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THE SMALL TOWNS OF CAROLINA

LITTLE CAROLINA TOWNS

The bare facts about the little country towns of North Carolina are: They are little places with fewer than 2500 inhabitants, which is the census bureau definition of a city.

They are 413 in number, averaging six hundred inhabitants, and with a total population of 241,000. Which is to say, our small-town population is a little less than a tenth of the total population of the state.

We now have fifty-five cities ranging from 2500 to 50,000 inhabitants, with a total population of 490,000. Which is to say, our small-town population is around one-tenth of the state total, our city dwellers two-tenths, and our open country population seven-tenths.

These classes of population increased during the last ten years as follows: (1) country dwellers 180,000 or only nine percent, (2) city dwellers, 181,000 or fifty-seven percent, and (3) small-town dwellers, 21,000 or only nine percent.

The Odds Against Them

Our small-towns increased at an average rate of only five inhabitants apiece per year during the last census period, which indicates that they are not growing vigorously.

But worse than that, ninety-three of them actually decreased in population. Like Sambo's catfish they swunk in size during the last census period.

But still worse, forty more of these little places decreased so decidedly that they surrendered their town charters and faded from the map.

In other words, 133 or almost exactly a third of our little towns suffered population losses—which means smaller business for stores and banks, smaller chances to sell town lots at a profit, more empty houses and smaller rent revenues. In the United States as a whole nearly one of every two small towns decreases in population and disappears every ten years.

In North Carolina a little country-town has two chances in its favor and one against; in the United States, the odds are almost exactly even. The small town everywhere has a dwindling chance to survive and develop.

The explanation lies in the fact that in the increasing cityward drift of country populations migrating country dwellers go over the little country towns like sheep over a low gap in a fence.

All of which spells the doom of drowsy little towns during the next ten years; of the dull little places that are half-awake, half-asleep, half-alive, half-dead.

Small-Town Defenses

They must either bestir themselves to become choice residence centers or lively industrial centers; or small town dwellers will be wise to move at once into more progressive places. No man can afford to do business and to rear a family in a dead town.

But the only place he can afford to move into, small or large, is a choice residence center. Trade, banking, and manufacture can easily make a city big, but they are no guarantee of its being great.

A city is really great when it is the best possible place to live in and to rear children in—which means, the best schools and churches, the best libraries, the best attention to sanitation and health, the wholesomest recreation and the highest morality, the most neighborly and the freest from gossip, feuds and factions, the keenest sense of civic and social responsibility and the best conditions of law and order, the best market facilities and the most generous concern about progress and prosperity in the surrounding trade area.

Our little towns are doomed—one out of every three in every decade—unless they can learn to function properly in democratic fashion. And they must learn this lesson in sheer self-defense.

HOW PROSPERITY COMES

Prosperity in business depends upon the good faith and righteousness of the man, in the estimation of Roger W. Babson, head of the Babson Statistical Bureau of New York. In a recent address he told how, in examining the statistics of business changes, he tried

to find the underlying causes, of depression and of prosperity.

He said: "A period of depression is the result of unrighteousness, dishonesty, extravagance, and inefficiency which develop in the latter half of a period of prosperity; and secondly, a period of prosperity is a reaction from the righteousness, industry, integrity and thrift which develop in the latter half of a period of depression."

He further said: "It is not railroads, steamships, or factories which bring prosperity; it is not bank clearings, foreign trade, or commodity prices which give us good business. All these things are mere thermometers that register the temperature of the nation. Prosperity is based on those fundamental qualities of faith, temperance, service, and thrift, which are the products of religion. The fundamentals of prosperity are the Ten Commandments.—Exchange.

TEN TESTS OF A TOWN

Questions that people ask about your town before they decide to make it their town:

1. Attractiveness: Shall I like the town—its atmosphere? Does it have the beauty of shaded streets and other beautiful features? Is it a quiet, roomy, airy, well lighted town? Does it have attractive public buildings and homes? Is it well paved? Is it clean in every sense?

2. Healthfulness: Will my family and I have a reasonable chance to keep well in that town? How about its water supply? Its sanitary system? Its methods of milk inspection? Its health department? Its hospitals? Is it without any congested district?

3. Education: Can I educate my family and myself in that town? How about its public schools—present and future? Its institutions of higher education or of business training? Its libraries? Its lecture and concert courses? Its newspapers? Its postal facilities?

4. People: Shall I like the people of the town? Are they "home folks" without false exclusiveness? Are they neighborly and friendly? Is the town free from factionalism?

5. Recreation: Can I have a good time in that town—I and my family? How about the theaters, museums, gymnasiums, parks, etc.? Are inviting opportunities for pleasure drives afforded by well paved streets?

6. Living: Can we live reasonably and well in that town? Are the best of modern conveniences available for its residents—electricity, gas, telephone, etc.? Are the housing and shopping conditions favorable? Rents, taxes, and prices fair? Hotels good? Home and truck gardens and dairy products plentiful?

7. Accessibility: Can we go and come easily? Does the town have adequate railroad connections and train service? Street car lines? Interurban lines? Well marked automobile routes and hard surface roads?

8. Business: Can I make good use of capital in that town? Are there banking facilities? Manufacturing interests? Up-to-date stores? Good shipping facilities? Favorable labor conditions? A prosperous farming territory? Active cooperation among business interests?

9. Employment: Can I get a job in that town at fair pay and with good prospects for the future? Can I count on cooperation from organizations making it their business to help introduce and establish new commercial interests and to welcome new citizens?

10. Progressiveness: Shall I find that I am in a town having a progressive city government, active civic organization, modern fire protection, and a pull-together spirit in everything—a town with future?—L. N. Flint, Department of Journalism, University of Kansas.

BUILDING A COUNTRY TOWN

The complaints most commonly made against country towns are these: (1) Lack of business opportunity; (2) lack of social life, educational advantages and pleasant entertainments.

The way to win business success in any line, is to render superior service. Many boards of trade, banks, and other

DROWSY LITTLE TOWNS

The cityward drift spells the doom of drowsy little towns lacking civic pride and enterprise sufficient to develop superior residential advantages. When country people move they go with a hop-skip-and-jump over dull little towns into census-size cities—in this and every other state.

As a result ninety-three of our little towns dwindled in population during the last ten years, and forty more faded from the map. The lesson the 1920 census reads to small town capitalists who own building lots, enjoy rent revenues, sell merchandise, and operate banks is: Make your home town the best place on earth to live in, develop local manufactures set in garden cities, or move in self-defense into progressive centers, or reconcile yourselves to stagnant community life with all its menaces to family integrity and business opportunity.

If the 413 little country towns of North Carolina can be brought into right relationships with the surrounding trade areas—as for instance in Garnett, Kansas—they will not only save themselves, but also the country regions round about. The small-town approach to country life problems is a hopeful approach, if only country bankers, country merchants and country ministers can be brought to realize it.—E. C. Branson.

organizations, are promoting local prosperity by inducing the farmers to select some specialty to be worked up in that neighborhood, like poultry, fruit raising or some special breed of live stock.

They will unite in sending some bright fellow away to an agricultural school, where he will learn everything they can teach him on that specialty. Then he is engaged to return and spend a large part of his time going around among the farmers coaching them on that line. In a few years the town will be turning out a superior product of that specialty, and developing it on a very profitable basis.

A bank man in an Arkansas town tells how his institution helped the boys of the town get into pig raising. One boy to whom the bank lent \$50.00, in three years had \$2500.00 worth of hogs. You can easily see how a town would go ahead, if its enterprises were being pushed in this way.

Any country town can have entertainments and social life if it wants them. Its people can see the same movie films that they have in big cities. Every country town should have its orchestra, its dramatic club, its well chaperoned dances. These activities will keep a lot of restless young folks contented. Lecturers and musicians can be secured from nearby cities.

All it takes is a little pep and initiative to push these things along. With some of these advantages, a country town is an ideal place to live in. It is in touch with the wide world, yet has all the beauty and the neighborliness of rural life.—Exchange.

THE ST. PAULS LEAGUE

The churches and ministers of St. Pauls are working together in comfortable comradeship to make their little home town the best place on earth to live in—a kind of cooperative effort that ought to be made in all our 413 little towns in North Carolina.

The organization details of this enterprise follow:

The name of this organization shall be The Community Service League of St. Pauls, N. C.

Its purpose shall be to promote the observance and enforcement of law and order, health and sanitation, social life, industrial development, and all forms of civic and social welfare.

The membership shall consist of all persons, male and female, who shall

COUNTRY HOME CONVENIENCES

LETTER SERIES No. 51
SOME LEGAL FACTS

We have had several inquiries of late in regard to the general question of rights. The following from the Farmer's Business Handbook by Roberts gives a general idea of the subject.

Water Rights

In many localities the value of water is such that special laws have been framed and passed regulating water rights. In general, however, it is the law that the riparian owner—that is, the one whose lands are bounded or crossed by a stream—has the right to the use of the water of that stream for all domestic or farm purposes, or other reasonable purposes, as turning a mill, and the like, and that no man may so divert the water from the stream as to interfere with that right.

It is impracticable here to go into the matter of the rights of mill-owners. For our purpose it is sufficient to say that, beginning at the source of the stream, each riparian owner, in his turn, has the right to the use of the water for domestic purposes. He must not divert it or pollute it or interfere with it in any way except to take what is necessary for his reasonable needs, nor may he materially interfere with the natural flow. No person has a right to divert any water by sluice, ditch or otherwise from its natural channel to the damage of another; and, if he does,

pledge themselves to promote by their example, influence and service, the purpose of this League.

The officers shall be a President, a Vice-President, and a Secretary-Treasurer, to be elected at the first meeting of each year.

These officers together with the chairmen of all permanent committees, shall constitute an Executive Committee, with full power, between the meetings of the League, to act in carrying out the purposes of the organization; and a majority of the committee shall be a quorum.

Permanent Committees on Law Enforcement, Health and Sanitation, Town Improvement, Industrial Development, Recreation, Local Relief, Community Organization, Co-operation with Negroes, Nominations, and others as needed, shall be elected, their terms to expire with the first meeting of each year.

The regular meetings of the League shall be held on the first Wednesday after the first Sunday evening of each year.

Twenty members of the League shall constitute a quorum.

The Constitution or By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular meeting.

All money needed to carry on the work shall be raised by collections or voluntary contributions.

The duties of the Permanent Committees shall be to promote the purposes of the League in the various departments of civic and social welfare, and to cooperate with all other organizations working along the same lines.

Law Enforcement: to create public sentiment for civic righteousness, organize community forces, and cooperate with county and town officials in discovering and prosecuting violation of law.

Health and Sanitation: to cooperate with state and county Boards of Health and local organizations, to inspect schools, stores, streets and all premises; to report unsanitary conditions, and encourage improvements.

Town Improvements: to study and recommend to the League and Town Council methods for beautifying the streets and all premises; and to cooperate with other organizations in whatever may make for the improvement of the business and residential sections and mill villages.

Industrial Development: to promote a newspaper and other mediums of publicity; and to cooperate with all business organizations in whatever may advance the material interests of the community.

Recreation: to promote a Chautauqua and entertainments by local musical and literary talent; athletic organiza-

he is liable for all damage caused by such diversion, except that one may change the channel of a stream upon his own land if he returns it again to its channel so as not to affect the flow on another's land; and one may withhold a reasonable amount of water from a stream permanently, but must not withhold so much as to materially reduce the flow below, though it has been held, and rightly so, that one may use all the water of a stream or spring necessary for his ordinary wants, such as drinking, cooking, washing, and for stock, even though it leave none for the lower proprietor.

Drainage

In case a person has wet lands in his farm, it is very generally provided that he may bring a proceeding to authorize the construction of a ditch across any adjoining lands, for the purpose of draining the wet places. The proceedings in such a case are quite technical, and a lawyer should be consulted before any steps whatever are taken. It has been held, in some states, that this proceeding constitutes a taking of private property for private use, and is therefore unconstitutional; but as a general rule some way can be found to force a ditch or drain across the adjoining lands, and the benefit is often so great that the matter is well worth investigating.

tions and games; community picnics; town or school library; public park and playgrounds; community house or hall and public rest-room; Boy Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls.

Local Relief: cooperate with the Churches and Red Cross in relief of poverty, sickness and distress.

Community Organizations: to organize a Central Council of all civic and social organizations, and to coordinate their activities.

Cooperation with Negroes: to promote organizations among negroes for community welfare, and to cooperate with them.

Nominations: to nominate all officers and committees at times for regular elections or whenever vacancies occur.

THE ATTRACTIVE TOWN

Economy is a good thing in municipal affairs, but you can carry it too far. Many public officials say that beauty is a luxury and it can't be afforded. Yet people who go on that theory in handling their own places are not apt to see their real estate advance in value much. It is the same in developing a city.

It has become a settled policy in many advancing towns, to try to persuade every householder to plant shrubs and trees and give each home a restful setting of foliage. Trees are planted when streets are laid out so that when houses are built the neighborhood seems homelike.

Vacant land in the outskirts is taken for parks. If taxes can't be afforded to improve it, community work days are held and the people take hold and make it a scene of beauty. Unused corners at street intersections are made into little nests of greenery. When buildings are put up, good standards of taste are consulted.

If a town will carry out such a policy for a number of years, it will acquire a charm far more attractive than a costly edifice. It would gain a reputation as a home of progressive and refined people, who have travelled enough to know what a fine modern town looks like. Almost anyone would pay a premium to live in a place like that.—Hillsboro Enterprise.

LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE

The University of North Carolina has won an enviable leadership in state-wide service to all classes of citizens. The community studies begun by the University have been developed by various State departments; and the State Board of Public Welfare has worked out a plan of State organization which cannot be excelled in America. A system as closely woven as that of the public schools will eventually cover the State, promoting the welfare of all classes of both races. The State Conference on Public Welfare calls for the same provision for delinquent negro boys and girls as for white; for vocational training for both races; and for increased care and training for unadjusted white and negro children, that no child of either race may lack the chance to make good as a member of society.—Christian Recorder.