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A Descriptive Study of the 1962-63 Dropouts at Mattoon High School

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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE 1962-63

DROPOUTS AT MATTOON HIGH SCHOOL

(TITLE)

BY

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B.S. in Education
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THESIS

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PREFACE

Approximately 40 per cent of our young people do not complete their high school education. According to the United States Department of Labor Statistics, of the 26 million new young workers who are expected to enter the labor market during the 1960's, 7.5 million will not have graduated from high school and 2.5 million will not have completed the eighth grade. Serious handicaps in social, personal, and vocation adjustment are inevitable for these early school leavers.

The community in which this study was made has a population of approximately 21,000 and is located in East-Central Illinois. Located there are several small plants and industries and such national firms as: Anaconda Metal Hose Co., Associated Spring Corporation, and Brown Shoe Company. Also, the surrounding territory is very productive agriculture land.

This study of pupils dropping out of the three-year high school was made during the school year of 1962-63 at Mattoon, Illinois, in an attempt to discover the types of pupils who dropped and why. The study includes personal observations of the writer, who is a guidance counselor at the school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The need for such a study.--With increased automation and a greater need for skilled workers it is more important now than ever before that young people do not leave school before graduation. The dropout is unable to qualify for the skilled jobs that are open, and the supply of unskilled jobs he might be able to fill is diminishing.

Who are the dropouts? What happened to them? The answers to these questions about school leavers is not the concern of Mattoon alone. The future of these youngsters, according to former Secretary of Labor Arthur J. Goldberg, is "potentially the most dangerous social condition in America today."

A description of the study.--Since this study covers only the 1962-63 school year, it is small in that it describes only a few of the nation's dropouts. The entire population for the study was composed of sixty students--thirty-five boys and twenty-five girls.

The purpose of this study is to describe the dropout and to attempt to determine why he dropped. A dropout is a student who withdrew from school, voluntarily or otherwise, prior to receiving a diploma.

This paper is written to satisfy the thesis requirement of obtaining a Master's Degree in Education. Some detailed information not otherwise necessary is included because of the interest it might have to the local school system.

Data for the study were collected by use of school records, questionnaires, and personal interviews. Some of the information was obtained from consultation with teachers, the attendance officer, and counseling personnel, all of whom were directly in touch with the dropout throughout the school year.

Information about the school.--During the year of this study the student population at the Mattoon Senior High School was 1055. There were 484 tenth graders, 319 eleventh graders, and 252 twelfth graders.

The course offerings fall into three main categories-- Technical, General, and College Preparatory. There are approximately 83 course offerings. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities is offered.

A student must earn 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ units of credit in the three years to be eligible for graduation. Included in these units are: English II, English III, American History, Senior Economics, and Physical Education II, III, and IV. Driver Training is required of all students as part of Physical Education, Health and Safety. Any student entering Senior High School who does not have credit in ninth grade English (English I) must satisfactorily complete his English I requirement before

registering for English II. English I does not count as one of the required 12 3/4 units for graduation.

Included in the curriculum are three work-study programs (Office Occupations, Distributive Education, and Diversified Occupations). These programs are for Juniors and Seniors only.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

Statistical information contained in a study of this nature becomes more meaningful when it is related to statistics of similar studies. Dissimilarity between studies makes it impossible to find comparable figures for some of the tables. But the universality of the problem has produced a great volume of written material on the subject and a great deal of comparative information is available.

Who are the dropouts?--In four different dropout studies the following statements were made concerning the problem of discovering who drops out:

One out of every three youths in school today will leave before high school graduation. At the current rate 7.5 million youths will have dropped out of school in the current decade.¹

No single image adequately characterizes the drop-out. We have discovered, for example, that the rate of drop-out is as high in rural as in urban areas.

Two-thirds of the nation's force of service workers and operatives and laborers are former drop-outs. Two-thirds of the unemployed men and women in the United States possess less than a high school education.²

¹ Percy V. Williams, "School Dropouts," NEA Journal, (February, 1963), p. 11.

² Daniel Schreiber, "School Dropouts," NEA Journal, (May, 1962), p. 51.

John W. Porter, Educational Research Consultant of the Department of Public Instruction in Michigan, made the following statement in his study:

Drop-out figures in Michigan indicate that approximately twenty-five out of every one hundred students entering the ninth grade will fail to graduate. This means 22,000 or more a year (in Michigan).

. . . 57 million men and women in this country have not finished high school.³

Charles V. Mathews of the Illinois Education Association says that:

A survey of the incidence of early school leaving conducted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the auspices of Title V, National Defense Education Act showed a variation in percentage of dropouts from more than 50 per cent in southern Illinois to less than 5 per cent in a few suburban areas, with a statewide percentage dropout of approximately 35 per cent.

He goes on to say:

. . . The dropout was particularly lacking in the personality characteristics necessary to achieve status and social maturity. He is easily disorganized and pessimistic about his occupational future. He finds himself often on the defensive in social situations and is unable to command the work habits necessary to succeed.⁴

When did they drop?--Related studies disclose the following information concerning when the students dropped from school:

³John W. Porter, "School Dropouts--A State Plan," NEA Journal, (May, 1962), p. 53.

⁴Charles V. Mathews, "The Serious Problem of the School Dropout," IEA Discussion Topic, XXIV, No. 5, p. 2.

A 1961-62 study of dropouts in every high school in the State of Maryland showed that 45.9 per cent of the dropouts left at age 16½. The Quincy (Illinois) Youth Development Project Study of all early school leavers in one class in an average Illinois community of about 50,000 population discovered that:

. . . About 32 percent of the children in an age group dropped out of school between the sixth and 12th grades. Dropouts left school at ages ranging from 14 to 18, with the highest number of dropouts between ages 16 and 16½. Twenty-four per cent left school before reaching the legal school leaving age of 16; and 17.5 per cent left school after reaching age 17½.⁵

In September the number of dropouts can be explained by indicating that a number of boys and girls over sixteen years of age quit their jobs and entered school in the autumn, only to decide after a short time that they did not want to give up the money and the independence which they had enjoyed while working. February, April and May showed definite increases in the number of dropouts. The month of February marks the beginning of a new semester, and at that time some pupils who had not done well in school leave.⁶

How much were they absent?--Charles V. Mathews goes on to say this about the absenteeism of dropouts:

Due to academic and social maladjustment, the absence rate of the dropout becomes so excessive during the last two years before he drops out of school as to jeopardize school achievement.⁷

What were the reasons for leaving school?--The following

⁵Williams, loc. cit.

⁶Mathews, loc. cit.

⁷C. B. Smith, "A Study of Pupils Dropping Out of a Mid-Western High School," School Review, (May, 1944), p. 9.

are statements concerning reasons for leaving stated in different studies:

Of the causes summarized under sixteen headings, the one listed most frequently was lack of interest. This cause accounted for 35.3 percent of the answers. Lack of success accounted for 17.8 percent, and economic reasons other than the cost of going to school amounted to 10 percent. Marriage and pregnancy represented another 14.5 percent. Together, these four reasons were given by 77.6 percent of the dropouts.⁸

We know, too, that each year about 175,000 girls leave school to marry.⁹

Dropouts in the study of the Quincy Youth Development Project were asked, "As you look back, what do you think was your main reason for leaving school?" Approximately 60 percent of them indicated a strong attitude of dislike, frustration, and social dissatisfaction with school. Some dropouts felt that particular teachers were responsible for their decision to leave school because they had rejected the dropout on the basis of social status or academic inadequacy. Reasons for leaving school given by the dropouts indicated they did not see education as a means to vocational success, and some believed that leaving school would provide a more direct route to vocational success. Some were involved at an early age in solving problems of sexual adjustment, marriage, or promiscuity, and found dropping out of school necessary because of pregnancy or impending marriage.

Financial inadequacy was given by only 16 percent of the dropouts as a reason for leaving school; in half of these cases the need for a job and money stemmed from the desire for a car, clothes or other peer-status symbols rather than more basic needs.¹⁰

How intelligent are they?--

⁸Mathews, loc. cit.

⁹Schreiber, loc. cit.

¹⁰Mathews, loc. cit.

Lack of intelligence may be a big factor for some dropouts, but it certainly is not the dominant cause. The Maryland Study showed that 49.8 percent of the dropouts had average to above average intelligence. It is also interesting to note that 45.3 percent of the dropouts had not been retained in either elementary or junior high school.¹¹

At the same time, the records of IQ scores indicate that the average dropout is by no means uneducable. He tends on the average, to score lower than his in-school counterpart, but a nationwide study conducted by the United States Department of Labor showed that 70 percent of the dropouts surveyed had registered IQ scores above 90. An intensive six-year study in the State of New York revealed that 13 percent of the dropouts had IQ scores above 110.¹²

What is their achievement level?--

In terms of achievement, 56.5 percent (of 13,715 high school dropouts in the Maryland Study) had not achieved according to their abilities. . . . 45.5 percent of the dropouts were reading at the sixth grade level or below.¹³

Reading remains the fundamental educational skill; without it no student can perform adequately in any subject. Yet, studies from every section of the country testify that the average dropout is at least two years retarded in reading ability by the time he quits school.¹⁴

What kind of grades did they make?--

Dropouts (in the Quincy study) received lower grades throughout their school career. . . . One main reason for school leaving according to Dillon is grade and subject failure. They drop

¹¹Williams, op. cit., p. 12.

¹²Schreiber, op. cit., p. 52.

¹³Williams, loc. cit.

¹⁴Schreiber, loc. cit.

out to keep their self respect. Grade and subject failures are accounted for in some cases by absenteeism.¹⁵

What subjects did they fail?--

Among the four programs offered in Maryland schools, students taking the general course made up the largest proportion of the dropouts. This course accounted for 45.8 percent of the dropouts; the commercial, 19.2 percent; the vocational, 12.9 percent; the academic, 12.2 percent and other, 10.9 percent.

As far as course failures were concerned, 47.5 percent were failing three or more subjects the semester they left school.¹⁶

Estimates show that a large number of our Michigan dropouts, however, do come from the students who are enrolled in general education courses rather than in college preparatory courses or in those designed to develop commercial or technical competency. It is estimated that between 50 and 60 percent of our high school students take general education courses. A large percentage of these become dropouts; the rest drift through school without tangible goals or without acquiring an employable skill for today's world of work.¹⁷

What are his interests and activities?--

When nonscholastic factors were studied it was found that more than two-thirds of the dropouts never participated in athletics or extracurricular activities of any kind.¹⁸

The dropout student does not actively participate in the extracurricular activities of the school. Although a majority of the dropouts have some contact with extracurricular

¹⁵Mathews, loc. cit.

¹⁶Williams, loc. cit.

¹⁷Porter, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁸Williams, loc. cit.

activities, most of them attend entertainment events or meetings only once or twice. Unfortunately, under the social organization prevalent in the extracurricular activities of many public schools, it is not possible for most dropout-prone students to achieve success. Lack of popularity and social differences efficiently preclude satisfying participation.¹⁹

What is his family background?--

When data on parents were viewed, it was found that the occupation of the head of the household in 46.4 percent of the dropout cases was classified as unskilled. Another 6.2 percent of the heads of the household were unemployed. Hence more than half of the dropouts were from families in which the occupation of the head of the household was relatively unstable and in the lowest income brackets.²⁰

The outcome of any school endeavor is bound to be affected by the atmosphere of the student's home, by the attitudes to which he is exposed outside the school. The majority of the dropouts come from families of the lower socioeconomic categories--families where the father is missing, where cultural background and horizons are limited, where education is viewed with indifference or distrust, if not open resentment.²¹

Dropouts appeared to be significantly lower in socio-economic status than students who stayed in school. . . . No upper-status students dropped out of school and only one upper-middle class child left school early.²²

What was the educational level of the parents?--

A check of the highest educational level

¹⁹Mathews, loc. cit.

²⁰Williams, op. cit., p. 11.

²¹Schreiber, op. cit., p. 52.

²²Mathews, loc. cit.

of the parents of dropouts revealed that 78.5 percent of the mothers and 80.3 percent of the fathers had also been dropouts, and 56.7 percent of the mothers had completed only nine years or less of formal education, and 30.9 percent of the fathers and 24.4 percent of the mothers had completed only the sixth grade or less.²³

Are they from broken homes?--

Nor are dropouts necessarily homeless or the product of broken homes. Eighty percent of those studied lived with one parent and 70 percent lived with both.²⁴

Were they behavior problems?--

The Maryland Study produced no evidence to support the idea that most dropouts are delinquent children. A large majority, 79 percent, were not considered serious behavior problems by either their principals or counselors. Furthermore, 76 percent had never been suspended from school.²⁵

²³Williams, loc. cit.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE DROPOUTS AT MATTOON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1962-63

School Record Data

Who are the dropouts?--Sixty students dropped from the Mattoon Senior High School during the 1962-63 school term. The number leaving was 5.6 per cent of the 1055 students making up the student body. Of those dropping, 41.7 per cent were girls and 58.3 per cent were boys.

TABLE 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS DROPPING FROM
MATTOON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Age	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
15	2	5.7	3	12.0	5	8.3
16	9	25.7	12	48.0	21	35.0
17	18	51.4	5	20.0	23	38.3
18	4	11.4	4	16.0	8	13.3
19	2	5.71	1	4.0	3	5.0
Total	35	100.	25	100.0	60	100.0

When did they drop?--Table 1 shows that 73.3 per cent of the dropouts were in the sixteen and seventeen year age group. Thirty-five per cent left at age sixteen, which is the minimum age at which a student may legally withdraw from school. The 5.7 per cent of the thirty-five boys who left before the legal leaving age of sixteen were two sent to the Illinois Youth Commission for delinquency. Of the 8.3 per cent of the twenty-five girls who dropped before the legal leaving age two dropped for health reasons, and the third one just stopped coming* to school.

Of the 16 per cent (4) of the girls who were eighteen at the time of withdrawal, all but one were two or more credits behind their class-mates, and failing the subjects in which they were enrolled at the time of dropping. The one girl was a senior, had lost no credits, and remained enrolled through part of May. She was receiving failing grades in the work-study program (L.O.) and in Physical Education.

Those who dropped at age sixteen were in their first year at the senior high school. Most of these students had to enroll because of the state age requirement. (The normal age at the completion of the ninth grade is fifteen.)

The greatest number of dropouts occurred in January and March. The writer can offer no explanation for this except that it seems possible that the dropping in January might be, at least in part, attributed to an unwillingness to take semester exams given during that month. It is also possible that a number of students who had attained age sixteen a few weeks before Christ-

* By the time remedial steps were completed, this girl had become sixteen.

was vacation were merely marking time awaiting the vacation before dropping. Some who might have been undecided may have allowed inertia to take over to extend the holiday into permanent termination.

TABLE 2
THE MONTH IN WHICH THE DROPOUT WITHDREW
FROM HIGH SCHOOL

Month	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Sept.	4	11.43	2	8.00	6	10.00
Oct.	7	20.00	1	4.00	8	13.33
Nov.	2	5.71	6	24.00	8	13.33
Dec.	2	5.71	4	16.00	6	10.00
Jan.	8	22.86	1	4.00	9	15.00
Feb.	2	5.71	3	12.00	5	8.33
Mar.	7	20.00	3	12.00	10	16.67
Apr.	1	2.86	4	16.00	5	8.33
May	2	5.71	1	4.00	3	5.00
Total	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

Comments overheard from students might offer some explanation for the high number of March dropouts. Expressions of futility about anticipated impossibility of obtaining passing grades for the year seemed prevalent. Students who had been sliding along with failing or near-failing grades and who had been building up an accumulation of incompleting assignments to be

made up may have finally decided either that they could not make up the work or that they could not bring their grades up to passing, or both; or that it wasn't worth the effort. These are, at best, merely carefully-considered guesses on the part of the writer.

TABLE 3
YEAR IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL WHEN DROPPED

Year	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Tenth	16	45.71	9	36.00	26	43.33
Eleventh	16	45.71	14	56.00	29	48.33
Twelfth	2	5.71	2	8.00	4	6.67
Others	1	2.86	-	-	1	1.67
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

Six of the tenth graders had failed English I in the ninth grade. The tenth grader must make this up before he can enroll in English II, but he receives no high school credit for making it up. The tenth grader who has to make up English I may enroll in only three other full credit courses. Consequently, even if he passes all four courses he is one credit behind his classmates who passed four credit courses in the tenth grade.

These six students are probably doomed to suffer under a continuing handicap. The twelve credits required toward graduation (excluding required Physical Education) average four credits

per year for each of three years. Even if they successfully complete the four tenth grade courses (including English I), these students, historically weak in English, must "pick up" an extra credit within the following two years to be able to graduate with their class. This can be accomplished in one of three ways; 1) Take five subjects during a normal school year which is prohibited unless a "B" average is maintained the preceding year. 2) Enroll in summer school for a full or half credit course. 3) Enroll for an extra half credit for each of two normal school years. (Combinations of half credits in a normal school year and a summer would also be possible.)

Table 10 shows that only three of the sixty (5 percent) maintained a "B" average as ninth graders. (Incidentally, none of the above six were in that 5 per cent.) Table 10 also starkly reveals that the grades became progressively lower each and every year, with precipitous drops after the fifth grade. These facts make it virtually impossible for these six students to ever enroll for an extra credit in a normal school year.

The fondness of a potential dropout for school is not such that he would be expected to enroll in summer school. The thirty-dollar tuition fee per credit is also a deterrent, especially for the lower income family group, from which the majority of these students come.

The third alternative is perhaps the most practical. For it there is no grade average requirement. However, the half credit courses are so limited in number and variety that they

TABLE 4

ATTENDANCE RECORD OF THE SIXTY DROPOUTS

Ratio of Days Pres. to Days Abs.	Days Enrld.	No. of Abs.	Times Abs. in Ninth	Ratio of Days Pres. to Days Abs.	Days Enrld.	No. of Abs.	Times Abs. in Ninth
73.33	60	44	23	24.00	25	6	13
63.86	74	48	21	22.15	149	33	NA
62.32	69	43	13	21.64	134	29	20
61.08	167	102	35	20.73	82	17	14
58.33	24	14	18	20.00	25	5	14
55.56	9	5	9	17.11	76	13	16
52.43	103	54	39	16.33	49	8	6
50.00	20	10	1	15.38	104	16	15
50.00	10	5	3	15.00	20	3	2
50.00	4	2	8	14.29	14	2	7
49.12	57	28	16	14.29	7	1	0
48.86	88	43	32	14.10	78	11	4
47.06	85	40	31	13.71	124	17	5
43.07	137	59	35	13.60	125	17	17
38.81	67	26	7	12.79	86	11	4
38.20	123	47	10	11.59	69	8	9
37.36	174	65	NA	11.11	36	4	54
36.43	140	51	32	10.00	60	6	14
35.71	70	25	5	6.50	123	8	NA
35.14	74	26	29	4.45	110	5	2
32.69	52	17	8	3.19	94	3	15
30.00	90	27	NA	2.56	117	3	8
29.94	167	50	38	2.17	138	3	0
29.85	67	20	11	1.94	103	2	NA
27.70	148	41	0	1.69	59	1	1
27.27	88	24	23	-0-	20	-0-	0
26.00	100	26	13	-0-	20	-0-	NA
25.60	125	32	34	NA	5	NA	14
25.42	118	30	12	NA	NA	NA	10
25.30	83	21	29	NA	NA	11	1
TOTALS				27.30	4645	1268	

Average Number of Enrolled Days

77.4**

*NA-Not available

**Plus whatever increase would result from adding figures to replace NA.

would be unattractive to the majority of the dropouts.

Only 8 per cent dropped from the twelfth grade. From this we might conclude that once the student has completed the tenth and eleventh grades it is highly probable that he will graduate from high school.

The table does not reveal that twelve of these dropouts had dropped out in the preceding school year. This means that they had dropped once, re-enrolled, and dropped again.

How much were they absent?--There is a high degree of correlation between dropping out of school and poor attendance. Of the sixty, ten were absent 50 per cent or more of the time enrolled. Only eight had a better attendance record per number of days enrolled than students who did not drop out.

On the average the dropout completed 43.7 per cent of the 177 days of the school year. How much more of the school year would he have completed, or - more important - how many would not have dropped out at all if attendance had been more regular?

One might ask: Are they absent because of some psychological attitudes which make their ultimately becoming a drop an inevitable eventuality? Or, is their absenteeism, engendered by some unrelated causes, responsible for their capitulation to a failure complex accompanying low grades attributable primarily to the devotion of inadequate time to school work?

The latter seems more plausible. If it is true, the dropout rate could be reduced by enforcing reduced absenteeism. At Mattoon a rigid system is maintained to inquire of parents about absentees. The parents of habitual absentees are called no later

than the second or third day of absence.

TABLE 4A
COMPARATIVE ATTENDANCE RECORD OF THE DROPOUTS

Students	Total Absences	Enrolled Days	Ratio of Absences To Enrolled Days
Sixty Dropouts	1268	4645	27.30
Whole School	9645	180568	5.19
Whole School-excluding Dropouts (Item 2 less Item 1)	8377	175923	4.76

The dropouts' days absent (1,268) are 27.30 per cent of their days enrolled (4,645). The total number of school days for the year was 177. The total student body had 180,568 total enrolled days, of which 9,645 were total days absent, which is 5.19 per cent of enrolled days. The total percentage of absences for the year excluding the dropouts was 4.76 per cent. This makes the dropouts' absenteeism rate 5.74 times as great as that of the non-dropout.

What reason did they give for leaving school?--When the dropout left school he was asked the reason for his leaving on a withdrawal form. Marriage (which in a few cases would be more accurately described as pregnancy) was the reason given by 25 per cent of the sixty dropouts. This was the reason given by 56 per cent (15) of the girls. Although this may sound surprisingly high, it is not out of line with the findings of other studies,

some of which are described in Chapter 2.

TABLE 5

REASON GIVEN BY THE DROPOUT FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

Reason	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Service	13	37.14			13	21.67
Employment	13	37.14	1	4.00	14	23.33
Family	1	2.86	4	16.00	5	8.33
Religious			1	4.00	1	1.67
Marriage	1	2.86	14	56.00	15	25.00
Dislike School	5	14.29	3	12.00	8	13.33
No reply	2	5.71	2	8.00	4	6.67
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

The only other percentages of any substantial significance are the 37 per cent of the boys who gave military service as the reason, and the same per cent who answered employment. These two groups make up three fourths of all the boys. In view of their relatively low economic level it is unlikely that they can go for any length of time without some source of income. It occurs to the writer to inquire whether these were actually reasons, or merely the two most attractive alternatives available to an already confirmed dropout.

The table does not reveal that five students indicated that

they planned to re-enroll for the next school year. These students were failing and apparently saw no point in remaining to get a failing grade in almost all, if not all, subjects.

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE SCORES OF THE OTIS GROUP
INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR THE SIXTY DROPOUTS

Scores	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
136-145	-	-	-	-	-	-
126-135	-	-	3	12.00	3	5.00
116-125	3	8.57	2	8.00	5	8.33
106-115	2	5.71	4	16.00	6	10.00
96-105	13	37.14	6	24.00	19	36.67
86-95	11	31.43	4	16.00	15	25.00
76-85	2	5.71	1	4.00	3	5.00
66-75	1	2.86	3	12.00	4	6.67
No Score	3	8.57	2	8.00	5	8.33
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

How intelligent were the dropouts?--The Otis Group Intelligence Scale had been given to most of the pupils who dropped out, with the exception of a few who entered during the school year from other districts.

The average intelligence quotient for the dropout was 99.67. This indicated that the average dropout this year is by

no means uneducable. A nationwide study conducted by the United States Department of Labor showed that 70 per cent of the dropouts surveyed had registered IQ scores above 90.²⁶ An intensive six year study in the State of New York revealed that 13 per cent of the dropouts had IQ scores above 110.²⁷

At Mattoon there were 14.29 per cent of the boys and 36.00 per cent of the girls with IQ's of 106 or better. Thus, the girls were intellectually better equipped to handle education. This is in line with the results from other dropout studies.

There were 60 per cent of the dropouts with average and above intelligence (above 95) and 25 per cent were in the 86-95 range (low average). The 11.67 per cent at the bottom of the scale were below 77 and would understandably have difficulty in any course.

What was their achievement level?--The Iowa Test of Educational Development is given to all Mattoon ninth graders. There were scores available for all students except those who either (1) moved into the district after the test was given, or (2) were absent at the time the test was given.

The test consists of nine separate tests, each of which deals with abilities important for success in high school. These tests concentrate on broad intellectual skills and understanding, and ability to use what has been learned, rather than on sheer knowledge of names, dates, and formulas. The nine separate tests are: social studies background, natural sciences

²⁶Porter, loc. cit.

²⁷Ibid.

background, correctness of expression, quantitative thinking, lower scores than the one corresponding to that position on the reading social studies, reading natural sciences, reading literature, general vocabulary and use of information.

TABLE 7

PERCENTILE COMPOSITE SCORES FROM THE IOWA TEST OF
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE DROPOUTS

Percentile Scores	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
10	5	14.29	4	16.00	9	15.00
20	9	25.71	4	16.00	13	21.67
30	1	2.86	4	16.00	5	8.33
40	3	8.57	2	8.00	5	8.33
50	3	8.57	-	-	3	5.00*
60	6	17.14	-	-	6	10.00
70	4	11.43	4	16.00	8	13.33
80	6	17.14	-	-	6	10.00
90	1	2.86	3	12.00	4	6.67
98	8	22.86	2	8.00	10	16.67
99	-	-	1	4.00	1	1.67
No Score	5	14.29	1	4.00	6	10.00
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

*The 50 percentile line is indicated to point out the national median that separates the upper 50 per cent of the group from the lower 50 per cent.

The score or percentile used for Table 7 was the composite score, which is an average of the students' abilities in all the tests except use of sources of information. A percentile score tells what percentage of students at the same grade level had

lower scores than the one corresponding to that position on the table. For example, a percentile score of 80 means that 80 per cent of a very large and typical group of high school students at that grade level received lower scores.

A comparison of tables 6 and 7 indicates that the academic achievement of the dropout is far below his intelligence level. Of the scores available, 70 per cent of the boys were in the lower 50 percentile and so were 58.33 per cent of the girls.

TABLE 8

AVERAGE GRADES RECEIVED BY 30 MALE DROPOUTS FROM GRADES 1-9

Score	GRADE LEVEL									Total	Per cent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
A	4	4	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	14	5.19
B	6	7	10	9	4	5	1	-	-	42	15.66
C	11	11	11	11	14	16	12	5	3	94	34.81
D	8	8	8	8	9	9	15	23	21	109	40.37
F	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	6	10	3.70
Totals	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	270	100.00

What kind of grades did the dropouts make?--From grades one through six all the dropouts were receiving passing grades. At grade seven (the first year of Junior High School) two began to fail and most of the others were receiving grades of "C" and "D". By the time these students completed the ninth grade, only 10 of them were making grades above "D".

TABLE 9

AVERAGE GRADES RECEIVED BY 20 FEMALE DROPOUTS FROM GRADES 1-9

Score	GRADE LEVEL									Total	Per cent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
A	5	5	3	-	2	0	1	1	0	17	9.44
B	8	7	9	9	8	9	5	4	3	62	34.44
C	4	5	3	8	9	9	9	9	4	60	33.33
D	2	3	5	3	1	2	5	5	11	37	20.56
F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	1.67
Totals	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180	100.00

TABLE 10
AVERAGE GRADES RECEIVED BY 50 MALE AND FEMALE
DROPOUTS FROM GRADES 1-9

Score	GRADE LEVEL									Total	Per cent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
A	9	9	4	2	5	-	1	1	-	31	6.89
B	14	14	19	18	12	13	6	4	3	104	23.11
C	15	16	14	19	23	25	21	14	7	154	34.22
D	12	11	13	11	10	11	20	28	32	146	32.44
F	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	8	13	2.86
Totals	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	100.00

There were 20.85 per cent of the boys and 43.88 per cent of the girls making some "A" and "B" grades from the first year

through the ninth. This intellectual and achievement superiority of girls is not surprising since the girls scored higher on the intelligence tests and on the Iowa Test of Educational Development.

The dropout was not achieving according to his ability in the upper elementary and junior high grades. This holds true not only for the average and above average, but also for those with below average ability.

Although the facts about the reading ability of these students are not shown in this table, the achievement test scores show that the majority of the dropouts were reading below their grade level by two or more grades. Also not revealed is the fact that of the sixty students studied, five boys and one girl repeated a grade. The grades repeated were the fifth, seventh, eighth, and three repeated the ninth.

What subjects did the dropouts like or dislike?--In questionnaires filled out by thirty of the dropouts, they indicated that they liked and disliked certain subject areas. Table 12 shows that, of those dropouts filling out the questionnaires, the majority preferred the non-academic courses. Table 11 shows that the boys indicated a preference for vocational courses.

The majority of those reporting indicated a liking for the non-academic subjects, and an even greater number disliked academic courses. Industrial Arts was the most-liked subject, and English was the most disliked.

DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES*

TABLE 11

SUBJECTS LIKED AND DISLIKED BY THIRTY DROPOUTS

Subject	LIKED		DISLIKED	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Art	-	-	1	3.33
English	6	20.00	14	46.67
Foreign Lang.	-	-	1	3.33
History	-	-	7	23.33
Ind. Arts.	12	40.00	-	-
Math	-	-	5	15.67
Phy. Educ.	3	10.00	1	3.33
R.O.T.C.	3	10.00	-	-
Science	-	-	11	36.67
Typing	3	10.00	-	-
TOTALS**	27	100.00	40	100.00

* Copy of questionnaire used appears as Appendix A.

** Totals are solely for proof of mathematical accuracy.

TABLE 12

PREFERRED READING AS INDICATED BY THIRTY DROPOUTS

Preferred Reading	15 Boys		15 Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Sports	4	26.67	-	-	4	13.33
Fiction	4	26.67	10	67.00	14	46.67
Mech. Books	4	26.67	-	-	4	13.33
Playboy	3	20.00	-	-	3	10.00
Biographies	-	-	2	13.33	2	6.67
Mysteries	1	6.67	1	6.67	2	6.67
Pioneer St.	1	6.67	-	-	1	3.33
None	4	26.67	3	20.00	7	23.33

What reading material does the dropout prefer?--When answering the questionnaires, some of the dropouts would indicate more than one area of preferred reading. The most significant result of Table 13 is that 46.67 per cent of the thirty boys and girls reporting preferred fiction and 71.43 per cent of the girls help make up this percentage. This is merely an indication of what they like to read when they read. It is probable that the majority of them do very little reading.

TABLE 13

HOW THE DROPOUT FELT ABOUT SELF (30 REPORTING)

Personality Traits	Number	Per cent
Like excitement	22	73.33
Like to be going places	21	70.00
Liked by parents	19	63.33
Dislike school	18	60.00
Liked by most teachers	15	50.00
Like to be with a crowd	13	43.33
Easy going	13	43.33
Have many friends	12	40.00
Quiet	11	36.67
Calm	11	36.67
Energetic	11	36.67
Accepting	9	30.00
Like to be alone	9	30.00
Talkative	8	26.67
Easily discouraged	8	26.67
Day dreamer	8	26.67
Like to stay home	7	23.33
Hard to discourage	7	23.33
Like school	7	23.33
Good looking	6	20.00
Excitable	5	16.67
Prejudiced	5	16.67
Shy	5	16.67
Prompt	4	13.33
Realist	4	13.33
Forceful	4	13.33
Slow	4	13.33
Have few friends	2	6.67
Disliked by most teachers	2	6.67
Good school citizen	2	6.67
Totals	272	906.67

What was the physical condition of the dropouts as reported on the questionnaires?--The students were asked to rank their physical condition as good, fair, or poor. Out of thirty reporting, 66.66 per cent rated their health as good, 33.33 as fair, and none as poor. Three reported that they had been seriously ill at one time.

Health does not seem to be a significant reason for dropping out. Only one withdrew from school for health reasons.

How were the study habits of the dropouts as indicated on the questionnaires?--Fifteen of the dropout boys indicated that they did not study at home and ten of them indicated they studied a total of less than an hour a day. Two of them studied more than one hour a day.

Five of the girls indicated that they studied a lot at home. Five said that they did not study at all, anywhere. Five studied less than an hour per day, and seven did not indicate either way.

It is the observation of the writer that the dropouts have poor study habits. Habitual absences and delinquency in assignments leaves the dropout with the feeling of not knowing what to do next. So he does little, if any, school work.

How did the dropout feel about himself?--Table 14 reveals the following:

1. There were 60 per cent who disliked school and 23.33 who liked school.

TABLE 14

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THIRTY OF THE DROPOUTS

Interests and Activities	15 Boys		15 Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
The most important honors received				
Lettered in sports	4	13.33	4	13.33
Took part in a play	-	-	1	3.33
Did dropout letter in a sport?				
Yes	1	3.33	-	-
No	14	46.67	15	50.00
Does dropout play a musical instrument, has he taken music lessons?				
Yes	4	13.33	2	6.67
No	11	36.67	13	43.33
What are the activities participated in outside of school?				
Church groups	1	3.33	3	10.00
Sports	4	13.33	-	-
Hunt-fishing	1	3.33	-	-
4H	-	-	1	3.33
None	9	30.00	11	36.67
What do they like to do for recreation?				
Sports	8	26.67	4	13.33
Movies	3	10.00	4	13.33
Drag racing	3	10.00	-	-
Dance	1	3.33	5	16.67
None	-	-	2	6.67
What hobbies do they have?				
Cars	4	13.33	-	-
Sports	2	6.67	2	6.67
Collecting records	-	-	2	6.67
Reading	1	3.33	1	3.33
Go places	-	-	4	13.33
Work	1	3.33	-	-
None	7	23.33	6	20.00

2. Fifty per cent felt they were liked by most teachers, and 6.67 per cent felt they were disliked by most teachers.
3. 43.33 per cent liked to be with a crowd as compared with 30 per cent who liked to be alone.
4. There were 40 per cent who felt they had many friends, and only 6.67 per cent who felt they had few friends.
5. A dominant characteristic was the desire for excitement, and the desire to be going places.
6. None of them indicated that they felt they were disliked by their parents. They either marked liked by parents or did not mark either liked or disliked by parents.
7. Only 6.67 felt that they were good school citizens.

According to the Baltimore Study, many dropouts reveal feelings of being left out.²⁸ Many of these students are indicating the opposite when they check that they feel they are liked by most teachers, by their parents, and that they have many friends. On the other hand they might be indicating what they would like rather than what they actually believe. The fact that they show little interest in school activities is one indication that they don't really have that feeling of belonging.

What were the interests and activities of the dropouts?--

About the only conclusion to be drawn from Table 15 is that the

²⁸Williams, loc. cit.

²⁹Ibid.

dropouts have an abnormally low interest in most of these areas. Nine out of fifteen boys and eleven out of fifteen girls indicated participation in no activities outside of school. Seven boys and six girls had no hobbies.

On the favorable side, four boys and four girls participated in school sports; and four boys and two girls play musical instruments or have taken music lessons. Only two girls and no boys indicated nothing for recreation.

From what kind of families did they come?--The classification of the socio-economic level of the dropouts is subjective (that is, not based on actual knowledge of dollar income.) The factors carefully weighed in assigning the classifications were (1) Personal acquaintance of student, dress, etc. (2) Parent's profession or job per student's questionnaire. (3) Knowledge of Aid to Dependent Children information.

TABLE 15

SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL OF THE SIXTY DROPOUTS

Socio-economic Level	Boys	Girls
A	-	-
B	1	3
C	16	9
D	17	8
E	1	5
Totals	35	25

The socio-economic level classification "A" denotes the upper income level and "B", above average. "C" stands for the average and "D" the low. The classification "E" is the area of ADC and destitute economic level.

Many of the students reported jobs of their parents that were in the unskilled classification. Many of the occupations reported were relatively unstable and in the lowest income bracket. In many instances both parents work.

TABLE 16

THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED BY THE PARENTS OF THIRTY DROPOUTS AS REPORTED IN QUESTIONNAIRES

Final Year Completed	Mother		Father		Mother and Father	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
3	-	-	1	3.33	1	1.67
4	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	2	6.67	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	10	33.33	9	30.00	19	31.67
9	4	13.33	8	26.67	12	20.00
10	2	6.67	2	6.67	4	6.67
11	4	13.33	4	13.33	8	13.33
12	8	26.67	6	20.00	14	23.33
Totals	30	100.00	30	100.00	60	100.00

Less than one fourth of the parents completed grade twelve.

Only 63 per cent went beyond the eighth grade. Eighty per cent of the fathers were dropouts and 73 per cent of the mothers. Of all of the thirty students reporting, 77 per cent of the parents dropped out of school before receiving a high school diploma.

In the Baltimore Study it was reported that 78.5 per cent of the mothers and 80.3 per cent of the fathers had also been dropouts.³⁰ The mothers average a higher educational level than the fathers.

Do the Dropouts attend church?--On the questionnaire, the thirty reporting indicate the following about their church habits:

1. 23 per cent of them go to church regularly.
56.6 per cent of them do not attend regularly.
20 per cent do not attend church at all.
2. 23 per cent of the parents attend church with them regularly.
63 per cent of the parents do not attend regularly.
13 per cent of the parents do not attend at all.

How do the dropouts think that their parents feel toward their school work and their home work?--Table 17 reveals that 66.67 per cent (20) of the dropouts felt that their parents think they should do better in their school work. Only three (10 per cent) felt that their parents were not interested in their school work.

They seem to counteract their statements when 66.67 per cent state "they feel I should do better" in school work and then mark "They feel I do about as well as I can" in home

³⁰Williams, loc. cit.

work (40.00 per cent). A small group felt that their parents did not seem interested in their school work or care if there was any home work or not.

TABLE 17

DROPOUTS OPINION ON PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL WORK

Opinion Item	Boys-Girls	
	Number	Per cent
How Parents feel about school work		
They feel I should do better.	20	66.67
They feel I do about as well as I can.	6	20.00
They do not seem interested in my school work.	3	10.00
How Parents feel about home work		
They feel I have too much.	2	6.67
They feel I do about as well as I can.	12	40.00
They insist that I do my chores first.	4	13.33
They don't care if I have any or not.	4	13.33

TABLE 18

DATA ON BROKEN HOMES

Home Status Item	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Broken Homes	11	31.43	7	28.00	18	30.00
Father Deceased	4	11.43	2	8.00	6	10.00
Father Disabled	1	2.86	-	-	1	1.67
Not reported Broken	19	54.29	19	64.00	35	58.33
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

The following charts are included in order to present as many profiles of the dropouts as possible from the available information. They are also included to serve as bases for comparison with subsequent studies of this and other schools.

Are the dropouts from broken homes?--The majority of both boys and girls were not from broken homes. In fact, 58.33 per cent of the sixty dropouts were reportedly living with both parents. Only one of the dropouts was living in a place other than home. (That is, both adults in the house were foster parents.)

TABLE 19

NUMBER OF SIBLINGS IN FAMILIES OF DROPOUTS

Number of Siblings	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0	9	25.70	-	-	9	15.00
1	6	17.13	7	28.00	13	21.67
2	8	22.85	8	32.00	16	26.67
3	4	11.42	4	16.00	8	13.33
4	4	11.42	2	8.00	6	10.00
5	3	8.57	1	4.00	4	6.67
6	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	2	8.00	2	3.33
9	1	2.86	-	-	1	1.67
11	-	-	1	4.00	1	1.67
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

At the time of this study and with the information available the dropouts showed that there was an average of 2.48

siblings per family or a total of 3.48 total children in each family.

TABLE 20
NUMBER OF MOVES MADE BY DROPOUT FAMILIES
AS RECORDED ON DROPOUT'S RECORD

Number of Moves	Boys		Girls		Boys and Girls	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
None	13	37.14	11	44.00	24	40.00
1	8	22.86	6	24.00	14	23.33
2	4	11.43	1	4.00	5	8.33
3	4	11.43	4	16.00	8	13.33
4	2	5.71	1	4.00	3	5.00
5	1	2.86	-	-	1	1.67
6	2	5.71	1	4.00	3	5.00
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	1	2.86	-	-	1	1.67
9	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	1	4.00	1	1.67
Totals	35	100.00	25	100.00	60	100.00

There was a total of 101 moves recorded. This makes an average of 1.68 moves per dropout.

Did they move often?--Information on the times the dropout moved was tabulated to provide a chart from which some inferences might be drawn about the relationship of moves to dropping out of school.

Any teacher will attest to the fact that a move produces an adverse effect on the continuity of academic progress. Besides

the obvious missing of classes during an inter-year move, several less obvious disturbing influences are, or may be, present:

1. Being ahead of the new class in assignments.
2. Being behind the new class in assignments.
3. Having to change to a different text book, which very possibly has a different arrangement of subject matter. This means that he may not have studied some of the material already covered by the new school, thus leaving him with an inferior background for completing the remainder of the course; or he may have already studied some of the material yet to be covered. This is a situation which invites lack of interest due to the absence of a challenge.
4. Customary turmoil in a household while adjusting to a new dwelling.
5. Mourning over absence from old friends.
6. Search for new friends and social acceptance.
7. Adjusting to new teachers and school routine.

Seventeen (28.3 per cent of the sixty dropouts had three or more moves during their school career before dropping out. Although the necessary information for this group is not available, it would be interesting to attempt to correlate any decline in grades achieved with the dates the students moved. While some students could "bend with the breeze" and readily adapt them-

selves to new environments, for other, even one move might prove so frustrating that a life-long attitude such as a "mental block" against school or studying could result. From personal experience as a school counselor, the author has seen newly transferred students wrought to tears from conflicts with teachers new to them.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The group studied consisted of sixty dropouts, which included thirty-five boys and twenty-five girls. The fact that the number of male dropouts outnumber the girls agrees with the findings of the National Education Association Dropout Survey. This study found that 55 to 60 per cent of the dropouts are boys.

This study reveals that the majority of the 1962-63 dropouts left school at sixteen and seventeen years of age. This age group accounted for 73.33 per cent of the sixty dropping. According to a study conducted by the Baltimore, Maryland State Department of Education, it was found that 45.9 per cent of their dropouts were leaving at the age of sixteen.

An analysis of the calendar month in which dropouts left school was inconclusive. Of course, few would be expected to drop in September since a large percentage of the tenth graders are still sixteen, which is the legal age one must reach before withdrawing from school.

The tenth and eleventh grades were equal in the number of dropouts. Many of the eleventh graders who gave up were discouraged and felt that the attainment of enough credits to earn their diploma was too far in the future.

The year in school at the time of dropping is misleading. A student who is classified as a tenth grader may be so classified because he is behind his classmates due to failure in courses in previous years. The same holds true for the eleventh and twelfth graders.

The attendance figures reveal findings similar to those in many dropout studies; absenteeism is greater than school average. The majority of the dropouts were absent more than one-fourth of the days enrolled in school during the year in which they dropped. For most of those who dropped, the majority of their absences fell just before dropping from school. This coincides with the statement made in some studies that the dropout goes through a waiting period before withdrawing from school.

Twenty of the thirty-five boys (57.1 per cent of the sixty dropouts) had been suspended from school one or more times. None of the girls had been suspended from school, but most of them had out classes one or more times. Nearly all of the sixty dropouts had skipped school.

Of the reasons given for leaving school, military service and employment were the most dominant for the boys. Marriage accounted for 56 per cent of the reasons given by the twenty-five girls.

The dislike for school as reported in tables 6 and 11 may be a result of the dropout's being discouraged by his academic progress, or because he disliked his teacher or subject. He

may see no practical value in his program; or he may feel left out of the school's social life and athletics.

The average intelligence score of the sixty dropouts was 99.67. It was also evident from the results that the girls rated higher in intelligence than the boys. Neither of the above two statements are a surprise since most of the recent dropout studies had similar findings. The United States Department of Labor shows that 70 per cent of the dropouts registered IQ scores above 90. An intensive six-year study in New York revealed that 13 per cent of the dropouts had IQ scores above 110.

Both the boys and the girls were under-achieving. Of the total dropouts, 58.33 per cent were below the fiftieth percentile on the Iowa Test. In the Baltimore study it was found that 56.5 per cent of their dropouts were underachieving.

The dropouts were making average and better grades in the early elementary years. By the time they entered the seventh grade only one made A's; 32.4 per cent of them were making a D average. In the ninth grade none of them were making A's, and eight of them were failing for the year. Sixteen per cent had to repeat a grade. In the Baltimore Study, of 13,715 dropouts, 56.7 per cent had been retained in either elementary or junior-high school. Ideally each child should attend school until graduation. Most of the dropouts came from the low average to low socio-economic level. The same was found to be true in a study by the National Education Research Department. It was found that 77 per cent of the parents dropped out

of school before receiving a high school diploma. In the Baltimore Study they found that 78.5 per cent of the mothers and 80.3 per cent of the fathers as compared to 73 per cent of the mothers and 80 per cent of the fathers of those reporting in this study had dropped from school before graduation.

What about course failures during their final year in school? The majority were making incompletes or failing in two or more subjects. But it is clearly apparent that this disinterest in their subjects didn't just suddenly crop up; it begins to show up rather obviously at the seventh grade level.

The three main curriculum areas are Academic (College Preparatory), Technical (Vocational), and General. In the Michigan Study it was estimated that between 50 and 60 per cent of the high school students take the general education courses. They also stated that a large percentage of those became dropouts. A large majority of the Mattoon dropouts were enrolled in the general curriculum.

Conclusions

Why did they drop?--There is nothing new about the fact that some of the youth of our nation leave school before graduation. But ideally each child should attend school until graduation. Of course, many more are dropping from high school now than in years past because a much greater number start.

The writer sees the following as a few of the reasons for early school leaving:

A. The legal age for leaving school falls at an awkward time. It falls after the student has enrolled in the tenth grade; so pupils are required to at least enroll in High School. So, we require them to enroll, but we do not require them to remain.

B. They withdrew from high school this year according to the records, but actually they began withdrawing as far back as the fifth grade.

Numerous studies have stated that certain symptoms show up early in the dropout's school years. We begin to help them too late. "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

C. There is that portion of the dropout population whose intellectual limitations keep them from profiting from the traditional courses that are required of all students. There has been a solution attempted by enrolling these students in remedial or low sections. This usually results in a social separation which itself may become a cause of dropping.

Unfortunately these students do not profit much from the vocational courses either. The

vocational courses normally require an average intelligence and at least average reading ability.

- D. The schools are sometimes almost saddled with the task of rearing these children, and, like the parents, are doing a poor job. Our school family is larger than ever before; often a classroom is a sea of little faces rather than a group of individuals. Curricular and teaching adjustments to this large "group of individuals" is necessary.
- E. The school leavers do not participate in school activities. If a student finds some recognition and feels a part of the group he will be an active member. All of us (the dropout is no exception) have this desire to belong. The dropout finds little satisfaction in extracurricular activities since the better students govern and dominate the groups. The dropout does not know how to contribute. He is more at home away from the school with other potential dropouts.
- F. A majority of the dropouts come from the lower socio-economic level. The social handicaps faced by this group force many of them to leave school. The middle-class-dominated school is

not adapted to the interests and needs of these lower-class students.

What can be done?--There is no apparent single solution.

Some feel that raising the legal leaving age to eighteen or requiring each pupil to remain in school until graduation would relieve the situation. This would possibly result in a meaningless diploma.

We are outgrowing our present educational system. These students who show a definite disinterest in academic courses should have available for them a public supported vocational school to which they could go at the end of either grade six or eight, or even after they found that high school was not for them.

We could possibly reduce the dropout rate, however, if we do the following:

1. Know each student individually. Get his confidence and listen to him once in awhile. A large number of dropouts could and would be salvaged by the classroom teacher if conditions within the classroom were more advantageous. Usually, in the over-large classes, the most sympathetic of teachers simply cannot afford to give the potential dropout the additional individual attention he needs if he is to overcome the problem presented by his limited background.
2. Provide situations where the student can experience some achievement.

3. Help the student to extend his social experiences. The majority of dropouts come from families of the lower-socio-economic categories-- families where the father or mother is often missing, where cultural background and scope are limited, where education is viewed with indifference or distrust, if not resentment.
4. Be ever alert for signs of trouble. Do something about it. Recording it on the record is no solution by it's self.
5. Make use of records. There is a wealth of information that is never used.
6. Extend the counseling services into the elementary grades. There should be no less than a full time counselor for each elementary school who will work closely with both junior and senior high school counselors.
7. Obtain closer contact between home and school so that the middle class teacher can better understand these lower class students and parents.

It becomes very much apparent that we need to expand both in curriculum and in personnel. Where do we build? We have a great need for the following in our local school system:

1. Curriculum changes:

- a. Change the curriculum to provide for under-achievers a program on their level for all school years.

- b. Provide year-around counseling services to students.
- c. Involve the community. Maybe some students should drop out of school, partially at least. With the community and the school working together these students could benefit both in and out of school.

2. Additional personnel:

- a. Provide no less than one counselor for every 300 students. (At the present time there are two full-time counselors for 1100 students.)
- b. Provide a full-time vocational counselor in the high school.
- c. Provide additional counselors on the junior high school level. (At the present there is one to each of two junior high schools with over 600 students to each.)
- d. Provide counselors for the elementary schools.
- e. Provide a reading specialist. (Who will work directly with those having reading difficulties.)

It is the sincere hope of the author that the hours of assembling, classification, and sifting of information will in some way shed illumination that will be helpful in localizing areas for which solutions can be found; and that the administrators, educators, and civic leaders who are continually aware of, and continuously studying the dropout problem will see something in

dropout's silhouettes depicted by the tables that will be instrumental in reducing the dropouts by at least one.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire filled out by all students in the Mattoon Senior High School with the exception of most seniors and students who were not in attendance at the time the questionnaires were filled out.

MATTOON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade _____ Date _____

Phone Number _____

YOUR LEGAL NAME _____ BIRTHDATE _____

ADDRESS _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

--Father _____ (Circle: father-stepfather-guardian-foster-grandparents)
Occupation _____ Place of Work _____

Education (Circle highest level completed: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Tech. School, College 1 2 3 4, Professional Tr.)

--Mother _____ (Circle: mother-stepmother-guardian-foster-grandparents.)
Occupation _____ Place of Work _____

Education (Circle highest level completed: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Tech. School, College 1 2 3 4, Professional Tr.)

LIST CHILDREN IN YOUR FAMILY EXCLUDING YOURSELF STARTING WITH OLDEST

Names of Children Sex Age Education Married Occupation

What changes, if any, have occurred in your own or your family situation in the past year? (Examples: births(give names, divorce, separation, remarriage, etc.)

What other people live in your home besides your immediate family?

HEALTH INFORMATION:

How do you rate your health? GOOD - FAIR - POOR - COMMENTS:

Have you ever been seriously ill: _____ Had a bad accident? _____ Give details _____

Has there been any serious illness or bad accidents in your family in the past year? _____ Give details _____

Do you have any health or physical problems at the present time? (example: hearing - eyes - polio, etc.) Explain _____

Who is your family doctor? _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

Where did you attend school last year? _____ What schools have you attended outside Mattoon? (give dates) _____

What school subjects have you liked best? _____ What school subjects have you liked least? _____ Do you study much at home? _____ How much per day? _____ (average)

How do your parents feel about your school work? _____ They feel I should do better _____ They feel I do about as well as I can _____ They do not seem to take much interest in my school work.

How do your parents feel about your homework? _____ They feel I have too much. _____ They feel I do about as well as I can. _____ They insist I do my chores first. _____ They don't care if I have any or not. _____ They don't think I have enough.

Do you have a room where you can study free from distractions?_____

Do you like to read?_____What type reading material do you prefer?

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES:

List the most important honors you have received and circle the one that gave you the most satisfaction._____

List the school activities in which you have received an award or held office in the past year._____

If you lettered in a sport, name it(or them)_____

List musical instruments you play, or have studied and circle the one that gives you the most satisfaction._____

In what activities do you participate outside of school?_____

What do you like to do for recreation?_____

What hobbies do you have? (list in order of their interest to you)

What vacation trips or travel experiences have you recently had?

What is your best friend?_____

CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

What church do you attend?_____

In what church activities do you participate?_____

Do your parents attend the same church?_____

Do you attend regularly?_____

PERSONAL:

Do you feel your parents are too strict?_____,Not strict enough_____
or just right_____.

Do you have an allowance?_____Get money from parents when
needed?_____

Do you have a part time job?_____What?_____Where?_____

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF. Below are some personality traits. Please UNDERLINE the ones in this list which you feel best describe you:

Prompt	Slow	Quiet
Shy	Energetic	Talkative
Prejudiced	Accepting	Forceful
Easy-going	Easily discouraged	Hard to discourage
Excitable	Calm	Liked by parents
Day dreamer	Realist	Good looking
Liked by teachers	Disliked by teachers	Like school
Dislike school	Good school citizen	Have many friends
Have few friends	Like to be with crowd	Like to be alone
Like to stay home	Like to go places	Like excitement

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