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A study of Corcoran Joint Union High School drop-outs for the school year of 1949-1950

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A STUDY OF CORCORAN JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL
DROP-OUTS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1949-1950

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
College of the Pacific

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

by

Emmit Rowland Wheat

June 1951

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

The Problem

Student drop-outs in high schools throughout the United States have increased to the extent that studies have been conducted in various parts of the country to determine the causes. The exact causes are varied and often difficult to determine because no fixed set of causes may be used as a yardstick throughout the country. In large cities students drop out for many reasons not found in small towns or rural areas, but they have their drop-out problems also. The Washington Educator's Dispatch reports,

The larger high school with its richer program, does not have any greater holding power than the small school. Nor is there any sharp difference in the holding power of the reorganized as against the traditionally-organized high schools. . . "From whatever angle the high school is examined, it falls far short of its announced goal of serving all youth," say Walter H. Gaumnitz and Ellsworth Tompkins, U. S. Office of Education.¹

The complicated political and social life of this

¹ Washington Educator's Dispatch, November 8, 1950.
(Washington, D.C.: A. C. Croft, Publisher)

country, plus the now added uncertain future, the problems of war possibilities and the draft, are all having a confusing effect upon the youth of today, the impact of which is leaving a stamp of fear, doubt, and discouragement and an over all feeling that life is too uncertain to waste time on an education.

This, then, poses a most serious and grave responsibility on educators throughout the land. A reasonably educated and understanding youth is the background of our national stability and future strength. Upon the shoulders of the youth of the nation rests, not only our defense during times of war, but the maintenance of our national traditions and the American way of life during times of peace.

That the gravity of the situation is being fully recognized by individual educators, as well as state departments of education, is attested to by the many studies being conducted in various states and cities. The United States Department of Labor, in the spring of 1947 interviewed 524 boys and girls who were from the public schools of Louisville, Kentucky, of whom 440 had not completed

high school.²

William L. Gragg made a drop-out study of the schools in Ithaca Public Schools, Ithaca, New York, and the public schools of New Haven, Connecticut, and has this to say,

Whatever the approach, a challenge lies in the endeavor to understand more fully the problem of school mortality. It is perhaps trite to add that if one wishes to do something about drop-outs, he must work on the situation well in advance of the time the pupil leaves school. Indeed, it may easily be inferred that an attack should be made at the early elementary school level. The problem takes on especially serious proportions when it is viewed in the light of expanding enrolment. When the present bumper crop of war babies reaches the end of the period of compulsory attendance, will they be held by the schools long enough to receive the full benefit of a secondary education? Only diligent application to the problem will provide a favorable answer to this question.³

As a result of suggestions from committees representing various state professional groups, The California State Department of Education has organized a state-wide cooperative study of school drop-outs.⁴ The State Depart-

² Elizabeth S. Johnson and Caroline E. Legg, "Why Young People Leave School--As Told by Young Workers." The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 32, November, 1948. pp. 14-24.

³ William Lee, Gragg, "Some Factors Which Distinguish Drop-Outs From High School Graduates", Occupations, April, 1949, XXVII, No. 7. pp. 457-459.

⁴ California Guidance Bulletin No. 13, January, 1950. (Sacramento, California: Bureau of Occupational Information and Guidance, California State Department of Education.)

ment of Education has planned the project to cover the two school years of 1949-1950 and 1950-1951. They have encouraged local communities to make drop-out studies. The findings from the local studies are to be used for local, county, and state benefit and will be incorporated into a report for state-wide use.

The problem for the study of Corcoran Joint Union High School can be stated in its simplest form with three closely related questions: Why did the students drop out? Where are they living now? What are they doing now?

Until these questions can be answered, until the various causes of drop-outs can be determined, little or beneficial changes can be made either in or out of schools to solve the problem or, at least, alleviate the tendency for students to leave high school before graduation.

Need for the Study

The problem which this particular study has attempted to solve is to determine why high school students dropped out of Corcoran Joint Union High School last year. This study attempts to answer what these drop-out students are doing now, where they are now living, and if school helped them in their present work.

Before the 1949-1950 school year had come to an end for the Corcoran Joint Union High School, a drop-out file became approximately one-half as large as the file of those

who were staying in school. The drop-out list gave impetus to this study to determine where the drop-outs went, what they are now doing, and if they are furthering their educational and cultural potentialities. Many subsidiary questions were asked, both oral and written, to get at the real, definite reason why these students quit school and if there were any possibilities of changes in or about our school that would increase the school's holding power over students.

When the outline for the study was formulated, there was not any definite group of ideas about the problem, to prove or disprove. The machinery was set up; the findings fell into homogeneous groups to be tabulated and evaluated.

Delimitations

This study is confined to the drop-outs of the Corcoran Joint Union High School for the school year beginning on September 6, 1949, and ending May 26, 1950. The students from the migratory families were not included in this drop-out study.

Definitions

The Corcoran Joint Union High School is a four-year high school, consisting of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.

The term drop-out is used to designate a regularly enrolled student who quit school before he or she graduated from the twelfth grade.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY AND SUMMARY OF OTHER DROP-OUT STUDIES

In 1899, The Committee on College Entrance made its report and the chief influence of the report was,

. . . to fix, for a time, the domination of the college-entrance idea on the high schools of the United States.¹

In later years, the progressive educators have attempted to formulate a high school curriculum that is well-balanced and meets the needs of all the youth in the community. The publication, Education for All American Youth, emphasizes the idea that schools are a public institution and that the school program should be planned to meet the needs of the young people and the adults alike.² However, Harold Rugg writes,

The progressive schools and their leaders have made little progress in putting the sociological, esthetic, and ethical foundations to work. There is still little interest in the study of foundational concepts and far too little concern with the problem of the basic

¹ Ellwood P. Cubberly, Public Education in the United States. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 543.

² "Planning for American Youth" National Association of Secondary-School Principals, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

design of the school and of a community program of education.³

Obviously, the recognized general function of the high school has always been that of furnishing the means for students to further their education beyond that of the elementary school, specifically, however, to prepare the student to enter college.

Many divergent reasons, such as the desire to go to work, financial needs of the family or the individual, lack of interest in school, or the failure of many high schools to offer attractive courses, have made it difficult to keep all students in school long enough to graduate, despite compulsory laws in almost every state which require students to remain in school until they are sixteen years of age.

Educators, concerned because of students dropping out of high school before graduation, have been conducting extensive studies in widely divergent areas to determine the causes of drop-outs and in what manner the high school can more effectively combat this trend and, further, how the curriculum may be revised and set up to offer courses of such interest and practical value that students may be

³ Harold Rugg, Foundations for American Education (New York: World Book Company, 1947), p. 603.

constrained to remain to graduate from high school.

William Lee Gragg, in an article appearing in the April, 1949, issue of the magazine Occupations, has this to say,

Despite the fact that secondary schools are turning out as "finished products" a higher percentage of the pupils with whom they deal than formerly, the proportion of all youth who enter the world of work equipped with a high school diploma is still alarmingly low. Only about 50 per cent of the boys and girls who enter high school today can reasonably be expected to emerge four years hence with a record of having achieved all the requirements set by their respective states for high school graduation. Contrary to the optimistic prediction that within a few years 75 to 80 per cent of our youth will complete high school, there is little evidence in the current scene to substantiate that prophecy.⁴

Further, Royce E. Brewster and Franklin R. Zeran write,

Changing conditions in both urban and rural areas have emphasized the need for appraisal of our educators that the school has an interest in and a responsibility for the adjustment of its out-of-school youth, as well as for those still in school, has emphasized the necessity of studying each individual in order that the school may meet the needs of the individual and the demands of society.⁵

⁴ William Lee Gragg, "Why Some Factors Which Distinguish Drop-Outs From High School Graduates," Occupations, April, 1949, XXVII, Number 7. pp. 457-459.

⁵ Royce E. Brewster and Franklin R. Zeran, Techniques of Follow-Up Study of School-Leavers. Revision of a previous Office of Education Bulletin Number Misc. 3038.

These writers feel strongly that there is a crying need for individual study and counsel. They point out that the success of the various professions and industries depend upon the knowledge and study of the problems peculiar to each. By the same token, a school may determine its success by an individual study of its drop-outs, curriculum and teaching service.

A very interesting study was made by the United States Department of Labor of out-of-school youth in Louisville, Kentucky.⁶ This study was conducted through interviews of 524 boys and girls, fourteen through nineteen years of age, who had dropped out of school and were working or seeking work.

Their reasons for dropping out of school were much the same as those found in other studies of this nature. The reasons that were given were financial need, desire for independence, lack of interest in school, and others.

Although school difficulties were given more than any other as the reason for quitting school, less than half had consulted with any school official or teacher before leaving school. Even fewer had received from the school any assistance in securing jobs.

⁶ Hunting a Career, a study of out-of-school in Louisville, Kentucky. U. S. Department of Labor, Bulletin Number 115.

This study also found that even in schools offering counseling service, too little of this service is rendered. Many counselors were responsible for other duties as well as carrying a teaching schedule.

California's educational program is a progressive one, but still the available enrolment statistics show that at least one-third of the young people leave school before completing the twelfth grade.⁷ The State Department of Education has organized a state-wide study of drop-outs and graduates in order that more adequate data in regard to the problem might be available. Many of the high schools conducted or are conducting their own, individual study for their own use and for the State Department of Education. San Luis Obispo County High School conducted and completed a drop-out study of those who dropped out between the dates of September, 1949, and March, 1950. Riverside County Secondary Schools has completed an interesting study on those who dropped out between the dates of February 1, 1949, and June 1, 1950. These that have been mentioned are completed but there are many studies now in progress which will be used in the state-wide study that are to be finished by the end of the 1950-1951 school year.

⁷ California Guidance Bulletin Number 13, January, 1950. (Sacramento, California: Bureau of Occupational Information and Guidance, California State Department of Education.)

It is hoped that the data that will be assimilated by the state-wide study will be helpful in improving the school's program to a higher degree of efficiency in meeting the needs of the youth. This study, in its beginning, has encountered many obstacles that were made by those to whom the educational benefits were to be directed. It has been a constant struggle of pulling one's self up by one's own boot straps in the interest of having a more efficient school program for more and more people. It has been one problem to educate more thoroughly the children that we have in school, but it has been another problem to educate our people to become educated. The professional men in education would like to have a larger per cent of our youth staying in school so that the class room teacher will have a chance to raise the standard of educational achievement of our youth today. Our military men have studied and reported the educational achievements of our youth in the military service. With all the educational equipment and personnel that this country has, the grade that represents the average highest-grade-achieved by the boys and girls in the armed services is found in the elementary grades.

It is a real problem for the school to devise methods and means of increasing the holding power of the school. Many studies all over the nation have been made in an attempt to give some helpful suggestions to the

problem of increasing the local schools' holding power on students. Nearly all of the reports and articles that have been written on the subject of drop-outs are mentioning the fact that almost half of the young people who start to high school drop out before graduation. G. M. White writes an article on drop-outs of high schools and has this to say in his opening paragraph,

When a boy quits school, he has taken his place among the appalling statistics of an educational limbo. Each year a million to a million and a quarter young people are dropping out of school without completing a high school education.⁸

So, it is not only the pioneers in education that are interested in the drop-out problem, but rather the general public is being made aware of the depth of the drop-out problem by reports of studies that have been conducted from local areas all over the country and by many written articles that have been appearing in some of the magazines.

It would seem, therefore, that while most of the states require boys and girls to attend school until they are sixteen years of age, in an effort to insure the completion of a high school education, many factors arise to defeat this purpose. Among these factors, several stand out more prominently than others; such as, financial need

⁸ G. M. White, "The Drop-Outs", Ladies Home Journal, January, 1951, 50-51.

of self or family; the lack of attractive courses in school; desire for independence and the lack of personal guidance and counsel.

To determine what effective means may be employed to keep the youth in school is the goal of the various studies which have been or are now being conducted in California and elsewhere.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In determining the procedure for this study of drop-outs, The Methodology of Educational Research, by Good, Barr and Scates,¹ together with The Elements of Research, by Whitney,² were carefully studied and much was learned to aid in planning the outline for this study in Corcoran Joint Union High School. The outline was written and submitted to the thesis committee for criticism and suggestions. The suggestions were incorporated into a definite plan.

Further, studies that had been made in the various sections of the country and had been completed and published, were consulted in order to make the procedures for this undertaking more definite.

It was decided that the questionnaire was the principal instrument to be used in obtaining the necessary data for the study. The Questionnaire in Education by

¹ Carter Victor Good, Arvil Sylvester Barr and Douglas Edgar Scates, The Methodology of Educational Research, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1941)

² F. L. Whitney, The Elements of Research, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1942)

Leonard V. Koos,³ was consulted and questions of other drop-out studies were examined in order to devise a tool for the investigations. Finally, the questionnaire for this drop-out study was formulated and approved by the thesis chairman.

It was suggested by the chairman that the questionnaire be tried out on a slow reading group of the school in order to test the simplicity of the words and sentences and that the wording be simplified, if the test proved it to be essential. This was done: The remedial reading students of the high school were given copies of the questionnaire and were asked to answer the questions. It was explained to them that the purpose of this activity was to see if the questionnaire was self-explanatory. They were asked to write any comments or criticisms they might have on any question or part of a question. They were to assume that they were drop-outs and that the questionnaire was sent to them for their answers. The fictitious stories that were made up as to why they dropped from school were most amusing. Eighteen students were given the test; only one failed to answer all of the questions; she wrote that she did not understand the meaning of three of the questions.

³ Leonard V. Koos, The Questionnaire in Education. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1928).

Since the principal method of collecting the data was to be the controlled interview, the questionnaire was ready to be administered without the necessity of any further changes. The questionnaire was to be used in two ways: First, it was to be the guide for the interview, and, second, it was to be mailed to those former students who could not be reached by a personal interview. No student was interviewed without the use of the questionnaire. This precaution kept the questions uniform for all the cases.

The next technique that was employed and proved to be invaluable, was the scheme of advertising the study that was to be made in the local community. The investigator realized that it was no easy task to reach so many in such a short time. Every member of the high school and junior high faculty and student body was informed of what was about to take place. The janitorial staff was very cooperative by assisting in giving the where-abouts of drop-out students. Part of the advertising started back at the beginning of the second semester of the school year 1949-1950. It was known that the study would be made sometime, so the nature of the study was mentioned to each student who quit school, and he was informed that he would be hearing about the study. These students were asked for a future mailing address and were encouraged to promise to

answer any and all correspondence that might be sent to them.

There were 184 cases to work on and a goal of 100 cases were to be found in order to obtain the information called for by the questionnaire. It took three months to reach the goal. Several students were interviewed during the first part of December, 1950, the Christmas vacation was used to bring in the largest group of completed questionnaires, and the Saturdays and Sundays that followed afforded enough time to complete the data-getting campaign.

Several cases could not be reached by the personal interview because they were taken into the armed forces or they were away temporarily for work or for other reasons. These former students were mailed a questionnaire and a letter of explanation. The completed questionnaires were returned in the self-addressed envelope that was provided. In some cases, a follow-up post card was sent to remind the youngster that his completed questionnaire was needed but had not been returned. Then, there was that group that had moved out of the country with their families and had left no forwarding address and left no friends who were able to tell where they had gone. A house-to-house campaign was made and several labor camps were visited in order to inquire about the lost but, in many cases, no in-

formation was received. Their whereabouts were never determined.

The methods of finding out the information that was needed to determine the places of abode of the former students is an interesting study within itself. A written thesis on the most effective methods of locating people would be most helpful to an investigator in a study like this one. The advanced advertising of the study proved to be a real aid in finding former students. Several students heard about the study and came to the high school to learn more about it. They were interviewed in the vice-principal's office. Some boys who were in the military service came to visit the school; needless to say, they were subjected to the interview session before they got away. The local businessmen were informed of what was going on and were asked to watch for certain drop-out students. Several old families of Corcoran have many relatives around the local community. They were asked if they knew where some of the boys and girls lived. This method helped some. It was interesting and entertaining to find that the children who were playing in the yards knew more former students' places of abode than the parents did. The cooperation of the Corcoran faculty members, students, business and professional men, and other interested patrons made it possible for the collection of 106 cases for the study.

The 106 completed questionnaires were collected, and the data derived from them were evaluated and tabulated. The categorized data appear in the eight tables that are included in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

In breaking down the information gained from the questionnaire for this study, the parental status of the drop-outs, both when the students entered Corcoran Joint Union High School and when they dropped out, was recorded and tabulated. It was thought that the findings in Table I, page 22, might have some significance as to the effect of home life, separated parents, or in families with father or mother deceased.

Of the twenty boys entering school in the ninth grade, the fathers of eighteen (90%) were living, two were deceased. The mothers were all living. Of the eighteen girls entering school in the ninth grade, seventeen (94.4%) fathers were living and one deceased, and all mothers were living.

Parents of sixteen (80%) of the boys were living together and the parents of two were separated.

Parents of nine (50%) of the girls were living together and eight (44.4%) were separated.

The fathers of twenty-one (87.5%) of the twenty-four boys in the tenth grade were living and three were deceased, and the mother of one of these boys was deceased.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO PARENTAL STATUS

Grade and Sex	Parental Status When Students Entered Corcoran High School						Parental Status When Students Left Corcoran High School					
	Father Living		Mother Living		Parents Living Together Parents Separated		Father Living		Mother Living		Parents Living Together Parents Separated	
	Yes	No	Yes	No			Yes	No	Yes	No		
9TH Boys	18	2	20		16	2	18	2	19	1	15	2
Girls	17	1	18		9	8	17	1	18		12	5
10TH Boys	21	3	23	1	19	2	21	3	23	1	19	2
Girls	14	2	16		13	1	14	2	15	1	12	1
11TH Boys	7	2	9		5	2	7	2	8	1	5	2
Girls	11		11		11		11		11		11	
12TH Boys	7		7		2	5	7		7		2	5
Girls	1		1		1		1		1		1	
TOTALS												
Boys	53	7	59	1	42	11	53	7	57	3	41	11
Girls	43	3	46		34	9	43	3	45	1	36	6

The fathers of seven (77.7%) of the nine boys in the eleventh grade were living and two were deceased; the mothers of all were living. The fathers and mothers of all the girls in this grade were living and all living together.

Of the seven boys in the twelfth grade all fathers and mothers were living, the parents of two were living together and five (71%) parents were separated.

The father and mother of the one girl in the twelfth grade were living and living together.

Of the one hundred six drop-outs, ninety-six (90.5%) of the fathers and one hundred two (96.2%) of the mothers were living when the students entered school.

Seventy-six (73%) of the parents were living together and twenty (27%) were separated.

The parental status of the one hundred six drop-outs had changed but little by the time these students dropped out of school. The mothers of three students had died, but the parents of three students, who were separated when the students entered school, were living together again when the students dropped out. Two of the deceased mothers were from broken homes due to the fact that the fathers were deceased also. These 106 drop-outs had three less broken homes due to parent-separations when they quit school than they did when they started.

It was further felt that the occupation of the fathers and mothers might have some bearing on this study. Table II on page 25 reveals the distribution of drop-outs as to the parents' occupations.

Of the ninety-six fathers living, it was found that sixty-seven (69.9%) were farm laborers, two were farmers, nineteen (19.7%) were tradesmen, two were city employees, one a truck driver, one a factory worker, two were in business for themselves, four were professional men, and one was not reported.

Of the one hundred and two mothers living, ninety-five (93.1%) were housewives, three were professional women, one was a farm laborer, one was a government employee, one was a bookkeeper, and one was a waitress.

In Table III on page 26, the distribution of drop-outs was tabulated as to grade and number of months of attendance.

Of the thirty-eight in the ninth grade, thirty-three (86.9%) drop-out students attended school from one to nine months, two attended ten months, two for eleven months, and one for fourteen months. Eight (20.8%) finished the year.

Of the forty students in the tenth grade, thirty-seven (92.5%) attended school from one month to eighteen months. Two went twenty months and one went twenty-four months. Thirteen (32.5%) finished the year.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO PARENT'S OCCUPATION

Grade	Sex	Parent	Farmer for Self	Farm laborer	Truck driver	Professional	Factory worker	Bookkeeper	Waiter Waitress	Housewife	Tradesman	City Employee	Government Employee	Business for Self
9TH	Boys	Father		14							3	1		
		Mother								19				
	Girls	Father		12			1				3			1
		Mother				1				17				
10TH	Boys	Father	2	18		1								
		Mother				1			1	20			1	
	Girls	Father		8	1						5			
		Mother								15				
11TH	Boys	Father		6							1			
		Mother								8				
	Girls	Father		6							4			1
		Mother		1				1		9				
12TH	Boys	Father		3							2	1		
		Mother				1				6				
	Girls	Father									1			
		Mother								1				
TOTALS	Father		2	67	1	1	1				19	2		2
	Mother			1		3		1	1	95			1	

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO GRADE AND NUMBER OF MONTHS
ATTENDING CORCORAN UNION HIGH SCHOOL

GRADE	MONTHS ENROLLED IN CORCORAN JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL																																			Did not finish year	Finished year	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35			
9TH	1	6	5	5	2	3	2	2	7	2	2		1																							30	8	
10TH	1		1	1	3	2		2	2	2	1	5	2	3	3		2	7		2				1												27	13	
11TH		1	1				1						1		1				2	1	1	1				1	8	1								13	7	
12TH																					1												1	3	2	1	8	
TOTALS	2	7	7	6	5	5	3	4	9	4	3	5	4	3	4		2	7	2	3	2	1		1		1	8	1				1	3	2	1	78	28	

Of those in the eleventh grade, nineteen (95%) attended school from two to twenty-seven months, one went twenty-eight months, and but seven (35%) finished the school year.

Of the eight in the twelfth grade, one attended school for twenty-one months, one for thirty-two months, three for thirty-three months, two for thirty-four months and one for thirty-five months. None finished the year.

Table IV on page 28 gives the distribution of the 106 drop-outs as to grade and sex.

Of the twenty boys entering the ninth grade, six (30%) were fifteen years old, twelve (60%) were sixteen and two (10%) were seventeen. Seven (38.5%) girls were fifteen years of age, ten (55%) were sixteen and one was seventeen. A total of eighteen girls.

Of the twenty-four boys in the tenth grade, one was fifteen years old, fifteen (63%) were sixteen and eight (33%) were seventeen. Of the sixteen girls, three (18.6%) were fourteen years of age, three (18.6%) were fifteen, eight (49.6%) were sixteen, one was seventeen and one was eighteen.

Of the nine boys in the eleventh grade, four (44.4%) were sixteen years old, three (33.3%) were seventeen, one was eighteen, and one was nineteen. Of the eleven girls in this grade, five (45.5%) were sixteen and six (54.5%)

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO AGE AND GRADE

GRADE		13 yr	14 yr	15 yr	16 yr	17 yr	18 yr	19 yr
9TH	Boys			6	12	2		
	Girls			7	10	1		
	Total			13	22	3		
10TH	Boys			1	15	8		
	Girls		3	3	8	1	1	
	Total		3	4	23	9	1	
11TH	Boys				4	3	1	1
	Girls				5	6		
	Total				9	9	1	1
12TH	Boys					3	2	
	Girls				1	1	1	
	Total				1	4	3	
Total Boys				7	31	16	3	1
Total Girls			3	10	24	9	2	
Grand Total			3	17	55	25	5	1

were seventeen.

Of the five boys in the twelfth grade, three were seventeen years old, and two were eighteen. Of the three girls in this grade, one was sixteen, and one seventeen, and one eighteen.

Of the total 106 drop-outs, three students were fourteen years old, seventeen (16%) were fifteen, fifty-five (51.7%) were sixteen, twenty-five (23.5%) were seventeen, five (4.7%) were eighteen, and one was nineteen. Ninety-seven (91.2%) students were from fifteen to seventeen years of age inclusive.

In Table V, page 30, is the distribution of the 106 drop-outs, as to courses taken and what these students are now doing.

Of those students who were taking the General Course, twenty-eight (42%) boys are now working full-time for pay, twelve (18%) are working part-time for pay, three are in school full time (elsewhere). Eleven (16.5%) are in the armed forces (three of these reported that they were in school full time), ten (15%) are not working but are looking for jobs. One is not working and not looking for a job.

Of the girls who were taking the General Course, two are working full-time for pay, five (9.5%) are working part-time for pay, seven (13.3%) are in school full time

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO COURSE
TAKEN IN CORCORAN UNION HIGH SCHOOL
AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING

COURSE TAKEN IN CORCORAN JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL		GENERAL		COMMERCIAL		COLLEGE PREPARATORY		AGRICULTURE	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Working for Pay Full Time	28	2	1					1	
Working for Pay Part Time	12	5	1					1	
In School Full Time	3	7	2			1		1	
In School Part Time									
Housewife		32	2						
In Business For Self									
In Armed Forces	11					2			
Not Working but Looking for a Job	10	2	1						
Not Working and Not Looking for a Job	1	4							

(elsewhere), thirty-two (60.8%) are housewives, two are not working but are looking for jobs and four are not working and are not looking for work.

One boy was taking the Commercial Course and is working full-time for pay. One girl taking this course is working part-time for pay, two are in school full-time (elsewhere), two are housewives and one is not working but is looking for a job.

Two boys who were taking the College Preparatory Course are now in the armed forces. The one girl taking this course is now in school full-time (elsewhere).

Of the three boys who were taking the Agricultural Course, one is working full-time for pay, one working part-time for pay and one is in school full-time (elsewhere).

Table VI lists the reasons given by the 106 drop-outs for quitting school. These are classified as "A Special Reason", "Partially the Reason", or "Had Little Influence." Some of the drop-outs checked more than one reason for their action. (See Table VI, page 32.)

While all of the reasons for dropping out of school are interesting, it seems that but few of these have any significant bearing on the study. Those seeming to have a definite bearing on the work will be grouped by totals.

The investigator was fully aware that the answers given by the students might be superficial. However, all

TABLE VI

WHY CORCORAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DROPPED OUT

Reasons Given	A Definite Reason		Partially the Reason		Had Little Influence		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Desire to go to work	42	2	8	3	1		56
Financial need for family	13	4	10	3	2		32
Marriage	3	27					30
Financial Need for self	15	3	8	2	1		29
Failure in courses	7	2	10	1	1		21
Lack of school spirit	1	1	6	5		2	15
School day too long	1		8	4		1	14
Moved away	3	8					11
Graduation requirements too difficult	2		6			1	9
Grade standards too high	1		3	2		1	7
Teachers unfriendly	2		1	1	1		5
Students unfriendly	2	1	1	1			5
Bored with school	1	2		1			4
Illness of self		3					3
Too few clubs, social organizations		1	1		1		3
Illness of parents	1	1					2
Illness of other family members				1			1
Ride long distance on bus				1			1
Not enough subjects				1			1
Walk long distance to school							
Parents separated							

the answers were accepted as statements of facts.

There were thirteen boys who gave financial need of the family as a definite reason for quitting school and ten boys gave it as partially the reason, and two, as having little influence on their action. Four girls gave this as a definite reason and three as partially the reason.

Fifteen boys and three girls gave financial need for themselves as a definite reason and eight boys and two girls gave it as partially the reason. One boy said it had little influence on his dropping out of school.

A total of thirty-two boys and girls gave financial need for the family as a definite or partial reason for quitting school. Financial need for themselves was given either as a definite or partial reason for a total of twenty-nine boys and girls.

Failure in courses was given by twenty-one boys and girl drop-outs as a definite reason, with one boy stating it had little influence on his dropping out.

The reason given by the greatest number of students quitting school was the desire to go to work. Forty-two boys and two girls gave it as a definite reason and eight boys and three girls gave it as a partial reason, or a total of fifty-five.

Marriage came next. Three boys and twenty-seven

girls gave it as a definite reason for dropping out of school.

Other items which might be mentioned are: First, school day too long. (Corcoran Joint Union High School day is from 8:45 A.M. to 4:05 P.M. with fifty minutes for lunch.) Thirteen gave this as a definite or partial reason for dropping out of school.

Second, fifteen students gave lack of school spirit as a definite or partial reason.

Third, nine gave graduation requirements as too strenuous. Thirty-three gave credit to eleven other reasons for dropping out and eleven moved away from Corcoran.

Table VII, page 35, shows the distribution of drop-outs as to who helped the most in selecting an occupation and the making of educational and vocational plans, by grade.

Among the ninth-grade drop-outs, eighteen gave parents first place in aiding them to select an occupation, five gave other relatives, four gave friends and one gave his teacher and one his counselor.

Eighteen drop-outs from the tenth grade mentioned parents; three, other relatives; three, friends; two, teachers; and one, counselor.

Twelve drop-outs in the eleventh grade gave parents

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS AS TO WHO AND WHAT
HELPED MOST IN SELECTING AN OCCUPATION AND
EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL PLANS BY GRADE

GRADE	Parents	Other Relatives	Friends	A Teacher	Counselor	Principal	Work Experience	Mathematics	Commercial Studies	Agriculture	Other Subjects	Other Factors	No Help Received
9TH	16	6	4	1	1			3	1	1	5		7
10TH	18	3	3	2	1		2	1	5	2	6		10
11TH	12		4	2	1			2	4	1	3		4
12TH	3	1	1	1		1							2
TOTALS	51	9	12	6	3	1	2	6	10	4	14		23

first place, four gave friends, two gave teachers and one gave counselor.

Three drop-outs in the twelfth grade gave parents first place; other relatives, one; friends, one; teacher one; and one gave the principal. Fifty-one (48.1%) in all gave parents first place in helping them to find an occupation.

Two students gave work experience as the guide to their occupations. Six gave mathematics, ten (9.4%) gave commercial subjects, four gave agriculture. Fourteen (13.2%) gave other subjects and twenty-three (21.7%) reported no help had been received.

Table VIII, page 37, was set up to determine, as far as possible, in what ways Corcoran Joint Union High School had helped the drop-out and in what ways it had failed.

Since the purpose of the whole study was, not only to find the causes for students quitting school, but to make recommendations for improvement which might keep more students interested in graduating. Table VIII is quite enlightening. It should be stated here that, while most drop-outs checked several items, quite a number gave no responses to all items.

Twenty-two (20.7%) drop-outs felt that they had been helped a great deal in the use of spare time. Forty-

TABLE VIII

HOW THE SCHOOL HELPED IN WHAT THE DROP-OUTS ARE DOING NOW

How High School Helped Them in Each of the Following:		A Great Deal	Some	Little or None	Un-certain	No Response
Using Your Spare Time	Boys	10	28	5	2	15
	Girls	12	21	1	2	10
Taking Care of Your Health	Boys	22	19	3		16
	Girls	20	12	2		12
Marriage and Family Life	Boys	4	6	13	4	33
	Girls	19	8	4	1	14
Taking Part in Community Activity	Boys	9	11	21	3	16
	Girls	7	9	9	3	18
Getting Along With Other People	Boys	22	21	2	1	14
	Girls	29	7	1	1	8
Preparing for Further Education	Boys	11	19	7	4	19
	Girls	8	15	4	1	18
Understanding What You Can Do	Boys	16	19	7	1	17
	Girls	16	16	1	1	12
Ability to Read Well	Boys	21	18	6	1	14
	Girls	26	8	1		11
Using Good English	Boys	19	20	8	1	12
	Girls	22	11	2		11
Using Your Money Wisely	Boys	8	21	12		19
	Girls	10	16	5		15
Using Basic Math Skills Wisely	Boys	19	18	10	3	10
	Girls	13	13	5		15
Conducting Your Own Bus. Affairs	Boys	10	17	10	2	21
	Girls	12	10	6	2	16
Thinking Through Problems	Boys	19	22	8	3	8
	Girls	17	13	2	1	13
Securing A Job	Boys	12	12	19	3	14
	Girls	5	3	15	1	22

nine (46.1%) felt that they had been helped some.

Forty-two (39.5%) said that they had been helped a great deal in the care of their health; thirty-one (29.1%) thought that they had been helped some.

Twenty-three (21.6%) were helped a great deal in their knowledge of marriage and family life. Fourteen (13.2%), some.

Sixteen (15%) were helped a great deal in securing a job; fifteen (14.1%) received some help.

Fifty-one (47.9%) gave credit to the school for a great deal of help in getting along with people. Twenty-eight (26.3%), some.

A great deal of help in preparing for further education was mentioned by nineteen (17.9%); thirty-four (32%), some.

Thirty-two (30.1%) drop-outs were helped a great deal in understanding what they were able to do. Thirty-five (32.9%), some.

Forty-seven (44.2%) felt they were helped a great deal by the school in their ability to read well. Thirty-four (32%) were helped some.

Forty-one (38.5%) said the school had helped them a great deal in the use of good English. Thirty-one (30.1%) were helped some.

Eighteen (17%) received a great deal of help in

learning to use money wisely. Thirty-seven (34.8%), some.

That they were helped a great deal in learning to use basic mathematics skills wisely, was attested to by thirty-two (30.1%). Thirty-one felt that they had been helped some.

Twenty-two (20.7%) were helped a great deal by the school in learning to conduct their own business affairs. Twenty-seven (25.4%) were helped some.

Thirty-six (33.8%) drop-outs were helped a great deal in learning to think their problems through. Thirty-five (32.9%) were helped some.

That they received little or no help on one or more of the fourteen items mentioned in Table VIII, was attested to by all students. Some items were mentioned by as little as one drop-out, while others were mentioned by as many as thirty-four drop-outs.

Receiving little or no help in learning to take part in community activities was mentioned by thirty (28.2%); thirty-four (32%) received little or no help in securing a job; seventeen (16%) received little or no help in learning about marriage and family life; seventeen (16%) received little or no help in learning to use money wisely; and sixteen (15%), little or no help in conducting their own business affairs.

Forty-one (38.5%) were uncertain of receiving any

help on some of the items.

Summary

By way of summarization, we find from Table I that, apparently, parental status had little effect upon the drop-outs in this study. Actually, it was found that among the one hundred and six drop-outs there were three less broken homes when they quit school than when they started.

Table II bears out the fact that the majority of the fathers of the one hundred and six drop-outs were farm laborers or tradesmen (89.6%), and of the one hundred and two mothers, 93.1% were housewives. This would indicate that the home background lacked sufficient cultural impetus and interest on the part of parents to stimulate interest and desire on the part of the youth to secure an education or an appreciation of its worth.

The study of Table III bears out the fact that the longer the student stayed in school, the less likelihood there was of his dropping out of school before graduation.

It is clearly indicated by Table IV that the critical age among the drop-outs was from fifteen to seventeen, or 91.2%.

From the study of Table V we find that the greater portion of the drop-outs had enrolled in the General Course in high school, (87.7%). This seems significant. It

indicates that these students might, if given closer guidance along vocational lines, have stayed longer in school.

Table VI covers the reasons for dropping out of school. Desire to go to work stands at the top of the list, with a total of fifty-six students. Financial need of family was given by thirty students and financial need for self was given by twenty-nine. Some of the fifty-six who dropped out because of the desire to go to work, probably had financial need of family or self in mind. Marriage proved to be the next highest, as thirty gave that as a reason for quitting school. Twenty-one gave failure in courses as a definite or partial reason for dropping out of school. The other reasons given were varied and of little significance.

Table VII indicates who or what helped most in selecting an occupation. Seventy-two gave credit to parents, other relatives or friends for help in selecting an occupation. Ten gave teachers, counselor or Principal credit. The balance gave credit to work experience, subject matter and other factors.

It is rather significant, as shown in Table VIII, that most of the drop-outs felt, generally, that they had been helped a great deal or to some extent, in the various items mentioned.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The one hundred and six students gave a variety of reasons appertaining to their quitting school, but, in the main, there were three definite reasons that were most frequently given. Two of the three, financial need for themselves or family and their desire to go to work, were very closely related. That is, almost all of the students who gave financial need for themselves or family as a definite reason, gave the desire to go to work as a definite reason also. There was only one exception: One girl stated that she quit school because of the financial need of the family. She had to stay at home and take care of her ill mother while an older sister could work and bring extra money into the household, but she did not desire to go to work.

The other most named reason for leaving school was marriage. Many of the girls quit school because they wanted to get married, and they stated that there were no other reasons involved. These girls were asked if they had any suggestions for improving the school's program, improving it to the extent, had it been in force when they were in school, they would not have quit school. Their answer was a negative one. They said that they wanted to get married

and nothing could have been offered or done to stop them.

Parental attitudes toward an education for the youths seemed to contribute to the causes for the drop-outs. If the parents had been more interested in their children's educational welfare, the boys and girls might have been encouraged to stay in school. Nearly fifty per cent of the drop-outs stated that their parents helped them most in making educational and vocational plans. That being the case, the parents were in good positions to ward off the students' quitting school. Many of these parents are farm laborers and housewives and their job does not require a person with a high school education, in most cases.

Broken homes, by parental separation or by a deceased member, seemed to have very little effect on the causes of students' dropping out. Only one former student stated that parental separation was a definite reason for quitting school. When three of the drop-outs started to Corcoran Joint Union High School, their parents were separated, but when they left, their parents were living together again.

There were many more freshmen and sophomore drop-outs than there were in the upper grades. This condition is due, probably, to more than one reason. First, there are twice as many lower classmen as there are in the upper

classes. Second, the lower classmen are younger and perhaps they are less mature in their evaluation of educational opportunities than are upper classmen. Third, upper classmen have more to lose if they drop out than those who were in school only a few months.

Some freshmen had been in school more than nine months, two sophomores had gone more than eighteen months, one junior had gone more than twenty-seven months. This fact might be some indication that retardation is a contributory influence toward dropping out.

All but nine of the drop-outs were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, inclusive. More than one-half of the drop-outs were sixteen years old. This fact is tied in with the reasons for quitting school. They desire to go to work, they get a job and they get a work permit when they are sixteen. It is relatively easy for these sixteen-year-olds to get farm labor jobs. Especially so when the cotton picking season is on. They want to work; they are sixteen; the ranchers need them to pick cotton, so they quit school with a permit to work.

In analyzing the findings of this study, a large number of drop-outs felt that they had been helped a great deal or partially in many of the items listed. Yet, a rather large group mentioned several items in which they expressed the feeling that little or no

help had been received. The items mentioned seem rather significant, such as marriage and family life, taking part in community activities, securing the job, using ones money wisely and conducting your own business affairs.

The lack of help to these students, as far as these items are concerned, indicates that the high school is failing, at least partially, to assist the students in some of the most important phases of their education. The need for improving courses to meet the more practical needs of the students and providing more adequate counseling service, seems definitely indicated by the above findings.

Corcoran Joint Union High School has an overflowing demand for many vocational classes. The vocational agricultural department and the industrial arts department are meeting partially the demands of the students, but there are many students who are deprived of these opportunities because of the limited facilities in these departments. Furthermore, the counseling service should begin with the beginning freshmen and actually become a part of the school's atmosphere for all students at all times. The counseling service should be so thorough that it will serve the adults as well as the young people. The adult counseling service should be in cooperation with the adult classes that are being proposed here.

An adequate counseling program and an adult education program will be a step forward in educating the community's patrons to become better educated.

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APPENDIX

(QUESTIONNAIRE)

STUDY OF FORMER STUDENTS

(Corcoran Joint Union High School)

(Note: Your answers will be considered confidential. They will be used only for statistical purposes and for the improvement of our school program.)

Your name

Mr.

Mrs.

Miss.....Present

Address.....

(If Mrs., give maiden name here.....)

Course taken in Corcoran high school.....
(college prep, business, general, etc.)

Approximate time you entered Corcoran High School.....
(Month)(Year)

Approximate time you dropped out of Corcoran High School

.....
(Month) (Year)

If you dropped out of Corcoran High School before graduation, please give the following information:

(1) Your age when you left Corcoran High school.....
(Years)

(2) Your age when you entered Corcoran High School.....
(Years)

(3) What grade were you in when you entered Corcoran High School?.....

(4) What grade were you in when you dropped out of Corcoran High School?.....

(5) Did you leave before the end of the school year or did you finish the school year?

Left before the end of the year.....Finished the
year.....

1. Are you (please check one)

Single..... Divorced or separated..... Widowed.....

Married..... (If married, how many children do you have
.....)

2. What are you now doing (please check one or more)

Working for pay, full-time..... Housewife.....

Working for pay, part-time..... In business for self...

In school, full-time..... In armed forces.....

In school, part-time..... Not working but looking

Not working and not looking for a job.....

for a job.....

Other (please describe).....

.....

3. Please list below any additional education you have had since leaving Corcoran High School. In other words, include any kind of classes that you have attended after you dropped out of school. List any private lessons, lessons in business, lessons in welding, or any other lessons you may have taken after you left Corcoran High School.

Name of school	Course you took	Date entered	Months spent	Diploma, degree, etc

(If more space is needed, write "over" and use the back of this page.)

4. Are your parents living? Father living.... Mother living....
5. Were your parents living when you entered Corcoran High School? Father living..... Mother living.....
6. Were your parents living when you left Corcoran High School? Father living..... Mother.....
7. Were your parents living together when you entered Corcoran High School? Yes.... No....
8. Were your parents living together when you left Corcoran High School? Yes.... No....
9. Are your parents living together now..... separated..... divorced.....?
10. What is your father's regular occupation?.....
11. What is your mother's regular occupation?.....
12. Which of the following helped you most in selecting an occupation and in making your educational and vocational plans? (check one or more)

(a) Parents.....	(f) Counselor.....
(b) Other relatives.....	(g) Principal.....
(c) Friends.....	(h) Work experience.....
(d) A teacher.....	(i) No help received.....
(e) School subjects (Please name them).....	
.....	
13. This is a very important question for those who dropped out of school before graduation. Will you state very frankly the real reason or reasons why you left school? Your honest and sincere answers will help to improve the school. A list of reasons for student drop-outs is given

below as suggestions only. If any of the suggestions pertain to your case, please check them. Do not check the ones that do not pertain to you. Please think through your own experience and give the reasons why you withdrew. Your answers will be kept in strict confidence.

Suggested reasons	A definite reason	Partially the reason	Had a little influence
Financial need for the family			
Financial need for yourself			
Illness of parents			
Illness of other family members			
Illness of yourself			
School day too long			
Grade standards too high			
Graduation requirements too difficult			
Ride long distance on bus			
Walk long distance to school			
Teachers unfriendly			
Students unfriendly			
Lack of school spirit			
Too few clubs, social organizations			
Failure in courses			
Desire to go to work			
Marriage			
Name others			

If you have not been working since leaving school, omit questions 14 to 18, and go on to question 19. In other words, omit all questions on this page if you have not been working and go on to the next page.

14. Please describe below the jobs you have held since leaving school:

Employer or Firm	Title of job or kind of work	Date you started	Months on job	Weekly wage

(If more space is needed, write "over" and use the back of this page.)

15. To what extent has your school training helped you on your present job? Please check appropriate blank.)

- (1) A great deal..... (3) Little or none.....
 (2) Some..... (4) Not certain.....

16 In what ways could your experience in this school have been more helpful to you?

17. Which of the following helped you most in getting your first steady job after leaving school? (Please check one or more.)

- (a) Parents or other relatives.....
 (b) Friends.....
 (c) School (teacher, counselor or other school persons.....
 (d) My own efforts.....
 (e) Newspaper advertisement.....

(f) Public employment service.....

(g) Private employment service.....

(h) Other (explain).....

.....

.....

18. Was the knowledge or training needed in your present occupation gained in high school?

Yes.....

No.....

Partially.....

19. What clubs, organizations, and activities did you take part in while in high school? _____

20. What community clubs, organizations, activities, and church work do you now take part in? _____

21.

Please indicate by checking in the proper column how much this school helped you in regard to each of the following:	A great deal	Some	Little or none	Uncertain
Using your spare time				
Taking care of your health				
Marriage and family life				
Taking part in community activities				
Securing the job				
Getting along with other people				
Preparing for further education				
Understanding what you are able to do				
Ability to read well				
Using good English				
Using your money wisely				
Using basic math skills wisely				
Conducting your own business affairs				
Thinking through problems				

22. If you have further comments or suggestions for improving part of this school's program, please state them here. If you need more space, please write on the back of this sheet.

Thank you for your help and cooperation