somewhere between vituperation and complacency must be found a road to the understanding and use of this great new medium of communication and social influence." 24

Evidence that this medium of communication and social influence is not entirely new, will be presented in the next chapter wherein a brief history of narrative illustration is developed.

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24 Harvey Zorbaugh, "The Comics as an Educational Medium," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 18, December, 1944. p. 194.

CHAPTER III

BRIEF HISTORY OF NARRATIVE ILLUSTRATION

Comics, as we know them, have had a comparatively short history in the field of current publication. Narrative illustration, however, dated back to our caveman ancestors.[1] The crude drawings, found in Spain, that were scratched on the stone walls of the cave homes may well be considered the forerunners of today's comics.

The speech of the early caveman was, no doubt, limited; but he, apparently, managed to get along with his limited vocabulary by using dramatization and pictures to help him convey his ideas to his fellow men.[2] As he sat in his cave, he, no doubt, was eager to describe, to his family or clan, the experiences he had had during the day. It is possible that he wanted to tell them what he had seen during his travels or explain to them how he had successfully hunted and killed the animal that he had brought back with him. To aid him in his description, he may have scratched a rough sketch or

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1 Hendrik W. Van Loon, The Arts, p. 26. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937.

2 M. C. Gaines, "Narrative Illustration," Print, A Quarterly Journal of the Graphic Arts, Vol. 3, Summer, 1942. pp. 1-5.

picture story on the near-by wall of stone.

Long before the invention of writing, men used pictures to explain and tell stories, just as young children use drawings to help them convey ideas to their elders. Some of the stories of important events in the history of Man have been preserved for us by means of stone tablets on which appear rather crude drawings. Drawing was a natural form of expression for primitive man; and down through the ages, it has continued to be an important medium of communication.

Ancient rulers used drawings to record their heroic deeds; and to insure the permanence of their history, they inscribed the walls of their tombs with pictures and picture stories. Much of our knowledge of the early Egyptians was gained from the narrative art that was used to decorate their shrines. Scenes of everyday life, some comic and some serious, wars, festivals, religious ceremonies, and many other events of historical importance have been described to us by means of these pictures.

The story of the wars of 3500 B. C., in which the Sumerian army participated, has been told and preserved in their mosaic pictures. The picture story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was recorded in the Bamberg Bible of the ninth century. A Buddhist ceremony was described and satirized by means of pictures in the scrolls

of Toba Sojo, a Japanese (1053-1140).

Samples of typical block books and pictures, used during the latter half of the fifteenth century, can be found in the history of printing and engraving. Blum stated that the Churchmen of this period were most interested in these block book illustrations.

> "The Church could set its doctrines and its ethics in a visible manner before the illiterate. The preface of Ars Moriendi" (a block book picture in the Comte de Waziers Collection) "alludes to this need of appealing to the eyes of the public: 'To make this matter useful to the world, it is here set forth before the eyes of all, both in writing which serves the clergy alone, and in pictures which serve both the clergy and laymen.'" [3]

Many of these block books were made up of a series of prints with texts included in the pictures. As Blum pointed out, "they mark the first step toward the discovery of printed books with which they were rivals for some time."[4]

During the Reformation in Europe, Martin Luther published a picture story in which he attempted to show the contrast between the humility and beneficence of Christ and the vanity and arrogance of the church officials. The success of this publication of 1521 was quite

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[3] Andre Blum, The Origins of Printing and Engraving, p. 92. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

[4] Ibid., p. 92.

remarkable; for without the use of words, the artist, Hans Cranach was able to appeal to the illiterate peasants and convince them that many church practices needed to be revised and corrected. One might say that Luther was among the first to realize that the picture story could be used to influence public opinion.

The work of William Hogarth (1697-1764) was enhanced by the caricatures that he used. The social comment that resulted from his publication gave impetus to other artists in the field of cartooning. Among the caricaturists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were James Gillray (1757-1815), Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), and George Cruikshank (1792-1878). These men were skilled in the use of the sequence of panels and satirized many of the social institutions of the time through their skilful use of caricature.

The word 'caricature' according to a dictionary means "a picture or description marked by ridiculous exaggeration or distortion."[5] This form of drawing was used by many prominent painters and artists of the Renaissance, but its successful use as a social influence was limited until new printing and engraving methods were

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5 Frank H. Vizetelly, editor, Practical Standard Dictionary of the English Language, New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1934. p. 187.

introduced and opportunities for wider circulation of printed matter were available.

During the nineteenth century, these necessary improvements were made, and the popular demand for caricatures and picture stories kept these artists busy. France, England, and Germany had representatives in the field; and before long, the popularity of the picture story spread to all parts of Europe and America.

Besides the improvements already mentioned, Gaines[6] pointed out that two other forces were at work in the nineteenth century that helped to set the pattern of the comic strip and comic book as we know them today. These factors were the introduction of the popular penny sheet and the use of the magic lantern slide, forerunner of the motion picture.

In a discussion of various artists, illustrators, and political cartoonists of America during the last sixty years, Craven[7] emphasized that, while many of the serious artists were concerned with the cultural ideals of their fellow citizens, "men of another breed were busy with an art form, or fun form, which was soon to become a national industry."

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6 M. C. Gaines, op. cit., p. 6.

7 Thomas Craven, editor, Cartoon Cavalcade, New York: Simon and Schuster, C. 1943. p. 15.

> "These men had no mission, no message, no ideals: the sole excuse for their existence was to compel laughter.....The first successful exhibit of the new fun form appeared in the Sunday supplement of the New York World, November 18, 1894, a momentous date in the history of humor."

The exhibit referred to was a colored sequence of R. F. Outcault entitled, "the Origin of a New Species." This name was almost prophetic; for as Craven pointed out, "it announced the birth of a new species of entertainment, the comic strip in color."[8]

Three years later, Outcault began work on a weekly picture story based on the characters in E. W. Townsend's story, McFadden's Row of Flats. Outcault's series was named, "Hogan's Alley," but later it was changed to "The Kid." A few years afterward, the same series was renamed, "The Yellow Kid."

Several other comic strips were started immediately after Outcault's successful venture and among the early pioneers were Frederick Burr Opper and T. S. Sullivant. Rudolph Dirks began a comic strip in 1897 entitled, "Katzenjammer Kids," and he has continued to draw this strip. When Dirks left his position on the staff of the Journal, he had to change the name of the strip to "The Captain and the Kids." The Journal, operating under

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8 Ibid., p. 15.

King Features Syndicate, hired another artist, H. H. Knerr, to continue the "Katzenjammer Kids" under the original title.

The widespread popularity of comic strips may be exemplified by the creation of George McManus, who started a comic strip in 1911 entitled, "Bringing Up Father," This picture story became so popular that it appeared in seventy-one countries and was translated into twenty-seven languages.[9]

The problems involved in the printing process of these early comic strips were gradually overcome. A system, known as the Ben Day method, was perfected in 1923 when it was found "that four color process plates could be printed successfully on rotary four color newsprint presses."[10]

The success of the weekly comic strip was well established before the daily strip was featured, and in like manner, the daily comic strip preceded the appearance of comic books. The first modern comic book appeared in 1911 and was a collection of newspaper strips by Bud Fisher of "Mutt and Jeff."[11] It was about six by

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9 M. C. Gaines, op. cit., p. 9.

10 Ibid., p. 8.

11 Hayden Weller, "The First Comic Book," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 18, December, 1944. p. 195.

eighteen inches in size, bound in stiff, gray boards, and printed on good quality paper. The original zinc plates were salvaged from the scrap pile of the old Chicago paper called, The American. The promotion manager of The American, Calvin Harris persuaded the Ball Publishing Company of Boston to print this comic book as a circulation builder for the newspaper. His plan was to offer the book to readers who had clipped coupons from six succeeding issues of the paper and were willing to pay an additional few cents. Although his plan appeared to be a failure at first, the public gradually took interest in it.

Most of the early comic books were reprints of Sunday color strips and were used by national advertising concerns as premiums. The Ledger Syndicate in 1930 published a promotional folder, and for the first time, it was found that pages seven by nine inches in size could be economically produced on a rotary press.

The comic magazine industry began to develop rapidly after 1930 and popular demand encouraged further experimentation. Instead of using reduced reprints of Sunday comic strips, publishers began to write original stories in comic book form and offered these books for sale.[12]

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12 M. C. Gaines, "Good Triumphs Over Evil," Print, A Quarterly Journal of the Graphic Arts, Vol. 3, Fall, 1942. p. 1.

M. C. Gaines, in 1937, formed a corporation that rapidly grew into an important and lucrative business. About thirty-three percent of the "eighteen-million-monthly comic magazine circulation" of the year 1942-1943 was published by one group, All American Comics, Incorporated.[13] At the time this study was made, there were approximately 120 different comic books on the market and most of them sold for ten cents a copy. All the issues that were studied contained the same number of pages, a feature that made them unlike other periodicals. It has been noted that in the past, many magazine publishers have been dependent, in part, on the income from advertising; while comic book publishers, apparently, have not been dependent on this and have been able, therefore, to set limitations on the number of pages in each issue. Before the recent paper curtailment, most comic books contained sixty-four pages, but this number was cut to fifty-six pages. The content of these magazines was, likewise, stabilized in that the same characters were portrayed in successive issues.[14]

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13 Bert Dale, "Funny Business," Forbes, (The Interpreter of Business), September 1, 1943.

14 M. C. Gaines, "Good Triumphs Over Evil," Print, A Quarterly Journal of the Graphic Arts, Vol. 3, Fall, 1942. p. 2.

In general, the evolution of comics may be divided into three periods or phases. The first twenty years of the twentieth century may be considered as the first period. During these years, comics were meant to be funny and humorous - hence the name funnies or comics.[15] In the first period, the artists of comic strips portrayed characters who were representatives of foreign countries. As Craven explained, this tendency was indirectly related to the feeling of nationalism that was disseminated, in large part, by Theodore Roosevelt and to the unrestricted immigration that brought people of many lands to this country and helped to make it a so-called "Melting Pot."

In many ways, the unfamiliar customs of these foreigners were held up for ridicule, and the comic strip also helped to reflect the popular attitude of the times. The French were satirized in Opper's strip "Alphonse and Gaston;" the Irish were portrayed in the strip by McManus, "Bringing Up Father;" while the Germans were ridiculed in "Katzenjammer Kids." Several strips depicting racial humor were also popular; such as, the Negro in "Black Berries" by Kemble and the Jew in

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15 William M. Marston, op. cit., p. 5.

"Abie, the Agent" by Hershfield.[16] It was interesting to note that "Bringing Up Father" and "Katzenjammer Kids" were the only two comic strips of this first period that survived more than thirty years.

During the next ten years, that roughly marked the second phase in comic strip development, several different elements or so-called "ingredients" were added. Emphasis was no longer on humor alone but rather on a number of various factors.[17]

The machine age that followed World War I brought about a centralization of wealth. Millionaires were created by the many new industries; such as, the manufacture of automobiles, movies, and electrical machinery. The Prohibition Amendment was disregarded by many people with barbaric glee and bootleggers became barons of wealth. Fads, manias, jazz, flappers, speed - all were characteristic tendencies of the aftermath of the war. The cry, "return to normalcy" as voiced by President Harding, was disregarded by most people and the younger generation "ran hog-wild in their lust for freedom."[18]

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16 Thomas Craven, op. cit., p. 16.

17 William M. Marston, op. cit., p. 5.

18 Thomas Craven, op. cit., p. 99.

The humor found in the earlier comic strips was replaced with adventure, pathos, and sex. The wandering, plotless fables that were so popular during the previous period were replaced with continuous stories told in picture sequence. "Gasoline Alley" by Frank King was started in 1919; and with the introduction of Skeesix in 1921, the strip continued for over twenty years. There were several comics that were written and drawn for adult readers rather than for children. These included "Toots and Casper" by Jimmy Murray and "Tillie the Toiler" by Russ Westover. Adventure and humor were combined in the comic strips for young children. "Skippy" by Percy Crosby and "The Little King" by Otto Soglow were favored by the younger group, while Carl Ed's creation, "Harold Teen," was preferred by most of the adolescents.[19]

The transition from comics that were funny to those that were really adventure strips was apparent during the 1930's.[20] The business depression and general trend of affairs tended to have a sobering effect on most people. It was during this time that such features as "Little

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19 Ibid., pp. 101-102.

20 William M. Marston., op. cit., p. 5.

Orphan Annie," "Tarzan," "Dick Tracy," and "Terry and the Pirates" became popular.[21]

The advent of Superman as a comic book in 1938 marked the beginning of the third period in the comic cavalcade. Marston described the comics of this period in the following way.

> "Comics continuities of the present period are not meant to be humorous, nor are they primarily concerned with dramatic adventure. Their emotional appeal is wish fulfillment. There is no drama in the ordinary sense, because Superman is invincible, invulnerable. He can leap over skyscrapers, fly through the air and catch airplanes, toss battleships around, or repel bullets with his bare skin. Superman never risks danger; he is always, by definition, superior to all menace." 22

The extent of wish fulfillment that Superman has given to his readers, as it was described above, has not been measured and would probably be very difficult to ascertain. The success of Superman as well as the growing popularity of similar comic book characters has puzzled many people. Perhaps the explanation given by Marston was corredt.

> "Superman and his innumerable followers satisfy the universal human longing to be stronger than all opposing obstacles and the equally universal desire to see good overcome evil, to see wrongs righted.... and withal to experience vicariously the supreme

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21 M. C. Gaines, "Narrative Illustration," Print, A Quarterly Journal of the Graphic Arts, Vol. 3, Summer, 1942. p. 12.

22 William M. Marston, op. cit., p. 5.

> gratification of the deus ex machina who accomplishes these monthly miracles." 23

Whatever the explanation may be, the introduction of Superman marked the inauguration of a new era in comics. The period has already exhibited "a most radical departure from all previously accepted standards of story telling and drama."[24]

Without doubt, this last phase, described above, will, in the due course of time, be replaced by some other innovation. In this study, however, our interest has been limited to the third period in the history of comics. The procedures and techniques used in this investigation will be presented in the next chapter.

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23 Ibid., p. 5.

24 Ibid., p. 5.

CHAPTER IV

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES USED IN THIS STUDY

It was pointed out in Chapter I of this report that comics, in general, reflected public opinion. The history of narrative illustration revealed the extended use of comics as a medium of social influence. Although the problem presented in this study was concerned primarily with interests of children, it was found that opinions and interests were closely related. It was also discovered that outside influence altered opinions that, in turn, affected specific interests. This preliminary investigation disclosed that, in trying to analyze children's interests in comic books, it was necessary to poll children's opinions concerning comic books.

In attempting to do this, a technique was employed that was developed by Gallup and his associates. This system, used successfully in nation-wide public opinion polls and known as stratified random sampling, was the result of extensive study and experimentation.

> "With this method the population is divided into numerous layers or strata and the units are drawn as nearly as possible at random from each layer. The proportionate representation of each layer in the sample is the same as its proportionate

representation in the whole population."[1]

This system of selection has been used so extensively that it has been recognized as the "most practical way of sampling."[2] The task of scaling down all the elements or characteristics of the population within the miniature sample would be almost super-human. "In the construction of nation-wide poll samples - the standard practice is to stratify with respect to geographical distribution, color, and economic status."[3]

The use of questionnaires in public opinion polls has been quite successful; but experimentation and preliminary surveys, in which the personal interview method was used, have shown that "usually the personal interview method is superior to any other."[4] "This procedure permits rigid control of the sample of respondents. The questioner can 'probe' into the reactions of the respondents obtaining full and detailed answers where necessary."[5]

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1 Hadley Cantril, Gauging Public Opinion, p. 142. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.

2 Ibid., p. 143.

3 Ibid., p. 143.

4 Albert B. Blankenship, Consumer and Opinion Research, p. 53. New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1943.

5 Ibid., p. 21.

The merits of both stratified random sampling and the use of a questionnaire as a guide in the personal interview technique have been emphasized by the accurate findings of such organizations as, The Psychological Corporation and Office of Public Opinion Research. In collecting data for the analysis of comic book interests in this study, it seemed advisable to make use of the highly recommended methods mentioned above.

Among the first problems encountered in the stratification process was the establishment of a basis for stratifying. Since this survey was already geographically limited, there remained only two other primary distinctions: color and economic status.[6] In a previous investigation by Chambers and Bell,[7] it was found that stratification by economic status was a more objective method. The classifications used by the Psychological Corporation were employed in the present survey and included the use of the four economic groups; A, B, C, and D.[8]

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6 Hadley Cantril, op. cit., p. 143.

7 M. M. Chambers and Howard M. Bell, "How to Make a Community Youth Survey," American Council on Education Studies, Vol. 3, January, 1939. pp. 19-20.

8 Henry C. Link, Eighth Nation-wide Social and Experimental Survey, New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1943. p. 2.

Since this study was concerned with the opinions of children, the personal interview technique seemed advisable. On the other hand, this practice involved personal contact with each child and this would necessarily consume a great deal of time and energy. A limitation, therefore, had to be imposed on the number in the sample. This restriction raised an important question: How large would the sample have to be so that the results would be representative and fairly accurate?

The following statement was made by Gallup and it partly answered the above question.

> "Actually the size of the sample (the number of persons interviewed) is far less important as a factor in achieving reliable results in modern polling than the representatives of the persons chosen to be interviewed." 9

In another portion of the same reference, Gallup pointed out:

> "Assuming that a correct cross-section of the people has been chosen, a sample which includes as few as 100 voters might provide a good prediction of an election or a referendum. When the sample is properly selected, the laws of 'probability' or of 'averages' reveal the likelihood of error at each stage, as the sample is increased in size. For example, if only 100 persons properly selected were interviewed in a national survey, the outside margin

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9 George Gallup, A Guide to Public Opinion Polls, p. 13. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.

of error would be fifteen percent."[10]

Additional information was presented in answer to another question: "Does the size of the sample have to be a fixed percentage of the population?"[11] Gallup answered this question in the following way:

> "In some fields of commercial research, it is mistakenly believed that the sample should be a fixed percentage, usually five percent of the total population. So long as the 'universe' or population sampled is many times larger than the sample, there is no fixed relationship between the two." 12

Theoretically, the obstacles or restrictions in the survey procedure were eliminated. The problem, now, was centered on the construction of a questionnaire that would be reliable and that would help to secure the desired information. To do this job, many devices were employed. Conversation with children, on the topic of comic books, was the chief source of obtaining material. Children in the classroom often brought comic books to show their friends and they discussed them in their "daily talks." On the playground, in the parks, around newsstands, on buses, and on street cars, children were seen reading comic books. Their comments and criticisms were noted and they

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10 Ibid., p. 16.

11 Ibid., p. 23.

12 Ibid., p. 23.

helped in the building of the questionnaire.

In the survey of previous comic book research, it was found that the factor of intelligence was omitted. For this reason, an instrument for measuring the intelligence of each respondent was included in the questionnaire for this study. The test chosen, for this purpose, had to be one that could be given without excess equipment and that would appeal to the children. It also had to be one that would be fairly reliable. The scale known as Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings, devised by Goodenough,[13] met the need.

Further examination of the previous research indicated that no attempt had been made to ascertain the reasons why children disliked certain comics. It seemed pertinent, therefore, to include this item in the questionnaire.

The importance of outside influence in determining the choice of reading matter was stressed in a study by Johnson on children's reading interests in which it was found that "recommendation of friends is the most important factor in selecting books among both children and adults."[14]

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13 Florence L. Goodenough, Measurement of Intelligence by Drawing, pp. 1-161. New York: World Book Co., C. 1926.

14 B. Lamar Johnson, "Children's Reading Interests as Related to Sex and Grade in School," School Review, Vol. 40, April, 1932. p. 270.

Investigation of previous work in the field of comics or comic books showed that this factor was also omitted. Several questions relating to this outside influence were, consequently, included in the present questionnaire.

At this point, it should be noted that, while several of the previous surveys in the field used questionnaires in the collection of data, the combination of a questionnaire and personal interview had not been used. Also the children questioned in the earlier studies had not been chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling.

Briefly then, the present investigation was unique in the following ways: (1) it attempted to determine the intelligence of each respondent; (2) it tried to ascertain the reasons for children's dislike of certain comic books; (3) it combined the use of the questionnaire and personal interview technique; and (4) it employed scientific methods in the selection of respondents.

After a trial questionnaire had been devised, it was used in a preliminary survey. The trial sample included forty children who were selected to represent the four economic strata recommended by both Link[15] and Blankenship.[16] Blankenship described these groups in the

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15 Henry C. Link, op. cit., p. 2.

16. Albert B. Blankenship, op. cit., p. 103.

following way.

> "The A group is the highest ten percent of the population in terms of income. These homes will be those in the very best sections, usually having two or more cars, nine room house or larger, and servants' quarters. The persons in this group will be largely successful business men and professional people, executives, etc.
>
> The B group comprises the next thirty percent of the population. It will generally include one family and some two family houses, containing eight rooms or less, and a few of the better class apartments will also fall within this class. Wage earners of this group will be employed in business or the professions or else will be well-paid clerical workers or skilled factory workers. This is the upper middle-class group.
>
> The lower middle-class group is the C group, composed of the next forty percent of the families. This group will be mechanics, factory workers, and the lower-paid business, clerical and professional persons.
>
> There still remains the lowest twenty percent of the population and this is the D group. These people have very few autos, practically none have electric or automatic refrigerators. The slum element of your town will be included here, as well as the tenement sections. Most negro and foreign language sections fall into this group." 17

Of the forty children selected for the preliminary survey, four were of the A group, twelve of the B group, sixteen of the C group, and eight of the D group. The question on the form in regard to the occupations of the parents helped to determine this grouping.

Each child was tested first. He was asked to draw a picture of a man according to the directions in the

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17 Albert B. Blankenship, op. cit., p. 103.

Goodenough Manual.[18] He was asked to make the drawing on the back side of the questionnaire form. After he completed the test, he was interviewed. The test and interview consumed approximately fifteen minutes.

After the interview, the drawing was scored and the calculations were made according to the directions given in the test manual. The name of each child interviewed in the preliminary survey was included on the questionnaire. This was done so that the same child could be interviewed again later.

The first trial survey was made during the month of November, 1945; the second test was made in December, 1945, or approximately one month after the first. The second survey was made to test the reliability of the items on the questionnaire; that is, to see if the same child would answer the same question in the same way. The results of these preliminary studies were tabulated.

This tabulation was divided in such a way that each item on the questionnaire was treated individually. The first and second responses of each child were paired. Each question number was listed; and opposite each number, the following classifications were made: (1) First Answer,

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[18] Florence L. Goodenough, op. cit., pp. 90-110.

(2) Second Answer Same, (3) Second Answer Different. The first answer of a child was compared with his second response. If both answers were the same, a check was made under the two headings, (1) First Answer and (2) Second Answer Same. If the second response differed from the first, a check was made under (1) First Answer and (3) Second Answer Different. The percentage of variation was, then, calculated and recorded.

It was found by this method that the reliability of item 9-c was questionable; however, the number of comics read during December, a winter month, was, on the whole, larger than the number read during the autumn month (per day, per week, or per month). Although this factor seemed pertinent, the question was revised on the final form that was used for the major survey. Item number 10 with its four sub-headings did not total forty in either first or second answers, because some children reported that they got comic books in more than one way.

The average percentage for all the items on the preliminary questionnaire was calculated according to the formula:[19] $\bar{x}$ equals $\frac{\text{the sum of the x's}}{\text{number in sample}}$ or by substitution; $\bar{x}$ equals $\frac{2416}{26}$ or 92.923. In this case, 26 represented the

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[19] Harry A. Greene, Workbook in Educational Measurements, p. 14. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., C. 1937.

total number of questions listed. This number was, therefore, used as the divisor rather than 40, the number of children interviewed. The dividend, 2416 was the sum of the percentages for the twenty-six questions. Numbers in the two columns, Second Answer Same and Second Answer Different, were added and the two combined equaled the sum of the numbers listed in the row designated, First Answer.

Further study on the problem indicated that two other items were needed to make the questionnaire more complete. The two additions included a check on the interview behavior of each respondent and a teacher estimate on the reading for each.

It was felt that the revised questionnaire would fulfil the purpose of this study, and so attention was now focused on the method to be used in selecting respondents on the basis of stratified random sampling. Unfortunately, no recent map of Omaha was available that indicated the four economic areas or groups described on pages 38 and 39 of this study. It was, therefore, necessary to utilize the economic map used by the Department of Psychology of the University of Omaha. This map revealed the desired information, and one school was selected in each of these four economic areas mentioned above.

Table 1. Summary of Preliminary Questionnaire Survey

No.	Question Number	First Answer	Second Answer Same	Second Answer Different	Percent x
1.	1-A-Yes	40	40	0	100 %
2.	1-a-Yes	28	26	2	93
3.	1-b-No	12	12	0	100
4.	2-a-Yes	22	22	0	100
5.	1	4	4	0	100
6.	2	18	18	0	100
7.	3	0	0	0	100
8.	4	0	0	0	100
9.	2-b-No	18	18	0	100
10.	3	40	30	10	75
11.	4	40	36	4	90
12.	5	40	32	8	80
13.	6	40	28	12	70
14.	7	40	38	2	95
15.	8	40	30	10	75
16.	9-a-Yes	36	36	0	100
17.	9-b-No	4	4	0	100
18.	9-c	40	18	22	45
19.	10-1	36	36	0	100
20.	2	10	10	0	100
21.	3	29	27	2	93
22.	4	0	0	0	100
23.	11-a	30	30	0	100
24.	11-b	10	10	0	100
25.	12-a	2	2	0	100
26.	12-b	38	38	0	100
		617	545	72	2416

Reference to page 41 of this study is suggested.

$\bar{x}$ is the symbol for average percentage.

2416 is the sum of the x's.

26 is the number in the sample.

$\bar{x}$ equals $\frac{\text{the sum of the x's}}{\text{number in sample}}$ or $\frac{2416}{26}$ or 92.923.

Sample 1. PRELIMINARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMIC BOOKS.

I am trying to find out why some boys and girls like to read comic books; so I would like to have you help me and answer a few questions. For example:

1. Do you like to read comic books?
   1-A. Yes _____
      1. Do you remember when you first started reading them?
         a. Yes _____ About how old were you? _____
         b. No _____
      2. Do you remember your first comic book?
         a. Yes _____ How did you get it?
            1. Bought it. 2. Gift. 3. Don't remember.
            4. Other way. _____
         b. No _____
      3. Which comic book do you like best? _____
      4. Why do you like it? _____
      5. Which one do you like next best? _____
      6. Tell why. _____
      7. Is there one that you don't like? _____
      8. Why don't you like it? _____
      9. Do you read many comics books? _____
         a. Yes _____
         b. No _____
         c. About how many do you read?
            Per day _____ Per week _____ Per month _____
      10. How do you usually get your comics?
         a. Buy them _____ b. Gift _____ c. Trade _____
         d. Other way. _____
      11. Do you always choose your own comics?
         a. Yes _____
         b. No _____ Who helps you? _____
      12. Do you read certain comics because your friends read them?
         a. Yes _____
         b. No _____
   1-B. No _____
      1. Why don't you like to read them? _____
      _____
      2. Additional comments. _____
      _____

2. General Information.
   2-A. Sex __M: __F: Age __ Class in school _____
   Race __W: __C: __Y: __R: __J: Nationality _____
   2-B. Father's work __Professional: __Skilled: __Businessman: __Common laborer.
   Mother's work __Professional: __Skilled: __Home-maker: __Common laborer.
   2-C. General economic group __A: __B: __C: __D.
   2-D. Date _____
   Birth date _____
   C. A. _____
   M. A. _____
   I. Q. _____

3. Name _____

Sample 2. SCORE SHEET FOR THE GOODENOUGH TEST ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. -
2. -
3. -
4a. -
4b. -
4c. -
5a. -
5b. -
6a. -
6b. -
7a. -
7b. -
7c. -
7d. -
7e. -
8a. -
8b. -
9a. -
9b. -
9c. -
9d. -
9e. -
10a. -
10b. -
10c. -
10d. -
10e. -
11a. -
11b. -
12a. -
12b. -
12c. -
12d. -
12e. -
13. -
14a. -
14b. -
14c. -
14d. -
14e. -
14f. -
15a. -
15b. -
16a. -
16b. -
16c. -
16d. -
17a. -
17b. -
18a. -
18b. -

Sample 3. PRELIMINARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMIC BOOKS
(Re-test for Reliability)

Sometime ago, I asked you some questions about comic books and you were very helpful; so now I would like to ask you some more questions about them. For example:

1. Do you like to read comic books?
   1-A Yes ____
      1. Do you remember when you first started reading them?
         a. Yes ____ About how old were you? _____
         b. No ____
      2. Do you remember your first comic book?
         a. Yes ____ How did you get it?
            1. Bought it. 2. Gift. 3. Don't remember.
            4. Other way. _____
         b. No ____
      3. Which comic book do you like best? _____
      4. Why do you like it? _____
      5. Which one do you like next best? _____
      6. Tell why. _____
      7. Is there one that you don't like? _____
      8. Why don't you like it? _____
      9. Do you read many comic books?
         a. Yes ____
         b. No ____
         c. About how many do you read?
            Per day _____ Per week _____ Per month _____
      10. How do you usually get your comics?
         a. Buy them. _____ b. Gift. _____ c. Trade. _____
         d. Other way. _____
      11. Do you always choose your own comics?
         a. Yes ____
         b. No ____ Who helps you? _____
      12. Do you read certain comics because your friends read them?
         a. Yes ____
         b. No ____
   1-B No ____
      1. Why don't you like to read them? _____
      _____
      2. Additional comments. _____
      _____

2. General Information.
   2-A Sex __M: __F: Age ____ Class in school _____
   Race __W: __C: __Y: __R: __J: Nationality _____
   2-B Father's work __Professional: __Skilled: __Businessman: __Common laborer.
   Mother's work __Professional: __Skilled: __Home-maker: __Common laborer.
   2-C General economic group __A: __B: __C: __D.
   2-D Date _____

3. Name _____

Sample 4. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMIC BOOKS

I am trying to find out why some boys and girls like to read comic books; so I would like to have you help me and answer a few questions. For example:

1. Do you like to read comic books?

1-A. Yes ____

1. Do you remember when you first started reading them?
   a. Yes ____ About how old were you? _____
   b. No ____
2. Do you remember your first comic book?
   a. Yes ____ How did you get it?
      1. Bought it. 2. Gift. 3. Don't remember.
      4. Other way. _____
   b. No ____
3. Which comic book do you like best? _____
4. Why do you like it? _____
5. Which one do you like next best? _____
6. Tell why. _____
7. Is there one that you don't like? _____
8. Why don't you like it? _____
9. Do you read many comic books?
   a. Yes ____
   b. No ____
   c. About how many do you read?
      1. 1 per month 2. 1 per week 3. 5 per week
      4. 1 per day 5. 1-5 per day 6. 6-10 per day
10. How do you usually get your comics?
    a. Buy them. b. Gift. c. Trade. d. _____
11. Do you always choose your own comics?
    a. Yes ____
    b. No ____ Who helps you? _____
12. Do you read certain comics because your friends read them?
    a. Yes ____
    b. No ____

1-B. No ____

1. Why don't you like to read them? _____
   _____
2. Additional comments. _____
   _____

2. General Information.

2-A. Sex _M: _F: Age __ Class in school __ Race _W:_C:_J:_M:

2-B. Father's work _Professional:_Skilled:_Businessman:
_Laborer.
Mother's work _Professional:_Skilled:_Home-maker:
_Laborer.

2-C. General economic group _A: _B: _C: _D.

2-D. Date _____ Teacher estimate on Reading
Birth date _____ _Good _Average _Poor
C. A. _____
M. A. _____
I. Q. _____

2-E. Interview Behavior.
Willingness to cooperate - 1. Eager 2. Willing 3. Normal
4. Not willing 5. Active objection
Social confidence - 1. Perfectly assured
2. Rather confident 3. Normal 4. Shy 5. Reserved.

Sample 5. SCORE SHEET ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

1. -
2. -
3. -
4a. -
4b. -
4c. -
5a. -
5b. -
6a. -
6b. -
7a. -
7b. -
7c. -
7d. -
7e. -
8a. -
8b. -
9a. -
9b. -
9c. -
9d. -
9e. -
10a. -
10b. -
10c. -
10d. -
10e. -
11a. -
11b. -
12a. -
12b. -
12c. -
12d. -
12e. -
13. -
14a. -
14b. -
14c. -
14d. -
14e. -
14f. -
15a. -
15b. -
16a. -
16b. -
16c. -
16d. -
17a. -
17b. -
18a. -
18b. -

On February 23, 1946, the Omaha Public School Attendance Department reported that the total enrolment for the city Public Elementary Schools was 21,819. The total enrolment for grades four through eight was 11,200. Gallup[20] pointed out that there was no fixed relationship between sample size and total population. According to Blankenship,[21] however, sample size could be determined. In an explanation of two tables (one by H. C. Link and the other by T. H. Brown), Blankenship indicated that a certain number of cases were required to provide results within certain accuracy limits. The tables of both Link and Brown were developed from the same basic formula: sigma equals $\sqrt{\frac{pq}{N}}$ and used two standard errors or ninety-five percent probability as the most desirable indication of probability. "A measure that will be right in 95 out of 100 cases is reasonably accurate for the usual survey."[22] As stated before, the number of interviews for this study necessarily had to be limited; and consequently, the number of cases required to be practically certain of accuracy within predetermined limits was 336. This sample size was found on the Brown table under the heading 30% or 70% and

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20 George Gallup, op. cit., p. 23.

21 Albert B. Blankenship, op. cit., p. 114.

22. Ibid., p. 115.

indicated a 5% range of error. This number, 336, represented three percent of the total 11,200 children in grades four through eight.

The number had to be divided so that the percentage for each economic group would be correctly balanced. Dundee School was chosen to represent economic group A, consequently, ten percent of the 336 interviews had to be selected from this school. This number was 33.60 or 34. Representatives of economic group B were chosen from Miller Park School. Thirty percent of 336 was 100.80 or 101. Forty percent of 336 represented the C group. This number was 134.40 or 134 and these children were selected from Lake School. The fourth group included twenty percent of 336. The D group, chosen from West Side School, totaled 67.20 or 67.

The four schools selected for the survey were geographically distributed so that most sections of Omaha were included; Dundee School, west; Miller Park School, north; Lake School, central and east; and West Side School, south and west.

In the Attendance Department's report of February 23, 1946, it was found that the total enrolment for each of the four schools was:

Dundee School	712
Miller Park School	542
Lake School	756
West Side School	389

Since this study was relative to children in grades four, five, six, seven, and eight, it was necessary to determine the number registered in these grades in each school. Reference was again made to the Attendance Department's report, and the partial enrolment was tabulated.

Dundee School	356
Miller Park School	270
Lake School	380
West Side School	194

From each of these partial registrations, it was necessary to choose the required number, namely, 34 of the 356 from Dundee, 101 of the 270 from Miller Park, 134 of the 380 from Lake, and 67 of the 194 from West Side.

The calculations for economic stratification seemed satisfactory. The next problem was centered on a practical plan for random sampling. Gallup[23] described random sampling in the reference, A Guide to Public Opinion Polls. "If the U. S. Bureau of the Census were asked to go through its files and pull out every 1000th name, this would be random sampling." In other words, a random selection could be made in this fashion from a systematic tabulation of the units in the 'universe' or total population under consideration.

Since each school had a file of Information Cards

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[23] George Gallup, op. cit., p. 98.

arranged by grades in alphabetical order, it seemed advisable to use these records. The random selection, however, could not be the same for each school; because the sample size and enrolment number varied. The calculation for each school was done on the same general principle, but the random numbers were different. For example; to secure 34 responses from Dundee School, the number 34 was divided into 356, the number of children in grades four through eight. By the process of division, this meant that every tenth child's card would have to be chosen from the alphabetical file of cards beginning with Grade Four.

In like manner, every second card in the file had to be taken in the selection of 101 responses from Miller Park, since the partial enrolment for this school was 270. At Lake School, every third card was chosen; because 134 responses were necessary and 380 children were enrolled in the five upper classes. Every third card was selected from West Side. Here, the sample number was 67, and these had to be equally divided among the 194 children registered in grades four through eight.

With the solution of this problem, a method had been devised according to the specifications of stratified random sampling. Permission was granted to visit the four schools chosen for the study and the personnel of each

school co-operated in making the survey a pleasant experience. During the week, February 25 through March 1, 1946, 336 children were tested and interviewed. The questionnaires were keyed in such a way that the respondent's name did not appear on it.

The system of identification combined a letter and number for each respondent and the key was written in colored pencil in the left hand corner of each questionnaire. The color and letter used for each school was different and the number on each questionnaire was different. To exemplify: Dundee School represented economic group A, therefore, the letter A was written in blue on each form used in that school. The numbers ranged from 1 through 34. The first questionnaire blank used at Dundee had the key A - 1 written in blue. The forms used at Miller Park were scored in red and were lettered B. The numbers ranged from 1 through 101. The questionnaires used at Lake were marked in green and lettered C. The arrangement of numbers included 1 through 134. Purple was used for West Side. The letter D appeared on each blank used there, together with the numbers 1 through 67.

Each child, who came to be interviewed, was given a question form; and the number on it was recorded opposite his name on the list. The name of the respondent was omitted from the blank. It was thought that the respondent's

answers might have been influenced by this feature.

After the child finished his drawing, he was ready to be interviewed; and the questioner wrote the respondent's answers on the inquiry form. Although names had been purposely omitted from the blanks, twenty-seven children signed their drawings. Of this number, ten were girls and seventeen were boys.

The system of identification described above was used throughout the study and greatly facilitated the tabulation and summary of the responses. During the week of the survey, many interesting contacts were made and a large amount of data was collected.

In summary, this section has described many of the procedures used in making this study. In Chapter V, an attempt is made to describe some of the results of the survey and to report cases that were of particular interest.

CHAPTER V

A SUMMARY OF THE DATA COLLECTED IN THE SURVEY

As stated in Chapter IV, this survey of children's interests in comic books differed in several ways from previous studies made in the field. As stated before, an attempt was made to determine the intelligence rating or I. Q. of each respondent interviewed. A chart is presented that shows the distribution of I. Q. scores. It should be noted that the scores of the four schools were presented first. The Arithmetic Mean and the Standard Deviation were calculated. The scores for each school were then tabulated separately to discover the variation between schools.

In each case, the coded scale was used with the following formulas and symbols. $\bar{X}$ equaled the algebraic sum of the frequenty multiplied by the value on the coded scale opposite that frequency and divided by the number in the sample. Expressed in the formula, $\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ where:

X was the value on the coded scale,
f was the frequency,
N was the number in the sample.

The Arithmetic Mean was found by the use of the formula:

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$) where:

$\bar{x}$ was the Arithmetic Mean,
a was the value of the class center on the coded scale,
b was the size of the class interval,
$\bar{X}$ was the value on the coded scale.

Table 2. Tabulation of I. Q. Scores for Schools A, B, C, D.

Class Interval x	Frequency Number f	Coded Scale X	Frequency Scale fX	Frequency Scale Squared fX^2
140	1	16	16	256
135	2	15	30	450
130	4	14	56	784
125	3	13	39	507
120	10	12	120	1440
115	21	11	231	2541
110	40	10	400	4000
105	48	9	422	3790
100	49	8	392	3136
95	46	7	322	2254
90	37	6	222	1332
85	26	5	130	650
80	23	4	92	368
75	17	3	51	153
70	3	2	6	12
65	2	1	2	2
60	4	0	0	0
	N is 336		fX is 2531	fX^2 is 21683

To calculate the Arithmetic Mean of this distribution, the following formulas were used.

$\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or by substitution: $\frac{2531}{336}$ or $\bar{X}$ is 7.532.

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$) or by substitution: 62.5 plus 5(7.532).
$\bar{x}$ is 100.160 Arithmetic Mean of the distribution.

To calculate the Standard Deviation of this distribution, the following formulas were used.

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2}$ or $\sqrt{\frac{21.683}{336} - (7.532)^2}$ or S_X is 2.60

S_x is bS_X or 5(2.60)

S_x is 13.00 Standard Deviation of the distribution.

Standard Error of the Arithmetic Mean is (plus or minus).708

Standard Error of the Standard Deviation is (plus or minus).541

By means of this calculation, it was found that the Arithmetic Mean of the distribution was 100.16.[1] Using the formula, $\frac{S_x}{\sqrt{N}}$, the standard error of the mean was found to be (plus or minus).708, where the symbols used were as follows:

S_x was the Standard Deviation,
N was the number in the sample,

In the computation of the Standard Deviation, the following formulas were used. The first one was:[3]

S_X equals $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{x}^2}$, where:

fX was the quotient of the coded scale multiplied by the frequency scale,
N was the number in the sample,
$\bar{x}^2$ was the squared value on the coded scale.

The second formula was:

S_x equals bS_X, where:

S_x was the symbol for Standard Deviation,
b was the size of the class interval.

It was found that the Standard Deviation for the distribution

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1 L. L. Thurstone, The Fundamentals of Statistics, pp. 73-77. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931.

2 Robert E. Chaddock, Principles and Methods of Statistics, pp. 237-239. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., c. 1925.

3 L. L. Thurstone, op. cit., p. 77.

was 13.00. The standard error of the Standard Deviation was calculated by the use of the formula: S. E. is $\frac{S_x}{\sqrt{2N}}$, or (plus or minus).541.

In an attempt to discover how the I. Q. distribution of the sample compared with the theoretical distribution, a histogram was drawn and a "Normal Curve" was calculated by means of the Normal Curve Table and formula:

$$y_0 \text{ equals } \left(\frac{N}{S_x}\right)\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}}\right) e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{x-\bar{x}}{S_x}\right)^2}; \text{ or in this case,}$$

$$y_0 \text{ equals } \frac{336}{13}(.3989)(5)(1.000)^4$$

By inspection, it was found that, outside of accidental conditions of sampling, the actual distribution conformed to the law of distribution represented by the bell-shaped probability curve.

In the computation of the Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of each school, the same symbols and formulas were used. The standard errors of both Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated and were designated by the letters S. E.

	$\bar{x}$	S. E.	S_x	S. E.
Dundee or School A	104.260	2.024	11.80	1.432
Miller Park or School B	103.290	1.285	12.85	.904
Lake or School C	96.080	1.271	14.71	.898
West Side or School D	102.120	1.446	11.84	1.023

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4 Robert E. Chaddock, op. cit., pp. 205-246.

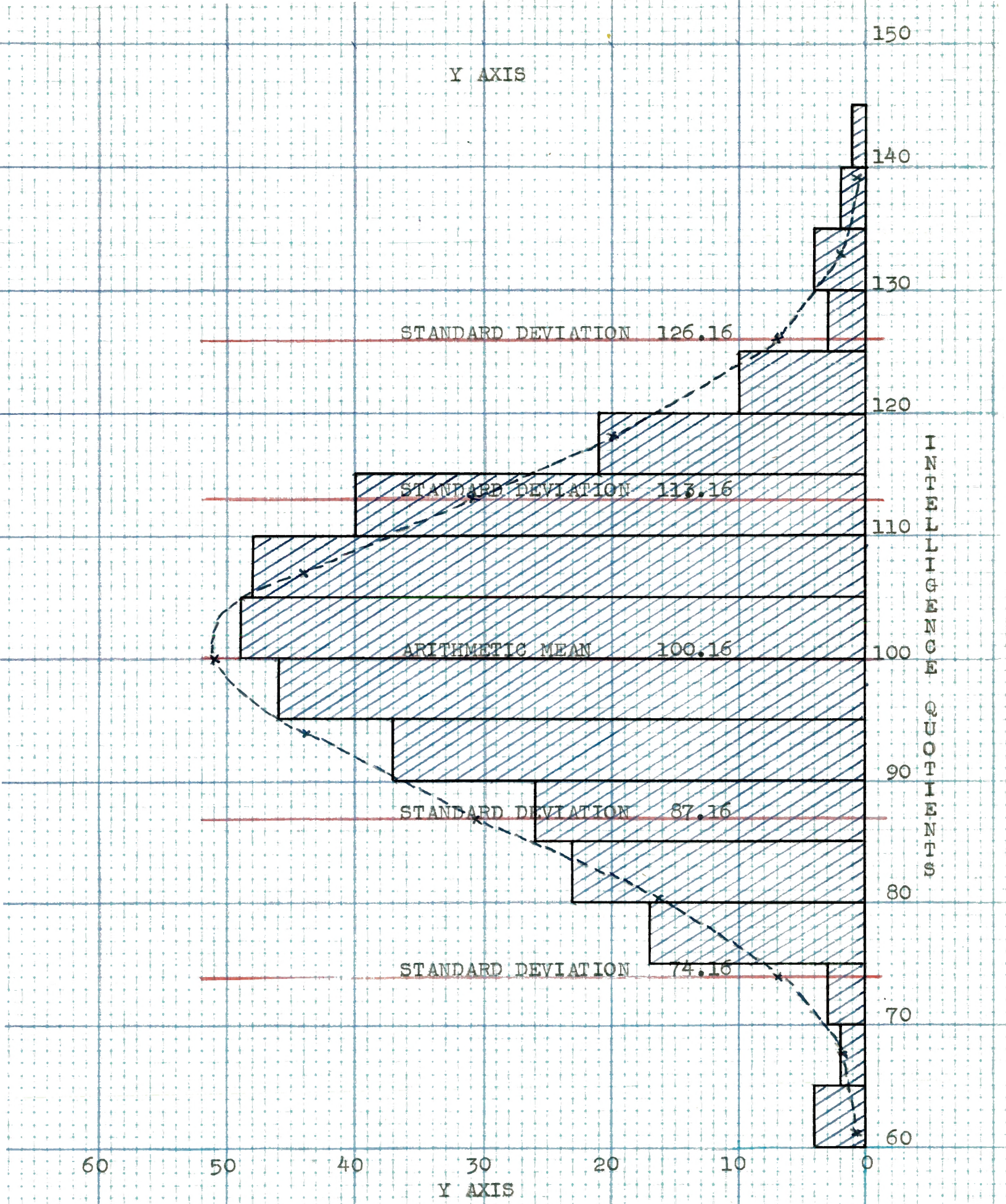

FIGURE I. DISTRIBUTION OF I. Q. SCORES OF SCHOOLS A, B, C, AND D WITH A NORMAL CURVE SUPER-IMPOSED.

Table 3. Tabulation of the I. Q. Scores for Schools A and B

School A

x	f	X	fX	fX^2
140	0	16	0	0
135	0	15	0	0
130	0	14	0	0
125	1	13	13	169
120	1	12	12	144
115	2	11	22	242
110	6	10	60	600
105	9	9	81	729
100	5	8	40	320
95	5	7	35	245
90	2	6	12	72
85	1	5	5	25
80	1	4	4	16
75	0	3	0	0
70	0	2	0	0
65	0	1	0	0
60	1	0	0	0
	34		284	2562

$\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or $\frac{284}{34}$ or 8.352

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$)

$\bar{x}$ is 62.5 plus 5(8.352)

$\bar{x}$ is 104.260

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{x}^2}$

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{2562}{34} - (8.352)^2}$

S_X is 2.36

S_x is bS_X or 5(2.36) or 11.80

Standard Error of $\bar{x}$ is (plus or minus) 2.024
Standard Error of S_x is (plus or minus) 1.432

School B

x	f	X	fX	fX^2
140	1	16	16	256
135	1	15	15	225
130	1	14	14	196
125	0	13	0	0
120	6	12	72	864
115	9	11	99	1089
110	10	10	100	1000
105	18	9	162	1458
100	16	8	128	1024
95	14	7	98	686
90	9	6	54	324
85	8	5	40	200
80	5	4	20	80
75	2	3	6	18
70	1	2	2	4
65	0	1	0	0
60	0	0	0	0
	101		826	7424

$\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or $\frac{826}{101}$ or 8.178

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$)

$\bar{x}$ is 62.5 plus 5(8.178)

$\bar{x}$ is 103.390

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{x}^2}$

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{7424}{101} - (8.178)^2}$

S_X is 2.57

S_x is bS_X or 5(2.57) or 12.85

Standard Error of $\bar{x}$ is (plus or minus) 1.285
Standard Error of S_x is (plus or minus) .904

Table 4. Tabulation of the I. Q. Scores for Schools C and D

School C

x	f	X	fX	fX^2
140	0	16	0	0
135	0	15	0	0
130	3	14	42	588
125	0	13	0	0
120	3	12	36	432
115	7	11	77	847
110	14	10	140	1400
105	10	9	90	810
100	16	8	128	1024
95	13	7	91	637
90	21	6	126	756
85	16	5	80	400
80	12	4	48	192
75	12	3	36	108
70	2	2	4	8
65	2	1	2	2
60	3	0	0	0
	134		900	7204

$\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or $\frac{900}{134}$ or 6.716

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$)

$\bar{x}$ is 62.5 plus 5(6.716)

$\bar{x}$ is 96.08

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2}$

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{7204}{134} - (6.716)^2}$

S_X is 2.942

S_x is bS_X or 5(2.942) or 14.710

Standard Error of $\bar{x}$ is (plus or minus) 1.271

Standard Error of S_X is (plus or minus) .898

School D

x	f	X	fX	fX^2
140	0	16	0	0
135	1	15	15	225
130	0	14	0	0
125	2	13	26	338
120	0	12	0	0
115	3	11	33	363
110	10	10	100	1000
105	11	9	99	891
100	12	8	96	768
95	14	7	98	686
90	5	6	30	180
85	1	5	5	25
80	5	4	20	80
75	3	3	9	27
70	0	2	0	0
65	0	1	0	0
60	0	0	0	0
	67		531	4583

$\bar{X}$ is $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or $\frac{531}{67}$ or 7.924

$\bar{x}$ is (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$)

$\bar{x}$ is 62.5 plus 5(7.924)

$\bar{x}$ is 102.12

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2}$

S_X is $\sqrt{\frac{4583}{67} - (7.924)^2}$

S_X is 2.369

S_x is bS_X or 5(2.369) or 11.845

Standard Error of $\bar{x}$ is (plus or minus) 1.446

Standard Error of S_X is (plus or minus) 1.023

In computing the standard errors of both Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of School A, it was found that, because the sample size was smallest, the standard errors were greatest. As Chaddock pointed out: "The variability of the mean and other statistical measures decreases as the size of the sample relative to the total population increases."[5]

The organization of the data collected was done according to the order of questions appearing on the questionnaire. The first question, Do you like to read comic books?, was answered negatively by eleven children.

Table 5. Distribution of Negative Answers

	Males	Females
School A.	2	
School B.		2
School C.	3	2
School D.	1	1

These eleven children were asked the question: Why don't you like to read them? The following reasons were given:

Table 6. Reasons for Negative Answers

Number of responses	Reason
6	Comic books were too fantastic
2	Too hard to read
1	Too hard to understand
1	Too much murder in them
1	No fun in comic books

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5 Ibid., p. 237.

Of the eleven children who answered negatively, six reported that their favorite sport or pastime was baseball, football, or boxing. Three girls stated that they liked to draw and two girls said they liked to hike.

When questioned as to their reading interests, seven reported that they read magazines and newspapers; while one boy and two girls said they got books from the library. One boy stated that due to eye trouble reading was difficult for him.

Because this group was so small, it seemed advisable to treat each one as a special case. The response of each child in this group was tabulated.

Table 7. Individual Tabulation of Negative Answers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
61	M.	A.	10	4B	Average	Willing	Confident	Too hard to understand
90	M.	A.	13	8B	Average	Willing	Confident	Too fantastic
108	F.	B.	11	4B	Poor	Willing	Confident	Too much murder
107	F.	B.	12	8A	Average	Willing	Confident	Too fantastic
80	M.	C.	12	5A	Average	Normal	Normal	No fun in them
84	M.	C.	13	8B	Poor	Willing	Confident	Too far-fetched
75	M.	C.	12	4B	Poor	Willing	Confident	Too far-fetched
90	F.	C.	10	5A	Poor	Willing	Confident	Too hard to read
100	F.	C.	13	8A	Average	Willing	Confident	Too fantastic
108	M.	D.	13	6B	Poor	Normal	Normal	Too hard to read
80	F.	D.	10	4B	Average	Willing	Confident	Too fantastic

The numbers at the top of each row in the table were:

1. The I. Q. of the respondent
2. Sex
3. General economic classification
4. Age
5. Class in school
7. Interview behavior and willingness to cooperate
8. Social confidence shown by respondent during the interview situation
9. Reasons given by respondent

No analysis could be made for this negative group because it was so small in number; however, the majority reported that the stories in comic books were too fantastic or far-fetched. Also it should be noted that, although the table does not indicate the favorite pastimes of the respondents, these children, for the most part, preferred to be active. As stated before, they liked baseball, football, boxing, drawing, and hiking.

The larger group of respondents, 325, answered the question, Do you like to read comic books? affirmatively; and 248 children could remember when they first started to read comic books. Below is a table showing the distribution of responses at the various age levels. Class intervals of age were stated in months rather than in years and will be found under the heading, x.

Table 8. Distribution of Age Levels for Beginning Comic Book Reading

x	f	X	fX	fX^2
144	1	9	9	81
132	2	8	16	128
120	6	7	42	294
108	19	6	114	684
96	33	5	165	825
84	50	4	200	800
72	44	3	132	396
60	56	2	112	224
48	27	1	27	27
36	10	0	0	0
	248		817	3459

$\bar{X}$ equals $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$ or $\frac{817}{248}$ or 3.29

$\bar{x}$ equals (a) plus ($b\bar{X}$) or (42.5) plus 12(3.29)

$\bar{x}$ equals 81.98 months or 6 years, 10 months

S_X equals $\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma fX^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2}$ or $\sqrt{\frac{3459}{248} - (3.29)^2}$ or 1.8

S_x equals bS_X or 12(1.8) or 21.6 months

S_x equals 1.8 years, Standard Deviation for the distribution

Standard Error of the Arithmetic Mean was 1.37.

Standard Error of the Standard Deviation was .95.

The Arithmetic Mean for this distribution was 81.98 or 82, which divided into years and months, was 6 years and 10 months. This was the average age for beginning comic book reading in this group.

The second question, Do you remember your first comic book?, was answered affirmatively by 192 respondents. They were asked the next question, How did you get it? Of the group of 192, thirty-six reported that they bought their own first comic book; while 150 children said that their first book was given to them by someone in their family or by a friend. Of the remaining six, two reported that they found theirs and four received them as rewards or prizes. Among those in the last group, a little boy reported that he was promised a comic book for a prize if he did not cry while

the dentist pulled his loose tooth. Another boy stated that he had received his first comic book from his piano teacher for having practiced his lesson. Two girls said that they won their comics at birthday parties.

Answers to question three were noted with particular interest, and several methods were used to record the responses to the question, Which comic book do you like best?

An attempt was made to discover comic book preferences of the four economic classes. Because the sample size varied in the four groups, the comic book selected by the largest number of respondents in each group was tabulated and calculated in percent. A graph was drawn to show the percentages of the responses in the four economic groups for the comic book liked best. This tabulation was then divided into the first choice for each sex in the four economic groups and another graph was drawn to show this comparison.

A third graph indicating choice of comic books for each sex for all of the economic groups was included. The first choice of both sexes of all economic groups was tabulated,,and this chart revealed that over twenty percent of the children interviewed named Donald Duck as their favorite comic book.

A comparison of the probability of association between comic book selection and economic status was made. Since both

factors were qualitative rather than quantitative, the statistical method known as Bivariate Chi-square was used. Four comic books having the largest number of first choice votes were selected. These were Donald Duck, Loonie Tunes, Bugs Bunny, and Superman. The four economic groups were indicated by letter on the vertical axis and the following formula was used. Chi-square equals $\left(\frac{(o-c)^2}{c} \right)$ where:

o was the observed frequency,
c was the calculated frequency.

The calculated frequency was based on the formula: $\frac{f_1 f_2}{N}$, where:

f_1 was the sum of the horizontal frequencies,

f_2 was the sum of the vertical frequencies,

N was the total number of frequencies.

The Chi-square derived from this calculation was 43.98. To ascertain the probability of association, the formula, n equals $(m_1 - 1)(m_2 - 1)$ was used in which the symbol m_1 was the number of frequencies or frequency classes in variable 1 and m_2 was the number in variable 2. In this case, n equals (4-1)(4-1) or 9. The table for Chi-square probability was then used. The probability chart revealed that there was association between economic status and choice of comic books.

In an attempt to discover the favorite comic book of the various age groups, another tabulation was made and it revealed the popularity of Donald Duck. A graph was

drawn to show the percentage of responses at each age level. The percentages for some age groups were low because of the variety of comics mentioned as being favorites; however, Donald Duck received the largest number of votes in each case.

A comparison of comic book choices between Negroes and Whites was attempted. The selection of comic books in this grouping included Superman, Donald Duck, Wonder Woman, and Loonie Tunes. A comparison was made of the probability of association between comic book choice and race. Again both factors were qualitative, and consequently, Bivariate Chi-square was employed. In this calculation, the Chi-square was 25.37 and again assignable cause was operating.

Intelligence and comic book choice were compared. Beginning with 60 I. Q. and up to 120 I. Q., the comic favorite of each sex was tabulated. Here again, the variety of comics mentioned was extensive; and because of this, the comic having the largest number of first choice votes was recorded on a graph. The comic favorite of children having an I. Q. of 130 or higher was not included on the graph, because each of the seven children in this group selected a different comic.

On another graph, the choice of both sexes was indicated according to I. Q. ratings and the comic book

A COMPARISON OF
THE COMIC BOOKS LIKED BEST BY THE
SEXES ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC GROUPS

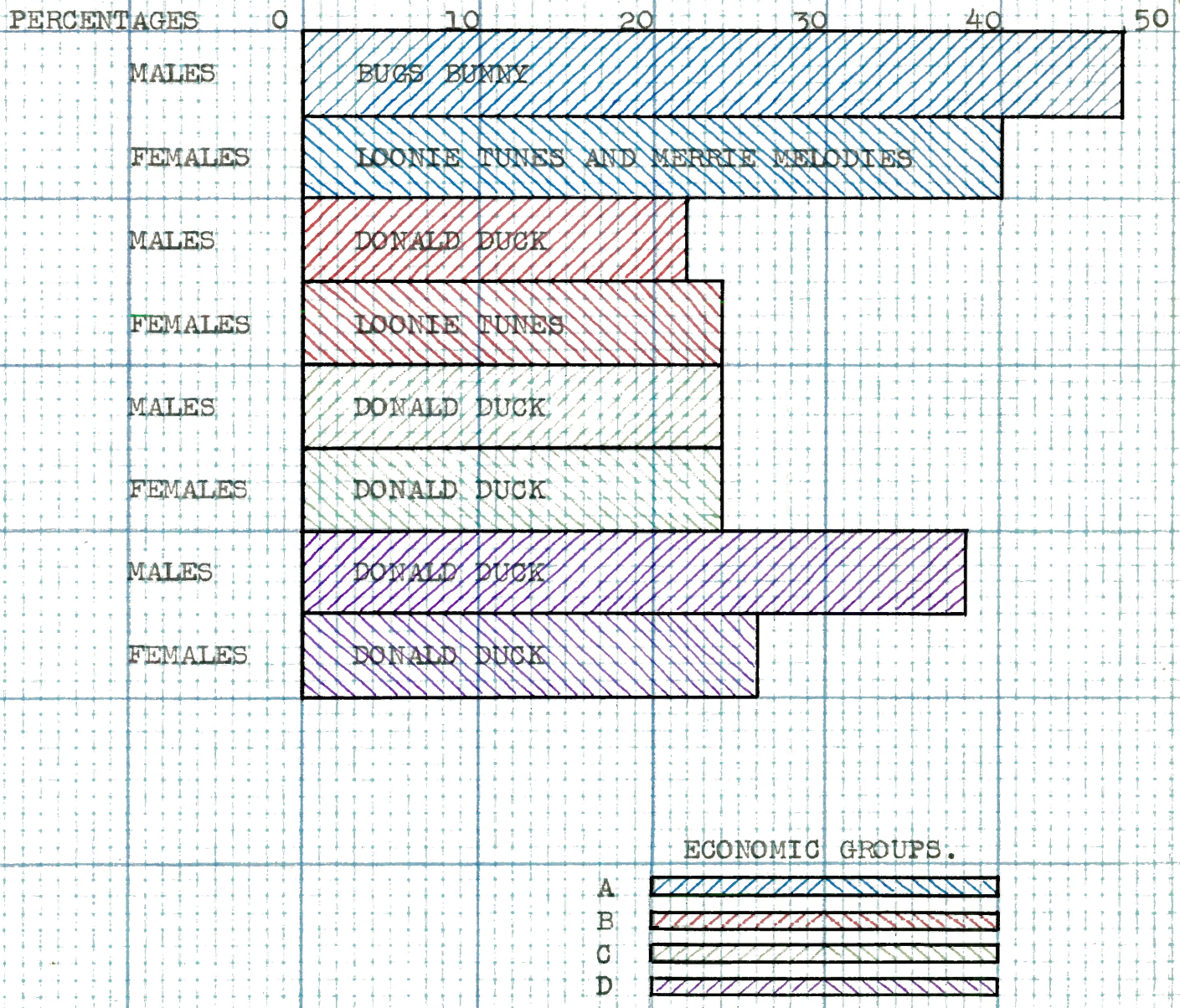
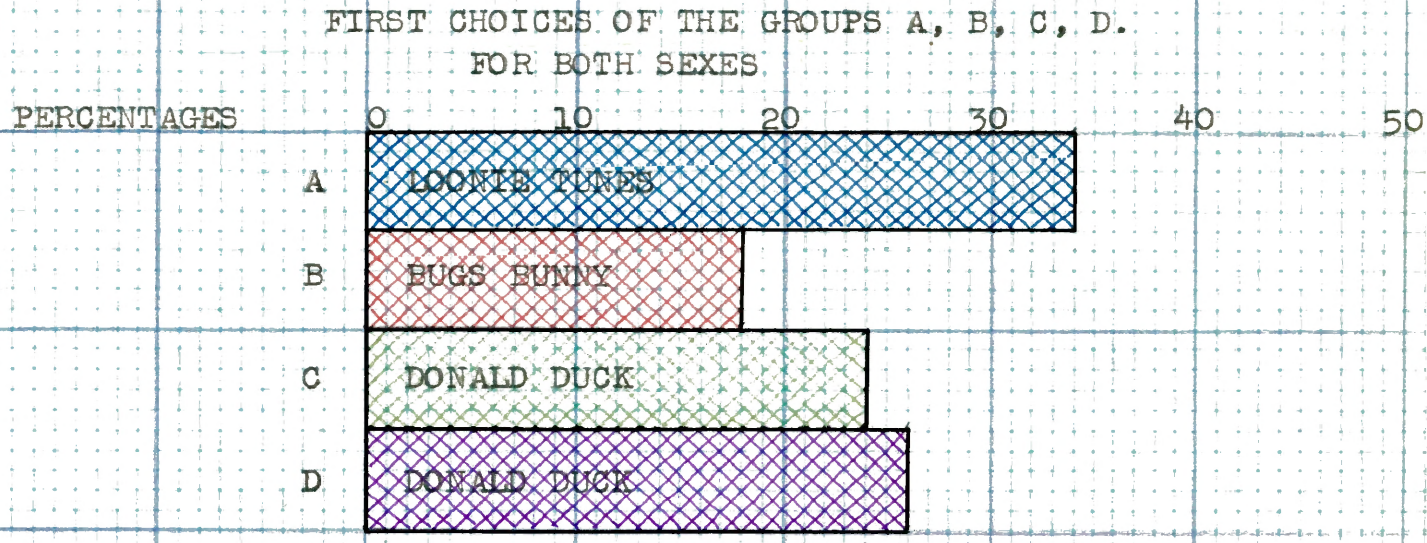
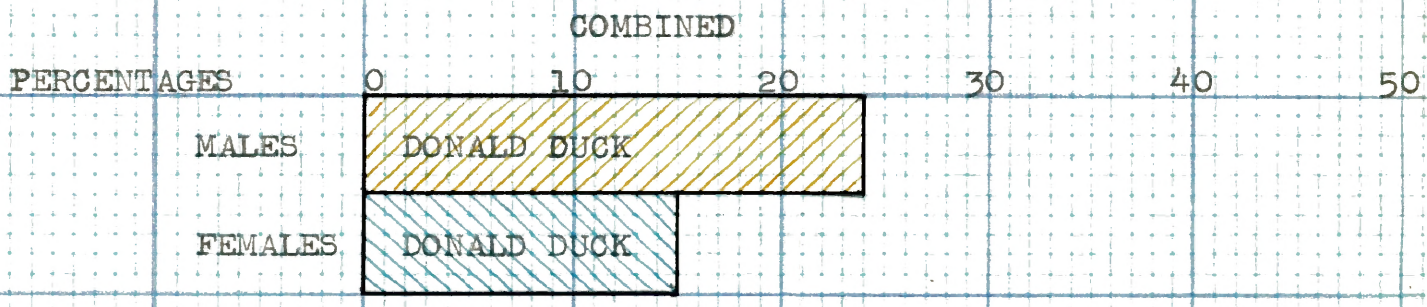


FIGURE II.

A COMPARISON OF
COMIC BOOK CHOICES OF THE SEXES
BY ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION





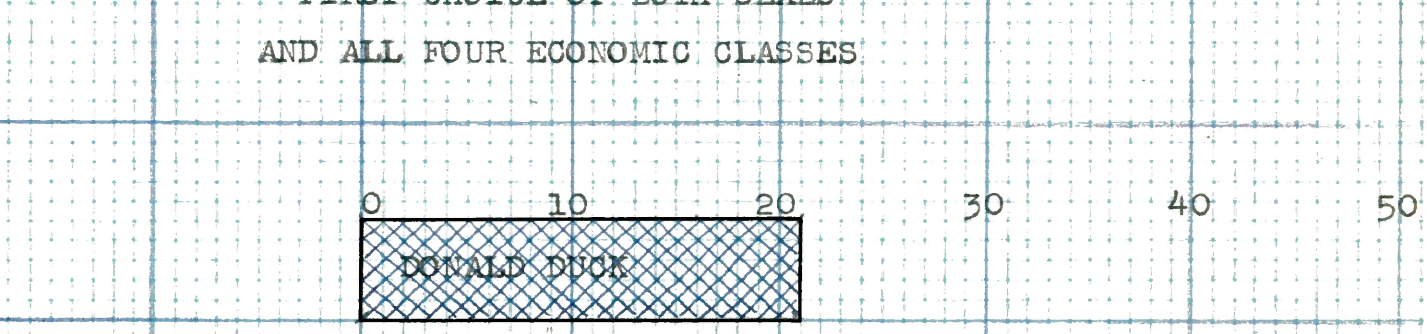
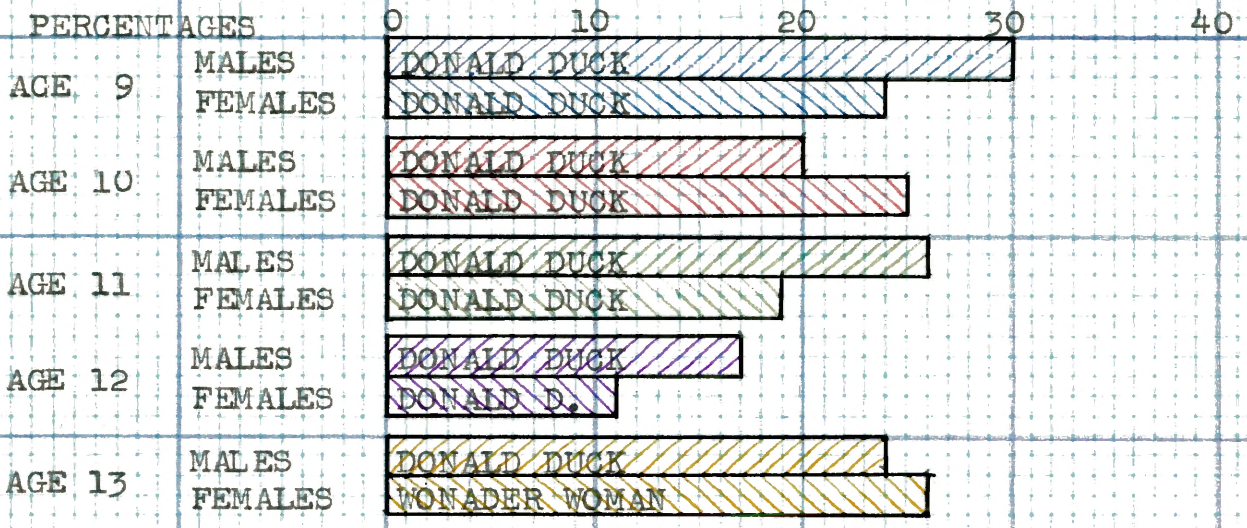


FIGURE III.

A COMPARISON OF

COMIC BOOK CHOICES BY AGES



FIRST CHOICES OF BOTH SEXES

BY AGES

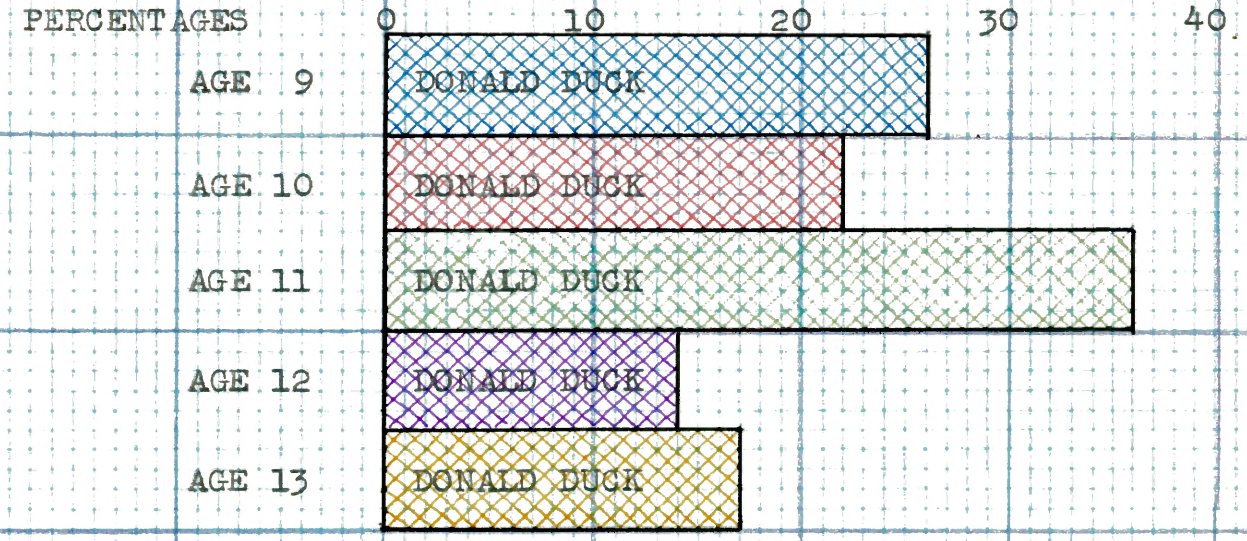


FIGURE IV.

A COMPARISON OF COMIC BOOK CHOICES
BETWEEN NEGROES AND WHITES

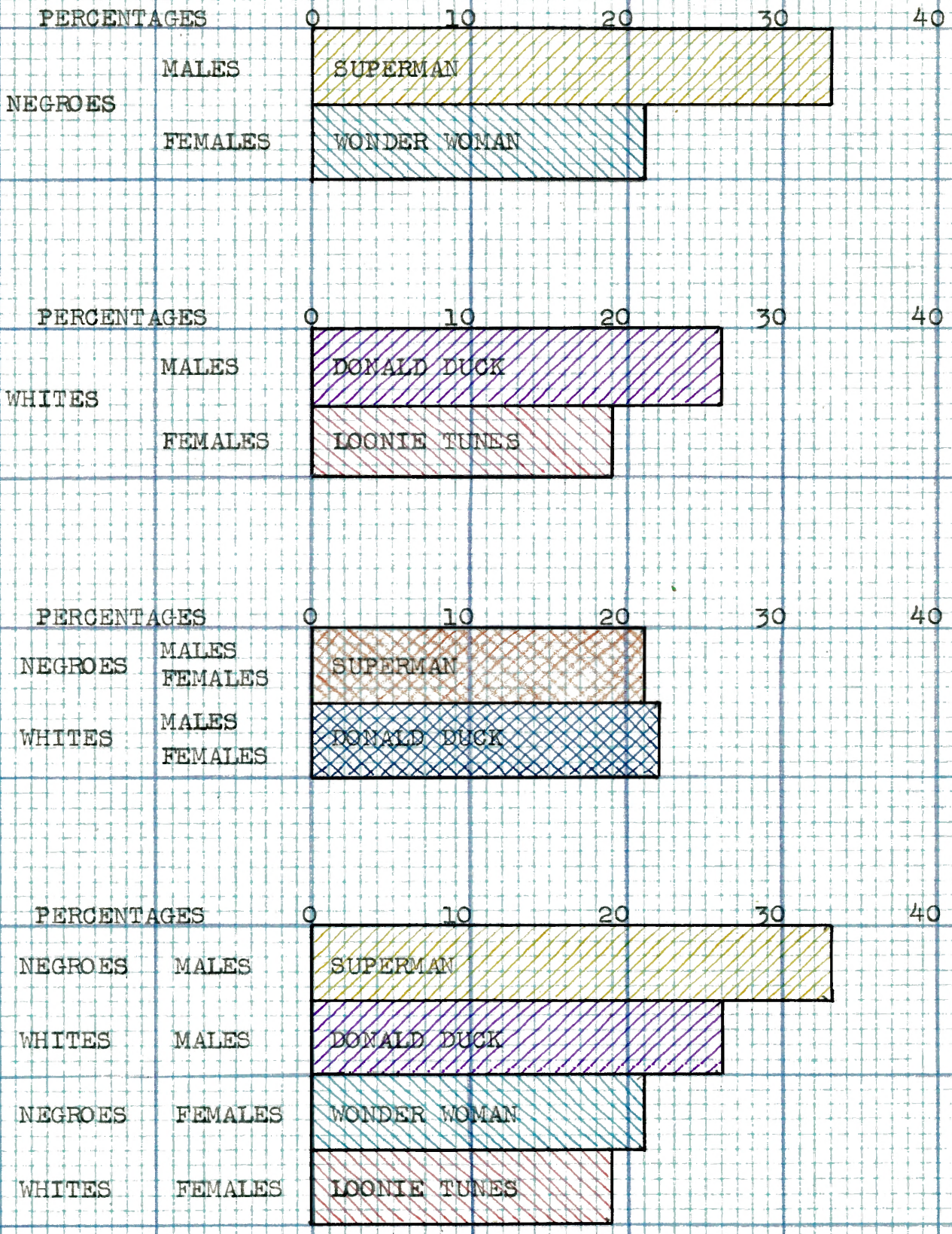


FIGURE V.

A COMPARISON OF

COMIC BOOK CHOICES BY I. Q. RATINGS

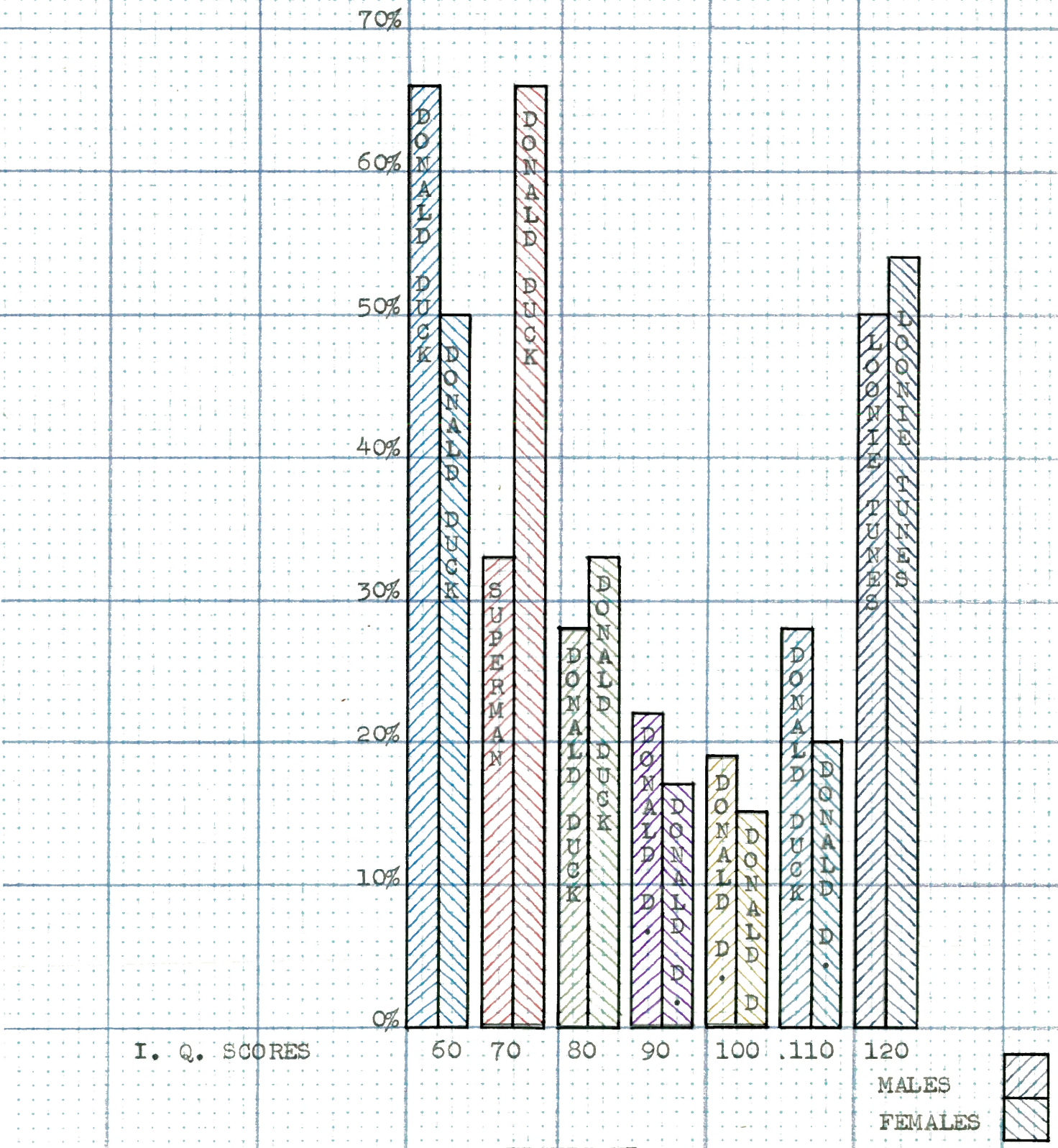


FIGURE VI.

A COMPARISON OF
THE COMIC BOOK FAVORITE
OF BOTH SEXES
ACCORDING TO I. Q. RATINGS

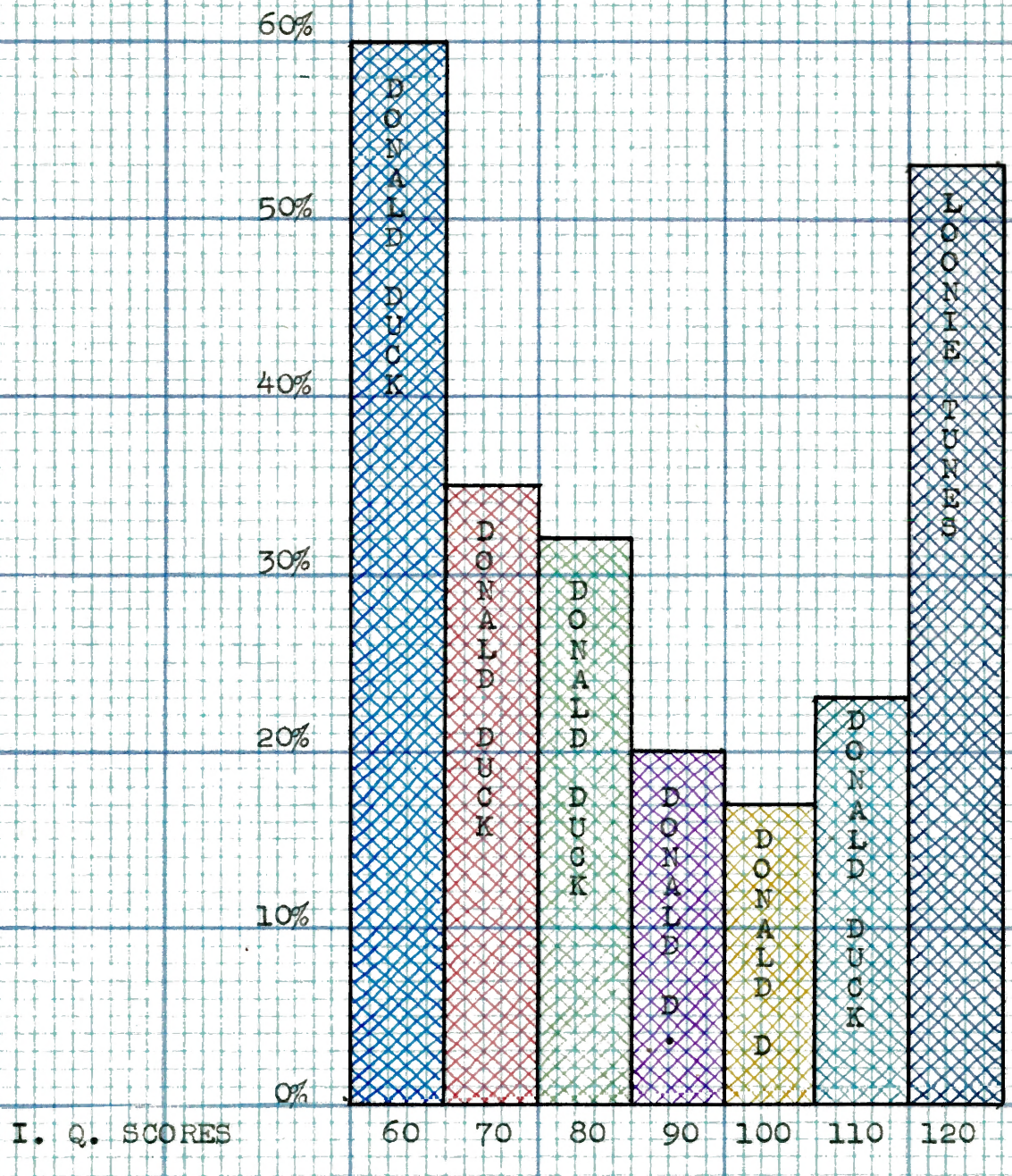


FIGURE VII.

favorite was Donald Duck in the majority of the groups.

Question four was, Why do you like it?, and the reasons given were tabulated for each comic book mentioned. The three leading reasons given for comic book choice were listed in a chart.

Table 9. Leading Reasons for Comic Book Choice

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Funny	79	72	151
Exciting	20	17	37
Adventure	21	11	32

These three reasons included sixty-seven percent of the responses. The remaining 105 answers were listed.

Table 10. Miscellaneous Reasons for Comic Book Choice

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Action	18	1	19
Teen age	2	13	15
Interested in physics and flying	12	0	12
Like to copy the pictures	6	6	12
Like the jungle	5	7	12
Mystery	8	4	12

The other twenty-three responses covered a wide variety of reasons and each was mentioned only once.

The sixty-seven children who selected Donald Duck as their favorite gave the following reasons for their preference. The main reason, however, given by the children who were interviewed in this survey for the selection of Donald Duck as the favorite comic book, was that the comic

book was funny. This reason represented seventy-seven percent of the responses reporting Donald Duck as the first choice.

Table 11. Reasons for Donald Duck Choice

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Funny	31	21	52
Like to copy the pictures	5	3	8
Cute	0	1	1
Not terrible like some	0	1	1
Not hard to read	1	0	1
Shows good workmanship	1	0	1
Easy to understand	1	0	1
Interesting	1	0	1
No killing in it	0	1	1
	40	27	67

Question number five was, Which one do you like next best? Conversation with children revealed that many of them liked more than one comic book or showed preference for more than one. For this reason, it seemed advisable to allow the respondents to express this preference.

In the tabulation of second choices, Donald Duck was selected by forty-one respondents. Of this group, twenty-five were boys and sixteen were girls. It was interesting to note that the sixteen girls who chose Donald Duck had named Loonie Tunes and Merrie Melodies as their first choice. Of the twenty-five boys who selected Donald Duck as second choice, ten had named Loonie Tunes and Merrie Melodies as their favorite or first choice. The first choice comic books of the remaining fifteen boys included

the following titles.

Bugs Bunny	6
Porky Pig	3
Dick Tracy	1
Archie Andrews	1
Captain Marvel	1
Captain Midnight	1
Superman	1
Wings	1
	15

It should be stated here that the children named as their second choice a total of sixty-eight different comic books. In listing the names of comics as their first choice, seventy-seven different comics were mentioned. A comparison of the two lists showed that the names of forty-three comic books appeared on both lists, while the remaining number varied. A list of comic book names, appearing on both tabulations together with the number of responses for each, was made.

The list of comic books, showing first and second choices, revealed that Donald Duck represented twenty percent of the responses for the first choice and twelve percent for the second choice. The three most favored comic books were; (1) Donald Duck, (2) Loonie Tunes and Merrie Melodies, (3) Bugs Bunny.

The three comics chosen most frequently as second choice were; (1) Donald Duck, (2) Loonie Tunes and Merrie Melodies, and (3) Superman.

Table 12. Comparison of First and Second Choice Comics

Names of Comic Book	First Choice	Second Choice
1. Donald Duck	67	41
2. Loonie Tunes	40	30
3. Bugs Bunny	29	15
4. Superman	25	19
5. Wonder Woman	24	12
6. Dick Tracy	14	8
7. Archie Andrews	12	3
8. Miss America	11	6
9. Tarzan	8	3
10. Batman	7	14
11. Captain Marvel	7	11
12. Shadow	5	10
13. Wings	4	2
14. Captain Midnight	3	1
15. True Comics	3	7
16. Porky Pig	3	1
17. Mickey Mouse	2	4
18. Mystery	1	8
19. Action	1	6
20. Air Ace	1	3
21. Flash Comics	1	2
22. Crime Comics	1	2
23. Classic Comics	1	2
24. Plastic Man	1	2
25. Planet	1	1
26. Air Age	1	1
27. Roy Rogers	1	1
28. Science	1	1
29. Green Lantern	1	1
30. Speed	1	1
31. Super Duck	1	1
32. Tip Top	1	1
33. Whiz	1	1
34. Coo Coo	1	1
35. Calling All Girls	1	1
36. Mandrake	1	1
37. Crack	1	1
38. Target	1	1
39. Human Torch	1	1
40. Black Hawk	1	1
41. Terry Toon	1	1
42. Joe Palooka	1	1
43. Air Boy	1	1

The sixth item on the questionnaire was, Tell why. The reasons given for second choice comic books were tabulated.

Table 13. Reasons for Second Choice Comic Books

Reasons	Males	Females	Total
Funny	78	64	142
Exciting and thrilling	16	14	30
Adventure	12	10	22
Action	12	8	20
Mystery	8	9	17
Fashions	0	15	15
Like to copy the pictures	8	7	15
Like the jungle	3	7	10
Imaginary	4	5	9
Cute	0	7	7
Like the main character	5	1	6
Listen to story over radio	4	2	6
Like what character does	3	3	6
Joined Captain Marvel Club	4	1	5
About girls	0	3	3
Stories are true	2	1	3
Catches murderers	2	1	3
About war	2	0	2
About real people	1	1	2
Solves crimes	1	1	2
	165	160	325

The forty-one children who selected Donald Duck as the second best liked comic book indicated that they liked the comic because it was funny and cute.

Table 14. Reasons for Donald Duck as Second Choice

Reasons	Males	Females	Total
Funny	25	11	36
Cute	0	5	5
	25	16	41

The responses to the next question, Is there one that you don't like?, were noted with interest. Eighteen children reported that they liked all the comic books, and twelve said that they liked all the books that they had read. Ten respondents stated that they did not read comic books that they disliked, and consequently, they could not name them. Thirty children made no response to the question, and after considerable probing, they said they did not know. Of the entire group of 325 respondents, seventy could not give the desired information. Responses of the remaining 255 children were tabulated first, according to sex and economic classification; next, according to age groups; thirdly, according to racial groups, and lastly, according to I. Q. ratings.

A graph was drawn for each comparison.

In the first graph, it was found that the two comic books liked least by both boys and girls were Superman and Batman. Although the comic, Superman ranked fourth highest among the comic books selected for first choice and third highest among those for second choice, sixty-three respondents of the 255 or twenty-four percent of the combined races and sexes named Superman as the comic they disliked most.

Batman was listed in tenth place of the comics liked best and fifth place among those liked second best; however,

twenty-six percent of the children of economic group D said Batman was the one they liked least. Of the sixty-nine Negro children who were interviewed in this survey, twenty-one percent chose Superman as their favorite. In answering the question, Is there one that you don't like?, only forty-nine Negro children answered; and of this group, thirty percent named Batman as the least favored comic. It should be noted that over half the respondents of economic group D were Negroes, and consequently, their vote predominated.

The comparison between Negroes and Whites of the comic books liked least showed clearly that the Negroes did not like the comic Batman, and the Whites did not like Superman.

In the comparison of age groups, the tabulation revealed that the comic book, Superman, was generally disliked.

The graph showing a comparison of comic books liked least by the I. Q. ratings of the children was limited to include those children having an I. Q. of between 70 and 120. Several children with an I. Q. lower than 70 did not respond, and each one who did answer the question named a different comic. Each of the seven children having an I. Q. over 120 selected a different comic, and consequently, the two extremes could not be included in the graph. Although many of the percentages on this graph were low,

the unpopularity of Superman was, on the whole, quite pronounced.

The names of the comic books liked least were listed and the number of votes for each was tabulated.

Table 15. Names of Comic Books Liked Least

Name	Number
1. Superman	63
2. Batman	30
3. True Comics	19
4. Dick Tracy	12
5. Captain Marvel	11
6. Crime Comics	10
7. Tarzan	10
8. True Aviation	8
9. Phantom	7
10. Mickey Mouse	7
11. Shadow	7
12. Plastic Man	6
13. Green Hornet	6
14. True Detective	6
15. Captain Midnight	6
16. Wonder Woman	5
17. Spy Man	5
18. Gray Ghost	4
19. Army	4
20. Wings	4
21. Famous Funnies	4
22. Calling All Girls	3
23. Exciting Comics	3
24. Blue Beetle	2
25. Speed	2
26. Flash Comics	2
27. Carnival	1
28. Cat Man	1
29. Mystery	1
30. Jingle Jangle	1
31. Big Shot	1
32. Human Torch	1
33. Pep	1
34. Planet	1
35. Sport	1
	255

A COMPARISON OF
COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST
BY THE SEXES
ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION

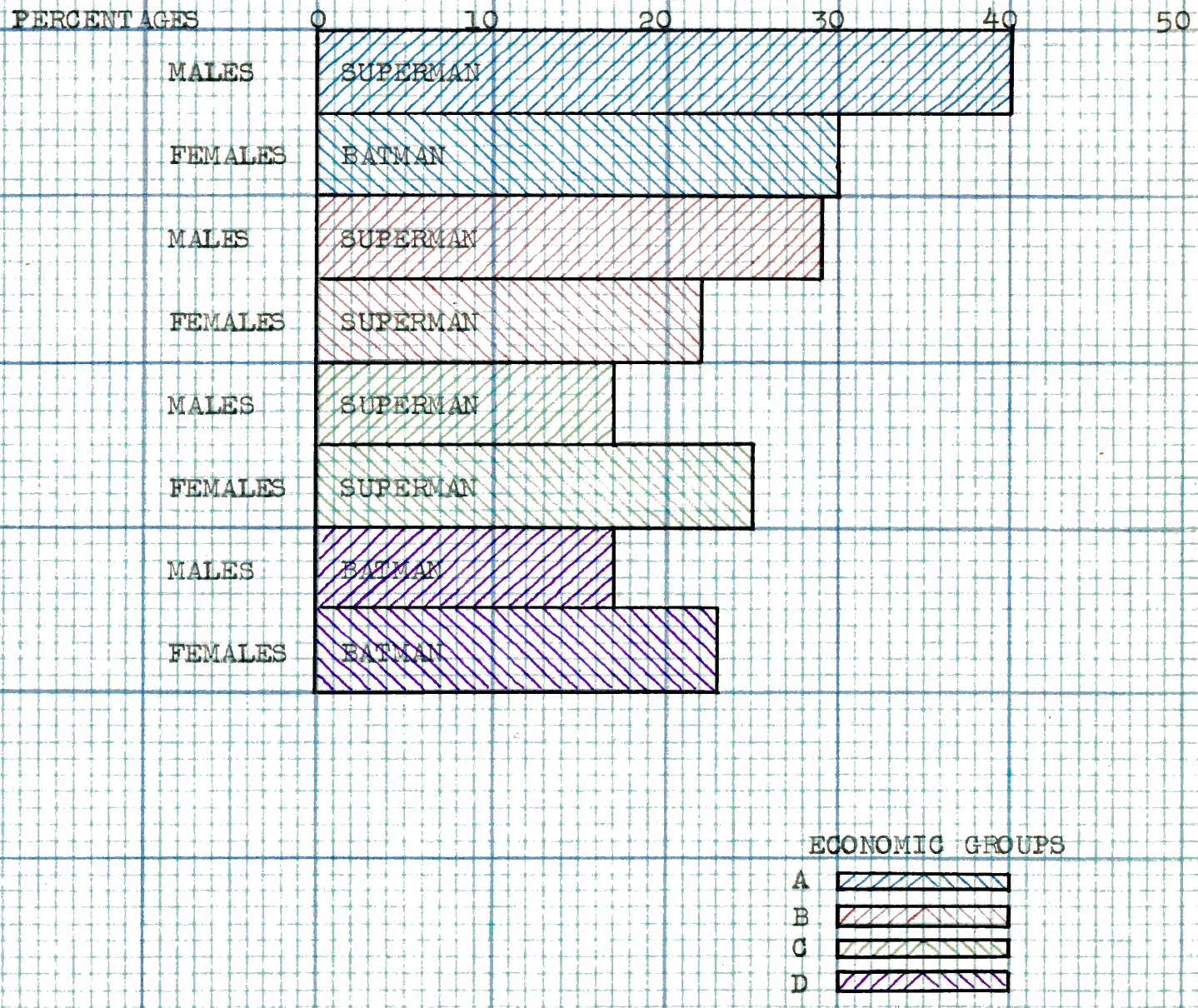
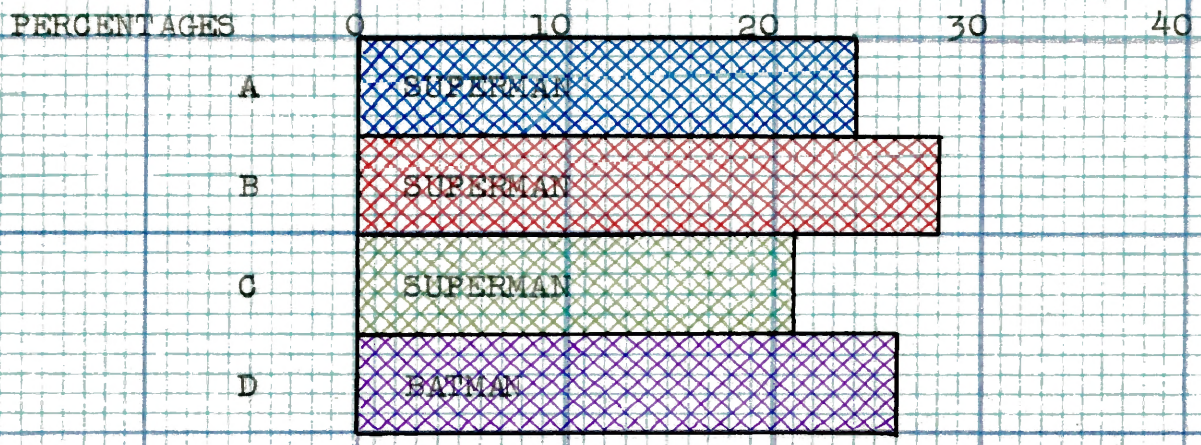
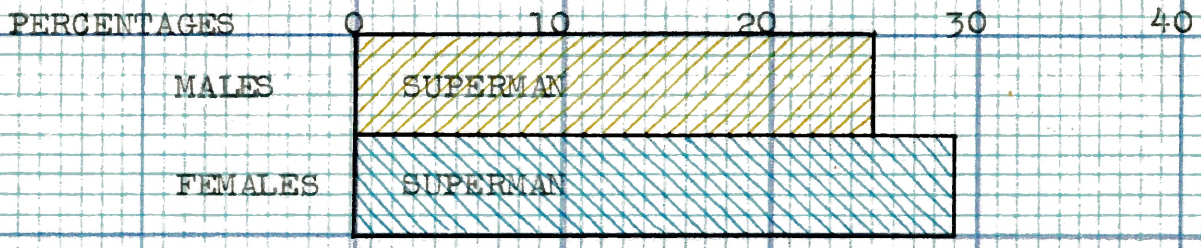


FIGURE VIII.

A COMPARISON OF
COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST
BY BOTH SEXES
ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION



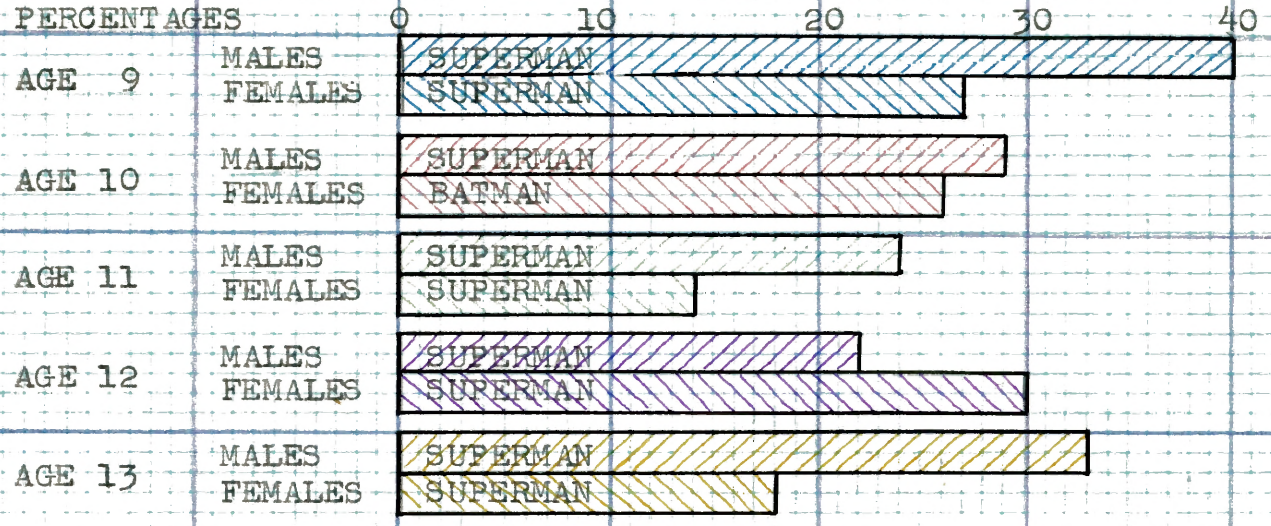
COMIC BOOK LIKED LEAST BY THE SEXES BY ECONOMIC GROUPS
A, B, C, AND D.



COMIC BOOK LIKED LEAST BY BOTH SEXES AND BY ECONOMIC
GROUPS A, B, C, AND D.

FIGURE IX.

A COMPARISON OF
COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST
BY THE SEXES
ACCORDING TO AGE LEVELS



COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST BY BOTH SEXES AND
ACCORDING TO AGE LEVELS

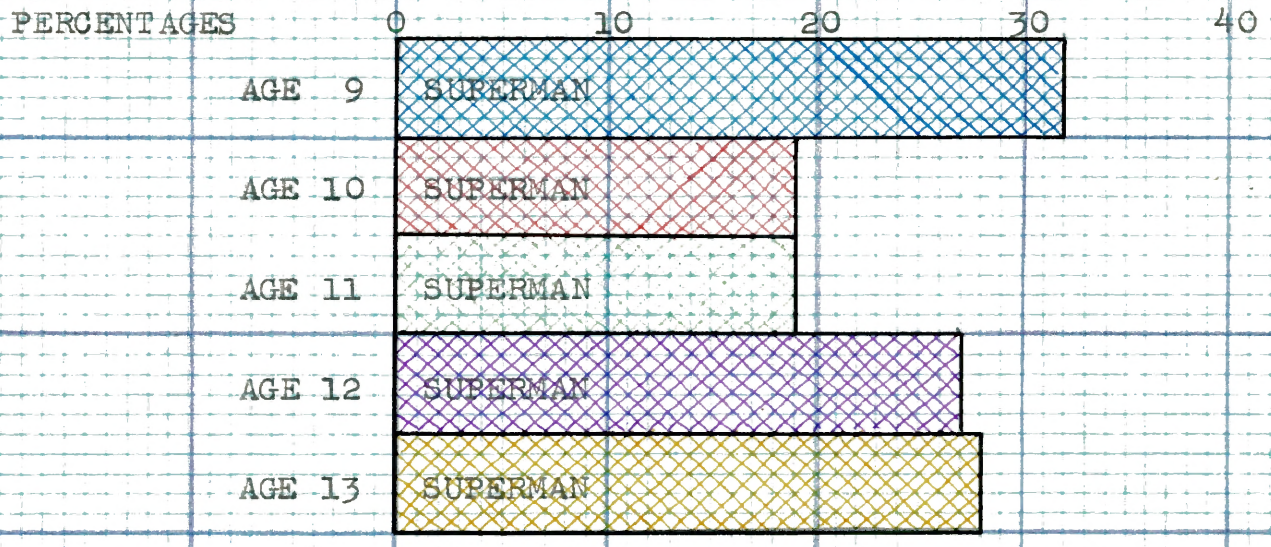


FIGURE X.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN NEGROES AND WHITES

OF COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST

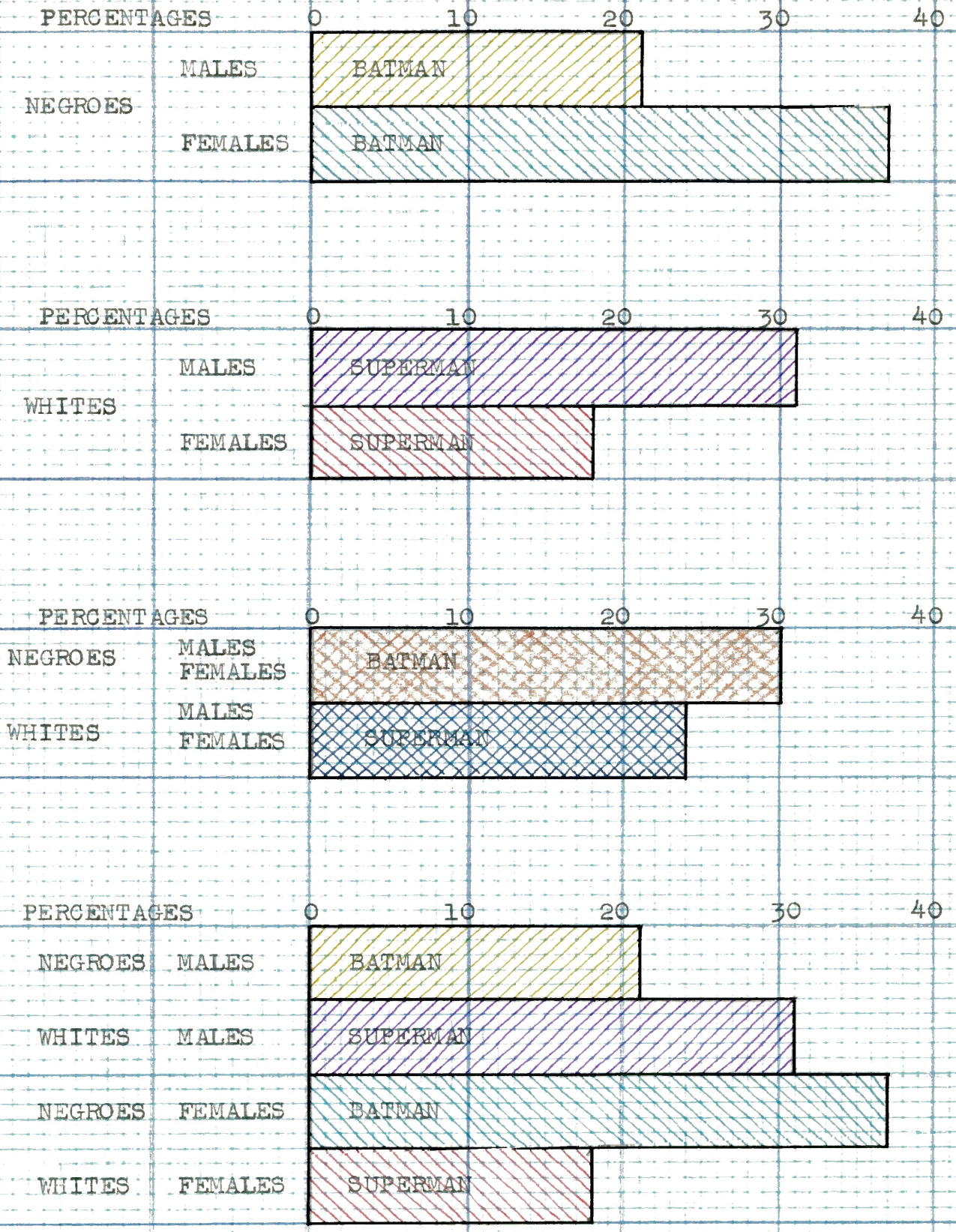


FIGURE XI.

A COMPARISON OF

COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST BY I. Q. RATINGS

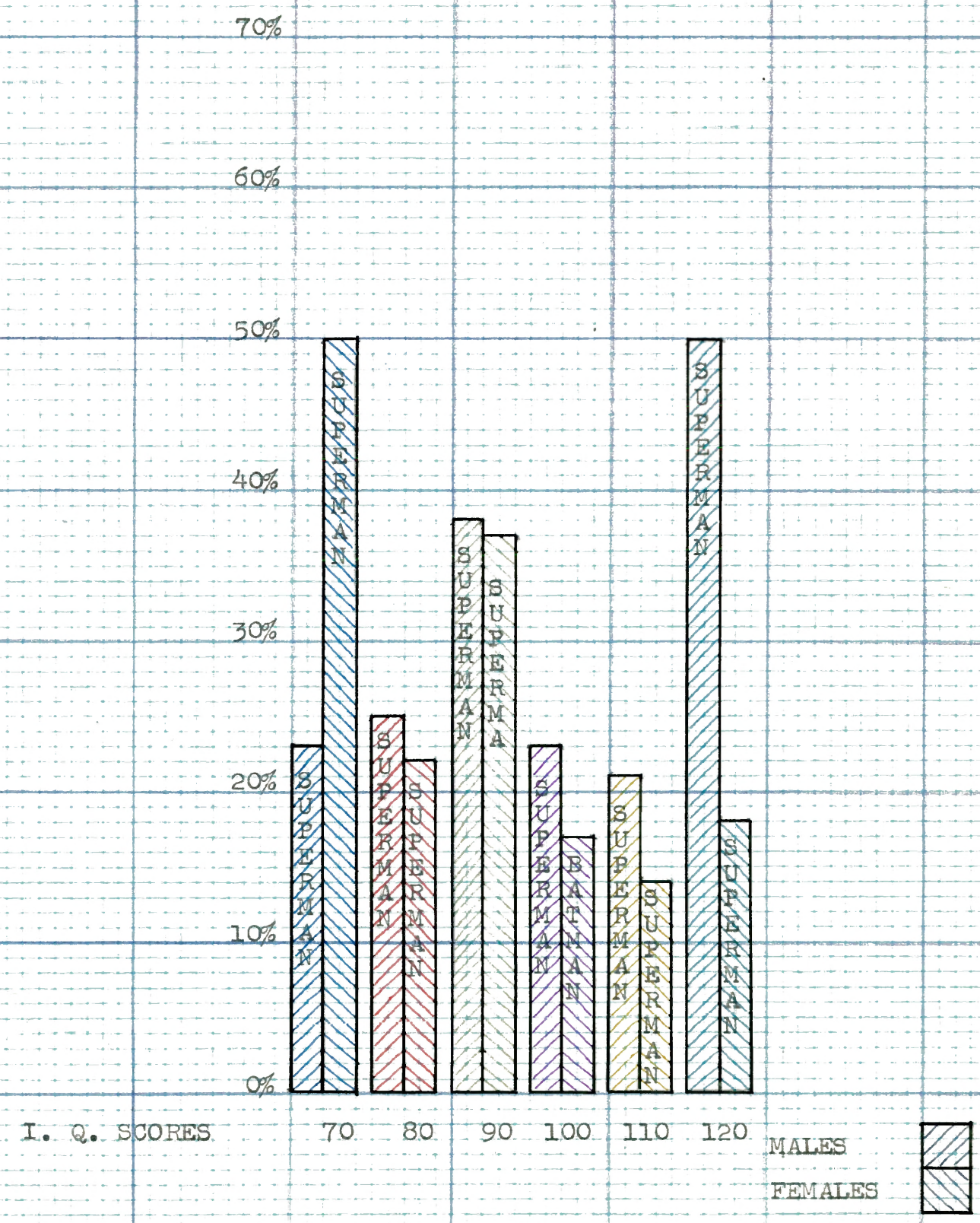


FIGURE XII.

A COMPARISON OF

COMIC BOOKS LIKED LEAST BY BOTH SEXES

ACCORDING TO I. Q. RATINGS

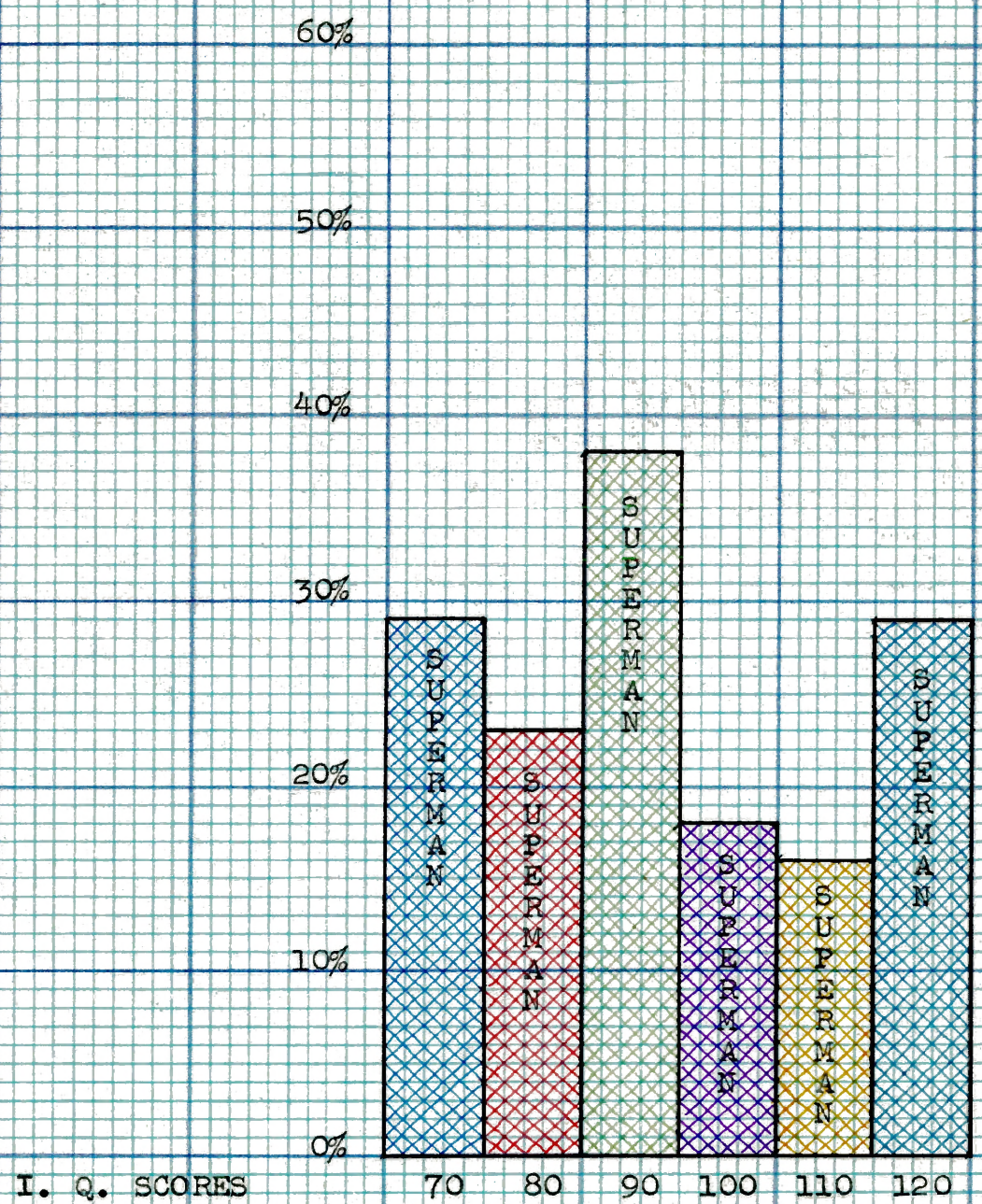


FIGURE XIII.

Of the 255 children who responded to question eight, Why don't you like it?, 126 said the comic was too far-fetched or fantastic. This reason represented approximately fifty percent of the responses. The other 129 children gave a varicty of reasons and these were listed.

Table 16. Reasons Given for Comic Books Liked Least

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Too fantastic	50	76	126
Not funny	23	18	41
Not exciting	12	8	20
Too much murder	8	10	18
Poor drawing	2	4	6
Too scary, dream about them	1	5	6
Too hard to understand	4	1	5
About girls	5	0	5
About crime	2	1	3
Too much to read	3	0	3
Can read same stories in books	2	0	2
Old fashioned	1	1	2
About airplanes	0	2	2
Characters are dumb	2	0	2
About love	2	0	2
No action	2	0	2
Poor story	2	0	2
Characters talk funny	1	1	2
Main character, too conceited	1	1	2
Too much killing	0	1	1
Story is continued, too long	1	0	1
Story doesn't make sense	0	1	1
Trash	0	1	1
	124	131	255

The sixty-three children who stated that they did not like Superman gave the following reasons, presented on the next page.

Table 17. Reasons for Superman as Comic Book Liked Least

Reason	Males	Females	Total
Too fantastic	16	25	41
Not funny	10	7	17
Main character, too conceited	0	1	1
Too hard to understand	1	0	1
Story is continued, too long	1	0	1
About crime	1	0	1
Trash	0	1	1
	29	34	63

In general, this survey revealed that the children preferred comic books that were funny and did not like comics that were too fantastic. From an adult point of view, the comic, Donald Duck would, no doubt, seem fantastic; but this comic, apparently, had the same imaginative qualities found in the old classics, Three Bears, Peter Rabbit, or The Three Little Pigs.[6] On the other hand, Superman and Batman were probably considered fantastic by the children because the characters performed humanly impossible tasks against a background of seriousness.

It may be that, as Marston[7] pointed out, Superman

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6 Gweneira M. Williams and Jane S. Wilson, "Why Not? Give Them What They Want!", Publishers' Weekly, Vol. 141, April 18, 1942. p. 1491.

7 William M. Marston, "Why 100,000,000 Americans Read Comics," American Scholar, Vol. 13, Winter, 1943-44. p. 5.

and his followers embodied wish fulfillment, but the children interviewed in this study clearly indicated that humor was more important to them. Although several previous studies revealed the popularity of Superman, it should be stated that, in the course of this survey, several children confided that, even though Superman had been their favorite comic book at one time, they did not like it any more. Several others stated that they read Superman only because an older brother or sister liked the comic. In several cases, children reported that mother and father read Superman regularly.

This study, however, was not concerned with adult readers of comic books, and consequently, no further evidence was collected on this problem. Influence of adults on children's reading interests was recognized, and the last four questions on the questionnaire referred to this influence.

Item nine on the inquiry form was, Do you read many comic books? Of the 325 respondents, 252 answered affirmatively, while 73 gave a negative reply. Many children, during the preliminary survey, found it difficult to answer this question, because the word "many" was not defined. To avoid this difficulty in the major survey, a second part was added to item nine. This question was, About how many do you read? The six

divisions under this part served as a check list and clarified the previous part of the question. A tabulation was made of the responses to this inquiry.

Table 18. Number of Comic Books Read

Period of time	Number
1 per month	17
1 per week	28
5 per week	41
1 per day	62
1-5 per day	130
6-10 per day	40
	318

Seven children claimed that they read more than ten comic books per day, and one respondent stated that he read regularly as many as fifty books per day. The responses of these seven children were treated as special cases.

The responses of 318 children were calculated on a monthly basis. This tabulation indicated that the average number of comic books read was 107 per month or better than three comic books per day.

An attempt was made to discover which sex read more comic books; and accordingly, another tabulation was made With the exception of the seven children (three boys and four girls) whose reading exceeded ten comic books per day, 162 boys read 18,635 comics or an average of 115 per month. The 156 girls read 15,674 or an average of 100 per

month. This calculation, in terms of daily reading, meant that boys read close to four comic books per day; while girls read an average of three per day.

Table 19. Number of Comic Books Read by Each Sex

Period of time	Males	Females	Total
1 per month	7	10	17
1 per week	17	11	28
5 per week	16	25	41
1 per day	28	34	62
1-5 per day	72	58	130
6-10 per day	22	18	40
	162	156	318

A comparison was made among the four economic groups with respect to average daily reading. Because of the variation in sample size, this comparison was expressed in percent.

Table 20. Number of Comic Books Read by the Four Economic Classifications

Period of time	A	B	C	D	Total
1 per month	.09	.06	.06	.00	.21
1 per week	.16	.12	.07	.04	.39
5 per week	.16	.20	.09	.08	.53
1 per day	.31	.19	.16	.21	.87
1-5 per day	.28	.37	.45	.46	1.56
6-10 per day	.00	.06	.17	.21	.44
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00

This chart indicated that thirty-one percent of the children from economic group A read about one comic per day, while forty-six percent of the children of economic group D read between one and five comic books per day.

It should also be noted that, while no children from economic group A read more than five comic books per day, twenty-one percent of the children in group D read between six and ten per day.

Three boys from economic group C claimed they read more than ten comic books per day, while four girls (two from the C group and two from the D group) insisted that they read more than ten daily. These seven children were listed as special cases.

Table 21. Individual Tabulation of Special Cases

Sex	Age	Race	I. Q.	Economic Group	Number
Male	11	Negro	97	C	15
Male	11	Negro	103	C	12
Male	11	Negro	73	C	20
Female	11	White	104	C	15
Female	12	White	89	C	50
Female	9	White	103	D	20
Female	11	White	111	D	15
					147

According to the testimony given by the seven respondents, they read an average of twenty-one comic books per day. The child, who reported reading fifty per day, confessed, after considerable probing, that reading was difficult for her; and consequently, she merely looked at the pictures. There was a possibility that the other six respondents misunderstood the question, and they were, therefore, grouped separately.

A comparison of comic book reading among the various age groups indicated that the largest percentage of children at the nine year age level read between one and five comic books per day. It should be noted that the percentages were largest for all ages under this heading.

Table 22. Number of Comic Books Read by the Various Age Levels Expressed in Percent

Period of time	Age 9	Age 10	Age 11	Age 12	Age 13	Total
1 per month	.00	.04	.05	.06	.07	.22
1 per week	.06	.04	.07	.14	.08	.39
5 per week	.06	.06	.12	.22	.18	.64
1 per day	.17	.20	.27	.13	.19	.96
1-5 per day	.63	.50	.41	.33	.30	2.17
6-10 per day	.08	.16	.08	.12	.18	.62
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.00

To determine which race read more comic books, a comparison was made, and here again, percent was used because of the variation in the size of the sample. Two tabulations were made: first, according to sex and race; secondly, according to combined sexes and race.

This tabulation indicated that Negroes read more comic books than Whites. It also revealed that while thirty-three percent of the Negro boys read between six to ten comic books daily, only twenty-four percent of the Negro girls read that many. The two charts are presented on the next page.

Table 23. Number of Comic Books Read by Negroes and Whites, Sexes Tabulated Separately

Period of time	Whites		Negroes		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
1 per month	.06	.06	.00	.00	..12
1 per week	.11	.08	.03	.00	.22
5 per week	.11	.16	.07	.12	.46
1 per day	.20	.24	.07	.15	.66
1-5 per day	.43	.38	.50	.49	1.80
6-10 per day	.09	.08	.33	.24	.74
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00

Table 24. Number of Comic Books Read by Negroes and Whites, Sexes Combined

Period of time	Whites	Negroes	Total
1 per month	.05	.00	.05
1 per week	.09	.02	.11
5 per week	.14	.10	.24
1 per day	.22	.11	.33
1-5 per day	.41	.49	.90
6-10 per day	.09	.28	.37
	1.00	1.00	1.00

In a chart showing the various I. Q. ratings and number of comics read, it was found that those respondents with a low I. Q. averaged between one and five comic books per day, while fifty percent of those having an I. Q. of 130 or higher averaged one a day. For the most part, the camparison showed that interest in comic books was quite general and was not limited to any particular group of children.

Table 25. Number of Comic Books Read by Children of Various Intelligence Ratings

Period of time	Intelligence Ratings 60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	Total
1 per month	.00	.06	.11	.09	.01	.05	.00	.00	.32
1 per week	.00	.06	.16	.12	.12	.02	.00	.00	.48
5 per week	.00	.06	.08	.10	.18	.16	.30	.00	.88
1 per day	.00	.16	.08	.25	.17	.20	.35	.50	1.71
1-5 per day	.80	.56	.40	.37	.40	.47	.34	.39	3.73
6-10 per day	.20	.10	.17	.07	.12	.10	.01	.11	.88
	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	8.00

The expense involved in supplying children with these periodicals was thought to be an influencing factor in comic book selection, and for this reason, question ten was included on the questionnaire. In answer to this inquiry, How do you usually get your comics?, 273 children stated that they bought their comics regularly. This represented the largest group of respondents and included representatives of the four economic groups. Several children stated that they got their comics in more than one way, and of this group, 231 reported that they traded comic books with friends, 91 received them as gifts, and 23 had subscriptions.

Since the majority of respondents reported that they bought their comics, another question was asked to discover whether these children were influenced by adults in the selection of the comic books they purchased. Question eleven was, Do you always choose your own comics?; and it was

answered affirmatively by by 253 respondents. The remaining group of 72, who gave negative replies, were asked, Who helps you? This group represented twenty-two percent of the entire sample; and in twenty-seven cases, the children reported that Mother assisted.

Table 26. Tabulation of Outside Influence in Comic Book Selection

Assistant	Number of responses
Mother	27
Brother	20
Sister	12
Father	3
Uncle	3
Aunt	3
Cousin	2
Grandfather	1
Friend	1
	72

Approximately eighty-two percent of this group were influenced in their selection of comic books by mother, brother, or sister. While mother was credited with influence in thirty-seven percent of the cases, father's influence was exercised in only four percent of the cases.

The twelfth and last question was, Do you read certain comics because your friends read them? This inquiry received 46 affirmative answers and 279 negative answers. Expressed in percentage, fourteen percent of the respondents were influenced in their reading by friends or relatives, while eighty-six percent reported that they were not

influenced. The differentiation between sexes, races, age groups, and intelligence ratings in regard to this influence was very slight and was considered to be of little significance.

In summarizing the results of the last four questions, it was found that, in the largest number of cases, the influence of mother was predominant; while recommendations of friends in comic book reading were found to be of limited importance.

In an attempt to discover the reading ability of each respondent, the classroom teachers were asked to give an estimate of the child's reading on a three point scale; Good, Average, and Poor. In giving this estimate, most teachers referred to the grades on standardized reading tests for each respondent in their classes. Due to an unavoidable situation, one school did not report this information; and consequently, the tabulation on this item was incomplete.

Table 27. Distribution of Reading Estimates on a Three Point Scale

Estimates	Males	Females	Total
Good	40	41	81
Average	74	76	150
Poor	38	33	71
	152	150	302

Two of the eleven children who said they did not like

to read comic books were from the school that did not report reading estimates, and the remaining nine were tabulated as follows.

Table 28. Distribution of Reading Estimates of Nine Special Cases

Estimates	Males	Females	Total
Good	0	0	0
Average	2	3	5
Poor	2	2	4
	4	5	9

With the exception of these nine children, the three groups were arranged on another chart.

Table 29. Reading Estimates of 293 Respondents

Estimates	Males	Females	Total
Good	40	41	81
Average	72	73	145
Poor	36	31	67
	148	145	293

These reading estimates were also tabulated according to economic grouping.

Table 30. Distribution of Reading Estimates by Economic Classification

Estimates	A	B	C	D	Total
Good	(No report)	23	43	15	81
Average		66	43	36	145
Poor		10	43	14	67
		99	129	65	293

In comparing these reading estimates with the I. Q. scores, there was considerable discrepancy in ten cases; but in the 283 remaining cases, this discrepancy was not so pronounced. The ten children whose reading estimates and I. Q. scores did not tally were listed as special cases.

Table 31. Individual Tabulation of Ten Cases Showing Discrepancy Between Reading Estimates and I. Q. Ratings

Sex	Age	Race	I.Q.	Reading	Economic Group
Female	10-0	White	130	Poor	C
Male	11-9	Negro	130	Poor	C
Female	11-4	White	121	Poor	C
Female	9-11	Negro	116	Poor	C
Male	10-3	White	115	Poor	C
Male	11-4	Negro	114	Poor	C
Male	9-6	Negro	110	Poor	C
Female	9-6	White	110	Poor	C
Male	11-3	White	75	Good	D
Male	10-1	White	75	Good	D

These responses were noted with particular interest. Not one of these children reported any reading difficulty and eight of them claimed that they read between one and five comic books per day. One boy, with an I. Q. of 130, reported that he read about five comic books per week; and one girl, with an I. Q. of 116, stated that she read about one comic book per week.

When a comparison of the number of comic books read by the respondents was made between I. Q. ratings and reading estimates, it was found that, for the most part,

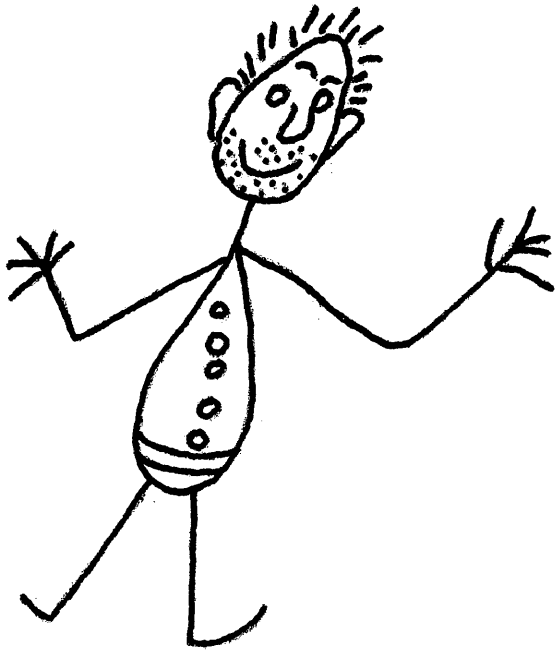
there was a similarity. That is, the individuals classed as good readers were those who had high I. Q.'s; while those who were judged as poor readers were found to have low scores on the intelligence test. For this reason, the number of comics read by children estimated as good readers matched the number read by those having high I. Q.'s. The number read by those children classed as average or poor readers also matched their respective numbers on the I. Q. classification; and consequently, no further comparisons were made with respect to reading ability.

The last item on the questionnaire had reference to the respondent's interview behavior. The system used, for this purpose, was similar to the check list found on the Record Booklet of the Revised Standard-Binet Scale. During the survey, it was very interesting to watch the children's faces as they changed expressions. Most of them displayed "concern" and "worry" when they first entered the "interview room"; but this quickly disappeared when they discovered why they had been called out of their classrooms. In fact, they were more than willing to cooperate and seemed to gain confidence as the interview continued.

As the respondents gained assurance and confidence, their conversations became more spontaneous. Many gave interesting explanations of the pictures they had drawn.

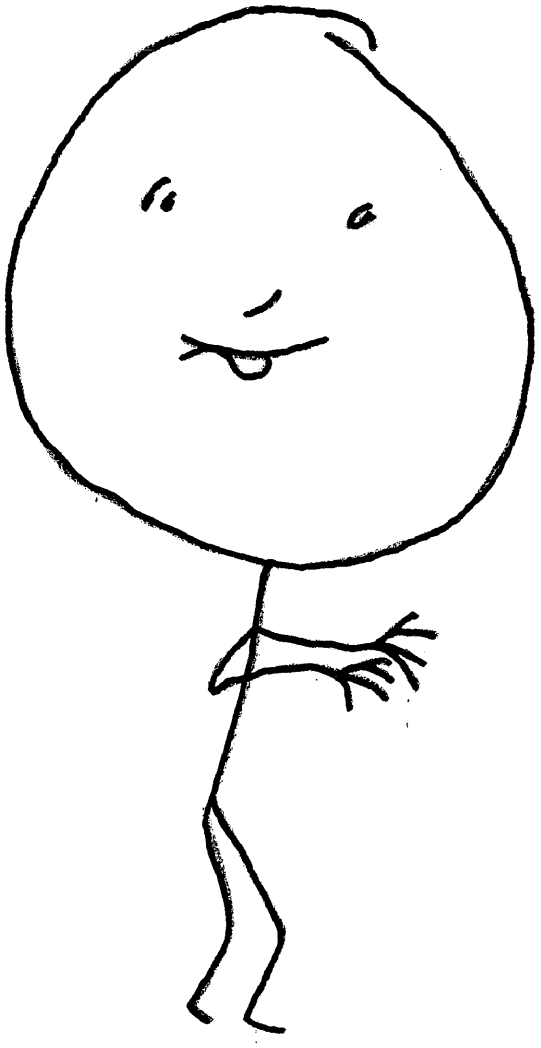
No. 1. Male, White

C. A. 11-4.



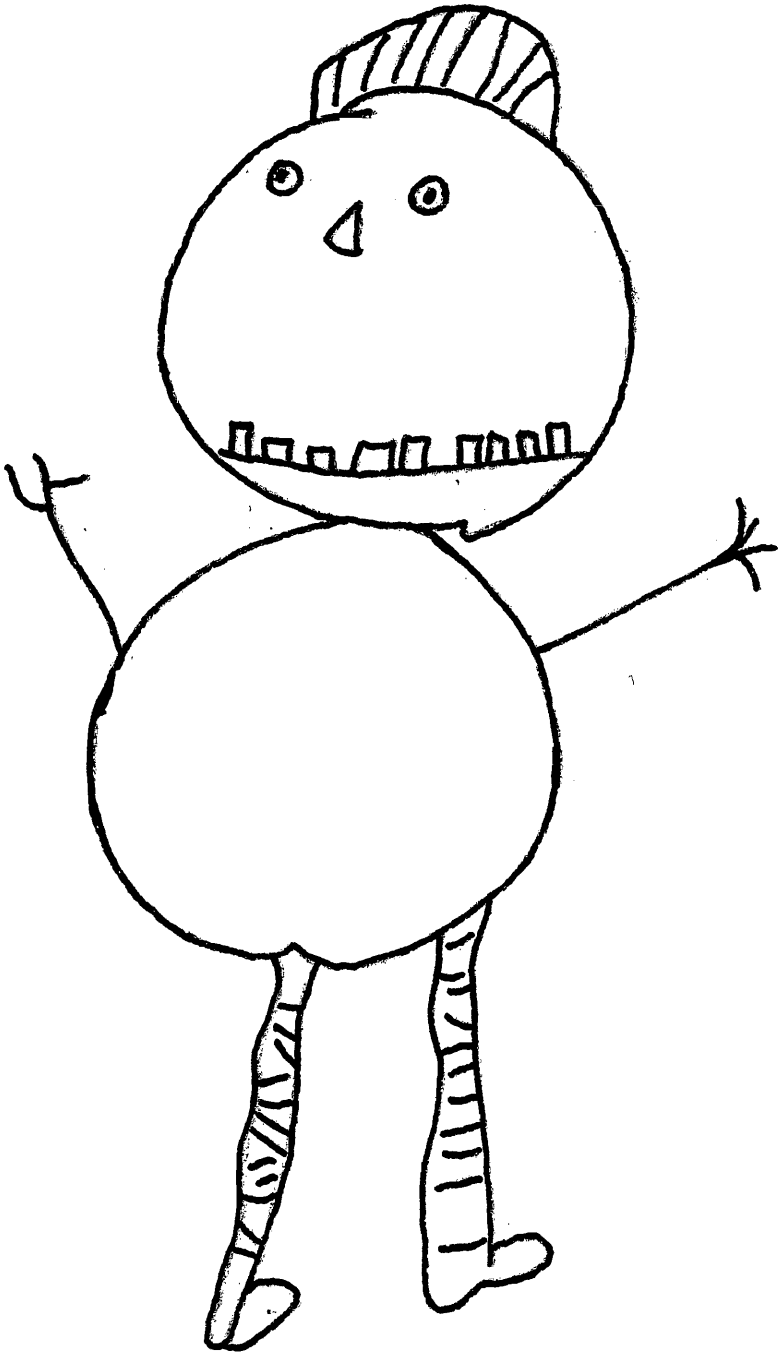
No. 2. Male, White

C. A. 9-10.



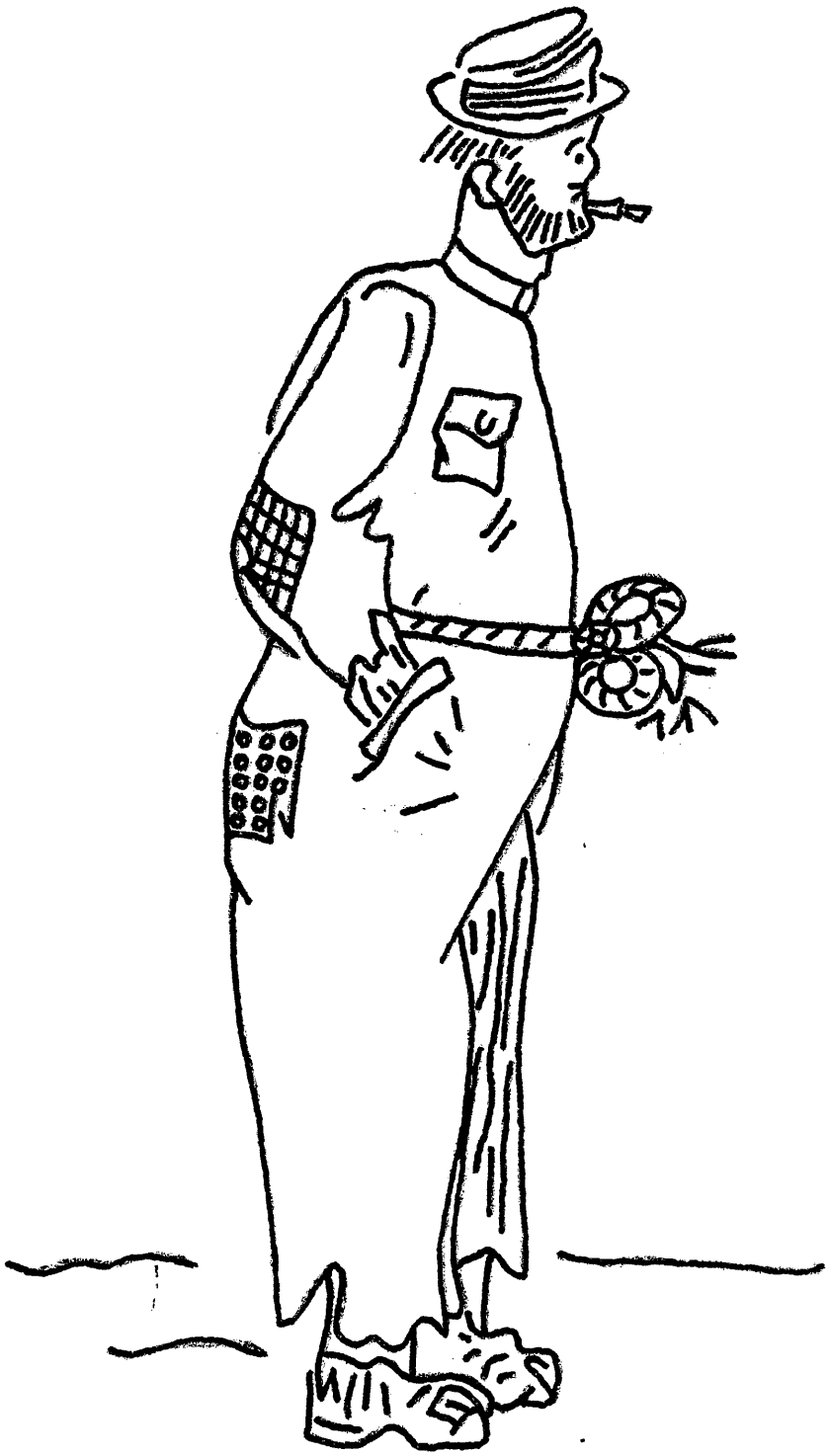
No. 3. Male, White

C. A. 10-4.



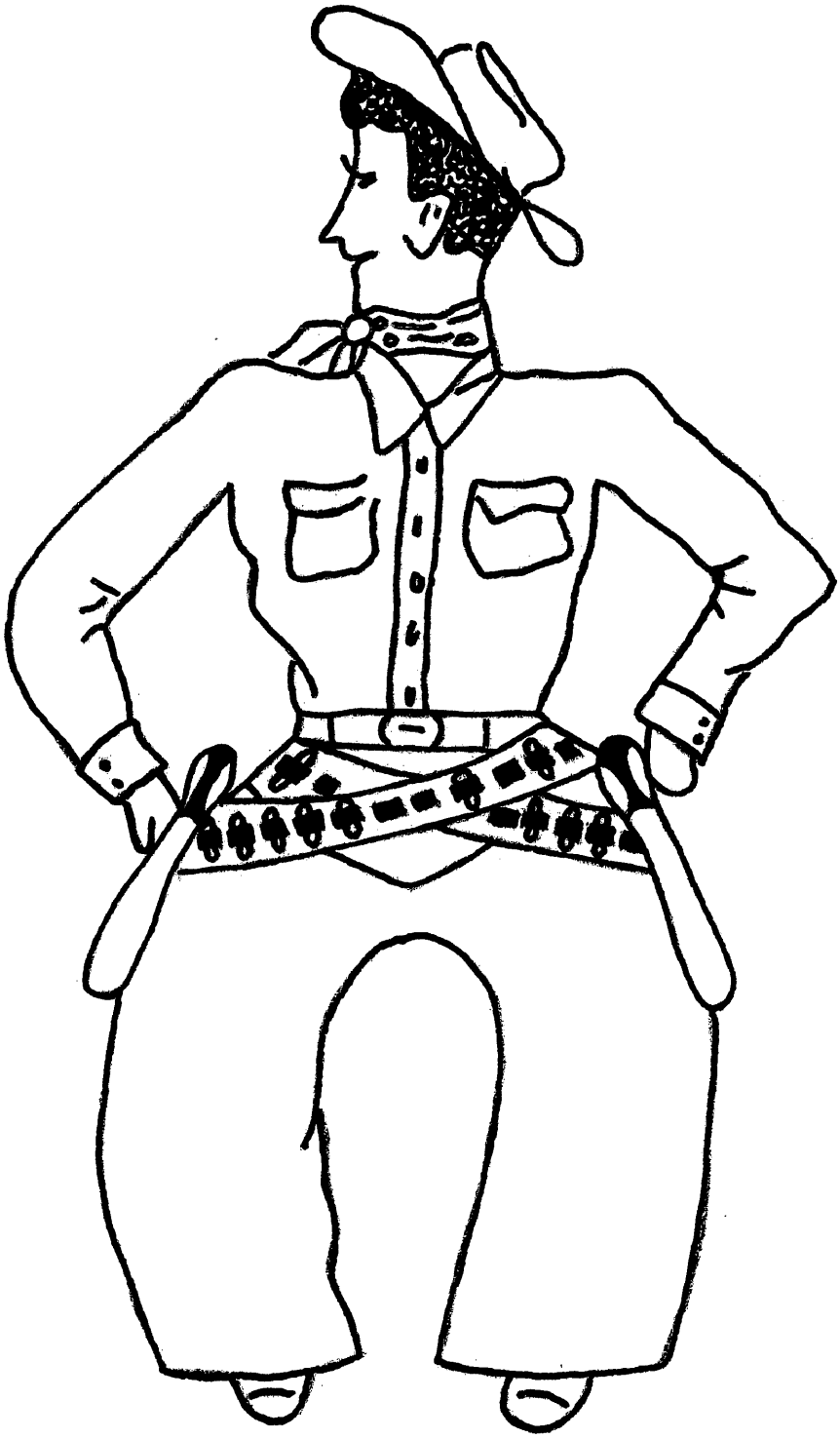
No. 4. Male, White

C. A. 13-1.



No. 5. Male, White

C. A. 13-2.

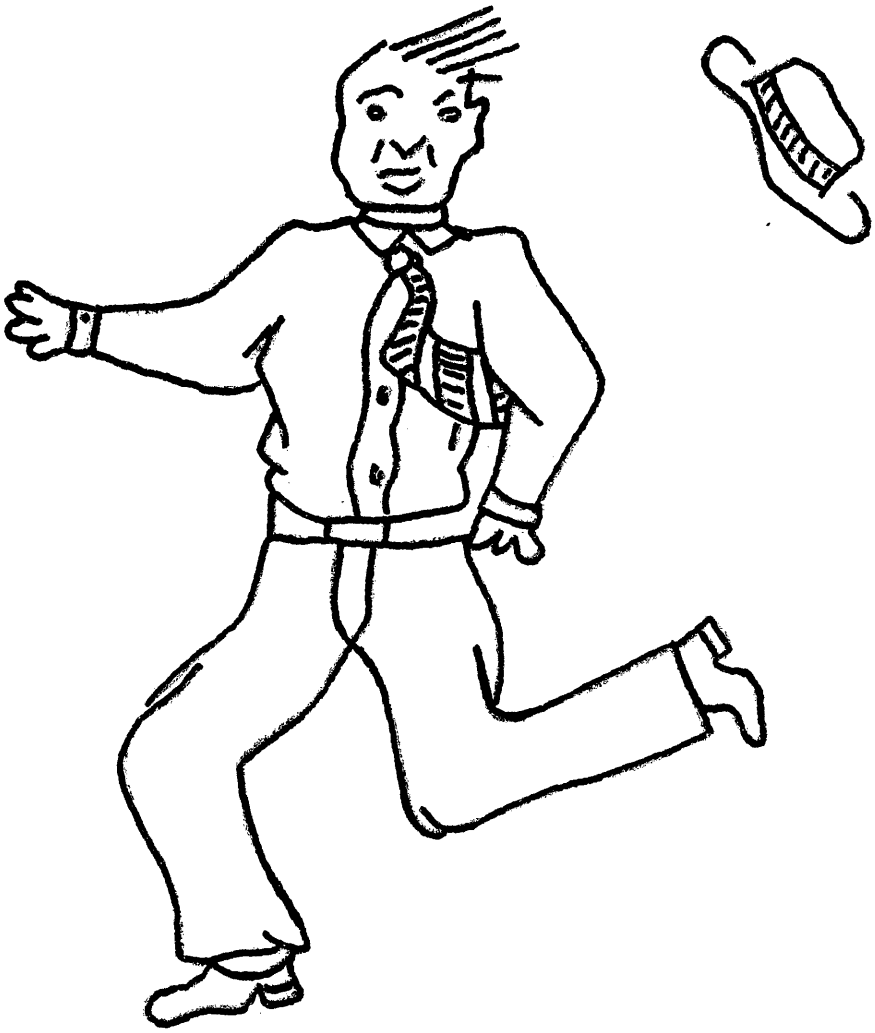


No. 6. Male, White

C. A. 12-1.

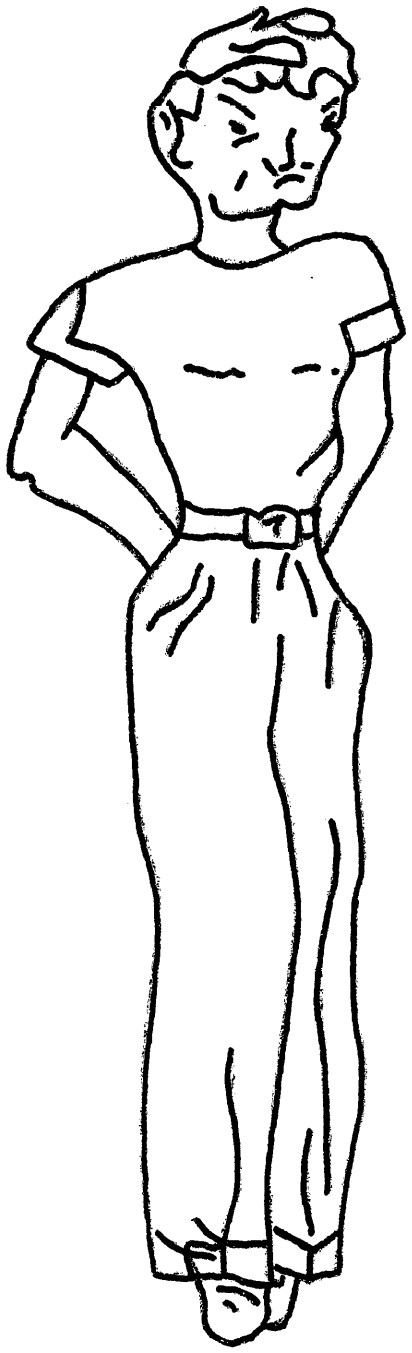
No. 7. Male, Negro

C. A. 13-O.



No. 8. Male, White

C. A. 12-2.



No. 9. Female, White

C. A. 11-3.

No. 10. Female, White

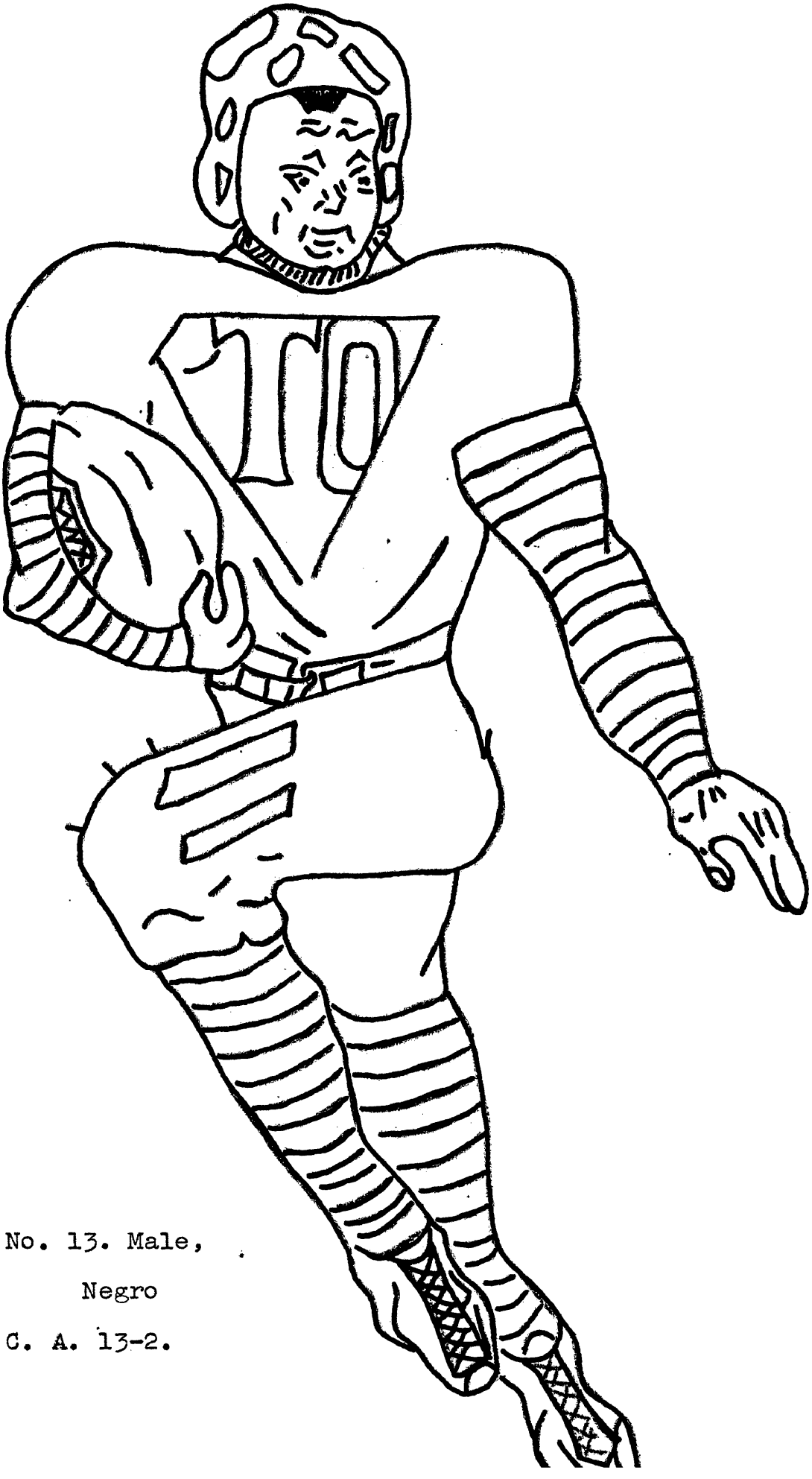
C. A. 10-10.

No. 11. Female, White

C. A. 12-1.

No. 12. Female, White

C. A. 11-11.



No. 13. Male,

Negro

C. A. 13-2.

A few samples of their work were included in this section and were representative of various levels of intelligence. Picture number 10 was drawn by a little Mexican girl. She explained that she didn't know "how to make the man's legs," and so she had drawn a picture of an altar boy. Picture number 13 was the work of a Negro boy who, in the course of conversation, stated that he often made his own comic books.

The collection of drawings included a wide variety of subjects; such as, hoboes, sailors, soldiers, airplane pilots, Chinamen, cowboys, Indians, and policemen. Some pictures included elaborate backgrounds of hills, flowers, trees, and houses; and the figures were drawn with great detail. Many costumes were extremely detailed with wrist watches or watch chains, carved buttons, flowered neckties, fancy shirts, and high heeled cowboy boots with spurs and ornate leather trimmings.

Before the task of summarizing was complete, something needed to be said in regard to a criticism that had been hurled at the promoters of comic books. This criticism referred to comic books as a possible source of juvenile delinquency. As a part of this study, an attempt was made to ascertain the extent of juvenile delinquency and its possible relationship to comic book reading.

The list of 336 names of children who had been

interviewed was checked against the records of three different organizations; namely, Douglas County Juvenile Court, Omaha Public School Attendance Office, and Omaha Police Departmant. The nature of the offenses committed was not revealed by the officials in charge; and because of this secrecy, it was impossible to determine whether the child was an habitual violator of the law. The confidential nature of this material restricted the investigator's efforts in gethering the necessary information; however, it was found that ten percent of the children interviewed in this study had records in one or more of these organizations.

The Juvenile Court records were available for a six month period, January to June of 1946, and five percent of the children were on record there. The records of the Public School Attendance Department were carefully checked for the school year, September, 1945 to June 1946; and six percent of the respondents had records in this office. One girl was on record in both Juvenile Court and Public School Attendance Office.

The records of the Omaha Police Department were extremely confidential; but Captain John Dennison, head of the Juvenile Section of the Police Department, and his staff cooperated. Five percent of the 336 names were

checked by police officials. While one percent of the names appeared on both Juvenile Court and Police records, almost two percent of the names appeared in all three files; Juvenile Court, Attendance, and Police.

Of the thirty-five children whose names appeared in one or more of these files, thirty-two were representatives of economic group C; while three were members of economic group D. Seventeen were Negroes and eighteen were of the white race. Of the eleven girls counted in this group of thirty-five, not one had a police record; but four were Juvenile Court cases and the remaining seven were problems of the Attendance Department.

The questionnaires of these thirty-five children were divided into three piles for further study and tabulation. That juvenile delinquency was usually caused by a number of factors was recognized; but an attempt was made to discover whether comic book reading might have been an influence in these thirty-five cases. The first pile of questionnaires belonged to children who had police records. Five boys of the white race selected Donald Duck as their favorite comic book because it was funny. Five Negro boys chose Superman as their favorite because the comic was exciting and had lots of action. The remaining five selected the following comics as

favorites.

Table 32. Comic Book Favorites of Children Having Police Records

Number	Comic Book	Reason for Choice
5	Donald Duck	Was funny
5	Superman	Was exciting and had action
1	Wings	Interested in flying
1	Army	Showed army life
1	Target	Depicted war
1	Wonder Woman	Liked good things character did
1	Captain Marvel	Caught law breakers

The second pile included the responses of children who had Juvenile Court records. Four children in this group selected Donald Duck as the favorite and the remaining four reported various comic books.

Table 33. Comic Book Favorites of Children Having Juvenile Court Records

Number	Comic Book	Reason for Choice
4	Donald Duck	Was funny and cute
1	Black Hawk	Liked action
1	Wonder Woman	Enjoyed adventure
1	Dick Tracy	Was exciting
1	None	No fun in comic books

The responses of the children whose names were found in the files of the Attendance Department were included in pile three. Six of these respondents claimed Donald Duck as their favorite, two liked the comic, Miss America, and the remaining five chose different comics. A tabulation of these favorites was made.

Table 34. Comic Book Favorites of Children Having Records of School Truancy

Number	Comic Book	Reason for Choice
6	Donald Duck	Was funny
2	Miss America	Was teen age
1	Loonie Tunes	Was very funny
1	Bugs Bunny	Was cute
1	Wonder Woman	Did great things for other people
1	Dick Tracy	Caught criminals
1	Superman	Was never killed

These tabulations indicated that approximately forty-three percent of the children referred to juvenile authorities named Donald Duck as the favorite comic. The children who selected other comics gave a variety of reasons for their choices; but their reasons, on the whole, were not indicative of undesirable influence. This group, however, was rather small and the information was limited. Consequently, no definite conclusions could be reached and the need for further study on this problem was revealed.

In this section, several aspects of comic book reading have been touched upon, and the problem of interpretation and generalization will be presented in the last chapter.

CHAPTER VI

GENERALIZATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It was stated that the purpose of this study was three-fold: (1) to determine which comic book the children liked best and which one they liked least together with reasons for their respective choices; (2) to discover the extent of outside influence in determining their selection of comic books; (3) to find out whether any relationship existed between the selection of comic books and each of the following: sex, age, race, general economic status, and intelligence.

The first objective mentioned was fulfilled as far as the limitations of this study permitted. The present popularity of Donald Duck was revealed and the reason given most frequently for the popularity of this comic book was that it was funny. Evidence was found that children did not like comics that combined extremely fantastic actions and seriousness. The fantastic quality of Superman placed this comic book in disfavor.

In regard to the second purpose, it was found that twenty-two percent of the children interviewed were influenced directly by an adult and most of this influenced was exercised by Mother. Recommendations of friends in

respect to comic book selection was found to be of rather minor importance.

The differentiation of comic book selection between the sexes was found to be slight, and the variation between age groups was also slight.

A comparison of comic book selection between Negroes and Whites indicated that the Negro choice was Superman. A separate study of the responses of Negro children revealed that the strength and physical superiority of the Superman character appealed to them. Donald Duck was favored by the Whites because of the humorous element in the comic. The statistical analysis indicated that this racial differentiation was not due to the probability of chance.

In a study of comic books favored least, the Negroes named Batman because to them the comic was not exciting. Superman was the comic liked least by the majority of White children interviewed in this survey, and the reasons given most frequently were that this comic was too fantastic and lacked humor.

In the differentiation of comic book selection among the four economic classifications used in this study, it was found that there was association between economic status and comic book selection. That is, children representing economic group A preferred comics other than

those chosen by children representing economic group D. This variation might have been due to racial differences as well as differences in economic status.

The comparison of comic book selection by I. Q. ratings showed little differentiation among the groups. The reading ability of each respondent was estimated by the classroom teacher, and in the majority of cases, this estimate corresponded with the I. Q. rating of the individual. No significant differentiation was found with respect to reading ability and choice of comic books.

In the course of this study, it was found that the average number of comic books read by children, nine to thirteen years old, was about three daily. Boys tended to read more comic books than girls. Children of economic group D read more comic books than those children representing economic group A. Negroes averaged more comic books per day than Whites.

The average age for beginning comic book reading in this survey was 6 years, 10 months; and the majority of children who could remember their first comic book claimed that it had been given to them by someone in their family or by a friend.

Eighty-four percent of the children reported that they bought comic books regularly.

An investigation on comic book selection as a possible influence on juvenile delinquency was unsuccessful because of authoritative restrictions. However, the material available indicated little or no association between the two factors.

Evidence was found that children liked humor, excitement, and adventure in their comics. Evidence was also found that the majority of children were avid readers of comic books and most of them preferred comic book reading to library book reading. Although this preference was not questioned specifically, many children voluntarily commented on it.

The technique employed in making this study followed the pattern used in nation wide public opinion polls and market research. A questionnaire on comic book interests was devised and tested, and served as a guide for each personal interview. The respondents were children ranging in age from nine to thirteen years and were enrolled in grades four through eight in the Omaha Public Schools. A sample of 336 children was selected according to a system of stratified random sampling and represented three percent of the total enrolment in these grades.

Stratification was done on the basis of economic classification, and one school was chosen to represent

each of the four economic groups. The same percentages of economic representation used and recommended by Gallup and other public opinion statisticians were employed in the selection of respondents.

Because the number of respondents in each school varied and because the enrolment in each school varied, a system of random selection had to be devised that would be practical and fairly accurate. Since each school had a file of Information Cards arranged by grade classification in alphabetical order, it seemed advisable to select names from these files. To insure a random selection of names, the total number of cards belonging to children in the five upper classes in each of the four schools was divided by the number of responses required for each economic group. This division facilitated the task of counting the cards and selecting the desired number in the right proportion and distribution for each of the four schools.

In other words, the respondents chosen in this way were representative of the four economic classifications and were selected according to random distribution. The experimentation of this plan of selection in this survey proved to be very practical and quite scientific.

Although the survey procedure described above made use of several previously used and tested techniques

common in modern public opinion polling, it was the method of combining these techniques that resulted in a new and better way of obtaining data. Application of this new survey procedure should prove useful in future studies of elementary school educational research, for it makes possible the acquisition of information from a direct source. It should also prove valuable, in that, it is practical, reliable, and objective.

Although the history of narrative illustration dated back to our caveman ancestors, narrative illustration in comic book form has been a recent development, and many leaders of public influence have been alarmed by the intense interest of children in comic books. Among them many critics of comic books was Sterling North, who described comic book interest as "a poisonous mushroom growth."[1] The blame for this widespread interest in "this graphic insanity," according to North,

> "lies largely with the parents who don't know and don't care what their children are reading. It lies with unimaginative teachers who force stupid, dull twaddle down eager young throats, and of course, it lies with the completely immoral publishers of the comics who are guilty of a cultural slaughter of the innocents." . . . . . "Parents and teachers of America must band together to break the 'comic' magazine." [2]

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[1] Sterling North, "A National Disgrace," Childhood Education, Vol. 17, October, 1940, p. 56.

[2] Ibid., p. 56.

Condemnations, such as the one just quoted, have been presented repeatedly with little or no scientific research to substantiate the accusations that have been made. Rather than a complete condemnation of this medium of social influence, improvements and experimentation should be encouraged.

A few experimenters have been successful in their attempts. Among them was W. W. D. Sones,[3] who employed comic books as a medium of instruction. Children who were disinterested in formal academic subjects became truly interested when the subjects were vitalized in comic book form. His experimentation was centered largely on lessons in Science, Geography, and History presented in comic book style. Some use was also made of comic books as instruments in remedial reading classes. The success of this experimentation was revealed in the testimony of Sones and his co-workers.

Although this study has been concerned primarily with leisure time comic book interests of children, the investigator was impressed with the possibilities of using comic books in the teaching of reading. Experimentation along this line might prove very successful and supercede present day methods of reading instruction; but until

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[3] W. W. D. Sones, "Comics in the Classroom?" The School Executive, October, 1943.

such a beginning reader has been devised and tried, children will probably continue to enjoy comic book reading as leisure time activity.

Perhaps, even this leisure time comic book reading has some value; for as Thompson pointed out:

> "Like all men in the storybooks and out of them, when we are shown the future we scoff with our minds - and with our souls, we fearfully await fulfillment. Meanwhile, however, if you have stomach for Tomorrow, don't feel guilty about adding the Phantom to your repertoire. You can have the Twentieth Century all at once instead of day by day. Between Puck, the comic weekly founded around 1900, and Planet Comics, you have time on a map. You can determine your progress and know what's around the bend." [4]

Between the harsh denunciations of North[5] and the "sugar-dusted" commendations of Thompson was an extreme contrast. A more rational viewpoint was presented by Josette Frank.[6]

"The comics are the folk-lore of Today."

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4 Lovell Thompson, "How Serious Are the Comics?" Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 170, September, 1942.

5 Sterling North, op. cit., p. 56.

6 Mary R. Lucas, "Our Friendly Enemy?" Library Journal, Vol. 66, October 1, 1941. p. 827.

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