

S T U D Y No. 20

Comments Regarding
E D I T O R I A L C O N T E N T
of

WHEELING NEWS-REGISTER
(Wheeling, West Virginia)

for

June 11, 1940

Survey Conducted and Report Prepared By

PUBLICATION RESEARCH SERVICE
(Successor to Gallup Research Service)
201 N. Wells Street, Chicago

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The Tuesday, June 11, issue of the Wheeling News-Register was published on the day following President Roosevelt's famous "Dagger in the Back" speech at the University of Virginia Commencement. Italy had just entered the war, and the Nazis were closing in on Paris.

Readers of these reports are now familiar with the methods employed in these surveys, the terminology and the kind of information made available. Hence, this report will merely point out a few highlights worth special attention. These are not set down in order of importance or significance, but the order corresponds roughly with their appearance in the paper.

WAR NEWS

I. A thorough and uniform interest in the war news is indicated by the consistent interest of readers in the war stories at the top of Page 1. Note the similarity of reader interest.

II. The highest reading of any war story on Page 1 for men is 67%, which is approximately the same as the percentage for the best-read war story for men on Page 1 of the last preceding study, The Cincinnati Post. The percentage of women readers for war news is larger than in The Cincinnati Post, where the best-read war story attained only a 34% rating. In the Wheeling study, the best-read war story attracted 51% of the women.

III. Attention is called to the high reading for the box in column six, captioned, "May Sack Paris If Nazis Advance." Read by 65% of the men and 51% of the women, this box was as well read as any of the major stories on Page 1. This technique is particularly effective in attracting reader attention and is regarded by many readers as "good editing."

IV. The best-read story in the entire newspaper for women was located on Page 2, under the caption, "Underwater Camera Man at Oglebay," and was read by 55% of the men and 52% of the women. This story is merely grand publicity for an illustrated motion picture lecture, one of a series during the Summer at Oglebay. Many a local publicity chairman would be cheered and solaced to learn the attention attracted by this unvarnished publicity for a local lecture series.

V. The story by J. W. T. Mason, war expert, on Page 2, was read by 30% of the men and 16% of the women. This audience was somewhat smaller than was secured by the same writer in The Cincinnati Post in a very different layout and presentation. Comparison of the reader interest figures of two techniques of presentation would indicate that The Cincinnati method attracted much more attention than the orthodox one-column story on Page 2 in the News-Register.

RETAIL ADVERTISING PICKS UP

VI. The Stone & Thomas advertisement on Page 3 was read by 85% of the women, and 84% of the women were attracted to the portion featuring hosiery at 63%. Six columns of a full page layout were devoted to a hosiery sale. This tremendous audience may furnish some clue as to why women mobbed retail stores when Nylon hosiery was introduced. The introduction of Nylon, or the advertisement of a June hosiery sale is far more important to many women than even the war raging in Europe. Some slight consolation is afforded the male by the fact that 59% of the women read the two columns of suggestions or tips for Father's Day.

EDITORIAL PAGE

VII. Forty per cent of the women readers read at least one of the four editorials in the first two columns...exactly the same percentage that read the column by Mrs. Roosevelt. No wonder Mrs. Roosevelt's presence was considered an asset at the Democratic National Convention.

Be sure to note the local column under the head, "News Nose-Gays." Fifty-four per cent of the men and fifty-four per cent of the women read this column, which is a combination of short editorial paragraphs and very personal comments on local events. The breezy style and tongue-in-cheek attitude are undoubted assets for this very valuable local feature. Again we find a demonstration of the tremendous interest in local features of this type.

Editors may question the reproduction of the advertising testimonial in the two-column box at the top of columns seven and eight on the Editorial Page. This letter from the Proctor Electric Company is a Bureau of Advertising promotion for the pulling power of newspaper advertising. While only five per cent of the men and three per cent of the women read this copy, these percentages may have included most of the advertisers and business men of Wheeling.

SOCIETY AND PERSONALS

VIII. Nine out of every ten women read something on the Society Page. The lead society story was read by 67% of the women, and 68% of the women read the personal notices at the top of columns seven and eight. The tremendous interest in columns of this type indicates that the readers of a daily newspaper of 23,000 circulation have the same inherent interest in "Personals" as the average weekly newspaper readers.

"Congratulations," an item regarding four local births, is rather revealing. It was read by 74% of the women, or more than read the entire column of "Personals." Births and deaths consistently attract more women readers than any other news in the paper.

PICTURE STRIP SERIAL

IX. On Page 10, we encounter the first picture serial tested in any survey to date. Four photographs are arranged in strip form with a small amount of copy as the day's installment. This happened to be publicity for the motion picture, "Susan And God," and was read by 45% of the women readers.

This 45% may be compared with the 23% reading the daily short story on Page 14. Since this degree of interest for the picture strip might not hold up consistently day after day, it is suggested that no final conclusions be drawn as yet as to the inherent interest in fiction presented in this form.

X. The usual 50% to 70% reading of movie advertisements shown in previous studies is found again in the Wheeling News-Register. Readers of metropolitan dailies and small town papers seem to have the same entertainment interests, and movie advertisements attract approximately the same percentage of readers, regardless of the size of the city.

SPORTS PAGE INTEREST

XI. Approximately the same percentage of baseball fans seems to exist in every city, irrespective of size. In Wheeling, the lead story on the baseball race rated approximately the same interest as we have found in other cities. Small town fans seem to be as interested as fans living in metropolitan areas where major league teams are seen

in action. These surveys support the contention that baseball is "the national game."

XII. Another common denominator in reader interest, irrespective of the size of the city, is comic interest. Eighty-six per cent of the men and eighty-two per cent of the women read one or more comics. In city after city, approximately the same percentage of readers is following the daily comic serials. American newspaper readers read their newspapers in much the same manner whether they live in Maine or California.

This study of reader interest in the Wheeling News-Register was conducted in the same manner and method as all previous surveys in "The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading."

Complete data on Cross Section and Distribution of Sample have been filed with the Advertising Research Foundation.

TEN BEST READ NEWS STORIES

MEN

	Page	Per Cent
Berlin Says Troops Moving From 2 Points on Capital	1	67
Rome Says Men Fighting Allies Since Dawn	1	67
May Sack Paris If Nazis Advance	1	65
Sub Menaces U. S. Vessel Off Portugal	1	57
French Say Nazis' Progress Slow, Toll Is Heavy	1	56
Underwater Camera Man at Oglebay	2	55
\$1,706,053,908 Defense Fund Given House	1	51
City Will Drop Howard Gray	1	50
U. S. Resources To Insure Win, British View	1	50
Prepare Paris Defenses	1	49

WOMEN

Underwater Camera Man at Oglebay	2	52
Berlin Says Troops Moving From 2 Points on Capital	1	51
May Sack Paris If Nazis Advance	1	51
Temperature Rises Today	1	48
Rome Says Men Fighting Allies Since Dawn	1	47
French Say Nazis' Progress Slow, Toll Is Heavy	1	43
\$1,706,053,908 Defense Fund Given House	1	36
Sub Menaces U. S. Vessel Off Portugal	1	36
City Will Drop Howard Gray	1	33
U. S. Resources To Insure Win, British View	1	33

READER TRAFFIC STOPS BY TYPE OF CONTENT

The "Any" percentages refer to the percentage of adult readers interviewed who had stopped to read anything of the character designated, or anything on a specific page or section, or on the inside pages of a section. These data are interesting mainly as an indication of how a newspaper is read, and, eventually, of what constitutes certain normal interests for readers of American newspapers.

PAGE	CONTENT	MEN	WOMEN
1	Any for Front Page	99%	98%
1-12	Any for Section I	100	100
2-12	Any for Section I exclusive of first page	99	100
13-20	Any for Section II	99	99
14-20	Any for Section II exclusive of first page	99	99
4	Any Editorial Reader	56	40
4	Any for Editorial Page	86	87
14,18,19	Any Comic Reader	86	82
19	Any Financial Reader	35	19
6-7	Any Society News or Pictures	56	95
13&15	Any Sports News or Pictures	80	33
	Any Advertising (Except Classified)	79	97
	Any National Advertising	53	65
	Any Local Advertising	73	96
	Any Department Store Advertising	39	90
16-17	Any Classified Advertising	39	51
10	Any Amusement Advertising	50	70

EDITORIAL FEATURES AND DEPARTMENTS

Showing Variations in the Reading of the
Wheeling News-Register Editorial Features and Departments
by Men and Women

PAGE	GENERAL FEATURES	MEN	WOMEN
1	The Weather	57%	71%
5	Obituaries	39	74
7	Answers To Questions	2	2
10	Your Theatre Clock	15	23
11	The Home Gardener (Edwin H. Perkins)	1	5
12	This Week at Oglebay	22	33
14	Burgess Bedtime Stories	1	7
14	Daily Crossword Puzzle	4	7
14	The Daily Short Story	7	23
14	Pointed Paragraphs	3	9
14	Uncle Ray's Corner	4	7
14	Winning Contract (The Four Aces)	6	7
15	Little Benny's Notebook	5	5
17	Death Notices	7	17
18	Daily Puzzler	2	7
18	Home Institute (Copy)	4	24
18	Home Institute (Picture)	6	27
18	Lessons In English (W. L. Gordon)	2	10
18	Sense and Nonsense (Carey Williams)	12	20
19	Local Stocks	10	7
19	New York Stocks	33	16
19	Pittsburgh Livestock	1	1
19	Pittsburgh Produce	1	1
19	Stock Averages	1	1
EDITORIAL PAGE FEATURES			
4	About People 'N Things (K.C.B.)	4	7
4	Bible Thought For Today	1	5
4	Can You Answer These - - -?	5	6
4	The Capital Parade (Joseph Alsop & Rob't.Kintner)	14	5
4	Edgar A. Guest	5	14
4	My Day (Eleanor Roosevelt)	8	40
4	News Nose-Gays	54	54
4	Hold That Deadline	36	27
4	Voices Of The Past	11	28
4	Your Birthday	5	21

EDITORIAL FEATURES AND DEPARTMENTS (Cont'd.)

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WOMEN'S FEATURES</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>
6	Congratulations to These Happy Parents	20%	74%
6	Personals	18	68
7	Good Taste Today (Emily Post)	5	38
9	Barbara Bell Pattern (Copy)	1	41
9	Barbara Bell Pattern (Picture)	4	60
18	Dorothy Dix	17	64
20	Needlework Pattern (Copy)	1	29
20	Needlework Pattern (Picture)	1	39
	<u>SPORTS FEATURES</u>		
13	Major League Leaders	37	6
13	Henry McLemore	29	6
15	How They Stand	61	9
15	Looking 'Em Over	43	13
15	Sports Cartoon (Phil Berube)	51	16
15	Steubenville Results	3	1
	<u>PANELS: HUMOR, ETC.</u>		
1	Dumb-Bells	59	59
2	Star Flashes	50	49
11	Mopsy	28	40
11	Suburban Heights	29	48
14	Strange As It Seems	81	63
16	Growing Pains	39	49
	<u>COMICS</u>		
14	Flyin' Jenny	67	59
14	Pop	70	54
14	Reg'lar Fellers	69	60
14	S'Matter Pop	58	51
18	Abbie an' Slats	63	54
18	Bound To Win	68	64
18	Ella Cinders	71	69
18	Nancy	76	76
18	The Nebbs	70	58
18	Sergeant Stony Craig	66	47
18	Tailspin Tommy	63	52