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# School Transportation in Barren County, Kentucky

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Giles Buford  
1953

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION IN BARREN COUNTY KENTUCKY

BY

GILES BUFORD WILLIAMS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

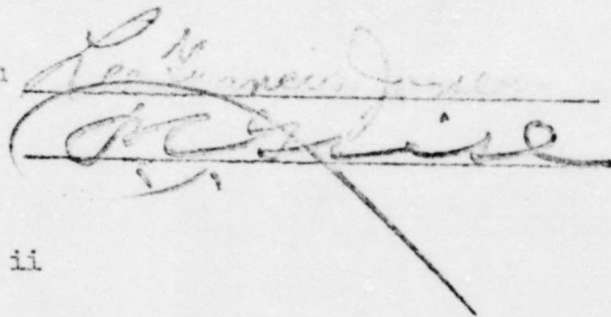
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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of school transportation in Barren County both educationally and financially in order to explain the present problems facing the school system and to seek possible solutions to these problems.

Scope

This study begins with the start of school transportation in 1935 and includes comparisons of other states with Kentucky, and other Kentucky counties with Barren.

Procedure

Much of the information in this study was obtained in the office of the Barren County School Superintendent, Mitchell Davis, who gave close cooperation. Questionnaires were used and the Principals of the four consolidated schools were highly cooperative.

## CHAPTER II

### DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The necessity for transportation of school children began with the establishment of the first school in the United States. This matter of transportation was for many years a private problem and it was not until 1869 that the Legislature of Massachusetts, by passing the first act authorizing taxation for "conveyance of pupils to and from the public school," brought the problem into the responsibilities of the school authorities and the public. However the early methods of transportation were not similar to methods used today. In fact the beginning of present day school transportation, as we think of it now, did not get under way until 1920. Prior to 1920 various and sometimes odd methods of transportation were employed. Among these we find bicycles, horses and mules, horse-drawn vehicles, railroads and steamboats. Many states had legal provisions for several of these methods.<sup>1</sup> Among the more interesting methods was the use of dog sleds, and a cable basket.

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<sup>1</sup> M. C. S. Noble, Jr., "Pupil Transportation in the United States," International Textbook Co., Scranton, Pa., 1940.



Kentucky entered the transportation picture legally in 1912 when the General Assembly empowered boards of education to submit to the voters a tax issue for consolidation and transportation. However, this was enabling legislation and it was not until 1934 that Kentucky required transportation of elementary children living beyond a reasonable walking distance of school.<sup>2</sup> Since this legislation transportation has made tremendous growth in Kentucky and the nation each year. Today the total cost of transportation in Kentucky threatens to upset the entire financial picture. From 1940 to 1950 the percentage of enrolled pupils transported doubled, and the annual total cost of transportation tripled.

Table I shows the relative position of Kentucky's pupil transportation with respect to the nation and selected states similar to Kentucky in agriculture and other economic factors in 1949-50.<sup>3</sup>

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The Project Staff, Federal Project Sponsored by State Department of Education, "A Study of Local School Units in Kentucky," Kentucky Book Mfg. Company, Louisville, Ky., 1937, p. 119.

3

Education Pupil Transportation, Legislative Research Commission, Research Publication No. 28, Frankfort, Ky., Dec. 1951.

TABLE I  
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION IN KENTUCKY COMPARED WITH THE NATION AND SELECTED STATES  
1949-50

	Number Pupils Transported	Annual Cost	Cost Per Pupil	Number of Vehicles		
				Public	Private	Total
North Carolina	405,111	\$4,071,384	\$10.05	5,752	0	5,752
Virginia	272,596	5,141,970	18.39	2,041	811	2,852
Tennessee	252,443	5,136,003	20.35	1,519	1,279	2,798
Kentucky**	189,096	4,016,276	21.25	1,310	1,020	2,330
Georgia	243,754	6,071,185	24.90	1,572	1,731	3,303
Ohio	379,846	9,696,005	25.52	4,909	1,555	6,464
Illinois	161,082	9,227,071	57.28	3,000	1,400	4,400
NATION	6,980,689	204,611,283	29.31	64,020	35,542	115,202*

\*Includes 15,640 unclassified by ownership.

\*\*Increased to 200,398 in 1950-51 at a cost of \$4,451,437.

It will be noted that North Carolina has the lowest annual cost per pupil transported of all the states. It will also be noted that all busses are publicly owned. Furthermore, many high school pupils operate these busses which are operated by the state of North Carolina.\* On the other hand, Illinois has some publicly owned busses but the cost is the highest in the United States. This is partly explained by the small number of pupils transported and by the peculiarity of the school system in maintaining many small elementary and high schools. It will be noted that while Illinois has 40 pupils per bus, North Carolina has 81 pupils per bus.

\*Education Pupil Transportation, op. cit., p. 22.

Immediately after the General Assembly of 1934 passed the requirement for transporting school children, Barren County initiated a transportation program. From an humble beginning with 30 pupils at a total cost of only \$1,312.00 in 1935, this program has grown to 2,269 pupils and required an expenditure of \$55,099.00 in 1951-52. Table II shows the growth by years in the number of children transported and the total annual cost.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Education Pupil Transportation, op. cit., p. 23.

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TABLE II  
PUPILS TRANSPORTED, NUMBER BUSES AND ANNUAL COST 1935-52

Year Ending	Number Pupils Transported	Number Buses	Annual Cost of Transportation (not including new buses)	Cost of New Buses
1935	30	3	\$ 1,312	
1936	85	4	3,731	
1937	328	14	4,913	
1938	370	20	6,541	
1939	412	12	7,220	
1940	477	11	8,878	
1941	509	12	12,088	
1942	626	12	12,232	
1943	677	12	15,261	
1944	606	12	15,385	
1945	663	29	21,268	
1946	1,177	24	26,848	\$7,149
1947	1,609	30	33,101	8,579
1948	1,728	31	39,819	6,695
1949	2,011	35	40,792	3,586
1950	2,030	34	44,703	1,750
1951	2,275	34	42,919	9,500
1952	2,269	38	55,099	

The large increase in 1945 to 1946 was caused by a consolidation program. It will be noted that the number of busses does not increase in the same year that the number of pupils increases. The size of the busses and the definition of the term "bus" has a bearing on this picture. All vehicles used for the regular transportation of school children are regarded as "busses" after 1945, whereas before this date the term was slightly ambiguous.

CHAPTER III  
THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The phenomenal growth in transportation of elementary and high school pupils has resulted in many far-reaching changes in the educational system of Barren County.

Table III shows the elementary enrollment, the number of teachers and the pupil-teacher ratio.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Reports filed in office of County School Superintendent of Barren County, Glasgow, Kentucky. (Annual Statistical).

TABLE III  
 ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND THE PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO  
 1936-1951

YEAR	Hiseville			Park City			Temple Hill		
	Elementary Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Elementary Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Elementary Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
1936	96	2	48	238	5	47	58	2	29
1937	93	2	46	215	5	43	40	2	23
1938	100	3	33	210	5	42	75	2	37
1939	80	3	26	275	5	55	150	4	37
1940	97	3	32	254	6	42	236	5	47
1941	104	3	34	271	6	45	238	6	39
1942	104	3	34	257	6	42	239	6	39
1943	87	3	29	258	6	43	275	7	39
1944	99	3	33	288	7	41	316	8	39
1945	255	7	36	279	7	39	346	8	43
1946	284	7	40	301	7	43	370	8	46
1947	306	6	51	268	6	47	345	7	49
1948	305	6	50	265	7	37	324	7	46
1949	375	8	46	267	7	38	330	8	41
1950	351	8	43	272	7	38	331	8	41
1951	365	9	40	269	7	38	336	8	42

By bringing together larger numbers of elementary pupils in consolidated centers more homogenous grouping has been possible and the pupil-teacher ratio has been increased to a more economical proportion. Temple Hill Consolidated School is an example of the attendance growth in elementary enrollment. The population is less dense in this community than in the other large consolidated centers of Barren County, yet the enrollment increased from 58 with two teachers for eight grades in 1936 to 336 with eight teachers for six grades in 1951. At the same time the pupil-teacher ratio rose from 29 to 42.

The educational opportunities of high school pupils has increased more extensively than the benefits afforded elementary pupils.

Table IV shows high school enrollment by years and the additions to the curriculum of Agriculture, Home Economics and Commercial departments.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reports filed in office of County School Superintendent of Barren County, Glasgow, Kentucky. (High School Organization).



TABLE IV  
HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, ADDITION TO CURRICULUM, AND PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO  
1935-1951

YEAR	Austin-Tracy			Hiseville			Park City			Temple Hill		
	High School Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	High School Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	High School Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	High School Enrollment	Number of Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
1935*	53	3	17	52	3	17	70	4	17	63	3	21
1936*	64	3	21	52	3	17	64	3	21	67	3	22
1937*	49	3	16	43	3	14	63	3	21	87	3	29
1938*	80	3	26	46	3	15	71	3	23	93	4	23
1939*	86	3	28	50	3	16	70	3	23	Home Economics 96	4	24
1940	87	3	29	69	4	17	106	5	21	123	5	24
1941	85	3	28	65	4	16	101	5	20	107	5	21
1942	86	3	28	78	4	19	Home Economics 106	5	21	111	5	22
1943	76	3	25	51	3	17	92	5	18	81	5	16
1944	69	4	17	57	4	14	76	5	15	88	5	17
1945	63	4	15	67	4	17	82	5	16	92	5	18
1946	Agriculture 91	5	18	Agriculture 163**	6	27	Agri., Commerce 173**	8	21	Agriculture 189**	8	23
1947	89	5	18	210	7	30	168	8	21	221	8	27
1948	H.E., Commerce 88**	9	10	Home Economics 204	6	38	168	7	24	219	7	31
1949	210	8	26	Commercial 225	8	28	253	8	31	Commercial 253	8	32
1950	229	9	25	251	9	27	237	9	26	277	9	30
1951	250	9	27	249	9	27	258	9	27	275	9	30

\*Small high schools at Finney - 1937, and Slick Rock 1935-39.

\*\*Seventh and eighth included in high school.

During the past seventeen years twelve vocational departments have been added to the curriculum offered in the four high schools of the Barren County schools. These additions are direct results of the transportation system since additional teachers and vocational subjects cannot be justified with small enrollments.

The extent of the transportation service to the pupils attending Barren County schools is indicated by the increase in the per cent of the school census using school transportation to get to school. In 1935 at the start of the program only six tenths of one per cent of the school census rode to either high or elementary schools in public conveyances while in 1952 over 53 per cent of the school census used this expanded service.

Table V shows the per cent of the school census transported each year since the start of school transportation in Barren County.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Statistical Reports filed in office of Barren County School Superintendent, Glasgow, Kentucky.

TABLE V  
PERCENTAGE OF CENSUS TRANSPORTED 1935-1952

Year	Census	Total Number Transported	Per Cent of Census Transported
1935	5,889	30	.50
1936	6,438	85	1.
1937	6,252	328	5.
1938	6,327	370	5.
1939	6,344	412	6.
1940	5,982	477	7.
1941	5,802	589	10.
1942	5,618	626	11.
1943	5,104	677	13.
1944	5,165	606	12.
1945	4,831	663	14.
1946	4,901	1,177	24.
1947	4,723	1,609	34.
1948	4,567	1,728	37.
1949	4,515	2,011	44.
1950	4,472	2,030	45.
1951	4,367	2,275	52.
1952	4,217	2,269	53.

The steady decline in the census of Barren County is attributed to two major factors:

- 1. A slight migration to cities.
- 2. More efficient census record keeping.

The steady annual increase in the percentage of the census transported is a clear indication of the popularity of the transportation program. The reception by the public and school officials has been enthusiastic. The only objections have come from those represented in the percentage as not transported.

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TABLE VI  
ANNUAL COST OF TRANSPORTATION, LOCAL REVENUE AND PER CENT OF LOCAL REVENUE  
SPENT FOR TRANSPORTATION 1935-1952.

Year	Annual Cost of Transportation Including New Busses	Total Revenue from Local Taxation	Per Cent of Local Revenue Spent for Transportation
1935	\$ 1,312	\$ 31,974	4.1
1936	3,731	30,647	12.1
1937	4,913	30,961	15.8
1938	6,541	31,735	20.6
1939	7,220	46,933	15.3
1940	8,878	44,976	19.7
1941	12,088	48,036	25.1
1942	12,232	47,199	25.9
1943	15,261	54,461	28.
1944	15,385	52,831	28.9
1945	21,268	63,125	33.6
1946	33,997	67,220	50.5
1947	41,980	89,781	46.7
1948	46,514	107,723	43.1
1949	44,378	146,913	30.2
1950	46,453	152,570	30.4
1951	52,419	153,886	34.
1952	55,099	172,502	32.

CHAPTER IV  
THE FINANCIAL IMPACT

Although no additional sources of revenue for the Barren County schools have been provided, the county has continued to provide an ever increasing amount for transportation of elementary and high school pupils. In the school year ending in 1935 Barren County expended only 4.1 per cent of all local revenue for transportation while in 1951 this per cent had increased to 35. According to the findings of the Legislative Research Commission in 1951 the "transportation cost as a percentage of current expenses less salaries" in Barren County was 54.34 per cent.<sup>8</sup> This method eliminates the expenditures of capital outlay for new buildings and other such items that recur annually.

Table VI shows the annual cost of transportation in Barren County since 1935, the total local revenue derived from county school taxes and the per cent spent for transportation.<sup>9</sup>

Table VII shows the annual cost per pupil transported since 1935.

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<sup>8</sup> Education Pupil Transportation, op. cit., Appendix, p. A-2

<sup>9</sup> Annual Financial Reports 1935-1952 on file in office of Barren County School Superintendent, Glasgow, Kentucky.

TABLE VII  
ANNUAL COST PER PUPIL TRANSPORTED 1935-1952

Year Ending	Number Transported	*Transportation Cost	Annual Cost per Pupil
1935	30	\$ 1,312	\$43.73
1936	85	3,731	43.89
1937	328	4,913	14.97
1938	370	6,541	17.69
1939	412	7,220	17.52
1940	477	8,878	18.61
1941	589	12,088	20.52
1942	626	12,232	19.54
1943	677	15,261	22.54
1944	606	15,385	25.38
1945	663	21,268	32.07
1946	1,177	26,848	22.81
1947	1,609	33,401	20.75
1948	1,735	39,819	22.95
1949	2,011	40,792	20.28
1950	2,030	44,703	22.02
1951	2,394	42,919	17.92
1952	2,269	55,099	24.28

\*Excluding cost of new busses.

Beginning with the year 1946 the annual cost per pupil transported has remained somewhat constant. A new method of reporting transportation statistics went into effect about this time. Nineteen hundred forty-six is also the year in which the number transported reached over 1100, almost double the previous year due to a consolidation program.



TABLE VIII  
RANK OF COUNTIES ACCORDING TO THE COST PER PUPIL TRANSPORTED, 1950-1951\*

School District	Cost Per Pupil
Floyd	\$ 7.19
Estill	8.70
Harlan	8.73
Knox	10.91
Jackson	12.12
Pike	12.51
Muhlenberg	13.67
Fayette	13.90
Boyd	14.65
McCracken	15.01
Boyle	15.57
Montgomery	15.59
Campbell	15.74
Laurel	15.95
Leslie	16.84
McCreary	17.08
Russell	17.23
Franklin	17.60
Caldwell	17.63
Clark	17.81
Owsley	17.94
Barron	18.08
Taylor	65.88

\*Legislative Research Commission, Research Pub. # 28.

The cost of transporting elementary and high school children to and from school may be reduced to an "annual cost per pupil transported" basis for comparison purposes. Compared to the 120 counties in Kentucky the annual cost per pupil transported in Barren County was among the lowest 20 per cent in 1950-51. Only twenty one other counties were more economical in expending their funds for transportation. The pupil cost varied from \$7.19 in Floyd County to \$65.88 in Taylor County.<sup>10</sup>

Table VIII shows the number of counties with less cost per pupil than Barren County.

Table IX shows the rank of County School Districts bordering and near Barren County according to annual cost per pupil transported in 1950-51 without considering local factors such as road conditions, scope or thoroughness of the transportation service, degree of consolidation and density of population.

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<sup>10</sup>

Education Pupil Transportation, op. cit. Appendix, p. A-3.

TABLE IX\*  
RANK OF HOUSING COUNTIES ACCORDING TO COST PER PUPIL TRANSPORTED, 1950-1951.

Selected School Districts	Cost Per Pupil
Barren	\$18.08
Todd	19.98
Simpson	21.06
Hardin	22.86
Warren	24.82
Edmonson	26.30
Butler	27.14
Hart	30.18
Allen	33.80
Metcalf	34.09
Cumberland	39.21
Monroe	47.63

\* Legislative Research Commission. Research Pub. # 28.

It may be seen that Barren County has been frugal in the administration of transportation funds. No other surrounding county has a lower annual cost per pupil transported although local conditions are similar to Barren County.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of school transportation in Barren County has followed closely the pattern set by other states and <sup>by the counties</sup> counties of Kentucky. There has been no indication on the part of officials or the public, as shown by the annual increase in service and per cent of census transported, to discourage the transportation of elementary and high school pupils. The movement in general has had full public endorsement. The administration of the transportation system in Barren County has been exceptionally efficient as shown by the county ranking in Table IX. The educational opportunities in vocational instruction have been enhanced by increased enrollment as shown in Table IV.

All of the tables telling the story of transportation show a remarkable similarity in the annual increases of number of busses, per cent of census transported, number of pupils transported, and amount expended annually for transportation. Fluctuation from year to year since 1935 is conspicuous by its absence. In fact the transportation program by its unwavering popularity with the public has been carried to the verge of the extreme. The increase in the financial burden as shown in Table VI to the point of expending approximately one-third of all Local Revenue for transportation has created a severe handicap for other services that seriously need attention.

The grave financial plight of school transportation with its high consumption of local revenue has its foundation in the fact that no new source of revenue has been added for this service since its inception in 1935. The situation has been met merely by diverting funds used for other services to that of transportation. The source of additional funds for transportation is immaterial as far as the immediate problem is involved but the conclusion

is inescapable that an additional source or sources of revenue is imperative if the Barren County school system is to maintain the growth in its transportation services manifest annually since 1935.

In view of these conclusions it is recommended that additional revenue be provided for transportation of elementary and high school pupils in Barren County of such nature as to provide for an annual growth indicated in Table II.

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