

## How workingmen spend their spare time

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I have been researching for a few years now the impact of cinemas upon London before the First World War, in particular looking at the first cinema audiences and asking why it was that cinema became popular in the way that it did, what its meaning was for audiences, and how it positioned itself among competing attractions. As part of this work I have been studying some of the social surveys undertaken around this time which either look at the cinema or consider cinema among a range of leisure options which were offered to what was predominantly a working class public, and which institutions found troubling or at least in need of greater understanding. One such survey is the topic of my talk this morning.

*How Workingmen Spend Their Spare Time* is a doctoral thesis, or rather part of a doctoral submission, by one George Esdras Bevens, produced at Columbia University in 1913.<sup>1</sup> Its subject is use of the spare time by the working men of New York, with sociological analysis conducted across professions, hours worked, wages earned, time available, and kinds of leisure activity. It presents its evidence in tabular form, with accompanying analytical text. It is an exceptional source of information on working class leisure activity in the early 1910s, demonstrating in particular the great rise of the motion picture as popular entertainment for a strata of society with little free money and little free time to call its own. Bevens' study is one of a number undertaken by academics and municipal bodies at this time which focus on the issue of working class leisure; others include Michael M. Davis's *The Exploitation of Pleasure* (1911), and Emilie Altenloh's renowned *A Sociology of the Cinema* (*Zur Soziologie des Kino*) based on studies undertaken in Mannheim, Germany in 1912/1913.<sup>2</sup> I am focusing upon Bevens' work on account of the richness of its data, for its significant positioning of cinema amongst other leisure attractions, and because of its easy availability to researchers today on account of the copy available through the Internet Archive. I am interested in Bevens' methodology, and what drove him to document in such passionate

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<sup>1</sup> George Esdras Bevens, *How Workingmen Spend Their Spare Time* (New York: 1913). Available from the Internet Archive at [http://www.archive.org/details/howworkingmenspe00bevarich\\_](http://www.archive.org/details/howworkingmenspe00bevarich_). All tables and quotations are taken from this document.

<sup>2</sup> Michael M. Davis, *The Exploitation of Pleasure: A Study of Commercial Recreations in New York City* (New York: Department of Child Hygiene of the Russell Sage Foundation, [1911]); Emilie Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die Sozialen Schichten Ihrer Besucher* (Jena: Verglegt Bei Eugen Diederichs, 1914), part one published in English as 'A Sociology of the Cinema: the Audience', *Screen*, vol. 42 no. 3, Autumn 2001.

detail. Bevens was interested in the sociology of time. The title of his work highlights the issue of 'spare time'. Was this wasted time, was it productive time, was it time that the working man merited? What, ultimately, was there to fear in working people having a time of their own?

Bevens began his project early in 1912 at the invitation of Dr Franklin H. Giddings, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. Having decided upon a questionnaire method, he devised his set of questions, prepared a time schedule, and sent out 4,000 documents to working men through the agency of labour unions, clubs and churches. Sadly, he obtained only 113 responses, which not surprisingly was deemed too small a sample for any sensible conclusions to be drawn. Although the survey had had general union support, the size of the questionnaire was daunting, and individuals were suspicious of the motives. Questions were asked such as, "Who is at the back of the study?", "What capitalistic scheme is this?", and "Why not investigate the employers and see how they spend their spare time?" A mixture of indifference, misunderstanding, forgetfulness and suspicion doomed the volunteer method. Wiser the second time around, and with the backing of the Bureau of Social Service of the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, Bevens engaged a team of thirty paid investigators who would interview working men, explain the project's sociological and reformist rationale, and see that the questionnaires were filled in.<sup>3</sup> The investigators were advised to approach any kind of working man, ignoring only the unemployed or retired, and to consider all nationalities. They were advised to "interview men who go to saloons and waste their timers well as those who use their time wisely." They were to stress union approval, and to tell their subjects that, while there were wage statistics, insurance, rents and family budget figures in large numbers, no statistics existed as to how spare time was spent. Bevens supplied them with the argument that, "reforms come only thru a knowledge of facts and that this is a study of a thousand men, from which to draw scientific conclusions to arouse the State, City, Employer, and Church to provide more night schools, social centres, men's clubs, public lectures and concerts for the improved use of leisure hours." No personal names were taken, and on average the interviews lasted half an hour.

This second phase of the investigation began on 1 November 1912 and was completed by 3 February 1913. 868 schedules were returned through this method. With other schedules filled in after mass meetings and other such group activity, a total of 1,070 were returned, chiefly from New York City, plus others from Rochester, Utica and other parts of New York State making up the numbers. Bevens, though he explains his methodology in some detail, does not say what the ideal figure would have been for a reliable statistical analysis, the assumption being that 1,000 seemed like a good round number. He

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<sup>3</sup> The Bureau of Social Service was established by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1903, originally as the Department of Church and Labor. Its role was to serve as a liaison body between church and workers. Gary Scott Smith, *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880–1925* (Lanham: Lexington, 2000), pp. 386-287.

admits to some possible biases in the statistical sample, as a number of the investigators were relatives of those being questioned. All in all the survey covered 164 trades, 29 nationalities, the educated and the uneducated, and both single and married men, though emphasis was placed on married men between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, as they were thought to represent the commonest type of working man.

Here is the questionnaire that was used:

**THE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKINGMEN'S TIME**

We are seeking by means of this personal appeal to find how workingmen spend their time. Will you kindly answer the questions on the following pages in order that your experience may help to secure better *educational* and *recreational* means for improving the use of spare time? It will not do you any harm, but your assistance will prove of the greatest value. Do not sign your name unless you desire to do so.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

What is your age?..... In what country were you born?.....  
 How long have you been in the United States?.....  
 If born in America, what is the nationality of your father?.....  
 Are you of the Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish faith?.....  
 How many times a month do you go to the church or the synagogue?.....  
 What is your trade or work?..... What is your pay each day?.....  
 Are you employed on piece work, or do you work by the day?.....  
 How much did you make last week?..... How much do you usually make a week?.....  
 Are you a member of a labor union?.....  
 About how many days, weeks, or months were you out of work on account of being *laid off* during the last 12 months?.....  
 About how many days, weeks, or months were you out of work on account of being *sick* during the last 12 months?.....  
 Are you married?..... How many children have you?.....  
 How many of your children are working?.....  
 How many of your children are working at home for money (making garments, flowers, etc)?.....  
 How much do they usually earn a week?.....  
 How many of your children are employed *outside* the home?.....  
 How much do they usually earn a week?.....  
 Does your wife take in *outside* work at home (as sewing, washing, etc)?.....  
 What does she usually earn a week?.....  
 Does your wife work in a store or factory?..... How many hours a day?..... What pay a day?.....  
 How many other persons do you support (as wife, parents, etc)?.....  
 Where do you eat at noon (restaurant, home, saloon, or place where you work)?.....  
 Is there a separate place provided in the shop where you may eat at noon?.....  
 How much did you spend for motion pictures during the past week?..... During the past month?.....  
 How much did you spend for theatres during the past week?..... During the past month?.....  
 How much did you spend during the past week for beer?..... For wine?.....  
 For whiskey or other liquors?.....  
 Do you drink liquor before going to work?..... At the noon hour?.....  
 How much did you spend during the past week for chewing tobacco?..... For smoking tobacco?.....

For cigars?..... For cigarettes?.....  
 What do you usually do after supper until bedtime?.....  
 How much do you contribute per week to the support of the church?.....  
 What is the total contribution per week of the members of your family who are not wage-carriers toward the support of the church?.....  
 How much do you spend per month for life insurance?..... For yourself?..... For your family?.....  
 What do you usually do Saturday afternoons?.....  
 What do you usually do Sundays?.....  
 Where do you usually go on trips, excursions, or other outings?.....  
 How much time do you spend trolley-riding for pleasure?.....  
 What holidays do you usually get each year?.....  
 What do you do on these holidays?.....  
 Do you have a vacation?..... How do you spend it?.....  
 Do you take your recreation with or without your family?.....  
 How much time do you usually take to eat breakfast?..... Dinner?..... Supper?.....  
 How much time do you spend per week on odd jobs at home?.....  
 Are there night schools in your neighborhood?.....  
 Are there men's clubs?.....  
 Are there social centers?..... Are there public lectures?.....  
 Are recreational facilities provided by the company for which you work?.....  
 What is the nature of these recreational features?.....  
 How are they regarded by the men? Do they regard welfare work or do they approve of it?.....  
 In what way have you found it most profitable to spend your spare time?.....  
 Why?.....

**DISTRIBUTION OF TIME DURING SEVEN DAYS**

**DIRECTIONS:**—Please fill in for EACH DAY the EXACT HOUR or the EXACT NUMBER of HOURS which the question asks for. Where you cannot give the exact time, show with a cross mark X on what days you do what the questions ask.

	SAT.	SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.
<b>1. At What Hour Each Day:</b>							
Do you get up?.....							
Do you go to bed?.....							
Do you leave home to go to work?.....							
Do you arrive at your work?.....							
Do you arrive at home after work?.....							
<b>2. How Many Hours Do You Work?.....</b>							
<b>3. At What Hours:</b>							
Do you eat breakfast?.....							
Do you eat dinner?.....							
Do you eat supper?.....							
<b>4. How Many Hours Do You Spend:</b>							
At labor unions?.....							
At clubs or lodges?.....							
At church or synagogue?.....							
At public lectures?.....							
At art galleries?.....							
At library?.....							
In private study?.....							
At night school?.....							
At motion-picture shows?.....							
At theatres?.....							
At dances?.....							
At base-ball?.....							
At saloon?.....							
Playing pool?.....							
Playing cards?.....							
<b>5. How Many Hours Do You Spend:</b>							
With your family?.....							
Reading newspapers?.....							
Reading magazines?.....							
Reading books?.....							
Visiting your friends?.....							

If any of the items in 4 or 5 are not daily or weekly occurrences, state how often they occur, or how many hours is given to them per month.  
\*Enter after each question in 4, extra column, the distance in squares or blocks from your home (as, Labor Union Hall, 6) means hall is six blocks or squares from your home.

**SUGGESTIONS**

What suggestions can you offer for improving the use of workingmen's spare time?

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Return to  
**BUREAU OF SOCIAL SERVICE**  
155 Fifth Avenue  
NEW YORK

Name..... Date.....

City or Town..... State.....

*How Workingmen Spend their Spare Time* is chiefly given over to the statistical tables that came out of the questionnaires. There are sixty-one tables, divided into eleven sections:

- The Relation of Hours of Labor to the Use of Spare Time
- The Relation of Occupation to the use of Spare Time
- The Relation of Hours of Labor to the Use of Spare Time, Grouping Men as Single or Married; and Ways in Which Single and Married Men Differ in Their Use of Spare Time
- The Relation of Age to the Use of Spare Time
- The Relation of Nationality to the Use of Spare Time
- The Relation of Wage to the Use of Spare Time
- What Men Usually Do on Certain Hours and During Certain Hours
- Personal Habits and Social Intercourse
- The Relation of Hours of Labor to the Expenditure of Money for Recreation and Other Purposes



- The Relation of Hours of Occupation to the Expenditure of Money for Recreation and Other Purposes
- The Relation of Wage to the Expenditure of Money for Recreation and Other Purposes

I will not go through the whole of Bevan's report, because there's too much to cover, and not all is within scope. Instead I'm going to concentrate of the position of motion pictures within the survey, and then consider his conclusions on the value of spare time with relation to the cinema.

**TABLE 1** ✓

Percentage of men who report time spent for various purposes during one week according to specified Hours of Labor.

	HOURS PER DAY			
	8—9	9—10	10—11	11 and over
<i>Number of men</i> .....	<i>289</i>	<i>257</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>
<b>SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Labor Union.....	39.4	24.8	16.4	8.3
Clubs or Lodges.....	38.1	44.7	35.9	29.5
Church or Synagogue.....	51.9	51.0	52.3	50.0
Public Lectures.....	32.2	26.4	16.4	5.3
Art Galleries.....	8.7	7.7	3.9	7
Library.....	14.5	15.1	10.1	2.2
Private Study.....	16.3	14.3	14.8	3.0
Night School.....	6.2	10.8	9.4	3.0
Motion Pictures.....	55.0	63.0	64.0	57.5
Theatres.....	56.7	44.3	39.0	24.2
Dance.....	25.0	14.3	13.2	9.0
Saloon.....	31.1	31.1	32.8	28.7
Pool.....	14.9	10.1	13.2	8.3
Cards.....	37.0	30.7	36.7	44.6
With Family.....	82.0	76.2	78.1	81.0
Newspaper.....	96.2	93.3	92.1	78.7
Magazine.....	31.1	22.5	15.6	19.6
Books.....	40.8	33.0	22.6	17.4
Friends.....	78.9	79.7	79.6	67.4

We begin with *The Relation of Hours of Labor to the Use of Spare Time*, **Table 1**. This compares the use of spare time to those working 8-9 hours, 9-10 hours, 10-11 hours or over 11 hours per day.

Underlying Bevans' survey was the ongoing labour movement's campaign for an eight-hour working day. It became the rallying call for socialists, anarchists and workers' associations throughout the United States in the late nineteenth century, with

Eight Hour Leagues being formed, and many strikes being organized, culminating in the countrywide strikes on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1886 which ended with the Haymarket bombing in Chicago, in which a number of policemen were killed and some of the strike leaders executed on false charges. The rallying cry was "8 Hours for Work! 8 Hours for Sleep! 8 Hours for What We Will!"<sup>4</sup> Although some cities and trades gradually agreed to eight hours, for many workers in the United States in 1912, when Bevans undertook his survey, the norm was still twelve hours a day or more. What Bevans was trying to demonstrate was that recreation time was not wasted time, but that it would instead lead to a better society.

The table compares workers within the various hour groups according to usage of spare time. We can see the various categories of spare time use that the survey was based around: labour unions, clubs or lodges, churches or synagogues, public lectures, art galleries, night schools, and so on. There is a clear ordering of these categories, perhaps indicating preferences, moving from men's clubs, to forms of study or betterment, to commercialised entertainments such as theatres and saloons, to time spent at home or with friends. In general, the table reveals that non-commercialised activities were most patronized by

<sup>4</sup> See Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

those within the shortest working hours sector. Immediately noticeable, however, is the prominence of motion pictures, enjoyed by 55, 63, 64 and 57.5% respectively. Irrespective of their working hours, or by the amount of free time they had, going to the motion pictures was enjoyed by a majority of working men, and overall only being with family, friends or reading a newspaper exceeded it.

**Table 2** builds on this by acknowledging that spare time was frequently devoted to more than one activity. So this second table shows the percentage of visits to or choices of the specified activity. Again motion pictures score higher than any other activity apart from the purely social. Along with card-playing and visiting saloons, it is the activity where the longer the work hours the greater percentage of men chose these activities, while reading and all forms of study decrease with the number of working hours.

**TABLE 4** ✓

Percentage of men who report time spent for various purposes during one week in specified Occupation Groups

	Professional and Public Services	Domestic and Personal Service	Clerical	Transportation	Merchants and Dealers	Building Trades	Metal Trades	Textiles	Miscellaneous
Number of men.....	40	72	135	72	31	110	76	113	157
SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Labor Union.....	10.0	5.5	1.6	16.6	.....	60.9	46.0	45.1	28.0
Clubs or Lodges.....	47.4	16.6	54.8	30.5	33.3	57.2	57.8	58.4	35.6
Church or Synagogue.....	32.4	49.9	44.4	45.8	66.6	56.3	63.1	60.1	45.8
Public Lectures.....	34.9	9.7	36.2	6.9	6.6	21.8	26.3	25.6	24.8
Art Galleries.....	14.9	2.7	10.3	.....	3.3	6.3	2.6	8.8	5.7
Library.....	10.9	2.7	23.7	2.7	3.3	7.2	4.4	11.5	15.9
Private Study.....	30.0	5.5	24.4	6.9	6.6	7.2	14.4	12.3	11.4
Night School.....	5.0	5.5	14.0	1.3	6.6	3.6	11.8	9.7	6.3
Motion Pictures.....	57.4	65.2	62.9	58.3	53.3	56.3	65.7	56.6	57.3
Theatres.....	50.0	31.9	65.9	36.1	43.3	42.7	46.0	46.0	37.5
Dance.....	19.9	12.4	31.1	19.4	3.3	15.4	10.5	11.5	16.5
Saloon.....	17.4	38.8	16.2	56.9	36.6	41.8	40.7	9.7	34.3
Pool.....	14.9	16.6	17.0	20.8	3.3	6.3	15.7	7.0	8.2
Cards.....	44.9	44.4	35.5	34.7	56.6	30.9	30.2	44.2	28.6
With Family.....	80.0	72.2	77.7	98.6	83.6	77.6	81.4	77.7	77.7
Newspaper.....	97.4	74.9	93.3	87.4	76.6	99.0	94.7	96.4	91.7
Magazine.....	27.4	19.4	38.5	18.0	16.6	21.8	23.6	11.5	23.0
Books.....	34.9	15.2	46.6	15.2	19.9	25.4	35.5	32.7	39.9
Friends.....	77.4	65.2	81.4	59.7	66.6	83.6	76.3	80.5	79.6

**TABLE 2**

Taking the total number of ways in which spare time was used by men in each Hour Group as 100%, the table shows the percentage of visits to or choices of the specified social and other agencies

SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES	HOURS PER DAY			
	8—9	9—10	10—11	11 and over
	%	%	%	%
Labor Union.....	5.1	4.1	2.5	1.6
Clubs or Lodges.....	7.5	6.4	5.6	4.9
Church or Synagogue.....	6.7	7.2	8.1	9.3
Public Lectures.....	4.1	3.8	2.5	1.0
Art Galleries.....	1.1	1.1	.6	.1
Library.....	1.9	2.2	1.6	.4
Private Study.....	2.1	2.1	2.3	.6
Night School.....	.8	1.6	1.4	.6
Motion Pictures.....	7.1	9.0	9.9	10.7
Theatre.....	7.3	6.4	6.0	4.5
Dance.....	3.2	2.1	2.1	1.7
Saloon.....	4.0	4.5	5.1	5.4
Pool.....	1.9	1.5	2.0	1.6
Cards.....	4.8	4.4	5.7	6.3
With Family.....	10.6	10.9	12.1	15.1
Newspaper.....	12.4	13.4	14.3	14.7
Magazine.....	4.0	3.2	2.4	3.7
Books.....	5.3	4.7	3.6	5.2
Friends.....	10.1	11.4	12.3	12.6

**TABLE 5**

Taking the total number of ways in which spare time was used by men in each Occupation Group as 100%, the table shows the percentage of visits to or choices of the specified social and other agencies

	Professional and Public Services	Domestic and Personal Service	Clerical	Transportation	Merchants and Dealers	Building Trades	Metal Trades	Textiles	Miscellaneous
SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Labor Union.....	1.4	1.0	.2	2.8	.....	8.4	6.2	6.4	4.2
Clubs or Lodges.....	6.6	3.0	7.1	4.9	5.6	7.9	7.7	8.2	5.3
Church or Synagogue.....	4.5	8.8	5.7	1.7	11.1	7.7	8.5	23.5	6.8
Public Lecture.....	1.8	4.7	1.2	1.1	3.0	3.5	2.6	3.7	.....
Art Galleries.....	2.1	.5	1.3	.....	.6	.9	.4	1.3	.....
Library.....	2.8	.5	3.1	.4	.6	1.0	1.1	1.6	2.4
Private Study.....	4.2	1.0	3.2	1.7	1.1	1.0	1.9	1.7	1.7
Night School.....	.7	1.0	1.2	.2	1.1	.5	1.6	1.4	1.0
Motion Pictures.....	8.0	11.8	8.1	9.8	8.9	7.7	8.8	8.0	8.5
Theatre.....	7.0	5.8	8.5	6.0	7.2	5.9	6.2	6.5	5.6
Dance.....	2.8	2.8	4.0	2.2	2.6	2.1	1.4	1.6	2.5
Saloon.....	2.4	7.0	2.0	9.6	6.1	5.7	5.4	1.4	5.1
Pool.....	2.1	3.0	2.2	3.5	6.6	.9	2.1	1.0	1.2
Cards.....	6.3	8.0	4.6	8.8	9.4	4.2	4.0	6.2	4.3
With Family.....	11.1	13.0	10.0	13.0	16.1	11.5	10.3	11.5	11.6
Newspaper.....	13.6	13.5	12.0	14.7	12.8	13.6	12.7	13.6	13.7
Magazine.....	3.8	3.5	5.0	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.2	1.6	4.2
Books.....	4.9	2.7	6.0	2.5	3.3	3.6	4.8	4.6	5.5
Friends.....	10.8	11.8	10.6	10.0	11.0	11.5	10.2	11.3	11.9

Bevans next relates occupation to the use of spare time. **Table 4** shows the percentage of men who reported time spent for various purposes during one week in specified occupational groups. Here one can see that attending labour unions was popular with those in the building and metal trades; that merchants and dealers were those most likely to spend time in church or synagogue; or that those in domestic service were the least likely to read a newspaper. Uniform across the occupations, however, is the motion picture – between 53% and 65% without any significant deviation. Again, a more refined picture is provided by allowing for percentages of time spent by any one person over a number of spare time activities, as **Table 5** illustrates. Motion pictures again enjoy a significant percentage across the

professions, headed only by family, friends and newspaper reading, with the highest percentage coming from those in personal or domestic service, at 11.8%.

**TABLE 15** ✓

Percentage of men who report time spent for various purposes during one week according to specified Age Group.

	17-24 years	25-35 years	36-45 years	46 yrs. and over
Number of men.....	207	331	187	82
<b>SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Labor Union.....	15.9	25.3	33.1	45.1
Clubs or Lodges.....	48.3	40.1	44.9	51.2
Church or Synagogue.....	39.1	45.3	62.5	69.5
Public Lectures.....	28.0	28.5	17.1	14.6
Art Galleries.....	9.6	6.6	5.3	3.6
Library.....	20.7	11.7	3.7	7.3
Private Study.....	26.0	10.8	6.4	3.6
Night School.....	17.8	0.6	1.6	46.3
Motion Pictures.....	43.9	65.2	45.1	46.3
Theatres.....	63.2	48.9	31.0	28.0
Dances.....	37.6	16.3	6.4	1.2
Saloon.....	17.8	32.6	42.7	30.4
Pool.....	25.1	12.3	2.6	2.4
Cards.....	25.6	39.8	41.7	26.8
With Family.....	65.7	80.3	94.6	85.3
Newspapers.....	94.6	90.3	89.8	92.6
Magazines.....	29.9	23.2	21.9	18.2
Books.....	45.8	28.8	27.8	20.7
Friends.....	51.6	80.0	71.6	65.8

**TABLE 17** ✓

Percentage of spare time spent for various purposes during one week by men in specified Age Groups.

	17-24 years	25-35 years	36-45 years	46 yrs. and over
<b>SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Labor Union.....	.9	1.3	1.5	2.3
Clubs or Lodges.....	6.1	3.1	3.1	5.2
Church or Synagogue.....	1.7	1.9	2.2	3.8
Public Lectures.....	1.9	1.3	.9	.6
Art Galleries.....	.3	.2	.2	.2
Library.....	1.4	.8	.6	.8
Private Study.....	4.5	1.6	1.1	.3
Night School.....	3.4	1.1	.2	.....
Motion Pictures.....	5.3	4.8	3.5	4.0
Theatres.....	4.8	2.8	1.6	1.7
Dances.....	3.8	1.0	.2	.1
Saloons.....	2.6	3.8	4.7	3.4
Pool.....	1.8	1.1	.4	.1
Cards.....	2.9	5.4	5.4	3.5
With Family.....	27.2	43.6	51.4	47.7
Newspapers.....	14.5	14.9	14.6	17.6
Magazines.....	2.6	1.6	1.4	1.2
Books.....	5.5	2.6	2.1	1.4
Friends.....	8.8	7.1	4.9	6.1

Passing over the tables which draw out the differences in spare time activity between single and married men, we can now look at the relation of age to spare time. **Table 15** shows clear rising and falling of categories according to age, determined to a degree by the wish for social betterment. So younger age groups went to night school or public lectures far more than did their elders. But once again motion pictures score highly across the board, though interestingly the highest group is 25-35 year olds, which the project assumed to be the commonest type of working man (and indeed the greatest number, 331, responded to this part of the survey). Looking at the percentages in **Table 17**, however, which allow for different activities filling a percentage of any one man's week, then motion pictures are seen to be the preferred choice of the younger groups overall, though the figures remain higher across the board than for all other non-home activities.

Then there is nationality. **Table 18** gives us possibly meaningless snippets of information such as Germans went the most to art galleries, but Austro-Hungarians the least; those American-born liked to dance the most, those British-born danced the least; Russians spent the most time with their friends, and Italians were the least likely to go to public lectures. Americans were those least likely to spend time with their families. Yet again, motion pictures score highly across the nationalities, marginally most popular with Americans, Germans and Russians.

**TABLE 18** ✓

Percentage of men who report time spent for various purposes during one week according to specified Nationality Groups.

	American	Austro-Hungarian	Great Britain	German	Italian	Russian	Other
Number of men.....	194	176	85	79	79	174	22
<b>SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Labor Unions.....	24.7	16.4	38.8	45.5	18.9	32.7	13.6
Clubs and Lodges.....	45.8	40.3	47.0	49.3	40.5	52.8	9.0
Church or Synagogue.....	45.8	62.4	48.2	65.8	48.1	43.1	27.2
Public Lecture.....	26.2	19.3	18.8	29.1	11.3	31.6	18.1
Art Galleries.....	5.1	3.4	7.0	11.3	8.8	8.6	18.1
Library.....	13.9	9.0	11.7	5.0	6.3	18.3	9.0
Private Study.....	13.9	9.0	9.4	8.8	15.1	17.8	18.1
Night School.....	7.2	7.9	4.7	7.5	6.3	13.2	4.5
Motion Pictures.....	61.3	59.6	58.8	60.7	54.4	60.3	54.5
Theatre.....	58.2	37.4	45.8	36.7	31.6	47.1	40.9
Dance.....	29.8	13.0	10.5	12.6	16.4	15.5	.....
Saloon.....	26.2	26.7	57.6	49.3	30.3	20.6	18.1
Pool.....	20.1	11.9	17.6	6.3	12.6	4.0	.....
Cards.....	32.9	50.5	35.2	27.8	37.9	28.1	54.5
With Family.....	74.2	84.0	85.8	86.0	82.2	79.8	68.1
Newspaper.....	94.3	89.2	91.7	91.1	92.4	91.9	90.9
Magazine.....	29.8	23.2	27.0	27.8	20.2	22.9	4.5
Books.....	34.0	31.2	23.5	32.9	27.8	37.3	36.3
Friends.....	75.1	78.5	76.4	72.1	79.7	82.7	81.8



The next crucial element is wage earnings, though it is a weakness of Bevans' study that there is no analysis of home budgets overall, and no relationship is drawn between money available and the cost of different activities. In **Table 21** we see categories of earners from under \$10 a week to over \$35 per week, with the greatest number of respondents earning between 15 and 20 dollars a week. What is noticeable is that those on the lowest income not only sought out the cheapest activities, but worked the most to better their lot, attending night school and reading books to a far higher degree than any other sector. Motion pictures again reign triumphant, the preferred form of non-home activity no matter what the man's earning power. As said, the figures are weakened by the absence of a consideration of other budgetary concerns.

**TABLE 21** ✓

Percentage of men who report time spent for various purposes during one week according to specified Wage Groups.

	Under \$10	\$10—14.99	\$15—19.99	\$20—24.99	\$25—29.99	\$30—34.99	\$35—over
Number of men.....	64	181	311	118	54	40	37
<b>SOCIAL AND OTHER AGENCIES</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Labor Union.....	11.0	28.2	49.9	57.5	42.4	8.1	
Clubs or Lodges.....	37.5	48.8	55.0	57.5	47.4	43.2	
Church or Synagogue.....	44.1	51.1	45.7	57.5	57.4	59.4	
Public Lecture.....	20.3	23.7	21.5	24.5	24.0	22.4	
Art Galleries.....	4.6	6.0	5.1	8.4	11.1	9.9	
Library.....	17.1	13.8	10.2	7.6	9.2	17.4	
Private Study.....	18.1	16.5	11.2	9.3	5.5	22.4	
Night School.....	21.8	9.9	8.0	4.2	1.8	2.4	
Motion Pictures.....	60.9	52.4	64.9	53.3	59.2	59.9	
Theatres.....	34.3	36.4	46.3	48.3	53.7	59.9	
Dance.....	24.9	17.1	15.4	17.7	20.3	14.9	
Saloon.....	28.1	34.8	28.9	31.3	33.3	32.4	
Pool.....	15.6	14.3	14.4	8.4	9.2	4.9	
Cards.....	24.9	30.3	36.6	40.6	48.1	32.4	
With Family.....	67.1	74.0	81.3	83.0	85.1	94.9	
Newspapers.....	81.2	83.9	92.9	95.7	98.1	100.0	
Magazines.....	18.7	22.6	21.8	27.1	35.1	32.4	
Books.....	40.6	29.2	29.0	38.1	25.9	37.4	
Friends.....	78.1	72.3	79.4	79.6	74.0	79.9	

**TABLE 48** ✓

Percentage of men who report expenditure of money for specified purposes during one week according to Hours of Labor.

	HOURS PER DAY			
	8—9	9—10	10—11	11 and over
Number of men.....	402	313	151	156
<b>ITEMS</b>	%	%	%	%
Motion Pictures.....	50.7	59.4	65.5	49.3
Theatres.....	47.3	41.2	27.8	21.1
Beer.....	55.5	61.1	54.3	62.5
Wine.....	10.2	8.3	7.3	14.7
Whiskey.....	20.1	21.4	21.2	16.6
Chewing Tobacco.....	11.9	11.8	9.9	9.0
Smoking Tobacco.....	30.3	24.3	23.1	21.8
Cigars.....	36.5	23.9	15.9	23.7
Cigarettes.....	30.6	34.8	44.4	44.2
Personal Contribution to Church.....	29.3	31.0	46.3	33.3
Family Contribution to Church.....	17.4	16.3	23.1	22.4
Self Life Insurance.....	32.6	31.0	27.1	22.4
Family Life Insurance.....	16.9	11.8	18.5	22.4

However, he does look at expenditure of money for specified purposes, as **Table 48** intriguingly reveals. Here we have a curious set of categories suggested by the questionnaire, and we see how motion pictures had to compete against expenditure on wine, chewing tobacco, contributions to the church and life insurance, amongst others. Motion pictures enjoy the highest score across all paid-for activities, across all hours of work, though particularly those working 10-11 hours a day.

**TABLE 51**

Percentage of expenditure of money for specified purposes during one week by men grouped according to Hours of Labor.

	HOURS PER DAY			
	8—9	9—10	10—11	11 and over
<b>ITEMS</b>	%	%	%	%
Motion Pictures.....	5.9	8.8	9.0	8.7
Theatres.....	21.8	17.9	11.2	10.5
Beer.....	19.3	22.7	26.8	21.9
Wine.....	5.7	4.0	2.3	9.3
Whiskey.....	7.2	6.8	6.6	7.9
Chewing Tobacco.....	8	1.4	1.2	9
Smoking Tobacco.....	3.3	4.4	3.1	2.6
Cigars.....	10.9	8.3	3.8	8.6
Cigarettes.....	7.2	9.7	14.9	14.6
Personal Contribution to Church.....	3.0	3.3	5.9	3.9
Family Contribution to Church.....	2.0	2.3	2.8	3.4
Self Life Insurance.....	9.1	7.4	8.0	4.5
Family Life Insurance.....	3.8	2.5	4.4	3.2

**Table 51** analyses this data in terms of percentages of money spent. Here the figures for motion pictures are lower than for theatres, beer or cigarettes. It was a cheap entertainment, and much time could be devoted to it for relatively little outlay, leaving money left over – where the men enjoyed having any

**TABLE 52** ✓

Combination of percentages in Table 51.

	HOURS PER DAY			
	8—9	9—10	10—11	11 and over
<b>ITEMS</b>	%	%	%	%
Motion Pictures and Theatres.....	27.7	26.7	20.2	19.2
Beer, Wine and Whiskey.....	32.2	33.5	35.7	39.1
Chewing and Smoking Tobacco.....	4.1	5.8	4.3	3.5
Cigars and Cigarettes.....	18.1	18.0	18.7	23.2
Personal and Family Contributions to Church.....	5.0	6.1	8.7	7.3
Self and Family Life Insurance.....	12.9	9.9	12.4	7.7



money left over – for other, marginally costlier activities as well. **Table 52** usefully arranges the expenditure activities into broad categories, combining motion pictures with theatres, showing how these activities declined with a rise in the number of hours worked, while spending on alcohol and cigarettes and cigars grew.

**TABLE 59**  
Average weekly expenditure of money for specified purposes during one week by men grouped according to Wage Groups.

	Under \$10	\$10–\$14.99	\$15–\$19.99	\$20–\$24.99	\$25–\$29.99	\$30–\$34.99	\$35 & over
Number of men.....	90	236	363	147	70	51	54
ITEMS							
Motion Pictures.....	\$ .08	\$ .13	\$ .16	\$ .16	\$ .22	\$ .22	\$ .18
Theatres.....	.12	.19	.30	.42	.63	.65	1.29
Beer.....	.45	.45	.39	.51	.66	.54	.42
Wine.....	.01	.06	.09	.08	.03	.30	.64
Whiskey and other Liquors.....	.06	.07	.12	.22	.23	.14	.50
Chewing Tobacco.....	.02	.01	.02	.02	.02	.04	.01
Smoking Tobacco.....	.03	.07	.07	.07	.12	.11	.02
Cigars.....	.01	.10	.12	.21	.33	.34	.85
Cigarettes.....	.18	.18	.22	.22	.15	.18	.32
Personal Contribution to Church.....	.04	.06	.06	.04	.10	.10	.34
Family Contribution to Church.....	.03	.06	.03	.03	.04	.06	.20
Weekly Self Life Insurance.....	.05	.10	.14	.13	.42	.15	.54
Weekly Family Life Insurance.....	.02	.05	.07	.06	.07	.06	.28
Total.....	\$1.10	\$1.53	\$1.79	\$2.17	\$2.92	\$2.89	\$5.59

Finally we have **Table 59**, where we see average weekly expenditure of money for specified purposes during one week by men grouped according to wage groups. At last we see leisure activities in terms of money spent against money earned. The general trend is the obvious one – an increase in wages leads to an increase in expenditure. Looking at motion pictures alone, spending is low – just 8 cents on average for

those earning under \$10 a week – but does not rise much as earning increases, which must mean that most were attending the cinema one or twice a week, rather than daily, and that increased wages did not mean more spending on cinema if the prices remained uniformly low. Any budding motion picture mogul looking at these figures would have quickly determined that the only route to greater profitability lay in higher prices, or at least a greater range of prices – and of course that is exactly what happened.

There are many more such tables in *How Workingmen Spend their Leisure Time*. Bevans considers which activities men undertook at different times of the day, how they spent Saturday afternoons (the only day time given over the spare time, though Bevans seems thereby to assume that his subjects were predominantly Christian and spared work on a Sunday, though of course many must have been Jewish and instead would be more likely not to have worked on a Saturday). He looks at time spent eating and eating locations, the same for drinking, and time spent on vacation. In general, the evidence he provides for motion pictures shows an activity popular across all professions, nationalities and lengths of spare time available, though with a tendency towards being more popular with the young, and more likely to be patronized by the lower paid. He also shows how motion pictures competed with other pleasures, commercial and non-commercial, revealing that they were not enjoyed exclusively but instead that their cheapness allowed for indulgence in other activities, making motion pictures less of a treat and more of a social norm. He also shows how expenditure on cinema-going was not greatly affected by any increase in wages, because of uniformity of pricing and particular cinema-going habits. The motion picture was establishing itself as a dominant social pleasure, but also one that priced and situated itself among other such pleasures, both free and commercialized.

Bevans' own conclusions relate to the nature of spare time. He writes:

From the data secured it would seem conclusive that the number of hours which a group of men work per day is directly related to the ways in which leisure time is used. The greatest contrast is apparent between the spare time spent by men in the 8-9 hour group and men in the 11 hour and over group. The 8-9 hour men engage in more social and cultural pastimes, whereas the 11 hour and over men spend most of their spare time in ways which are cheaper and more convenient. Between these two extremes the gradation of the 9-10 and 10-11 hour groups is an indication that the longer the working day the less social and educational development ...

The Tables 1 to 3 prove untrue the oft-repeated statement that shorter working hours afford too much leisure time for men to dissipate and make themselves less fit for labor. It is evident from a comparison of the Hour Groups that men working the lesser number of hours per day use their spare time more wisely and more uniformly than do men in the longer hour groups. It seems probable that the explanation of this is to be found in the ever-narrowing margin of available spare time as the work day lengthens; in the consequent increase of fatigue with more labor; in the withering of ambition and of interest in pleasure; and, finally, in decreasing wages. Men who work the greatest number of hours per day seek, in the use of their spare time, first for rest and then for recreation that comes cheaply and easily ... The table[s] ... indicate that to give workmen an equal number of hours of leisure would tend to establish a uniform standard for spending spare time.

Here is a nub of the matter. The underlying fear, which Bevans sought earnestly to counter, was that too much leisure time was bad for you – or at least bad for you if you were working class. He uses his data to make the bold claim that the more spare time the men were given, the better use they were able to make of it. Nor does he lapse into judgmentalism. Though there is an implied preference for night schools, private study and the like, he never decries card playing, drinking or going to the motion pictures, and takes care to emphasize that no one activity was undertaken in isolation but instead was part of a parcel of social activities.

It is no surprise then to find, at the end of *How Workingmen Spend their Spare Time*, statements from labour unions allying its findings to their cause. The Central Federated Union wrote: "We heartily approve of this study as a help towards bringing about a UNIVERSAL EIGHT-HOUR DAY, and we earnestly appeal to every man of labor to answer the questions herein given," while John S. Whalen, Deputy Commissioner of Labour added, "The opportunity is here given for workingmen to better their hours of labor and hours apart from labor by co-operating in this much-needed scientific investigation. I believe that all broad-minded workingmen will see in this study a means for improving social conditions and be interested enough to help and be helped." Whether it helped the cause at all, it is not possible to say, but it certainly intended to play its part.

There are some oddities to Bevans' survey. It leaves out some significant social activities, such as attending or taking part in sports, musical activity, or visiting parks – something that is a favoured theme in other social investigations of this period. Although it does much to aid our understanding of the early

cinema as a social phenomenon, it suffers from not considering women or children, who between them made up the majority of the cinema audience. And, as pointed out, it fails to give a full-rounded picture of the men's budgets – food, rent, clothing etc. – and so gives us no proper sense of spending power or how budgetary concerns helped determine the choice of spare time options.

What is also missing, but in this case because it could not be quantified, is the quality of experience. What was precious about going to the cinema was the value that it put on spare time. It was not that the visit to the cinema filled one or two hours of eight hours, or less, but that it took you out of time. In the escape that it provided, and in the special time-world within which the entertainments on the screen existed, it released you from regimentation, schedules, keeping to time, subservience, and the kind of quantitative analysis that, ironically, Bevans' survey exemplifies. Eight hours for what you will was disturbing enough for some authorities and employers, because spare time was seen as wasted time, or unprofitable time. It was something to be feared, because it was time that could not be quantified. The great popularity of the early motion picture, which Bevans documents, came not from a value to be measured in hours, dollars or percentages, but in a value that lay beyond any counting at all.