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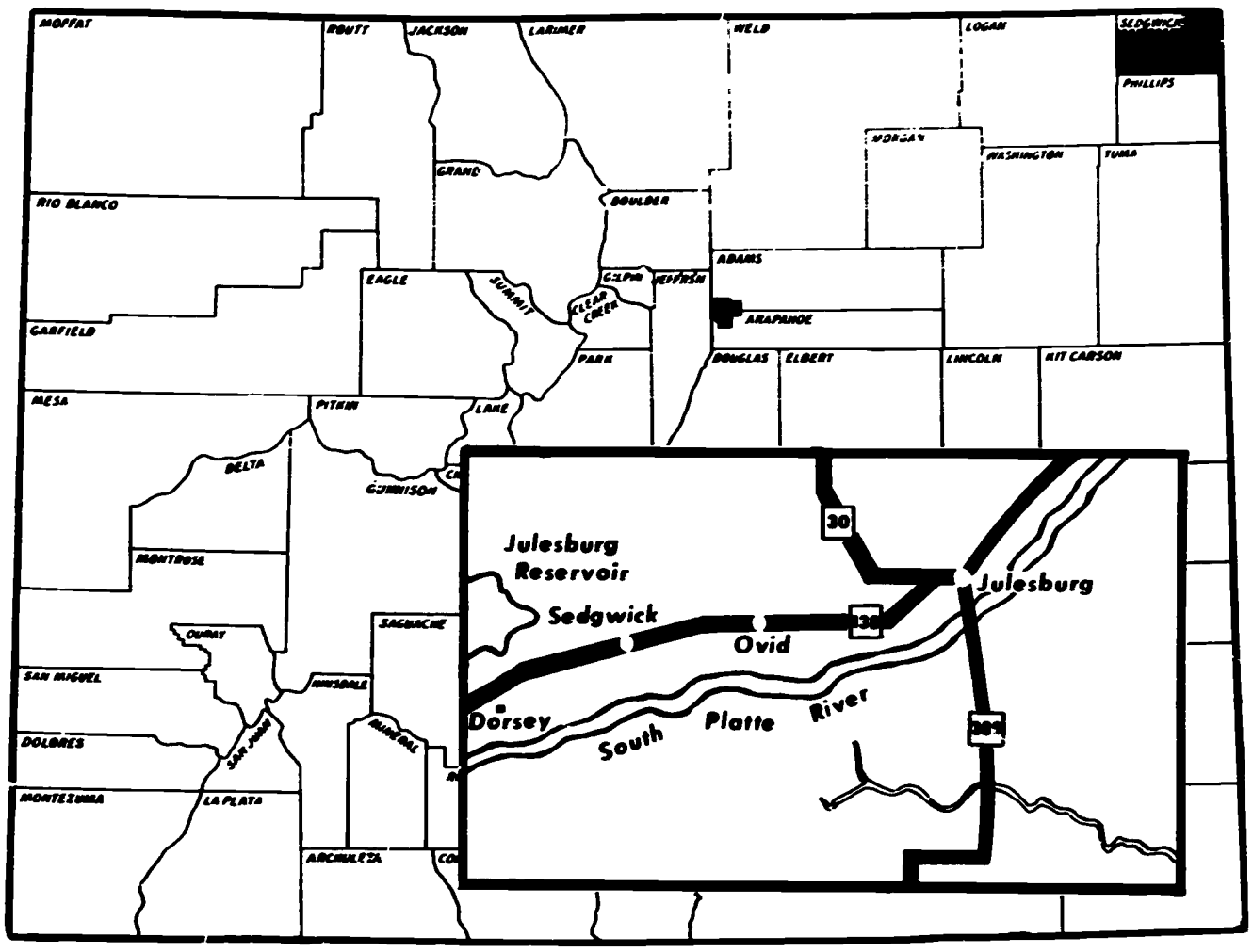
ABSTRACT

Sedgwick County leaders, concerned about outward movement of young people from rural areas, requested that a study be made of the population change and migration from the county. Dated in September of 1964, this report deals with the educational plans, community satisfaction, and migration intentions of the county's young people. The sample studied consisted of 93 high school juniors and seniors (16, 17, and 18 years of age), or about 44% of all persons in those age groups in the county. Data collected by a questionnaire suggested that most students expected to leave the county. The largest group who expected to remain were from farm families and planned to farm; however, they were faced with the problem of decreasing number of farms and increasing cost of land and necessary farm equipment. The majority of students who desired further education and occupational mobility were planning to leave the county. The crucial point in the students' responses seemed to be the lack of occupational opportunity they perceived in Sedgwick County. Due to a positive evaluation toward the county in general by these students, it would seem that emigration of the students might well be reduced if their perception of job opportunities, or the opportunities themselves, could be changed. (AN)

Technical Bulletin 85

# ATTITUDES AND PLANS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SEDGWICK COUNTY, COLORADO

Ellen P. Robin and Joseph Sardo




Colorado State University Agricultural Experiment Station
In cooperation with Farm Population Branch, Economic and Statistical Analysis Division, Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture
Fort Collins

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# ATTITUDES AND PLANS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SEDGWICK COUNTY, COLORADO

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# Acknowledgment

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Appreciation is expressed to the several persons who contributed to various phases of the study, particularly to Gladys Bowles and Calvin A. Beale of the Farm Population Branch; Nan Paterson, chief clerk, department of economics and sociology; and Emmett Ramey, graduate student in sociology. In addition, the authors wish to thank Charles E. Ramsey, chairman and professor of sociology; and Stanley S. Robin, associate professor of sociology, Colorado State University, for their encouragement and help in the preparation and completion of the research report.

Special recognition is given to the Sedgwick County leaders, whose interest in their county led them to request this study.

# ATTITUDES AND PLANS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SEDGWICK COUNTY, COLORADO

by Ellen P. Robin and Joseph Sardo*

## Introduction

A rural youth about to graduate from high school today is faced with making decisions which will affect both his own and his community's future. He must decide whether to enter the work force or continue his schooling. Both decisions generally involve leaving the home community because of changes in agriculture and the limited occupational opportunities in rural areas. Though the outward movement of young people has been of concern in most rural areas, in the sparsely settled counties of the Great Plains it has intensified existing problems of population maintenance.

One county faced with this problem is Sedgwick County, Colorado. County leaders, concerned with what they saw, requested a study be made of the population change and migration from the county. This report deals with the educational plans, community satisfactions, and migration intentions of the young people of the county.

## The setting

Sedgwick County is situated in the extreme northeastern corner of Colorado and is bounded on the north and east by portions of Nebraska. It is rectangular in shape, 30 miles long (east-west), and about 18 miles wide, with a land area of 554 square miles (see cover). The surface is nearly level or slightly rolling, except for the South Platte Valley where there is a low range of hills along the river. The South Platte River flows through the northern part of the county providing water for irrigated acreage. The few small streams in the southeast are tributaries of the Republican River.

The mean annual temperature is 50.9 degrees, the annual

*Research associate and assistant professor of sociology, Colorado State University, respectively.

precipitation averages 16.35 inches, and the growing season averages about 143 days. The altitude ranges from 3,400 to 3,675 feet. Because of its location, in about the middle of the Great Plains region, the weather is highly variable and unpredictable. The county is predominately agricultural with winter wheat as the major crop.

## Agriculture

The number of farms in Sedgwick County has been declining steadily and the average size of farm has been increasing. In 1950 there were 474 farms averaging 661 acres, while in 1959 the number of farms had dropped to 376 and the average size had increased to 828 acres. This trend in number and size is also reflected in data on irrigated portions of the county. The land area used for farming, both irrigated and nonirrigated decreased only slightly; but, as should be expected, the average value of land and buildings per farm almost tripled since 1950, from $39,584 to $90,812 in 1959.

In addition to the changes mentioned above, there have been changes in other areas of farm life in the county. One worth mentioning is the change in the tenure statuses of farm operators during the 1950-1959 decade. As depicted in table 2, there has been a decrease in the proportion of full owner and tenant operated farms and an increase in the part owner category. The same thing has occurred in the State of Colorado, where in 1950 about 19 percent of all farm operators were classified as part owners and in 1959 about 32 percent were so classified. From these statistics, and the fact that the town-centered services and industries are dependent on agriculture, one can assume there is a lack of occupational opportunities for young people of the county.

## Population

**Rural population in Colorado has decreased greatly as a proportion of the total between 1900 and 1960.** The population of Colorado has been increasing

TABLE 1.—*Selected agricultural characteristics for Sedgwick County, 1950-1959*[1]

| Year | No. of farms | Average size of farms | Value of land and buildings Average per farm (Dollars) | Land in farms (Acres) | Number of irrigated farms | Proportion of all farms | Land in irrigated farms (Acres) | Average per farm (Acres) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1950 | 474 | 661 | 39,584 | 313,196 | 160 | 33.4 | 95,180 | 595 |
| 1959 | 376 | 828 | 90,812 | 311,398 | 124 | 33.0 | 85,299 | 688 |

[1] Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. **U. S. Census of Agriculture:** 1959. Vol. 1, Counties, Part 41, Colorado. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1961, pp. 125, 131; and **U. S. Census of Agriculture:** 1954, Vol. 1, Counties and State Economic Areas, Part 29, Wyoming and Colorado. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1956, pp. 163, 166.

TABLE 2.—*Number and percent of farms, by tenure of operators, Sedgwick County, 1950-1959*[1]

| Tenure of operators | 1959 | | 1950 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of farms | Percent | Number of farms | Percent |
| Full owner | 100 | 26.6 | 140 | 29.5 |
| Part owner | 152 | 40.4 | 162 | 34.0 |
| Managers | 5 | 1.3 | 3 | .6 |
| Tenants | 119 | 31.7 | 169 | 35.7 |

[1] Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. **U. S. Census of Agriculture:** 1959. Vol. 1, Counties, Part 41, Colorado. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1961, p. 141; and **U. S. Census of Agriculture:** 1954. Vol. 1, Counties and State Economic Areas, Part 29, Wyoming and Colorado. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1956, p. 172.

rapidly since 1900 (from 539,700 persons in that year to 1,753,925 in 1960), but the growth has been unevenly distributed among the various residential categories. Since 1900 the urban population has increased from 48.3 percent to 73.7 percent of the total population while the rural has declined from 51.7 percent to 26.3 percent of the total population. The number of rural people has increased by 65 percent in this period. However, between 1950 and 1960 the number of rural people in the State declined by about 32,000. Forty-seven of the 62 counties with rural populations (the 63rd, Denver County, was completely urban) experienced decreases in rural population between 1950 and 1960. The rural farm population in 1960 comprised only 7.3 percent of the population of Colorado. In addition to the decline in the rural-farm population, Colorado has also had decreases in the number of persons in the rural towns—that is, in places of under 2,500 population. On the other hand, the population living in open country rural-nonfarm areas increased during the decade.

**Sedgwick County's population decreased sharply from 1930 to 1960.** Sedgwick, a completely rural county, is no exception to the above trends. In 1900 it had 971 people and its population rose irregularly up to 1930. Sedgwick has declined sharply since, from 5,580 persons in 1930 to 4,242 in 1960. The greatest absolute and percentage loss was in the decade of 1950 to 1960. In that period the total population decreased by 16.7 percent with the greatest loss occurring in the rural-farm population, which declined from 2,062 people in 1950 to only 989 persons in 1960, a 52.0 percent decrease.

The three towns of Julesburg, Ovid, and Sedgwick also lost a total of 237 persons between 1950 and 1960. The population in 1960 of Julesburg, Ovid, and Sedgwick were 1,850, 571, and 299 respectively, while in 1950 the towns had 1,951, 664, and 332 persons. The rural

nonfarm population, as a whole, gained about 220 persons in that decade. The increase of rural nonfarm people in Sedgwick County, even though the towns were losing population, is partly due to the change in definition which placed some persons, who were included in the farm population in 1950, into the rural nonfarm category in 1960.

**One of the factors responsible for the decline in population has been the outmigration of young people.** By comparing the age-sex pyramid for the years 1950 and 1960 the reader can readily detect the changes that have been taking place in the age composition of Sedgwick's population since 1950 (figure 1). The most noticeable differences are found in the decrease of the proportion of persons 20-39 and the increase in the older age groups, especially 65 and over, but starting at 40. The younger ages, under 19, show a slightly higher proportion in 1960 than in 1950.

Much of the outmigration is due to the technical revolution in agriculture which made it possible for farm production needs to be met with decreasing numbers of farm workers. The technical revolution in agriculture is continuing. Thus, the prospects are that the population decline will continue in the open country and in many small towns where an offsetting growth in nonfarm employment does not occur.

## Purposes

Concern over what was occurring in their county was felt by the county leaders. This led to a study designed to give factual information about the county. The objectives agreed upon were:

1. To obtain and analyze data on the composition and trends of the population of a Great Plains county.
2. To determine the extent and destination of recent migration from the county and the selectivity of migrants with respect to such characteristics as age, sex, education, tenure status, size of farm, type of farm, etc.
3. To determine the stated reasons for the outmigration of recent migrants, including such factors as degree of satisfaction with community, occupational choices, and economic aspirations.
4. To gauge the migration intentions of present county residents (especially young people) and the reasons therefore.
5. To assess the impact of migration and declining population on the rural life in the county.

This report is specifically concerned with objective "four" which includes the educational plans, community satisfactions, and migration intentions of the juniors and seniors in the high schools of the county.

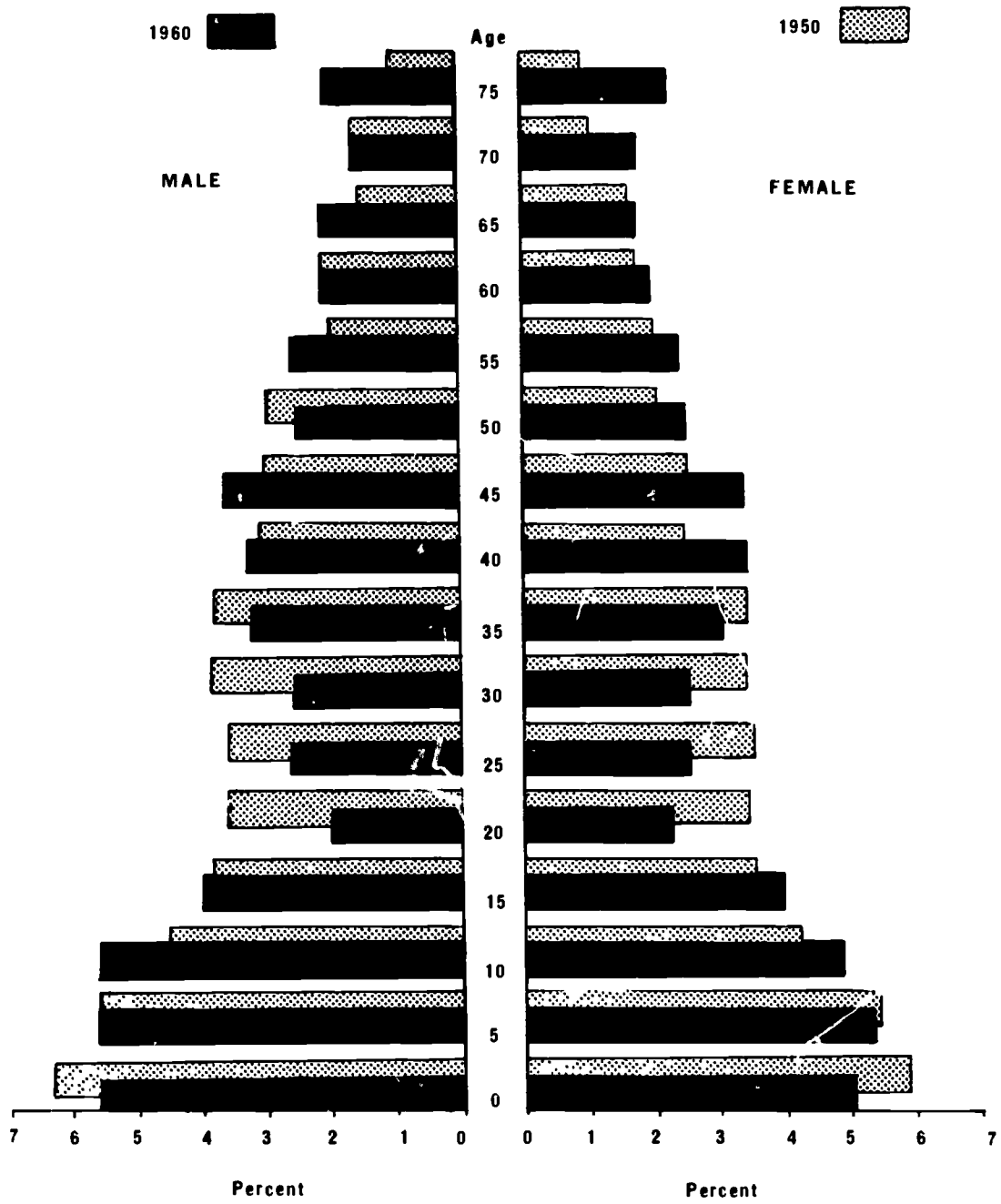


**Figure 1.—Sedgwick County population by percent, age, and sex, 1950-1960.**

## The sample

As depicted in table 3, the sample consists of 93 persons, 16, 17, and 18 years of age, or about 44 percent of all the persons in those age groups in the county.

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire filled out in class by juniors and seniors at Julesburg and Sedgwick high schools and juniors at Ovid High School. The six seniors at Ovid High School had graduated before they could be contacted, and though an effort was made to find them, only one ultimately filled out the questionnaire. The population, thus, includes all the juniors and all but five of the seniors in the county high schools.

TABLE 3.—*The sample population by sex, year in school and residence*

| Year in school and sex | Residence | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Farm | Nonfarm | Total |
| **Seniors** | | | |
| Male | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Female | 2 | 13 | 15 |
| **Juniors** | | | |
| Male | 14 | 23 | 37 |
| Female | 9 | 22 | 31 |
| Total | 28 | 65 | 93 |

## FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

This section compares students in terms of the family characteristics which may influence their decisions to remain in or leave the county.

Characteristic of the family income data is the large minority of students who did not or could not answer the question concerning family income (sixteen students with the highest proportion being children of farm operators). Only four, on the other hand, did not answer the question regarding father's educational level. Both median income and median years of school completed followed the same decreasing pattern from "white collar" (professional, management, sales, and office personnel), with the highest income and education, through farm operators, skilled, semiskilled and unskilled workers, and unclassifiable, and "don't know" with the lowest education and income level. (It is interesting to note that the median family income reported in the 1960 census for Sedgwick County was just under $5,000 and that median education for males was 9.7 years. Thus, families of persons responding to this questionnaire had a slightly lower median income than for the county as a whole but fathers' median educational level was somewhat higher.)[1]

Further data indicate that only 12 persons reported a secondary occupation for the father. The occupational category accounting for the largest proportion of secondary occupations is the semiskilled and unskilled category (accounting for half of the fathers with secondary occupation) which also has the lowest median income and education levels (see table 4). Only 2 of 27 farm operators have secondary occupations.

[1] Within our sample we had seven pairs of siblings. In comparing answers to income and educational level questions between members of the same family, we found two discrepancies in answers to the income question (one amounting to $5,000, the other much smaller) and one involving educational level (one brother listing his father as a high school graduate, the other as having some college). Siblings, with one exception, were agreed on the age and occupation of parents.

TABLE 4.—*Median family income and median years of school completed by fathers: by father's occupation for high school age persons*

| Occupation of father | Students (Total) | Median family income* | Median years of school completed* |
|---|---|---|---|
| White collar | 20 | $5550 | 12.5 |
| Farm operator | 27 | 4750 | 12.0 |
| Skilled worker | 17 | 4688 | 9.5 |
| Semiskilled and unskilled | 27 | 4166 | 8.0 |
| Unclassifiable | 2 | 3700 | 8.0 |
| Total | 93 | $4796** | 10.8 |

*Not all students answered in regard to family income and year of school completed by father. Sixteen persons failed to respond to the question on income and four on the education question.

**Median income of all families in Sedgwick County as shown by the 1960 Census of Population was $4,904.

Answers to questions regarding the work status of the mother revealed that 21 of the mothers work part-time while 12 work full-time. About half of the families with working mothers, 16 in number, have an average family income of between $2,500 and $4,999 per year. All but seven of the working mothers live in town. Relatively few farm operators' wives work off the farm, probably because of the lack of jobs near home, transportation difficulties, or home demands on time and energy. The primary occupation of the father which yields the largest number of working mothers (14) is semiskilled or unskilled.

## FINDINGS

Because answers to some questions may differ among high school juniors and seniors and between members of the two sex groups, most of the tables and analyses are based on four sex-class groups. High school seniors are faced with a decision about the immediate future. They must decide in the few months following graduation, if they have not already decided, whether and where they plan to work, attend an advanced educational institution, or enter military service. High school juniors, on the other hand, still have a year in which to think about these decisions.

In tabulations in this section we have followed census definitions of residence which means that all respondents are categorized either as rural farm residents or as rural nonfarm residents. None of the three vil-

TABLE 5.—*Expected residence of high school juniors and seniors by high school class, sex and residence*

| High school class, sex, and residence | Total | Remain in county | Leave county | Don't know or no answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Senior males** | | | | |
| Farm | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nonfarm | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| **Senior females** | | | | |
| Farm | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Nonfarm | 13 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| **Junior males** | | | | |
| Farm | 14 | 6 | 2 | 6 |
| Nonfarm | 23 | 0 | 17 | 6 |
| **Junior females** | | | | |
| Farm | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Nonfarm | 22 | 2 | 8 | 12 |
| Total | 93 | 16 | 46 | 31 |

*$x^2$ SD = 1.38 df = 1 (n = 62) P>.05 $x^2$ Class by plans or no plans = 8.78 p<.01 df = 1

*$x^2$ RD = 7.16 df = 1 (n = 62) p<.01 $x^2$ Residence by plans or no plans = 0.3 p>.05 df = 1

*$x^2$ CD = .0024 df = 1 (n = 62) P>.05 $x^2$ Sex by plans or no plans = 0.3 p>.05 df = 1

(n = 93 in above)

*In this and following tables $x^2$ SD means $x^2$ Sex by dependent variable, $x^2$ RD means $x^2$ residence by dependent variable, $x^2$ CD means $x^2$ Class by dependent variable.

lages in the county had a population of over 2,500 and can be classified as urban.[2]

## Plans to migrate

Before discussing possible factors contributing to migration, we shall look first at students' expectations in regard to their place of residence after completing high school. In table 5, results of the study are presented regarding expectations about future residence. The schedule question was worded: "Where do you actually expect to be living after high school?" The answer to this question is not necessarily in terms of commitment to live in the place named but in terms of the greatest probability of living in that place.

Many factors can be operative in determining choice of place of

[2] According to the definition adopted for use in the 1960 United States Census, the urban population comprises all persons living in (a) places of 2,500 inhabitants or more, incorporated as cities, boroughs, villages, or towns (except towns in New England, New York, and Wisconsin); (b) the densely settled urban fringe, whether incorporated or unincorporated, of urbanized areas; (c) towns in New England and townships in New Jersey and Pennsylvania which contain no incorporated municipalities as subdivisions and have either 25,000 inhabitants or more or a population of 2,500 to 25,000 and a density of 1,500 persons or more per square mile; (d) counties in states other than the New England States, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania that have no incorporated municipalities within their boundaries and have a density of 1,500 persons or more per square mile; and (e) unincorporated places of 2,500 inhabitants or more.

residence: expected enrollment in a college or school, job opportunities or commitment, marriage, military service, etc. Expectation regarding these factors influence the answers to this question.

Most high school students expect to leave Sedgwick County after graduation. No senior male expects to remain in the county, although two farm senior males do not know where they will live. Of the two farm senior females, one expects to leave, one to stay; the nonfarm senior females are fairly evenly divided with five planning to stay, six planning to leave, and two undecided. Junior male farm residents are less unanimous than the other groups with six planning to stay, two planning to leave, and six undecided. No nonfarm junior males expect to remain although six are undecided. Junior females seem to be the group with the least well determined plans with one-half undecided about a place of expected residence.

Tests of significance[3] indicate only one significant relationship —between residence (farm and nonfarm) and plans to remain or plans to leave—showing that, proportionately, many more nonfarm residents expect to leave than do farm residents. Tests between residence plans and sex, and residence plans and class rank are not significant and show that plans to stay in or leave the county do not differ according to sex or class rank. In these tests only those persons who indicate that a decision has been made are included in the computations, a total of 62, or two-thirds of the sample.

When the same three independent variables (high school class, residence, and sex) are run against the dependent variable (residence plans), now categorized according to those who have indicated plans (to leave or to remain) and those who have not ("don't know" and no answer), we find the only significant relationship is between the high school class and plans or no plans. This is to be expected since seniors must make an immediate decision in regard to future residence while juniors have another year in which to decide. There is no significant difference between males and females and farm and nonfarm residence in this respect.

## Attitudes toward Sedgwick County

This section will deal with items indicating attitudes toward Sedgwick County. Answers to these questions may serve both as an index to future plans and as an indication of trouble spots in the life of the county.

Table 6 shows the distribution of answers to three questions dealing with attitudes toward

[3] Statements of significant differences in chi-square ($x^2$) tests are used to explain the probability of specific differences occurring by chance. Hence, the significance level of .01 means that the differences referred to could have occurred by chance only 1 in 100 times and the significance level of .05 means the difference could have occurred by chance 5 times in 100. For further discussion see: Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric Statistics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956, pp. 175-179.

the county as a place to live after graduation and after marriage, and the size of community preferred.

**Students' feelings about the county as a place to live after graduation and marriage are mixed. Most, however, indicate a preference to live in a place with a population of over 2,500.** It is interesting to note that students whose present residences are rural nonfarm are less favorable toward the present community as a place to live both after graduation and after marriage. Students whose present residences are farms are somewhat more favorable toward the county after graduation and marriage. Juniors, both male and female, regardless of residence, have less well-defined attitudes and have more "indifferent" responses than do the seniors. Except for junior males residing on farms, all categories have a majority of

TABLE 6.—*Attitudes of juniors and seniors toward community and preferred size of community by class, sex, and residence*

| Class, sex, and residence | Total number | Community as place after graduation | | | Community as place after marriage | | | Preferred size of community | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Like | Indiff* | Dislike | Like | Indiff* | Dislike | Rural | Urban |
| **Senior males** | | | | | | | | | |
| Farm | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Rural nonfarm | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| **Senior females** | | | | | | | | | |
| Farm | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rural nonfarm | 13 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 10 |
| **Junior males** | | | | | | | | | |
| Farm | 14 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 5 |
| Rural nonfarm | 23 | 3 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 17 |
| **Junior females** | | | | | | | | | |
| Farm | 9 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Rural nonfarm | 22 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 13 |
| Total | 93 | 38 | 25 | 30 | 34 | 18 | 41 | 34 | 59 |

*Includes don't know and no answer responses.

Test of significance:

| Community as place after graduation | Community as place after marriage | Preferred size of community |
|---|---|---|
| $x^2$ SD = 1.41 | $x^2$ SD = 2.67 | $x^2$ SD = .01 |
| df = 2 | df = 2 | df = 1 |
| P > .05 | P > .05 | P > .05 |
| $x^2$ CD = 3.90 | $x^2$ CD = 3.39 | $x^2$ CD = .63 |
| df = 2 | df = 2 | df = 1 |
| $x^2$ RD = 11.38 | P > .05 | P > .05 |
| P > .05 | $x^2$ RD = 7.47 | $x^2$ RD = 2.35 |
| df = 2 | df = 2 | df = 1 |
| P < .01 | P < .05 | P > .05 |

persons indicating they would prefer to live in a place with a population of 2,500 or more.

Testing each of the variables, sex, class rank, and residence against preferred size of community (rural, up to 2,500 population, and urban, over 2,500) shows that though the sample as a whole prefers communities over 2,500, there are no significant differences by the independent variables indicating that these apparently have no significant effect on the preferred size of the community.

Those students who are farm residents are more likely to be satisfied with the community as a place to live in the future than are nonfarm residents. This might be explained in terms of difference in orientation with farm residents preferring to remain in a situation similar to that which they have known in the past and nonfarm residents being oriented toward urban centers not available in the county. There is also the possibility that farm residents have a greater economic stake in the county with employment on the farm assured and with the possible inheritance of land.

Tests of significance reveal that the current place of residence (rural farm or rural nonfarm) is the only significant independent variable in terms of the dependent variables of attitude toward the county as a place to live after graduation (significant beyond the .01 level) and as a place to live after marriage (significant beyond the .05 level).

**Attitudes toward the county as a place to live tend to be held consistently.** Table 7 shows attitudes toward the county as a place to live after marriage plotted against attitudes toward the county as a place to live after graduation. This analysis was planned to determine the consistency of projected attitudes. Examination of table 7 indicates, and the test of significance supports, that attitudes are highly consistent with one another. Those people who expect to like

TABLE 7.—*Attitudes of high school juniors and seniors toward the county as a place to live after marriage by attitudes toward the county as a place to live after graduation*

| Attitude toward county as place after graduation | Total number | Attitude toward county after marriage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Like | Indifferent | Dislike |
| Like | 38 | 29 | 4 | 5 |
| Indifferent | 25 | 3 | 13 | 9 |
| Dislike | 30 | 2 | 1 | 27 |
| Total | 93 | 34 | 18 | 41 |

$x^2 = 70.73$
df = 4
P < .001 level
n = 93

the county after graduation tend to expect to like it after marriage, and so on.

**Though one-third of the students did not know where they would actually live, nearly half of them expected to move away. Most of those who planned to stay expected to like it.** Table 8 shows the attitudes of students toward the county as a place to live after graduation and after marriage by responses to the question: "Where do you actually expect to live after you finish high school?" It should be noted that a full one-third of the sample (31 persons) did not know, or did not answer the question. Analysis of responses reveals, as might be expected, that the largest proportion of persons who expect to live in the county also expect to like it as a place to live both after graduation and after marriage. Conversely, those who expect to live elsewhere express dislike of the county as a place to live both after graduation and after marriage. Significant differences among responses were revealed by application of the chi-square test with "don't know" and "no answer" responses excluded. Those who did not give a specific response to where they would live were nearly equally divided between those expressing "like" and "dislike" for their communities.

**Though many are undecided, most students in families with an income over $5,000 expect to reside outside of the county.** Table 9 shows the place of expected residence (county or other) by average family income (under or over $5,000, which is close to the median income for families of students) in the sample. Common sense might lead us to hypothesize that those persons with lower family income levels would plan to move outside the county where they might make more money and those students with higher income might be more satisfied

TABLE 8.—*Attitudes of high school juniors and seniors toward the county as a place to live after graduation and after marriage, by place of expected residence*

| Place of expected residence | Total number | County after graduation | | | County after marriage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Like | Indiff* | Dislike | Like | Indiff* | Dislike |
| County | 16 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 3 |
| Other place | 46 | 11 | 13 | 22 | 8 | 7 | 31 |
| Don't know, no answer** | 31 | 14 | 10 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 7 |
| Total | 93 | 38 | 25 | 30 | 34 | 18 | 41 |

*Don't know or no answer responses have been included in this category.

**$x^2 = 16.78$ $x^2 = 16.42$
$df = 2$ $df = 2$
$P < .001$ $P < .001$
$n = 62$ $n = 62$

**In computation of tests of significance, don't know, no answer categories have been excluded.

TABLE 9.—*Place of expected residence of high school juniors and seniors by average annual family income*

| Average annual family income | Total number | Place of expected residence | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | County | Other | *Don't know; No answer |
| Under $5,000 | 47 | 10 | 18 | 19 |
| Over $5,000 | 30 | 2 | 18 | 10 |
| *Don't know, no answer | 16 | 4 | 10 | 2 |
| Total | 93 | 16 | 46 | 31 |

*Excluded from computations.
$x^2 = 2.85$
df = 1
$P > .05$
n = 48

with the county and plan to stay. The data, however, reveal the converse. Though a higher proportion of students with a family income of under $5,000 plan to leave the county rather than stay, an even higher proportion of students whose family income is over $5,000 plan to leave. (The chi-square test shows significance beyond the .10 level which is suggestive of the relationship indicated.)

**In general, students hold favorable attitudes toward the county though most feel that employment opportunities are insufficient.** Table 10 shows responses to a series of opinion items regarding Sedgwick County. On the questionnaire students had five possible responses for each question (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree). For the purpose of this table adjacent categories (strongly agree—agree and disagree—strongly disagree) were combined because relatively few students expressed strong opinions.

It is interesting to note that over half of the students expressed opinions favorable to Sedgwick County on A, B, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, O, and P[4]. Items for which more than half of the students gave favorable responses are: medical facilities are good and adequate; leaders are generally capable; the county is progressive; shopping facilities are adequate; there are good things to be said of a place this size; the county is desirably located; you can have a good time without leaving the county; the climate is as good as anyplace; high school teachers are the equal of those anywhere; ability is recognized; and there are families into which one would like to marry.

On only one item (M—availability of employment) did more than half of the students express an opinion unfavorable to the current status of the county. On two other items (N—recreation-

[4] For purposes of interpretation the investigators assumed that particular responses to items indicated favorable or unfavorable assessments of the county.

TABLE 10.—*Responses of high school juniors and seniors to series of opinion items regarding Sedgwick County*

| Item | Favorable | Unfavorable | Undecided | No answer* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Anything of a progressive nature is generally approved. | 73 | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| B. With few exceptions the leaders are capable and ambitious. | 74 | 5 | 12 | 2 |
| C. It is difficult for people to get together on anything. | 43 | 31 | 17 | 2 |
| D. Everyone helps to decide how things should be run. | 25 | 43 | 23 | 2 |
| E. The future of the county looks bright. | 28 | 31 | 32 | 2 |
| F. The high school teachers are equal to teachers anywhere. | 51 | 22 | 18 | 2 |
| G. Persons with real ability are usually given recognition. | 51 | 17 | 22 | 3 |
| H. The county is not located in a very desirable section. | 58 | 25 | 8 | 2 |
| I. A person has to leave the county in order to have a good time. | 55 | 22 | 14 | 2 |
| J. There are not very many families you would care to marry into. | 47 | 24 | 22 | 0 |
| K. People have to do without adequate shopping facilities. | 58 | 26 | 9 | 0 |
| L. The medical facilities are good and adequate. | 76 | 11 | 6 | 0 |
| M. Employment opportunities are practically nonexistent. | 35 | 49 | 9 | 0 |
| N. Recreation facilities are abundant and varied. | 37 | 45 | 11 | 0 |
| O. Not much can be said in favor of a place this size. | 57 | 16 | 20 | 0 |
| P. The climate is as good as any other place in the United States. | 54 | 32 | 7 | 0 |
| Q. Few if any of the neighboring counties are able to surpass Sedgwick County. | 44 | 16 | 32 | 1 |

*Items A through I were inadvertently omitted in two questionnaires.

al facilities, and D — everyone helps to decide how things shall be run) unfavorable opinions were just under half.

Less than half of the students expressed opinions favorable to the county on the following items: Q, Sedgwick County is equal to neighboring counties; and C, easy to get people together. A high proportion of students are also undecided as to ranking the county according to neighboring counties (Q). Students were fairly evenly divided between favorable, unfavorable and undecided responses on item E dealing with the future of the county. Other items showing a fairly large proportion of undecided responses are: D, everyone helps decide how things should be run; G, recognition of persons with ability; and J, num-

ber of families into which one would like to marry.

All in all, it would appear that though a large proportion of students plan to leave the county many regard the county as a good place to live. It may well be that the relatively ambiguous nature of the students' judgments of the county's future coupled with their perception of the lack of job opportunities are contributing factors in their decisions to leave.

## Plans and preferences in regard to Sedgwick County

In addition to the questions regarding attitudes toward Sedgwick County, the following questions were designed to elicit expectations in terms of migration: "Now, considering the kind of job and the way of life you *eventually* wish to have, do you think it will be necessary for you to move from Sedgwick County?" To determine the possibility of students staying or returning we asked: "Would you remain in or eventually return to this county if jobs were available?" Responses to these questions are found in tables 11 and 12, respectively.

**Though most students feel it will be necessary for them to leave the county eventually, many would consider remaining or returning if jobs were available.** Though most of the students feel that it will eventually be necessary for them to move from Sedgwick County in order to lead the kind of lives they wish, it appears that many would remain in or return to the county if jobs were available. This suggests that the shortage, or perceived shortage, of attractive jobs within the county is a factor strongly contributing to decisions to move. It is interesting to note that farm males are considerably less likely to think they will have to move than are nonfarm males. Females show no such patterns.

Though the majority of students expect that it will be necessary eventually to leave Sedgwick County, tests of significance failed to show significant relationships between the independent variables of high school class or sex and the dependent variable of expectation of moving. When the sample is divided by place of residence, however, there is an association between place of residence (farm and nonfarm), and the expected necessity of moving.

Responses to the question about remaining or returning to the county do not form quite as clear a picture (see table 12). Though more people would remain in or return to Sedgwick County were jobs available (36

TABLE 11.—*Opinion on necessity of moving from Sedgwick County for high school juniors and seniors by sex, high school class, and residence*

| High school class, sex, and residence | Total number | Necessary to move | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | *Don't know |
| **Juniors** | | | | |
| Males | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 14 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Nonfarm | 23 | 17 | 2 | 4 |
| Females | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Nonfarm | 22 | 14 | 5 | 3 |
| **Seniors** | | | | |
| Males | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Nonfarm | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Females | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Nonfarm | 13 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 93 | 58 | 18 | 17 |

$x^2$ RD = 2.87 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 76
$x^2$ RD (males) = 2.64 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 37
$x^2$ RD (females = 0.1855 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 39
$x^2$ CD = .0816 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 76
$x^2$ SD = .0207 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 76
*Excluded from computations

TABLE 12.—*Opinion on willingness to remain in or returning to Sedgwick County if jobs were available for high school juniors and seniors by high school, sex, and residence*

| High school class, sex, and residence | Total number | Remain in or return to Sedgwick County if jobs were available | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | *Don't know |
| **Juniors** | | | | |
| Males | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 14 | 9 | 0 | 5 |
| Nonfarm | 23 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| Females | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 9 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Nonfarm | 22 | 7 | 2 | 13 |
| **Seniors** | | | | |
| Males | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Nonfarm | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Females | | | | |
| Rural-farm | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Nonfarm | 13 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Total | 93 | 36 | 15 | 42 |

$x^2$ RD = .9562 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 51
$x^2$ RD = .7468 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 27 (males)
$x^2$ RD = .0021 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 24 (females)
$x^2$ CD = .1062 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 51
$x^2$ SD = .0472 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 51
*Excluded from computations.

students), a plurality of students (42) do not know whether they would remain in or return to the county. Tests of significance show no significant relationship between the independent variables of high school class and sex and the dependent variable of remaining in the county. When the sample is divided according to residence, in this case the variable is not significantly associated with expectations of remaining in or returning to the county. Nor is residence significantly associated with the dependent variable for males or females.

## Occupational plans

One of the many decisions facing high school juniors and seniors is that of occupational choice. Although a decision reached at this point need not be considered a final one, all the students in the sample will make some decision within the next few months to a year. Decisions made at this point will, however, have the effect of determining the students' immediate plans for leaving or remaining in the county.

Although the largest group of students would choose white collar jobs in the county if they had their choice of any job, many were undecided about job preference. In order to gain insight into the occupational structure of the county as perceived by the student, we asked the hypothetical question: "If you were to remain in this county and had your choice of the jobs here, what job would you pick (regardless of training or experience required)?" Table 13 shows responses to this question by high school class and sex. The most striking feature about this table is the relatively large proportion of students in each category who do not know what job in the county they would choose. Junior males show the smallest proportion of "don't know" answers, though 11 of 37 give no substantive response to the question, while 22 of the 56 students in the other categories do not know. Also of note in this table are the relatively large propor-

TABLE 13.—*High school juniors' and seniors' choice of any job in the county by high school class and sex*

| High school class and sex | Total number | Choice of any job in the county | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | White collar | Farm operator | Skilled | Semi- and unskilled | Don't know No answer |
| **Juniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 37 | 17 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 11 |
| Females | 31 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 12 |
| **Seniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 10 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Females | 15 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Total | 93 | 42 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 33 |

TABLE 14.—*Preference of high school juniors and seniors for job any place by high school class and sex*

| High school class and sex | Total number | Preferred job any place: White collar | Farm operator | Skilled | Semi- and unskilled | Don't know No answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Juniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 37 | 19 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Females | 31 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| **Seniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 10 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Females | 15 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 93 | 57 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 12 |

tion of students who would choose white collar occupations and the small proportion of students who would choose skilled, semiskilled or unskilled jobs. These responses may be indicative of the perception of difference in the status of occupations rather than of the perception of job availability since it is unlikely that such large proportions of students would find white collar positions in such a rural county.

**More students have a job preference if their choices are not restricted to jobs available in the county.** Table 14 shows responses to the question: "If you could have any job you wanted, regardless of location or the amount of training or experience required, what job would you pick?" Compared to table 13, table 14 shows some differences in patterns of response. The proportions of "don't know" answers decrease while the proportion of white collar responses increase in each category. Proportions choosing skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled jobs increase with almost all of this change occurring among junior females. The proportion choosing farming drops among senior males. It appears possible that students view jobs in out-of-county terms because there is a wider range of job preferences out-of-county than in-county.

**More than half of the students are considering white collar jobs as lifetime work.** The third question on occupations which was asked: "What job are you now seriously considering as a lifetime work?" Responses to this question are found in table 15 by class rank and sex. Here again we find relatively large proportions of white collar aspirations—52 students: 29 males, 23 females. In all categories except junior girls over half the students aspire to white collar jobs. This table is characterized by fair representation of skilled, semiskilled and unskilled jobs. The category of "housewife" was not a possibility for girls which may have biased the results for this question since some might have chosen this as a job preference.

**Job choices of students are characterized by high aspirations in relation to the jobs held**

TABLE 15.—*Occupation considered for lifetime work of juniors and seniors by high school class and sex*

| High school class and sex | Total number | Occupation considered for lifetime work: White collar | Farm operator | Skilled | Semi- and unskilled | *Don't know No answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Juniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 37 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Females | 31 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| **Seniors** | | | | | | |
| Males | 10 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Females | 15 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 93 | 52 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 13 |

$x^2$ CD (with categories: skilled and semiskilled and unskilled combined = 1.577
df = 1
p > .05
n = 80
$x^2$ SD (white collar against all others) = .3173
df = 1
p > .05
n = 80
*Excluded from computations.

TABLE 16.—*Choice of lifetime job of juniors and seniors by sex of students and fathers' occupation*

| Fathers' occupation | Total number | Choice of lifetime job: White collar | Farm operator | Skilled | Semi- and unskilled | No answer Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Male students** | | | | | | |
| White collar | 11 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Farm operator | 16 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Skilled | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Semi and unskilled | 13 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| No answer | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total males | 47 | 29 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| **Female students** | | | | | | |
| White collar | 9 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Farm operator | 11 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Skilled | 11 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Semi and unskilled | 14 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| No answer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total females | 46 | 23 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 8 |
| Total both sexes | 93 | 52 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 13 |

by their fathers. Table 16 shows occupations students are considering for a lifetime job by their fathers' occupations. Nine males (but no females) chose farming as a lifetime occupation. All but one of the males choosing "farm operator" as their lifetime work had fathers who were farm operators.

With the exception of sons of farm operators (of whom 8 of 16 chose farming as an occupation) and daughters of semiskilled and unskilled workers (of whom 5 of 14 chose semiskilled and unskilled occupations), the majority of students in each classification chose white collar occupations as their lifetime work. This would indicate high aspiration level and the existence of aspirations for occupational mobility since most students aspire to occupations at the level of or higher on the status hierarchy than those occupied by their fathers.

Only four persons chose skilled occupations though 17 of the fathers are in skilled occupations. Semiskilled and unskilled occupations were chosen by 15 (two of the males, 13 of the females) though 27 of the fathers were engaged in such occupations. One possible explanation for the fact that so many female students chose semiskilled and unskilled jobs is that the category of "housewife" was not a possible answer for this question. It is likely that those girls who otherwise might have answered "housewife" because of expectations of or plans for marriage answered semiskilled and unskilled occupations because of lack of plans for further education. Thirteen persons in the sample had not chosen a lifetime job (five males and eight females).

In summary, it might be said that most students show relatively high aspirations in terms of occupations. These aspirations appear to be somewhat unrealistic in terms of the current makeup of the labor force where 43.2 percent of the population are in white collar jobs, 14.2 percent in skilled jobs, 38.6 percent in semiskilled and unskilled jobs, and 4.1 percent farmers and farm managers (1960 census data). These students, however, cannot be considered as representative of the labor force as it existed in 1960 since many of them will defer entry until after completion of further education and training. Perception of trends in the labor force, decline of semiskilled and unskilled jobs, will probably influence long-term choice. In order to check the realism of expectations, plans for further education of students will be examined.

## Plans for further education

With education beyond the high school level becoming increasingly important to the economy and increasingly a part of the aspirations of parents and their teenage children, it would be anticipated that a fairly large proportion of the sample would plan for such education. Tables

TABLE 17.—*Plans of high school juniors and seniors to attend schools beyond high school by place of residence*

| Place of residence | Total number | Plans for education beyond high school | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Do not plan to go | College or professional school | Trade school | To go—place not indicated | *Don't know |
| Farm | 28 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| Nonfarm | 65 | 10 | 26 | 11 | 7 | 11 |
| Total | 93 | 13 | 37 | 13 | 9 | 21 |

$x^2$ RD (type of school) = 0.6 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 50
*Excluded from computations.

17 and 18 show plans to attend school beyond high school by residence and sex, respectively.

While place of residence is not associated with further educational plans, the sex of the student is strongly associated with further educational plans. Table 17 (plans by residence) shows no significant relationship between place of residence and further educational plans. The proportion of farm students who intend to go to trade schools is smaller than that of nonfarm students, although the chi-square test shows this difference is not significant. About the same proportion of farm and nonfarm students expect to go to professional school or college and to trade schools. It should be noted that the proportion of farm students who have not made plans is more than twice that of nonfarm students.

Table 18 shows a significant relationship between sex and type of school plans (college or professional school and trade schools). This significant relationship is clearly seen since no male student expects to attend a trade school while 13 female students expect to attend such a school. A much larger proportion of male than female students expect to continue school

TABLE 18.—*Plans of high school juniors and seniors to attend schools beyond high school by sex*

| Sex | Total number | Plans for education beyond high school | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Do not plan to go | College or professional school | Trade schools | To go—place not indicated | *Don't know |
| Male | 47 | 3 | 30 | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| Female | 46 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 5 | 11 |
| Total | 93 | 13 | 37 | 13 | 9 | 21 |

*Excluded from computations.
$x^2$ SD (type of school—college or trade) = 28.7 df = 1 $p < .001$
n = 50

TABLE 19.—*Plans of high school juniors and seniors to attend schools beyond high school by fathers' education*

| Fathers' education | Total number | Plans for education beyond high school | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Will not attend | Will attend | Don't know |
| Under 7 years | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| 8 years | 25 | 4 | 14 | 7 |
| 1-3 years, high school | 14 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| High school graduate | 27 | 4 | 20 | 3 |
| College, 1-4 years | 10 | 0 | 7 | 3 |
| Other | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| No answer | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 93 | 13 | 59 | 21 |

$x^2$ Fathers' education (less than high school graduate; high school graduate; college) $\times D = 5.93$ $df = 2$ $p > .05$ $n = 80$

$x^2$ Fathers' education (high school graduate or less: college) $\times D = 0$ $df = 1$ $n = 80$

$x^2$ Fathers' education (less than high school; high school graduate and college) $\times D = 4.35$ $df = 1$ $p < .05$ $n = 80$

TABLE 20.—*Plans of high school juniors and seniors to attend schools beyond high school by mothers' education*

| Mothers' education | Total number | Plans for education beyond high school | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Will not attend | Will attend | Don't know |
| Under 7 years | 8 | 0 | 7 | 1 |
| 8 years | 20 | 3 | 12 | 5 |
| 1-3 years, high school | 8 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| High school graduate | 36 | 7 | 20 | 9 |
| College, 1-4 years | 14 | 1 | 12 | 1 |
| Other | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| No answer | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 93 | 13 | 59 | 21 |

$x^2$ Mothers' education (less than high school graduate; high school graduate; college) $\times D = 3.9007$ $df = 2$ $p > .05$ $n = 86$

$x^2$ Mothers' education (high school graduate or less: college) $\times D = 2.13$ $df = 1$ $p > .05$ $n = 86$

$x^2$ Mothers' education (less than high school graduate: high school graduate and college $\times D = .0506$ $df = 1$ $p > .05$ $n = 86$

while about the same number of females and males have not made definite plans.

Other empirical studies have shown that the education of parents will have an effect upon educational aspirations of children. Tables 19 and 20 show students' plans for further education by education of fathers and mothers respectively. With only one evception ("no answer" on mother's education), every category of mother's or father's education shows at least half of the students categorized planning to attend school beyond high school.

**While plans for further education vary by sex, with more males than females making plans, and by high school class, with more juniors than seniors making plans, the income of the students' families seems to have little relationship to further educational plans.** Table 21 shows plans for further education by class rank and sex. Tests of significance reveal a slight, but not significant, relationship between high school class rank and plans for education. However, it is interesting to note that proportionately more juniors than seniors plan to attend school after high school. "Don't know" responses were omitted from the tests of significance, but it was noted that more juniors than seniors are undecided about their plans.

When a test of significance was applied a relationship just under the .05 level was found between sex of student and plans for further education. This relationship is accounted for by the fact that more males than females expect to go on to school. Again, "don't know" and "no answer" responses were omitted from the calculations and it is interesting to note that proportionately more females than males are undecided about future plans. Most students who plan to go on to school plan to attend Colorado schools.

Table 22 indicates students' college plans by family income. Traditionally we have had dual

TABLE 21.—*College plans of high school juniors and seniors by class and sex*

| Class and sex | Total number | Plans for higher education | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Will not go | Will go | Will go Colorado | *Don't know No answer |
| **Juniors** | | | | | |
| Male | 37 | 2 | 25 | 18 | 10 |
| Female | 31 | 4 | 17 | 12 | 10 |
| **Seniors** | | | | | |
| Male | 10 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 0 |
| Females | 15 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Total | 93 | 13 | 59 | 45 | 21 |

$x^2$ CD = 1.98 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 72
$x^2$ SD = 3.80 df = 1 $p > .05$ n = 72
*Excluded from the computations.