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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE GIRL SCOUTS ***

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EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE GIRL SCOUTS

LOUISE STEVENS BRYANT
EDUCATIONAL SECRETARY GIRL SCOUTS

[Advance sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education in
the United States, 1918-1920]



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EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE GIRL SCOUTS.

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By LOUISE STEVENS BRYANT,
Educational Secretary, Girl Scouts.

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Do you believe that girls should like to work at home, to cook and clean house and mind the baby? Do you believe that a girl should like to take care of her clothes and be able to make them; that she should know how to be thrifty and to conserve the family money in buying and using food and clothing; that she should play a fair game and put the group above her personal interests? Do you believe that she should value a strong healthy body above clothes and cosmetics, and rejoice in the hope of being some day the healthy mother of healthy children?

If you do, you believe in the Girl Scouts, for in this organization the girls learn all these things in such a happy way that they *like* to do them, which means that they keep on doing them.

The Girl Scouts, a national organization, is open to any girl who expresses her desire to join, and voluntarily accepts the promise and the laws. The object of the Girl Scouts is to bring to all girls the opportunity for group experience, outdoor life, and to learn through work, but more by play, to serve their community. Patterned after the Girl Guides of England, the sister organization of the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts have developed a method of self-government and a variety of activities that appear to be well suited to the desires of the girls, as the 89,864 scouts and the 2,500 new applicants each month testify.

HISTORY AND GROWTH.

Girl Scouts and their leaders, to the number of 89,864, were in 1920 organized in every State, and in Hawaii, Porto Rico, and Alaska. There are troops in 1,400 cities, and local councils in 162 places. This represents a tremendous growth since the founding by Mrs. Juliette Low in March, 1912, of a handful of enthusiastic "Girl Guides" in Savannah, Ga. In 1915 the growth of the movement warranted its national incorporation; so headquarters were established in Washington, D. C., and the name changed to Girl Scouts, Incorporated. In 1916 the headquarters were removed to New York, and are now located at 189 Lexington Avenue.

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From the start the organization has been nonsectarian and open to all races and nationalities. Through the International Council the Girl Scouts are affiliated with the Girl Guides of England and all parts of the British Empire, and similar organizations in other parts of the world.

At the 1920 meeting of the international conference at London, reports were received from Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, China, and Siberia, as well as from all parts of the British Empire, and the United States.

From a membership of 9,769 in January, 1918, the girl scouts grew to 89,864 in 1921, at the rate of nearly 10 to 1 in three years. The greatest relative growth was in 1918, when the membership grew fourfold. During 1919 the increase over the preceding year was more than two-thirds, while in 1920 the relative increase was one-third. The details are as shown in the accompanying table.

This growth is due to a spontaneous demand of community after community for scouting for girls, and not to deliberate propaganda on the part of the national headquarters. The reasons for it are therefore to be sought in the activities and methods themselves, which make such widespread appeal.

ACTIVITIES.

A glance through the handbook, *Scouting for Girls*, will show that the activities of the girl scouts center about the three interests—Home, Health, and Citizenship.

Home.—The program provides incentives for practicing woman's world-old arts by requiring an elementary proficiency in cooking, housekeeping, first aid, and the rules of healthful living for any girl scout passing beyond the Tenderfoot stage. Of the forty-odd subjects for which Proficiency Badges are given, more than one-fourth are in subjects directly related to the services of woman in the home, as mother, nurse, or home-keeper.

Growth of Girl Scout membership, Jan. 1, 1918, to Jan. 1, 1921—Active registrations.

January 1.	Officers.	Increase.	Scouts.	Increase.	Total.	Increase.
1918	1,314	8,455	9,769
1919	3,823	2,509	36,847	28,392	40,670	30,901
1920	5,357	1,534	61,754	24,907	67,111	26,441
1921	6,839	1,482	83,025	21,271	89,864	22,753

Into this work, so often distasteful because solitary, is brought the sense of comradeship. This is effected partly by having much of the actual training done in groups. Another element is the public recognition and rewarding of skill in this, woman's most elementary service to the world, usually taken for granted and ignored.

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The spirit of play infused into the simplest and most repetitious of household tasks

banishes drudgery. "Give us, oh, give us," says Carlyle, "the man who sings at his work. He will do more in the same time, he will do it better, he will persevere longer. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness; altogether past comprehension its power of endurance."

While the place of most production is to-day outside the home, much of the final preparation of goods, particularly food and clothing, is still done there. So that, while the homecrafts are far from being the vital necessities they once were, they are still needed.

Handicrafts of many sorts enter into the program of the girl scouts. In camping, girls must know how to set up tents, build lean-to's, and construct fireplaces. They must also know how to make knots of various sorts to use for bandages, tying parcels, hitching, etc. Among the productive occupations in which Proficiency Badges are awarded are cooking, house planning, beekeeping, dairying and general farming, gardening, millinery, weaving, and needlework.

While production has left the home, consumption is increasingly the business of the home-keeping woman. There are few purchases, even for men's own use, which women do not have a hand in selecting. Practically the entire burden of household buying in all departments falls on the woman, who is thus in a position to learn how to spend wisely and make the most of each dollar. In France this has long been recognized, and the women of the middle classes are the buying partners and bookkeepers in their husbands' business.

The girl-scout organization encourages thrifty habits and economy in buying in all of its activities. The scout troops are self-supporting, and are expected to earn most of their equipment by means of rallies, pageants, plays, as well as by individual effort. One of the 10 scout laws is that "A girl scout is thrifty."

Health.—The girl scout learns that "a cheerful scout, a clean scout, a helpful scout is a well scout. She is the only scout that really *is prepared.*" So that health, physical and mental, is the keynote to the scout activities, which are calculated to develop the habit of health, rather than simply to give information about anatomy or physiology. Personal health is recognized by the badge of "Health Winner," given to the girl who for three months follows certain rules of living, such as eating only wholesome food, drinking plenty of water, going to bed early, exercising in the open air, and keeping clean, and who shows the result by improved posture, and by the absence of constipation and colds. Outdoor sports, swimming, boating, and dancing are other health-producing activities.

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Of all health-promoting activities, camping is the best, and this means all stages of life in the open, from the day's hike, with one meal out of doors, to the overnight or week-end hike, and finally the real, big camp, open all summer. Girl scouts learn how to dress for outdoor living, how to walk without fatigue, and how to provide themselves with food, warmth, and shelter, so that "roughing it" does not mean being uncomfortable.

During 1920, 50 large girl-scout camps were maintained in 16 States. These are self-supporting, and as they are open for 10 weeks as a rule and accommodate about 50 girls at a time, they give an opportunity to several thousand for the best sort of holiday.

The idea is to have enough camps to give every scout the experience. To promote this work national headquarters maintains a camping section and has published a book, "Campward Ho!" which gives full directions for organizing and running large, self-supporting camps for girls.

Community health habits are quite as important as the purely personal, and the older girl scout is expected to become a "health guardian," which means that she takes an intelligent interest in the things pertaining to public health, such as playgrounds, swimming pools, school lunches, the water and milk supplies, clean streets, the disposition of waste and garbage, the registration of births, and the prevention of infant mortality. She also learns how to help in times of emergency as first aid, in sickness as home nurse, and at any time as child nurse.

A scout whose mind is filled with interesting facts about birds and animals and trees, and who is busy playing games with her companions or in making useful and beautiful things and in rendering active service to her home and community, is apt to have a healthy mind without thinking much about it. And she has a little rule for the blue times, which is "to smile and sing under all difficulties."

Citizenship.—The basic organization of the girl scouts into the self-governing unit of a patrol is in itself an excellent means of political training. Patrols and troops conduct their own meetings, and the scouts learn the elements of parliamentary law. Working together in groups, they realize the necessity for democratic decisions. They also come to have community interests of an impersonal sort. This is perhaps the greatest single contribution of the scouts toward the training of girls for citizenship. Little boys play not only together but with men and boys of all ages. The interest of

baseball is not confined to any one age. The rules of the game are the same for all, and the smallest boy's judgment on the skill of the players may be as valid as that of the oldest "fan." Girls have had in the past no such common interests. Their games have been either solitary or in very small groups, in activities largely of a personal character. If women are to be effective in modern political society, they must have from earliest youth gregarious interests and occupations.

Among the scout activities that tend to develop this larger community sense are games, athletic sports of all kinds, including team work and competition between small, well-knit groups. Folk dancing and other forms of amusement, such as dramatics, pageants, and story-telling, serve a similar purpose because they all mean the possession of a resource not only for the right use of the girl's own leisure time, but for serving this need in the community.

METHODS.

The activities of the girl scouts are, of course, not peculiar to this organization. Every one of them is provided for elsewhere, in schools, clubs, and societies. But the way in which they are combined and coordinated about certain basic principles is peculiar to the girl scouts.

In the first place all these activities have a common motive, which is preparation for a fuller life for the individual, not only in her personal but in her social relations. It is believed that both the habits formed and the concrete information acquired contribute to the girls being ready to meet intelligently most of the situations that are likely to arise in their later life. This concept is expressed in the girl scout's motto, "Be prepared."

The method of preparation followed is that found in nature, whereby young animals and birds *play* at doing all the things they will need to do well when they are grown and must feed and fend for themselves and their babies.

The heart of the girl scouts' laws is helpfulness, and so the scouts have a slogan: "Do a good turn daily." By following this in letter and spirit, helpfulness becomes second nature.

Because the girl scouts are citizens they know and respect the meaning of the flag, and one of the first things they learn is the pledge:

"I pledge allegiance to my flag, and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Some observers have criticized the girl-scout organization because of its apparently military character. It is true that the girls wear a uniform of khaki and are grouped in patrols corresponding to the "fours" in the Army; that they salute and learn simple forms of drill and signaling. But the reason they do these is because the military organization happens to be the oldest form of organization in the world, and it works. It is the best way men have found of getting a number of persons to work together. Following directions given to a group is quite a different matter from doing something alone, and most of us need special training in this. A group of eight has been found to work the best, because it is the largest number that can be handled by a person just beginning to be a leader, and, moreover, elementary qualities of leadership seem to exist in just about the proportion of one in eight. It is probably on this account that children take so kindly to the form, rather than because of any glamor of the army, though this must be admitted as a factor. In actual practice the drill and signaling take up a very small portion of the program and are nowhere followed as ends in themselves, but only as a means to an end.

Uniform.—The uniform is simple, durable, and allows freedom of action. It is of khaki because this has been found to be the best wearing fabric and color. It is not easily torn and does not readily soil. Wearing it gives the girls a sense of belonging to a larger group, such as it is hard to get in any other way. It keeps constantly before them the fact that they represent a community to whose laws they have voluntarily subscribed, and whose honor they uphold. It is well, too, to have an impersonal costume, if for no other reason than to counteract the tendency of girls to concentrate upon their personal appearance. To have a neat, simple, useful garb is a novel experience to many an overdressed doll who has been taught to measure all worth by extravagance of appearance.

ORGANIZATION.

The outstanding feature of the girl-scout organization is its voluntary character. Among some 7,400 officers and leaders of girl scouts throughout the country in the

fall of 1920, just 211 were "paid workers." This is about 3 per cent. The organization is actually a great volunteer school of citizenship in which the women of the country share with their younger sisters the results of their own experience in ideals and practical working knowledge of community living. Scout troops are organized either independently or in connection with public and private schools, churches, settlements, and other associations.

Scouts of different ages.—The original girl-scout program was designed mainly with the needs of the young adolescent in mind, and the age was fixed from 10 to 18 years. But the little girls wanted to come in, and so a separate division was made for them called the Brownies or Junior Scouts. Then the older girls and women wanted to join, and as time went on the original girl scouts grew up but not out of the scout movement, and programs are being made for Citizen Scouts who are 18 and over.

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The three age groups seem to be natural ones, and each has its own methods and activities. The Brownies are formed into packs, under the leadership of a "Brown Owl," and play games and learn self-help and how to "lend a hand" to their families. The Citizen Scouts are expected to be self-directing and to take actual part in the life of the community and, either as wage earners or service givers, to pay their way.

But the large majority of all girl scouts belong to the middle group. More girls register at 13 than at any other age. This is interesting, as it marks the age of susceptibility to social ideas, shown also by the fact that it is the most common age of religious conversion. It is also the age of first crime. The distribution of ages at first registration is shown by the accompanying table.

The organization of the regular girl scouts is as follows:

Ages of Girl Scouts at first registration.

Ages.	Number.	Per 1,000.
6-9	440	5
10	6,059	73
11	9,130	110
12	14,857	179
13	16,434	198
14	14,276	172
15	10,707	129
16	5,810	70
17	3,486	42
Total 10-17	80,759	978
18 and over	1,826	22
Grand total	83,025	1,000

Patrol.—Eight girls form a Patrol, which is the working unit. One of them is elected patrol leader and has charge of the activities for as long as the patrol wishes. It is desirable to have each girl of a patrol serve as a leader at some time or other.

Troop.—One or more patrols constitute a Troop, which is the administrative unit recognized by the national organization. The Troop meets weekly and wherever possible at a place which "belongs" to it. When possible troops should meet outdoors. The troops are self-supporting and earn money for all equipment as well as for camps and hikes or special activities. Troops are registered with national headquarters and pay annual dues of 50 cents for each member. They also have their own local dues, generally 5 or 10 cents weekly.

Captain.—The troop is under the direction of a Captain, who must be at least 21 years of age and whose qualification as a leader of young girls is passed upon by national headquarters before she is commissioned.

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Lieutenant.—A captain may have one or more Lieutenants, who must be at least 18 years of age, and whose commissions are likewise subject to control by national headquarters. Captains and lieutenants may be organized into associations in any given locality.

Scout classes.—There are three classes of girl scouts, the youngest being the "Tenderfoot," the name given by frontiersmen to the man from the city who is not hardened to the rough life out of doors. Even the Tenderfoot, however, has to know some things, including the promise, laws, slogan, and motto; how to salute and the respect due to the flag; how to make an American flag; and how to tie at least four kinds of useful knots. She must also have earned enough money to buy some part of her scout equipment.

The "Second-class" scout has been a tenderfoot for at least one month and can

pass a test of distinctly greater difficulty. This includes, under home interests, the ability to make fires in stoves and out of doors, to cook a simple dish so that it will be palatable, to set a table for two courses, to make an ordinary and a hospital bed, and to sew.

Under health interests, she must know the main rules of healthful living, her own height and weight, and their relation to the standard; some simple first-aid points such as stopping bleeding, removing speck from eye, and bandaging a sprained ankle. She must also have a variety of facts at her command that will keep her alert and interested when out of doors, such as an acquaintance with animals, birds, and plants, the use of a compass, the alphabet of a signal code; and must demonstrate her ability to observe her surroundings accurately and quickly so as to report upon them.

Under topics preparing for citizenship she must know the history of the American flag, how to prevent fire, and what to do in case of fire, and must have served her troop, church, or community in some way and earned or saved money for some personal or troop equipment.

The highest rank is that of "First-class" scout, and is to be attained only by a young person of considerable accomplishment. She must be able to find her way about city or country without any of the usual aids, using only the compass and her developed judgment of distance and direction. She must also be able to communicate and receive messages by signaling. She must have shown proficiency in home nursing, first aid, and housekeeping, and, in addition, in either child care, personal health, laundering, cooking, needlework, or gardening. She must also be an all-round outdoors person, familiar with camping and able to lead in this, or be a good skater or a naturalist or be able to swim. Not only must she know all these different things, but she must have trained a tenderfoot, started a savings account, and served her community in some tangible way.

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Proficiency badges.—After a girl scout has attained to first class there are still other worlds to conquer, as the badges she has earned on the way are only a few of the many to be worked toward. There are no less than 47 subjects in which a scout may achieve, and more are being added. Just to mention a few: A girl scout may be an artist, a beekeeper, a business woman, a craftsman, or a dancer; an electrician, a farmer, a flower finder, a horsewoman, an interpreter, a motorist; or a musician, a scribe, a swimmer, or a star gazer. The highest award given is the Golden Eaglet, which means the earning of 21 Merit Badges, of which 15 are in required subjects.

About 2,000 Merit Badges are earned a month. An analysis of the subjects shows that home nursing is the most popular, with 126 of each 1,000 earned. Laundress comes next with 97. First aid is next with 67. Needlewoman, child nurse, cook, pathfinder, health guardian, flower finder or zoologist, and home maker complete the first 10 most popular badges, with between 61 and 38 in each 1,000. The details are shown in the accompanying table.

Local councils.—Where troops are numerous it is usual to form a council composed of women and men representing all the best interests of the community: Parents, schools, religious denominations of all sorts, business, producers, women's clubs, and other social and philanthropic organizations. The council acts as the link between the girl scouts and the community. It has the same relation to the separate troops that the school board has to the schools—that is, it guides and decides upon policies and standards, interprets the scouts to the community and the community to the scouts. It does not do the executive or teaching work; that belongs to the directors, captains, lieutenants, and patrol leaders.

One function of the council is to interest public-spirited women and men, particularly artists and scientists, in girl-scout work and to get them to act as referees in awarding proficiency badges.

But wisdom is to be sought not only in large cities, where there are schools and museums, laboratories and studios. It is a poor community that does not have at least one wise old person—a farmer learned in nature's ways, a retired sailor stocked with sea lore, or a mother of men who knows life as perhaps no one else can. The wise council will know where to find these natural teachers and see that the scouts go to their schools.

Another prime function of the council is to raise funds and to make available such material equipment as camp sites, meeting places for the troops, etc. The captain should turn to the council for help in arranging and directing rallies, dances, fairs, pageants, and other devices for entertainment or securing money.

National organization.—The central governing body of the girl scouts is the national council, holding an annual convention of elected delegates from all local groups. The national council works through an executive board, which meets monthly and conducts national headquarters in New York. The national director is in charge of headquarters and his direct responsibility for the administration of the

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whole organization, with the general divisions of field, business, publication, and education, each in charge of a secretary.

The field work is administered through 14 regions, each covering several States, and in charge of a regional director, who helps in the formation of local councils, the training of captains, and acts as general supervisor and consultant for all work in the district.

Under business comes the handling of mails, all the work of the shop where uniforms, insignia, books, badges, flags, and other equipment are sold, and the distribution of material ordered by mail.

There are three classes of publications: First, a monthly journal, *The American Girl*. Second, pamphlets and articles for general propaganda and publicity; these are handled by the editorial and publicity staffs, respectively. Third come publications of a technical nature, like the official handbooks for scouts and officers and outlines for training courses. These form part of the work of the education department, which has general oversight of all that pertains to training for leaders and the development of standards of work, including the important feature of coordinating the girl scouts with the other educational and social organizations. Camping also forms a part of the work of the education department.

During 1919 and 1920 the following publications were issued:

Scouting for Girls: The official handbook, 576 pages.

Campward Ho: A manual for girl-scout camps, 192 pages. Designed to cover the needs of those undertaking to organize and direct large, self-supporting camps for girls.

The Blue Book of Rules for Girl Scout Captains: All official rules and regulations, 32 pages.

Training Courses: (1) Outline for 32-period course, 17 pages. (2) Introductory course, 10 periods, 16 pages.

Girl Scout Health Record: Booklet form for recording points for health winner's badge.

Miscellaneous Pamphlets: Averaging 8 pages; 128,325 copies.

Need for leaders.—The growth in membership has been twice as rapid among the scouts as it has among the officers, as may be seen in the table already given. For every scout in 1918 we have 10 in 1921. For every officer in 1918 we have but 5 in 1921. For some time to come, therefore, the energy of the national officers must be directed toward the securing of properly trained leaders.

Colleges and higher schools are responding to a gratifying extent with the introduction of training courses in scouting for girls. Within two years courses have been given at the following colleges or universities: Adelphi, Boston, Bryn Mawr, Carnegie Institute, Cincinnati, Converse, Elmira, Hunter, Johns Hopkins, Missouri, New Rochelle, Northwestern, Pittsburg, Rochester Mechanics' Institute, Rochester University, Rockford, Simmons, Smith, Syracuse, Teachers' College, and Vassar. Also at the following higher schools: Battle Creek Normal School of Physical Education, Brooklyn Training School for Teachers, Chautauqua Institute, Chicago Normal School of Physical Education, Community Service Council of Marquette County, Mich., Manhattan Trade School for Girls, Milwaukee Normal, State Normal at Pittsburgh, Pa., Washington State Normal, and Western State Normal, Mich. The following schools and colleges are asking for courses: Chicago, Cornell, Detroit Normal, Kalamazoo, Michigan State Normal, Pennsylvania State, and Temple University.

Through cooperation with the deans of women in all parts of the country, and with the Intercollegiate Community Service Association, the college women are being influenced to take up scouting as an extra academic activity before graduation, and as a form of community service in their home towns later.

In addition to this work through existing educational bodies, many special courses are conducted in connection with the organizations of local councils.

The First National Training School for Girl Scout Officers has been conducted for four years, the last two years at Long Pond Camp in Plymouth, Mass. During the summer of 1920 special training camps were also held in connection with the councils of Greater New York, Cincinnati, and Harrisburg, with instruction given under the auspices of national headquarters. Five such camps are planned for 1921, located in Plymouth, Central Valley, in the Catskills, Lake Mohegan, N. Y., Philadelphia, and Cincinnati.

Scouting in the public schools.—Only that organization for young people can succeed which contributes directly to their chief business, which is getting an

education. One reason the girl scout organization is received so cheerfully by school people is that it works into the school's own plans to a remarkable degree. Local councils have a larger representation from the public schools than from any other single agency. Scout leaders are drawn largely from the teaching force because teachers naturally have a better insight into the needs of young people than any other single group.

In a few places this interest has resulted in the gradual assimilation of scouting into the school system. At Fort Scott, Kans., this work has progressed furthest, with 90 per cent of all pupils of scout age, either boy or girl scouts. Supt. Ramsey made a most favorable report on this situation at the Cleveland meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association in 1920. Among essential features he mentioned the following:

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The boy scout executive and girl scout commissioner act as recreational directors and have charge of all the health education and vocational guidance.

A room is set aside in the Junior High School for all scout work which, however, is passed upon by a council, including persons outside of the school force.

Through glee clubs and choruses great interest in community singing and other music has been developed. The scout organization is helping to solve the dress problem for both boys and girls.

"To give the modern ideals of education would be to state the ideals of scouting." The modern teacher is increasingly well fitted to become a good scout leader.

Scouting may best be promoted through the public school, because that is the only organization that includes all the boys and girls. Moreover, because of close daily association, leaders of school troops can insure each scout being an active scout.

The school also benefits by scouting in a number of ways. Older pupils stay in school longer because of their interest in scouting than because of any other influence. "A year of work in scouting will do as much toward acquainting a teacher with the ideals of teaching as a year spent in any college or university of the country." Finally, scouting secures the interest, attention, and good will of the parents to the public schools.

Girl Scout badges earned in 1919-20.

Subject.	Number. Per 1,000.	
1. Home nurse	2,852	126
2. Laundress	2,192	97
3. First aid	1,523	67
4. Needlewoman	1,389	61
5. Child nurse	1,267	56
6. Cook	991	44
7. Pathfinder	990	44
8. Health guardian	923	41
9. Flower finder or zoologist	878	39
10. Home maker	861	38
11. Citizen	732	32
12. Signaler	647	28
13. Bird hunter	636	28
14. Health winner	600	26
15. Pioneer	595	26
16. Artist	592	26
17. Musician	580	26
18. Interpreter	578	25
19. Swimmer	557	25
20. Business	424	19
21. Cyclist	422	19
22. Gardener	393	17
23. Athlete	345	15
24. Horsewoman	266	12
25. Bugler	254	11
26. Scribe	216	10
27. Telegrapher	192	8
28. Motorist	190	8
29. Dairy maid	190	8
30. Farmer	187	8
31. Sailor	130	6
32. Electrician	101	4

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

On the second table, first column, the totals look a little confusing, but properly read they are correct. The sub-total does not take into account the first line (440) making the total 80,759. Adding it back in gives the total of 81,199 plus 1,826 (18+) gives the correct grand total. It has been left as in the original.

There is a variation between girl-scout and girl scout; girl-scout denotes the organization, and girl scout pertains to an individual. They have been left as in the original.

Only one typo found and corrected; susceptibility was misspelled as "susceptibility".

***** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE GIRL SCOUTS *****

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