

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

The news in this publication is released for the press on receipt.

Published weekly by the University of North Carolina for its Bureau of Extension.

FEBRUARY 23, 1921

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.

VOL. VII, NO. 14

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt.

Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

RICH IN AUTOS, POOR IN SCHOOLS

RICH IN MOTOR CARS

One hundred and forty million dollars invested in automobiles in North Carolina.

Our wealth in motor cars is almost exactly half the capital invested in the railroads of the state.

It is nearly five times the sum we have invested in the church buildings of our fifty-two religious denominations.

It is almost exactly six times the amount we have invested in public school property for both races, town and country.

It is ten times the value of our thirty-one college properties public and private, church and state.

It is more than twice the value of the public school houses, church buildings, and college properties of North Carolina all put together.

Our churches and schools are the slow growth of two hundred and fifty years. Our automobile wealth is the swift accumulation of a single decade.

We invest in motor cars with eager right hands. We invest in vital commonwealth causes with reluctant left hands—or apparently so.

Our motor car wealth averages \$54 per inhabitant counting men, women, and children of both races.

Our church property averages \$11.50 per inhabitant, our public school property \$9.40 per inhabitant, and our investment in thirty-one college properties, church and state, \$5.70 per inhabitant.

We believe in public schools, church causes, and college education—or say we do, but our faith in automobiles is stronger—nearly two and a half times stronger.

We believe in motor cars in North Carolina—no doubt about that. But we doubt the durability of a Tin Lizzie civilization.

Now, we perfectly understand that passenger cars, motor trucks, and tractors are necessities as well as luxuries in modern life. But if ever we come to believe as strongly in brain power as in gas engine power, as strongly in culture and character as in gasoline and lubricating oil, the Old North State will quickly lead America in public education, public health, public highways, and public welfare.

There is both accusation and condemnation in the following table of investments in North Carolina in this year of our Lord, 1921:

1. Automobiles..... \$140,000,000
2. Church buildings..... 30,441,000
3. Public school houses..... 24,059,000
4. College properties..... 14,008,000

And, mind you, these figures come straight from (1) the Secretary of State who licenses motor cars, (2) the last Federal Census of Religious Bodies, (3) the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and (4) the college authorities themselves.

If we are deliberately minded to fashion a topsy-turvy civilization here in North Carolina we are set about it in exactly the right way. The present order of things is witless, and our sense of final values needs to be immensely quickened and thoroughly revised. We cannot build a noble commonwealth in this wise.

\$114,000,000 a Year

But even more amazing is the annual cost of keeping our motor cars in commission. It takes a vast sum of money to keep 140,000 motor cars going in good order at full speed. It called for some sixty-seven million dollars in North Carolina in 1920. And this total is figured according to the formula of The Railway Age; but with almost every detail less than the average for the country-at-large.

Depreciation, 20 percent of \$140,000,000.....	\$28,000,000
Interest on investment, at 6 percent.....	8,400,000
Gasoline, 20 gal. a month per car, at 30c a gal.....	10,080,000
Lubricating oil, 8 gal. a yr. per car, at \$1.25 a gal....	1,400,000
Tires, 4 a year per car, at \$20 each.....	11,200,000
State license fees.....	1,776,000
Insurance, 70,000 cars at \$72 each.....	5,040,000

Labor cost of repairs, at \$10 each.....	1,400,000
Total.....	\$67,296,000

And sixty-seven millions is a minimum figure. It leaves out the cost of motor car accessories and parts used in repairs, losses not covered by insurance, garage storage and service charges, chauffeur hire, repainting, varnishing, and upholstering, etc.

They amount to millions a year, of course, but they are omitted in this exhibit for lack of authoritative data.

Now add to these 67 millions the 47 millions we spent last year for new automobiles and automobile parts, and you have the startling total of 114 million dollars spent by the people of this state on automobile account in 1920.

It is a rich people that can afford to invest 140 millions in motor cars and another 114 millions a year to keep them going!

And if we balk at state bond issues in millions for public highways, state colleges, and state hospitals for the insane, epileptic and feeble-minded, for the blind, deaf and crippled, the neglected and wayward, then we stand convicted of big-scale spending for private indulgences and small-scale spending for noble state enterprises.

A Bill of Indictment

Here is the way we spent money in North Carolina last year, and the table that follows is a bill of indictment against us, as matters are at present.

Automobile upkeep.....	\$67,000,000
New automobiles and parts..	47,000,000
Manufactured tobacco products.....	50,000,000
Carpets and luxurious clothing.....	35,000,000
Candy.....	25,000,000
Public school support.....	12,000,000
State government.....	7,000,000
Church support.....	6,000,000
College education, church and state.....	2,500,000
State benevolent institutions	1,446,000
State college support.....	730,850

No guesses here. These figures are based on the very latest reports of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Federal Treasury, the State Tax Commission, the Federal Census of Religious Bodies, and the authorities of our thirty-one colleges, state and church.

Wrong End Foremost

Reduced to expenditures per inhabitant, they mean that for every \$45 we spend to keep our motor cars going, we spend \$5.30 to keep our public schools going, \$2.65 to keep our churches going, 92 cents to keep our thirty-one colleges going, 64 cents to keep our state hospitals going, and 33 cents to keep our nine state colleges alive.

What a curious sense of values! Dollars for automobiles, tobacco, rich apparel, and candy! Dimes for public schools! Still fewer dimes for churches! And just a few cents for college education!

If we are wise we will right-about-face in a hurry and set our civilization right-side-up. At present it is clearly up-side-down.

If we are incurably childish, we will drift along in graceless self-indulgence. But let us remember that both the state and the church are imperiled by selfish self-indulgence and tight-fisted citizenship.

What a man does with his money is significant.

If he hoards it and starves himself and his family, he's a miser. If he earns it diligently, saves it prudently, and spends it wisely, he's thrifty. If he throws it away like a drunken sailor, he's a spendthrift. If he is diligent in business serving himself alone, he's a tick-and-flea citizen. That is to say, he's interested in the commonwealth he lives in exactly as ticks and fleas are interested in the animal they live on. And rich or poor, if he indulges himself generously and supports his community and his church stingily, he is apt to think in two-penny ways about commonwealth enterprises.

What we do with our money in North Carolina is significant. At present it goes in millions for personal indulgences, and in midget sums for public necessities. Does anybody know of any surer way of building a pagan civilization here in North Carolina?

THE GOVERNOR'S LOOK AHEAD

The program I have suggested does not contain new or revolutionary ideas calculated to excite wild enthusiasm, but in my judgment, it is a program which, if carried out, would make North Carolina the fairest and noblest habitation for men, women and children to be found upon the earth. Its adoption in completeness and fullness will require political courage of a high order. I appeal to the progressive men and women of the state to come together upon this program, agree to details and plans, and courageously proceed to write it into the law.

The reactionary will whimper to the timid that this is a bad time to expend much money because of the depressed condition of our whole business life, but North Carolina is still rich enough to take humane care of its defectives and unfortunate, to guard itself as far as an enlightened knowledge of preventive medicine will enable it to against sickness and suffering, to provide adequate schools for the training and education of its children, to build a system of roads suggested by sound business, and to do all other things reasonably necessary in the discharge of the high duties of a great state.

Bonds for Vital Causes

If we were willing to bear a tax burden of \$2.95 a year per inhabitant for thirty-six years for public highways and public schools, state colleges, and state institutions of benevolence—if year by year for a single generation we were willing to spend one-tenth as much for vital state causes as we spent last year on motor cars alone, then the people of this state would quickly move up out of the mud and at the same time lift out of the mire our state hospitals and state colleges. Good roads are fundamental and for lack of them, churches and schools, trade and banking languish in sixty-eight counties of this state.

Two dollars and ninety-five cents a year per inhabitant would pay the annual interest on one hundred and twenty-five millions of five-percent bonds and settle the debt in thirty-six years. These figures, by the way, are based on the amortization tables of the Federal Bureau of Markets, and they are correct. These bonds could be issued in series, as fast as the money is actually needed for construction purposes, and they could be sold at par—not today perhaps but tomorrow certainly when money markets are easier.

They could be applied as follows:
Public highways.....\$99,000,000
State colleges.....14,500,000
Public school loan fund.....6,000,000
State hospitals.....5,500,000
Total.....\$125,000,000

Reduced to a rate, it would mean a levy of three mills on the ad valorem taxables of the state, or thirty cents on the hundred dollars of property. A rate of this sort would mean a dollar and a half a year for a taxpayer with five hundred dollars on the tax list. And mind you, right around one-half the taxpayers of the state, or fifty-one percent of them all, have less than five hundred dollars on the tax books. So it was or thereabout in 1917. With three hundred dollars of personal property exempt—household furnishings, farm tools, mechanics' instruments, wearing apparel, and the like—this ratio of small taxpayers in 1920 ran away beyond fifty-one percent. Nearly nine-tenths, or eighty-nine percent, of this tax would fall on taxpayers with more than one thousand dollars on the tax books.

For a discussion of Who Pays Taxes in North Carolina, see chapter six of Essays at Citizenship, The University Record No. 151. If you cannot credit these figures, examine and analyze the tax list in your home county, no matter where it is located in North Carolina.

Two dollars and ninety-five cents a year per inhabitant for public highways, public schools, state colleges and state hospitals, looks like a whale of a sum. But it is a trifle when the circus or street carnival squats in our neighborhood, or when the car needs a new tire, or when the family wants a picture-show spree or two.

And one hundred and twenty-five mil-

lion dollars looks like a whale of a sum, even when spread over thirty-six years. But we spend one hundred and fourteen million dollars in a single year on automobile account, and another hundred millions on tobacco, candy, and fine apparel, and we do it without batting an eyelid.

People that can do these things are not poor. They are rich. They are rich in self-indulgence. And they need to be rich in state enterprises.

How The Counties Rank

How much we think of motor cars on the one hand and public schools on the other appears county by county in the deadly parallel columns prepared by Mr. L. deR. McMillan of Wilmington and published elsewhere in this issue.

In the state at large our motor car investment is almost exactly six times the value of our public school properties. In ninety-one counties of the state more money per inhabitant is invested in motor cars than in schools, in ratios ranging from one to one in Clay, on up to twenty-five to one in Alexander. Alexander's faith in automobiles is superb.

Eight counties have greater per capita wealth in school buildings than in motor cars. They are mountain and foot-hill counties, with relatively very little money invested in either schools or automobiles—with one inspiring exception, Transylvania.

Fifty-four dollars per inhabitant is what we have invested in automobiles in the state at large, the averages ranging from one dollar per inhabitant in Mitchell and Graham to ninety-nine dollars in Greene and one hundred and six dollars in Scotland. These two counties head the list in motor car property, and both are rural counties.

But in school property our investment is another story. It is only nine dollars per inhabitant the state over, and the averages range from two dollars in Al-

exander and Brunswick, three dollars in Ashe, Chatham, and Clay, to twenty-two dollars per inhabitant in Buncombe and twenty-four dollars in Transylvania. These two counties head the list in per capita public-school investments.

Scotland stands first in automobiles but twelfth in schools. Greene stands second in automobiles but eighty-fifth in schools. Pitt stands third in automobiles, but forty-fourth in schools.

Amazing investments in motor cars—amazingly large! side by side with amazing investments in public-school property—amazingly small!

The people of this state ought to know the facts in every home county.

Mr. McMillan's table for the first time gives the people of North Carolina a chance to look themselves straight in the face and decide once for all, county by county, whether or not they are setting gas-engine power above brain-power, culture, and character.

There is a great future for any county that leads in public spirit—for counties like Lenoir with two million dollars invested in good roads, or Guilford with two millions voted for good roads and sixteen hundred thousands more for schools when other counties are crying hard times and bankruptcy, or Forsyth with nearly a million going into new school buildings, or New Hanover with a new half million dollar high school building nearing completion, or Transylvania and Buncombe which far and away lead the state in per capita investment in public school property. And by the way, the new school building at Roanoke Rapids and at Elizabeth City will each cost more than twice as much as any building on the University campus.

But what is the outlook for a county like Alexander with \$52 per inhabitant in automobiles against \$2 in school property, or for Greene with \$99 in automobiles against \$4 per inhabitant in public school buildings and equipments?

MOTOR CARS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Investments per Inhabitant in each on Dec. 30, 1920

Based on Reports of the Secretary of State and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Public school property, state total \$24,000,000 in 1920, or \$9 per inhabitant.

Private motor car property, state total \$140,000,000, or \$54 per inhabitant.

L. deR. McMillan, Wilmington, N. C.

Department of Rural Social Science, University of North Carolina.

Rank	County	Per cap. autos	Per cap. schools	Rank	County	Per cap. autos	Per cap. schools
1	Scotland.....	\$106	\$14	49	Beaufort.....	\$53	\$9
2	Greene.....	99	4	49	Craven.....	53	12
3	Pitt.....	89	8	53	Durham.....	52	17
4	Wilson.....	84	10	53	Chowan.....	52	14
5	Guilford.....	83	11	53	Franklin.....	52	6
6	Davidson.....	82	5	53	Buncombe.....	52	22
7	Edgecombe.....	79	8	57	Alexander.....	50	2
8	Nash.....	77	10	57	Union.....	50	5
9	Lincoln.....	73	6	57	Jones.....	50	6
9	Rowan.....	73	7	60	Warren.....	49	9
11	Hoke.....	72	18	61	Halifax.....	48	8
12	Wake.....	71	12	62	Person.....	47	5
12	Johnston.....	71	7	63	Perquimans.....	46	8
14	Mecklenburg.....	69	9	63	Orange.....	46	7
15	Lenoir.....	68	20	65	Chatham.....	44	3
15	Martin.....	68	8	65	Northampton.....	44	6
17	Catawba.....	66	7	65	Henderson.....	44	9
18	Wayne.....	65	14	68	Gates.....	43	5
18	Forsyth.....	65	9	68	Rutherford.....	43	7
20	Richmond.....	64	9	70	Tyrrell.....	42	4
20	Cabarrus.....	64	9	71	Columbus.....	37	6
20	Gaston.....	64	13	71	Camden.....	37	8
23	Moore.....	63	11	73	Onslow.....	36	8
23	Lee.....	63	9	74	Bladen.....	35	4
23	Iredell.....	63	13	74	Caldwell.....	35	5
26	Randolph.....	62	5	76	Pender.....	34	4
27	New Hanover.....	61	17	77	Pamlico.....	30	17
27	Cleveland.....	61	7	78	Carteret.....	27	16
27	Yadkin.....	61	4	79	Haywood.....	26	6
27	Surry.....	61	7	80	Transylvania.....	23	24
31	Alamance.....	60	11	80	Polk.....	23	4
31	Pasquotank.....	60	8	82	Burke.....	22	5
33	Rockingham.....	59	7	82	Wilkes.....	22	6
33	Robeson.....	59	11	82	Watauga.....	22	6
35	Bertie.....	58	8	85	Brunswick.....	21	2
35	Stanly.....	58	12	86	Hyde.....	20	7
35	Granville.....	58	10	86	Alleghany.....	20	9
35	Vance.....	58	10	88	McDowell.....	18	21
39	Sampson.....	56	6	89	Madison.....	11	9
40	Currituck.....	55	12	90	Jackson.....	10	12
40	Duplin.....	55	18	90	Cherokee.....	10	12
40	Hertford.....	55	6	92	Avery.....	9	8
40	Montgomery.....	55	14	93	Swain.....	8	6
40	Davie.....	55	6	93	Macon.....	8	6
40	Anson.....	55	6	95	Ashe.....	6	3
40	Harnett.....	55	9	96	Yancey.....	3	4
47	Caswell.....	54	2	96	Clay.....	3	3
47	Cumberland.....	54	8	96	Dare.....	3	4
49	Stokes.....	53	4	99	Mitchell.....	1	4
49	Washington.....	53	15	99	Graham.....	1	5