

III. THE RESEARCH 1994

1. Team A

"Comparison of National Sports between the USA and Japan"

2. Team B

"American Life Style: A Comparative Study Life Style Revealed through the Use of Electrical Appliances and My Summer Vaction"

3. Team C

"Comparative Study: After-School Life of Junior High School Students between USA and Japan"

4. Team D

"America as a Multi-cultural Society"

5. Team E

"A Comparison of the American and Japanese High School Students' Life During Summer Vacation"

6. Team F

"Cross-Cultural Communication Through Comparison of Food Culture"

Comparison of National Sports between the USA and Japan

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Gregory A. Hastings, Dr. East Carolina University
Paul V. Sherburne, Executive Director
Japan America Society of Minnesota

INTRODUCTION

As a concrete example to develop teaching materials for cross cultural understanding, our team will focus on baseball in the USA and *SUMO* in Japan as national sports to study the American way of thinking by comparing them. Although some Americans may say that the national sports of the USA are football or basketball, and not baseball, we will dare to regard baseball as the national sport in the USA because it is very popular and has a long history in both the USA and Japan.

The title of the teaching material, we will try to develop, is "Let's understand each other through baseball and *SUMO*." Baseball and *SUMO* are representative sports of the USA and Japan, and they are closely related to the history and culture of each country. Baseball was introduced into Japan in the *Meiji* era, about 100 years ago, and circulated all over Japan. Professional baseball has been popular now for more than 50 years. Today baseball is as popular in Japan as it is in the USA, however, there are many differences between these two countries in the types of baseball facilities, the way in which baseball leagues developed, and even the seasons in which baseball is played. On the other hand, *SUMO* hasn't been well known in the USA, but lately it has been gaining popularity due to the influence of three *SUMO* wrestlers from Hawaii, namely *Konishiki*, *Akebono* and *Musashimaru*, who have taken active parts at the grand tournaments.

It is for these reasons that we decided to survey the differences in the way of thinking about national sports to develop teaching materials as a basis

for understanding American culture and society.

METHOD

As a method of study, we have planned to 1) survey children in North Carolina and Minnesota by a questionnaire (prior to our arrival) to determine their attitudes towards baseball; 2) give students (from 5th to 9th grade) a *SUMO* presentation and seek their impressions and questions about *SUMO*; 3) observe some sporting facilities in the USA and compare them with ones in Japan; 4) interview people about national sports at baseball fields, shops, homestays and so on; 5) try to videotape and take pictures to show the students as much details as possible during our field study.

The questionnaires we asked our partners to have American students complete are as following:

1. Do you know any Japanese athletes?
2. If you answered "YES" for question No. 1, please write their name(s).
3. In Japan *SUMO* is the national sport. Have you ever heard about *SUMO*?
4. What is the national sport of the USA?
5. If it was possible for you to be a professional athlete, what sport would you choose? (You don't have to consider your sex.)
6. What sport do you play the most?
7. What sport do you watch the most?
8. Have you ever watched a baseball game at a stadium?
9. What is your favorite professional baseball team?
10. Do you have the following baseball goods?
 - Baseball gloves
 - Baseball bats
 - Baseballs
 - Autographs of professional players

VISITATION SITES

July 31, Sunday

Hotel Velvet Cloak Inn

We were lucky to have the chance to interview Mr. Rick Logo, the front clerk, who is a cousin of *Akebono*, a grandchampion, *Yokozuna*, of *sumo*. He has been to Japan and watched a live *sumo* grandtournament. He has also watched *sumo* wrestlers in training, so is aware of how hard they must train. He also commented that most Americans know very little about *sumo*.

August 1, Monday

Rock Springs

Listened to an explanation and suggestions from Dr. G. Hastings and Dr. P. Beaman about our field study schedule in North Carolina.

Overton's

Visited the biggest sports shop, Overton's, in Greenville and interviewed the young manager. He likes football and plays it almost every day, but in his opinion, baseball is the national sport of the USA. His reason for this opinion is that baseball equipment is in greater demand than any other kind of sporting goods in his shop, even though the area for marine sporting and fishing goods is much larger than that for baseball equipment. It was very surprising for us that many hunting guns are sold there. It seems that there is little difference between hunting and fishing for Americans.

Grainger Stadium

Visited Grainger Stadium to watch the baseball game between Kinston Indians and Lynchburg Red Sox, minor, double A league, guided by Mr. Joe Gaddis, Administrative Manager, ECU. The stadium has a seating capacity of about 2,000 and has a large free parking area. The admission fee is from 3 to 5 dollars. We bought admission tickets for reserved grandstand seats for 4 dollars. According to information on the ticket, the game was supposed to begin at 7 pm, but it actually began at 6 after the national anthem was played, because the game, the preceding day, had been called off due to rain, so there was a doubleheader game. Our plan was to interview many spectators about sports, and thanks to Mr. Gaddis, we were introduced to the spectators by the stadium announcer, so they were willing to answer our questions. Many of them responded that baseball is the national sport of the USA, but some young people replied that the national sport of the USA is football or basketball, and some of them said that baseball, football and basketball are national sports. From their answers, we came to the conclusion that "the national sport" means "the most popular sport" in people's

mind.

August 2, Tuesday

Nash Central Junior High School

In the morning we discussed with Mr. Bobby G. Spencer, the principal of Nash Central Junior High School, about the sports activities after school. Sports are strongly emphasized in the curriculum, and many of the students seriously want to be professional players. One of the major differences between the USA and Japan is that in the USA, students change the sports they play according to the seasons, but in Japan, students play the same sports all year round. This seems to be particularly interesting to American people.

In the afternoon we gave a presentation of *SUMO* to the students. About 25 students attended. Firstly we explained the outline of *SUMO* and then showed the video of the day *Musashimaru* won the championship. Finally we asked them to take part in *SUMO* after our demonstration. Some of them actually did *SUMO* with one of us or each other and all of them seemed to take an interest in *SUMO*. We handed out pamphlets published by the Japan *SUMO* association to the students at the end of our presentation. The students read the pamphlets eagerly and asked us some questions.

August 3, Wednesday

Southern Nash Junior High School

Visited Southern Nash Junior High School and observed the sports facilities, including the baseball field, football field, gymnasium and so on, with our guide Mr. Rick McMahon, the principal of the school, and three teachers. The facilities were more impressive than in Japan, and it seems that there is no use comparing them. But we thought that too much money has been spent for the sports facilities.

August 8, Monday

University of Minnesota

Discussed our field study schedule with Mr. Paul V. Sherburne, Executive Director, Japan America Society of Minnesota.

Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome

Joined the tour to observe the facilities of the Metrodome for three dollars in the morning. This tour is held twice a day and about 15,000 people join this tour every year. The Metrodome is the first stadium with a dome for baseball and football in the world, and has a seating capacity of 55,000 for baseball games and 63,000 for football games, because there are no right outfield bleachers when they play baseball, however, the stand moves and 8,000 seats are built when they play football. We had a chance to observe facilities which are not usually open to the public, such as the VIP room, the press box, the dugout and the locker room. We also went down to the ground and walked around there. After this tour we visited the office of Minnesota Twins which is in the Metrodome and collected material about the major league, in particular regarding the Twins.

In the evening we went to the Metrodome again to watch the game between Minnesota Twins and Boston Red Sox. We got there more than one hour before the game began and interviewed many kinds of spectators, children, boys, girls, young (wo)men, adults, old (wo)men. Most of them answered that baseball is the national sport of the USA, and all boys said they want to be professional baseball players when they grow up. But some of young people, especially young women said that the American national sport is football or basketball. Before the game we saw many boys, who belong to the baseball teams in Minneapolis, parading on the ground. The leagues are separated into four levels, and there are about 100 leagues in each level, and each league consists of about 8 teams. We understood how popular baseball is in the USA when we witnessed this parade.

August 9, Tuesday

Concordia College

Give a presentation of *suwo*, as we did at Nash Central Junior High School, to the students who are members of the Youth Express program at Concordia College. Youth Express is a program designed to provide young people with education and cultural opportunities, work experience, and leadership training outside of the normal school environment. They were more positive than the students of Nash Central Junior High School, asked many questions during our presentation, and most of them did *suwo* voluntarily, some participated more than once. At the last match the only girl of the attendance played *gyoji*, the referee.

Youth Express

Visited the office of Youth Express to hear about the daily activities from the leader.

Baseball Diamonds

Observed some baseball diamonds, guided Mr. Paul V. Sherburne. There are about 1,750 diamonds in the metropolitan area in which 2.5 million people live, and anyone from children to adults can use them freely. The baseball diamonds we saw in Minneapolis and St. Paul were maintained in good condition by the staff of both cities.

CONSIDERATION

We found some differences in the way of thinking of sports, especially national sports, between the USA and Japan through our field study.

Sumo has a lot to do with the history and tradition of Japan, and it is very popular as the national sport of Japan, but it is very difficult to get tickets and few people have ever watched a live *SUMO* grand tournament. Many Japanese like to watch it, but almost all Japanese don't actually do *sumo*. *Sumo* is the most popular sport to watch, but not to participate in.

On the other hand, when we asked some questions about the national sports in the USA, they answered that the sports many Americans enjoy are baseball, football and basketball. From this view point, most answered firstly baseball, and secondly basketball.

Thinking of the national sports, one of the most important points is how the people of the country relate to the sport. In Japan many people recognize sports as the way to build up their bodies and to train the spirit, not as a form of enjoyment. But Americans say that sports are for pleasure. We saw many more sports facilities of (junior) high schools in North Carolina and Minnesota than we did in Hiroshima prefecture, and the standard was excellent. We were very surprised by them. These differences are due to the extent of the countries and the educational curriculum. We were also surprised that the spectators cheered the baseball teams very hard even though it was a game of double A league.



Based upon these factors, when we examined the things in common between *SUMO* and baseball as national sports, we found that it is a very rigorous process to become one of the foremost athletes. It is much harder for *SUMO* wrestlers in Japan and baseball players in the USA to reach the top than it is for athletes

of other kinds of sports.

We came to understand these above-mentioned factors very well through our field study, and it convinced us that we could develop teaching materials on national sports for cross cultural understanding between the USA and Japan. AS a result, we gained many ideas how to develop them.

We would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts, Mr. Gregory A. Hastings, Mr. Paul V. Sherburne and the people who kindly helped us in North Carolina and Minnesota.

Itinerary and Major Activities in Field Study and Workshop (Team A)

Date	Visitation site	Activities	Participant
July 31 10:30 	Hotel Velvet Cloak Inn	Interviewed Mr. Rick Logo a cousin of <i>Akebono</i> , grand-champion of <i>sumo</i> .	R. Logo D. Spence
Aug. 1 9:30 12:30	Rock Springs Overton's 	Recieved an explanation and suggestions about our field study in North Carolina. Visited the biggest sports shop in Greenville and interviewed the manager and customers about sports. From the interview, we found that "a national sport" means the most popular sport in USA. The space for baseball equipment isn't very large, and the shop sells guns for hunting.	G. Hastings P. Beaman

13:30

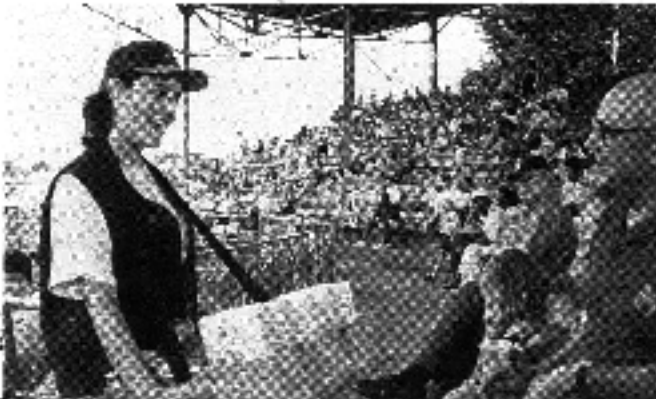
Grocery store

Visited a grocery store and interviewed customers about sports. More people had heard of *SUMO* than we expected, and some of them have even watched it on TV.

G. Hastings
P. Beaman

17:00

Grainger Stadium



Watched a baseball game of double A league at Grainger Stadium, and interview spectators about national sports. The stadium announcer introduced us to them during the game, so it was easy for us to conduct the interview. A few interesting attractions were held and the spectators enjoyed them. There are no differences in the equipment between American stadium and Japanese one.

J. Gaddis

Aug. 2



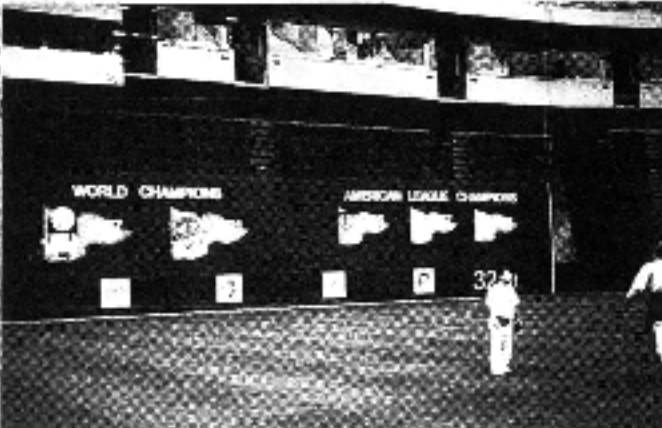
10:00

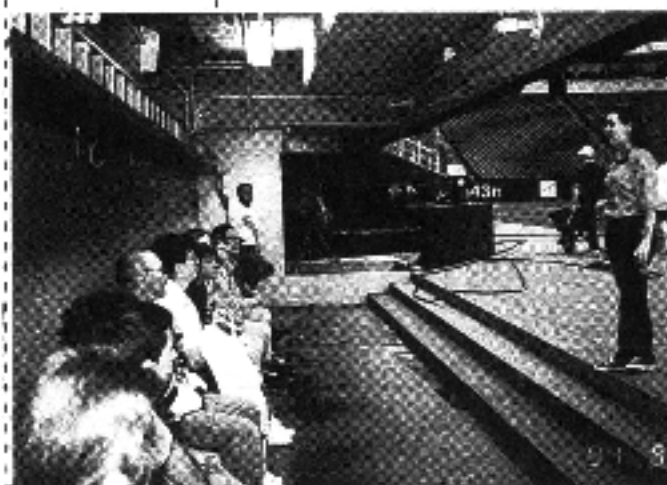
Nash Central Junior High school



An explanation about the curriculum from the principal, Bobby G. Spencer. In the curriculum sports are very emphasized and many students want to be professional athletes. Their parents hope that their children will succeed as athletes. Students in the USA select the sports they will play each season. This system is different from Japanese one.

P. Beaman
B. Spencer

13:00	Nash Central Junior High School	<p>Gave about 25 students a presentation of <i>SUMO</i>. This was their first chance for almost all of them to know about <i>SUMO</i>. They were interested in it, and they knew that it is the national sport of Japan.</p>	P. Beaman B. Spencer
<p>Aug. 3 10:00</p>	<p>Southern Nash Junior High School</p> 	<p>Saw the sports facilities of the school. Sports are very emphasized in this school, too. Discussed the curriculum in the USA and Japan with the teachers.</p>	R. McMahon
<p>Aug. 7 10:00</p>		<p>Took part in a softball game. There are more than 1,500 baseball fields around here, anyone can use the fields freely.</p>	P. Sherburne
<p>Aug. 8 10:00</p>	<p>University of Minnesota</p>	<p>An explanation and suggestions about our field study in Minnesota.</p>	P. Sherburne
13:00	<p>Hurbert H. Humphrey Metrodome</p> 	<p>Took part in the guided tour of the Metrodome. This tour is held twice a day, and about 15,000 people join the tour from all over USA every year. The Metrodome's interior volume is 60 million cubic feet, approximately equal to</p>	P. Sherburne



17:30 Hurbert H. Humphrey
Metrodome



the volume of 3,300 homes, and it can be converted from baseball to football use, and vice versa, in four hours, faster than any other stadium. Visited the Twins' office in the Metrodome to interview about the major league and received some materials.

Visited Metrodome to watch the game between the Twins and the Red Sox and interviewed spectators of various ages. More than 90% of spectators come to the Metrodome by car, so there are many parking areas in the vicinity. The capacity of them is about 15,000 cars.

P. Sherburne

Aug. 9
10:00 Concordia College

Gave a presentation of *SUNO* to about 25 members of the Youth Express as we did at Nash Central Junior High School.

P. Sherburne



<p>14:00</p>	<p>A Sports Shop</p>	<p>Visited a small sports shop to see the equipment which is sold at the store.</p> <p>The space for baseball goods is larger than ones for basketball, football and so on. In the USA baseball cards are big business. Eight companies produce baseball cards. Many cards are sold at this shop, and some older cards are sold at much higher prices. The most expensive one is 200 dollars.</p>	<p>P. Sherburne</p>
<p>Aug. 10 9:00</p>	<p>Hotel Luxeford Suites</p>	<p>Wrote a report.</p>	<p>P. Sherburne</p>



**American Life Style : A Comparative Study
Life Style Revealed through the Use of Electrical
Appliances and My Summer Vacation**

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Masaki Suzuki, Johoku Elementary School
Kazumi Takahashi, Matsue Second Junior High School
Dr. Henry A. Peel, East Carolina University
Bob Erickson, Global Studies Resource Center

INTRODUCTION

In our initial meetings as a team, we discussed many aspects of everyday American life and how it compares to life in Japan. We shared with each other information that we had read or heard about American life. One of the team members had lived in America for one month in 1984 and we shared her perspectives of American life. We decided to examine the attitudes of Americans and how these attitudes and interactions relate to home life. To examine these interactions, we chose two areas of study:

- 1) What electrical appliances do Americans use as part of their everyday home life?
- 2) What do American children do to enhance their home life during summer vacation?

To truly understand and appreciate the similarities and differences of home life in Japan and America, we feel it is important for our students to become familiar with the electrical appliances used in America, and what effect these appliances have on family life. This study is more than just a comparison of products, it is an examination of why there are different types of appliances used, and what their use says about Japanese and American cultures. Equally as important, our students should understand American student's summer vacation and its impact on their culture.

In order to have a better understanding and appreciation of American home life, we decided to interview an American electrical appliance sales person, a teacher, a professor, a mother, a father, a school aged child, a school administrator, a preschool child, and others. Through these voices we hope to gain information to help our students attain a clearer picture of American home life.

PURPOSE

The purpose of our team project is to make a field study of home life through observing the use of electrical appliances and children's summer vacation in North Carolina and Minnesota. We will use these case studies to obtain source information about home life in the United States in order to produce teaching materials to enhance international understanding for elementary school students in Japan.

METHOD

As a method of survey, our team planned to 1) interview electrical appliance sales representatives ; 2) interview family members; 3) observe and take pictures of electrical appliances in stores and homes; 4) use electrical appliances in homes; 5) obtain advertising brochures about electrical appliances; 6) compare and contrast summer vacations for children from both cultures.

For our interviews, we prepared questionnaires to use during home visits with adults and children and other questionnaires for store clerks.

Our study will examine electrical appliances through different topics:

1. Physical Description
size, shape, weight, color, options, cost, reliability, purpose
2. Use in Home Life
time of use, time of the year/day, reason used, who uses, how it works, impact on home life
3. Reason for Differences of appliance use in America and Japan

Our study will view summer vacation through recreation and study.

VISITATION SITES

August 1, Monday

Stokes Elementary School

The Stokes Elementary School was toured and pictures were taken.

Corey Home Center

At the Corey Home Center, Washington St, Williamston, a sales clerk was interviewed. Pictures were taken of major appliances - dish washer, clothes washer, dryer, refrigerator, micro-wave oven, and vacuum cleaner. The outcomes of these observations were that American appliances are larger in size, heavier, stronger and the cost is 1/2 to 2/3 that of Japanese appliances.

From the interview, it was apparent the way appliances are selected reflects the way of living.

Dr. Henry A. Peel's House

Team B went to Dr. Henry A. Peel's house to observe the use of appliances in the home. The research was conducted on how and when the appliances were used, and who used them. Members of the team operated the appliances and confirmed how they worked. A five-year-old son and a three-year-old daughter were part of the discussion, and as they played with members of team B, we learned more about their daily life.

August 2, Tuesday

Snow Hill Primary School

The condition of education was talked by team B, Dr. Peel and the teachers at Snow Hill Primary School. The summer program there was observed and pictures were taken. Computer studies in a computer lab were observed as well.

Classes are from 8:30 to 3:00. Students go home by school bus. They spend their time after school doing homework, playing, going to private lessons such as piano, dance, etc. A class has 27 students at maximum and they have more space compared to Japanese classrooms. In the computer laboratory, each of the students is given a computer and they can choose their own program. Most of them were studying languages. The entire school building is equipped with air conditioning and central heating.

Strickland Dale Restaurant

Japanese education was discussed over lunch by team B, Dr. Peel and the teachers of Snow Hill Primary School.

West Greene School

A 4-H Discovery Camp was observed, pictures were taken, and children were interviewed. This summer camp is a day camp held from June 11 to August 24 in a part of the school building. Children in the school district just come in the morning to play with friends, play sports, and they go home in the afternoon. There were 7 teachers, and all of them were volunteers.

Greene County Governmental Offices

We met a home economist. A lecture was given about American's preference for diet food. A demonstration of cooking low-fat meal was given and a "Turn Over" was served.

Snow Hill Primary school

We met the host families and visit host families' homes. Each member introduced a bit of Japanese culture, observed American family life and interviewed the family members about electrical appliances and summer vacation.

August 3, Wednesday

SEARS

Electrical appliances were examined and a sales clerk was interviewed. Americans consider the price to be the most important factor when choosing their appliances. Japanese-made electronics are popular, but not Japanese-made appliances. Americans don't seem to prefer a computer driven panel, which is common in Japan.

August 8, Monday

University of Minnesota

All of the members of the Hiroshima project and their partners met in a classroom of Belgen Hall at the University of Minnesota. A lecture by Dr. Walter Enloe was given, dealing with the structure of Japanese and American homes, the types of life styles, and a comparison of education. This prompted some discussion. Dr. Enloe gave a high evaluation of Japanese education, which we felt did not take into account some of the problems we see. All eventually agreed that both educational systems have their own problems as well as their strengths.

After a break, each of the six teams reassessed their plans for the three day research visits.

St. Louis Park Junior High School

A tour was made of the St. Louis Park Junior High School, a building of 650 students in grades 7 and 8. Mr. Erickson showed us classrooms for each of the subjects taught as well as the media center/library which included books, computers, and audio-visual equipment.

It was determined that junior highs are quite similar, with equipment and furnishings being very satisfactory.

Mr. and Mrs. Kalgren's House

A home visit was made to the family of Frank and Sue Kalgren. The parents were interviewed as well as the 13-year-old son, 10-year-old daughter, and a teen-age visitor from France.

The outcomes of this visit were:

- the way appliances are used is different
- the person using the appliances will differ in different families
- the family organization will determine roles and tasks within it.

August 9, Tuesday

Montessori Day Care Center

The Center is housed in a church and cares for children from the ages of 3 to 6. We exchanged courtesies with the children and staff.

Montgomery Ward

Pictures of electrical appliances were taken. A sales representative was interviewed.

One reason for not having Japanese-made appliances might be due to the greater cost of shipping. The clerk said Americans consider the price and durability when choosing their appliances. The reason for having a larger refrigerator is that they eat meat or chicken, which they buy on the weekend and they have to preserve them until the next weekend.

August 10, Wednesday

Byerly's Super Market

A tour was made of Byerly's Super Market to observe how people shop and what they are shopping for. A study was made of foods prepared for simple preparation.

Global Studies Resource Center

The Global Studies Resource Center, which is a social studies center featuring books and materials about global education, was visited. Mr. Erickson distributed catalogs and samples of classroom materials used by teachers and students. It was observed what constitutes global education in American schools.

Mr. and Mrs. Erickson's house

An interview with Mrs. Erickson was made as to how and when she uses appliances. This reconfirmed what was found at previous interviews, and that a retired couple uses appliances in similar ways to families. An important note was made that the way appliances are used reflects the organization of the family.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FIELD STUDY

Through interviews with Americans and observations and experiments in American homes, we gained valuable insights to share with our students. It is important for Japanese children to understand and recognize that there are similarities in their life style when compared to other countries. This understanding helps them see that they live in an international society and that there are global similarities of which they are a part. By understanding the differences, Japanese children can appreciate and enjoy the uniqueness of their own culture. These findings will make our children more comfortable and competitive as they interact with people from other cultures and travel outside of Japan. This field study moves Japanese students closer to an international understanding.

Itinerary and Major Activities in the Field Study (Team B)

DATE	VISITATION SITE	ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANT
July 31 15:30 16:30 19:30	Greenville Hilton Inn East Carolina Univ.	Arrive at Greenville Hilton Inn Pig Picking Party Meet Mr. and Mrs. Peel Visit ECU campus	Dr. Peel
Aug 1 9:00 11:00 14:00 15:00 16:00	Rock Springs Stokes Elementary School Corey Home Center Dr. Peel's house	Ceremony Have a discussion about the schedule Take pictures of the facilities Watch and take pictures of electrical appliances Interview the store manager Visit Dr. Peel's House Take pictures, interview children Try lawn mower, vacuum cleaner	Dr. Peel Dr. Peel Stan Crow (store manager) Dr. Peel's family and relatives
Aug 2 9:30 11:30 14:00 16:00	Snow Hill Primary School Strickland Dale Restaurant West Greene School Greene County Governmental Offices Snow Hill Primary	Visit classes and the computer lab Talk with teachers Talk with students in summer program Talk with teachers of Snow Hill Primary School Visit 4-H Discovery Camp Meet with home economist Meet host families	G. Edmondson (principal) M. E. Slane Teachers at Snow Hill Primary School Mr. & Mrs. Horton Mr. & Mrs. Edwards Mr. & Mrs. Adams

Aug 3 11:00	SEARS	Visit appliance store Interview a sales clerk	Wayne Parsons
14:00	Greenville Hilton Inn	Report writing	Dr. Peel
Aug 8 9:00	University of Minnesota	A lecture by Dr. Walter Enloe was given, followed by some discussion Reassessed plans for the research	Dr. Enloe Mr. B. Erickson
13:00	St. Louis Park Junior High School	A tour in St. Louis Junior High Visit classrooms and the media center	Mr. B. Erickson
15:30	Mr. and Mrs. Kalgren's house	A home visit to the family of Frank and Sue Kalgren Interview the parents, son and daughter Videotape the tour in the house	Mr. B. Erickson Mr. & Mrs. Kalgren
Aug 9 9:00	Montessori Day Care Center	Visit Montessori Day Care Center Talked with staff and children	Mr. & Mrs. Erickson
10:30	Montgomery Ward	Visit electrical appliance store Take pictures and interview a sales representative	Mr. & Mrs. Erickson
Aug 10 9:30	Byerly's Super Market	Observe how and what people are shopping for Study foods	Mr. B. Erickson
10:30	Global Studies Resource Center	Visit Global Studies Resource Center Study the materials used by teachers and students	Mr. B. Erickson
13:30	Mr. & Mrs. Erickson's	Interview Mrs. Erickson Report writing	Mr. & Mrs. Erickson