

The year was...

1957

If time is, as they say, like a river, wouldn't it be great, once in a while, to be able to get out of the boat? We might walk along the shore back to terrain long ago passed by, and relive times we knew or even (depending on our age) experience times we never knew. For the voyeur in each of us, it could be an irresistible opportunity to view the stark realities of other times through eyes unmisted by nostalgia.

Science has not yet presented us with the means to make such ship-to-shore excursions in our own persons; but the Roper Center has the next best thing: an immense collection of

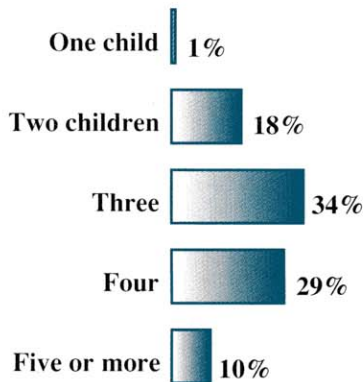
original historical sources that can open windows onto the past by means of polling data.

In this issue of *Public Perspective*, we are pleased to introduce a new department called "Historical Perspective," in which we offer data samplings from the archive pertaining to times past. Each issue will feature data from a different year, historical era, or event. The intention is not to be comprehensive; just take a peek into the gold mine of historical resources available in the archive, and catch a glimpse of what was on the minds of those folks dwelling on that long-vanished shore.

—Lisa Ferraro Parmelee

Life

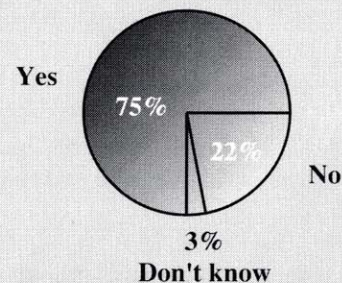
Question: What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 5-12, 1957.

Faith

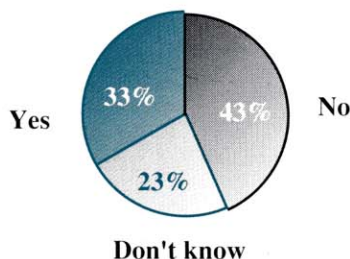
Question: Do you think most people can be trusted?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, April 1957.

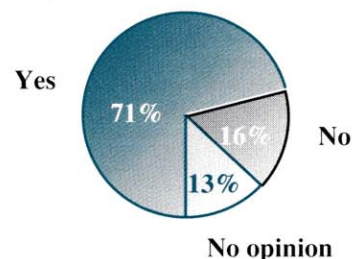
Death

Question: Do you think we are likely to get into another world war in the next five years?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 28-December 4, 1957.

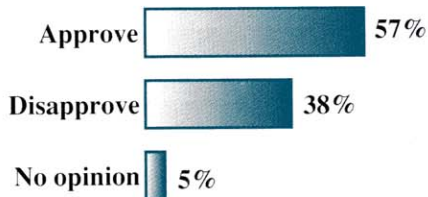
Question: If there should be another world war, do you think the hydrogen bomb will be used against us?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 25-30, 1957.

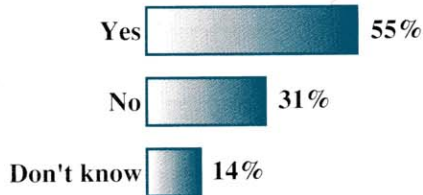
Prejudice

Question: The US Supreme Court has ruled that racial segregation in the public schools is illegal. This means that all children, no matter what their race, must be allowed to go to the same schools. Do you approve or disapprove of this decision?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 19-24, 1957.

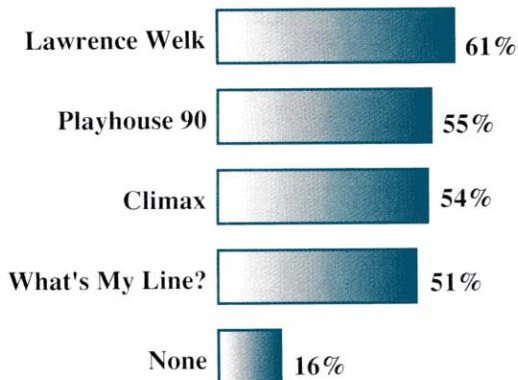
Question: Do you think the day will ever come in the South when whites and negroes will be going to the same schools, eating in the same restaurants and generally sharing the same public accommodations?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, July 18-23, 1957.

After Supper

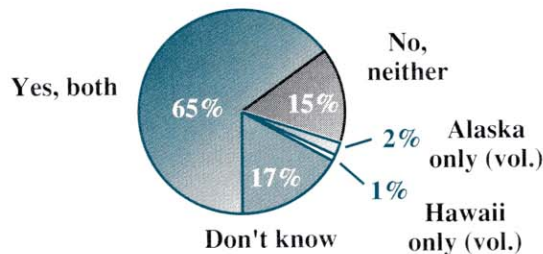
Question: Which of the TV programs on this list have you, personally, seen in the past month?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 28-March 5, 1957.

Expanding Nation

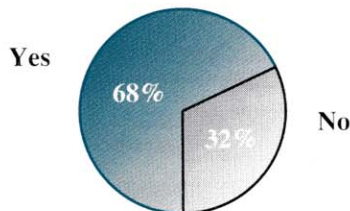
Question: It has been proposed that Hawaii and Alaska be made the 49th and 50th states in our union. Do you think they should become states or not?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, March 1957.

Preoccupations

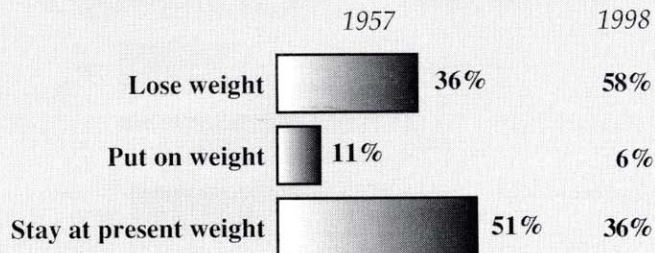
Question: Do you save or collect trading stamps?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, June 27-July 2, 1957.

The Fat of the Land

Question: Would you like to lose weight, put on weight, or stay at your present weight?



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, August 29-September 4, 1957 and January 16-18, 1998.