

MOBILE HOMES: A REVIEW OF THE FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY ASPECTS OF TRAILER LIVING AS
IT HAS DEVELOPED IN THE
UNITED STATES

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Scope of Study: Since 1930 trailer living has taken an important place in the United States as temporary, semi-permanent, permanent, or non-residential housing. There has been little research on this subject although trailer living has had definite implications for family and community life. The purpose of this study is to review the literature and observe the problems for the family and the community brought about by this type of housing. The major sources of material consisted of The New York Times, periodicals, and data from the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association.

Findings and Conclusions: There is evidence that mobile living is a permanent way of life in the United States, and there are three groups of people in particular who find that trailer living suits their needs. The first group, permanent or semi-permanent, are those who move frequently on the job, are students or are retired. The next group is composed of vacationists who are the temporary mobile home users, and the last group uses trailers, not for dwelling but for business or professional purposes. These people have found an economical, comfortable and movable shelter. The manufacturers of trailers have tried to better conditions for trailerites by adapting a code of standards in mobile home construction and by using technological developments have added the conveniences found in conventional homes. The modern family enjoys more privacy than the family living in the early trailer. Considering the three phases of the family, perhaps only the expanding family with several children experiences difficulty by trailer living. The Park Division of the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Assn. has cooperated with the trailer family by supplying plans for better parks which supply the necessary facilities for sanitary living. The community officials are changing their attitudes toward trailerites and are placing trailer parks in a more desirable section of town. The social stigmas of owning trailers have more or less been removed, and today 3,480,000 people live in mobile homes.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL

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PREFACE

Since 1930 trailer living has taken an increasingly important place in the United States as temporary, semi-permanent, permanent, or non-residential housing. There has been relatively little research on this subject even though mobile home living has had definite implications on family and community life. The purpose of this study is to review the literature written and at the same time observe the problems for the family and the community brought about by this type of housing. The major sources of material consisted of The New York Times, periodicals, and data from the Mobile Home Manufacturers Association as only three or four book references were available for this study.

Indebtedness is acknowledged to Dr. Sara Smith Sutker and Miss Leevera Pepin for their valuable interest and guidance without which this problem could not have been completed. Appreciation is also expressed to Mr. Alton Juhlin for his patience and assistance in the library. Finally, but of prime importance, the author is indebted to her husband, Charles, who gave encouragement as well as being the photographer of charts, figures and illustrations found in the paper and to her daughter, Wilma Jean Graves, who typed the manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE HOMES

The use of trailers drawn behind passenger cars as a mode of living while touring began with the development of the house car. (16-p.1) From this beginning, the trailer idea has developed into the relatively permanently parked mobile home of today.

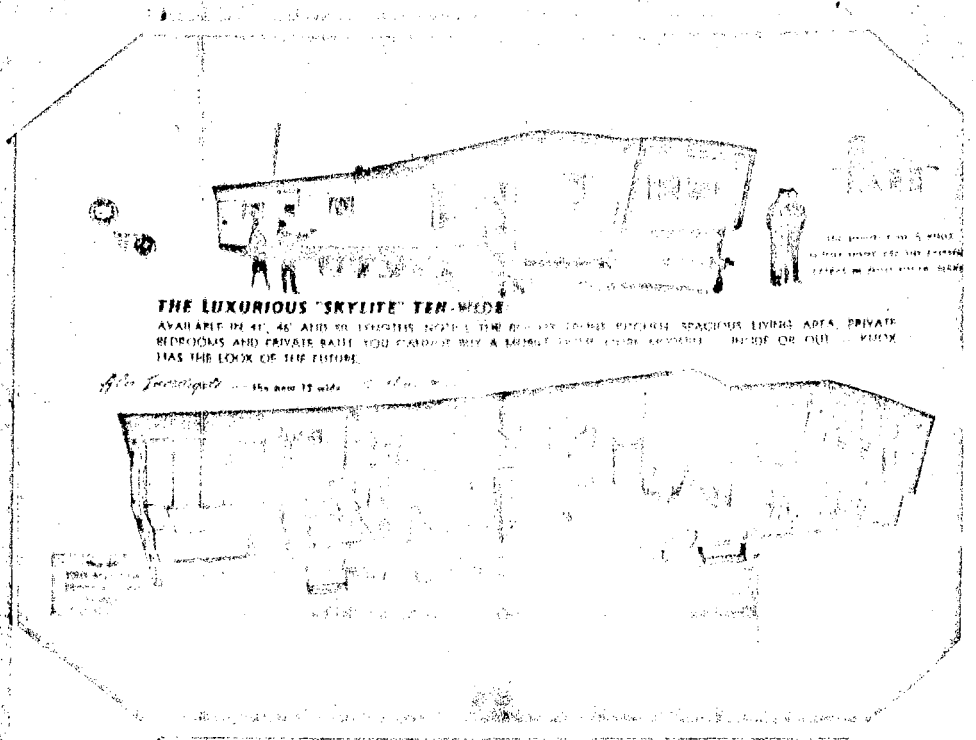
There are several reasons for the phenomenal development in the United States of this motorized offspring from the horse-drawn "caravan" of England. (38-p.1) Even in our early colonial days the spirit of adventure and the desire to see new places were the start of today's great tourist business. (58-p.13) The development of our country by the early American pioneers was by means of Conestoga wagons which transported the family with all its household effects. The practicability of the automobile and the improvement of roads were the two factors most responsible for the popularity of trailers for traveling about the country. (38-pp.1-5) In 1959 the number of units in the United States totaled 148,600 and was valued at \$690,850,000. (50-p.1)

The change in trailers from the models of the early period has been great. A comparison of the present mobile

dwellings with those of the past should demonstrate this amazing development. The interiors of these mobile homes and travel trailers are very similar to those of small conventional housing units. (Figs 1 and 2) The trailers are much larger than were the earlier models, and the floor of the mobile home is divided into rooms by the use of wall partitions with doors as well as sliding panels. (59-p.163) Generally, a hall leads to the various rooms. The room arrangements vary, with some models having a broken and raised floor line between the living room and kitchen area to create the illusion of two separate areas. (47-pp.40-42) Others have a two-story arrangement, with two bedrooms and a bath in the upper section and the kitchen, living room, and bath in the lower. (58:108) In order to have more room without sacrificing mobility, many trailers have a section that can be telescoped out to one side after reaching the parking site. (Fig. 3)

Over 90% of the present mobile dwellings are equipped with bathroom facilities. The smaller units have bathrooms containing shower stalls and a washstand. When mobile homes are large enough, an especially designed tub (23x36 inches) or a separate shower can be installed. As a result of many dealer requests, larger models are equipped with standard tubs. In most mobile homes, drains from the sink, wash basin, toilet and tub or shower are joined into one outlet which carries the waste water into the park sewer system.

Most modern mobile homes are heated with oil burning



A



B

Figure 1.--A, Large modern mobile home unit shown with room arrangement; B, typical spacious living area.

Source: A, Knox Homes Corporation
B, Aluminum Company of America

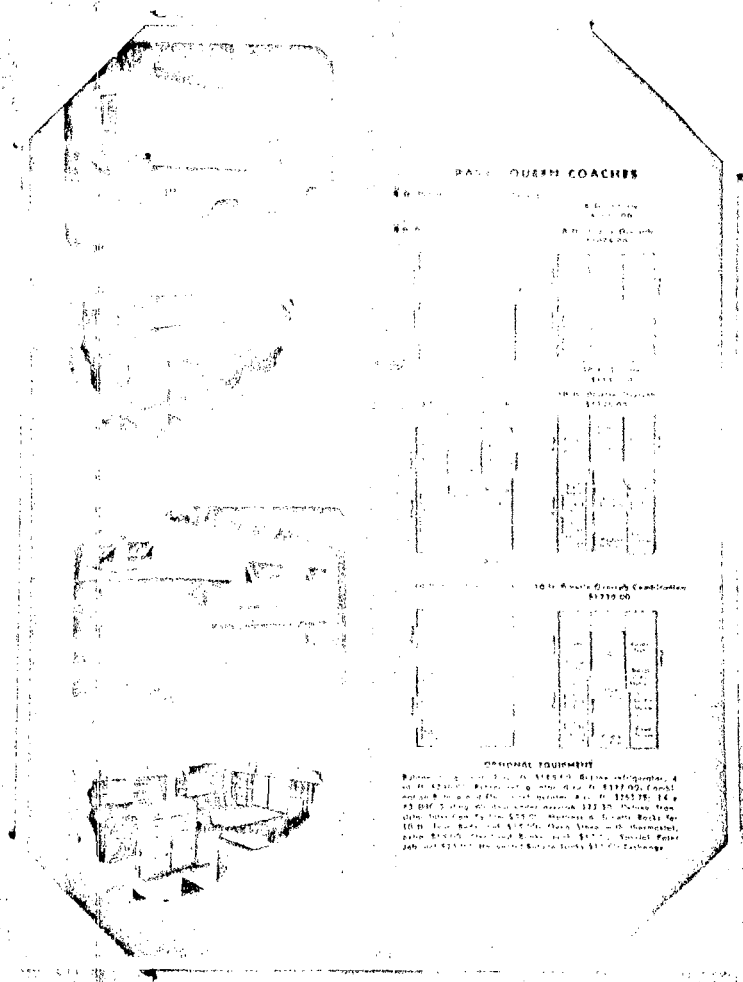


Figure 2.--Travel coach mounted on pick-up truck. A very versatile unit for vacationers--interiors similar to travel trailers.

Source: Travel Queen Coach Company

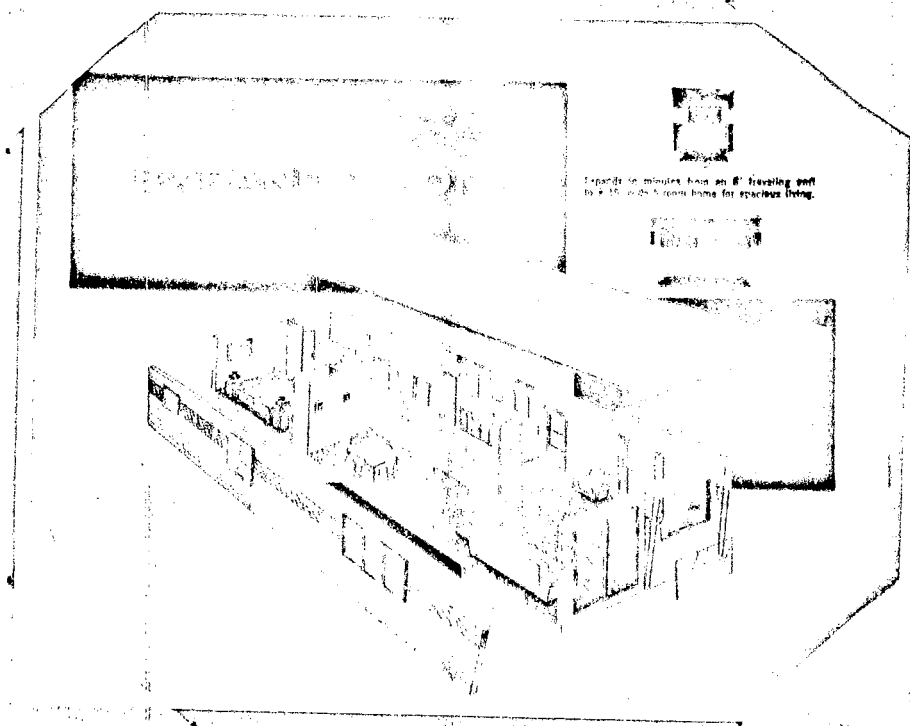


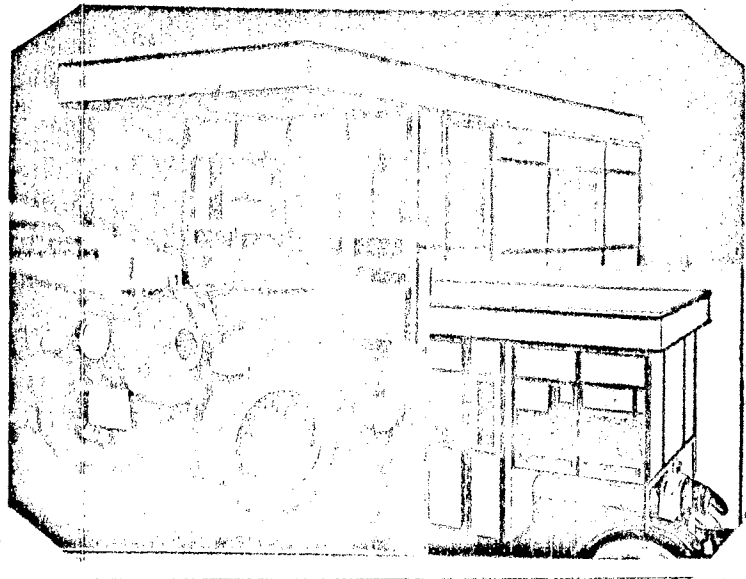
Figure 3.4--Expansion-type mobile home which expands to 15 feet in width after reaching the camping site.

Source: Budger Manufacturing Company, Inc.

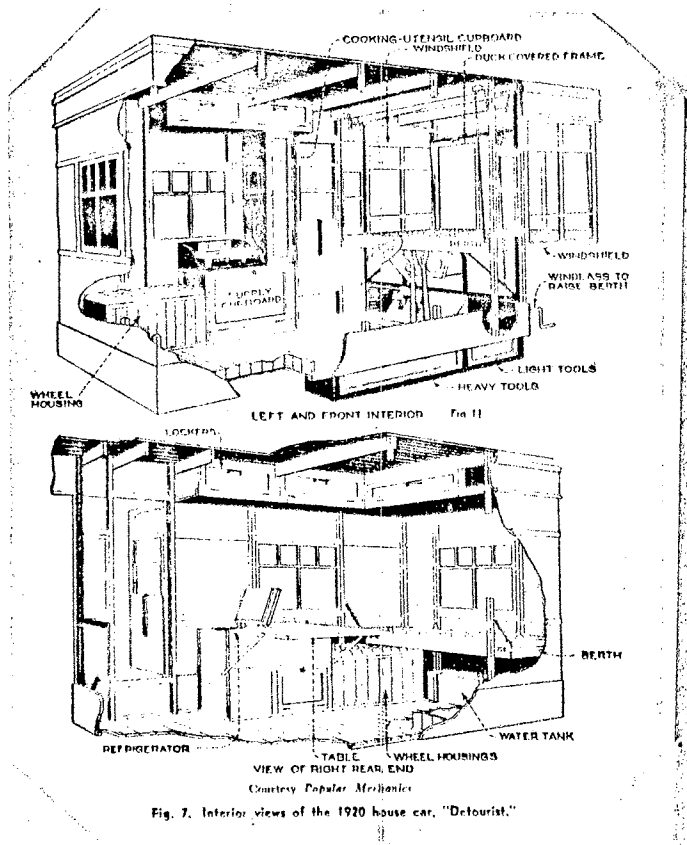
units controlled by electric thermostats. A few manufacturers install petroleum gas heaters supplied from fuel tanks mounted beside the mobile home or on the towing hitch. Generally, an air duct equipped with a blower supplies warm air from the heater, which is usually located in the living room, to the rear bedrooms and bathroom. The high cost of electricity in some areas has eliminated its use at present. (47-p.44)

The development of the mobile home into the comfortable, modern "traveling apartment" of today began before 1920 with a wall-type tent known as the army tent which was carried in the rear of the car as camping equipment. After the automobile became inclosed, the umbrella-type tent made its appearance. This tent was roomy when erected, compact when not in use, and much easier to set up than the old army tent. (38-p.1) A new development, the house car, soon made its appearance. This vehicle afforded living conveniences for use during day and night, as well as being a means of transportation. It is thought that Ray F. Kuns designed the first house car in 1919 and built it in his workshop the following year. (38-p.1...Fig. 4)

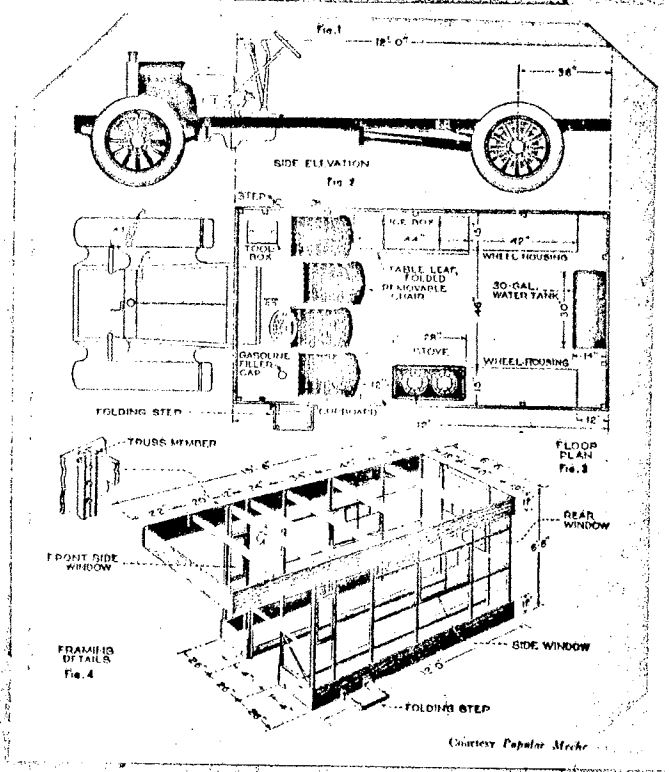
While the house car was being developed, the collapsible-type trailer or "Folding Cottage" was beginning to be used in connection with the passenger car. (Fig. 5) These trailers, which were very convenient to set up after reaching the camping site, were produced by several companies in the mid-twenties. Their disadvantage was that the equipment could not be used as a living convenience during the day



A



B



C

Figure 4.--A, First house car built by Kuns in 1920; B, interior design and arrangement; C, detailed construction of framework and seating arrangement while enroute.

Source: Trailer Coaches by Ray F. Kuns

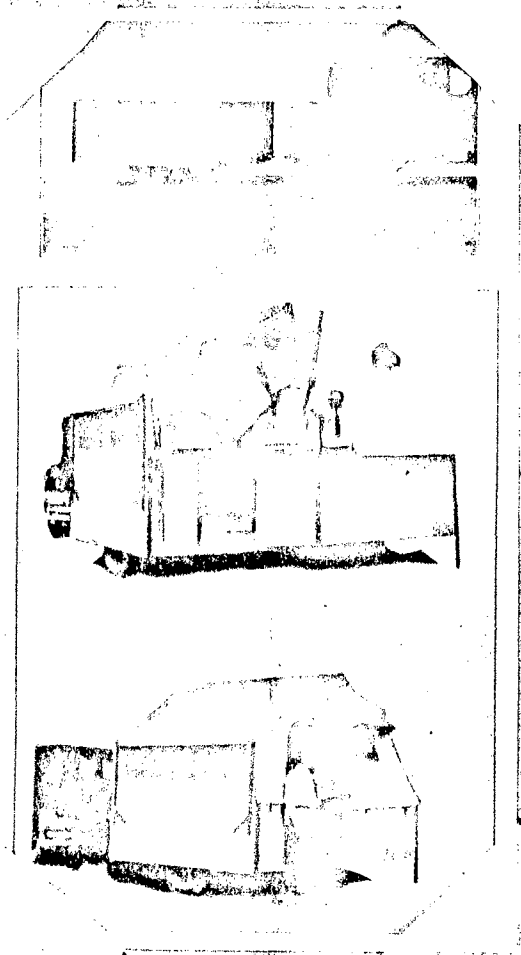


Figure 5.--Early folding cottage mounted on trailer drawn by automobile.

Source: Trailer Coaches, Ray F. Kuns

while it was being towed behind the car. (38-pp.1-4) By the early thirties the house car and folding trailer had reached their peak of usefulness. Tourists were demanding much more easily available and convenient equipment. Some of the beginning ideas, however, are still used by mobile home manufacturers. The floor space is still rectangular with two doors on the right side for easy entrance and exit. Just as in 1930, beds are still placed across the front and rear with the area in the center being utilized for the kitchen. (47-p.40)

The first encouragement to the use of trailers came in 1930 when Mr. Arthur G. Sherman of the Covered Wagon Company exhibited an improved model at the Detroit Automobile Show. (47-p.4) After 1930, there were economic conditions that encouraged the use of trailers. During the depression when many families were forced to look for work in other parts of the country, trailers were used as shelters during the search. Do-it-yourself trailers and house cars were inexpensively made in the back yards by anyone having a little knowledge of woodwork. (16-pp.1-3) Another factor in favor of trailers was that little capital was needed to start a trailer business which generally took place in a garage. (47-pp.4,112) In addition to furnishing inexpensive and temporary housing, trailers were used as offices, police tracking units, religious chapels, political campaign quarters, and for use by professional and government organizations. (58:45,46,4,8,11)

During and following World War II, veterans and their families as well as war workers made use of trailers because of the serious shortage of housing. Adequate temporary housing had to be provided for the influx of construction workers into an area, and more permanent housing was needed for the operative personnel of new and reactivated production facilities. Although migratory laborers had been using trailers as semi-permanent homes during the thirties, the trailer market really opened up with the defense effort. (47-pp.13-14)

By 1943 more than 60% of the nation's trailers were in defense areas. The National Housing Agency had purchased 35,000 of these, and private sales were forbidden by the government. Finally, the industry was notified that no more trailers would be purchased by the government since officials believed that the housing shortage was over. With the curtailment of government purchases, many manufacturers went out of business and the production work force dropped below 5,000.

Although trailers did not add to the permanent housing resources, they did provide inexpensive dwellings for wartime use.

The federal government realized the potentiality of mobile dwellings as an adjunct to its housing program. (58: 69,72,77,78,86,87,88,89,99) Trailers were purchased by various government agencies for use in the areas where there was a shortage until more permanent housing units could be

built. In 1940, 1,500 units were ordered to house construction personnel in defense production centers, and were used throughout the nation for the remainder of the war. In many cases, permanent housing never replaced these trailers. (47-p.14) Federal officials not only purchased large numbers of mobile homes for rentals, but also had sites near defense production centers and military installations prepared for privately-owned trailers. (47-pp.13-18)

The main factor that retarded the use of trailers for a number of years was the lack of knowledge of the mobile home business by manufacturers and dealers. There were no available statistics of production other than estimated figures. (58:15) Even though growth was made in the industry, manufacturers and dealers maintained a cautious attitude toward the future. From the earliest days of the industry, manufacturers feared that the demand for trailers would be temporary and that the saturation point would finally be reached. As a result of their fears, some manufacturers and dealers were reluctant to reinvest their money to build up their businesses.

For the same reason, large numbers of park operators made little effort to improve their facilities. Because of unfavorable legislation, mobile home parks were required to be located in areas not suitable for family living. The regulating of plumbing, heating and wiring has been slow to come. There has been a need for a standard code of construction covering the installation of heating, electrical

and sanitary systems. The Mobile Homes Research Foundation which is sponsored by the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association has recently taken over many research and developmental projects to better the living conditions of the modern trailerites. In 1959 California enacted a code in those three areas that was applicable to mobile homes and travel trailers. The Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association developed similar construction specifications which became effective in March 1960. A National American Standard has been endorsed by the Mobile Home Dealers National Association and the National Conference of Mobile Home Association, which endeavors to establish national standards. (88--pp.3-4)

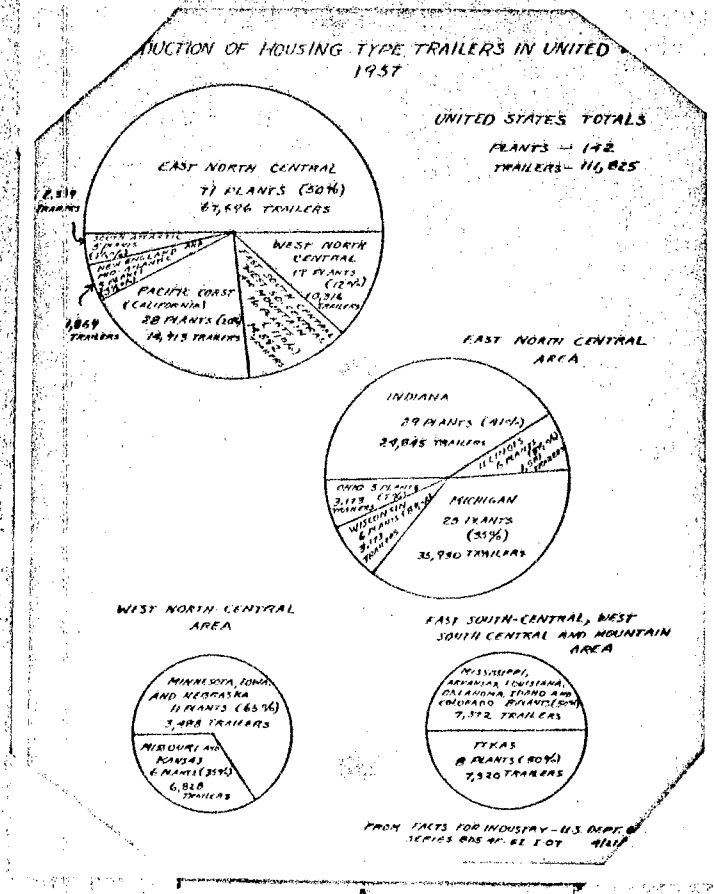
The reluctance of bankers to finance mobile homes has also hampered the growth of the industry. (46--pp.110-111) In 1948 trailer buyers were required to make a one-third down payment and had only two years in which to complete the transaction. Since banks were reluctant to accept trailer paper until recently, those loan companies financing mobile home dwellings have had the field to themselves.

In 1953 three financing institutions in Grand Rapids, Michigan, were holding 15% of all mobile home financing. Most manufacturers in the industry are small and cannot provide wholesale and retail financing plans for their dealers. The future of financing, however, looks brighter. Banks have begun to make loans for trailers. The Spartan Aircraft Company dealers can offer consumers terms of up to 60 months with a 5% finance charge and a minimum down payment of 25%

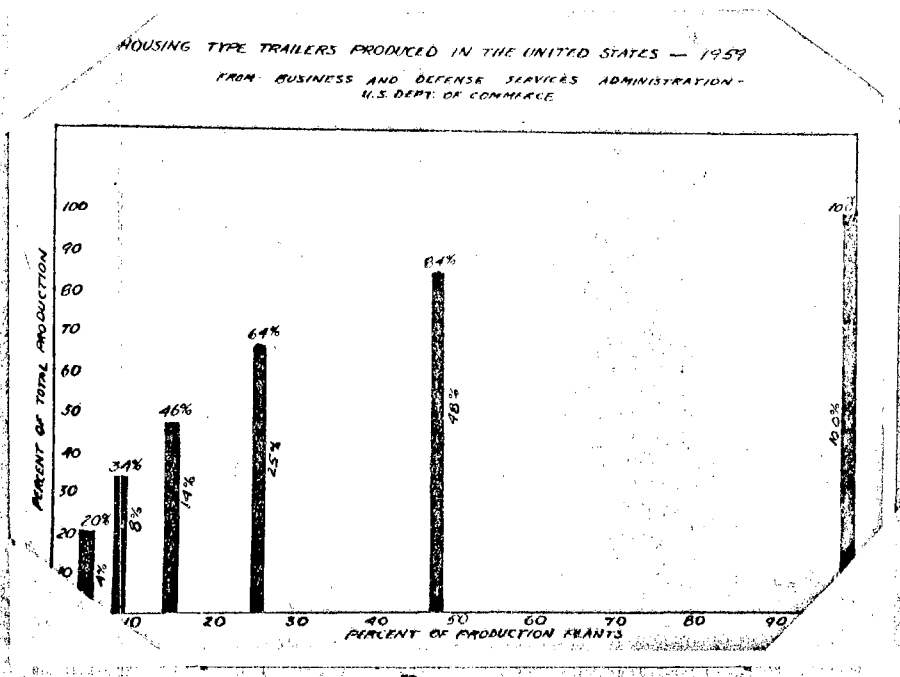
on new Spartan trailers. Dealers report that these long maturities and small down payments have been important factors in the rapid growth of Spartan sales. Other financing institutions have begun offering the same terms, but some banks and finance companies still refuse mobile home loans. (47-pp.89-92)

In spite of these deterrents, the industry sales trend has continued to rise. At the present time 3,480,000 people live in mobile homes in areas which extend to most communities in the United States. (50-p.1) The major areas are in Michigan, Illinois and Indiana, with important segments in California, Arizona, Texas and Florida. (Fig.6)

The mobile homes and travel trailers of the present time date back to the tent trailers and house cars which were used for vacations of a weekend or a few weeks duration since 1930. All were classified as trailers until 1955 when they were separated into travel trailers and mobile homes.



A



B

Figure 6.--A, Production of housing type trailers in United States in 1957; B, distribution of production according to size of plant.

Source: A, Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, 1957
B, Business and Defense Services Administration U.S.D.C.

CHAPTER II

THE PRINCIPAL TRAILERITE GROUPS

By 1941 the people who bought and lived in trailers could be classified into three types: as temporary or vacation residents, permanent or semi-permanent residents, and non-residential occupants. In 1960 these categories are still useful ones.

TEMPORARY OR VACATION: The early vacation trailerites became a more important group when working hours were shortened and there was more time for leisure. The desire to travel popularized trailer living which in turn satisfied the demand for more comfort, convenience and economy. (47-pp. 7-9) Fifty percent of the total 1937 sales were trailers for temporary use.

In the late thirties sportsmen could purchase and use luggage trailers. The cost of hauling such a trailer behind a car was nominal compared with the convenience of not having to sleep on the ground and of being able to remove and dry by a stove muddy boots and waders in rainy weather. Lighter types of family trailers which were new on the market then weighed about 925 pounds and cost from \$590 to \$1,500. These could conveniently take the entire family for a vacation in secluded and hard-to-get-to places. A special group of

vacationers were using trailers for economy and privacy earlier than 1935. (58:2)

As early as 1940 vacation trailerites as a group were getting attention and some criticism. Blackburn Sims reported in the New York Times that the West Coast motorists had become trailer-minded and were seen cruising over the country on weekends, as well as on annual leave, to various scenic spots in California. He thought that the biggest mistake of the trailerites of this time was to consider the trailer as a "house-on-wheels" and to scale their living to that of a house or apartment, a style which was much more complex and not nearly as much fun as trailer living. (58:62) Because records were not kept, we do not know how many of the total number of trailers produced in the thirties were luggage or vacation trailers; but popularity of the travel trailer has continuously increased until today when 125,000 units are in use, 23% of the 1958 and 1959 production of mobile units. (50-p.1)

PERMANENT AND SEMI-PERMANENT: The permanent and semi-permanent trailer group contains the largest number of consumers today. This group consists of migratory workers (professional, skilled, unskilled and seasonal), other workers, retired people, students and persons who prefer mobile home living or are forced into it. Members of this group purchased 73% of the total production in 1958 and 77% in 1959. Thirty-seven percent of the permanent or semi-permanent residents are skilled workers, 20% military personnel, 18% professional people, and 12% are others such as businessmen, laborers or semi-

skilled workers. (50-pp. 1-2; 58:132)

A review of the articles in the New York Times (58) from 1935 to the present shows the importance of these people with "homes-on-wheels" and their problems to the progress of better living in all respects for migratory people. (16-p.14)

Migratory laborers have been using trailers as semi-permanent housing since the early 1930's.

MIGRATORY WORKERS: (supra p. 5) In 1940, 1500 units were ordered for construction centers throughout the nation and were used for the duration of the war instead of being replaced by more permanent housing. (47-p.14) In 1941, "many construction workers and service men purchased trailer coaches for use as semi-permanent housing when they could find no more desirable dwellings." (47-p.13) When a new highway is now being built or a dam is under construction, thousands of families live in modern, well equipped trailer coaches which enables them to move from campsite to trailer park as the job progresses. This type of living is also popular with other skilled workers such as carpenters, engineers and electricians who help to build factories or missile bases and when finished move to other locations. (29-pp.34-35)

The more recent defense effort, which has required immediate housing in relatively sparsely populated regions where atomic energy plants are located, has resulted in housing shortages for skilled personnel and an increased use of mobile homes. A typical example of the effect on trailer

demand of the need for immediate housing was found in 1951 at the atomic energy installation near Paducah, Kentucky. In 1950, before construction had begun, the population of Paducah was 32,828. A total of 7,800 construction workers were brought in as well as an unknown number of service workers which further increased the demand for housing. Home owners began advertizing sleeping rooms for \$100 a month, and a small flat for \$150 monthly. Mobile home parks were filled, and up to 2,500 trailers were parked in camps, behind conventional homes, in vacant lots, and throughout the countryside for miles around the plant. Paducah city officials agreed that there would have been no other way of housing these construction laborers without the use of mobile dwellings. (47-p.23)

Another example was at the Savannah River Hydrogen Bomb Project described by officials of the Atomic Energy Commission as the largest construction project since the Panama Canal. To provide shelter for 45,000 construction employees would require the building of a new city in a few weeks. The AEC was determined to avoid sponsoring additional government towns like Oak Ridge, Tennessee, or Los Alamos, New Mexico. For this reason mobile dwellings were chosen as the most feasible type of housing. (47-p.24) The establishment of privately-owned trailer parks equipped with mobile homes for renting to workers was encouraged by AEC officials. By September 1952, there were 4,000 rental mobile homes located in four trailer parks in Augusta, Georgia, and Aiken, Barnwell and Williston, South Carolina. They were under common manage-

ment and each was called Robbins Trailer City.

Since there were 39,000 construction workers in the area during late 1952, every mobile home was occupied and there was a waiting list of workers who wanted to move into vacated units. The list continued even though the original rental price was \$82.50 per month. However, an order by the Office of Rent Stabilization reduced the rent to \$50 a month. The difference of \$22.50 was paid by the Atomic Energy Commission to the operators of the mobile parks. The officials of the commission were quite satisfied with this arrangement which they regarded as much less expensive and preferable to building, maintaining, and operating government housing. It was thought that the mobile home villages were responsible for easy recruitment of labor when families were to be housed. Even though residents were opposed to trailers, most of them had to admit that mobile housing provided a satisfactory solution to the housing problem. The government officials believed that by using mobile homes, the possibilities of over-building would be minimized. (47-pp.23-25) In addition, the consumption of gasoline by employees was reduced by having trailer homes near the war production plants.

Not very much is known about trailer families of migratory industrial workers. A.M. Denton, Jr. revealed in his study concerning trailer families working on the H-Bomb plant in the Savannah River area, certain facts. The government made few plans for the families who lived on this project. The ones interviewed came from 36 states. Only a few families

had more than four members, and the majority of parents were under 40. The children were also young, with 65% being under six years of age.

Most of these families intended giving up their mobile home and moving to a conventional dwelling. According to Denton the reasons they gave were as follows: children form closer associations by the time they reach their "teens;" families need to be more settled by the time their children reach the 7th or 8th grades because school work is more specialized and difficult; trailers are too crowded for personal privacy as children become older; inadequate room is available in a trailer for high school children to entertain their friends; and high school children who live in trailers may be "looked-down-on" by other students. Grade school children seldom make such distinctions. (15-p.518)

Many construction firms prefer married men who can bring their families on out-of-town jobs. The results of the experiences in 1952 of several oil companies with single men, married men without families, and married men accompanied by their families showed that the last group was much happier and more dependable. Since the housing supply was short in these sparsely settled regions, many workers brought mobile homes with them. The same is true in the construction pipelines (e.g. at Bartlesville, Oklahoma,) as well as other construction jobs where frequent moves are necessary. Most of these field workers live permanently in mobile home dwellings. (47-p.27-28)

In 1959 the word "home" to construction workers still meant a "take-along" home. An example of this type of housing is represented by the \$421,000,000 Glen Canyon project in northern Arizona where 1,400 men, mostly with families, are working. Sixty-two mobile homes owned by the contractors of the project were available to incoming workers until permanent housing was built or workers could arrange for their mobile homes. (34-pp.8-10)

A special group of migratory workers are the seasonal workers who also have used trailers. A typical example was given in the Garden City Telegram, a daily newspaper of Garden City, Kansas. A custom-harvester family of Liberal, Kansas, follows the wheat harvest from Texas to Canada. This work starts in early May and ends in mid-September at the Canadian border. The house trailer is a very important part of the harvesting equipment, and when on location serves as a field kitchen. (22-p.2)

STUDENTS: Today, 3% of the mobile home owners are students, and 1% of these own their own travel trailers. (50-pp.1-2) The percentage was extremely small until after the war when approximately 13,000 government-owned trailers were presented to colleges and universities where housing was needed by married veterans. In some cases the government rented trailers to educational institutions, but in most instances the units were given to them outright. (47-pp.17-18)

In 1937 many students who were attending college lived in trailers to escape paying rent. In a trailer village

called "Town" which was located at the Utah State Agricultural College, the first college to accept trailers for student living quarters, the students used their trailers as homes while job hunting after graduation. (58:21)

The University of Missouri was faced with the worst housing shortage of its history in 1945, until 165 house trailers were obtained and supplied as housing units to all veteran students who applied. (58:92) The Kansas State Board of Regents approved of the granting to students of 100 trailers which were leased from the federal government and rented to these former servicemen at cost. (58:94) At the University of Iowa 250 house trailers were available for 1,500 veterans enrolled in that institution, 40% of whom were married. (58:98) At Anderson College, Indiana, trailer units from government sources were added to their facilities in 1946 to house married veterans. (58:100) In January of that year, 100 trailers were placed on the campus at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, to relieve housing shortages. (58:101) In Bloomington, Indiana, 225 trailers were installed on the campus to form a village and were reserved for married veterans. This temporary housing was used until building materials and labor were available for permanent building. (58:103) The University of Minnesota secured 200 house trailers to meet their needs. Some of these trailer communities installed a government of their own with a mayor and a council. (58:104) A similar government was organized by 379 trailer residents at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado. (58:95) As was revealed in

1948 from a survey by Professor Cecil L. Dunn of Occidental College in Southern California, the students who could not find moderately priced housing near their college or university were more or less forced to live in trailers for reasons of economy. (47-p.21) In 1954 the University of Indiana sold about 100 trailers and kept 235 mobile homes for housing students. (47-p.18)

At the present time students are still using mobile homes for housing while attending college. According to the Stillwater, Oklahoma News Press, many Oklahoma State University students move into trailers while attending classes for four years, thus having a "home-away-from-home." As an example of the use of these units after college, one couple plans to use their trailer as a lakeside cottage until a permanent job is obtained. (4-p.8)

RETIRED: Since 1955, 10% of the mobile homes and 21% of the travel trailers have been owned by retired people. (50-pp.1-2) Earlier, when houses had large living units, the aged were easily taken care of by their children. In recent years, there has been a tendency for the older people to live in separate homes due to preference and to the lack of sufficient space for them in the small homes. The use of trailer coaches offered a satisfactory solution to their problem. (47-pp.7-8) (Fig. 7)

In the late nineteen fifties about half of the trailers manufactured were sold to people with pensions, small savings and those who were well-to-do. (58:12) Although classified

as "retired," about 35% of this group had some employment, often in an executive or supervisory capacity. The average income for retired mobile home owners was \$3,500, with 11% having incomes over \$7,000. Seventy-eight percent had bank accounts and 66% had savings accounts. About one half had both savings and checking accounts.

Comparing retired travel trailer owners with retired mobile home owners, we find there are more couples and fewer single people among the trailer owners. Fewer people in this group were employed. The average income for retired travel trailer owners is \$4,400 to \$4,500. Twenty percent have incomes over \$7,000. Ninety percent have bank accounts, 75% have savings accounts and 65% have both. Ninety-three percent paid cash for their trailers. Ninety-two percent of retired trailer owners and 93% of the mobile home owners were over 50 years old. Wives of travel trailer owners were older than those of retired mobile home owners.

In Dr. Dunn's survey in 1948, retired people, like students, reported that they found mobile home living inexpensive and requiring less work. (47-p.21-22) By 1950, retired people accounted for 15% of the trailer market as compared with 35% of the sales to migratory workers. (47-p.18) As early as 1952 the dealer group felt that there was an expanding market among these people in retirement. The optimism of the dealers was based on population statistics accumulated by the Federal government and the long life-span determined by life-insurance company actuaries. At this time

**RETIRED = 10% OF ALL
MOBILE HOME OWNERS**

	Satisfaction	Size of family	Space requirement	Size of trailer	Reasons for mobile living	Location of mobile home	At present location	Employment "retired" men	Employment "retired" women	Income of "retired" men	Financial condition
Preferred											
Trailer home	94										
Permanent home	5										
Size of family											
2 in family		80									
3 in family		10									
4 in family		10									
Someone with them		5									
Space requirement											
Need no added space			23								
Add annex			13								
Size of trailer											
10 feet				10							
8 feet				80							
Reasons for mobile living											
Climate					45						
Cost					50						
Family ties					12						
Friends					15						
Work					12						
More than 1 of above					11						
					30						
Location											
So. Atlantic states						13					
Pacific						56					
Mid. Atlantic						14					
East. No-Central						21					
Mountain						14					
West. No-central						8					
West. So-central						8					
New England						2					
East So. central						1					
At present location											
Less than 2 years							38				
2-3 years							50				
4-5 years							10				
Over 5 years							14				
Not moved in 5 years							27				
Moved in past year							50				
2 times in past year							15				
3 times							13				
4 times							8				
5 or more in 5 years							13				
Employment of "retired" men											
Some								35			
Supervisory								50			
Women employed											
Total									15		
Of these - part time										32	
Income											
Average										3500	
25%										2000	
25%										2100	
25%										1800	
25%										2200	
25%										2400	
25%										1600	
25%										1700	
Financial condition											
Checking account											90
Savings											75
Both checking and savings											65

FROM - SURVEY OF THE MOBILE HOME CONSUMER
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY - 1958

Figure 7.--Status of mobile home living as related to the retired population.

Source: Mobile Home Manufacturers Association, 1958

there were 12,000,000 people in the United States who were 65 or older. By 1970 it is estimated that there will be 20,000,000 old people in the United States. (58:34) The trailer buying of this age group accounts for the stable trailer population and also explains the relatively few children found among trailerites. (58:67)

The popularity of mobile living made it possible for these people to travel to various places which would not have otherwise been visited. (58:120) In 1937, Herbert U. Nelson, Secretary of the National Association of Real Estate Boards stated that, while trailers took people away from apartments and hotels in cities, the states themselves benefited by this movement. (58:33) Of the 100 trailer sites in Florida, one at Bradenton operated by the Kiwanis Club is occupied only by people in retirement. No one can live there who is gainfully employed. Other clubs and religious groups have initiated similar projects for the aged. (47-p.32)

OTHERS: The ease with which mobile homes can be bought appeals to other mobile people who do not want to or cannot wait months to move into a house. Mobile homes complete with all the furnishings can now be built within twenty-four hours. No time is needed to erect them at the site. This means that there is no interim construction financing which accounts for 3% of the cost of building a conventional house and causes many people to become mobile home owners. When a mobile home owner wants a new home his old unit may be traded in as easily as a car, and with a better allowance. (63-pp.94-97)

Mobile homes have been used frequently for shelter of storm victims when their homes were destroyed, and can be used in the event of attack by a foreign aggressor. In 1951 the Housing and Home Financing Agency purchased 1,000 mobile homes to house victims of the Kansas flood. A few hours after the orders were received the trailers were being sent to Kansas. One of the largest trailer parks for that time was established to house the homeless. (47-p.26-27) Another example of homeless people being supplied with shelter by the use of trailers was on June 5, 1958 after a tornado hit Colfax, Wisconsin. Mobile homes were loaned to these people by dealers, park operators and manufacturer members of the Wisconsin Mobile Home Association until their homes were rebuilt. In the event of an attack by a foreign country, the National Security Resources Board has considered using mobile homes. There are approximately 15,000 mobile homes on delivery lots, in dealer's hands and enroute to dealers at all times. This inventory would be available to provide shelter for the injured and the homeless. (47-p.27)

NON-RESIDENTIAL: From 1930 until the present there have been many special uses for trailer coaches other than for residence. These uses are mainly for business, professional, religious, and educational purposes.

Before the war scores of firms used trailer coaches as sales showrooms. By this means they could impressively demonstrate and illustrate to dealers and customers more complete lines than could be done by the use of catalogs.

Photographic studios, political mobile campaign offices, police units, restaurants, key duplication shops, beauty parlors, mobile field offices for construction companies and many other uses have been found for trailer coaches. Clergymen and priests have used the trailer coach to spread the gospel to remote areas. Doctors and dentists have built up practices in small towns by using fully equipped mobile offices. Among many other special uses, municipalities have frequently used coaches for "Bookmobiles" to make more books available to many more people. (47-pp.9-12)

CHAPTER III

THE FAMILY LIFE-CYCLE AND TRAILER LIVING

In the discussion of whether mobile housing of the past, or with the improved models of today, could be suitable for satisfactory family living, the progressive phases in the family structure must be considered. Although the question of sufficient space and privacy for the specific family are important, these considerations are influenced by variables such as age, sex and attitudes which would affect the values of individuals or entire family groups in deciding whether or not the housing was adequate. What a person wants, prefers, expects and demands in housing are contingent on the physical, psychological, social and economic values which may have been acquired or received culturally. To understand family life, Koppe states that one must understand the relationship of values, attitudes and human behavior. (37-pp.129-132) Through his early relationships with others, the individual acquires ideas, habits and attitudes which really compose the core of his personality. This constitutes a real challenge to builders and planners of dwellings, whether mobile or conventional type homes.

In a study by Beyer, Mackesey and Montgomery it was noted that to have greater livability in smaller

houses, the design features that give the most satisfaction to the occupant must be known, and these are dependent upon values of each member of the family group. By attempting to study human values, observations from the research of relationship of houses to people showed definite reflections of living patterns which should be of service to designers in planning better small dwellings. Builders should try to find the features that satisfy each family most for practical living for the money spent. The results of this study could also apply to mobile home living. (7-pp.1-48)

Whether the home is a mobile or conventional type, we must first know who is going to live in the dwelling before discussing the social aspects that would affect the family as well as the neighborhood. In deciding the type of house that would be satisfactory for a given family, we must first place the family with all its variables into the proper life-cycle category. For example, will the family represent the beginning or early child-bearing phase, the more mature expanding stage, or the contracting period of the family life cycle? Let us consider three hypothetical families who may or may not think of space, privacy and economy of their home as major factors in determining their satisfaction for family living, but who are at different phases of the family life-cycle. Family A. is in the beginning or child-bearing group; family B. is in the expanding family group; and family C. is an aging or contracting family group.

THE BEGINNING FAMILY: Family A. could be a recently

married couple with both members working, or recently married college students trying to finish their degrees together. With either of these two families, space and location would not be very important factors in determining whether or not their home was satisfactory. This is the period of adjustment after breaking away from the ties of their former respective families. With their present income and lack of time, entertainment would be kept at a minimum. The greater portion of their income would be required for payments on the home, with the remainder going to essentials not included among the wedding gifts. On week-ends they would probably either visit relatives or couples of about the same age and economic status.

In the period from 1930 to 1940, this kind of a family would not have suffered as much as a larger family under similar circumstances from irritations and frustrations brought about by inconveniences. In those days trailers more or less served as shelters from the elements. They also offered a place for sleeping, and the facilities of a gas or oil stove on which to cook meals. People in the early days of this "vehicle-home" appreciated having their own bed in which to sleep and home-cooked food, rather than having to depend upon hotel services. The husband, who could be a migratory worker finding conventional housing too expensive for a couple, bought a used mobile home, his first home, which was about 6 feet wide and 25 feet long. The furnishings consisted of a stove, an icebox, two beds with one at each end of the trailer, a table and several folding

chairs. Many of these models lacked bathing and toilet facilities, with the space being used for needed storage. Most of the camps had laundry and bathroom facilities which were generally used in preference to a private one. Much of the social life took place when the laundry was being done or when the men stood in line for a shave.

Before family ties had been broken, each member might have been living in a very small house which had little floor space and very little privacy was obtainable. As a consequence mobile living was not as disorganizing as it was sometimes thought to be, and little adjustment had to be made. Since both members of the family worked, not too much time was spent in the trailer, and it was not difficult under these circumstances for the two people to become adjusted to the situation. However, when they were at home each one would need to be alone at times. Some personalities require being alone more frequently than others. Since the trailers were not divided into rooms in those days, two people would have little privacy. The saving of money is an important factor, as the family should be prepared to meet later obligations resulting from trying to satisfy its dreams and expectations as well as wants and demands. Cowgill reported that the living costs during the 1937-38 period ranged from \$65 to \$100 per month, with an average of \$90, while the average income was approximately \$250 per month. The owning of a trailer had a strong psychological appeal, but this was not powerful enough for purchasers to pay the price for the product. Thirteen percent did not want to pay more than \$400.

Dr. Cowgill thought that this was an explanation of why Roger Babson's prediction, that half the people by 1940 would be living in mobile homes, did not come true. (17-pp. 33-43)

The present-day attitudes of Family A would probably differ in needs, wants and expectations concerning housing. The mobile home would not just serve merely as a shelter as in former days and would have to be longer and wider. Also, more conveniences would be demanded for the comfort of the occupants. Mastering the household tasks with the least amount of energy would be a necessity. Hobby space might be needed, depending upon the individual. As an example, the young student husband of one of my trailerite friends can barely wait until he graduates from college and is financially able to move into a conventional home. His main objection to trailer living is that there is no place to set up a workshop, and the walls are too light for hanging up his tools.

Privacy to maintain individual integrity and mental health would not ordinarily be a problem for a young couple living in a mobile home today. The living space is now partitioned into room areas with walls and doors. In many trailers a hallway leads to each bedroom, and the bath is as fully equipped as in conventional homes. The young couple of today could have the same satisfaction in owning a comfortable trailer as that of the early trailer family which has been discussed earlier in the paper concerning the present mobile home trend. The standard of living could be raised as the family take-home pay increased, and the image of owning a

larger home equipped with the latest technological developments could ultimately be fulfilled. Among these latest developments is the proper selection of colors for the interiors, fixtures, furniture, and accessories by interior designers. This should add to the comfort and satisfaction of the occupants. A study by N.L. Mintz revealed that people are affected by color and the appearance of their surroundings. In an experiment to test this phenomenon, a person who was confined in an "ugly" room of cold and drab colors became tired and listless, but when placed in a "beautiful" room with warm and vibrant colors the reaction was of happiness and of showing a great deal of energy. (49-pp.459-466)

Increased sales in the market may have in part resulted from manufacturers making use of interior designers. The change in the economic system of paying for a product by installments instead of by one sum at the time of purchase has also contributed to the rise in the use of mobile homes. Cowgill found that the cost of the trailer was a selective factor associated with the income level of those living in trailers. There was found to be a definite correlation between the cost of the mobile home and the income of the occupants. This factor would undoubtedly exist today, even though buying a trailer has been made easier for the purchaser. (17-pp.41-43)

The Expanding Family: Family B in the expanding phase of the family life cycle will be considered as consisting of four members: the father who is 40 years old and is a

migratory construction worker; the mother who is 36 years old and interested in organizations connected with children's activities; a son of 7 who is enrolled in primary school and a daughter of 14 attending high school. For this family the period of major adjustments have been made, and they are now concerned with the comparatively minor adjustments which affect the happiness and well-being of the family. Housing needs, such as space and privacy, have increased with the expansion and maturity of the family group, and have now reached the most critical stage. However, the importance of privacy was found by Montgomery, Sutker, and Nygren to be among the least important of six housing values to Oklahoma rural people. It was noted by these investigators that there was an effort made by this rural group to satisfy only the basic needs of comfort, economy and family-centeredness, with little interest being given to privacy, social prestige, or beauty. They confirmed Hazel Kyrk's observations that American families are not too concerned with privacy as has been shown by the popularity of open, unwallled room areas in modern homes. (53-pp. 43-46) From the author's observation of present day mobile home plans, privacy would be more attainable for those who need or prefer it than if they were living in a conventional house which had very few walls. In contrast to the beginning family, the maturing family has a larger acquaintanceship with other people, both through the social activities of the parents and those of their children. The problems of entertainment would thus necessarily increase in proportion to the size

and social inclinations of the family group.

In 1930-40, the maturing family would have fared much more poorly than the beginning family which was limited in size and in social requirements. With the smaller trailers of that time, there was undoubtedly a feeling of crampedness, depending upon what the family had been accustomed to. The need for privacy must have been significant for a mixed family group of different ages in the early state of trailer living. When the children had homework to do, they could either sit at the kitchen table or on their beds. Generally, the bedroom sections were partitioned off by curtains, but still this atmosphere was not conducive to good work.

The entertainment of friends by the boy and girl in the early mobile home would have been almost an impossibility. Boys are inclined to be boisterous, and girls usually want to be more by themselves. In spite of these shortcomings, Dr. Cowgill's survey of 1938 indicated that 67% of the people interviewed felt that the trailers were large enough, 29% thought they were rather small, and only 4% thought they were too small. Perhaps the 33% registering other than complete satisfaction were in the expanding-family group.

The feeling of lack of adequate space was apparently not highly detrimental to happy family relationships as Cowgill's survey also indicates that size of the trailer seldom or never caused friction in 85% of the families and was never the cause of frequent disagreements. Furthermore, 93% of the trailerites had the same number or fewer disagreements than

before changing their mode of living, and this is reflected in the low divorce rate of trailer couples. (17-p.98) One reason for this is that the trailer becomes a symbol for the family, and has the tendency of uniting it into a more closely-knit unit. When children of school age were involved, the family generally remained in one location until the school year was over. In fact, the Cowgill survey showed that 83% of the people interviewed felt that trailer life either was not a detriment or actually helped in the education of their children. In Family B the children could probably take part in school activities with the secure feeling that they would remain in one place long enough to make friends. The Cowgill survey showed that all the local children interviewed were either friendly or very friendly toward trailer children, and none were indifferent, unfriendly or hostile.

Because of the lack in space in the earlier trailer homes, many customs handed down from tradition had to be given up, and mementoes dear to the occupant could not be retained. The same is true of migrants living in conventional homes. When the writer's family was transferred from Gulfport, Mississippi to Honolulu, Hawaii, her son looked wistfully at the toys and other treasure being "cast by the wayside."

The advantages of trailer living for the expanding family in the early days of trailers would be measured in terms of economical living, being able to see parts of the country, making numerous and often lasting friendships and having independence as to the neighbors.

The increase in size and the added convenience in modern day mobile homes has greatly changed this picture. Family B would probably have a three bedroom mobile home in order to have individual privacy or a place to entertain friends. The living area, often equipped with TV, makes an excellent place for this purpose. Many of the modern trailers have exterior styling which resembles conventional homes, although one manufacturer claims that they are not as popular as the more typical mobile homes.

The living and storage space in modern trailers is well-planned, and they often have about every convenience and even better planning than most modern homes. Little wonder, then, that 1,200,000 mobile homes are in use today, housing 3,480,000 people with an average income of \$5,250. (Fig. 8)

Of mobile home owners, about one half of all the families had children under 18 years. There is an average of about one child of pre-school age to each two mobile homes and about one child to every four mobile homes in the junior-senior high school age group. It was also found that one third of the families with children have them in more than one age group. An interesting fact to be noted is that the number of children per family is lower than the national average and varied in geographical divisions of the United States. (3-p.5)

In spite of the increased size, areas for privacy, attractive living quarters and modern conveniences, the trailerites have the same problems in family living that are

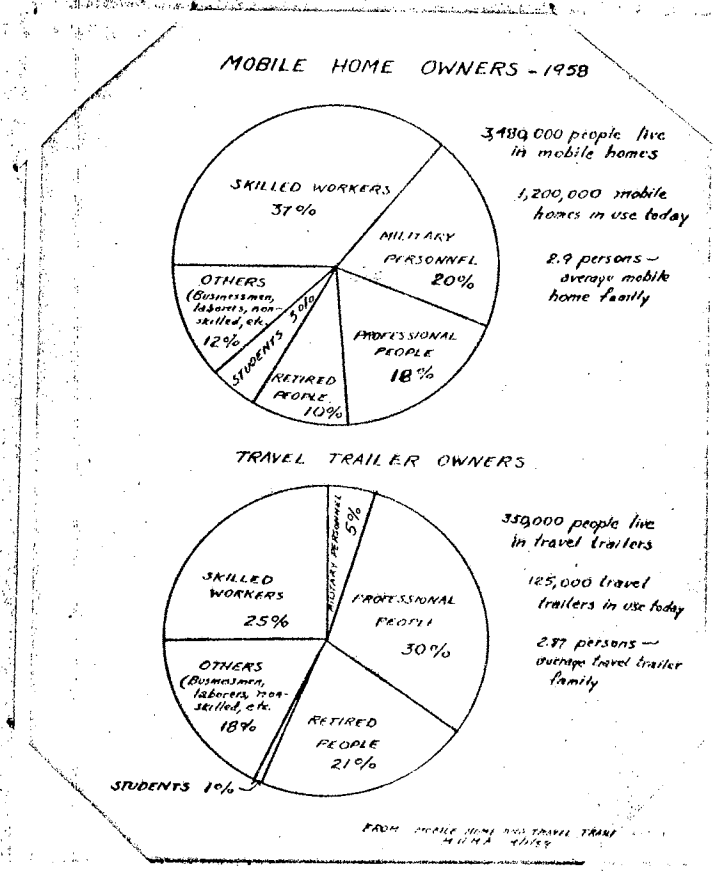


Figure 8.--Distribution of mobile homes in relation to occupation of owners.

Source: Mobile Home Manufacturers Association, 1958

familiar to occupants of apartments and small conventional homes. Wherever people live in confinement, problems are bound to arise. The solution lies in the conduct of the families involved and governed to a large extent by the temperament, intelligence, education and past experiences of the family group, particularly with regard to the parents. The ability to live in close quarters where competition for space is bound to occur, is infinitely more difficult than in larger homes where the occupants may choose the degree of privacy that suits their mood.

In a study by Robert Blood of two child families in a housing development, permissive parents reported that significantly more of their activities were disturbed by noise, and that the privacy they preferred was less obtainable than for restrictive parents. Although more lenient, the permissive parents experienced more difficulty in securing conformity even with the few limits they chose to impose. In general, permissive handling of children drastically affected the lives of the parents. Peace and quiet, spotless homes and obedient children were sacrificed by permissive parents and conversely gained by restrictive parents through strict control of their children. Each family is an individual problem, but these studies point to the need of special techniques for the handling of parent-child situations in mobile homes where living space is necessarily confined. The degree of permissiveness practiced by the parents has much to do with the ability of a family to live in close

quarters successfully. The amount of time children are allowed to play indoors affects the use of the home by other members, namely, the parents. In small apartments, play activities tend to spread from the children's bedroom to the living area. The extent to which parents permit this to happen provides an indication of their permissiveness. The extent to which children are allowed to clutter the living room with their toys is another measure of parental permissiveness. Family interaction is increased when the total floor space is limited in relation to the number of family members. Parents with a developmental ideology are more permissive with their children than are parents holding traditional concepts of what constitutes a "good child." Older children are handled less permissively than younger ones. Vulnerability of fixtures to damage is another situation variable influencing permissibility. (8-pp.84-87)

The Contracting Family: Family C, representing the contracting family group, can be thought of as consisting of a husband and wife who are both retired--the husband from his profession and the wife from the child-bearing and child-rearing phases of married life. Now that their children are grown and have established homes of their own, fewer occupants must be provided for in their mobile home.

The use of the trailer home enables the retired couple to have the freedom and independence of their own home, which would not be the case if they were living with their children. This has not always been the case, however, as

Hoyt stated "older persons have characteristically been the least mobile group in our population." Two studies have focused attention on their increasing mobility. Hitt found a substantial increase in the migration of older persons in the decade 1940-1950 over that of 1930-1940, and stated that in 1950 over one fourth of Florida's older people were immigrants into the state. (32-pp.361-370) T. Lynn Smith in his analysis of the problem, reports that the areas to which the largest numbers of older people migrate are southern California, Florida and eastern Texas. (74-pp.15-18)

There are several reasons why old people leave friends, relatives and other associations. Among these are the following: (1) growth of the retirement system which imposes an upper age limit on employment; (2) loss of status and role of the older person in modern urban society; and, (3) the transition from the economic dependence of aged parents upon children to economic independence brought about by Social Security and growth of industrial pension systems. (55-pp.24-39)

The reasons given for preferring to live in a retired community are: (1) less disturbance from children going to school and people going to work; (2) local neighborhood groups respond quickly if one is ill; and, (3) help by group in emergencies such as fire. The advantages of mobile home living mentioned by retired people were economy (25%), sociability and activities (52%), less work in upkeep (13%), and mobility and less worry (10%).

The contracting family group has fewer social problems than the other two categories. The space requirements are at a minimum, and their desires and requirements are fewer. Furthermore, these are often handled on a community basis, as people in this category tend to congregate where they may associate with others of similar age or as they put it "those who are in the same boat." (32-pp.361-370)

According to Talcott Parsons the social isolation of older people is more of a problem than financial hardship. Solution to the problem is to develop communities composed mainly or entirely of retired people, preferably in a suitable climate. (61) Mobile home communities are now well established in the Florida peninsula and they enjoy popularity among older retired persons. An outstanding example is the Bradenton Trailer Park founded in 1936 by the Bradenton Kiwanis Club, and now the oldest and largest trailer park in Florida. (47-p.32)

This park has 1,118 trailer spaces and all are kept rented each year. Rental charges vary from \$3.00 to \$4.50 per week, and each rental entitles the family to full participation in the recreational program, a basic amount of electricity, water, and laundry and ironing facilities. They are located in 9 utility buildings distributed throughout the community. All of these provide lavatory, toilet and shower facilities, and 4 have laundry and ironing rooms. No resident may be employed in Manatee County and the adjacent counties to prevent competition on the labor market.

The residence period varies with individuals, but 12% of the group spend 10 months or more each year at Bradenton and 31% of the trailers have some permanent structure added which would prevent them from being moved. The median monthly income is \$172.22.

At Bradenton there is a recreational hall where social events are held regularly. Leadership in all cases comes from residents of the community. Activities include "pot luck" dinners and shuffleboard. Most residents interviewed reported that they got all or most of their recreation within the park. (32-pp.361-370)

As can be seen from this analysis, the beginning and contracting family types would probably be more satisfied with mobile home living than would the expanding family. The requirements for space, privacy and the sociability needs of the children in the latter family group would strain the capacity of a mobile home.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF MOBILE LIVING ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE COMMUNITY

From the beginning of its popularity, the use of trailers for housing caused much discussion by residents and community officials. Some of the assumed problems concerned taxation, education, citizenship, sanitation, relief and morality. Most of these problems were thought to be common to all transients, rather than only to trailerites.

From a survey in 1937-1938 trailerites were found to be a representative group of people who were fairly well educated and who placed a high value on the education of their children.

There was evidence that 90% of the mobile home owners had a serious interest in politics and government. They felt it was their duty to vote, and were very careful to maintain their legal addresses. (17-pp.80-85)

The question as to whether they paid taxes for this education was an issue from time to time. However, trailer owners did pay taxes directly as well as indirectly, in the form of gasoline, sales, trailer taxes and/or license fees in most states. Some states have registration fees on trailers, and in 24 of them a personal tax is collected. Since most of this money went to the state, communities felt that they were not receiving remuneration for services such as sewerage disposal, garbage collection, water supply,

police protection, health protection, street maintenance and the operation of parks and public buildings. They did not appreciate the hidden taxes that the trailerites were paying on rent, which helped to cover the fees and licenses paid by the camps. Really, communities should have welcomed these people who earned their money elsewhere and spent it in their temporary place of residence. The survey showed that the average yearly expenditure by a trailer family was \$1056, some of which went for hidden taxes, and all of which was money imported into the community. (17-pp.80-87)

Sanitation was a problem in the early days of trailering. Many camps had few facilities as the managers tried to keep from spending much for improvements which decreased their profits. Trailerites liked orderly, neat camps with good facilities for sanitation, and were willing to pay for these services. The patronization of the better camps brought about competition and caused the owners to improve. Where the majority of people were found, the most sanitary camps were located, as the owners felt their responsibility. Municipal inspection would have been a means for bringing about improvements. In fact, the Trailer Manufacturers Association in 1957 proposed a municipal ordinance to license and inspect camps. (17-p.85)

Morality maintenance was not a problem, as the majority of trailerites were older, stable and well-adjusted people. The public had little factual foundation for considering the trailer a liability to most communities in the early days of

trailerling. Education of the trailer children was not a burden since they were few in number. The trailer people were treated unjustly because they were mistaken for transients. California had thousands of the latter who were liabilities in every respect.

During the war period when housing shortages occurred around defense plants, sanitation and overcrowded conditions were the worst in the history of trailer living. Willow Run, which was close to Ypsilanti and Detroit, Michigan was an excellent example. Professors Carr and Sterner emphasized the deleterious effects on family living and questioned whether or not satisfactory substitutes could be found for privacy, cleanliness and space in which children could play. Health of both children and adults was sub-standard, with the prevalence of colds resulting from poor ventilation, over-crowding and lack of proper sleep. (12-pp.154-160)

The above example of a war plant was not typical of the average situation existing during that period. By 1951 it was recognized that trailer populations were not relief problems, nor did they bring immorality to the communities.

In 1953 nearly 2,000,000 people lived in trailer houses, but people in the communities complained of the same problems as in 1937. Richard Duke of Michigan State College made the statement in his essay that communities should take steps to correct their difficulties after a study had been made of their specific problems. Trailer parks should be placed where they would be to the advantage of all. If parks had good community buildings, laundry, and recreational facilities,

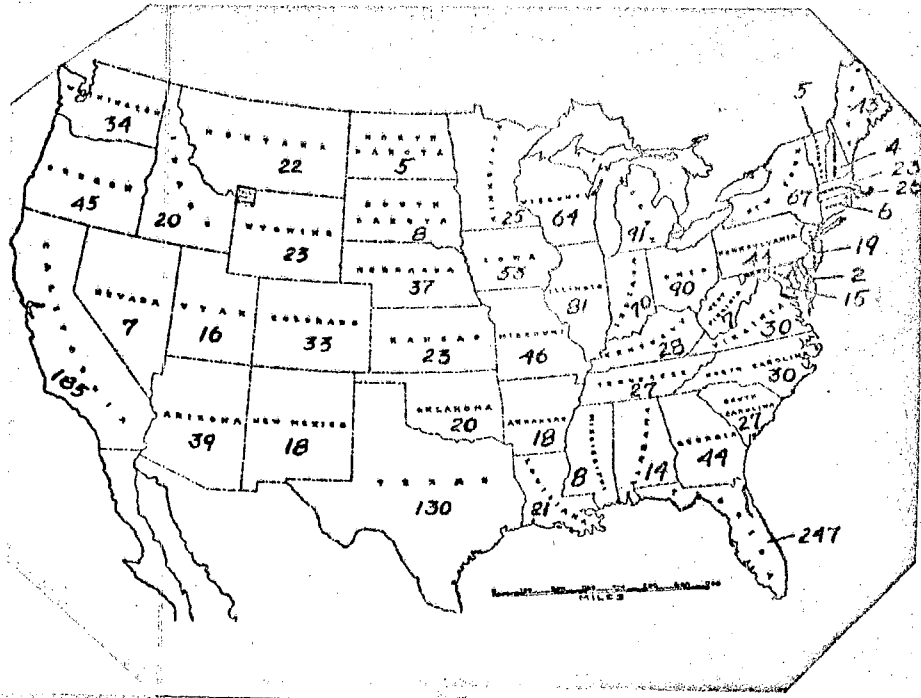
the residents would not encroach on those of the community.

(31-p.9)

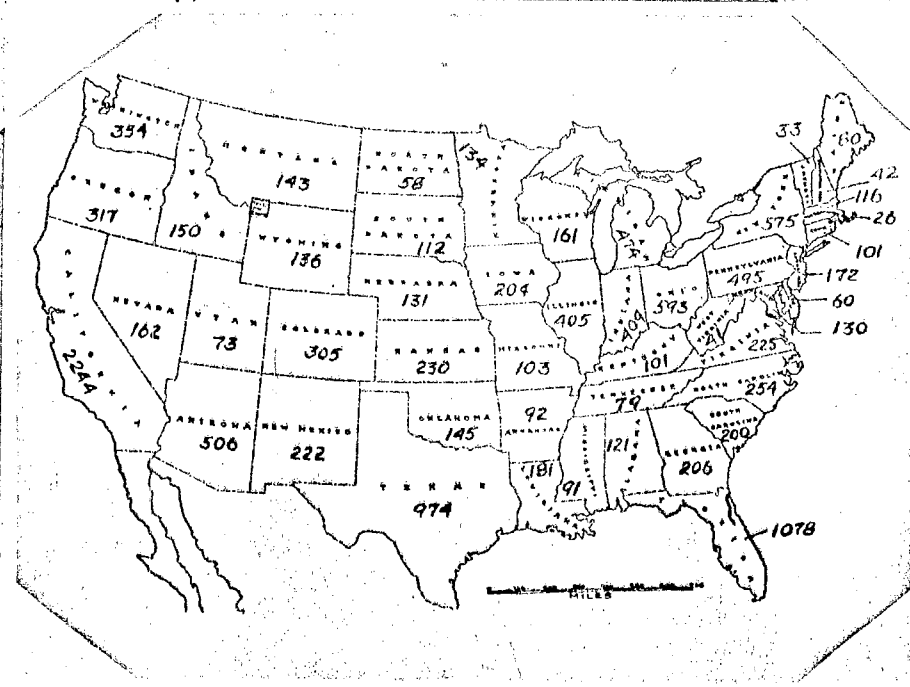
The escape of trailerites from paying taxes and community assessments was still being discussed in 1953. At a meeting of Assessors of the Association of Towns in New York, it was agreed that the real property of the camp should be liable to assessment. The camp tax could be charged to the trailer owner who would then be paying some of the cost of government. (31-p.9)

The social problems brought about by trailer living are not as critical as formerly although much progress has yet to be made. The lack of enough well planned mobile home parks with adequate facilities is still a problem. However, F.H.A. Mortgage Insurance was made available for financing mobile home and travel trailer parks in 1955, thereby giving a great impetus to park construction. At present there are well over 13,000 trailer parks, as compared with almost 2,000 in 1938. (Fig. 9) Many communities realize that mobile homes are an asset to the community by bringing in outside capital, and are considering trailer parks in their overall planning. An example of this is Newton, Kansas, where in 1958 an ordinance was passed to provide a residential environment with definite standards for mobile parks. In this way, their development would be an asset to the community.

Since every tenth new home in the United States is a trailer, the new problem for community planners is to arrange parking areas in other than ugly clusters. The defacement of



A



B

Figure 9.--A, Distribution of trailer parks in 1937; B, distribution of trailer parks in 1958.

Source: A, Mobile Homes: A Study of Trailer Life, Cowgill
B, Woodall's Mobile Home Park Directory, 1959

TRAILER CAMPS BY REGIONS				
Region	1937-38		1958	
	Number	%	Number	%
New England	94	4.7	398	3.0
Middle Atlantic	152	7.6	1,242	9.4
South Atlantic	401	20.3	2,194	16.6
East North Central	404	20.4	2,042	15.4
West North Central	203	10.2	972	7.3
East South Central	76	3.8	392	3.0
West South Central	188	9.5	1,392	10.5
Rocky Mountain	176	8.9	1,697	12.8
Pacific	281	13.2	2,915	22.0
Total	1,975		13,244	

FIGURE 10
Distribution of trailer camps in the United States by regions
1937-38 and 1958

the landscape by early trailer parks could have caused the end of the industry, but, surprisingly, prosperity has continued in the selling of bigger and better products. One half of the parks are still inadequate, and some communities have been able to ignore their trailer camps. Some towns and cities have excluded trailer courts from their boundaries or put them in industrial or commercial zones where they are absorbed in the unsightly surroundings. (24-pp.127-131)

An example of typical city zoning of which Foggarty was speaking is in Stillwater, Oklahoma. In a discussion by the author with the mayor of that city, it was learned that trailers can be parked anywhere within the city limits provided that 100% of the people who have adjoining property and 80% who have property with a radius of 200 feet, sign petitions giving permission. Only two trailers may be parked on a lot. City zoning requires that trailer courts be located in the business district. This was thought by the mayor to be a mistake. He stated that the ordinance should be changed because of the fire hazard.

California, Arizona and Florida, which claim one-third of all trailer parks, are exceptions to the rule. Most of their parks are higher in their standards. In Florida, for example, a group of developers have proposed a multi-level "apartment house" project for mobile homes which is to become a reality within three years. (65-pp.25-29)(Fig. 11)

If communities would impose stringent standards on park construction, excessive profits by owners would be impossible.

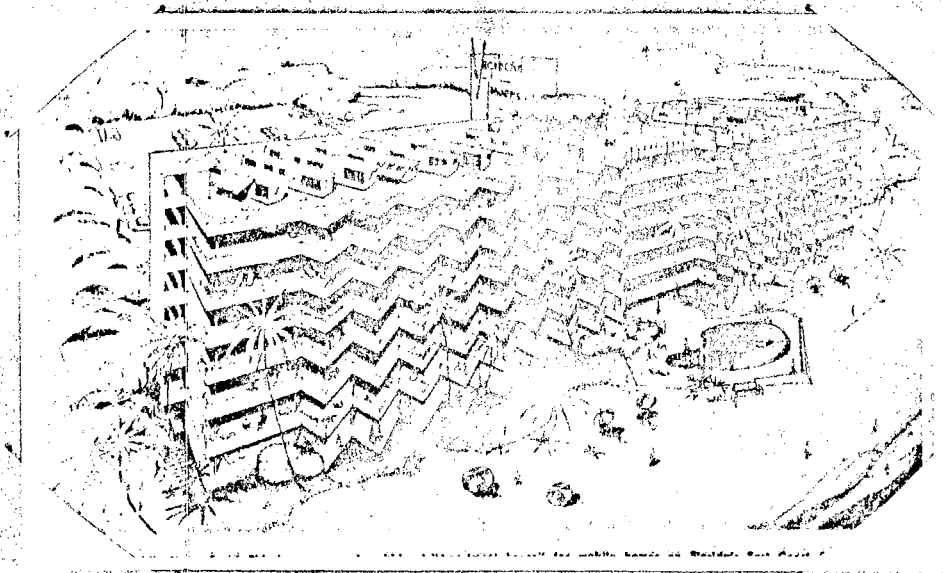


Figure 11.--Proposed multi-level "apartment house" parking project.

Source: Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, Mobile Life, 1960

Thirty states at present have statutes for licensing and regulating mobile home and trailer parks. Usually, regulations by the community are in regard to health and safety. As for taxation, both parks and trailers are taxed in most states. This may be in the form of license fees in addition to highway, personal or real estate licenses. In this way some revenue is collected for the services that trailer park families receive. (56-p.25) One noticeable problem is that ordinances do not go far enough in regulating parks by requiring higher standards. Many of them fail to meet the minimum property requirements set by FHA to determine the eligibility of trailer parks for mortgage insurance. FHA standards banned the gridiron plan of parking, and prescribed no specific requirements except that adequate space must be set aside for recreation and buffering. If trailer parks are to accommodate today's large trailers, 3000 square feet per lot is thought to be necessary, excluding a 200 foot area for play and recreation. Architect George Muramoto, a consultant for Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, is one of the few architects who specializes in trailer park design. In order to have adequate space for close living without a scattered look, Muramoto suggests that 4200 square feet should be the maximum. Park design would be greatly improved if park owners used that amount of space in planning angled lots or ones in clusters of four or more. Ten feet of landscaped area around the parking would separate it from the rest of the environment. The utilities should be under-

ground. Concern should be given to the width of the streets and walks, and to the lighting requirements within the park. Adequate zoning ordinances would aid in placing parks in more suitable locations. (Fig. 12.)

As a result of the mobile home manufacturers' desire for more and better trailer parks, the Mobile Home Corporation was founded. The group encourages the construction of better parks by offering blueprints and construction procedure kits to prospective park operators. (47-p.34)

Communities are also beginning to see the necessity of making plans for better trailer park zoning, so that the trailer communities may become an asset to the environment. Strict zoning in many cases has made it impossible for park operators to use desirable sections of land; therefore, zoning laws are having to be altered.

Because of greater competition between park owners, technological advancements in the construction of trailer homes, increased income of trailer owners, and efforts of various mobile home associations, the standards of trailer parks have risen and parks are becoming increasingly more attractive.

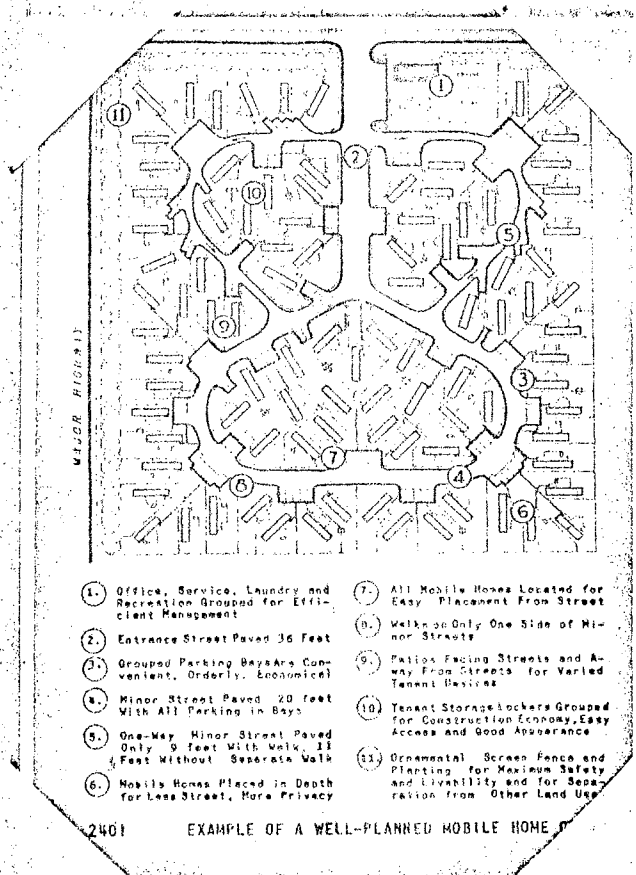


Figure 12.--Example of a well-planned mobile home court.

Source: Minimum Property Requirements for Mobile Home Courts by Federal Housing Administration, January 1957.

CONCLUSION

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from a study of this type.

First, there is evidence that at present mobile living is a permanent way of life in the United States. There are three major groups of people in particular who find that trailer living suits their needs. There are those who need to move frequently in the line of their job or profession. These are classed as semi-permanent or permanent residents such as the retired, students, defense, construction and other workers who make up the largest number of mobile home owners. The next group of people of importance is temporary users or vacationists. The third group uses trailers for purposes other than residential--for business, professional, religious and educational. All of these people find that mobile dwellings fill their needs since they can be moved where shelter is a necessity and at the same time comfort in an economic type of housing is found. Trailers have and will continue to fill the gap between housing shortages during emergencies such as were found at immediately expanded defense efforts, construction projects and disaster areas. "Houses-on-wheels" will also continue to supply people with a comfortable home when the cost of conventional housing is too high. This contemporary, up-to-date home

will not only fill the need for shelter, but will also satisfy the demands of people who desire economical, comfortable and spacious living quarters similar to that found in a conventional type house.

Second, it has been shown that the manufacturers of trailers have been very cooperative in trying to better conditions for people owning the dwellings by finally adopting a code of standards in mobile home construction. Manufacturers have revolutionized the trailer by making use of technological developments and adding partitions, doors, and bathrooms like those in conventional homes. These details were lacking in the early trailers, and this development has given the members of the family more individual privacy and spaciousness.

Third, the Park Division of the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association have also supplied information, plans and construction procedures to prospective park operators to encourage more and better mobile home parks. These modern parks have recreational areas, laundry and storage facilities, and adequate plumbing, electrical, and water supplies. Since mobile homes and park construction are really big business because of the money involved, the federal government has given aid to park owners by F.H.A. insurance loans. To further the trend of popularity in trailer buying and mobile park construction, lenders of money, after a long period of scepticism, have become more lenient with loans. Now, they realize that trailerites and trailer parks owners are not

people of the lower economic level and are substantial citizens while living in the community.

Finally, community officials are changing their attitudes toward trailerites. Future City planners are placing mobile home parks in more desirable locations for better family living. In the beginning, trailer people were thought to be non-supporters of community services and lacked leadership in community affairs. After more uniform systems of taxation among the various states, zoning and coding are initiated, these residents will be more welcome in the communities where they go. This will lead to a better understanding between permanent residents and mobile home owners; but improvement is being made, especially since the trailerites have proved to be no poorer or no less morally sound than the permanent resident. Since the social stigmas of owning trailers have more or less been removed, more and more people are taking to the roads with their "houses-on-wheels."

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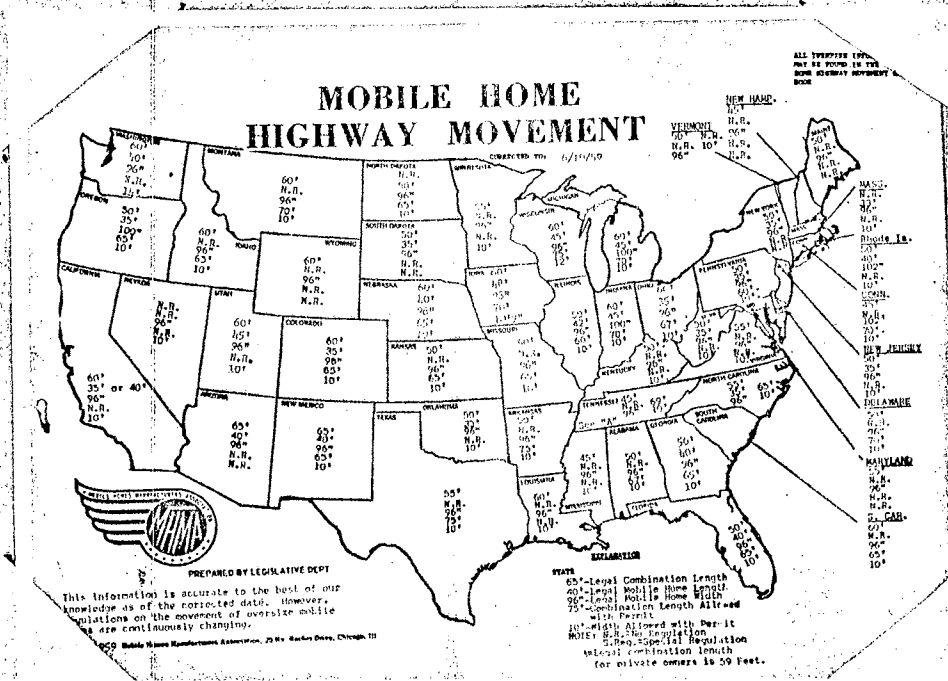
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138. "Manufacturers Prepare Code For Mobile Homes." New York Times, (August 10, 1958), VIII, 4:7.
139. "Florida Borrows California Camping Trick." New York Times, (April 12, 1959), XI, 3:3.
140. "New Trailer Park For Grand Canyon Visitors." New York Times, (April 26, 1959), II, 34:1.
141. "Trailers." New York Times, (November 22, 1959), 10:4.

APPENDIX X



Regulation of Movement of Mobile Homes

Source: Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, 1959

VITA

Wilma Margaret Kindt Henderson

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Problem: MOBILE HOMES: A REVIEW OF THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ASPECTS OF TRAILER LIVING AS IT HAS DEVELOPED IN THE UNITED STATES

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