

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OPINIONS  
OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS IN  
BACA COUNTY, COLORADO

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Mobile homes are becoming increasingly popular as residences for American families. In 1969, the sales of mobile homes amounted to nearly three billion dollars. It was estimated in 1969 that one in every two single-family homes sold was a mobile home. More than 400,000 mobile homes were shipped in 1969, with officials expecting to sell 475,000 units in 1970, and one million units by 1975. Over 90 per cent of all new single-family homes valued under \$15,000 were mobile homes (20).

The increased popularity of mobile homes has been felt in Baca County, a rural county in southeastern Colorado. Although this county has a low density of population, many of the families are choosing mobile home living.

More than 69 per cent of the couples between 18 and 34 change their address in any given year (12). In the past, people who knew they would eventually move because of their occupation preferred mobile home living. The biggest appeal of mobile homes presently is to the young married people and the senior citizens. Couples under 34 years of age buy 43 per cent of all mobile homes and the elderly and retired account for more than 25 per cent of all mobile home owners (1).

No longer are mobile homes considered only for lower class or second-rate citizens. Mobile home prices ranged from \$4,000 to \$18,000



with an average price of \$6,110 for a 12 foot by 65 foot home complete with furnishings and appliances in 1971 (3).

Mobile homes are particularly important in serving the housing requirements of younger couples in communities where the housing supply does not meet their needs (27). They are also attractive to retirees because they are convenient, carefree, and inexpensive. Mobile home parks provide companionship and a special social environment for the older people, which satisfies many of their wants and needs (3).

Because of the increased interest in mobile homes, this study is undertaken to gain some understanding of the opinions regarding mobile homes.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine opinions young adults have toward mobile homes and mobile home living in order to determine the content and the objectives of housing classes to be taught to home economics classes.

#### Objectives of Study

1. To survey and examine the literature related to mobile homes.
2. To determine the opinions young adults have toward mobile homes and mobile home living.
3. To develop a teaching unit based on these findings to be used in housing classes offered high school students who are prospective mobile home owners in order to enable students to make reasonable decisions about housing choices considering mobile homes as a possible alternative.

4. To make these findings available to help mobile home manufacturers and retailers as they design and manufacture their product.

#### Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study.

Mobile Home is a transportable structure, which exceeds either 8 body feet in width or 32 body feet in length, built on a chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities (10).

Double Wide Mobile Home is a mobile home consisting of two sections combined horizontally at the site while still retaining their individual chassis for possible future movement (10).

Trailer is now the term applied to portable units generally used for recreational purposes. The word "trailer" is now long out-dated, when used to describe a mobile home (9).

American National Standard A119.1 for Mobile Homes sets forth the requirements for the construction, as well as the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems of the home (10). This term is not to be confused with the National Building Code (23).

#### Procedure

The procedure that was used to carry out this study was as follows:

1. A review of literature related to mobile homes and mobile home living was conducted.
2. A questionnaire was developed to determine opinions and satisfactions derived from mobile home living.

3. The questionnaire was pretested on a selected sample.
4. The questionnaire was revised and duplicated for distribution.
5. The population was selected from mobile home residents between the ages of 18-34 in Baca County, Colorado.
6. Data were tabulated and analyzed, and conclusions were drawn.
7. A teaching unit was developed.
8. Further recommendations were made from the results.

#### Limitations of Study

The sample selected for this study was limited to a group of young adults between the ages 18-34 because high school students may find a closer relationship between themselves and young adults than with older persons. Studies have also indicated that couples under 34 years of age buy 43 per cent of all mobile homes.

#### Summary

Chapter I presents the statement of the problem, the objectives, the definition of terms, the procedure, and the limitations of this study. Chapter II includes a review of the literature relating to mobile homes and mobile home living. Chapter III will explain in detail the procedure. In Chapter IV both the presentation and analysis of the data are found. Chapter V contains a brief summary of the research, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of the review of literature that was pertinent to this study. It includes the following areas: mobile homes and the housing crisis, the history of mobile homes, mobile home residents, mobile home living, financial aspects of mobile homes, mobility, mobile home developments, and the problems of mobile home living.

#### Mobile Homes and the Housing Crisis

A housing crisis has developed because too few dwelling units have been built in relation to the need. During the decade from 1969 to 1978, 26 million new housing units must be built to provide a "decent home in a suitable living environment" for all Americans (22).

Rising costs for conventional housing construction have caused many families of low and middle incomes to turn to mobile homes (10, 13). The cost of mobile homes is about \$8.50 to \$10 per square foot, complete with furniture, carpeting, drapes, and major appliances. Conventional housing averages about \$16 per square foot without furnishings and appliances (15).

The primary reasons contributing to the development of the housing crisis are a rapidly expanding economy with considerable inflation and a rising rate of family formation. Housing production tends to decrease when tight money policies are instituted to curb inflationary

expansion of the economy (22).

According to George W. Romney (30), former Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, hereafter called HUD, "NO MAJOR PART of our economy is as backward as housing. Nowhere are we using less of our managerial and technical knowledge." Romney feels building codes are to blame. He says that if the cost of housing is to be reversed and the new jobs needed in housing and construction are created, then the local restrictions, codes, and zoning restrictions that prevent the application of the knowledge and methods should be simplified.

In 1970, while the home builders knew their industry was in deep trouble, the mobile home dealers were selling one in every two single-family homes. The more than 400,000 mobile homes sold in 1969 was nearly double the number sold in 1966 (20).

In a speech presented to the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association in 1971, Robert F. Elrick (8) stated

In my opinion, the only true low-cost housing available anywhere in the United States today continues to be the mobile home. Economy housing is still the single-wide, expandable, and double-wide mobile home that comes to the site on its own undercarriage and wheels. Any meaningful appraisal of the future of all other forms of housing must start with understanding this simple, basic fact.

Therefore, I believe that mobile homes must continue to supply a substantial share of the housing demand in the future, and for many years to come.

The need for low-cost housing is approaching crisis proportions--not only to replace slums, but also to accommodate young marrieds and retired couples, the two fastest-growing segments of the adult population (27). Mobile homes offer inexpensive housing for young couples until they can afford larger quarters, and reduce maintenance chores

and stretch pensions for older folks (17).

For decades, the Federal Government largely ignored all the fundamental causes of rising housing costs. Instead, it concentrated on making overpricing more palatable through easier FHA and VA terms for home buyers and direct subsidies for the growing portion of the population unable to afford decent shelter without them. The emphasis is now beginning to change. As an experiment, the FHA backed inexpensive houses built by half a dozen manufacturers of mobile homes. To keep the price low, the requirements for street paving and foundations were relaxed and FHA waived a few of its ordinary minimum standards (33).

The mobile home is a remarkably flexible housing technique. Now that its effectiveness has been established, it seems destined to be used by many families regardless of a housing crisis (22).

### The History of Mobile Homes

Mobile homes or portable shelters have been used as dwellings in all periods of human history. Before permanent settlements were developed, portable dwellings provided housing for men and their families as they moved from one semipermanent village to another. During the great migrations of human history, portable dwellings were the principal means of shelter used by people. The Tuareg tribe of the Sahara Desert continue to use tents as movable shelters today. Others who use movable shelters are the American Indians who use tepees and the gypsy caravans (22).

The Conestoga Wagon and the railroads played a prominent role in the development of this country. The Conestoga Wagon was one of the major forms of mobile homes in the United States for over 150 years

and is largely responsible for the entire history of the American West. Men and supplies made the move west by this means. Competition from the railroads contributed to the decline of the Conestoga Wagon. Entire towns were carried on the railroads as construction crews moved ahead laying track. The mobile shelters were sometimes unloaded at a site and stayed put until track construction moved some distance ahead. Then the town would be dismantled and moved. In other instances the mobile shelters would remain on the flatcars and be moved with, but just slightly behind, the rail construction (22).

The modern version of the mobile home has developed from some of the following technological processes: the covered wagon, the tent for vacation purposes, automotive travel, trailers and semitrailers for freight transportation, and the cloth-top trailer. Prefabricated housing has been a parallel development of the trailer (22).

The contemporary mobile home apparently grew out of a desire to improve this attachment to the automobile as the modern travel trailer developed with the rise of the automobile. The first trailer was little more than a "two-wheeled cart" described as a box on wheels which opened into a tent (22).

The house trailer made an appearance about 1924 when it developed from a box tent into a permanent but simple structure consisting of a wooden frame covered with canvas placed on a chassis and wheels. About 300,000 people were living in house trailers by 1936 (22).

Hundreds of manufacturers entered the competition and large-scale production of the house trailer began during the 1930's. Almost before it was known to any large proportion of the populace, the house trailer was being turned into a house. Many people were choosing trailers as

"permanent homes" because they were cheaper, more adaptable, and even more comfortable than most summer cottages as well as some conventional housing. Another advantage was that the trailer avoided property taxes even when used as a permanent unit (22).

In 1937, a major disagreement developed among manufacturers. They were about evenly divided between those who favored placing primary emphasis on the development of the vacation trailer and those who believed that the future of the house trailer lay in the development of year-round homes which retained the potential of mobility (22). The industry is still divided on this matter.

During World War II the house trailer played a significant role in the housing of military personnel and construction workers. The trailers served military purposes as well as housing, being used for field kitchens, first-aid stations, aviation repair shops, photographic laboratories, and communications and supply offices (22).

The trailer industry began to show signs of maturing into what is now referred to as the mobile home industry in the 1950's. As the 10-foot-wide home was introduced, the automobile was virtually eliminated from the scene, as only trucks could safely move such large units. As the sales of mobile homes rose, the number of independent manufacturers declined rapidly under the pressure of competition and the small-scale trailer operations of the 1930's came to an end (22).

#### Residents of Mobile Homes

Two types of households have predominated as characteristic of mobile home dwellers. One is the young household, consisting of a male head, his wife, and one or two children who are usually of



preschool age, while the other is the older two-person household, usually retired and made up of husband and wife (22).

In 1960, 43 percent of the heads of mobile home households were under age 35, compared with 23 percent of such households in the general population. The same general pattern held in 1966. (22)

The elderly and retired who make up more than 25 per cent of mobile home owners are attracted to mobile home living because of the price (1). The highest proportion of this age group who live in mobile homes reside in retirement states such as Florida and Arizona. In both 1960 and 1966, more of the people of the age group 55 or over lived in their own homes rather than mobile homes.

The lower proportions of intermediate-age households in mobile homes is very likely related to two factors: first, that men in these age groups tend to have larger families and more children still at home, and second, that men in these age groups are approaching their maximum lifetime income levels and, therefore, can afford to live in conventional housing (22).

In the 1966 study (22), two- to four-person households were more frequent in the mobile home population than in the general population. However, households of five or more persons made up 22 per cent of national households, while they were represented in only 11 per cent of the mobile homes. This distribution lends support to the idea that, as their size increases, families tend to move out of mobile homes (22).

Meadows' study (18) indicated that rural mobile homes primarily are occupied by young families who are very satisfied with mobile home living and their first home ownership experience. The socio-economic status of these rural families is slightly higher than the national average of mobile home residents because occupational status, annual

income and education of the household head are higher for the rural mobile home residents.

The study by Fly (11) supported the conclusion that age seemed to influence homemakers' satisfaction with their kitchens. More of the women ranging to 34 years of age expressed dissatisfaction with their kitchens than did those of the older age groups. This may occur because younger women may look upon their mobile home as a temporary residence until they can move into a house, and also, the women under 34 may have more young children at home.

Fly (11) found that family size also influenced the homemakers' satisfaction, as those with three or more family members living at home expressed more dissatisfaction with their kitchens than did those with fewer family members at home. In this study, renters rather than owners tended to be satisfied with the kitchen and storage facilities. Renters were more willing than owners to improve storage even at the cost of other space and additional money. The owners were less willing than renters to improve storage because such improvement costs had to be borne by them.

Many residents of mobile homes tend to have favorable attitudes toward their homes. Kienz (5) writes

One important fact I would like to bring out is that in ten years of mobile home living, many things have worked out exactly as we had hoped. Our maintenance has been simple and inexpensive. Nothing has worn out any faster than in a traditional house. Our park has maintained its high standards of cleanliness, peace and quiet. And we haven't found much we would change if we were to do it over again.

Students find mobile homes fulfill their housing needs adequately.

Comments of one student (6) are:

Because of our present situation, living in a mobile home is our best bet. Rent is just too much for us, plus

a mobile home requires little, if any, upkeep. And until I have an established career, we'll probably be moving quite a bit.

Almost one out of every ten retirees prefers mobile home living today. Retirees favor mobile homes because they have all the features of a modern home and their previous homes became too much home with too much upkeep, and too much worry when they travel (3).

Studies have indicated that there is little difference between mobile home owners and other people. Bank and credit agencies agree that mobile home owners are good credit risks. Parents of mobile home children do cooperate with the school administration, but seem slightly less involved with the Parent-Teacher Association (34).

Surveys of churches of all denominations have been made and findings were unanimous in reporting that mobile home families attend church services as often as other members of the congregation. Mobile home residents also participate in church projects and activities in about the same proportion as the other members (34).

Findings of surveys of police departments show that there is no evidence of a greater amount of alcoholism or drug abuse in mobile home parks than in other housing areas. There is no indication that there is a greater incidence of crime in mobile home parks than in other residential areas (34).

Conflicting findings are reported in pioneer studies of mobile home residents. With the exception of one study, however, the studies implied that the "mobility" that theorists on social problems were so concerned with had little ill effect on the character of the people who were mobile home residents (7).

People from all walks of life live in mobile homes. Engineers,

teachers, nurses, police officers, skilled mechanics as well as factory workers all live in mobile homes. Social workers evidently believe that mobile homes are stable, secure environments for children because in several instances children have been placed for adoption with mobile home couples (34).

### Mobile Home Living

Mobile homes not only supply emergency housing during periods of critical shortages, they are also considered a real alternative form of housing. About three million people were living in mobile homes in 1955 although the postwar housing shortage had ended. This apparently indicated that if people were still turning to mobile homes, at least some of them might be doing so from choice (22).

Surveys in the 1960's suggested that families living in mobile homes were looking for a better way of life but could not afford the house in the suburbs which by then had become the ideal home for millions of Americans. Some studies indicate that mobile home occupants were looking for an inexpensive way to enjoy the advantages of suburban living while they were saving for the purchase of a conventional single-family house (22).

Young mobile home owners found their homes the solution to problems related to attaining homeownership and acquiring equity, economical housing, absence of satisfactory alternatives to conventional housing, and job transience. The young adults tended to evaluate living in a mobile home more in comparison with living in a rented apartment than with owning a single-family conventional home (22).

Only 10 per cent of the respondents cited economy as a reason for

living in a mobile home in the 1968 market survey. The most important reason was being near the location of work, given by 46 per cent, and climate and pleasant surroundings the next most frequent as given by 29 per cent. About two fifths of the households had not moved in the preceding five years, and 29 per cent had made only one move. About one fifth had moved to their present residence from a mobile home (22).

### Financial Aspects of Mobile Home Living

#### Financing

Most people purchase their mobile homes on credit. Although Savings and Loan Associations as well as banks can now lend on mobile homes, the standard method of dealer financing, one similar to that used for automobiles, still predominates. The dealer arranges for financial sources for purchase through a conditional sales contract agreement or the Uniform Commercial Code Security Agreement and the loan agreement originates through the sales agent. Then the installment contract is sold to the financial institution. Interest is usually of the "add-on" type on which payments are computed after interest has been added on the entire principal at the stated rate. The Truth-in-Lending regulations apply to mobile home financing. Down payments range from 20 per cent to 30 per cent and payment time ranges up to 10 years (10).

FHA insures loans up to \$10,000 maximum for terms up to 12 years and 32 days. The location for the placement of the home must pass requirements of property standards of the agency (10).

The maximum loan rate remains stable at \$10,000 with a term of 12 years under the new VA program. The allowable amount for lot purchase and site preparation for the home is raised to a maximum of \$17,500 for

the home and lot for a maximum term of 15 years. A Certificate of Eligibility is required for a VA loan. Mobile homes must conform to the standards required in the American National Standard A119.1 for Mobile Homes in both the FHA and VA programs (10).

The true interest rates on mobile homes range from 10 to 12 per cent, compared with 7 to 7½ per cent for home mortgages. The time for paying for a mobile home ranges from 5 to 10 years, compared with 20 to 30 years for a conventional mortgage (15).

Finance charges can be saved if the mobile home is financed on a five-year contract, but the monthly payments will be substantially higher. Federal law requires mobile home owners to carry fire and theft insurance on their mobile homes. If the owner is buying on time, interest charges can be saved if the insurance is purchased separately (15).

### Resale

A mobile home depreciates in value where conventional homes normally go up in price under present market conditions. After six and a half years a mobile home has a market value of only about half its original price. After 15 years it may be sold for 20 to 35 per cent of its original cost, usually as a second home in some rural area or as a fishing or hunting cabin (15).

A standard trade "blue book" of mobile home values is available just as for used-car values. The values are based on sales reports and therefore reflect current prices. They are not a guide to future values and do not respond directly to the common worry about how fast a mobile home depreciates (31).

Manufacturers believe that a properly built and maintained unit has an economic life expectancy of at least 20 to 25 years. One manufacturer sees depreciation as essentially similar to depreciation in conventional housing and subject to the original quality of construction, careful upkeep, and a location that continues to be desirable (31).

Families moving from an area can arrange to have a dealer take over the old mobile home and leave them free to move to a conventional house or purchase a new mobile home in another location. The trade-in value of an old mobile home may provide the down payment, or a large part of it, on a new mobile home (22).

### Rentals

The HUD survey of 1966 (28) indicated that 54 per cent of the mobile home residents moving into new rental units moved from other rental units. The second largest segment was the newly formed households, while the remaining group was the former owner-occupants. Most of the people who are former renters and newly formed households are younger, growing, and highly mobile households. White-collar occupations, especially professional and technical, predominate among the new renters. Clerical and sales workers rank next in importance. Much less important are managers, officials, proprietors, and operators (28).

Former owners of mobile homes tend to rent new units with more rooms and pay more for them than do former renters and new households. The differences between former owners and former renters are not great; however, on the average, new households rent considerably smaller units at proportionately lower rates. The former owners rent the most space

per person while new households tend to rent slightly more space per person than do former renters (28).

### Insurance

Convenient, economical, wide-coverage package insurance policies similar to the homeowners policies long available to people living in conventional houses are becoming available to mobile home owners. The main advantage of the all-in-one policies is that they put together an array of protection that usually gives more insurance at less expense than is possible in buying the same coverage separately (24).

Premiums for new policies vary with the amount of insurance, the kind of policy, and the location. Insuring a \$10,000 mobile home with one of the basic policies may cost about \$100 a year, depending on location and other factors. An extra fee will probably be charged if the mobile home is located in a seacoast area subject to high winds. However, the premium can be reduced by 10 per cent in all locations by using approved tie-downs to secure the home (24).

### Furnishings

New mobile homes are sold fully equipped with major appliances, furniture, draperies, lamps, and carpeting all included in the purchase price. Air conditioning, automatic dishwashers, and automatic garbage disposals are some of the optional features available. A gas, oil, or electric furnace provides central heating for the home. Buyers have a choice of color and style when selecting furnishings (10). Good quality furniture lasts much longer and is an indication of the quality used elsewhere in the home (19).



## Mobility

Families sometimes take mobile homes with them when they move across town or to a nearby city. However, moving mobile homes any distance is costly and is usually too expensive. Rough, long-distance hauling may also cause damage (15).

Some studies have been devoted to the traumas experienced by housewives before and after moving. Mobile home housewives do not seem to experience this trauma and there has been some indication that the children of the mobile resident seem to be less disoriented after a move than other children. The aged also are more secure when there is no uprooting from their possessions (7).

## Mobile Home Developments

### Types of Siting Arrangements

Three types of siting arrangements are used for mobile homes. One is renting space in a mobile home park, another is buying a lot in a mobile home subdivision, and the third is siting the mobile home on a privately owned lot outside either a park or a subdivision (22).

The 1966 HUD survey of recent purchasers of mobile homes indicated that about two fifths of the mobile homes were not situated in parks, and of that proportion, about half were on rented sites (28). Many owners may be siting their homes outside parks because the development of parks has been slow in comparison with sales of mobile homes (22).

New mobile home parks are a far cry from the unsightly clusters of house trailers still seen on the edge of some cities. Parks are becoming a big business and the best ones are like small subdivisions, with

landscaping and extra facilities. Two kinds of new parks are most prominent. One type usually caters to older couples and is located in a rural or resort area and features swimming pools, community centers, and sometimes a golf course. Young people seeking shelter at a relatively low cost are residents in the second variety which is located as closely as possible to urban areas (15).

### Safety Features of Parks

Safety is an important feature of many mobile home parks. Many mobile home parks have an extremely low rate of crime because they are well lighted. Also, a closely knit community in many instances makes it unlikely a stranger could pass unnoticed among the homes (4).

Visitors to some mobile home parks are required to stop at a central office before entering the park. Some of the larger developments employ guards. In some developments, cars are checked in and out of the park. Mobile home park residents can go on vacation without fear of burglary since the park's management can keep an eye on the home (4).

## Problems of Mobile Home Living

### Construction

In the past, mobile homes have had an unattractive "box look," but this look can be changed by adding porches, carports, and other trimmings (15). Manufacturers are beginning to improve the outside appearances of the homes.

The amount of insulation affects the heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer. Well-insulated floors, walls, and roofs are important

in every climate. Insulation should have sufficient resistance to the transfer of heat to maintain wall surfaces in a comfortable range even when the outdoor temperature is extreme (19).

Many people buy a mobile home and then move it to another state. Often the moved mobile home will not stand up to weather in the new location because many mobile homes are built to be used in the immediate location of their construction. Potential mobile home purchasers are advised to seriously consider the permanent location of their mobile home when making the final selection (25).

Reputable dealers will tell potential customers that a minimum of insulation and undersized heating and cooling facilities with midget-sized wiring, and only a few electric outlets is not the best investment and the buyer will likely do a great deal of remodeling. A three- or four-thousand dollar mobile home may eventually cost more than the six- or seven-thousand dollar better purchase (25).

#### Inadequate Parking Facilities

Finding a park in which to put a mobile home is one of the most difficult problems. There are 25,000 mobile home parks in the United States containing over 1,500,000 spaces, but many of these are considered inadequate because they are overcrowded, poorly located, and poorly kept (1).

#### Depreciation

Mobile home values usually decrease like car values. Some dealers base the formula for depreciation on wholesale cost and others base it on the retail price. A third formula uses a value midway between these

prices, figuring 20 per cent depreciation the first year, 10 per cent the second and third, and 5 per cent for each of the next few years (2).

### Fire Danger

Studies of mobile home fires show that the likelihood of death from a mobile home blaze was from 2.74 to 5.10 times greater than from a fire in a conventional home. The average loss in a mobile home fire was \$1,529 compared to \$690 in a conventional home, despite the higher cost of most conventional homes (29).

The 1973 report by the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control states that mobile homes have characteristics that make them a special fire danger. These were listed as: limited space, few and inadequate escape doors, combustible materials, and the close proximity of heaters and kitchens to bedrooms (5). Ideally, fire resistant material should isolate the furnace from the rest of the home (19).

Mobile home parks are usually located outside of cities because of zoning requirements, which makes it difficult for fire departments to reach the fire in time. Often there is also an inadequate supply of water. It is recommended that mobile home park owners be required to provide needed safeguards and that legislatures pass necessary laws to force them to do so (5).

### Weather

Proper anchoring can greatly alleviate wind damage to mobile homes. Much of the damage to mobile homes is the result of high winds not classified as tornadoes. A properly anchored mobile home will not

likely be destroyed by a weak twister (27).

The cost of tying down a mobile home ranges from \$100 to \$250 nationally. Tiedown sets consist of steel strapping or cable; two anchors, one for each side of the home; tensioning devices for drawing the sets tight; and buffers where the ties might rub against the home. There are two types of ties, frame and over-the-top. To provide protection against winds up to 85 miles an hour one set of frame ties is needed for every 10 feet of mobile home. Over-the-top ties should be positioned at stud and rafter locations (27).

State officials are stressing the need for a storm shelter in every mobile home park. If a tornado hits, the best procedure for mobile home residents to follow is to leave their home and find a shelter (27).

#### Teaching Materials Available

Teaching materials directly related to mobile home living are not readily available. The Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association has developed a teaching unit which consists of a course outline and suggested learning activities (21). In reviewing current Home Economics texts, Consumer Housing (12) seems to have the most detailed coverage of mobile home living because it covers more thoroughly various aspects of mobile home living such as characteristics of mobile home residents, ways of financing and insuring mobile homes, buying from reputable dealers, and selecting the site location. The information in the other texts reviewed dealt mainly with the advantages and disadvantages of mobile home living. Various pamphlets are available from the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association and the Better Business Bureau which

are helpful in educating the public about mobile home living.

### Summary

Two primary reasons for the development of the housing crisis were discussed in Chapter II. These reasons are inflation and the rising rate of family formation. Rising costs for conventional housing construction have caused many families of low and middle income to choose mobile homes.

The history of mobile homes was traced to early periods of human history. Portable dwellings were the principal means of shelter during the great migrations of human history. The Conestoga Wagon was a major form of mobile home in the United States and is largely responsible for the development of the American West. The mobile home as it is known today made its first appearance about 1924 and large-scale production began during the 1930's. The trailer industry matured into the mobile home industry during the 1950's.

Two major types of classification of mobile home dwellers predominate. Forty-three per cent of the heads of mobile home households are under age 35, while the elderly make up 25 per cent of the population.

The next topic reviewed was the financial aspects of mobile homes. Most people purchase their mobile homes on credit. The FHA and VA loan programs are available for mobile homes. A mobile home depreciates in value comparable to an automobile. The purchase price of new mobile homes included major appliances, furniture, draperies, lamps, and carpeting.

While one of the apparent advantages of mobile home living is the mobility factor, it has been found that moving is costly and can cause

damage to the mobile home. An advantage of mobile homes is that residents do not experience the trauma of being uprooted from their possessions.

The three general types of mobile home sites are: renting space in a mobile home park, buying a lot in a mobile home subdivision, and locating the mobile home on a privately owned lot outside either a park or a subdivision.

Some problems exist in mobile home living. Construction, inadequate parking facilities, depreciation, and fire and weather dangers are the main problems which exist.

Finally, some of the available teaching materials regarding mobile homes were reviewed. The review of these materials seemed to reveal that there is a need for additional emphasis in this area.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe the methods and procedures utilized in conducting this study of opinions of mobile home residents. This chapter includes an explanation of the adaptation of the questionnaire, a discussion of the methods by which the population was selected, explanations of the manner of collecting data, and the procedure used in analyzing the data.

#### Instrumentation

The review of literature indicated that the adaptation of the Housing Survey by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (28) and the Meadows survey in Florida (18) were most suitable for the study. The HUD survey had been done to obtain information regarding the composition of households and financing of the mobile home (28). The Meadows survey had dealt with the satisfactions of mobile home residents with their mobile homes (18). Additional questions were included to determine characteristics of the mobile home, reasons for choosing to live in a mobile home, and information people should have before selecting a mobile home and a site for their mobile home.



### Population of the Study

The research was conducted in Baca County, Colorado, because it is the home of the researcher. Baca County is a lightly populated county in the southeastern corner of Colorado. The residents' chief source of income is agriculture. The mobile homes in this study were widely spread throughout School District RE-4 within the county.

The population for the study consisted of young adults ages 18-34. The ages of the adults were limited to 18-34 because studies have indicated this group buys the largest percentage of mobile homes. Also, their ages were nearer those of high school students and, therefore, would be more helpful in determining instruction for high school students.

The names were selected from a list in the Baca County Clerk's office of persons who had purchased 1973 license plates for their mobile homes. An explanatory letter was sent to 51 residents in the selected district. The residents were asked to complete and return information if they were presently living in a mobile home, if they were between ages 18-34, and if they were willing to participate further in the study. Twenty surveys from the first mailing were returned by residents who fulfilled the requirements for the participants. A second mailing was completed to 16 residents who did not respond and six additional surveys were returned by residents who were eligible to participate in the study. The 26 surveys returned signified a 51 per cent return of the total names selected. Twenty-four residents completed the final questionnaire.

## Data Collection

After the residents were selected, the questionnaire in the appendix was mailed to participants. The survey was administered in July, 1973.

A questionnaire was chosen for the survey because the size of the school district would have made it difficult and expensive to contact all the residents personally. The advantages of using a questionnaire are that the approach is impersonal and the instructions can be uniform. Further advantages are that the questionnaire permits the respondent to take as much time as he wishes and he may think through his answers more carefully than would be possible in an interview (14).

Closed questions were chosen for a majority of the questions to aid the ease of response and tabulation. However, some open-end questions were used to permit the residents to respond in their own words to give insight into their feelings, interests, and decisions (14).

The initial questionnaire was given to three residents of mobile homes in Stillwater, Oklahoma. These residents were contacted by the researcher personally. This pilot study was conducted to determine any inadequacies the original questionnaire might contain. Minor changes were made to two questions on the original questionnaire to help the residents understand more easily the final form of the question.

## Computation of Data

Frequency counts and percentages were obtained for the respondents' answers for both the general informational questions and the satisfaction ratings. In order to find average rankings of questions 12 and 13 the data were computed by adding the number of each ranking for each

choice and dividing by the total number of respondents. Tables were made to illustrate the residents' responses. The data regarding the findings will be reported in Chapter IV.

#### Development of Teaching Unit

After the data were computed and analyzed, the findings of the study were used to develop a teaching unit on Mobile Home Living which is presented in Chapter IV. The objectives and learning experiences of the unit were derived specifically from the findings of this study. The development of this unit completed objective three of this study. Then recommendations were made to complete objective four of this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine opinions of young adults toward mobile homes and mobile home living in order to determine the objectives and the content to be taught in housing classes. This chapter will explain in detail the characteristics of the population and results of the data regarding the opinions of the young adults toward mobile homes and mobile home living.

#### Characteristics of Population

Twenty-four residents returned questionnaires in the study. The families who participated were mobile home residents in Baca County, Colorado. Detailed descriptive information about the families is presented in Table I.

The number of persons living in each mobile home ranged from two-member families to families with five members living at home. Three-member families constituted the largest group, 41.7 per cent. Next in declining order were two-member families, 29.2 per cent; four-member families, 25 per cent; and five-member families, 4.1 per cent.

A slightly larger percentage of household heads (58.3 per cent) were in the younger age group of 18-25 than were between 26 and 34 years of age (41.7 per cent).

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>Number of Persons in Household</u>		
Two persons	7	29.1
Three persons	10	41.7
Four persons	6	25.0
Five persons	1	4.1
<u>Age of Household Head</u>		
18-25	14	58.3
26-34	10	41.7
<u>Sex of Household Head</u>		
Male	23	95.8
Female	1	4.1
<u>Education of Head</u>		
Attended high school, did not graduate	1	4.1
High school graduate	7	29.1
Attended college, did not graduate	11	45.8
College graduate	4	16.8
Advanced degree or post graduate study	1	4.1

The head of the household in most families was the male; in fact, twenty-three families (95.8 per cent) were headed by a male.

Information regarding education of the household head revealed that the largest per cent of households (45.8 per cent) had attended college, but did not graduate. Seven family heads (29.1 per cent) were high school graduates, while four family heads (16.8 per cent) had four-year college degrees.

### Financial Status of Subjects

Financial information obtained from the mobile home families included annual income and ownership status. Table II gives the data regarding the residents' financial information. The greatest number of families, seven families or 29.1 per cent, had annual incomes between \$6,000 and \$8,999. Incomes between \$9,000 and \$11,999 were reported by five families (20.8 per cent). Other income classifications are given in Table II.

TABLE II  
FINANCIAL STATUS OF SUBJECTS

Variable	Number (24)	Per Cent (100)
<u>Total Annual Income</u>		
Less than \$3,000	1	4.1
\$3,000 to \$5,999	2	8.3
\$6,000 to \$8,999	7	29.1
\$9,000 to \$11,999	5	20.8
\$12,000 to \$14,999	3	12.5
\$15,000 and over	4	16.6
No response	2	8.3

All 24 families listed the mobile home as their sole residence. All 24 families also owned their mobile homes, mobile home ownership being a basis for sample selection.

### Mobile Home Information

Complete data regarding information about the mobile homes in the survey are given in Table III. The most popular mobile home size in the survey was 14 feet wide by 60-80 feet long. Eight mobile homes (33.3 per cent) were in this size range. Four mobile homes (16.8 per cent) were 12 feet wide by 51-60 feet long. Thus, one third of the families surveyed expressed their preference for the largest single-wide units available.

As might be expected in a rural county, 20 mobile homes (83.3 per cent) were located outside mobile home parks. Four mobile homes (16.6 per cent) were situated in two mobile home parks. These responses are a result of the lack of available mobile home parks in Baca County.

Several reasons were given for choosing to live in a mobile home rather than an apartment or a house. The five classifications of reasons in descending order are as follows: no other housing available, the response given by 12 families (50 per cent); economy, mentioned by nine families (37.5 per cent); and mobility and desired ownership, each listed by three families (12.5 per cent). Only one family (4.1 per cent) preferred mobile home living.

The majority of the respondents were residing in new mobile homes. Sixteen families (66.4 per cent) were residents of new homes, while eight families (33.3 per cent) resided in used homes.

TABLE III  
MOBILE HOME INFORMATION

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>Size</u>		
Double wide	3	12.5
14' x 60' - 14' x 80'	8	33.3
12' x 61' - 12' x 70'	3	12.5
12' x 51' - 12' x 60'	4	16.6
12' x 41' - 12' x 50'	1	4.1
10' x 51' - 10' x 60'	3	12.5
10' x 32' - 10' x 40'	1	4.1
8' x 45'	1	4.1
<u>Location of Site</u>		
Inside mobile home park	4	16.6
Outside mobile home park	20	83.3
<u>Reasons for Choosing Mobile Home Rather than House or Apartment*</u>		
Economy	9	37.5
No other housing available	12	50.0
Mobility	3	12.5
Desired ownership	3	12.5
Prefer mobile home living	1	4.1
<u>Condition of Home</u>		
New	16	66.4
Used	8	33.3

\*Total will add to more than 100 per cent as respondents could cite more than one reason.



## Financing Information

Financing information included means of financing, difficulty obtaining financing, and difficulty maintaining financing. Complete data regarding financing information are given in Table IV.

TABLE IV  
FINANCING INFORMATION

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>Means of Financing*</u>		
Commercial bank	7	28.0
Finance company	8	32.0
Other	5	20.0
Not applicable	5	20.0
<u>Difficulties Obtaining Financing</u>		
No	18	75.0
Yes	1	4.1
Not applicable	5	20.8
<u>Difficulties Maintaining Financing</u>		
No	21	87.5
Not applicable	3	12.5

\*Total will add to more than 24 as one respondent gave more than one answer.

The principal means of financing mobile homes was the finance company. Eight families (33.3 per cent) used this method. The commercial bank was the response given by seven families (29.1 per cent).

Five families (20.8 per cent) gave other resources as their answers. Included in this category were two families who borrowed from savings and loan companies. Each of the remaining three responses in this category were varied. One family had paid cash for their mobile home, one had borrowed from a credit union, and one had borrowed from a family member after initially borrowing from a finance company. The "not applicable" category applies to the residents who did not respond because they had paid cash for their mobile homes.

Only one resident (4.1 per cent) indicated having any difficulty, explaining that the lending party considered him a poor risk because of his youthful age of 21. None of the families who had obtained financing expressed any difficulty maintaining the payments on their mobile homes.

#### Extra Features of Mobile Homes

Table V gives information about the extra features of the mobile homes in the study. Nineteen residents (79.1 per cent) had the ANSI Standard Seal on their mobile home, while only five (20.8 per cent) did not have the seal. This response indicates that many of the residents were aware that the ANSI Standard Seal shows that the unit was built according to standards which provide safety and performance qualities for the consumer.

Only two residents (8.3 per cent) indicated their mobile homes had none of the extra items listed on the questionnaire. The most common extra was concrete blocks for support, which 19 (79.1 per cent) of the mobile homes had. Other extras in declining order were: skirting (17 homes--70.8 per cent); steps with handrails and outdoor storage (nine homes--37.5 per cent); over-the-roof tie-downs (four homes--16.6 per

cent); concrete strips for wheels, outdoor storage, porches, and screened rooms (two homes--8.3 per cent); and awnings, garage, and carport (one home--4.1 per cent).

TABLE V  
EXTRA FEATURES OF MOBILE HOMES

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>ANSI Standard Seal</u>		
Yes	19	79.1
No	5	20.8
<u>Extras*</u>		
Concrete blocks for support	19	79.2
Skirting	17	70.8
Outdoor storage	9	37.5
Steps with handrails	9	37.5
Over-the-roof ties	4	16.6
Concrete strips for wheels	2	8.3
None	2	8.3
Patio	2	8.3
Porch	2	8.3
Screened rooms	2	8.3
Awnings	1	4.1
Carport	1	4.1
Garage	1	4.1

\*Total will add to more than 24 and 100 per cent as respondents could check more than one item.

### Factors Related to Mobility

Data related to mobility of residents are given in Table VI. The majority of mobile home residents, 13 families (54.1 per cent), had not moved their mobile home since purchasing it. One move had been made by six families (25 per cent); two moves had been made by four families (16.6 per cent); and only one family (4.1 per cent) had moved three times.

Nine families (37.5 per cent) indicated they had experienced no problems when moving their mobile homes. The problems which two residents (8.3 per cent) experienced were the cost of moving and the fact that the mobile home fell off the jack after the blocks were removed. One resident recommended hiring a professional mover when moving.

When asked if they had plans to move from or sell their mobile homes, nine of the families (37.5 per cent) indicated they did not plan to do so. Six families (25 per cent) planned to move or sell after a period of time from one to three years. Five families (20.8 per cent) did not know their future plans for their mobile homes and three families (12.5 per cent) planned to move within one year.

The majority of the families (58.3 per cent) did not know if they would move, when questioned about their future plans. Eight families (33.3 per cent) indicated they planned to move into a house they would own, while only two families (8.3 per cent) planned to move into another mobile home. The need for more space was given by 37.5 per cent of the respondents as their reason for wanting to move. More permanent housing was desired by 33.3 per cent. Only one family (4.1 per cent) wanted to move because they did not like living in a mobile home.

TABLE VI  
MOBILITY INFORMATION

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>Number of moves of mobile home</u>		
None	13	54.1
One	6	25.0
Two	4	16.6
Three	1	4.1
<u>Problems moving</u>		
Yes	2	8.3
No	9	37.5
<u>Plan to sell or move</u>		
No	9	37.5
Do not know	5	20.8
Within 1 year	3	12.5
1 up to 3 years	6	25.0
No response	1	4.1
<u>Plan to move into</u>		
Another mobile home	2	8.3
A house resident would own	8	33.3
Do not know	14	58.3
<u>Reasons for wanting to move</u>		
Need for more space	9	37.5
Desire more permanent housing	8	33.3
Do not like living in mobile home	1	4.1
Not applicable	6	25.0

### Reasons for Choosing Mobile Home Site

The residents were asked to rank seven reasons for choosing their mobile home site. The average was obtained by adding the number of each ranking for each choice and dividing by the total number of respondents.

The first choice given by residents for choosing their mobile home site was its closeness to location of work. Other reasons in descending order were: climate and pleasant surroundings, closeness to relatives, proximity to school and church, medical facilities, recreational facilities, and library facilities. Information concerning the reasons for choosing the mobile home site is given in Table VII.

TABLE VII  
REASONS FOR CHOOSING MOBILE HOME SITE

Reason for choosing site	Average rank*
Close to location of work	1.27
Climate and pleasant surroundings	2.75
Closeness to relatives	4.00
Proximity to school and church	4.05
Medical facilities	4.10
Recreational facilities	5.20
Library facilities	5.95

\* Rankings 1-7 were used.

### Reasons for Choosing to Live in Mobile Home

The residents were asked to rank eight reasons for choosing to live in a mobile home. The average was obtained by adding the number of each ranking for each choice and dividing by the total number of respondents. Table VIII gives information concerning the reasons for choosing to live in a mobile home.

TABLE VIII  
REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO LIVE IN MOBILE HOME

Reason for choosing mobile home living	Average rank*
Home ownership	2.17
Economy	2.67
Clean, new, well-equipped housing	3.74
No other housing available	4.08
Mobility	4.38
Easy maintenance	4.58
Prefer mobile home style of living	6.04
No desire to invest in real estate	6.08

\*Rankings 1-8 were used.

Home ownership was the leading reason for choosing to live in a mobile home. Other choices in descending order were: economy; clean, new, well-equipped housing; no other housing available; mobility, easy

maintenance; prefer mobile home style of living; and no desire to invest in real estate. Only a slight difference was indicated between the average ranking of 4.38 for mobility and the average ranking of 4.58 given to easy maintenance. There was also little difference between the average ranking of 6.04 for mobile home living and the average ranking of 6.08 given to having no desire to invest in real estate. Therefore, economic factors were the leading reasons for choosing mobile home living, while there was much less concern for mobility, care, preference of mobile home living, and investments.

#### Advantages of Mobile Home Living

Residents were asked to explain the factor they liked best about mobile home living. Data regarding these responses are given in Table IX. Convenience was the answer given by nine residents. Other answers in descending order were: ease of cleaning, mobility, economy, coordinated furnishings, and size of rooms and room arrangement. One resident considered his mobile home convenient for his way of life while eight others liked the convenience of having the mobile home clean and ready for living when purchased. One resident mentioned that the resident can take his home with him when he moves and say it is his own. Thus, the main advantage of mobile home living was the convenience factor of having a unit ready for occupancy upon purchase.



TABLE IX  
ADVANTAGES OF MOBILE HOME LIVING

Variable*	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
Convenience	9	37.5
Easy-to-clean	7	29.1
Economy	5	20.8
Mobility	5	20.8
Furnishings	5	20.8
Room size and room arrangement	4	16.6

\*Total will add to more than 24 and 100 per cent as respondents could give more than one response.

#### Disadvantages of Mobile Home Living

Ten different responses were given when the residents were asked to explain the greatest disadvantage of mobile home living. Lack of storage space and the weather were each given as responses by six residents (25 per cent). Other responses given in descending order were: lack of living space (20.8 per cent), noise (12.5 per cent), unable to remodel or expand (8.3 per cent), vibrations (8.3 per cent), safety (8.3 per cent), the fact that it is a mobile home (8.3 per cent), mobile home parks (4.1 per cent), and difficulty cooling and heating (4.1 per cent). Table X gives the data regarding the disadvantages of mobile home living.

When asked if they had experienced any problems during storms, twenty families (83.3 per cent) responded they had had no problems,

while four families (16.6 per cent) reported they had experienced problems. The problems mentioned were that the heat was inadequate when the weather was very cold, the windows have a tendency to leak, the roof leaked, and hail dented the exterior finish. As a result, the leading disadvantages of mobile home living were lack of storage space, weather, and lack of living space.

TABLE X  
DISADVANTAGES OF MOBILE HOME LIVING

Variable*	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
Lack of storage space	6	25.0
Weather	6	25.0
Lack of living space	5	20.8
Noise	3	12.5
Unable to remodel or expand	2	8.3
Vibrations	2	8.3
Safety	2	8.3
Fact that it is mobile home	2	8.3
Mobile home parks	1	4.1
Difficulty cooling and heating	1	4.1

\*Total will add to more than 24 and 100 per cent as respondents could give more than one response.

## Knowledge Needed Prior to Mobile Home and Lot Selection

In order to improve the educational materials regarding mobile homes, the residents were asked to suggest factors about selecting a mobile home, a mobile home site, and living in a mobile home which people should know before moving into a mobile home. Table XI gives complete data on this.

The residents overwhelmingly listed construction as the most important item people should consider (66.4 per cent). Size and space (20.8 per cent), knowing the brand name and dealer (12.5 per cent), and avoiding buying used mobile homes (4.1 per cent) were also mentioned as important considerations when advising potential owners of mobile homes.

When asked to suggest factors to include if one were teaching people to select a site, knowledge of available utilities was the response given by the largest number of people, nine residents (37.5 per cent). Permanent neighbors and convenience to schools and work were answers listed by six residents (25 per cent). Other responses included: level ground (16.6 per cent), weather protection (12.5 per cent), landscaping (12.5 per cent), individuals should own their own lot (12.5 per cent), cleanliness (8.3 per cent), easy to park mobile home (8.3 per cent), and determining if the rent price included the price of utilities (4.1 per cent). Thus, the respondents felt an economic factor, the available utilities, mattered a great deal in site selection.

Eleven different answers were given as advice for people who are considering mobile home living. Some responses were conflicting

depending upon the resident's satisfaction with his mobile home. Several residents expressed the idea that mobile home living is very comfortable and that it is not much different from a house if the home is good quality. The leading response given by seven residents (29.1 per cent) regarding advice for potential mobile home residents was that the new residents should be concerned about the design features of the mobile home. Four residents (16.6 per cent) advised that mobile home living was unlike a house, while another four residents felt the need for knowledge about the lack of storage. Detailed descriptive information is given in Table XI.

#### Satisfaction Ratings of Features of Mobile Homes

Twenty-two items were adapted from the Meadows survey (18) to form a rating scale of satisfaction with mobile home features. A total of 528 responses by 24 residents were made for this rating scale. Responses of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" were grouped under the heading of positive. "Not satisfied" was grouped as negative and "not applicable" responses were grouped under the "not applicable" heading. Table XII shows the resulting information in the form of percentages of total responses.

It is apparent that approximately 78 per cent of the responses indicated positive satisfaction toward mobile home features. It seems, therefore, that the population tended to be satisfied with mobile home living insofar as it can be reflected from satisfaction with mobile home design features for space, furnishings, storage, upkeep, and temperature control systems.

TABLE XI  
 KNOWLEDGE NEEDED PRIOR TO MOBILE HOME  
 AND LOT SELECTION

Variable	Number (24)	Per cent (100)
<u>Information Needed for Mobile Home Selection*</u>		
Construction	16	66.4
Size and space	5	20.8
Knowing brand name and dealer	3	12.5
Avoid used mobile homes	1	4.1
<u>Information Needed for Mobile Home Site Selection*</u>		
Utilities	9	37.5
Permanent neighbors	6	25.0
Convenience to school and work	6	25.0
Level ground	4	16.6
Weather protection	3	12.5
Landscaping	3	12.5
Individual's own lot	3	12.5
Cleanliness	2	8.3
Easy to park mobile home	2	8.3
Price of utilities included in rent payment	1	4.1
<u>Information Needed Prior to Mobile Home Living*</u>		
Design	7	29.1
Unlike a house	4	16.6
Lack of storage space	4	16.6
Noise	2	8.3
Good storage space	2	8.3
Fixtures not standardized	1	4.1
Temperature change	1	4.1
Heating and cooling difficulties	1	4.1
Care needed to improve resale value	1	4.1
Level and solid	1	4.1
Mobility	1	4.1

\*Total will add to more than 24 and 100 per cent as respondents could give more than one response.

TABLE XII  
SATISFACTION WITH MOBILE HOME LIVING

Satisfaction	No. of responses (528)	Per cent of total
Positive	413	78.2
Negative	86	16.3
Not applicable	29	5.5

By grouping the responses into positive and negative categories, the computed data show that over two thirds (67.3 per cent) of the population were satisfied with the space features of mobile homes. Satisfaction with the quality of mobile home furnishings was expressed by 80.4 per cent of the residents.

Almost complete approval (97.2 per cent) was expressed for the time, energy, and money involved in the upkeep of the mobile home. Slightly over four fifths (81.2 per cent) of the residents were satisfied with the heating and cooling systems of their mobile homes.

Adequate space for hobbies, entertaining, and overall storage as well as quality of furniture were the features with which residents were somewhat less satisfied. Therefore, it seems that there are features of mobile homes which could be improved for greater satisfaction. The percentages of the responses for satisfaction ratings of the mobile home features are given in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII  
SATISFACTION RATINGS OF MOBILE HOME FEATURES

Variable	Number of responses	(Percentages)		
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
<u>Space</u>				
Dressing	23	20.8	45.8	29.1
Individual privacy	23	37.5	50.0	8.3
Sleeping	23	41.7	45.8	8.3
Children's play	21	12.5	45.8	29.1
Eating	23	37.5	41.7	16.6
Entertaining	23	29.1	25.0	41.7
Hobbies	21	8.3	29.1	50.0
<u>Qualities of furnishings</u>				
Furniture	19	8.3	25.0	45.8
Floor coverings	23	37.5	58.3	4.1
Interior wall materials	24	33.3	58.3	8.3
Draperies and curtains	23	12.5	62.5	20.8
Exterior siding materials	24	16.6	83.3	0.0
Exterior design	24	25.0	75.0	0.0
Kitchen appliances	24	41.7	50.0	8.3
Laundry appliances	17	29.1	41.7	0.0
Bathroom fixtures	24	16.6	70.8	12.5
<u>Storage</u>				
Overall	23	20.8	33.3	41.7
<u>Upkeep</u>				
Time involved	24	25.0	75.0	0.0
Energy involved	23	16.6	70.8	4.1
Money involved	24	33.3	66.4	0.0
<u>Heating and Cooling Systems</u>				
Heating	24	33.3	58.3	8.3
Cooling	22	20.8	50.0	20.8

## Teaching Unit on Mobile Home Living

By using the data in this chapter, the following teaching unit on mobile home living was devised. The objectives and learning experiences are direct results of the findings.

UNIT: MOBILE HOME LIVING

LEVEL: HOME ECONOMICS III AND IV

SUGGESTED TIME: APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEKS

OVERALL BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

- I. Recognizes that values and needs of families differ in housing.
- II. Develops judgment concerning the factors to be considered in the selection of a mobile home.
- III. Develops ability in planning the use of resources for securing housing for a family.
- IV. Identifies factors involved in selecting an appropriate mobile home site.
- V. Recognizes the value of the care and maintenance of the mobile home.

Concepts and Specific Objectives	Learning Experiences*
<p>I. Mobile Home Living</p> <p>-the student will be able to compare reasons for choosing mobile home living in order to determine the most important factors which influence selection.</p> <p>-the student will be able to list the characteristics of mobile home residents regarding age, family size and educational background.</p>	<p>Opinionaire (A) to pre-test students' knowledge of mobile home living.</p> <p>Read: page 373 (B), 140-143 (C), page 348 (D), 21-23 (E), and pages 6-8 (F).</p> <p>View transparencies with the results of Baca County study regarding demographic information and reasons for choosing mobile home living.</p> <p><u>Evaluation</u> - students develop list</p>

\*References and resource material used in preparation of Unit are identified by letter and listed on page 52.



-the student will be able to list and discuss the limitations of mobile home living, particularly regarding space for hobbies, qualities of furniture, storage space, living space, and space for entertaining.

of advantages and disadvantages of mobile home living.

View film: Their Reasons Are Their Own (G). Students explain why families of different lifestyles choose mobile home living. (13 min.)

Evaluation - students keep a notebook for the unit which includes notes from film and class discussions.

Interview mobile home occupants and ask them to list advantages, disadvantages, and problems unique to mobile home living.

Evaluation - students report findings to class.

## II. Selecting a Mobile Home

-the student will be able to identify terms related to mobile home construction and design features.

Students use flash cards to study mobile home construction and design terms (A).

Evaluation - students identify terms by completing crossword puzzle developed by researcher.

Handout: Flash Facts on Mobile, Sectional and Modular Homes (H).

Bulletin Board: "Follow All Clues" (I). Girl peering through looking glass at tracks which represent the points one should remember in mobile home selection.

View transparencies with the results of the Baca County study regarding the satisfaction with mobile home design features.

-the student will be able to distinguish between standard features and extra features of mobile homes.

Evaluation - given a list of mobile home features the student will distinguish between the standard and extra mobile home features.

-the student will be able to explain mobile home standards.

Read: page 5 (H), pages 6-9 (J), and pages 31-34 (F). Students outline in notebook buyer protection standards which are available.

- the student will be able to identify qualities of dependable mobile home dealers.
- Read: page 14 (K), and 21-27 (E). Answer questions 1 and 2 on page 30 (E) in notebook for evaluation.
- III. Costs of Buying and Insuring a Mobile Home
- Read: pages 16-17 (K), 61-64 (F), page 24 (E), pages 42-44 (L), pages 4-6 (J), and page 6 (H).
- the student will be able to explain type of financing and insurance for mobile homes.
- Guest speaker to discuss various means of financing mobile homes.
- Evaluation - students prepare and present reports on types of mobile home financing and insurance.
- IV. Selecting Mobile Home Sites
- Read pages 11-14 (J), 66-68 (F), and 8-9 (H). Answer questions 3-5 on page 30 (E) for evaluation.
- the student will be able to identify the various types of mobile home sites.
- Read page 174 (L).
- the student will be able to distinguish desirable qualities of mobile home sites including location, government regulations, availability of utilities, and weather and safety protection.
- View transparencies with the results of the Baca County study regarding reasons for choosing mobile home site.
- the student will be able to explain the reasons why mobility of mobile homes is limited.
- Interview city and county officials to gain information about zoning restrictions, building codes, taxes in local community, and special assessments of mobile homes.
- Develop check list for desirable site locations including zoning restrictions, building codes, taxes and special assessments, available utilities, and weather and safety protection.
- Class discussion regarding factors indicating mobile homes and mobile home sites are commonly selected on a permanent basis rather than for mobility.
- Evaluate various mobile home parks and lots for desirability using check list.
- V. Care and Maintenance of Mobile Homes
- Read (L). Answer review questions in notebook.

-students will be able to identify factors involving interior and exterior maintenance of mobile homes.

Evaluation - Use Mobile Home Buyers Check List (J) for case study.

Opinionaire (A) to determine changes in students' knowledge of mobile homes.

Listed below are the references and resource material used in this unit.

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- (G) Modern Talking Pictures, Inc.  
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- (H) Flash Facts on Mobile, Sectional and Modular Homes. Chantilly, Virginia: Mobile Home Manufacturers Association, 1973.
- (I) A Resource Guide for Housing. Division of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education. Tallahassee, Florida, 1968.
- (J) Facts on Mobile Home Selection. Washington, D. C.: Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. 1973.
- (K) Mobile Home Life. Chicago: Mobile Home Manufacturers Association.
- (L) Owner's Guide to Mobile Home Maintenance. Chicago: Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, 1969.

## Summary

The findings of this study indicate a majority of the residents were young adults between the ages 18-25. The most frequent size of family group living in these mobile homes was the three-member family. All except one of the heads of the household in the study were male. The largest percentage of the heads of household had attended college, but did not graduate. The average income indicated by the largest percentage of residents was \$6,000 - \$8,999. All of the residents owned their mobile homes. The most popular mobile home size was 14 feet wide by 60-80 feet long. Because of a lack of mobile home parks in the community, a majority of the residents parked their mobile homes on private lots.

Homeownership, economy, and lack of other available housing were the leading factors given by residents for choosing to live in mobile homes. The most common means of financing mobile homes was the finance company. Only a minimum amount of difficulty was experienced in obtaining mobile home financing.

Mobility was not a leading factor for choosing mobile home living because a majority of the residents had not moved their mobile homes. Few problems were given by those who had moved their homes.

Closeness to location of work was the leading reason given for choosing the mobile home site. Convenience was considered the greatest advantage of mobile home living while lack of storage space and weather were listed as the greatest disadvantages.

It was found that the majority of the respondents in the population seemed to be satisfied with the design features of the mobile homes in which they were living. The majority of mobile home owners surveyed

indicated that if potential buyers were aware of the positive features of mobile home living, such as parking outside a mobile home park and easy maintenance, the satisfaction of the owners would increase. The leading dissatisfaction of the residents was lack of space for hobbies, quality of furniture, storage space, living space, and space for entertaining.

The responses of the residents indicated there were needs for additional curriculum to be taught to young people who are potential mobile home owners. The findings of this study were used to devise a teaching unit on mobile home living which includes main sections devoted to mobile home living, selecting a mobile home, costs of buying and insuring a mobile home, selecting a mobile home site, and care and maintenance of mobile homes. Objectives and learning experiences directly related to the findings of the study were included in each main section.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary and Conclusions

Mobile homes are becoming increasingly popular as residences for American families. In order to choose these mobile homes, young adults should possess knowledge concerning mobile home selection. The purpose of this study was to determine opinions young adults have toward mobile homes and mobile home living in order to determine the content and the objectives in Home Economics housing classes.

Young adult mobile home residents between the ages 18-34 in Baca County, which is a rural area in southeastern Colorado, were chosen as the population for study. A total of 24 residents responded to the questionnaire developed for the study. In responding to the questionnaire, participants answered 23 questions about family size, financial information, and educational background as well as information about their mobile homes. In addition, 22 questions were included regarding the residents' satisfaction with particular design features of their mobile homes. A rating scale having a possible choice of four answers: very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied, and not applicable was answered regarding the 22 design features.

The findings indicate mobility is not a major factor in residents' choosing to live in mobile homes. A majority of the residents had not moved their mobile home since purchasing it. Knowledge of the

construction of the mobile home was given by 66.4 per cent of the residents as the most important item people should consider before purchasing a mobile home. The findings indicate that prior to selecting a mobile home site residents should have adequate knowledge of available utilities.

A comparison of characteristics of Baca County mobile home living with data in HUD's (28) and Meadows' (18) surveys revealed both similarities and differences. Meadows' findings indicated the greatest number of residents had an annual income of \$3,000 - \$5,999, while findings of the Baca County study indicated the annual income of residents was \$6,000 - \$8,999. The most common size of mobile homes varied slightly from the Meadows study to the Baca County study. The Meadows study found 12 feet by 51-60 feet to be the most popular size, while the Baca County study found the most common size to be 14 feet by 60-80 feet. The residents in Meadows' study preferred mobile home style of living as the leading reason for choosing a mobile home, while the Baca County residents gave as their leading reason the desire for home ownership.

The findings of the HUD survey indicated the largest group of households consisted of two-member families, while three-member families were most common in the Meadows and Baca County surveys. The findings of this study indicated 45.8 per cent of the household heads had attended college, but did not graduate, while only 16.3 per cent of the residents in the HUD survey and 14.1 per cent in the Meadows survey had attended at least some college. The majority of mobile homes in the HUD survey were located inside mobile home parks, while in both the present study and the Meadows survey, the majority of residents

resided outside mobile home parks.

The data from the Baca County study revealed that occupants of mobile homes were generally satisfied with the design features of the mobile home in which they were living. Adequate overall storage was the feature with which Baca County residents were less satisfied, while furniture quality and space features were of greater concern to residents in the Meadows study.

As housing costs continue to increase, an increasing number of families will be able to reside in a dwelling close to their employment while enjoying the benefits of home ownership. Mobile homes seem to be a successful means to adequately house our increasing population with less expense. In the future, if satisfactions from mobile homes are to increase, it is apparent that educators must continue to provide students with needed information about mobile homes as a housing choice.

The findings of this study were used directly in determining the objectives and content of the teaching unit regarding mobile home living included in Chapter IV. The researcher plans to use the unit to teach housing classes to home economics students and adjustments will be made after teaching the unit.

#### Further Recommendations

This researcher makes the following suggestions:

1. More complete information about mobile homes should be added to existing textbooks and educational materials.
2. Mobile home information should be included in housing and consumer education curricula. The time and emphasis placed on educating young adults about mobile homes should be increased.
3. Mobile home manufacturers might use findings of this study as one reason to improve such design features as storage, living space, and weather protection of mobile homes.



4. Manufacturers and retailers might continue to compile and expand educational materials for study by potential mobile home residents.

This chapter included a summary of the study, conclusions from the data, and recommendations for further use of the information presented. It is hoped that the findings from this study may be used by educators and mobile home manufacturers as a guide in providing housing education for families in the future.

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APPENDIX

BACA COUNTY SURVEY OF MOBILE HOMES

1. Please fill in the following information.

	Name of persons living in this mobile home		Exact relationship to head of family	Male	Female	Age
	LAST	FIRST				
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

If more than 5 persons live in this mobile home, write the additional names on the back of this page.

2. What was the highest grade or year of regular school completed by the head of the household? Circle the highest school year completed.

- Elementary School (Years) . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- High School (Years) . . . . . 1 2 3 4
- College (Years) . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

3. Do you live in this mobile home most of the year? Put an X before your answer.

- Yes, my mobile home is my sole residence.
- Yes, but I also have another home.
- No, I have another home in which I live most of the year.
- No, other - Explain on the line below.

4. Was your mobile home new or used when you moved into it? Put an X before your answer.

- New
- Used

5. Do you own or rent your mobile home? Put an X before your answer.

- Own or are buying
- Rented for cash - Skip to question 9.
- No cash rent - Explain on the line below.

6. If you are financing your mobile home, how was the mobile home financed? Put an X before your answer.

- Commercial bank
- Finance company
- Other - Explain on the line below.

7. If you are financing your mobile home, did you have any problems obtaining financing. Put an X before your answer.

- No
- Yes, Explain on the line below.

8. If you own or are buying your mobile home, do you have any problems maintaining payments?

- No
- Yes - Explain on the line below.

9. a. Do you plan to sell or more out of this mobile home? Put an X before your answer.
- No - Skip to question 10
  - Do not know - Skip to question 10
  - Yes, within 1 year
  - Yes, 1 up to 3 years
  - Yes, 3 or more years
- b. If you plan to move, do you plan to move into
- Another mobile home
  - An apartment
  - A house you could rent
  - A house you could own
  - Other - Explain on the line below
- 
- Do not know
- c. What are your reasons for wanting to move? Put an X before your answer. (Mark as many answers as may apply)
- Need more space
  - Desire more permanent type of housing
  - Do not like neighborhood
  - Do not like living in a mobile home
  - Other - explain on the line below
- 
10. Does the construction of your mobile home comply with ANSI Standards 119.1 for Mobile homes? (A silver Standards Seal will be displayed near the front door) Put an X before your answer.
- Yes  No
11. Which of the following extras does your mobile home have? Put an X before your answer. (Mark as many answers as may apply)
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the following       | <input type="checkbox"/> Carport         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steps with handrails        | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor storage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skirting                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Patio           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete blocks for support | <input type="checkbox"/> Awnings         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over-the-roof "ties"        | <input type="checkbox"/> Porch           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete strips for wheels  | <input type="checkbox"/> Screened rooms  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage                      |  |
12. The following question relates to your reasons for choosing your mobile home site. Rank the items starting with 1 as first choice, 2 for second choice, 3 for third choice, up to 7 as last choice.
- Close to location of work
  - Climate and pleasant surroundings
  - Recreational facilities
  - Proximity to school and church
  - Medical facilities
  - Library facilities
  - Closeness to relatives
13. The following question relates to your reason for choosing to live in a mobile home. Rank the items starting with 1 as first choice, 2 as second choice, 3 for third choice, up to 8 for last choice.
- Mobility
  - Clean, new, well-equipped housing
  - Easy maintenance
  - Economy
  - Homeownership
  - No other housing available
  - No desire to invest in real estate
  - Prefer mobile home style of living

14. What was the income in 1972 for ALL members of this household from employment? Put an X before your answer.

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> \$9,000 to \$11,999
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$3,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12,000 to \$15,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000 to \$5,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 and over
<input type="checkbox"/> \$6,000 to \$8,999	

15. Is your mobile home site inside or outside a mobile home park? Put an X before your answer.

Inside  Outside

16. Why do you live in a mobile home rather than in a more conventional dwelling such as a house or apartment? Explain on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the approximate size of your present mobile home? Put an X before your answer.

<input type="checkbox"/> Double wide	<input type="checkbox"/> 12' x 41' - 12' x 50'
<input type="checkbox"/> Expandable	<input type="checkbox"/> 12' x 32' - 12' x 40'
<input type="checkbox"/> 14' x 60' - 14' - 80'	<input type="checkbox"/> 10' x 50' - 10' x 60'
<input type="checkbox"/> 12' x 61' - 12' - 70'	<input type="checkbox"/> 10' x 41' - 10' x 50'
<input type="checkbox"/> 12' x 51' - 12' x 60'	<input type="checkbox"/> 10' x 32' - 10' x 40'

18. How many times have you moved this mobile home? (Do not count the move to the first site of your mobile home when you bought it) Put an X before your answer.

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Three
<input type="checkbox"/> One	<input type="checkbox"/> Four
<input type="checkbox"/> Two	

19. If you have moved, did you have any problems when moving? Put an X before your answer.

Yes  No

If yes, please explain on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Have you encountered special problems during storms? Put an X before your answer.

Yes  No

If yes, please explain on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_

21. On the line below, explain the best thing about mobile home living.

\_\_\_\_\_

22. On the line below, please explain the worst thing about mobile home living.

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Before moving into a mobile home, what should people know about:

a. selecting a mobile home? \_\_\_\_\_

b. selecting a site for their mobile home? \_\_\_\_\_

c. living in a mobile home? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your mobile home?

Directions: At the left of each statement are four choices. Please circle the appropriate number representing your choice.

- | 4              | 3         | 2             | 1              |  |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|--|
| Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Not Satisfied | Not Applicable |  |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 1. Adequate space for individual privacy.          |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 2. Adequate space for dressing.                    |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 3. Adequate space for sleeping.                    |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 4. Adequate space for children's play.             |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 5. Adequate space for eating.                      |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 6. Adequate space for entertaining guests.         |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 7. Adequate space for hobbies.                     |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 8. Quality of original furniture.                  |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 9. Quality of original floor coverings.            |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 10. Quality of original interior wall materials.   |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 11. Quality of original draperies and curtains.    |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 12. Quality of original exterior siding materials. |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 13. Design and general appearance of exterior.     |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 14. Quality of original kitchen appliances.        |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 15. Quality of original laundry appliances.        |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 16. Quality of original bathroom fixtures.         |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 17. Adequate overall storage.                      |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 18. Amount of time involved in upkeep.             |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 19. Amount of everygy involved in upkeep.          |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 20. Amount of money involved in upkeep.            |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 21. Adequate heating system.                       |
| 4 3 2 1        |           |               |                | 22. Adequate cooling system.                       |

VITA 2

Sharon Crites Christie

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OPINIONS OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS IN  
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