

# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

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## LOOKING BACK SEVENTY YEARS

### RECONSTRUCTION STUDIES

The Bureau of University Extension is now mailing out a new bulletin of 57 pages—The State Reconstruction Studies—the North Carolina Club at the University.

It gives to the public the organization of the State Reconstruction Commission, the layout of commission work, the state reconstruction studies of the North Carolina Club, and 40 odd pages of reading references on public health, public education, transportation and communication, home and farm ownership, race relations, public welfare, organized business and life—corporate, cooperative, social and civic problems, state and local. The edition is small, but until it is exhausted, the bulletin will be mailed out free of charge to anybody in North Carolina who wants it and writes for it in one; and for 50 cents postpaid to anybody outside the state.

for public welfare which will be held then. These institutes are to be conducted in conjunction with the Southern Division of the Red Cross, and are planned for the instruction of county superintendents of public welfare, or prospective superintendents, for Red Cross secretaries, and for all other welfare workers who need professional training for their tasks. The courses offered include such subjects as "Rural Social Problems", "Play and Recreation", "Dietetics and Home Economics in the South", "Community Music", and "Physical Education." By undertaking to conduct these institutes the University is taking a significant and important step forward in social work, and one which must show far reaching results wherever welfare workers in the State put the training thus received into effect. — News and Observer.

### PROGRESSIVE GREENVILLE

The town of Greenville, this state, has recently taken a step that some other towns in North Carolina should take. It has provided, by the purchase of a large and handsome residence, a home for its city school teachers. A recent issue of The Greenville Daily Reflector carries an attractive cut of the building, underneath which appears the following:

"This handsome structure was opened up to the teachers of this city last Monday with the re-opening of schools, being purchased independently recently by the school trustees looking to the interest of everything connected with educational development throughout the city. All teachers will board and room in this building at reasonable prices and will not be troubled by shortage of boarding houses as experienced in the past. The movement is considered one of the most progressive in the state, and it is expected many other localities will follow in the pathway blazed in the interest of greater education."

For several years past the management of Gastonia's city schools has, each fall, been up against an almost unsolvable problem in securing places for the teachers. There has been talk for a long time of doing just what Greenville has done but so far it has all been talk. Why not follow Greenville's example and act? —Gastonia Gazette.

### LOOKING BACK 70 YEARS

The seventy years between 1850 and 1920 were marked by significant changes in North Carolina agriculture. A brief table of contrasted details appears elsewhere in this issue.

During this period our population grew from 869 thousand to two and a half million. Against this increase of 188 per cent in population must be reckoned all changes in our agriculture, or we shall miss their significance.

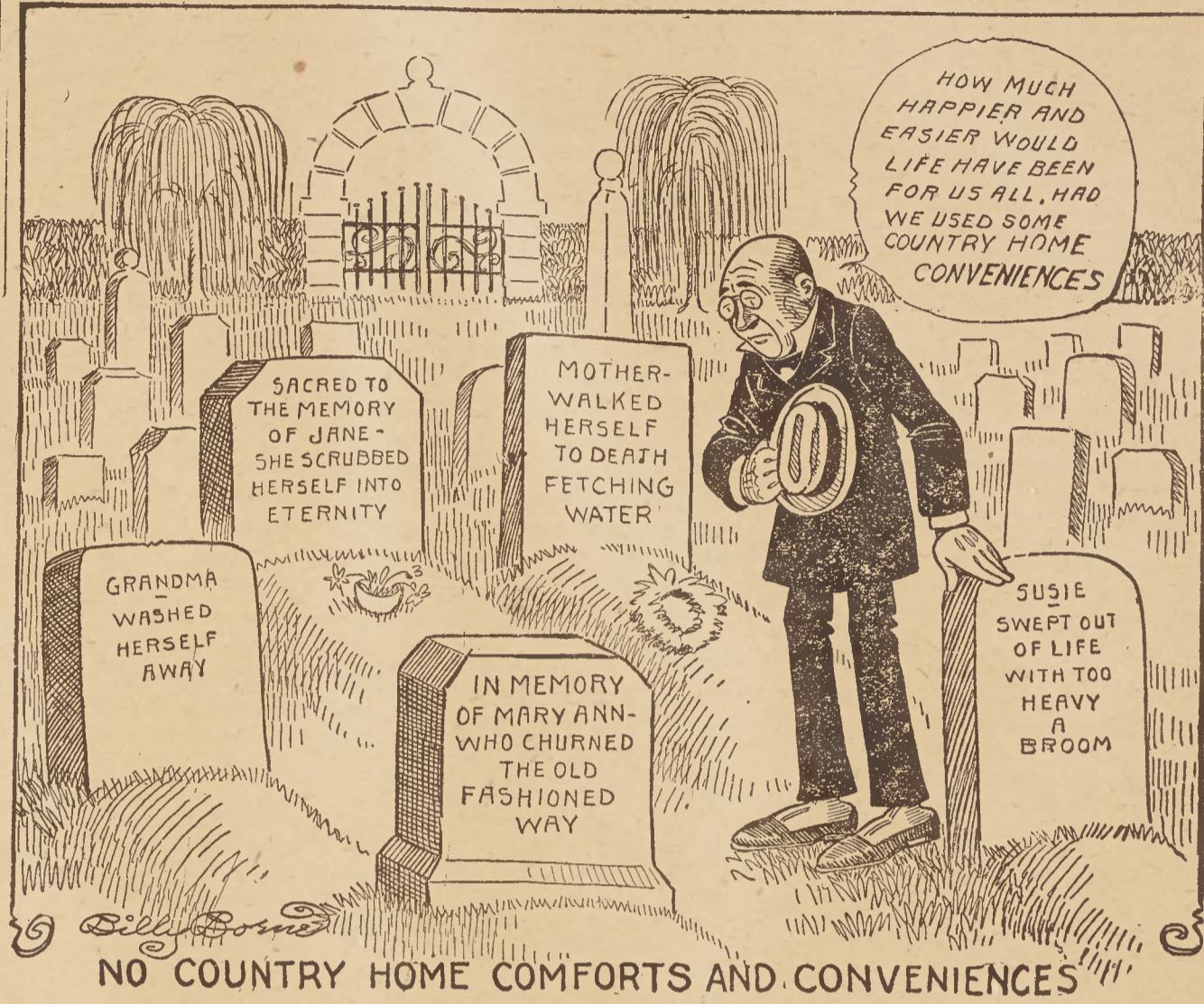
The increase in cultivated acres during these seventy years was only 46 percent. Our crop area last year was a little less than eight million acres and our farm workers numbered 825 thousand. With farm laborers more than quadrupled in number, our farms diminished in average size—from 96 to 29 acres; and the average acres per farm worker dwindled from 32 to 10. These figures indicate a drift out of medium and large scale farming into small scale farming—into intensive cotton and tobacco farming based on a farm-tenancy, supply-merchant, crop-lien, time-credit system.

The conditions that forced this vicious system on North Carolina and the South were deficient cash operating capital, and abundant cheap labor. The consequent economic ills afflicting our agriculture during this period were (1) decreasing attention to food and feed crops, (2) neglect of meat and milk animals, and (3) excessive bills for imported bread and meat supplies. The accompanying social consequences in our country regions were even worse, but we do not stop here to detail them.

The War of 1860-65 forced this farm system on us. We adopted it as a crutch, but in the end we bore it as a cross.

The move out of this type of farming was not pronounced until six-cent cotton in 1914 brought our farmers, merchants, and bankers face to face with bankruptcy, and forced them into a common realization of the necessity for diversified agriculture based on more and better farm animals of all sorts.

It was a hard lesson half learned because the Great War quickly sent cotton



and tobacco prices skyward, and we again went up in the air in the cotton and tobacco belt. The chances are that only the devastations of the boll weevil will bring us down to earth once more.

### Gains in Cash Crops

During these seventy years the gains that really ran ahead of our population increase of 188 percent were (1) cotton, which moved up from 41 thousand to 875 thousand bales, an increase of 2064 percent, (2) tobacco, which moved up from 12 million to 320 million pounds, an increase of 2567 percent, (3) mules which moved up from 25 thousand to 236 thousand, an increase of 844 percent, and (4) wheat which moved up from 2 million to 7 and a quarter million bushels, an increase of 239 percent.

These increases mean that under the pressure of sheer necessity we were concentrating upon ready-money crops under a farm tenancy system. In an area deficient in cash operating capital it was our only chance to keep alive and move ahead slowly toward economic freedom in the cotton and tobacco belt.

The Great War moved the prices of all farm products into high levels where they are likely to remain for six or eight years to come; in short, it established economic freedom for the South as a section in farming, manufacture, trade, and banking. It has taken us a full half-century to recover from a war that impoverished the South as no ally in Europe nor Germany herself was impoverished by the last great war. But at last it becomes clear that we are safely on our feet once more. The South is at last free of economic serfdom.

### Less Home-Raised Food

On the other hand our gains in quantity totals and gross values will not deceive thoughtful students.

For instance, our work animals have increased 140 percent in number since 1850 but the number per farm has fallen from three to one and a half—and the half is frequently in evidence. Which means that our farm values are produced in the main by expensive human labor with primitive hand tools and a minimum of horse and machine power. It is bound to be so in small-scale farming, 10 acres per worker, as in North Carolina; and so far it seems unavoidable in the production of cotton and tobacco which are hand-made crops. A successful cotton-picking machine would be hardly less revolutionary in its effects upon southern agriculture than Whitney's cotton gin was during the last century.

We nearly doubled our corn crop total during these seventy years and more than doubled the per acre yield but in production per inhabitant we fell from 32 to 22 bushels. In 1850 we had corn enough for home consumption and a million bushels or so to sell abroad. In 1920 we shall have some 15 million bushels to buy from the West as food and feed for

man and beast.

In wheat production the state was two-thirds self-feeding in 1850 and so again in 1919. The increase in population considered we have been marking time in wheat farming.

As for milk cows we had an average of more than one for every household in the state in 1850; in 1920 we averaged only one for every two families. The relative decrease is around 50 percent. Our milk animals are greatly improved in quality but their number is greatly decreased when compared with the number of people to be fed.

It is startling to run into the fact that we had fewer cattle other than milk cows in 1920 than we had seventy years ago, fewer by 78,000; and fewer swine, fewer by 221,000; and fewer sheep, fewer by 451,000. When compared with the population to be fed in North Carolina in 1920, these decreases are as follows; milk cows, 50 percent decrease; other cattle, 70 percent decrease; swine, 69 percent decrease; and sheep, 92 percent decrease. Our meat animals are greatly improved in quality but they are greatly decreased in number compared with our population in 1920.

The scarcity of labor in our farm regions, the approaching calamity of the boll weevil, and the apparently permanent high price levels of farm products are the economic causes that will revolutionize our agriculture during the next quarter-century.

It is immensely well worth the while of our merchants and bankers to help the farmer think out this situation sanely, to adjust themselves all together to approaching necessities, to capitalize and cash in the largest possibilities of the new

era, and to do it in generous thoughtfulness of one another, in terms of mutual advantage. The way out lies in collusion, not in collision—in cooperation not in class struggle.

### Bread and Meat Farming

We are not yet producing cotton and tobacco on a bread-and-meat basis, but the wisdom of it is fairly clear to most of our farmers. Their minds have become accustomed to the thought—thanks to the activities of the Federal Farm Extension Service, the State College of Agriculture and Engineering, the State Department of Agriculture, The Progressive Farmer, the Carolina Landowners' Association, and a small number of public-spirited bankers and merchants here and there. Our fifty-two cheese factories, our thirty-one cooperative credit unions, our leadership in soy bean culture, the increase of velvet beans in our corn fields, the increasing acreage in winter cover crops, the improvement in breeds of dairy herds, swine and poultry, and the gains in truck farming and orcharding are directly due to these invaluable agencies.

But we are yet a long way from being a self-feeding farm civilization. We have yet to learn that the first business of a farm is to feed the farmer, the farmer's family and the farm animals; that in order to be truly self-directing it is necessary for farmers to be self-financing, and that in order for farmers to be self-financing they must be self-feeding.

Cotton and tobacco produced on a bread-and-meat basis would make North Carolina rich beyond the wildest dreams of avarice; and would do it in a single decade. But we are not likely to learn this lesson with cotton averaging around forty cents and tobacco fifty-two plus.

## CAROLINA AGRICULTURE: 1850-1920

Based on the 1850 Census and the 1920 Reports of the Federal Bureau of Crop Estimates

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SOCIAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Crops Produced	1850		1919		Increase, 188 per cent.
	1850	1919	1850	1919	
Population in 1850 was 869,000. In 1919 it was 2,500,000.					
Cotton, bales	40,436	875,000			2064
Tobacco, pounds	12,005,000	320,000,000			2567
Corn, bushels	28,000,000	55,100,000			97
Wheat, bushels	2,130,000	7,225,000			239
Oats, bushels	4,052,000	3,767,000			- 7
Potatoes, both kinds	5,716,000	14,800,000			159
Farm Animals					
Horses	149,000	183,000			23
Mules	25,000	236,000			844
Milk cows	222,000	328,000			48
Other cattle	472,000	394,000			- 17
Swine	1,813,000	1,592,000			- 12
Sheep	595,000	144,000			- 76
Land and Labor					
Improved acres	5,454,000	8,000,000			46
Number of farms	57,000	275,000			382
Improved acres per farm	96	29			- 70
Improved acres per farm worker	32	10			- 70

### BROADENING ACTIVITIES

More and more the University is manifesting recognition of the fact that its ties extend not merely to the cultural education of its students, but to the social education of all the people of North Carolina as well. It is giving fine evidence of a broader conception of what the functions of a state university should be, and its responsibility in promoting the general public welfare of the State. The University is one of the most helpful agencies in keeping the life of North Carolina abreast of the times, because it is abreast of the times itself. Its Extension Bureau with its excellent publication, the News Letter, devoted to community service, shows that, as do the North Carolina Club and its studies in state reconstruction, and the newly established University News Bureau, the object of which is to keep the people of the State informed as to what the University is doing. These activities are only a few indications of the new spirit of public service which has pervaded the University.

But nothing shows this spirit more clearly than the special feature of the approaching summer school, the institutes