

A STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF DROP-OUTS DURING  
THE SCHOOL YEARS 1958-1962 IN  
HOKE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

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ERASABLE BOND  
COTTON CONTENT

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of Education  
Appalachian State Teachers College

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education

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by  
Donald Webster Miller

August 1962

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by

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It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine the cause or causes of student drop-outs as expressed by ex-students, teachers, and parents in Hoke County High School during the period beginning with the fall semester 1958 and ending with June 1, 1962; (2) to secure the needed information to determine, if possible, the character of the drop-out by means of a teacher, student, and parent questionnaire; and (3) to suggest what action the school could take to reduce the severity of this problem.

The information for this study was collected by (1) a survey of literature related to drop-outs, the high school curriculum, and modern approaches to retaining students in school; (2) a study of the cumulative record for each drop-out in regard to attendance, grades, tests, and social evaluation by teacher judgment; (3) questionnaires sent to the drop-outs, their parents and their homeroom teachers, and (4) personal contact with students chosen from those who had not replied to the questionnaire.

The following procedure was used in collecting data. A questionnaire was mailed with a letter of explanation to the drop-outs and also to the parents of the drop-outs. This was followed by a postal card to those who had not responded. In some cases a second postal card was required. A third questionnaire and a letter were given to the homeroom teachers of these students.

The following conclusions were drawn as a result of the study:

1. The drop-outs were slow in returning the questionnaires which



could indicate that they had not changed their opinion as to the importance of education.

2. Most of the drop-outs occurred during the freshman year with the number decreasing each year after that.

3. The scholastic average of the drop-outs indicated that some of them were failing or nearly failing their courses.

4. The social evaluation by the teachers of the drop-outs showed that generally they were average in this respect.

5. The intelligence quotient of 68.4 per cent of the students indicated that they could have made passing grades had they used their ability to its maximum potential.

6. The attendance record of the drop-outs was below average for the school. The poor attendance is a possible cause for the poor grades.

7. The cumulative records indicated that June had more drop-outs than any other month with October having the next highest.

8. The study showed that the three main causes as given by drop-outs were marriage, tired of school, and failure of subjects. Teacher statements in the cumulative records gave failure of subjects as the main cause.

9. The study showed that the educational status of the majority of the parents of drop-outs was low with 68 per cent attending elementary school only.

10. Most of the drop-outs came from large families with the largest per cent having six or more children. This could have put a financial hardship on the family in keeping the student in school.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Hoke County lies in the southeastern region of North Carolina. It is the second youngest county in the state--formed in 1913.<sup>1</sup>

Racford, the only sizable area of population in the county, is the county seat. It is a typical southern town with a population of approximately 3,500.

The white schools of Hoke County which make up the District I schools are found in Racford. During 1960-1961, the last rural white elementary school was consolidated with the District I schools. Grades one through four are located in the John W. McLauchlin Elementary School which had twenty-seven teachers and 698 students during the school year 1961-1962. Grades five through eight are located in the Racford Elementary School with nineteen teachers and 563 students, while grades nine through twelve are located in a new modern high school with twenty-five teachers and 400 students.

The area is mainly farming with some industries having been established during the last twenty years. Pacific Mills, a division of Burlington industries, is the largest plant in Racford employing some 1300 persons.<sup>2</sup> Next in size is the Upchurch Milling Company with 135

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<sup>1</sup>W. C. Allen, The Story of Our State North Carolina (North Carolina: The Dixie Press, 1942), p. 348.

<sup>2</sup>Shirley Gabriel, Personnel Manager of Burlington Industry (Pacific Division in Racford, North Carolina), personal interview.



employees.<sup>3</sup> The other industries, Hoke Oil and Fertilizer,<sup>4</sup> and United Rubber<sup>5</sup> employ sixty-five persons each.

In this small county school system there are three races of people--white making up forty-eight per cent, Negro with fifty-one per cent, and Indian with one per cent.<sup>6</sup> Each race tends to live with members of its own race in certain sections of the town or county.

Raeford does not have sufficient jobs for its young people. Many of its talented students seek other places to live after completing high school or the A. B. or B. S. degrees in college.

It would appear that one of the main problems of the Hoke County High School is to retain the potential "drop-out" as long as possible.

The student has the choice of taking a course of study to prepare him for college or of taking introductory vocational courses. The college preparatory course of study offers such subjects as Algebra I and II, advanced algebra, plane geometry and solid geometry, physics, chemistry, and includes other required courses as English, history,

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<sup>3</sup>Talmedge English, Assistant Manager of Upchurch Milling Company, personal interview.

<sup>4</sup>Clyde Upchurch, Jr., President of Hoke Oil and Fertilizer Company, personal interview.

<sup>5</sup>Fred Plummer, Overseer of the United States Rubber Company, personal interview.

<sup>6</sup>W. T. Gibson, Jr., Superintendent of Hoke County Public Schools, personal interview.

modern foreign language, biology, and physical education. The students not planning to attend college are offered three years of home economics, three years of agriculture, commercial courses, economics, sociology, and geography.

On the faculty at Hoke High School are only a few persons with a Master's degree. Most of the teachers are middle-aged and have had several years of teaching experience in this school. This familiarity with the students and community might help in the problem of holding the students in school.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of the study (1) to determine the cause or causes of student drop-outs as expressed by ex-students, teachers, and parents in Hoke County High School during the period beginning with fall semester 1958 and ending June 1, 1962; (2) to secure the needed information to determine, if possible, the character of the drop-out by means of a teacher, student, and parent questionnaire; and (3) to suggest what action the school could take to reduce the severity of this problem.

Importance of the study. The philosophy and objective of education during the twentieth century demands that the curriculum of the school be designed to meet the needs of its students. Thus, this study may indicate in a small way guides or goals for a more attractive school program. This study may furnish some information on the following



hypotheses: that students drop out: (1) because of the desire to earn money at an earlier age, (2) because of the desire for a car rather than an education, (3) because of marriage, (4) because education is not connected with the daily needs of the individual, and (5) because of the undesirable attitudes toward "getting an education."

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Dropping of pupils. The Dictionary of Education defined the dropping of pupils as,

(1) the art of removing pupils from the rolls of school because of absences of three, five, ten, or more days; (2) the practice of obliging a probation pupil to withdraw from a particular school or because of consistent failure or inability to do the work of the school or course.<sup>7</sup>

Drop-out. Good defines a drop-out as "a pupil who leaves school before the completion of a grade or before graduation."<sup>8</sup> The use of the definition of "the drop-out" will permit the author to see both the forced drop-out as well as the voluntary drop-out in the respected areas of this study.

Failures. Rivlin and Schueler define this term as "pupils, who at the end of a term, have not met the standards set for that term . . .

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<sup>7</sup>Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1945), p. 142.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



not promoted to the next grade."<sup>9</sup> The term in the case of this study will be used as one semester's work, or one half of the one hundred eighty school days as required by law in North Carolina.

Course of study or curriculum. Paul Monroe gives the definition of this term as "a graded outline of the subjects of instruction, the order to be followed in pursuing them, and the amount of each to be completed in definite portions of time."<sup>10</sup>

Feeder school. This term is used to describe a school which transfers its students upon their completion of the required work in the school to another school of higher grade level. In this study the feeder school included grades five through eight.

Suspension. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, suspension is "the act of suspending or the state or period of being suspended, interrupted, or abrogated . . . may be employed to remove an apparently seriously objectionable boy or girl from school."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Harry N. Rivlin and Herbert Schueler, Encyclopedia of Modern Education (New York City: F. Hubert and Co., Inc., 1943), p. 617.

<sup>10</sup>Paul Monroe, A Cyclopedia of Education (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911), II, p. 222.

<sup>11</sup>Philip Babcock Gove (ed.), Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub., 1961), p. 2303.

### III. PROCEDURES AND SOURCES OF DATA

The data. Information for this study was collected by (1) a survey of literature related to drop-outs, the high school curriculum, and modern approaches to retaining students in school; (2) a study of the cumulative record for each drop-out in regard to attendance, grades, tests, and social evaluations by teacher judgment; (3) questionnaires sent to the drop-outs, their parents and their homeroom teachers; (4) personal contact with students chosen at random and their parents; and (5) a study of the elementary records of the students interviewed for trends indicating potential drop-outs.

Procedure used in collecting data. A questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed with a letter of explanation (Appendix B) to the drop-outs. This was followed by a postal card to those who had not responded (Appendix C). In some cases a second postal card was required. A questionnaire (Appendix D) and a letter were mailed to the parents (Appendix E). A third questionnaire (Appendix F) and a letter (Appendix G) were given to the homeroom teachers of these students. The students for the personal interviews were chosen from those who had not replied.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

F. V. N. Painter in writing Luther on Education for the Lutheran Publication Society of Philadelphia in 1889 quoted Luther as saying,

"Where there are towns and villages which have the ability," Luther wrote, "your electoral grace has the power to compel them to maintain schools, pulpits, and parishes. If they will not do it from a consideration for their salvation, then your electoral grace, as highest guardian of the youth and of all others needing supervision, is to compel them to do so, just as they are compelled to render contributions and services toward bridges, paths, and roads, or other matters pertaining to the public interest . . . If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and rifle, to mount ramparts and perform other martial duties in time of war; how much more has it a right to compel the people to send their children to school, because in this case we are warring with the devil."<sup>1</sup>

Luther, one of the outstanding leaders of the sixteenth century, saw the need for the education of the masses. The world had fought the same evil before Luther and continues to do so today. Yet the problem is different in 1962. The United States has a massive educational program for "all its citizens". The problem is not how "to educate the masses" but how to retain those who do not wish to complete high school.

With so much emphasis in the N. D. B. A. program during 1961, much attention was given to the gifted student. With this accelerated program many of the slower students were taken for granted. Dr. Carroll, Superintendent of Public Schools in North Carolina, said in Raleigh on

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<sup>1</sup>John S. Brubacher, A History of the Problems of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947), p. 358.



March 16, 1962; that North Carolina was losing about fifty per cent of its students from grade one to grade twelve. This fact is now causing concern after a dark period of unconcern by the public.

Theodore L. Torgerson and Georgia Sachs Adams list the causes of low achievement as follows:

- (1) Physical factors--due to accident either in child birth or acquired after birth, a person may have one arm, one eye, may not be able to hear well, or have one leg. The incentive is to feel sorry for one's self.
- (2) Emotion factor--problem at home with parents or brother-sister relationship, problem with classmates, or some outside stimuli.
- (3) Mental-maturity factors--large in body but mentally immature, able to excel in sports but small in size.
- (4) Disabilities in the basic skills--unable to retain simple basic steps in math, rules in English, unable to spell and inability to read.
- (5) Inadequate work-study skills--unable to study as readily as one should--does not know how to study.<sup>2</sup>

Charles M. Allen in Combating the Drop-out Problem has cited the following facts.

- (1) Only a little over half of our nation's youth stay in school long enough to graduate.
- (2) A high percentage of our juvenile delinquents come from the ranks of drop-outs.
- (3) Drop-outs drift unhappily from job to job.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Theodore L. Torgerson and Georgia Sachs Adams, Measurement and Evaluation for the Elementary School Teacher (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), pp. 210-211.

<sup>3</sup>Charles M. Allen, Combating the Drop-out Problem (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), p. 3.

Mr. Allen has cited the personality of many drop-outs by applying the emotional factor of Mr. Torgerson and Mr. Adams to explain the juvenile delinquents.

It is possible that potential drop-outs may encounter teachers as the one described by Charles L. Robbins.

With respect to his pupils the teacher has almost always to strive against the ancient tradition that he is their national enemy. Happy is he who can instill in the minds of his pupils the belief that he is helper and friend, that their interests are his, that differences in age and position are no insurmountable barrier to friendship and co-operation.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Robbins was certain that a good teacher could kindle a small fire of knowledge to create the interest of an individual; therefore, giving school some meaning to the student.

Much of teacher education was devoted to understanding the individual needs of students during the 1950's and early 1960's. With this in mind and the changing approach to subject matter one can see a decrease in drop-outs in a study made by the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare entitled Biennial Survey of Education in the United States. In the twenty-four years from 1924-1925 to 1948-1949 the difference of fifth graders entering high school rose from 61.2 per cent to 86.3 per cent, while the number graduating from high school rose from 30.2 per cent to 58.1 per cent.<sup>5</sup> These facts are shown in the

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<sup>4</sup>Charles L. Robbins, The School as a Social Institute (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1918), p. 449.

<sup>5</sup>"School Retention Rate Rises," School Life, XLII (January, 1960), 60.

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table below which was prepared to show the results of the study.

For every 1000 fifth graders in	This many entered 9th grade	This many graduated from H. S.	This many entered college	Year of college entrance
1924-1925	612	302	118	1932
1926-1927	677	333	129	1934
1928-1929	736	378	137	1936
1930-1931	780	415	148	1938
1932-1933	776	455	160	1940
1934-1935	803	467	129	1942
1936-1937	839	393	121	1944
1938-1939	796	419	lack of inf.	1946
1940-1941	781	481	lack of inf.	1948
1942-1943	807	505	205	1950
1944-1945	848	522	234	1952
1946-1947	872	553	283	1954
1948-1949	863	581	301	1956 <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "School Retention Rate Rises," Ibid.



With the educational advancements being made and the number of high school students increasing, it would seem that the number of drop-outs would be decreasing, but according to Mr. Ribicoff, this is not true.

Our high school dropout rate has reached fantastic proportions. Two and one half million of the 10,800,000 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 of the nation's public and nonpublic schools this fall will drop out before graduation. The drop out rate ranges from 20 to 40 percent in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

A table prepared by the Office of Education shows that in North Carolina there were 75,363 ninth graders in 1956-1957. Of these, there were 45,271 who graduated in 1959-1960. The per cent not graduating was 39.9.<sup>8</sup>

The ability to identify a drop-out varied with each individual who dropped out. Charles M. Allen described the drop-out as one who is

(1) unsuccessful in school work and retarded by one or more grades; and many are consequently overage by the time they withdraw. (2) Most drop-outs take little part in out-in-class activities. (3) Most drop-outs are from low-income families and have difficulty meeting school costs.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Plain Words from Mr. Ribicoff on Dropouts," School Life, XLIV (November, 1961), 14-15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Allen, op. cit., p. 8.

Allen also stated why intelligence tests were not effective with this type of student.

Intelligence tests may be affected by differences in experience or cultural background. Investigation shows that most of these tests favor students from the middle or upper social classes; drop-outs from lower-class homes may get unrealistically low scores. For students from low-income families, money for normal participation in extracurricular activities often means financial sacrifice by the rest of the family. Nonparticipation contributes to the feeling of not belonging and leads the potential drop-out to seek satisfaction outside of school and eventually to withdraw.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Harold Hand has cited another problem in our school system-- the problem of money. The cost of books as well as other supplies has doubled in recent years. This has created a great strain on the low income families. Dr. Hand in a study of the student expenses in seventy-nine Illinois high schools found the following cost for "hidden extras" amounted to \$33.00 per boy and \$35.15 per girl. For physical education, required by law in high schools, Dr. Hand's study found the peak costs were \$15.85 per boy and \$14.00 per girl. In the same studies the median schools reported subject costs high enough to discourage children from low-income families in completing an education.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. George J. Heckt, publisher of Parents' Magazine, has stated in an article "that of 85 jobs available to young people, the Labor Department's 'Job Guide for Young Workers' shows that only twenty-three are possibly open to nongraduates." Mr. Heckt further states that

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<sup>10</sup>Allen, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 15.



employers find high school graduates more dependable and more trainable. Having a high school diploma shows that the person can be trained. Heckt said also, "In the professions, it's estimated that in less than ten years by 1967, we'll need about 900,000 more trained people in just the areas of medicine, teaching, natural science and engineering, in addition to replacements."<sup>12</sup>

Following the trend, Bettina Weary has quoted President Eisenhower as saying,

I urge every girl and boy in the United States to continue as students in school until they have developed their God-given capacities to the full. Only in this way can they hope to make their finest contribution to the strength of the Nation and reach the fulfillment of their own life purposes.<sup>13</sup>

The Handbook for Communities, which Bettina Weary discussed, stated reasons why one should stay in school.

Life as well as industry is growing more complex. Increasingly more understanding and more competencies are needed by everyone for success as a worker, a family member, and as a citizen of a Nation which must provide leadership in a world seeking international understanding and peace.<sup>14</sup>

The Handbook also said that "the typical high school graduate, during his adult earning years, will receive \$50,000 more than the 8th-grade graduate; \$30,000 more than the high school dropout."<sup>15</sup> It is

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<sup>12</sup>George J. Heckt, "The Calamity of Our Million School Drop-outs," Parents' Magazine, XXXII (September, 1957), 39+.

<sup>13</sup>Bettina Weary, "Stay-in-School Campaign," School Life, XXXIX (May, 1957), 13-15.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.    <sup>15</sup>Ibid.



also pointed out that the 1950 census showed that among men who were between the ages of 25-64, the high school graduate was much less likely to be unemployed than the nongraduate.

The public must be educated "to an awareness of the value of education in today's world . . . by drawing the attention of the community to the advantages which accrue to the holder of a high school diploma, in terms of increased opportunities and earning power."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Evelyn S. Bianchi, High-School Dropouts (Washington: National Education Association, 1959), p. 1.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

All available information, the cumulative folders, questionnaires, and personal interviews with twenty-three students were studied carefully in an attempt to arrive at the causes for the students dropping out of Hoke County High School.

Three questionnaires were sent to: (1) the student drop-outs, (2) the parents of the drop-outs, and (3) the homeroom teachers who are responsible for keeping the records of the students.

The home addresses of the ninety-five drop-outs were acquired from the cumulative folders. Of these ninety-five only nineteen parents and students returned the questionnaires. Forty-five were returned marked "unknown", "insufficient address", or "moved leaving no forwarding address". A postal card was sent to the students who had not replied. Further investigation yielded new addresses for eighteen of the drop-outs and questionnaires were mailed a second time. These yielded only three additional returns. A second postal card was sent to each of the remaining fifteen students with five replying this time. In June twenty-two additional names were obtained of students who had dropped out during 1961-1962. Questionnaires were sent to these and eleven were returned. This gave a total of sixty-one students including personal contacts or 52.1 per cent of the 117 students participating in the study. The tabulation of these results were shown in Table I.

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TABLE I  
RESULTS OF CONTACTS WITH DROP-OUTS

Number mailed	Returned unknown or moved	Returned completed	Number not returned or completed	Personal contacts	Total
Boys 71	19	19	19	14	71
Girls 46	17	19	1	9	46
Totals 117	36	38	20	23	117

The homeroom teachers were given a questionnaire for each drop-out in their class. All but three teachers completed these. The three teachers not completing the questionnaires were no longer connected with Hoke County High School.

The cumulative records (Appendix G) served to give the following information: (1) the scholastic grade average, (2) social evaluation by the teachers, (3) the intelligence quotient of the drop-out, (4) date and grade the student dropped out of school, (5) the attendance record, and (6) the educational status and address of the parents.

Table II was a tabulation of the rate of drop-outs by the grade and year during this four-year period. Hoke County High School had seventy-one boys and forty-six girls to drop out during 1958-1962. The table indicated that the largest number of drop-outs were freshmen. It also indicated that the number diminished with each succeeding year. Could it be that the transition



from the elementary school to high school was too hard for the freshmen? It was also note-worthy that most of the drop-outs were males. During the 1958-1959 school year, more students dropped out than in any other year. Why would this year be different from the trend for the other three?

TABLE II

## DROP-OUTS BY GRADE AND YEAR

Year	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
1958- 1959	12	9	8	3	9	3	1		45
1959- 1960	1	7	5		5	2	1		21
1960- 1961	5	3	6	5		3	2		24
1961- 1962	12	5	2	3	2	2		1	27
Totals	30	24	21	11	16	10	4	1	117

From the information compiled in Table III, it was noted that seventy-eight students had an "F" average when they dropped out of school while twenty-one had a "D" average. Therefore, it would seem that failure, near failure, or lack of sufficient units to graduate with their class could be a contributing cause for dropping out.

TABLE III  
SCHOLASTIC AVERAGE CHART

Scholastic Average											
100-95		94-90		89-80		79-70		69-60		Totals	
Year		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Grade											
1958-											
1959											
9			1		3	2	1	10	4	12	9
10				2	2	2		4	1	8	3
11	1			1	2	2		7	1	9	3
12						1				1	
Totals	1		1	2	6	7	1	21	6	30	15
1959-											
1960											
9						2		1	5	1	7
10						1		4		5	
11								5	2	5	2
12								1		1	
Totals						1	2	11	7	12	9
1960-											
1961											
9						1		5	2	5	3
10			1	1	1	1		4	2	6	5
11	1					1		1			3
12						1		1		2	
Totals	1		1	1	1	2	3	10	5	13	11
1961-											
1962											
9		1			1	3	3	8	1	12	5
10								2	3	2	3
11								2	2	2	2
12					1						1
Totals		1			2	3	3	12	6	16	11
Grand											
Totals	2	1	2	3	9	13	9	54	24	71	46

The social evaluation chart (Table IV) may shed more insight into the student drop-out problem. This evaluation was teacher judgment and was a repeat in most cases of the questionnaires which were filled in by them. The code for this was superior, above average, average, below average, and low. The qualities judged were co-operation, courtesy, dependability, industriousness, initiative, leadership, maturity, personal appearance, and self control. It should be noted here that only ninety-nine students were evaluated while there were 117 drop-outs. Some of the teachers indicated on their questionnaires that they did not remember some of the students. Neither were comments recorded on the cumulative records of these eighteen students. The largest group of students was rated average by their teachers. The next group was below average while nine were rated above average. It should be noted that none were rated superior. Could this give a little more insight into the character of the drop-out group?

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TABLE IV  
SOCIAL EVALUATION

Year	Grade	Superior	Above average	Average	Below average	Low	Total
1958- 1959	9		2	12	6	1	21
	10		1	7	6	1	15
	11		2	2			4
	12				1		1
Totals			5	21	13	2	41
1959- 1960	9			3	3		6
	10			4	1		5
	11		1	4	2		7
	12				1		1
Totals			1	11	7		19
1960- 1961	9			4	2	1	7
	10		1	3	4		8
	11		1	1	1		3
	12						
Totals			2	8	7	1	18
1961- 1962	9			10	4	1	15
	10		1	1			2
	11			1	2		3
	12			1			1
Totals			1	13	6	1	21
Grand Totals			9	53	33	4	99

The intelligence quotient was taken from the cumulative folder to give a background of reasoning ability. It was divided into three groups. These groups were: (1) 0-89, (2) 90-110, and (3) 110 plus. For this study 0-89 shall be considered below average, 90-110 shall be average, and 110 plus shall be above average.

TABLE V  
INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Year	Grade	0-89	90-110	110 Plus	Total
1958- 1959	9	7	10		17
	10	8	2	1	11
	11	4	1	3	8
	12	1			1
Totals		20	13	4	37
1959- 1960	9		2	4	6
	10		2		2
	11	3	3	1	7
	12				
Totals		3	7	5	15
1960- 1961	9	2	5		7
	10	4	3		7
	11	1	1	1	3
	12				
Totals		7	9	1	17
1961- 1962	9	8	6	1	15
	10	1	3		4
	11		3	1	4
	12				
Totals		9	12	2	23
Grand Totals		39	41	12	92



Table V indicated that only ninety-two students had a recorded intelligence quotient score. Perhaps the reasons for those drop-outs not having a score were either absence on the day the tests were given, or they may have not attended Hoke High School long enough to be given a test. This chart seemed to indicate a weakness in their educational background since 68.4 per cent were average or above average. It would further indicate that 32.6 per cent would not be expected to excel in the academic program of the high school due to a lower intelligence quotient as measured by standard mental ability tests.

The attendance records of the drop-outs were studied for the four-year period. The purpose of this observation was to see if the attendance was a contributing factor for the drop-outs. Table VI has shown that seventy-three students or 62.5 per cent attended school 1-119 days while 37.5 per cent were in school 120-180 days. This seemed to indicate that students were irregular in attendance.

TABLE VI  
ATTENDANCE RECORD OF DROP-OUTS

Days attended	Boys	Girls	Total
1-40	14	6	20
41-80	16	7	23
81-119	19	11	30
120-160	11	10	21
161-180	11	12	23
Totals	71	46	117

Certain months were indicated as ones during which the rate of drop-outs was greater. The events occurring in the school calendar explained this in part. The statistics were compiled in Table VII.

TABLE VII  
STUDENT DROP-OUTS BY MONTHS

Year	Grade	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	Total
1958-	9	2	3	1	1		3	2	1	1	7	21
	10	3		2		1		1			4	11
1959	11	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1		1	12
	12										1	1
Totals		8	4	4	2	2	5	4	2	1	13	45
1959-	9	1		1		1	1	1		1	2	8
	10		1					3			1	5
1960	11			1			1	2		1	2	7
	12			1								1
Totals		1	1	3		1	2	6		2	5	21
1960-	9	2	1				1			2	2	8
	10	1	1		1	2	1			1	4	11
1961	11			1	1		1					3
	12		2									2
Totals		3	4	1	2	2	3			3	6	24
1961-	9	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	17
	10		1	1			2		1			5
1962	11		2			1				1		4
	12										1	1
Totals		1	5	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	2	27
Grand Totals		13	14	11	7	8	14	12	4	8	26	117

The table has shown that September, October, February, and June were the months during which most of the drop-outs occurred. September had thirteen students dropping out. It may be that these students



entered school with the "I-will-give-it-another-try" attitude. The first report period occurred during October, and it would seem that some who were not passing would drop out due to either failing grades or lack of interest. February followed the mid-term examinations indicating further possible failing grades. The June losses may be attributed to students who dropped out because they felt they would not pass their final examinations, or they just did not return in the fall.

The cumulative folders did not include a complete record of the cause for the student dropping out of school. However, teacher statement of the cause as collected from the folders gave the following as causes of the drop-outs: (1) failure, (2) lack of school to meet needs, (3) marriage, (4) work, (5) truancy, (6) nervousness, and (7) other causes. These answers accounted for 110 of the drop-outs. The teachers' information as to reasons for student drop-outs differ with the reasons given by the students on the questionnaires or the reasons given during personal interviews.

The students, in giving their reasons for dropping out of school, may have given a different reason than the teacher. The drop-out could have given the teacher an incorrect reason in an effort to cover a failing grade or for not applying themselves.

As noted in Table VIII, marriage, tired of school, and failed subjects were the three primary reasons given for dropping out. A small

TABLE VIII  
REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT AS GIVEN BY  
DROP-OUTS AND CUMULATIVE RECORDS

Reasons	Boys	Girls	Total	Cumulative records
Wanted to work	7	3	10	11
Needed at home	4	2	6	
Marriage	8	10	18	18
Failed subjects	6	7	13	35
Joined Armed Service	5		5	
Tired of school	10	6	16	
Lack of money	2		2	
Car accident	1		1	
School did not meet needs				24
Truancy				3
Nervous				1
Others				18
Totals	43	28	61	110



minority gave lack of money as the reason. A sampling of other reasons as quoted from the questionnaires given by both parents and students were:

"I wanted to work and buy me some clothes because I didn't have the kind of clothes other girls had."

"I was going to get married but we broke up."

"I was pregnant."

"She began failing different subjects. Of which cause her to become uninterested in going to school. Also didn't seem to get along with some of her teachers. Then became interested in getting married." (by a parent)

"Because she could not understand her subjects (she said) but to my opinion she could have understood them if she would have tried a little harder." (by a parent)

"\_\_\_\_\_ 's home life was not very good. My \_\_\_\_\_ children didn't have a fair chance to finish school. Stepfather problems and having to quit school to help earn a living." (by a parent)

"I thought it was something big."

In a personal interview with a male drop-out, the following statement was made concerning money. "I was always late in paying book rent and everything else that came along. It got to the place that I hated to go to school because of money I owed." In this case the student was not pushed to "pay up" but was given the benefit of time as his homeroom teacher stated.

In most instances the parents were not in favor of their child's decision to drop out of school, but they were not able to use parental force to keep them in school. When asked the question, "Were you in favor of his decision?", some parents just answered with "No!". Others

Others explained their answer in various ways.

"I had to be I can't live her life for her. She was almost 18 at the time."

"No, I wasn't but he talked me into letting him quit. We were having serious financial difficulties at the time."

"Is any parents in favor of their child dropping out of school."

"Not entirely."

"We wanted him to go on to school, but saw that is was no need in trying to make him go."

"No. I wanted him to go on and finish and he has found out he should have gone on and finished high school, as he has been turned down on jobs."

"No, but knowing that she was not going to study & try to learn. There was notheing much else I could do."

It has been stated that "to sometimes understand a child, one must look at the parents." Table IX was an indication of the educational/ of the drop-outs' parents.

TABLE IX  
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF PARENTS OF DROP-OUTS

Parents	Elementary school	High school graduate	Attended college	College graduate	Business or other	Total
Father	49	11	1	0	0	61
Mother	34	26	0	0	1	61
Totals	83	37	1	0	1	122

It was noted that 30.3 per cent of the parents finished high school, while 68 per cent attended the elementary grades or did not



complete high school work, and 1.6 per cent attended advance schooling. It should also be noted that not a single parent of the drop-outs completed college work and only one attended college for a short period of time.

The number of children in a family would probably have a bearing as to the amount of financial help the student could expect. The United States Department of Commerce stated the following statistics for March, 1960 in the Statistical Abstract of 1961.<sup>1</sup> In a survey of 45,062 families, 43.0 per cent had no children, 18.5 per cent had one child, 18.0 per cent had two children, 11.1 per cent had three children, and 9.4 per cent had four or more children.

In comparison, the families of the Hoke County drop-outs had 6.5 per cent with one child, 13.1 per cent with two children, 14.7 per cent had three children, and 65.6 per cent had four or more children. Therefore, the trend was higher in Hoke County than the national average, as shown in Table X.

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin D. Goldfield, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1961 (Washington 2, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office), p. 39.

TABLE X

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES OF PARTICIPATING DROP-OUTS

Number in family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 or more	Total
Boys	3	5	4	6	4	6	2	3		33
Girls	1	3	5	4	2	5	3	2	3	28
Totals	4	8	9	10	6	11	5	5	3	61

A large majority of the parents of the drop-outs worked either in an industry or were farmers. By virtue of the parents' employment, it would be assumed that their income would range from \$2,000 to \$3,500 per year as stated by Mr. Dickson. With the high cost of living, it would indicate that many parents would not be able to provide their children with many of the extras that may be demanded at school.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the present study an attempt was made to determine the causes of student drop-outs in Hoke County High School during the fall semester 1958 and June 1, 1962.

The information was received by means of questionnaires sent to the drop-outs, their parents, and their homeroom teachers, cumulative records, and personal interviews. Influencing factors such as scholastic average, social evaluation, intelligence quotient, school attendance, educational status of the parents of the drop-outs, and the size of the family were investigated for each drop-out.

The following conclusions were drawn from the results obtained:

1. The drop-outs were slow in returning the questionnaires.

Could this indicate that evidently they had not changed their opinion as to the importance of education--particularly those who did not return them at all?

2. Most of the drop-outs occurred during the freshman year.

The number decreased each year after that. Would the tendency to drop out during the next three years be lessened if students remained in school for the entire freshman year?

3. The scholastic average of the drop-outs indicated that the majority were failing or nearly failing some of their courses.

4. The social evaluation by the teachers of the students showed that generally they were average students in this respect. This would

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not necessarily be an accurate measurement of the students as each teacher would have her own standard as to what she considered average, above average, or low.

5. The intelligence quotient of 68.4 per cent of the students indicated that, barring other factors, they could have made passing grades if they had used their ability to its maximum potential.

6. The attendance record of the drop-outs was below average for the school. This poor attendance is a probable cause for many of the poor grades.

7. The cumulative records indicated a pattern of the months when drop-outs occurred more often. June had more drop-outs than other months. Could this be because the students realized near the close of the school term that they could not possibly pass the subjects? October, February, and September had higher numbers of drop-outs than the remaining months.

8. The study showed that the three main causes, as given by the drop-outs in Hoke County, in the order of frequency of mention were marriage, tired of school, and failure of subjects. Teacher statements in the cumulative records listed failure of subjects as the main cause. When asked the questions, "What type of courses would have been best suited for the drop-out?" and "What course would you suggest be added for this type student?", the most frequent answer was vocational courses.

9. The study showed also that the educational status of the majority of the parents of drop-outs was low with 68.3 per cent attending elementary school only. It would be logical to think that the parents did not begin teaching their children at an early age the importance of a formal education.

10. Most drop-outs came from large families---being from families having six or more children. Could the size of the family put a financial hardship on the family in keeping the student in school even though lack of money was listed by only two students as the cause for the drop-out? Could it have been that many drop-outs were embarrassed to say that they did not have the money they felt was necessary to stay in school?

The author makes the following recommendations as possible ways to help overcome or limit the numbers of drop-outs in the Hoke County High School.

1. A curriculum to meet the needs of all the students. The curriculum of Hoke County High School for the "college bound" student is standard for the North Carolina public high schools. The graduation class of 1961-1962 had 37 per cent of its members enrolled in various colleges for the fall semester. Hoke High School has a college preparatory curriculum for the more academically talented students, but



lacks provisions for many students who will not attend college. It is suggested that Hoke High School investigate the possibility of varied instruction for its students: (1) for business, (2) for vocational training, and (3) for students interested in higher education. With this type of program, each student would be better prepared by his years in high school.

Perhaps three courses such as English, mathematics, and physical education could be required the first year. The second year the student could take English, history, and science as well as begin the curriculum leading to his special type of diploma.

2. A Family Relations course as suggested by several drop-outs. Several of the female drop-outs who left school to get married, stated that they thought a course on family living and problems connected with marriage would be of great value to the students. Such a course could be taught by the home economics teacher as is actually provided for by the State Department of Public Instruction in its guide for teaching of home economics in the high schools of North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The course would be taught for one or two semesters to a mixed class of ninth and tenth grade boys and girls. It would deal with

"experiences in nutrition and preparation of simple meals, care and selection of clothing, spending the family income, family relations, child development, a preparation of marriage, and establishing and furnishing a home. Management of time, money,

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<sup>1</sup>Homemaking Education Grades Nine Through Twelve (Publication No. 327. Raleigh: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1959), p. 184.



energy, and human resources would be interwoven in all experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Health and safety practices in the home would also be included.<sup>3</sup>

3. Orientation week. Due to the vast difference in the high school and elementary school it would aid the freshmen to have a period of orientation at the beginning of the school year. At that time, the curriculum could be explained, and also the value of an education emphasized. Perhaps someone from an industry or other business would come in and let the students know that not only at the present time but in years to come, almost all employers will require that their employees have at least a high school education. The guidance counselor would be in charge of this period of orientation.

4. A full-time guidance counselor. Hoke High School had only a part-time guidance counselor. She also worked with the Negro and Indian high schools. It was difficult to divide her time among these three schools and be available when Hoke County High School students needed her. Several students indicated on their questionnaires that they had conflicts with one or more of their teachers. No apparent reasons were given. The counselor might have been able to have detected these if she could have talked with the students. The teachers indicated on their questionnaires that to their knowledge, none of the drop-outs had been referred to the guidance counselor before they left school. It

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<sup>2</sup>Homemaking Education Grades Nine Through Twelve, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

could have been that she was not available at the necessary time. The author recommends a full-time guidance counselor for Hoke High School since it has 400 students.

5. Extra-curricular activities to include all students. The questionnaires indicated that only a few drop-outs belonged to clubs such as the Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Glee Club, Beta Club, and other such student organization. If these students could be given a feeling of responsibility in various activities, it is possible that this might reduce the number of drop-outs. As a example, perhaps an intramural physical education program could be established which might interest the students more in school.

6. A method for helping defray part of the students' expenses. It was noted that most drop-outs came from a family of four or more children. Perhaps financial assistance to reduce the severity of the obligations on parents may help. As noted in Chapter II, it was reported that some students pay \$30.00 or more for the privilege of taking some of the courses. Could Diversified Education in the curriculum of the school help relieve some of this financial strain? Could this assistance be in the form of time payments for the various fees, so that the students would not have to pay the full amount at the beginning of school?

7. An active plan for adult education. Many students after quitting school wish to go back, but due to age, family obligations, or other factors do not find it feasible to do so. For this reason the



state provides for adult training in the vocational areas, but too often those teachers are not willing to spend the time or effort to build an attractive program. One of the Hoke County Agriculture teachers has started a program of this type. It was started in 1959 with two adults and in 1961-1962, it had increased to ten. The area of study was farm equipment and its maintenance. Areas for other teachers would be phases of home economics as budgeting, sewing, home furnishings, or business, mathematics, English, and history. The students could receive units for these courses which could be applied as credit for receiving a diploma or a certificate.

8. Better relationships between school and parents. Since the students in general stated that they were not sorry that they had dropped out of school, it would appear that the interpretation of the school program was not clear to the students or the parents. To help reduce this problem the following suggestions are made: (1) to send a newsletter periodically to the parents which could explain the school's program, publicize importance educational happenings at school; (2) to invite the parents to an open house so that they might become acquainted with the teachers, become familiar with the physical plant, be informed about other things of interest; and (3) to have two or three half days of school to free the teachers from classroom duties so that they might visit the homes of the students.

9. More strict compulsory school attendance laws. In Hoke County tobacco is the chief money crop and its preparation extends over



the entire year. Because of this the student may be expected to be absent several days during any month. The North Carolina statutes defend the farmer in keeping his children out of school to help gather his crop or maintain his farm. Would the employment of a full-time attendance officer and the passage of more strict attendance laws reduce some of the unnecessary absences?

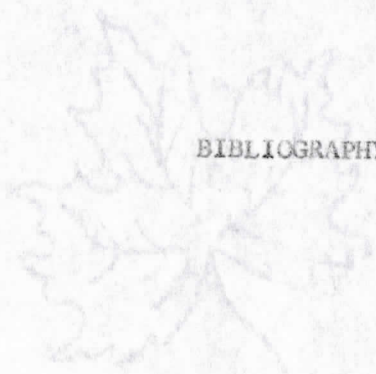
The author makes the following suggestions for further study concerning the drop-out problem:

1. A study of the same drop-outs five years hence to determine any change of attitude regarding school would be of great interest.
2. The attitudes of employers toward employing drop-outs could be used by educators in planning a vocational program.
3. A complete analysis of the curriculum of Hoke County High School would be of value in planning future programs to meet the needs of the students.
4. A study of family relationship to other drop-outs would give some insight into the character of the drop-outs.



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Gabriel, Shirley. Personnel Manager of Burlington Industry (Pacific  
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Gibson, W. T. Superintendent of Hoke County Public Schools.

Plummer, Fred. Overseer of the United States Rubber Company.

Upchurch, Jr., Clyde. President of Hoke Oil and Fertilizer Company.



APPENDIX



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## APPENDIX A

## Student Questionnaire

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Father's name \_\_\_\_\_ : Education \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_ : Education \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your address \_\_\_\_\_
5. Parents living together? \_\_\_\_\_ : divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
If divorced, which did you live with? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of brothers: \_\_\_\_\_ older; \_\_\_\_\_ younger  
Number of sisters: \_\_\_\_\_ older; \_\_\_\_\_ younger
7. Were you interested in the subjects you were taking at the time  
you were in school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
8. Did you attend school regularly? poor \_\_\_\_\_, fair \_\_\_\_\_, good \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did you want to quit school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did your parents want you to finish school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
11. What could the high school include in its courses which would help  
other students like you? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Would you like to continue your education now? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you feel that dropping out of school has helped you?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you feel staying in school would have helped you more?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
15. Did you get along with other students? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
16. Were the teachers "picking on you"? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_.  
If the answer was yes, then why?



17. Did you try to do all your homework and classwork? yes \_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_
18. What grades, if any, did you repeat? \_\_\_\_\_
19. What subjects, if any, did you fail? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Were you called to the principal's office? often \_\_\_\_\_,  
seldom \_\_\_\_\_, not at all \_\_\_\_\_
21. Did you ride the bus to school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
22. Did you own a car while in school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
23. What did you enjoy the most at school? \_\_\_\_\_
24. Did you belong to a club at school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_  
What club? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Check your reason for dropping out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to work
- \_\_\_\_\_ needed at home
- \_\_\_\_\_ marriage
- \_\_\_\_\_ failed subjects
- \_\_\_\_\_ joined Armed Service
- \_\_\_\_\_ tired of school
- \_\_\_\_\_ others

## APPENDIX B

## Letter to Students and Their Parents

Box 113  
Raeford, North Carolina  
February 7, 1962

Inside address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am working on my Master's Degree at Appalachian State Teachers College in Boone, North Carolina. As part of my work there, I am making a study of all students who dropped out of Hoke High School between the years 1958 and 1962. I am interested in the reasons for the students quitting school. We hope that this study will be useful to the school in helping students in the future.

To help me with this study, would you please fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it as soon as possible in the self-addressed, stamped envelop? The information will be confidential.

Thank you for your help in this project.

Sincerely yours,

D. W. Miller



## APPENDIX C

## Postal Card

Box 113  
Raeford, North Carolina  
February 25, 1962

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

On February 7, I mailed a questionnaire to you regarding a study of student drop-outs from Hoke County High School. I am certain that you have not had time to complete it and return it to me. Won't you take a few minutes and fill it in today? Thank you again for your help in this project.

Sincerely yours,

D. W. Miller

## APPENDIX D

## Parents' Questionnaire

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
Your education: elementary \_\_\_\_\_, high school \_\_\_\_\_, college \_\_\_\_\_  
college \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your wife's name \_\_\_\_\_  
Her education: elementary \_\_\_\_\_, high school \_\_\_\_\_,  
college \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of children besides \_\_\_\_\_  
Boys: older \_\_\_\_\_, younger \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls: older \_\_\_\_\_, younger \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many finished high school? \_\_\_\_\_, elementary \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did your child fail a subject in high school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did your child repeat a grade in elementary school? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did your child drop out of school with your permission?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
8. Please answer the following question briefly, "Why, in your opinion, did your child want to quit school?"
9. Were you in favor of his decision?

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## APPENDIX E

## Teacher Questionnaire

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of subject that you taught student \_\_\_\_\_
2. Quality of work of student: good \_\_\_\_\_, fair \_\_\_\_\_, poor \_\_\_\_\_
3. If student failed, was he capable of doing passing work?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
4. Was the student taking the best course of study for his or her future? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the student's reason for dropping out of school?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Did student confer with you before dropping out of school?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
7. Would the student have profitted by staying in school the rest of the year or until he or she graduated? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
8. What type of courses would have been best suited for the drop-out?  
academic \_\_\_\_\_, vocational \_\_\_\_\_, business \_\_\_\_\_
9. What course would you suggest be added for this type student?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What clubs or leisure time activities did the drop-out engage in?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What was the student's I. Q.? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What physical or mental handicaps did the drop-out have, if any?  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Was the drop-out directed to the guidance counselor? yes \_\_\_\_\_, no \_\_\_\_\_
14. On back of questionnaire, list any outstanding facts concerning the student.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX F

## Letter to Teachers

Box 113  
Raeford, North Carolina  
February 6, 1962

Inside Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am making a survey of all students who dropped out of Hoke High School during the years 1958-1962. This is being done in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree from Appalachian State Teachers College.

Enclosed is a questionnaire for each student who was in your homeroom. Would you please assist me in making this study by filling in the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience?

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely yours,

D. W. Miller



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## APPENDIX G

Cumulative Folder

COTTON CONTENT

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