

A Study of
**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**REPORT III. SOME PROBLEMS OF LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP:
CROSS-SECTIONAL MEMBERSHIP, AND MEMBER ACTIVITY.**



**SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER—INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

August, 1957

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About this report

This report deals with two separate problems of League membership: that of widening the base of League membership; and that of increasing the level of League activity.

The first section deals with the extent to which League membership is now representative of the community, the extent to which the League might expect to become more cross-sectional, and the nature of the problems the League might encounter in widening its membership base.

The second section deals with the reasons for inactivity in the League. It discusses the importance of time, husband's attitude toward organizations, motivation, and ability to work with other women.

The first section of the report is based on data from a representative sample of women aged 25-64 who live in the urban three-fifths of the United States--the part of the United States where there are local Leagues. Five hundred and nine women were interviewed in this phase of the survey.

The second section of the report is based on data from a representative sample of League members. Two hundred twenty-seven members were interviewed in this phase of the survey.

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Introduction

1. The report series

This is the third in a series of reports of data gathered in the study of voluntary organization conducted by the Human Relations Program, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, in cooperation with the League of Women Voters. This study is financed by a grant from the Schwartzhaupt Foundation.

The first report was titled The League Member Talks About the League¹ and presented tabulations of responses from interviews with two hundred twenty-seven League members, chosen to be representative of the League as a whole. It dealt with the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of League members with the organization, their activity in the organization, their understanding of League procedures, and their attitudes toward fund-raising.

The second report was titled Community Attitudes Toward the League and described the attitudes toward the League held by women in communities which have local Leagues. The report dealt with image of the League, image of the League member, and the factors that produce membership.

¹Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, October 1956.

2. The group involved in the study of the League of Women Voters includes:

From the League of Women Voters, the members of the project Steering Committee:

Mrs. John F. Latimer, Chairman
Mrs. George A. Dreyfous
Mrs. Walter Laves
Mrs. Bradford L. Patton
Mrs. George A. Wulp

From the Human Relations Program, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan:

Robert Kahn, Ph.D., Program Director
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This report was prepared by Dr. Weiss, Mrs. Slater, and Mrs. Goldhaber.

I. The Problem of Community Representativeness

One of the problems which has concerned very large unions is whether the leaders should act as being in direct contact with the rank and file. The rank and file are the main body of the union, and it is essential that the leaders should have a direct contact with them. The problem is complicated by the fact that the rank and file are not a homogeneous group, and the leaders must take account of the different interests of the different groups. The problem is also complicated by the fact that the rank and file are not always in agreement with the leaders, and the leaders must take account of the different views of the rank and file. The problem is also complicated by the fact that the rank and file are not always in agreement with the leaders, and the leaders must take account of the different views of the rank and file.

I. THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVENESS

What is the problem of community representativeness? It is the problem of how the leaders of a union can represent the rank and file in a way which is fair and just. The problem is complicated by the fact that the rank and file are not a homogeneous group, and the leaders must take account of the different interests of the different groups. The problem is also complicated by the fact that the rank and file are not always in agreement with the leaders, and the leaders must take account of the different views of the rank and file.

1. How representative is the union rank and file?
2. How representative is it possible for the union to be?
3. What are some of the problems which the union may expect to meet if it decides to become more representative?

I. The Problem of Community Representativeness

One of the problems which has concerned many League members is whether the League should aim at being an organization of women in the community who are in some sense an elite group, or whether it should have a more cross-sectional membership. The problem is highlighted by responses to the question we asked League members about whether they would suggest change in League membership. (Report I, page 42.) A small group of the members felt the League should increase in size, but keep the same kind of members it has now. On the other hand about twice as many would agree with the member of the New England group who felt that the League isn't cross-sectional enough: "...There aren't many people from low income groups in the League and I'd like to see them."

Can the League become more cross-sectional? What would the problems be in an attempt to widen the membership base of the League? In this part of this report we will try to answer these questions:

1. How cross-sectional is the League right now?
2. How cross-sectional is it possible for the League to become?
3. What are some of the problems which the League may expect to meet if it decides to become more cross-sectional?

1. How Cross Sectional Is the League Now?

Neighborhood

Sociologists, trying to understand someone's position in the community, frequently ask "What part of town do they live in? What sort of neighborhood?" We asked our interviewers (all women) to rate the neighborhoods of respondents. The interviewer checked whether she felt the respondent lived in a good, average or below average neighborhood. League members are for the most part women from neighborhoods checked good. (Chart number 1.)

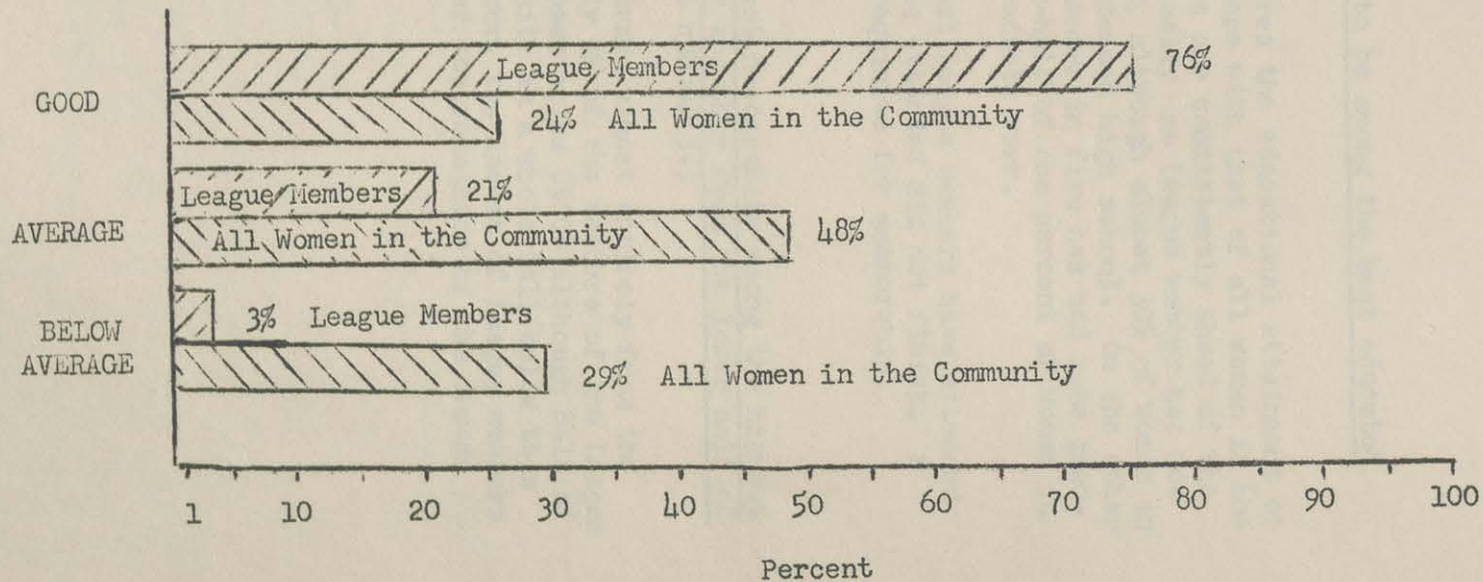
Most local Leagues draw their membership almost entirely from "good" neighborhoods. Some local Leagues have members from "average" neighborhoods, but there are practically no members living in "below average" neighborhoods. League members also tend to own their own homes, most of which have gardens, and to have lived in their present neighborhood for three years or more. This indicates a stability which is less frequently found in the community as a whole. It seems likely that this will continue to be the case, in the normal course of events, since League membership seems to spread within social or neighborhood groups. Most of the present League members heard about the League through personal contact with a League member, often a friend or neighbor. (Report II, p. 33)

CHART 1

INTERVIEWERS' RATINGS OF THE QUALITY OF RESPONDENTS' NEIGHBORHOODS

(Percent of League members and of women in the community as a whole, living in good, average, or poor neighborhoods.)

Interviewer
Rating of
Neighborhood



Education

League members tend to be among the best educated women in the community.

Chart number 2 compares the educational attainment of women who are League members with that of all women in the community. League members are consistently ahead of the community at large. Virtually no League member has not had some high school work, although almost 30% of women in the community have not attended high school. On the other hand, almost one League member in five has had some graduate work, while only one-half of one percent of women in the community have had graduate work.

However, although most League members have attended college, many of those who attended did not finish. A college degree is not a requisite for membership.

Income

League members are not necessarily among the highest income group, but neither are they from the lower half of the income scale. (Chart number 3.)

League members are drawn almost entirely from the upper income groups. Only 6% of the members of the League of Women Voters have incomes below \$5000 although half of the incomes of the community as a whole fall below this mark. Above \$5000, however, the income of League members is distributed evenly over the remainder of the income scale.

CHART 2

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LEAGUE MEMBERS
AND OF ALL WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY

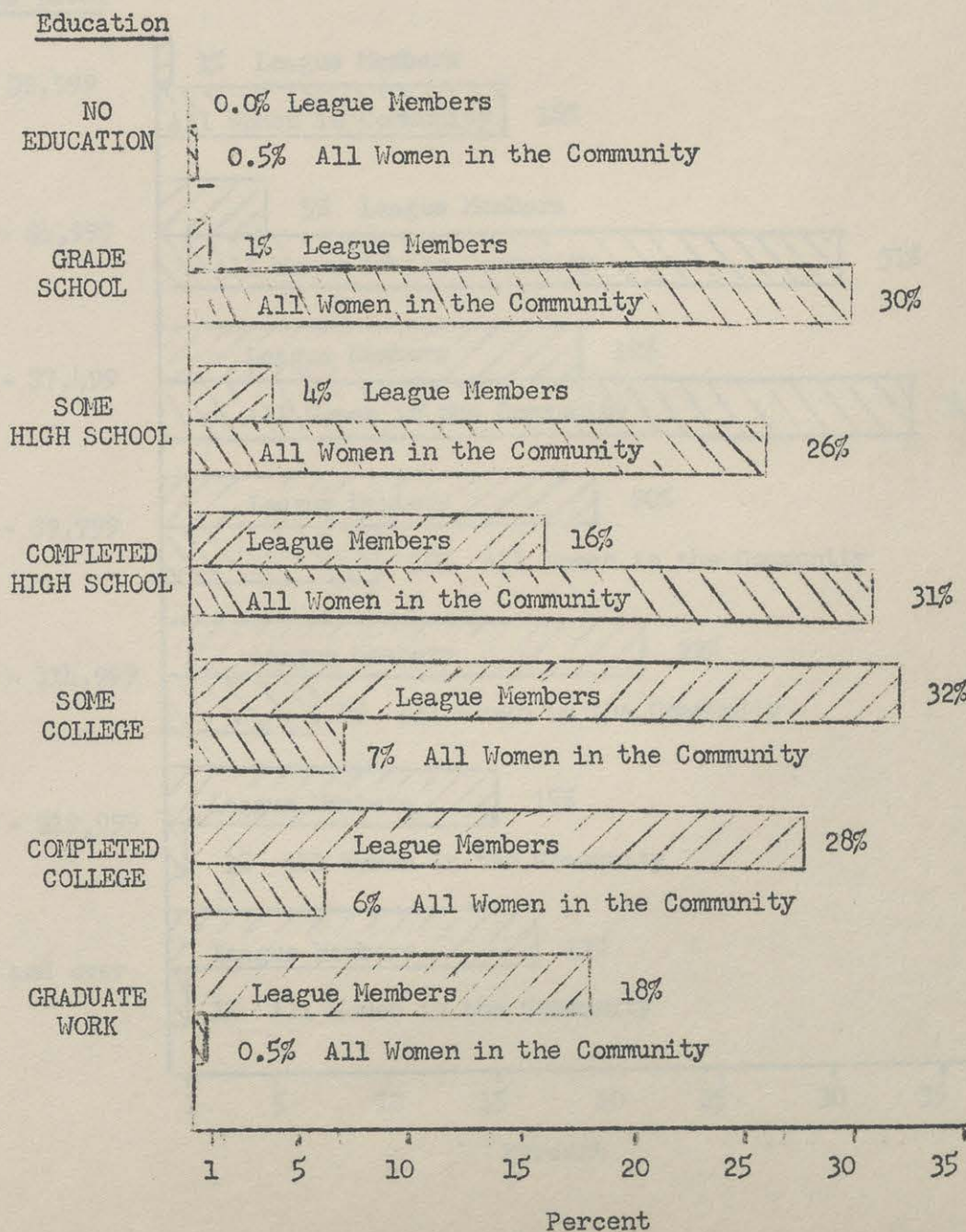
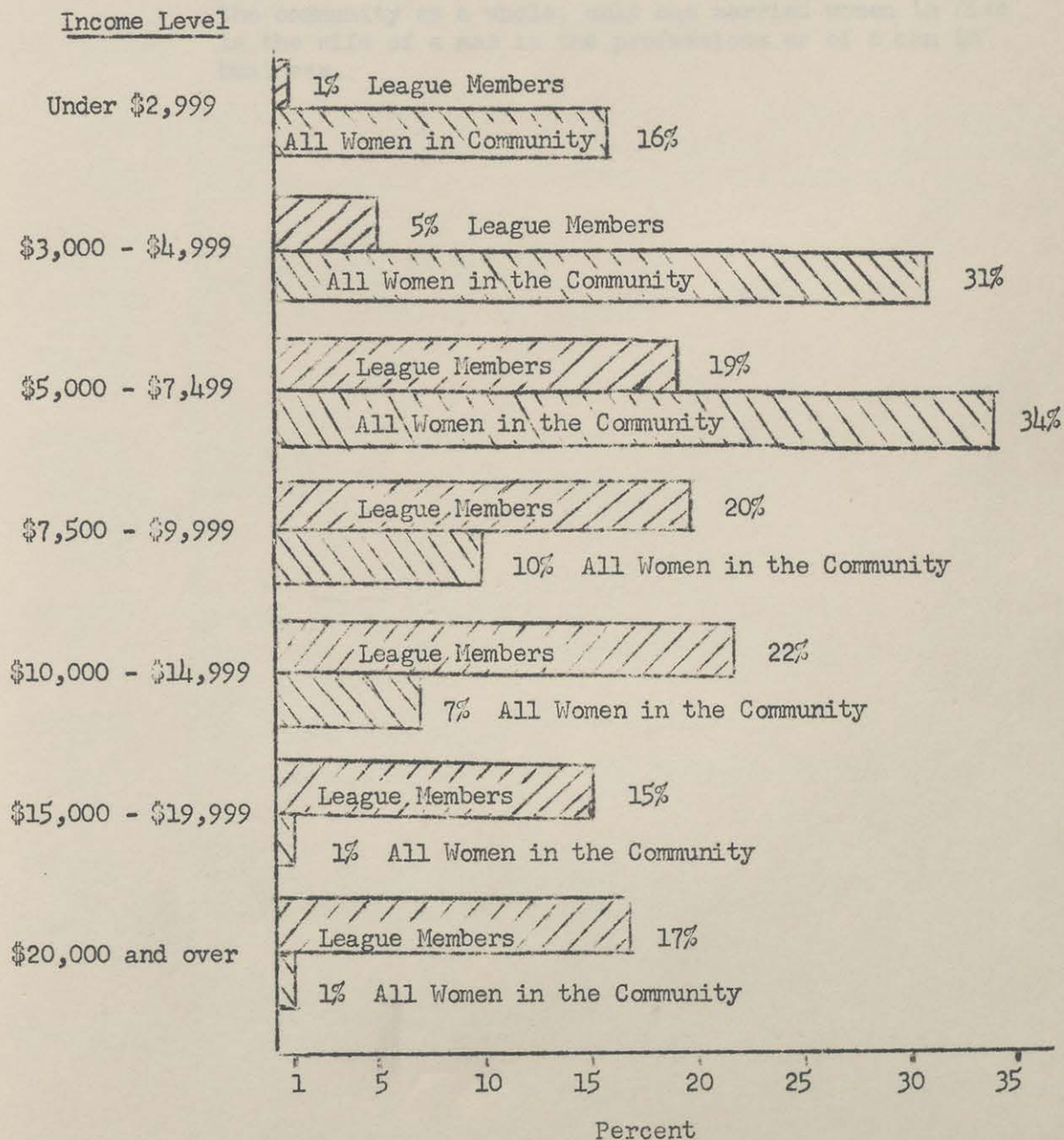


CHART 3

INCOME OF LEAGUE MEMBERS' FAMILIES COMPARED WITH
INCOME OF FAMILIES OF ALL WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY



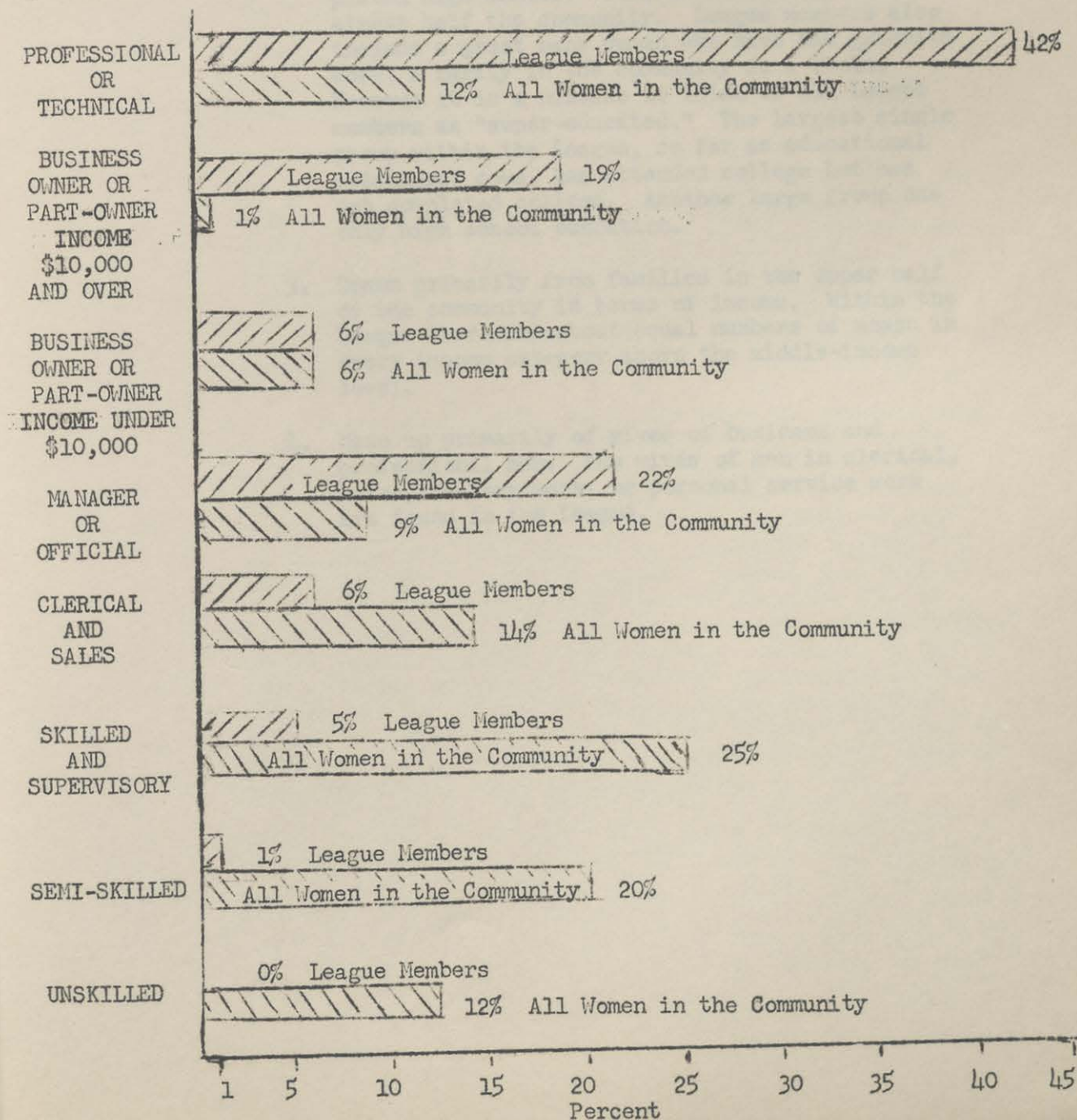
Husband's Occupation

The two occupational groups which contribute most to the League's membership are the professions and business. Almost three out of four League members are wives of men in professions or of businessmen. (Chart number 4) In the community as a whole, only one married women in five is the wife of a man in the professions or of a man in business.

CHART 4

OCCUPATION OF HUSBANDS OF LEAGUE MEMBERS COMPARED WITH
OCCUPATIONS OF HUSBANDS OF ALL WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY

Occupations



To summarize, it appears that the present membership of the League is characterized by being:

1. Drawn primarily from good neighborhoods. Almost no League members come from "below average" neighborhoods, although about a quarter of the community as a whole live there.
2. Drawn primarily from among women who have completed high school. This automatically excludes almost half the community. League members also include a great many women who have had graduate work, a rarity in the community as a whole. However it is a mistake to think of all League members as "super-educated." The largest single group within the League, so far as educational attainment goes, has attended college but has not completed college. Another large group has only high school education.
3. Drawn primarily from families in the upper half of the community in terms of income. Within the League there are about equal numbers of women in every income category above the middle-income level.
4. Made up primarily of wives of business and professional men. Few wives of men in clerical, sales, factory work, or personal service work are found in the League.

2. To what extent is it realistic for the League to think of becoming more representative?

Could women from segments of the community other than are now represented in the League be brought into the League? What might they be like? How might they be reached and brought into membership?

To answer these questions we searched our interviews of women who were not League members for women who (a) lived in what interviewers thought of as "average" or "below average" neighborhoods, (b) were married to men employed in something other than business or the professions, and (c) were "potential members" for the League.

What makes a "potential member", in our judgment? The second part of this report shows that activity in the League depends on interest in the organization or in its aims, plus what might be thought of as "ability for membership." By this latter phrase we mean the ability to work cooperatively with other women in getting things done. A "potential League member" would then be a woman who was interested in the League or its aims, and who showed evidence of having ability for membership.

We therefore looked first for women who were already active in organizations (thus demonstrating ability for membership), or who felt that organizational membership was a way in which a woman could make the world a better place (thus demonstrating interest in the League's aims), or who once had some interest in joining the League, even though she hadn't actually joined. We then read each interview carefully, judging from the kind of woman the respondent seemed to be whether she would indeed be interested in the League and make a good member. We looked to see if her interests were broad enough--and rejected on this basis a woman who was interested only in organizations which helped the blind. We checked on her continued interest in activities outside her home--and rejected on this basis one woman who hadn't voted in twenty years.

We found about twenty women who seemed possible League members. These women tended to be wives of skilled workers and foremen, rather than wives of semi-skilled workers or unskilled workers. Their income level was higher than the average blue-collar income. Their educational level was also higher than average, closer to League levels. A League effort to make its membership more representative of the community is most likely to attract those women from other segments of the community who are most like the present League membership.

Making the League more cross-sectional would not be equivalent to bringing a random sample of the community into the League. The women attracted to the League would be among the best educated, and most favored socio-economically, in their segment of the community.

These twenty or so women include all women we thought likely to be interested in the League. We went further and tried to select those women we thought probably would respond to a membership campaign which reached them. This narrowed the group down to eight women, from our original sample of five hundred nine. Eight women in five hundred nine represents a small percentage of women in the community, but even so, it represents a larger group than the present membership of the League. So, while we cannot say just how many women from this different segment of the community might join the League if there were concerted League effort, we can say that it would very likely be a good many.

We think descriptions of a few of these women would be valuable. These descriptions will indicate why we think of them as potential members and may also suggest some of the problems both the local League and the women themselves would have to overcome before they could actively contribute to the League.

Mrs. A. lives in a below average section of a medium-sized Middle-Western city. She is 35, the mother of five children ranging in age from 2 years to 8 years, and is expecting a sixth in a few months. Her husband is employed as a mechanic. Both she and her husband are

active in community affairs. Her husband is president of his local union and an active member of political and religious (Catholic) organizations. Mrs. A. contributes two to three hours a week to her Den Mothers group and also is active in a church organization.

Mrs. A. comes from a family which was active in the community, and has been herself active in organizations since high school. In high school she was elected a class officer. After high school she took a secretarial course, and did secretarial work for the union for several years before her marriage. Since leaving work she has occasionally made out income tax forms as a way of earning extra money.

The interviewer describes her home as terribly run down, with little furniture, and what furniture there is "could well be used for kindling wood." At the same time the interviewer describes Mrs. A. as a "lovely person." Obviously the A's spend their income (between \$6500 and \$7500) on their large family.

Mrs. A. expressed interest in the League of Women Voters, saying that she had heard of it and thought of joining. She added that she had been interested in politics for some time. Before her marriage she had considered running for a minor office on the Democratic ticket. She hadn't joined the League, she said, because she was too busy with her family.

Mrs. A. might be a good representative of another segment of the community than that now represented in the League. Her husband is a leader in union affairs. She herself has energy, and competence. Right now she has a problem of time (although she does find time for Den Mothers and work on income tax forms). But her family will grow up in a few years, and she will have more freedom. Will she join the League then? We may suspect

these problems will arise: (1) she knows no League members; (2) her home and her neighborhood are not up to the standards of the average League member, and if meetings are held in homes she might be forced to make the comparison; and (3) she may have some problem with money.

Mrs. B. is 33, married to a city employee. They have lived for eight years in a home they bought in a middle-range residential area adjacent to a large Midwest city. At the time of the interview Mrs. B. was concerned with the health of her third child, now a year old. She is Rh negative, and the third child was "quite a risk."

Mrs. B. comes from a home where her mother both worked and was extremely active in organizations. Her mother was a secretary and belonged to social clubs, travel-study clubs, and literary clubs. Her father approved her mother's activity. She herself took part in many activities in high school, including speech groups and sports, and served on many committees. She married just after leaving high school. She had started work as a beautician just before her marriage and continued work as a beauty operator, occasionally selling cosmetics as well, until her last pregnancy. She describes herself this way: "I'm an average housewife--plump and contented--I'm so curious about things--why it happened, and what can be done to correct it. I always want to get at the bottom of things that happen, not just special things, but everything!" Right now Mrs. B. is a member of three organizations, a church group, union group, and girl scout group, where she is quite active, though not a leader.

Mrs. B expressed interest in the League, saying that "my doctor has told me I should join because he knows how interested I am in world affairs." She hasn't joined because "With a young baby who has been sick, I haven't the time to give to it. It would be too expensive to have a baby-sitter all the time." (Mrs. B's husband earns between \$5000 and \$6000 a year.)

It seems apparent (and is more so from other parts of Mrs. B's interview) that Mrs. B would not take the active role in the League that Mrs. A. would. She is less of an active "doer," and more of a "consumer," someone who receives information. Still, she might be interested in the program of the League.

The problems in the way of her joining are the same as the problems which faced Mrs. A.: time, money, lack of acquaintance with League members, and possible difficulty in "fitting in" in the group.

Mrs. C. is 35, Negro, born and educated in the South. She and her husband, a spray painter, moved West twelve years ago and three years ago bought their present home in an average quality residential area adjacent to a West Coast metropolis. Mr. C. earns between \$5000 and \$6000 and Mrs. C. occasionally supplements this income from the sale of Seventh Day Adventist Story Books.

Mrs. C.'s mother, a strong-minded woman, was herself a Baptist, but felt that her children would get a better education in a Catholic parochial school, and so had them raised as Catholics. Mrs. C. has repeated this pattern with her own children. Though she considered herself a Catholic until a few years ago, she became a Seventh Day Adventist (like her husband) because she felt the education her children would receive in the Adventist school would be preferable to education in the public schools. She is now on the Adventist School Board, has served in a number of offices in the P.T.A., and has been asked by the Principal of the school to form an alumni group.

Mrs. C. has always been an active person. In high school she was president of her choral group and captain of her basketball team. Before her marriage she worked as a playground director. Now, besides her responsibilities at home and her many organizational activities (in addition to the School Board duties, she is President of a literary club and member of other groups,) Mrs. C. finds time to take college courses in a nearby Junior College.

Mrs. C. had not heard of the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. C., like Mrs. A., might effectively represent a segment of the community which is perhaps at present absent from the League. Like Mrs. A., she has energy and competence.

What are the problems associated with her entrance into the League? In addition to those faced by Mrs. A., there is the problem that Mrs. C. has not heard of the League and is unlikely to hear about it, unless the League contacts women's clubs in her community. And there is a further problem: Mrs. C. is, in some aspects of background and belief, different from the typical League member. There is the possibility that integration of Mrs. C. into a local League might require an adaptability on the part of both the local League and Mrs. C. beyond that ordinarily required.

Mrs. D. is 54, has two children who are now both married and living away from home, is very active in local community affairs and in local Democratic politics. Her husband earns an adequate income (between \$5000 and \$6000) as a service manager in a nearby airfield and they own their own home in the small town in which they live. The town, about ten miles from a middle-sized city, is not a very wealthy one and the interviewer described the neighborhood as below average.

Mrs. D. comes from a family that has always been interested in community affairs. Her mother was fairly active, but of her father she says, "Masons was his big interest in life." In high school Mrs. D. was a member of a great many groups and was elected president of the senior class. For a few years after high school she taught music, worked in a department store, and worked as a secretary. She quit work with her marriage.

Mrs. D. is strongly committed to helping others through membership in organizations designed to accomplish this. Of the many organizations to which she belongs she thinks she values most highly the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. She was chairman of the Mothers' March in _____. She also feels that good government grows naturally from the quality of the home. "What I've always said, our government is based right in the home, and then the precinct. As the precinct goes, so goes the county and the state, and the nation. (The home) is just a unit and a very important unit."

Mrs. D. is quite familiar with the League of Women Voters. A couple of League members spoke to one of the groups of which she is a member.

She has mixed feelings about the League: "I think it's a little pro-Republican, I think. In this city at least it's a little pro-Republican." (What's its purpose?) "It's supposed to be for better government and for education of how to vote. For education. We need more women in a group of that kind. I don't think they're trying to get new members. The one or two who came out here were a bit too arrogant."

Mrs. D. has much the League would value: time, competence, energy, involvement in good government, interest in her community. Her commitment to the Democratic Party could be a bar to active leadership. Another bar, perhaps more important, is the feeling expressed behind "I don't think they're trying to get new members...the one or two who came out here were a bit too arrogant."

Thus there are women from segments not now represented in the League, who could be League members. Some of them are leaders in their neighborhood or community, and could be highly active members of the League. Some of them would be average members, contributing their share, but rarely taking the lead.

These women from other segments of the community have common problems in relation to League membership. The problems are greater in the case of some (as Mrs. C., for example), less in the case of the others (Mrs. B., for example). The most difficult problems are those of money, and fitting in to the local League.

The problem of money. The League can be expensive to the woman on a severely limited budget. League dues are low, but lunches and baby sitters can mount up, and even a sizable annual income for a family with several children may not have the necessary margin. One League member, now inactive, says:

It(League membership) is expensive. The social aspects are not to my liking because they are too expensive. The luncheons are \$2.50 and that is too much to pay.

But the occasional lunches, and slightly increased phone bills in areas where there is a per-call charge, are not the most serious problems. More serious is the fact that the League member's expenses increase the more active she becomes in the League. The League secretary may find herself buying her own stamps and stationery. The League delegate to the National convention may be expected to use some of her own money

on the trip. The cost of suitable clothes may well become a major expense.

Before expanding its membership base, a local League would have to give explicit consideration to the financial demands it makes on its members. The accommodations to a cross-sectional membership might represent a real departure from present local League practice: as giving up social luncheons and increasing budgets so that officers and delegates would not have to bear any part of their own expenses.

Fitting in. Let us assume that a local League made the decision to include in its membership a wider cross-sectional representation. Many of the women who would be brought into the League from segments of the community not now represented would be women who could command the respect of the average League member simply by their energy and ability. They would be the most active, most effective, best educated, and most successful representatives of the non-college, less financially comfortable segment of the community. But they would be different. They would have to adjust to the League organization, and the League would have to make adjustments to them.

If, after the League meeting, members enjoy talking with each other about the schools their children are attending, other organizations to which they may belong, or plans for social get-togethers, the new member from a different segment of the community would be left out. Only a little of this experience might convince her that she was different from the others, and not really a part of the local League. She might well drift away, as did so many "blue collar" members of civic groups established during and immediately after the War.

The integration of women from other segments of the community might be especially difficult in those Leagues whose members have joined largely to make friends, where the social aspects of the meetings are important, and where meetings tend to be held in member's homes.

A League in a small town which is not a suburb of a larger city might be most acutely aware of this problem in trying to absorb the 'different' member. In the large metropolitan areas the problem of integration of the 'different' member is reduced because the membership there is more heterogenous and friendship ties have already been watered down.

Whatever the size of the League or the kind of community in which it is located, the nature of the League will tend to change if 'different' members are brought in. The difference in educational background might pose problems of group discussion. The character of the program and method of its presentation might have to be modified.

To Summarize:

1. The League membership at present represents only certain sections of the community.
2. It is possible that a large number, although a small percentage, of the women in other segments of the community could be interested in the League if certain conditions could be met. These conditions include:
 1. Decrease in the importance of friendship ties.
 2. Decrease in the amount of financial outlay required by active participation in the League program.

The possibility should be recognized that some changes in present League program and procedures might also be necessary.

II. Activity in the League

Just as there is concern among League members as to whether the League could be, and ought to be, more cross-sectional, there is also concern about the distribution of activity within the League. Many members feel that too few of them carry too much responsibility, and wonder how participation in the League might be spread more evenly.

One member, very active until a few months before the study, puts it this way:

"...You can always get joiners, but you can't always get joiners to work. If you do get active, you are piled high with work. (We) need more membership participation."

Another member would have the League try increasing the level of activity among present members before attempting the recruitment of new members:

"I'd like to see more women working; more members encouraged to become active. We have loads of members now, but most of them are dead weight. Before we try to grow I'd like to see our present members brought into closer contact."

Of course, there are other points of view, too. An active member of an Eastern League says:

"The way it's set up now, the League only wants members who are active. We're not self-supporting and I would just as soon have 25% more new inactive members to help support us."

But even though the inactive members may be seen as contributing (through dues or in other ways), there seems little question that it would be desirable to learn more about why some members are less active than others, and what might be done to help more members become active. In this section we will try to answer these two questions:

1. Why are some women active in the League and others less active?
2. How might the League help presently inactive members become more active?

Factors Relating to Activity in the League

In our sample of League members we interviewed 27 women who may be called relatively inactive (at least some time devoted to League activities, but less than one hour a week), 71 who may be called moderately active (at least an hour a week, but less than three hours), and 38 who may be called active (three or more hours a week). In trying to understand why some members are among the active, and others among the relatively inactive, we shall examine factors of time, of husband's attitude, of personality, and of interest.*

Time "Not enough time" is a reason sometimes given for inactivity. When asked "When other members become less active or drop out of the League, what do you think is likely to be the cause?" over half the members guessed among other things, "Not enough time." The most frequent reason given for not having time was "Family responsibilities, home affairs, or young children." (Report I, page 20)

*For further descriptive material regarding activity in the League, see Report I, pages 1-27.



memo from mini

July 22, 1964

Dear Membership Chairman:

"The League of Women Voters? I've always wanted to join, but I just didn't know how." Or, "I ought to get interested in politics, but I'm not smart enough." Sound familiar? Do you get frantic calls on election day from friends who implore you -- fruitlessly -- to tell them how to vote? Do you find yourself on the gentlemen's side of the room after dinner discussing the zoning commission, the proposed bond issue or what the school board is doing? Lady, your interest in the League is showing. Why not share the wealth -- the knowledge, interest, excitement that your League membership has brought.

All over this great state there are women who would like to take part in the decisions their government makes. You and I know that one of the best ways to begin is to join the League of Women Voters. Shall we ask them?

How to start? First you will want to sit down over a friendly cup of coffee with your Membership Committee--enthusiastic League members who will help you reach others interested in joining. With the committee, plan your goals for the year to come. Experienced chairmen suggest a calendar. What are your aims? An interested membership, participating in League study and decisions? An active membership, involved in encouraging citizen participation in government? A knowledgeable membership, sparked by home-grown League "experts"? A growing membership and a dynamic League? Put these aims on paper, now. Then begin to work toward them.

How to go about it? Sharpen your League tools! What are they? As you probably know, League tools are the "how-to-do-the-job" publications available from the State and National Leagues. THE LOCAL LEAGUE HANDBOOK is basic. You'll want to add HOW TO GET AND KEEP MEMBERS -- where to find members; how to organize a committee for maximum effectiveness. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS pamphlets are quite helpful, too. All these are listed in the National Publications Catalog. The Texas League has a "Membership Swap-Shop" of tested membership ideas. If you don't already have these in your notebook, ask your Publications Chairman to order them for you today. When you and your committee are familiar with these tools, you'll want to complete your plans.

Compile a list of membership prospects. The Board will help. Add names from your local paper's columns. Put together a list of "Women-doers" in your community-- those interested in organization work or in government. What about contributors' wives? People active in the parties? Don't overlook the names of business, and professional women. Many of them would be interested in a night unit. So would many young mothers. Have you considered this with your Unit Organization Chairman?

Now that you have a list of potential members, how are you going to acquaint them with the League? Maybe you'll begin with one or more small, informal "Let's Talk League" coffees in August. Pick up a frozen coffee-cake at the store, plug in the pot and dust off the tops of the furniture. Then ask five or six prospects and a few Board members to join you. You'll find the Orientation Outline in HOW TO GET AND KEEP MEMBERS helpful as you explain what the League is-- and what it does. A word of caution--don't try to teach them everything about the League in one two-hour session. Rather, pique their curiosity, then provide them with some follow-up material to take home--FACTS, perhaps. If they don't decide to join then and there, call them before the next unit meeting. Maybe they'd like a ride. Bet they'll join you!

Or, why not a grown-up BIRTHDAY PARTY? This August marks the 44th anniversary of woman suffrage. Invite some non-League friends over to have dessert and discussion. Refreshments? Cake-mix cake, topped with 44 candles all aglow. What could be easier or more effective? And, we'll bet your president would be willing to use "FORTY YEARS OF A GREAT IDEA" as an introduction to the League story. You know, we're the spiritual heirs of the suffrage movement. Show the people in your town how we've changed!

Many of you plan a full-scale membership affair in the fall. This year you'll have all the excitement of Women Voters Week to plan around. So plan to use the kit prepared for WVW by the National League. If you haven't received a copy, ask your president to share hers.

As you polish your membership techniques and put your best League foot forward, remember to strive for the warm, personal approach to new membership. The nice, simple, polite ways of asking people to join you--the personal call, the visit to a newcomer, the hand-written note--are, and will continue to be, the most successful.

If you haven't yet used the recruitment flyers that the National League has made available, try them! They are effective and attractive.

REMEMBER that NEW MEMBERS thoughtfully involved in your League's program are the way you get NEW LIFE FOR TIRED LEAGUE BLOOD!

Sincerely,

Mimi Freedman

Mimi Freedman
Membership Director

P.S. - A special hello to Frances Hills, Denton; Edye Ebright, Tyler; Janell Truly, Wichita Falls--hardworking membership chairmen all. And congratulations to Ann Bowling, Abilene a brand-new membership chairman with a plan for growth ahead. I'm looking forward to meeting more of you in the months ahead.

Our data indicate that the competition of other activities can indeed be a barrier to active membership, but its importance tends to be overestimated. The phrase "Not enough time" may sometimes mean that there are other things which the member must do; it tends also to mean that there are other things which a member prefers to do. A member who pleads insufficient time for activity in the League because of her activity in another organization is in reality expressing a preference for the other organization. Even when a member has family responsibilities to which she must attend, she can frequently arrange her life to allow continued activity in the League, if the League is important enough to her.

The League member with small, pre-school, children probably is the member who most has her hands full with other activities. To what extent do pre-school children cause her to cut down on her League activity? Chart number 5 shows that of women who do not have pre-school children, 30% are active League members; of women who do have pre-school children, 20% are active League members. Assuming all else held constant, having a small child will reduce the activity level of one in three active members. This is an appreciable group. But twice as large is the group of women who have pre-school children and remain active members.

If responsibility for pre-school children is not an insurmountable barrier to activity, neither are other competing activities such as other organization memberships or wanting to fix up a new home. More important than competing activity is the member's interest in the League itself.

CHART 5

AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD AND ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

YOUNGEST
CHILD
5 OR
YOUNGER

27%	53%	20%
RELATIVELY INACTIVE	MODERATELY ACTIVE	ACTIVE

N = 30

YOUNGEST
CHILD OLDER
THAN 5; OR
NO CHILDREN

18%	52%	30%
RELATIVELY INACTIVE	MODERATELY ACTIVE	ACTIVE

N = 106

26

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one
hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

Husband's attitude Most women may be able to find time for League activity if they really want to, but they may well need the cooperation of their husband. Even if they don't need his active cooperation in the form of occasional baby-minding, they need his approval and understanding. A husband who growls when the phone rings on League business makes activity difficult; a husband who sympathizes with his wife's League interest makes activity simpler.

One indication of the importance of the husband's attitude is that it is much easier for a woman to be active in the League if her husband is himself interested in organizations. Compared with wives of men inactive in organizations, about twice the proportion of wives of active men are themselves active (Chart number 6). A husband who understands the importance of organization work, even if he is busier than another husband, makes it easier for the wife to take part in organizations herself.

The woman herself A husband sympathetic to organizational membership and at least a minimum of freedom from competing activities probably describe the most important situational requirements for activity in the League. What of the woman herself?

Women who are highly active in the League tend to be women who are active in general, sure of themselves in social situations, and, in addition, interested in the world outside their homes. Some inactive members are also active women who, however, prefer to direct their energies in other directions. They get more gratification from a social club, or are more interested in church work. Other inactive women are shy, less active in general, and less interested in community affairs.

CHART 6

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS HUSBAND BELONGS TO AND WIFE'S ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

HUSBAND
BELONGS TO
0 OR 1
ORGANIZATIONS

28% RELATIVELY INACTIVE	49% MODERATELY ACTIVE	23% ACTIVE
-------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 39

HUSBAND
BELONGS TO
2
ORGANIZATIONS

12% RELA- TIVELY IN ACTIVE	65% MODERATELY ACTIVE	23% ACTIVE
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 26

HUSBAND
BELONGS TO
3 OR MORE
ORGANIZATIONS

16% RELATIVELY INACTIVE	41% MODERATELY ACTIVE	43% ACTIVE
-------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 51

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

Following are sections of three interviews; one with an active member, one with an inactive member who is like most active members in personality, and one with an inactive member who is different in some aspects of her personality from most active members.

An active member of a Metropolitan League.

Mrs. M. is 37, married to an engineer, the mother of three school-age children. She lives in a neighborhood the interviewer rated as "average," in a large metropolitan area.

Mrs. M. has been active in organizations all her life. She was in a great many clubs and organizations in both high school and college, often serving as president of the group. After receiving her B.A. she worked as a paid staff member of a voluntary organization (not the League) for a year or two. She liked work and has been thinking of returning. "While I make the same old beds every day, I think of doing something...because I want to be able to point at something I did in the world." She doesn't want to be a "career woman," but she thinks she would like a career in a field where she would meet people.

Mrs. M. joined the League several years ago. She says "An election was coming up, and I didn't know who to vote for. I felt downright stupid, so I looked in the paper, and found a League meeting and joined it then." She is a member of a number of League committees, and has joined two other organizations because of her League membership. She averages about ten hours a week on League work. She says "The League keeps me on my toes, educationally, and politically. It gives me an outlet to work constructively, without social obligations which I would find binding on my time. It seems to meet just often enough to keep me interested and not too often so I can't get my work done here (at home). I've made some wonderful friendships, learned a lot, and enjoy it...."

In describing herself Mrs. M. emphasizes her high level of activity. Her self-description contains some deprecatory elements, but a basically positive core: "I'm inclined to race my motor. I take things too hard. I get all wound up in the minutia, and want to do it all myself, and get frustrated when I can't accomplish what I want to. I don't think of this all myself, my husband tells me this, so now I'm going to form a committee to take on some of the work I do. I'm an organizer almost to the point of it being hard to stand."

A member inactive because of other interests.

Mrs. N. is 35, married to an engineer. She does not have children. She and her husband live in a suburban area, in a neighborhood the interviewer considered "good." Mrs. N. attended college, where she studied painting, and also secretarial school. She did not graduate from either. While in school she belonged to many organizations, most of them related to art or dramatics. She was never an officer in any group.

She joined the League about a year ago. "A friend took me to a tea and talked to me about the League. She had been president for two years. She is most enthusiastic. I was impressed by her knowledge. I thought this has a lot to offer in way of education. I said I'd join, but be inactive, but not inactive in learning and supporting and receiving literature--so I am very enthusiastic about the League, you see."

Actually, Mrs. N.'s greatest interest is in art. She is a member of a number of groups reflecting this interest, and is chairman of a local Art Group. This interest takes most of her time: "I have not time for anything more right now. I need at least an hour each day completely to myself in order to keep my feet on the ground."

At the same time, Mrs. N. hopes she will be able to devote more time to the League in the coming year, and says that the League is the organization she values most highly. "The League is completely non-social. No use anyone using it as a stepping stone to get along socially...it is not that type. I believe in its aims. You want to work with the type of girls who are in it. There is no thought of color or creed. ...All in all it is a fine organization."

Mrs. N.'s description of herself emphasized her interest in personal growth and achievement: (How would you describe yourself?) "I feel that I have just started to grow. I have a lot to learn, a lot to do....Every day is a new challenge to me. The days are not long enough to even scratch the surface. ...I find life very interesting."

The pattern of Mrs. N.'s interests has always been in the direction of personal accomplishments without reference to community contributions. The League, though she respects it as an organization, does not, at present, offer her opportunity for achievement of the kind she values.

An inactive member, who does not have strong
competing interests

Mrs. O. is 35, married, mother of three children, all of school age. Her husband teaches shop in a local High School. They live in a neighborhood considered by the interviewer to be "average," in a middle-sized Eastern city.

Mrs. O. is a college graduate. She was a member of no organizations in college or in high school. She taught school for a few years after college, until her marriage. Since then she has stayed home, but hopes to return to work some day.

Mrs. O. heard of the League a year ago, from one of her neighbors. She attends most meetings, although she is not completely happy with any of them. She says, about the unit meetings, "Well, ...one or two members try to monopolize the time, and this is very distracting." About the fact-finding meeting she attended, she says "This was a complete waste of time. She spoke so fast we couldn't take notes. She should have mimeographed the notes and we could have asked questions." Altogether, Mrs. O. estimates League activities require about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour a week. She belongs to no other organizations.

Mrs. O. describes herself as "A housewife --I'm contented, very contented. I'm happy with what I'm doing." Many of her responses to the interview questions suggest an essentially shy person. For example, when she was asked "Suppose a woman had just moved (into this neighborhood) and wanted to make friends. What should she do?", Mrs. O. responded: "If she doesn't have children, nothing. It's usually through the children you meet the neighbors." Mrs. O. emphasized children again when asked whether there was anything the average woman could do to make the world a better place to live in: "If she brings up her children to know right from wrong, there will be less crime and corruption in the world."

It is as though Mrs. O. feels herself effective primarily in relation to children. One suspects that her feeling that League meetings are monopolized by one or two women reflects in part her own difficulty in speaking before a group, and her associated feeling of ineffectiveness.

These case histories point up what seem to be the personal requirements for activity in the League; what the active members are like, as people. The active members are first of all interested in the League Program. Second, they are able to work with other women.

Interest in the League Program A member may be interested in the League Program because it is a way of working toward better government, or she may be interested in the League Program because by working on it, she can join with other women in an interesting and educational activity. Probably most members feel the League Program offers both these bases for interest: as means toward the achievement of better government; and as an interesting, informative end in itself.

Our data indicate that activity in the League is related to either an interest in taking part in social and service activities or a belief that one may contribute to making the world a better place through organized action. Either one of these ways of looking at League activity--as end in itself, or as means to a further end--would make it likely that a member will be quite active.

One of the questions we asked was "Now, about things in life that are important to men and the things that are important to women--what are the really important things in life to women?" Most members gave two or three responses, most often mentioning family, marriage, children, or home. About one-fourth the membership mentioned, in addition, goals outside the home, including having friends, social activities, and (more rarely) work of service to the community. For these women the League Program can serve as an end in itself, since it provides all these things. Only about one in ten of the group who value goals outside the home are relatively inactive in the League; twice this proportion (two-tenths) of those who see only home-centered goals as of importance to women are inactive in the League.(Chart number 7.)

CHART 7

GOALS SEEN AS OF IMPORTANCE TO WOMEN, AS RELATED TO LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

"Now, about the things in life that are important to men and the things that are important to women, --what are the really important things in life to women?"

RESPONDENT MENTIONS RELATIONSHIP OR SERVICE OUTSIDE THE HOME	11% RELA- TIVELY INAC- TIVE	48% MODERATELY ACTIVE	41% ACTIVE	N = 27
RESPONDENT MENTIONS ONLY HOME-RELATED GOALS	22% RELATIVELY INACTIVE	54% MODERATELY ACTIVE	24% ACTIVE	N = 108

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

We also asked League members "What can the average woman do to make the world a better place?" Somewhat fewer than half the members suggested participation in activities outside the home as a way of making the world a better place. For these women, the League Program can be a means to personal action. (Other members tended to emphasize the woman's role in raising her children as a way she could make the world a better place.)

Members who are likely to see League activity as a means to effective action are also more likely than other members to be among the most active League members. They are less likely than other members to be relatively inactive. (Chart number 8.) Seeing the League as an action organization is as effective in motivating a woman for activity as is seeing the League as a place where one may meet with other women for an essentially social (though also service-oriented) activity. One of these interests is necessary: either will do.

Being able to work with other women Interest in the League, in itself, is not enough to insure that a member will be active. Some inactive members--Mrs. O. for example--are interested in the League's Program and are not prevented from more active membership by competing demands on their time. Their diffidence in relation to other women is the barrier which prevents them from being more active.

The ability to work well with other women is made up of a number of things. Two of the most important are seeing oneself as a person of value, and security in relation to others. Both these elements are aspects of self-confidence.

The importance of positive feeling toward oneself for activity in the League is indicated by Chart number 9. Of the women whose responses to the question "How would you describe yourself" were entirely positive, twice as many are active as are inactive. Of the women who made some positive comments and some negative comments about themselves the same number are active in the League as are inactive. But of the women who describe themselves in flat, colorless terms--"I'm an average housewife," for example--three times as many are inactive, as are active. Seeing oneself as a person of value is highly associated with activity. Recognizing faults in oneself, along with good points, is compatible with activity. But seeing

CHART 8

BELIEFS REGARDING WHAT THE AVERAGE WOMAN CAN DO TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE,
AS RELATED TO LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

"What can the average woman do to make the world a better place?"

SUGGEST
PARTICIPATION
IN ACTIVITIES
OUTSIDE THE
HOME

12% RELA- TIVELY INACTIVE	52% MODERATELY ACTIVE	36% ACTIVE
------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 58

DO NOT
SUGGEST
PARTICIPATION
IN ACTIVITIES
OUTSIDE THE
HOME

25% RELATIVELY INACTIVE	53% MODERATELY ACTIVE	22% ACTIVE
-------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 78

36

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

CHART 9

IMAGE OF SELF, AS RELATED TO LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

"How would you describe yourself?"

ENTIRELY POSITIVE MIXED: SOME POSITIVE; SOME NEGATIVE FLAT; NO EMOTION USED IN DESCRIBING SELF; COLORLESS	15%	51%	34%	N = 65
	RELA- TIVELY INACTIVE	MODERATELY ACTIVE	ACTIVE	
	19%	59%	22%	N = 47
	RELATIVELY INACTIVE	MODERATELY ACTIVE	ACTIVE	
	43%	43%	14%	N = 14
	RELATIVELY INACTIVE	MODERATELY ACTIVE	ACTIVE	

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

oneself only in terms of a role ("I'm a housewife") or as indistinguishable from others ("I'm just an average person,") or in terms of one's personal appearance ("I'm sort of plump") are all incompatible with activity. Women who describe themselves in these ways do not have the sharply defined and positively valued images of themselves important for interaction with others.

Security in relation to others To test the importance of security in relation to others for activity in the League, we designed a picture of four women, who might be seen as engaged in some sort of discussion, standing in a room something like a large living room. One woman was placed a bit away from the others, in the right foreground of the picture. (The picture is reproduced inside the end page of this report, as Projective Picture number 1.) The picture has a certain amount of tension in it. The women are not standing at rest; rather they seem to be moving, or doing something, or thinking of doing something.

We asked each member we interviewed to tell us what she thought was happening. Our aim was in this way to learn what the member would anticipate in any unstructured social situation.

The stories members told usually identified the group as women at a meeting or a tea party. Some of the stories emphasized the division in the group or the rejection being suffered by the girl at the right. ("Looks like a tea party and the girl at the right wasn't invited. Looks like she's getting snubbed.") Other stories emphasized instead, the essential cohesion of the group ("Something has been said, and they're thinking it over") or saw it as a group breaking up, without rejection of the girl at the right ("Been a meeting and they're ready to go home") or saw the girl at the right as left out only temporarily ("Hostess is going to bring the shy one over."). Stories of the first kind, which emphasize group division or rejection of the girl at the right, we call stories with themes of conflict or non-acceptance. We assume that seeing conflict or non-acceptance in the pictured situation will mean a tendency to see conflict or non-acceptance in any social situation--in other words, a tendency to be insecure in a social situation.

As Chart number 10 shows, members who see conflict or non-acceptance in the social situation picture are somewhat more likely to be inactive than to be active. Members who do not see conflict or non-acceptance are more than twice as likely to be active as they are to be inactive.

Attitude toward the home One might conclude that the inactive member, since she is more likely to see a woman's goals completely within her home, and since she tends to be more diffident in social situations, would be more often content at home. This is not the case. Rather, the inactive member more often than the active member is concerned about being "tied down"--restricted to her home.

We asked respondents to tell us what was happening in a second projective picture (Projective Picture number 2 inside the end cover of this report). In the foreground of this picture is a woman standing behind a fence, looking out into the distance. Behind her is a modern looking home outside of which play two small children. There is a car in the foreground. The fence extends all around the house. Our aim was to learn from the stories respondents told, whether they felt the woman was "fenced-in"--restricted--by the fence. An example of a "fenced-in" response is: "Looks like she's restless and would like to go to the city but she can't because she has to stay with the children." An example of a response which is not a "fenced-in" response is: "She's sort of standing against the fence and dreaming, maybe waiting for her husband to come home."

Our interpretation of a response which saw the fence as restrictive is that the respondent does not want a barrier between herself and things outside the home. A response which did not see the fence as restrictive would mean to us that the respondent was not concerned, at least at the moment, with the possibility of being tied down, unable to get out of the house, or unable to get away from the children.

CHART 10

TENDENCY TO SEE NON-ACCEPTANCE OR CONFLICT IN A SOCIAL SITUATION AS RELATED TO ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

Responses to Projective Picture number 1

RESPONDENT
DOES NOT
SEE A
CONFLICT

15% RELA- TIVELY INACTIVE	51% MODERATELY ACTIVE	34% ACTIVE
------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 88

RESPONDENT
SEES
NON-ACCEPTANCE
OR CONFLICT

29% RELATIVELY INACTIVE	51% MODERATELY ACTIVE	20% ACTIVE
-------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

N = 41

40

RELATIVELY INACTIVE = Some time but less than one hour per week

MODERATELY ACTIVE = One-three hours per week

ACTIVE = More than three hours per week

We find (Chart number 11) that the relatively inactive member is most likely to see the fence as restrictive. Almost half the inactive members give responses of this kind. Only one in three of the moderately active members, and one in four of the active members, evidence this concern with being tied down by home and children. Contentment at home is not a basis for inactivity in the League. On the contrary, the inactive are particularly likely to be concerned with "getting out of the house."

The goals of the inactive members, which tend to be centered in their own home, plus their social diffidence, make it difficult for them to become more active outside the home. But their inactivity is not something they desire.

CHART 11

TENDLNCY TO PROJECT FEELING OF BEING FENCED-IN AT HOME,
AS RELATED TO ACTIVITY IN THE LEAGUE

Response to Projective Picture number 2

RELATIVELY INACTIVE	44% SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	56% DO NOT SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	N = 27
MODERATELY ACTIVE	35% SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	65% DO NOT SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	N = 71
ACTIVE	25% SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	75% DO NOT SEE WOMAN AS FENCED-IN	N = 36

To summarize

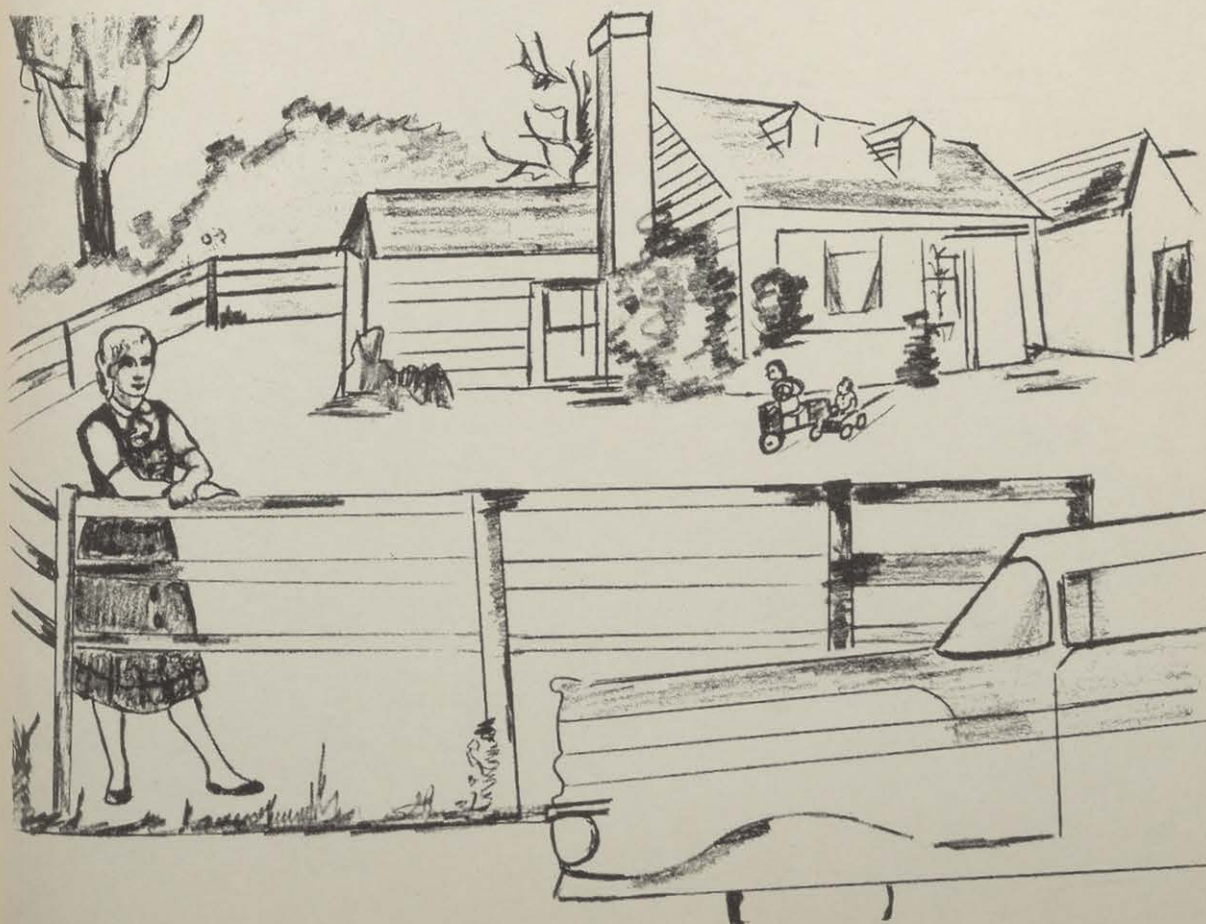
Activity in the League seems to depend primarily on:

1. Time, which means freedom from competing activities. This factor, however, can be over-rated. Most women who really want to be active in the League can find the time.
2. Husband's attitude. In the group of significant people whose attitude influences a woman's organizational activity, the husband is the most important. Actually there are other significant people in the woman's life whose attitude will be important; her friends, her neighbors, her children, when they are old enough to voice an opinion. But the attitude of her husband is perhaps the most important situational determinant of whether she will be active.
3. Interest in the League's Program. Interest in the Program may reflect liking the League's activities for themselves, as well as seeing the Program as a means toward the achievement of better government. Both ways of seeing the Program are related to activity in the League. (This suggests that the League is attractive both to women who are most interested in the League as a place to learn and as a place to meet interesting women and to women who are most interested in the League as an action organization.)
4. Ability to work with other women. This boils down to a certain amount of regard for oneself, and (probably associated with this) security in relation to other women.

It is not the case, in general, that the inactive members are more content at home. On the contrary, they are particularly likely to want additional freedom from home duties.



PROJECTIVE PICTURE # 1



PROJECTIVE PICTURE # 2

