SCHOOL DROP-OUTS IN A RURAL SCHOOL IN THE TOBACCO AREA OF NORTH CAROLINA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Problem

The state of North Carolina, through its system of public schools, provides certain educational opportunities which, if pursued, may be expected to result in a public-school education for the school child. Many children, however, evidently find that they are lacking in ability to take full advantage of these avenues of learning or they drop out of school as a result of other causes. Clyde A. Erwin, Superintendent of Public Instruction for North Carolina, emphasizes this fact in the following statement:

> Last year, 1943-1944, there were an average of 59,075 absences for each day the schools operated. . . . The reports also show that in addition to these daily absences there were 46,129 pupils who actually stopped school to enter employment or for other reasons.[1]

Although many children in the cities of North Carolina fail to complete their schooling, the big problem in this respect, no doubt, lies in the rural areas. This would necessarily be true, it seems, since the city child is largely a liability to his parents, while the rural child is a real asset.

The rural school child is indeed confronted with many serious difficulties in his efforts to secure a public school education. First

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1 Erwin, Clyde A. Compulsory School Attendance. Publication No. 253, 1945. Raleigh, N. C.: State Superintendent of Public Instruction. p. 3.

of all, there is the demand of the farm. The child must live, but in order to live he needs food and clothing. These necessities he cannot have unless the farm produces. Thus a peculiar problem is presented, for it seems that the school child himself usually does much of the work on the farm and does it of necessity while the public school in his community is in session.

"Every farm child has a variety of chores to perform around the house and at the barn; this is in addition to the regular field work with the crops."[2]

Another investigator, E. N. Clopper, after a study of the school child in certain rural sections of Kentucky, found that "in the case of white children, farm work and housework caused almost as many days of absence as all other causes combined."[3]

Clopper made a study also of the school child in certain rural areas of Oklahoma. He states that "From the totals of all children shown in Table D it appears that the farm workers are most retarded, 51.1% of their number being below normal grade."[4]

The daily routine of performing certain chores or of working in the fields changes with the seasons and corresponds to the dates when crops are planted, cultivated, and harvested. During such times every

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2 "Rural Children in Selected Counties of North Carolina." Children's Bureau Publication, No. 33, U. S. Department of Labor, 1914, Washington, D. C. p. 13.

3 Clopper, E. N. "Farm Work and Schools in Kentucky." National Child Labor Committee, Pamphlet 274, New York City.

4 Clopper, E. N. Rural Child Welfare. New York: Macmillan Company, 1922. p. 20.

available person on the farm, regardless of sex and almost irrespective of age, is pressed into service for the urgent demands will admit of little delay. The child's school work may suffer severely at such periods, since he either cannot get to the achool at all, or if he does prove his attedance, he probably goes ill-prepared, devoid of energy, and with a mind preoccupied with farm problems. After a very recent study of the school child in rural New York State, Lorene K. Fox comments

> The long school day works hardships on very young children and on such of the more conscientious older ones who must fit "homework" or lessons into a schedule of farm and home chores.[5]

In North Carolina the State Board of Education has made definite recommendations that may be followed by the various rural communities in their efforts to keep the farms and the schools on an even keel.

> Section 115-303 of the Compulsory School Act provides that "the immediate demands of the farm or home" in certain seasons of the year in the several sections of the state shall constitute a legal excuse for temporary non-attendance.[6]

Many parents, however, and an increasing number of children are beginning to realize that an excused absence for farm work does little toward helping the child secure the benefits provided by the school in the community. In other words, the child must actually attend the school with some degree of regularity if he is to profit properly from

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5 Fox, Lorene K. The Rural Community and its School. New York: King's Crown Press, 1948. p. 86.

6 Compulsory School Attendance, Publication No. 253, p. 17. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C., 1945.

the fact that it exists in his locality. Therefore, in the cotton areas the divided school term has been set up with the approval of the State Board of Education.[7] This is obviously an attempt to adjust the school to the needs of those who reside in the district.

A large part of the rural population of North Carolina lives on "tobacco farms." Tobacco is a crop that requires close attention practically every day of the year. Moreover, certain processes connected with its curing may require constant hourly attention, day and night. Indeed, tobacco is a crop that presents problems from the time the plant bed is prepared, probably in February or March, until it is marketed which may be as late as December or even later. Since there is almost always some type of work to occupy the attention of the tobacco farmer and since there is a diversity of duties, the child of school age is widely used. In fact, every school child is able to help and usually does, too often at the expense of his public school education. The State Board of Education, however, evidently recognizing that a divided school term would not serve the needs of those on this type of farm, made the following recommendation:

> In such seasons of the year it might be wise to open schools earlier and close about 12 or one o'clock, thus permitting pupils to attend school the first half of the day and to aid their parents the second half.[8]

Such provisions as have been listed here, as well as all observations that have been made, in no sense eliminate the difficulties

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7 Compulsory School Attendance, op. cit., p. 18.

8 Compulsory School Attendance, op. cit., p. 18.

under which the rural child ekes out his existence. On the contrary, they simply magnify the fact that he has serious difficulties to face in his efforts to better himself educationally.

Statement of the Problem

This thesis is a study of the high school drop-outs in a rural school in the tobacco area of North Carolina, 1940-1949. The orderly development of the study requires adequate information concerning the following sub-problems:

I. The life of a tobacco-raising community

II. The girl drop-outs

III. The boy drop-outs

IV. Recommendations

Scope of the Problem

The drop-outs as treated in this study are limited to the Berea high school district, Granville County, North Carolina, and to fifty-one drop-outs during the period 1940-1949.

Method

First, a careful survey was made to eliminate the possibility of duplicating previous work done in this field and to discover any related or supporting studies. The following reference works were examined:

1. Thomas H. Palfrey and Henry E. Coleman, Guides to Bibliographies and Theses in the United States and Canada. Second edition. Chicago: American Library Association, 1940. 54 pp.

2. United States Library of Congress, Catalogue Division. List of American Doctoral Dissertations. Washington: Government

Printing Office.

3. Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1934-1943.

4. United States Office of Education, Library, Bibliography of Research Studies in Education, 1923-24 To Date. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929-1940.

5. Carter Victor Wood, Editor. Doctor's Theses under Way in Education, in the Journal of Education Research, 1931-1944.

6. Ruth A. Gray, Editor. Doctor's Theses in Education. United States Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 60. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933. 69 pp.

7. Ruth A. Gray. "Recent Theses in Education," School Life. 1933.

8. Walter Scott Monroe. Ten Years of Educational Research, 1918-27. University of Illinois, Bureau of Educational Research, Bulletin No. 43, August, 1928. 377 pp.

A survey of professional literature revealed numerous studies dealing with the drop-out problem but failed to produce one that duplicated the study, "School Drop-outs in a Rural School in the Tobacco Area of North Carolina." Help, however, was received from the following thesis:

White, Joseph B. "A Case Study of Pupils Who Leave High School in Hampton County, South Carolina," Duke University, 1930.

Finally, a questionnaire was used to obtain certain pertinent data concerning the reasons for the pupil's withdrawal from school. This data included: family interests and attitudes, pupil interests

and attitudes, pupil ability as measured by Stanford Achievement tests and as revealed by teacher estimates, size of family, economic conditions, and the extent to which teacher trouble influenced the drop-out.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNITY

The Village of Berea

The village of Berea is located in Granville County, North Carolina on United States Highway #158, nine miles west of Oxford and about twenty miles south of the Virginia state line. A glance at the state physical map will show that it is on the eastern fringe of the Piedmont section of the state bordering the coastal plains. It is unincorporated and has no law enforcement agency. The one hundred and fifty inhabitants are about equally divided as to white and colored, but there is no evidence of any serious racial unrest. There are no telephone connections within two miles and the nearest railroad is nine miles away. All mail comes by rural delivery from Oxford or Rougemont. There is not a drug store in the town and the nearest doctor is at Oxford; nor is there a barber shop closer than that in one of the nearby towns.

No industry has been established within the village. Usually there will be found in the vicinity a couple of sawmills which may furnish employment for some twelve or fifteen men. The stores are combinations of service stations, garages, and grocery stores, of which there are seven or eight. These give employment to a very few.

The people are predominately of the Baptist faith, and they have constructed two large churches, one of which is of brick and relatively modern. The churches, with the school, serve the social and recreational

needs of the people in the absence of recreational facilities ordinarily found in larger towns. There is not a theater or a showhouse of any kind within the village.

The Berea School District

The Berea School District consists of many square miles of country around Berea and includes the village itself. This school district, which is considered to be synonomous with the Berea community, is approximately eight miles long by eight miles wide, the measurements representing the longest ones possible in each case. The western boundary follows the Person county line for several miles. Before World War II this district was somewhat larger than it is at present, since the government, during the war, used a large section of the southwest corner as a part of Camp Butner. Recently the government has indicated its willingness to make this land available to the previous owners or, perhaps, to others.

Life Within the School District

Farming is the chief and practically the only occupation in the Berea school district or community. The farm house in most instances is attractive and gives evidence of being well-kept. The majority of the buildings are painted and have lawns, which add greatly to the general appearance of the premises. A number of the houses are of brick construction. In most instances the farmers have the advantages of electricity and enjoy modern conveniences, such as the regrigerator, the electric range, the radio, and electric lights. In a few cases there are telephones, although there are none in the village.

Numbers of the farmers have the most modern farm equipment. This includes riding plows, cultivators, harrows, riding tobacco planters, tractors, trucks, and automobiles. In addition, many home owners also keep two or three horses or mules whether he has a tractor or not. Some of the equipment is used to bring supplies to the farm and to carry other products to the towns. The farmer is able to do this as the result of a system of roads, which, while not paved or of the all-weather type, is usually in a fair state of repair.

Several different crops are produced on the farms. Most of the farmers have gardens; some of them grow a little corn; a few have crops of wheat or other small grain; and a number of them have poultry which supplies eggs and meat above their immediate needs. In addition, practically every farm will have a cow and one or two hogs, and four or five farmers are engaged in dairying to a limited degree. All farmers, however, grow tobacco as the main crop.

Activity on the Tobacco Farm

This area has long been important, not only as a tobacco-growing region, but also as a locality where experimental work with tobacco has been carried out. The tobacco experiment farm at Oxford, under the direction of E. G. Moss, has given the tobacco farmer the benefit of literally hundreds of experiments which indicate better methods of seeding, transplanting, cultivating, harvesting, curing, marketing, and of coping with various diseases of the plant.

In Berea all the farmers are really tobacco farmers. Tobacco is the "big money" crop, but it is also a crop that requires work almost the entire year. The farmer probably prepares his seed- or plant-bed in late

January or in February. To protect the small plants from frosts, late freezes, and insects, he covers it with canvas. Various diseases may attack the young plants, such as Blue Mold. Therefore, the farmer must be prepared to apply the proper remedy. If the plants grow too slowly, he may use nitrate of soda in solution with water. Should they grow too rapidly, he would probably remove the canvas and rush the preparation of the soil into which they are to be transplanted.

Sometimes during the month of May or early June, the plants are drawn from the plant-beds and transplanted in the previously prepared soil at the rate of four to six thousands per acre. Some years ago, all transplanting was done by the use of a peg, which was thrust into the soil to make an opening for the plant. The hole was then closed and the operation was completed. This method could only be used to advantage, however, after a rain. Today many farmers use hand planters, which carry the necessary water in them for transplanting when the weather is dry. Large amounts of water are necessary, however, and teams of horses or a tractor may be used to haul the water to the fields. Other farmers use the riding planters. These are drawn by a tractor or a team of horses and require three people to operate, two to drop the plants and one to drive the tractor or the team of horses. This method is usually resorted to in dry weather, and, of course, great quantities of water are essential.

After the transplanting is completed, the young plants must be carefully cultivated for from four to six weeks. Close attention is required also to keep tobacco worms under control since they would ruin the leaves of the plant. Formerly they were picked and killed by hand,

but today their numbers are reduced practically to the point of extinction by spraying at more or less frequent intervals. The suckers, or small shoots, that appear must be broken off every week or two after the plant has been "topped," an operation required of each plant. It consists simply of breaking the top of the plant off at the desired height, in order that there may be a better leaf. The school child has his share of work to do in respect to all these operations.

When harvest time arrives, all hands help, both young and old. This season begins in July and extends into September, when the public schools open. The farmer decides when the leaves are of the proper ripeness, and when ready, they are "primed," that is, they are removed from the stalk for curing purposes. Very little waiting can be tolerated when the leaves are ready to be harvested, if a high quality product is expected. Therefore, the leaves of required ripeness are pulled from each plant, put in a slide drawn by a horse or mule, and are taken to a central point for tying or stringing. This operation consists of putting four or five leaves together, running a string around them, and then placing them on a tobacco stick. Fifteen or twenty of these "hands" or bundles of leaves may be placed on each stick, which is then hung in the tobacco barn for curing purpose.

When the barn is filled with from four to eight hundred sticks of tobacco, the curing process begins. This operation requires expert knowledge and close attention on the part of the person in charge. Fires are started in the furnace or the heating units and flues carry the hot air or fumes through the barn. Unless the temperature is controlled in accordance with the requirements of the tobacco, the quality

of the product suffers, thus rendering it impossible for the producer to command highest market prices for the leaf. The quality, which includes leaf texture, flavor, odor, and color, depends largely upon how much heat is applied and when it is applied. Temperatures are usually started in the nineties and are gradually increased until at the end of four or five days, when the "killing out" process is in operation, they may reach a high of 200°F.

During the curing process, especially the later stages, there is often considerable danger that the farmer may lose not only the tobacco within the barn, but the tobacco barn as well, since the fire hazards are extremely great. Should he lose the barn as a result of fire, he is put at a serious disadvantage in his efforts to take care of the remainder of the crop, still in the fields. When tobacco is ready to prime, a delay of a day or two may render it practically worthless. Therefore, once the tobacco is in the barn for curing, many farmers stay with it day and night to see that proper temperatures result and to guard against fires.

The curing process is completed after four or five days, at which time it will be found that every leaf, including the stem, is completely dry. Then the tobacco is removed from the barn in order to make room for the uncured leaf, as well as to care more adequately for that already cured. After its removal from the barn, the tobacco is packed in large piles or stacks in packhouses. Here it is protected from the air as much as possible, since exposure of this type will change the color and the flavor and will result in a lower quality. Assuming the cured leaf has been properly packed, the farmer turns his attention

once again to the uncured leaf still in the field. Usually leaves must be removed from the stalk about once a week after the curing season has started. This means that, since it requires about a day to "put in" a barn of tobacco, four or five days to cure it, and at least a part of a day to remove it from the barn after it has been cured, the seven-day week may be rather short for the tobacco farmer. Other demands of the farm or home must of necessity go largely unheeded during this very strenuous and busy season.

Before the curing season is entirely over, the farmer may decide that, because of pressing financial obligations or other reasons, it may be desirable to "grade" some of the cured leaf and get it ready for the markets. Warehouses will probably open about September 1, before all the tobacco has been cured, and remain ready for service through December. At this time there is likely to be unprimed tobacco still in the fields, uncured tobacco in the curing barns, and ungraded tobacco in the packhouse--all requiring careful handling. Complications are likely to occur at this stage, for this is also the month when the school boys and girls start to school. Thus an acute labor shortage, plus other financial demands, claim the attention of the already over-worked farmer, who probably has had little or no income for six or eight months.

Grading consists of separating the cured leaves into from three to six different parts, depending upon the color, texture, weight, and smell. They they are made into "hands" of probably eight to fifteen leaves each, and the stem ends are wrapped with another leaf in order that the bundles may not fall apart. Twenty to thirty of these hands

are then placed on a tobacco stick. The product is then packed down once more, this time to await the marketing date.

When the day for marketing arrives, the farmer places his tobacco into a truck or, if there is not too much, he uses his automobile. The product is taken to one of the warehouses in a nearby town usually, where it is placed in neat piles on the warehouse floor. These piles extend in long rows the entire length of the building, there being just enough room between rows for the auctioneer, the buyers, and the interested farmers to walk. The auctioneer then "auctions" the tobacco and the buyers place bids. When the tobacco is sold, the farmer takes the sales slips showing weight and price paid, to the office in the warehouse where checks or vouchers are issued. These he takes to the bank where they are presented for cash. Needless to say that he finds many ways in which he may then use the money. Numerous ordeals of this type are necessary before the farmer realizes the total cash for his tobacco crop.

By this time, it is probably about time to clear a space for a new plant-bed, so that the entire operation may get underway for another crop of tobacco. This means that it has taken him almost an entire year to take care of this adventure in the field of tobacco.

The School

The Berea school is located in the village on United States Highway #158. It is an eighteen room, two-story brick building in a rather good state of repair. Two of the school rooms are separated from the others by means of the auditorium, and are equipped and arranged for children in the first and second grades. Each of these rooms is pro-

vided with an outside entrance as well as with one through the auditorium. There is also an entrance connecting the two rooms. Wash rooms, used only by the first and second grades, are readily available, being only fifteen or twenty feet away in adjoining rooms. A first aid room, recently painted and equipped, is only a few feet away. There are no classrooms overhead, and the children in these two rooms are subjected to a minimum of disturbing elements.

The other elementary school grades occupy first floor classrooms that lead into the auditorium from the back. A room for an elementary school library is in the process of being equipped and will be used during the 1949-1950 school term. It will be readily accessible to all grade children.

The high school is accredited by the state, and is located on the second floor. Here is found also the high school library, which contains over six hundred volumes.

The auditorium is spacious and provides seating facilities for over five hundred people. The floor has a gradual elevation, from front to back, and no pupil has difficulty seeing the stage. Nor is there difficulty in hearing, for accoustics are of the best. Exits, in case of fire, are through four double- and two single-doorways.

The gymnasium is within fifty feet of the school building. It is adequate for school and community needs and has a seating capacity of several hundred people. A hot-air heating system has recently been installed and showers for boys and girls are also provided.

Adjacent to the gymnasium is the attractive four-room vocational home economics building. This structure serves the needs of community

groups quite as well as it does the school classes. Modern equipment, including a regrigerator and an electric cooking range, is an incentive for good work in the field of home economics at this school.

Beside the home economics building and in conjunction with it, is the school cafeteria. It had the high sanitary rating of 97.5% at the last previous rating date. Approximately two hundred pupils obtain hot plate lunches daily at a price of twenty-five cents per person.

All units of the Berea school are of brick construction and are in close proximity with each other. They are also, without exception, connected with concrete walkways.

Some three hundred feet away, but also on the school grounds, is the principal's home. This is a recent addition and, like the other buildings, is of brick construction. It is a two-story affair, containing six rooms, heated by an oil-burning floor furnace. The grounds around the home are beautifully laid out and are made attractive by the addition of flowers and shrubbery.

Surrounding the various school buildings is a campus of unusual beauty, five and one-half acres in size. It is picturesquely situated along the gentle slopes of a hill-side, and the natural beauty of the location has been greatly enhanced by intelligent landscaping. In addition, the mediocre athletic field has this spring been doubled in size and greatly improved. This field now adequately serves the school needs for its physical education program, and affords community groups the use of the only satisfactory athletic field in the vicinity. Every available foot of the school property is now being developed and used to the fullest possible extent.

Ten teachers are employed in the Berea school. Four of these are in high school; one of these is the vocational home economics teacher; the other six are, of course, in the elementary school. Since there are only six teachers for eight grades, undesirable grade combinations are unavoidable. This school year, however, four of the six teachers will have straight grade work, the only combinations necessary being taken care of by two teachers, one in grades two and three and the other in grades seven and eight. In addition to the state allotted teachers, a person is employed to teach piano. This, however, is a part time arrangement of three days per week.

Two hundred and seventy-five pupils are enrolled in the entire school. Seventy of these are high school pupils, while 205 of them are in grades one through eight.

The Berea public school is not only located in a community that is purely rural, but it is a fact that practically every boy or girl who attends the school lives on a farm. Six school buses transport some 225 pupils to and from school each day. No bus makes more than one trip, and no bus is kept on the road unless it is considered to be in condition necessary to provide maximum safety for the boys and girls who must of necessity ride it. An employee from the Granville County Bus Garage personally contacts each bus daily for repair needs. Bus drivers are high school boys and girls who qualify and who, consequently, have compiled enviable records. It has been found that the girl driver is just as good as, if not better than, the boy bus driver.

Students in the Berea high school take the traditional college preparatory subjects. Due to the very limited size of the student body

and to the small number of teachers allotted by the state, the curriculum must necessarily be restricted. Subjects taught follow closely the suggestions laid down in the state Handbook. There is neither a vocational agriculture nor commercial department. A high percent of the graduates, however, go to some college and seemingly make good records.

The Parent-Teachers' Association is exceedingly active at Berea. Numerous valuable projects have been undertaken and carried through to completion fruition. This organization solicits usually the cooperation of the local Grange in any important and expanding program designed to aid the school.

The Berea Grange

The Berea Grange is affiliated with the National organization and is, with the exception of the school, the greatest single force in the Berea community. The Grange was organized several years ago due to the fact that a need was felt for a farm organization in this purely rural area. Its members represent the highest type citizenry the school district affords. This organization, working with the local P.T.A., has been largely responsible for the realization of such projects as the following: (1) An elementary school library room, the first or only one in Granville County, has been painted, shelved, supplied with Venetian blinds, and equipped. This equipment includes approximately two hundred new books, several tables, and two dozen library chairs. (2) A Reception Room or Teacher's Lounge, opposite the principal's office, has been painted and equipped. (3) A First-Aid Room, located back of the stage, has been painted and supplied with necessary accessories including a bed and a linoleum rug for the floor. This room has a

lavatory with running water.

The Grange has also: (1) Reconditioned and painted a music room. (2) Refinished completely two pianos. (3) Greatly enlarged and improved the athletic field. (This particular project required the removal of much soil as well as the elimination of many trees.) (4) Landscaped the school campus. This difficult undertaking included the clearing away of underbrush, honeysuckle, briars, cafeteria dumps of tin cans, and rubbish and debris of many kinds. Trees were then transplanted, flower beds and rock gardens were made, shrubbery was set out, and much of the ground was cultivated and sown with grass seed.

The problem of financing these undertakings presented a real challenge. A Hallowe'en carnival, using local talent, cleared several hundred dollars; a womanless wedding was such an attraction that two performances were necessary; and a Tom Thumb wedding drew a capacity house. All talent in every case was from the community.

CHAPTER III

GIRL DROP-OUTS

An Examination of Assembled Data

Why do girls drop out of Berea high school? There is, perhaps, no simple answer for this question. Numerous studies have been made of the drop-out problem in many different sections of the United States, but, as is pointed out in a related study, there is no general agreement as to which factors are chiefly responsible for elimination from high school.[1] It is noted in the same study that fifteen girls gave marriage as their reason for stopping school, and that the attempt to discover a more fundamental cause failed.[2]

The case study of drop-out girls in the Berea school resulted in a wealth of data, which was then classified. In the very beginning of this study it seemed reasonable to assume that there might possibly be a combination of factors, rather than just one, which influenced the early elimination from school. Therefore, data were assembled which would make possible a consideration of some of the elements most likely to be involved.

A reference to Table I will show that of twenty-one girl drop-outs, twelve or 57 per cent gave marriage as the reason. A close

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1 White, Joseph Benton. A Study of Eliminations of Students from the High Schools of Hampton County, S. C., A.M., Duke University, 1932. p. 13.

2 Ibid., p. 13.

TABLE I*

DATA REFLECTING DIFFICULTIES FORCING

GIRLS TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Pupil	Age	Grade	Years Retarded	Difficulty Causing the Drop-out				
				Health	Teacher	Work	Economic	Marry
AA	15	11	-2	3	3	2	3	yes
AF	15	10	-1	3	3	3	3	yes
BJ	15	9	0	3	3	3	2	yes
BS	16	10	0	3	3	3	2	yes
CE	19	12	1	3	3	3	3	yes
DM	14	9	-1	1	3	3	3	no
DS	16	9	1	3	3	2	2	no
HN	15	9	0	3	2	2	2	no
HF	16	10	0	3	3	3	3	yes
HE	18	12	0	3	3	3	3	yes
LC	16	11	-1	3	3	3	3	yes
MV	16	11	-1	3	3	3	1	no
OL	19	11	2	3	3	2	2	no
OE	19	12	1	3	3	3	3	yes
RA	14	10	-2	3	3	3	3	yes
RD	18	11	1	3	3	2	2	no
RE	17	11	0	3	1	2	2	no
RL	16	10	0	3	2	2	2	no
RLa	16	9	1	3	3	3	3	yes
WM	18	10	2	3	3	3	1	no
WW	16	10	0	3	3	3	3	yes
Total	344	217	0	61	59	56	56	12 yes
Average	16.3	10.3	0.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	57% yes

* 1: high, 2: average, 3: little
A negative number under Years Retarded indicates pupil was advanced rather than retarded.

examination of the data relative to these twelve reveals several interesting facts. These girls came from high school grades only; they were not retarded; only three of them, seniors, were of legal, marriageable age without parental consent; one girl was only fourteen years of age; three of them were just fifteen; five of them were sixteen. Thus it is seen that seventy-five per cent of all the girls who married and

stopped school were too young to do so without the consent of their parents.

An interesting fact about the entire group of twenty-one girls is that they were not, as a group, retarded. Although a few were retarded one or two years, others were normal; six, however, were actually advanced from one to two years for their age and grade. These six advanced pupils came, without exception, from the three lower high school grades; there was not a senior in this group.

Health did not enter the data as an important item. The one girl who stopped due to poor health experienced a severe attack of rheumatic fever and the doctor advised against continuing in school.

Difficulty with the teacher was also a major cause in only one case, and no girl gave inability to pass school work as an important reason for discontinuing school. Only two girls suggested that economic conditions at home influenced them to interrupt their secondary education.

The importance of parents' attitudes toward the school is usually stressed. Coxe, after an investigation of home conditions of some 140 drop-outs in the state of Ohio, concluded that the home influence was a most important item. He found no encouragement from eighty per cent of these parents.[3] Table II shows that fifteen of the twenty-one families involved at Berea, or seventy-one per cent of the total families considered, were indifferent to the child's educational needs. The table also shows that pupil interest, in general, was rather

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3 Coxe, W. W. "Home Conditions as a Cause of Failures in High Schools," Educational Research Bulletin, 2:202, September 19, 1923.

low. There would seem to be a fairly high correlation between parents' attitudes and the pupils' interest in school work. No parent, it would seem, actually advised the pupil to discontinue her schooling but the six who wished them to continue represent only twenty-eight per cent of the total parents.

TABLE II*

FAMILY DATA ON ATTITUDES OF GIRLS' PARENTS

Name of Pupil	Interest in School Work	Attitudes of the Parents		
		Desired pupil to continue in school	Desired pupil to stop school	Made no difference
AA	3			X
AF	3			X
BJ	2			X
BS	2			X
CE	1	X		
DM	1	X		
DS	3			X
HN	3			X
HF	3			X
HE	1			X
LC	2			X
MV	1	X		
OL	2	X		
OE	1			X
RA	1	X		
RD	2			X
RE	2			X
RL	2	X		
RLa	2			X
WM	1			X
WW	3			X
Totals	41	6	0	15
Average	1.99			

* 1: intense interest; 2: appreciable interest; 3: little or no interest.

Data dealing with family size and interests, in Table III, indicates that every family had two or more children, the average being slightly more than four. The average number of boys, in this case, is the same as the number of girls per family. In two instances a parent, the father, had died, but in each of these cases the death had come after the child had stopped school rather than before.

TABLE III*

FAMILY DATA ON GIRL DROP-OUTS

Name	Deceased	Father			Mother			Siblings		
		I.F.	I.C.	I.S.	I.F.	I.C.	I.S.	Boys	Girls	Totals
AA		2	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	3
AF		2	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	3
BJ		2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	6
BS		2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	6
CE		1	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	4
DM		1	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	5
DS		1	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	5
HN		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4
HF		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4
HE		2	3	2	2	2	7	7	2	9
LC		1	2	1	1	2	2	1	4	5
MV	F-1940	1	3	3	1	1	1	0	4	4
OL		1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	3
OE		1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2
RA		2	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	7
RD		2	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	3
RE		1	3	3	1	3	3	1	2	3
RL		1	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	3
RLa		2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	4
WM	F-1948	1	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	4
WW		1	3	3	1	3	3	1	2	3
Totals	2	31	59	50	30	46	46	45	45	90
Averages		1.5	2.8	2.4	1.5	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	4.3

* F: father, I.F.: interest in family; I.C.: interest in community; I.S.: interest in school. 1: great interest; 2: appreciable interest; 3: little or no interest.

This table also reveals an important fact about parental interests in connection with the school and the community. The average interest per parent was very low. This is true whether it is the mother under consideration, or whether it is the father; it is true of the community interest and it holds true for the school. Parents, of the twenty-one girl drop-outs, evidently had considerable interest in their immediate families, but the school and the community received very little consideration.

A study was likewise made of pupil abilities as revealed by Stanford Achievement tests and by teacher estimates. The I. Q.s, calculated from the Stanford tests, ranged from a high of 126 to a low of eighty, and averaged just ninety-eight for the entire group. It might be pointed out also that only two of these twenty-one high school girls had I. Q.s that exceeded 110, which any reasonably good high school student would be expected to have.[4] As a matter of fact, it will be noticed from Table IV that there were not over five girls in the entire group who had I. Q.s above 100. These figures seem to indicate that at least sixteen of the girls, or more than 75 per cent of them, had I. Q.s that were low enough to suggest that they would experience considerable difficulty in passing high school work. This conclusion would seem to be justifiable in spite of the fact that the same Table IV shows that the average grade equivalent of the girls, as determined by the Stanford tests, was slightly higher than the average grade placement. Thus the grade equivalent of 7.5 against the grade placement of 7.4 would seem

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4 Cubberly, Ellwood P. An Introduction to the Study of Education. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925. pp. 97-98.

to indicate that the girls were slightly advanced. Actually, however, this probably indicates retardation, since most of the standard tests were given during the spring and none were administered during the fall.

Pupil abilities as suggested by teacher estimates correspond closely to those revealed by the Stanford Achievement tests. Three teachers were selected who represented different grade levels. Teacher "A" was a primary teacher in the first and second grades; teacher "B" was in the fifth and sixth grades; teacher "C" was a high school teacher. The grade teachers, A and B, had taught in the school for a period covering the entire school experiences of all the girls and were therefore able to supply much needed information relative to tests, grades, I. Q. ratings, and pupil background.

The three teachers selected were asked to rate the pupils on a 1, 2, 3 basis, with 1 representing a superior pupil, 2 indicating an average child, and 3 designating a poor pupil. A glance at Table IV reveals the fact that while the estimates obtained by this process vary considerably, yet they are consistent in that the primary teacher's estimates are higher than those of the fifth and sixth grade teacher, and that the high school teacher's estimates are lower than either of the others. In other words, the lower the grade level, the higher the teacher estimates. Thus in the first and second grades the average teacher estimate is relatively high, or 1.7; in the fifth and sixth grades the estimate is lower, 2.0; while in high school it has dropped to the low point of 2.5. If an average is taken of the estimates made by the three teachers, it is found to be 2.1, which, it seems, corresponds rather closely with the average I. Q. rating of 98. This

evidence of abilities tends to prove conclusively that these high school girls, in general, would encounter serious difficulty in their efforts to secure a high school education.

TABLE IV*

DATA ON ABILITIES OF GIRL DROP-OUTS

Pupil	C. A.	Grade	G. E.	I. Q.	Teachers' Estimates of Abilities		
					Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
AA	14	7	7.6	92	2	3	3
AF	14	6	7.9	103	2	3	2
BJ	16	9	5.2	99	2	2	2
BS	15	9	6.0	100	2	2	2
CE	13	6	6.2	90	1	1	3
DM	11	6	4.9	96	1	1	2
DS	13	9	7.4	95	2	2	3
HN	14	7	5.9	88	2	3	3
HF	14	7	8.5	99	2	2	1
HE	14	7	9.8	126	1	1	2
LC	13	6	7.4	94	2	2	3
MV	13	6	9.6	108	1	1	1
OL	17	9	5.0	80	2	3	3
OE	15	9	9.3	93	2	2	3
RA	12	7	8.5	99	1	1	1
RD	17	9	7.7	89	2	2	3
RE	13	6	8.3	113	2	2	3
RL	14	7	8.5	98	2	3	3
RLa	14	7	7.8	81	2	2	3
WM	14	7	9.3	108	1	2	2
WW	15	9	7.2	99	3	2	2
Total	293	155	158.0	205	36	43	52
Average	14	7.4	7.5	98	1.7	2.0	2.5

* 1: superior ability; 2: average ability; 3: poor.

An effort was now made to discover whether the school was offering, in the way of studies and activities, what the pupils desired. The girls were asked to name the subject they liked best, the one they disliked most, and the subject or activity not offered in the school which they fancied they would like to have made available to them. It was

realized, however, that there was a strong likelihood that a few of these pupils might not have had opportunity to take some particular course of their liking being offered even then in the school; or perhaps they had no choices to express. In any case, they were encouraged to indicate their likes and dislikes, and, if they had no preferences, they were asked to indicate that fact also. Table V shows that several of these girls were not getting some course they wanted very much; a few courses, which they detested, happened to be more or less required subjects. About a third of the girls indicated a dislike for mathematics; a like number of them seemed to have no particular subject they especially liked; almost half of them answered that there was no single subject for which they had a special dislike. Otherwise there seemed to be no particular central tendency except for one thing. Over fifty per cent of the girls expressed a desire for typing, a department the school has not established. Of course, these girls did not know whether they would really like typewriting or not; neither did they know with what facility it could be learned. It is a reasonable assumption, however, that since it is generally known by high school students that graduates who can use the typewriter locate positions rather easily, the establishment of a commercial department at the Berea school would hold many would-be drop-outs in school.

TABLE V*

THE CURRICULUM

Girls' Name	Subjects liked						Subjects disliked				Subject wanted	
	Math.	Eng.	Hist.	Fr.	H.Ec.	N.C.	Math.	Eng.	Hist.	N.C.	Typing	N.C.
AA	X								X		X	
AF		X					X				X	
BJ						X				X	X	
BS						X				X	X	
CE			X					X			X	
DM						X				X		X
DS					X					X		X
HN			X				X				X	
HF						X				X		X
HE				X			X				X	
LC	X									X		X
MV		X					X				X	
OL			X				X				X	
OE			X				X				X	
RA		X					X					X
RD						X				X		X
RE						X				X		X
RL						X				X		X
RLa						X				X		X
WM			X					X				X
WW		X					X				X	
Totals	2	4	5	1	1	8	8	2	1	10	11	10

* N.C. at head of a column means pupil has no choice.

CHAPTER IV

BOY DROP-OUTS

An Analysis of Assembled Data

Why do boys drop out of high school? A ready answer, perhaps, is not at hand; but it is conceivable that adverse circumstances, over which they may have no control, force many boys to discontinue their secondary education plans. The following statement by John Dewey is very fitting:

> To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness. Nothing is more tragic than failure to discover one's true business in life, or to find that one has drifted or been forced by circumstances into an uncongenial calling.[1]

Public schools exist for the benefit of the boys and girls in the community; yet during the period 1940-1949, in the Berea school district, it is a matter of record that thirty boys dropped out of school before their high school education was completed. The data collected with reference to these boys reveal many interesting things. Table VI shows that the number of children per family ranged from two to eleven, and that the average for all families was slightly over five. The boys in the family exceeded the girls in the ratio of about seven boys to four girls.

Perhaps the most important fact established, however, from a consideration of the data in Table VI, is that the interest of parents,

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1 Dewey, John. "Vocational Aspects of Education," Democracy and Education. New York: Macmillan Company, 1919. p. 360.

TABLE VI*

FAMILY DATA ON BOY DROP-OUTS

		Father			Mother			Siblings		
N	D	F	C	S	F	C	S	B	G	T
AC	M	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	0	2
AD*		1	3	3	1	2	2	4	1	5
AE*		1	3	3	1	2	2	4	1	5
BT		2	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	3
BR	F	2	3	3	2	2	3	6	4	10
CB	F	1	2	2	1	2	2	7	1	8
CJ		2	3	3	2	3	3	3	0	3
CD		2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3
CE		2	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	5
CS*		1	3	3	1	2	2	3	2	5
DN		1	2	2	1	2	2	4	0	4
FS	F	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	9
HJ		2	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	3
HY		2	2	2	1	2	2	4	6	10
HR	F	2	2	2	1	2	2	7	2	9
HW	F	2	2	2	1	2	2	7	2	9
JD	M	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	0	4
KR		1	1	1	2	1	2	4	4	8
MR		2	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	3
OT		3	3	3	2	3	3	2	0	2
OL		1	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	3
PJ		2	2	2	2	2	2	7	4	11
RRa*		2	2	2	1	2	2	4	1	5
RRo*		2	2	2	1	2	2	4	1	5
RL		2	3	3	2	3	3	5	2	7
WC	F	1	2	2	1	2	2	4	5	9
WB	F	1	2	2	1	2	2	4	5	9
WBl		1	2	3	1	2	3	2	1	3
WD	F	1	3	3	1	2	2	1	3	4
WN		1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	5
Totals		48	72	74	44	65	71	107	64	171
Averages	8F 2M	1.6	2.4	2.4	1	2	2.4	2.6	2.1	5.07

* N: pupil's name; D: deceased; F: interest in family; C: interest in community; S: interest in the school; B: boys in the family; G: girls in the family; T: total children in family. F under column headed D indicates father, M indicates mother deceased. All parents are farmers except those starred. These latter operate service stations or garages.

both father and mother, was very low. This is true whether this interest is related to the community or to the school. The average interest, on a 1, 2, 3 basis, is 2.4 for the parents with reference to their attitudes to both the community and the school. It will be observed that the average interest of the father and the mother in their family is rather high in comparison, being 1.6 for the father, and 1.5 for the mother. This is to be expected. John Dewey states that "family life may be marked by exclusiveness, suspicion, and jealousy as to those without, and yet be a model of amity and mutual aid within."[2]

It will be observed in Table VII that the interest of the boy at the time he stopped school averaged 2.5. This figure, however, is approximately what one would expect when it is remembered from Table VI that the parents' interest in the school was only 2.4. Additional emphasis is placed on these low interest figures when a glance at Table VII shows seventeen of the thirty boys had parents who were indifferent to the schooling needs of the pupil, eight parents actually desired that their boys would stop school, while only five of the parents encouraged the child to remain in school. Under such circumstances as these, one may feel amazed that as many of these boys completed as much formal schooling as they actually did. Perhaps Betts' statement, "rural children have almost everywhere been quitting school as soon as compulsory education laws would permit, and in thousands of cases have dropped out in defiance of the law,"[3] will hold true for any part of the nation where parent interest in schools is low.

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2 Dewey, John. Democracy and Education. New York: Macmillan, 1919. p. 95.

3 Betts, George H. Better Rural Schools. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1914. p. 93.

TABLE VII*

FAMILY DATA ON ATTITUDES OF BOYS' PARENTS

Name	I. S. W.	Attitudes of Parents		
		W. C. W.	W. D. W.	Indif.
AC	3			X
AD	2		X	
AE	2		X	
BT	3			X
BR	3			X
CB	2		X	
CJ	3			X
CD	3			X
CE	2			X
CS	2			X
DN	2		X	
FS	2			X
HJ	2		X	
HY	2			X
HR	2		X	
HW	3	X		
JD	2			X
KR	3			X
MR	2	X		
OT	2			X
OL	2			X
PJ	3		X	
RRa	3		X	
RRo	2	X		
RL	3			X
WC	2			X
WB	2			X
WBl	2	X		
WD	2			X
WN	2	X		
Totals	75	5	8	17
Average	2.5			

* I.S.W.: pupil's interest in school; 1: intense interest; 2: appreciable interest; 3: little interest; W.C.D.: wished pupil would continue in school; W.D.W.: wished pupil would discontinue schooling; Indif.: made little difference what child did.

It will be observed from Table VIII that teacher difficulty was the prime reason for five of the boys quitting school. It is a matter of school record that these five were taken out of school by their parents because they didn't like certain disciplinary action taken by the school in regard to misbehavior on the part of the pupils. The other twenty-five boys, it would seem, gave little trouble to the teachers and they did not drop out of school as a result of any teacher difficulty. The average for all the boys was 2.6, which indicates that teacher difficulty was not a major reason for the pupils stopping school.

Personal health problems were the reason for pupil elimination in the case of just one boy, who underwent a serious operation at a hospital and could not immediately resume his schooling. Otherwise, health factors did not enter as reasons for withdrawal from school.

Five pupils gave their inability to pass school work as the principal cause of their withdrawal. The general average, however, of all boys with reference to their inability to pass school work as a cause of their elimination from school was 2.3. Thus it can be seen that this was not a very strong influence in their decision to quit school.

The single factor that influenced more of the children to stop school than any other was the economic situation at home. The general average in this instance was rather high, 1.8. Many of the pupils stated that it was imperative, at the time, that they withdraw in order that the demands of the tobacco farm might be met. One point, however, which gives rise to doubts of the necessity of this action on the part of so many boys, is the fact that the average number of children per family was more than five. Proper utilization of this potential help on the tobacco farm would, it seems likely, have prevented many of these

TABLE VIII*

DATA REFLECTING DIFFICULTIES FORCING BOYS OUT OF SCHOOL

Pupil	Age	Grade	Years retarded	Difficulties H	T	W	E	M
AC	18	9	3	3	2	2	1	no
AD	15	9	0	3	1	3	1	no
AE	16	10	0	3	1	3	1	no
BT	16	9	1	3	3	1	3	no
BR	16	9	1	3	3	2	1	no
CB	18	10	2	3	1	3	1	no
CJ	16	10	0	3	2	2	2	no
CD	15	9	0	3	2	3	2	no
CE	17	9	2	3	3	2	1	no
CS	16	9	1	3	1	3	3	no
DN	18	10	2	3	3	3	1	no
FS	15	10	-1	3	3	2	2	no
HJ	19	11	2	3	3	1	3	no
HY	15	9	0	3	3	1	2	no
HR	16	9	1	3	3	3	1	no
HW	18	9	3	3	2	2	3	no
JD	16	10	0	3	2	2	2	no
KR	18	11	1	3	3	3	3	no
MR	16	9	1	3	3	3	1	no
OT	18	10	2	3	2	2	2	no
OL	17	9	2	3	2	2	2	no
PJ	17	9	2	3	3	3	1	no
RRa	17	9	2	3	2	1	3	no
RRo	17	9	2	1	3	3	3	no
RL	16	9	1	3	1	3	3	no
WC	18	11	1	3	3	3	1	no
WB	23	12	5	3	2	1	2	no
WBl	18	9	3	3	3	2	1	no
WD	16	10	0	3	3	3	1	no
WN	19	12	1	3	3	2	2	no
Total	510	290	40	88	71	69	55	30 no
Averages	17.	9.7	1.3	2.6	2.4	2.3	1.8	

* H: health; T: teacher; W: school work; E: economic conditions at home; M: marriage; 1: great difficulty; 2: average difficulty; 3: little difficulty. A negative number in column Years retarded indicates pupil was not retarded but advanced.

school losses. An important consideration here, however, is the evidence that in ten of these homes a parent had recently died, and in eight of the ten cases, that parent was the father. In view of this observation, the economic situation at the pupil's home is strengthened as a valid reason for his withdrawal from school. See Table VI.

Although, according to Table VIII, economic conditions at the pupil's home were chiefly responsible for the major part of the drop-outs, a scrutiny of Table IX tends to prove that low mental ability may have been a more potent factor. This table shows that the I. Q.s, calculated from the Stanford Achievement tests, ranged from a high of 113 to a low of 84, and that the average I. Q. for the entire group was only 97. The significance of these figures is readily apparent when viewed in light of the fact that the median I. Q. of 6,567 freshmen entering the St. Louis high schools during 1922-1925 was 102.6.[4] This means that the average I. Q. of the boys who dropped out of school at Berea was 5.6 points below the median of over six thousand other freshmen high school boys. A closer study of Table IX reveals that less than half of the Berea boys who withdrew from school had an I. Q. of above 100. This fact most assuredly means that over 50 per cent of these boys who stopped school would have experienced serious difficulty in securing a high school education, even under the most favorable circumstances.

The evidence that the average mental ability of these thirty boys was low is augmented by the results obtained from teacher estimates. Three teachers, representing the primary, the intermediate, and the high

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4 Portenier, Lillian G. Pupils of Low Mentality in High Schools. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933. p. 20.

TABLE IX*

DATA ON ABILITIES OF BOY DROP-OUTS

Pupil	C. A.	Grade	G. E.	I. Q.	TA	TB	TC
AC	12	5	4.9	85	3	3	2
AD	14	6	7.7	85	1	1	2
AE	14	6	7.9	102	1	2	2
BT	14	7	5.5	88	2	2	3
BR	10	5	5.3	99	3	2	2
CB	13	7	10.0	104	2	2	2
CJ	13	6	13.0	113	2	3	3
CD	12	7	5.9	100	3	3	3
CE	15	7	8.8	88	2	3	2
CS	14	6	5.8	92	2	2	3
DN	12	6	5.9	77	3	3	2
FS	14	6	7.8	101	2	2	3
HJ	14	6	7.8	86	1	3	2
HY	14	6	7.9	102	2	2	2
HR	13	6	6.2	104	1	2	2
HW	12	6	5.4	101	2	1	2
JD	10	6	6.3	113	1	2	2
KR	13	7	10.2	111	1	1	1
MR	15	6	6.2	93	2	3	2
OT	15	7	8.8	86	2	2	3
OL	14	6	5.1	90	2	3	3
PJ	13	6	6.2	110	1	3	2
RRa	15	6	4.7	85	3	1	2
RRo	15	6	4.3	84	2	3	3
RL	13	6	6.4	102	3	3	3
WC	13	6	5.9	95	3	3	3
WB	13	6	5.6	92	2	3	2
WBl	14	7	5.8	98	1	2	2
WD	12	6	5.9	109	1	1	2
WN	13	6	9.5	108	2	3	3
Total	398	185	203.2	2903	58	69	70
Averages	13.27	6.2	6.8	97	1.9	2.2	2.3

* TA, TB, TC: teacher estimates of pupils.
1: superior; 2: average; 3: poor.

school grades, were asked to estimate the ability of each pupil under consideration, using 1 to represent a superior child and 3 to indicate a poor pupil. The average of all estimates by these three teachers

was 2.1, a figure which corresponds closely with the average I. Q. of 97, found from the Stanford Achievement tests.

The average grade equivalent, as determined from the Stanford Achievement tests, was actually higher than the average of the grades the pupils really occupied. It is seen from the table that the average grade placement of the pupils was 6.2, while the average of the grade equivalent as determined by the testing program, was 6.8. Since these tests were, in most cases, given during the early spring of the school year, the situation would appear to be not too far from a normal one. It will be remembered, however, that it was found from Table VIII that this group of boys was retarded 1.3 years at the time of their withdrawal from high school, and that the average grade level at that time was 9.7. From Table IX, however, we find that at the time the tests were given when the pupils occupied a grade level of 6.2, the average age was 13.27 years. This means that the boys were already retarded 1.1 years when they had a grade level of 6.2. Therefore, the difference in 1.1 and 1.3, or 0.2, represents the amount of retardation in years taking place from approximately grade seven through the drop-out grade of 9.7. In other words, the retardation suffered by these pupils, generally speaking, occurred in grades one through six.

In view of the fact that Table IX indicates that the average mental ability of the pupils was low and that the pupils were retarded, it will be interesting to learn how they respond to the school curriculum. Table X reveals that the boys generally liked mathematics better than any other subject and that they disliked English. Many of them, however, indicated no choice as to likes and dislikes. The one point to be observed here is, perhaps, that all of them felt that they would like

vocational agriculture. Since this region is purely a tobacco-growing region and these boys live on the farms, the addition of a vocational agriculture department probably would insure that many boys would remain in school who otherwise are destined to drop out.

An appropriate question at this point is probably this: Why do pupils in the Berea school remain in school as long as they do, considering the fact that the average mentality of many of them is below average, and that they are "exposed" to subjects which they either do not like, or subjects which will be of little value to them as they return to their work on the farms? Williams[5] probably has stated the answer as well as is possible in these words: "Thousands of these youths are in high school because the law compels them to be there, and they stay there because the law says they must." In order to hold high school boys until graduation, Williams believes the curriculum must be revamped. He writes:

> It is necessary, therefore, to recognize that in the secondary schools of today there are many youths to whom learning by formalized, logically organized bodies of factual material is neither possible nor in keeping with their purposes and needs.[6]

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5 Williams, L. A. Secondary Schools for American Youth. New York: American Book Company, 1944. p. 496.

6 Ibid., p. 502.

TABLE X*

THE CURRICULUM

Boy's Name	Subject liked					Subject disliked				Subject wanted
	M	E	H	S	N	M	E	H	N	V. A.
AC	X						X			X
AD		X				X				X
AE		X				X				X
BT			X			X				X
BR				X			X			X
CB				X		X				X
CJ				X			X			X
CD	X						X			X
CE				X		X				X
CS	X						X			X
DN				X			X			X
FS	X						X			X
HJ			X			X				X
HY					X				X	X
HR	X								X	X
HW					X				X	X
JD					X		X			X
KR	X						X			X
MR	X								X	X
OT	X						X			X
OL			X				X			X
PJ	X								X	X
RRa		X							X	X
RRo					X	X				X
RL					X				X	X
WC					X				X	X
WB	X						X			X
WBl				X		X				X
WN					X				X	X
Total	10	3	3	6	8	9	12	0	9	30

* M: mathematics; E: English; H: history; S: science; N: no preference; V.A.: vocational agriculture.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This thesis is a study of the high school drop-outs in a rural school in the tobacco area of North Carolina, 1940-1949. The area in question is the Berea school district, located in Granville County; the school is the Berea public school; and the drop-outs are the fifty-one boys and girls who withdrew from high school during the period under consideration. A preview of the plan of procedure suggested that certain preliminary steps were essential to the orderly development of an authentic work. First, school records at the Berea school were examined in order that the number, the identity, and the scholastic attainments of the drop-outs might be ascertained. Second, a questionnaire[1] was formulated and used in assembling data relative to the drop-out pupils.

The questionnaire itself indicated the following information: (1) family interests and attitudes, (2) pupil interests and attitudes, (3) pupil abilities as determined by the Stanford Achievement tests and as reflected by teacher estimates, (4) size of the family, (5) economic conditions at the pupil's home, (6) school subjects the pupil liked and disliked, (7) school subjects and activities desired by the pupil but not available to him, (8) personal health problems, (9) difficulty with a teacher.

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1 See Appendix A. p. 50-51.

In order to obtain this pertinent data, it was necessary to draw upon the following sources for information: (1) school records, (2) the pupil involved, (3) parents of the pupil, (4) teachers, (5) influential people in the community. The raw data thus collected were classified and assembled in a set of ten tables from which certain central tendencies and conclusions relative to the drop-out pupil were evolved. The following is a summary of certain key data contained in the data tables.

Average number of children in the family when the girl dropped out	4.3
Average number of children in the family when the boy dropped out	5.07
Average number of children in the family, boy and girl	4.65
Number of families with the father deceased, for the girls	2.
Number of families with the father deceased, for the boys	8.
Number of families with the mother deceased, for the girls	0.
Number of families with the mother deceased, for the boys	2
Average age of girl when she dropped out of school	16.3 years
Average age of boy when he dropped out of school	17.3 years
Average grade placement of girl when she withdrew from school	10.3
Average grade placement of boy when he withdrew from school	10.0
Average number of years girl was retarded when she stopped school	0.0 years
Average number of years boy was retarded when he stopped school	1.33 years
Number of girls who dropped out to marry	12.0
Number of boys who dropped out to marry	00.0

Average of the twelve girls who married and dropped out of school . . . . . 16.2 years

Number of girls not of legal marriageable age without parents consent 9.0

Average home economic influence causing drop-out (1, 2, 3 basis), girl 2.7

Average home economic influence causing drop-out (1, 2, 3 basis), boy 1.8

Average I. Q. from Stanford Achievement Tests, girls 98.0

Average I. Q. from Stanford Achievement Tests, boys 97.0

Average of teachers' estimates of abilities (1, 2, 3, basis), girl 2.1

Average of teachers' estimates of abilities (1, 2, 3, basis), boy 2.2

Number of parents advising girls to stop school 0.0

Number of parents advising boys to stop school 8.0

Number of parents indifferent to girls' schooling 15.0

Number of parents indifferent to boys' schooling 17.0

Number of parents who encouraged girls to continue schooling 6.0

Number of parents who encouraged boys to continue schooling 5.0

Average interest of girls at time they stopped school (1, 2, 3, basis) 1.9

Average interest of boys at time they stopped school (1, 2, 3 basis) 2.5

Subject liked best by girls . . . . . History

Subject liked best by boys . . . . . Mathematics

Subject girls disliked most . . . . . Mathematics

Subject disliked most by boys . . . . . English

Subject not taught in school girls desired most . . . . . typing, 11 girls

Subject not taught in school boys desired most . . . . . vocational agriculture, 30 boys

In summarizing the central tendencies indicated by the foregoing key data, certain rather definite general conclusions seem justified in connection with the drop-outs occurring in the Berea school. The following reasons appear to be the most obvious and pertinent in forcing the drop-out:

1. Little or no encouragement on the part of the parents.
2. Parents not especially interested in the school.
3. Economic conditions at the home.
4. Many boys stopping school to work on the farm.
5. Most of the girls stopping school to get married.
6. Lack of success in school.
7. Difficulty with a teacher, in case of the boys.
8. Boys retarded, overaged.
9. Little interest in school.
10. Low ability in high school work.
11. School not meeting the needs and desires of the pupils.
12. School evidently lacking in guidance.

Recommendations

In view of the facts established as a result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Every available means should be employed to educate the parents to see the function of the school in their community and to acquaint them with the school program.

2. Every possible effort should be made to enlist the support of the parents in the development of their child's personality through the school in their community.

3. A plan should be developed in the school which would encourage the teachers to give more individual attention to the maladjusted school child. This plan would make it necessary for the teacher to be in frequent contact with the parents as well as with the child.

4. The curricula should be adjusted to meet more nearly the needs, as well as the desires, of the rural school child. The modified curriculum should include vocational agriculture for the boys and a commercial department for all the pupils. The fact is recognized that, due to the limited number of high school students, the establishment of the above mentioned departments may not have state or, possibly, county approval. In this case it seems advisable, for the good of the boys and girls, to suggest that the entire school set-up at Berea be re-examined with a view to consolidate, possibly, with some other rural school or schools in the county.

5. Provision should be made to serve more adequately the needs of the high school pupil whose mental ability will not permit him to perform his school tasks with dispatch. The entire school experiences of this child should not exceed a period of fourteen years, and he should qualify for graduation either at the termination of this period or sometime before. The child should leave school with the feeling that he has achieved some measure of success, rather than with the impression that he has been a total misfit and a dismal failure.

6. In view of the fact that a large number of the girls marry and withdraw from school, a course in marriage and homemaking should be offered and required of all girls.

7. A program employing the principles of guidance should be initiated in the school.

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A

THE DROP-OUTS IN THE BEREA HIGH SCHOOL

A CASE STUDY OF FIFTY-ONE DROP-OUTS

Drop-outs cover years 1940-1949

Questionnaire

Name of pupil _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Married _____ Divorced _____ Mate deceased _____ Single _____

Present employment _____

Dropped out of school in grade (Circle grade) 9 10 11 12

Age at time of drop-out . . . . . ___ ___ ___ ___

State of health at time of drop-out 1 2 3

Interest in school work at time of drop-out 1 2 3

Did parents encourage pupil to continue school work? Father __ Mother __

Did parents desire pupil to discontinue school work? Father __ Mother __

If it made little difference to parents what pupil did, check:
Father ____ Mother ____

Did school offer what pupil desired in: Studies _____ Activities _____

What subject offered did pupil like most _____ like least _____

What subject or activity NOT offered was especially desired? _____

If boy, would pupil have remained in school if Vocation Agriculture had been offered? _____

Degree to which difficulty with teacher influenced drop-out: 1 2 3

Degree to which difficulty in passing work was a factor in drop-out:
1 2 3

Degree to which economic status at home influenced drop out: 1 2 3

WAS DROP-OUT DUE TO THE PUPIL HAVING MARRIED WHILE IN SCHOOL? _____

TEST SCORES: Test _____ Score _____

Test _____ Score _____

I. Q. _____

Teachers' Estimate of Pupil

Teachers		Estimates
A	. . . . .	1 2 3
B	. . . . .	1 2 3
C	. . . . .	1 2 3

FAMILY DATA

Father's name _____ Age _____

Employment _____ Health 1 2 3 Deceased _____

Interest in community 1 2 3 Interest in school 1 2 3

Interest in family 1 2 3 Provides for family 1 2 3

Considered good citizen _____

Mother's name _____ Age ____ Health 1 2 3

Deceased _____

Interest in family 1 2 3 Interest in community 1 2 3

Interest in school 1 2 3

Number of Siblings (Order in series indicated by circle; boys, underline once; girls, underline twice; deceased, cross out number with "X".)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Size of family _____

ECONOMIC STANDING: Own their home ____ Approximate size of farm ____

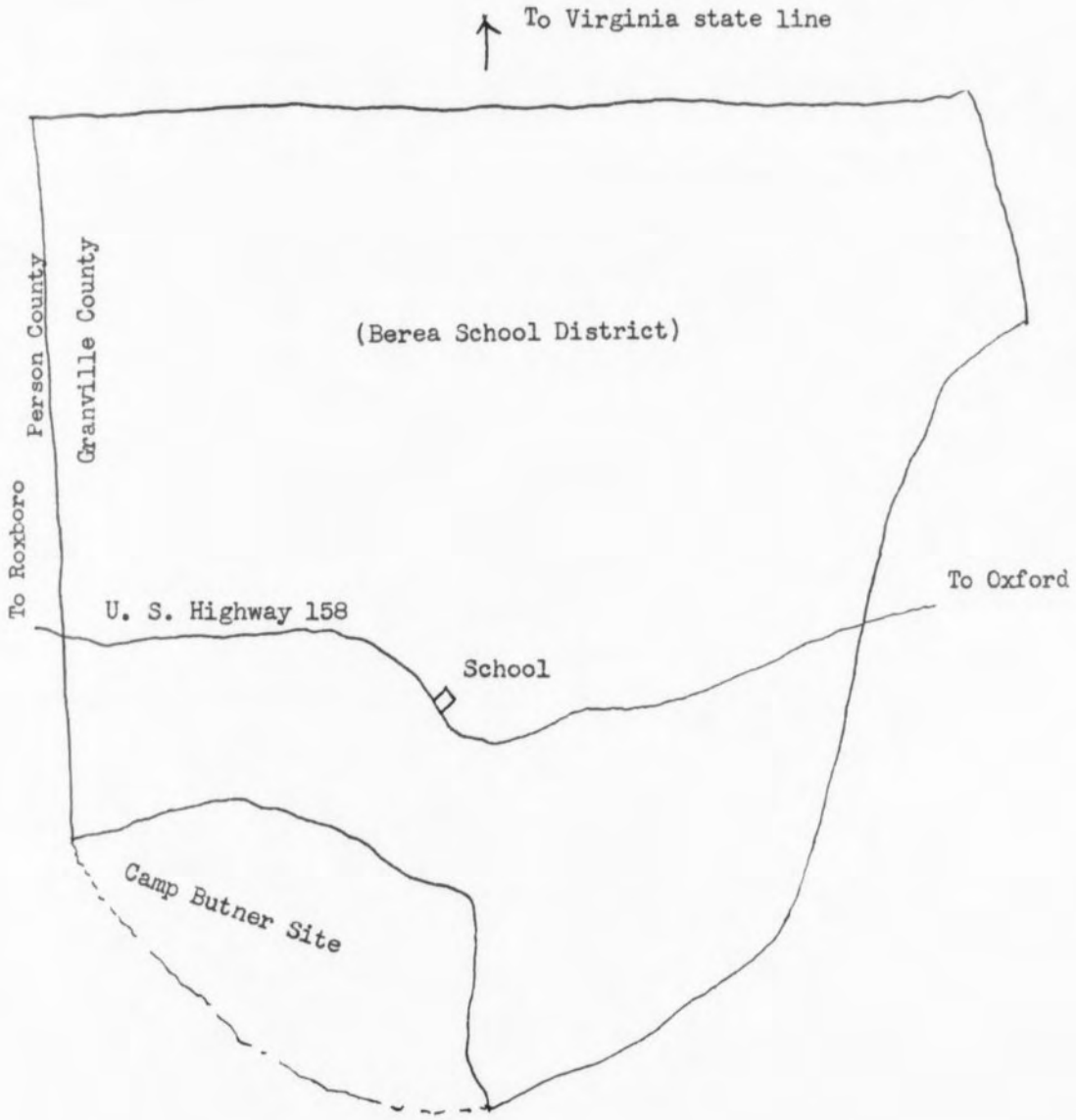
How long have they owned their farm _____

If tenant, how long at present location ____ Previous location ____

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

APPENDIX B

LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX B

LOCATION MAP