

# Migration affects success, Penn State study shows

UNIVERSITY PARK — Financial success and prestige in adulthood are related to early migration and education, according to a Penn State study of some 2,000 former students in rural high schools of Pennsylvania. The study was made 22 years after graduation.

For both males and females, success was found directly related to migration. In addition, as education increased, the levels of family income and occupational status also rose.

"Despite financial success, migrants did not report greater

happiness or more satisfaction with their ways of life or their employment than those who stayed within 50 miles of their high school homes," stated Fern K. Willits, rural sociologist in the College of Agriculture at Penn State.

She said the study was begun in 1947 when the students were sophomores in rural high schools. Records were kept on 2,806 students from 47 of the Commonwealth's 67 counties. In 1971, Penn Staters were able to locate 2,081 graduates in 40 states and several foreign countries. Associated with Willits on the

study were Donald M. Crider and Robert C. Bealer, both in rural sociology.

The findings contradict the widely-held American assumption that financial success is essential for personal satisfaction. In most cases, migrants and nonmigrants showed similar levels of contentment.

After 22 years, most of the graduates were not far from their original homes. More than three-fourths of the sample were living in Pennsylvania. An additional 13 percent lived in adjacent states. By 1971, 72 percent

listed an address within 50 miles of their 1947 residence, and were classified as nonmigrants.

For the men, migration was related to occupational aspiration, 1947 residence, high school grade-point average, and adjustment. For the women, only grade-point average was associated strongly with migrant status. Those with high grade-point averages were more than twice as likely to move as those with low averages.

Occupational prestige was highest for both men and women migrants. This was directly related to levels of education. People who went on to schooling beyond high school were the ones most likely to migrate. Nonetheless, education was not associated significantly with satisfaction or happiness.

More than 30 percent of the migrants listed their 1971 addresses as cities with 50,000 inhabitants or more. However,

over 30 percent of the migrants, both men and women, reported addresses in towns of less than 10,000 persons. About half of these small-town residents were in communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants.

When asked to characterize their locales, less than 45 percent of the migrants saw themselves as living in "urban" areas, no matter how the U.S. Census classified the location.

"It would not be accurate to characterize nonmigrants as exclusively small-town and open-country dwellers," Willits said. "About one in every seven nonmigrants described his or her place of residence as urban."

A full report of the study has been published as Bulletin 831 of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Penn State. The title is, "Twenty-Four Years Later: Migration and Success for a Panel of Rural Pennsylvanians."

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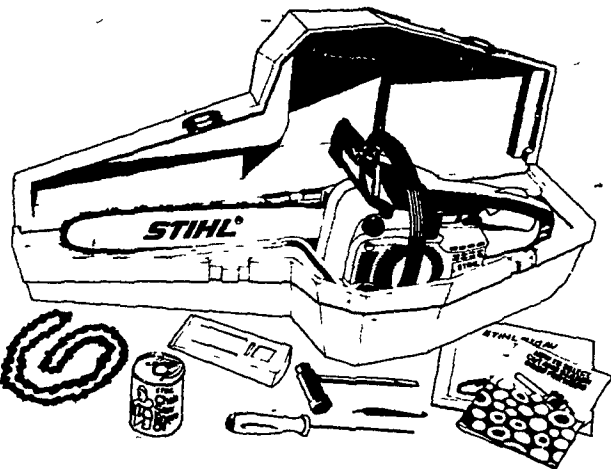
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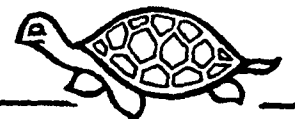
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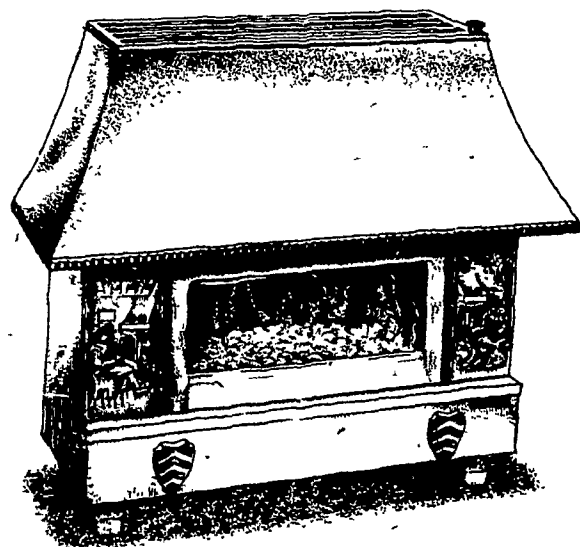
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