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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
NEWS LETTER

Published Weekly by the University of North Carolina for its University Extension Division.

JULY 13, 1921

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.

VOL. VII, NO. 34

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FARMS IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1920

INCREASES AND DECREASES

Elsewhere in this issue of the News Letter will be found a table ranking the counties of North Carolina from high to low according to percents of increase in farms during the last census period. Edgecombe made the best showing, with a gain of 31.1 percent, while Dare, a Tidewater county where there is little farming, foots the list with a loss of 43.4 percent of the farms she had in 1910. During this ten-year period fifty-nine counties increased in farms, all the way from Edgecombe with 31.1 percent to Stokes with only four-tenths of one percent. In addition, the area formerly occupied by Cumberland and Robeson counties, but now comprising Cumberland, Robeson, and Hoke, increased its farms 12.6 percent. So actually 62 counties gained in the number of farms.

Thirty-Eight Lose

During the same period thirty-four counties and the area formerly occupied by Watauga, Caldwell, and Mitchell, but now comprising Watauga, Caldwell, Mitchell, and the new county of Avery, or a total of 38 counties, lost farms. In the area occupied by these 38 counties farming is losing out or making little headway. Many of these same counties actually lost population during the last decade. These counties, for the most part, lie in areas of social and economic stagnation. They are counties of sparse and increasingly sparse populations, sixteen of them actually losing population during the last decade.

Where They Are

During the last ten years 29 counties increased their farms more than ten percent. With just four exceptions these counties are situated in the eastern or coastal plains section of North Carolina. The four exceptions are Rockingham, Caswell, Person, and Orange, located in the north central part of the state where the cultivation of tobacco has recently been revived. Only one county in all the Coastal Plains section, Bladen, a lower Cape Fear county, failed to increase the number of her farms. Bladen suffered a decrease of 1.7 percent. Without exception every county making a conspicuous gain in the number of farms is located in the Coastal Plains region. A few of those making the largest gains are, Pitt, with 1,241 more farms, Sampson 1,200, Wilson 1,033, Johnston 1,004, Wayne 995, Edgecombe 911, Duplin 839, Lenoir 739, and the small county of Scotland 341 more. These are some of the counties which during the war period plunged deeply into cotton and tobacco farming, which was very profitable for a few years. This area for a brief period prospered as it had never prospered before, and within three or four years land values rose two, three, and four hundred percent because tobacco and cotton land was in such great demand. Possibly no equal area in the entire South produced and handled as much farm wealth as the combination tobacco and cotton counties of the Coastal Plains of this state.

The counties making gains in the number of farms but gains of less than ten percent, are found scattered all over the state. In the main they are to be found in the Hill counties where farming continued to be prosperous but where manufacturing has had a marked development. Here the white tenants have moved off the farms in large numbers and have become mill operatives in our great textile centers. The farms in this area are more largely cultivated by farm owners than ten years ago and both the tenants who moved to textile centers and the farmers who remained on the farm have been benefited. Outside of the Hill country, six counties in the Tidewater area, three in the Coastal Plains and three in the Mountains gained less than 10 percent in the number of farms.

Thirty-eight counties in North Carolina lost farms during the ten-year period. Eight of them are located in the Tidewater area and all the rest in the Mountains and Hill country. And the reasons for the losses in these three areas are not so complex. In the Tidewater areas, the already sparse country population, lack of trade centers, poor transportation facilities, and lack of a good money crop and marketing facilities, in part explain why farmers moved off the farms and out of the

counties; for five of them lost population during the last census period. In some of these counties, especially Dare, Tyrrell, Carteret, and New Hanover, farming has never been a very important activity, and the total number of farms lost is not so large. Except for a few small areas the whole Tidewater section has made little progress, so far as farming is concerned, during the last ten years. The truck farmers of the northeastern area have been moving ahead at a good pace.

Why They Lost

The loss of farms in the Hill counties is due very largely to the rapid growth of this area as the textile center of the South. The white farm tenants by the thousands have been swarming out of the country regions and into the textile towns and cities. These urban places have been growing at a rapid pace. For instance, Winston-Salem more than doubled her population during the last decade, while Gastonia, Charlotte, Greensboro, High Point, Durham, and the smaller towns grew at a pace never before witnessed—at the expense, of the country regions, for twelve Hill counties lost farms during this period. Every county in this area and in the mountains decreased its farm tenant population and today we find a far larger number of farm owners in the western half of our state than we have seen before in our lifetime. But also the entire eastern half of North Carolina with a bare half-dozen exceptions increased its farm tenant population all the way from one percent in Nash to 94 percent in Pamlico. The western counties, though losing farms in many counties, are headed into farm ownership and live-at-home farming, while the entire eastern half of North Carolina is headed into more and smaller farms, farm tenantry, and cotton and tobacco farming with all the attendant evils. The western half is headed in the right direction. The eastern half can never be a safe and prosperous farm area as long as it is based on tenantry and its necessary attendant, the cash crop system.

More Farms, Fewer Acres

Today we have 16,038 more farms in North Carolina than in 1910, but 614,647 fewer acres under cultivation. That is almost a contradiction unless one knows our type of farming and the way we are headed, especially in the cotton and tobacco counties, where farms increased most in number and decreased most in size. Every decade since the Civil War finds us cultivating more but smaller farms. Each decade finds us more intensive farmers. The average cultivated acres per farm sixty years ago were 125. Today the cultivated acres per farm are 30.4, having decreased four acres per farm in ten years. The average cultivated acres per farm worker are 13, while ten years ago they were 15. We are hand farmers today as never before, while more than 70 percent of our land lies idle, or practically so. The farms in Johnston, for instance, increased nearly 17 percent, but the land under cultivation remained almost the same during the last ten years. Edgecombe increased her farms 31.1 percent, but the land under cultivation decreased nearly 8 percent. Caswell increased her farms 27.8 percent, but decreased her cultivated acres 7 percent. Duplin increased her farms 21.8 percent, but decreased her cultivated acres 17 percent, and this with less than one-fifth of her land under cultivation. Lenoir county made a gain of 30.5 percent in number of farms, but the average cultivated acres per farm decreased from 37 to 28 in ten years. What will be the size of farms in the eastern half of our state 20 years hence? If the practice of 60 years is an indication, we will be pocket-handkerchief farmers just as they are in Northwest-ern Europe today. We are almost that now, and in an area of sparse rural population. During the year 1919, our most prosperous year, seventy-eight, or nearly four-fifths, of the counties of this state had fewer acres under cultivation than ten years previously.

It is our opinion that we are headed the wrong way. We are drifting into smaller farms, hand culture, tenantry, and cash crops, especially in the eastern half of the state. We should be headed into larger-sized farms, cultivated with labor-saving, profit-producing machinery, and into food and feed crops, live-

**EDUCATION PAYS**  
Senator Benjamin H. Hill  
Education is the one thing for which no people ever yet paid too much. The more they pay the richer they become. Nothing is so costly as ignorance and nothing so cheap as knowledge.

stock farming and agricultural industries sensibly tied in with our splendid cash crops.  
Early issues of the News Letter will carry studies dealing with increases and decreases in farm owners, tenants, and negro farmers.—S. H. H., Jr.

WIDE-AWAKE BANKS

In this time when agencies for improving farm life are being discussed it will be in order to mention the splendid work the Tarboro banks are doing for the people of Edgecombe county. Chief among these is the First National Bank, although the Farmers' Banking and Trust Company is not far behind.

In 1917 Mr. M. G. Mann came to Tarboro as Vice-President and Cashier of the First National Bank. He soon realized the work that could be done among the farmers—to improve conditions in the county and incidentally gain interest in and patronage for the bank. He therefore soon let it be known in an unobtrusive way that he would be backing all progressive measures. He has offered many prizes for farm life papers, fair exhibits, etc., but his policy through the bank has been more daring—bigger than that.

He has gone on the outside and purchased and brought to Edgecombe more than ninety pure-bred Jerseys. Most of these cows were put with the boys to encourage them to stay on the farm. Their notes were accepted for one year, teaching them the value of credit and the method of obtaining money from the banks in a way which will prove most helpful to them when they have the responsibility of running a farm.

Moreover, about a year ago twenty pure-bred Hampshire pigs which cost about \$2,500 were delivered to the county boys, their notes being accepted. These pigs are doing well and should be the means of raising the standard of swine in the county.

The Bank has also endeavored to raise the quality of sheep in the county by purchasing from New Mexico one hundred twenty-five high-grade sheep and several high-grade rams. The wool has made beautiful blankets, many of which have been sold in the county.

The most profitable thing that has yet been undertaken is in encouraging the farmers to use better seed, and during the spring and fall the Bank was kept busy getting seed of various kinds and quantities for the farmer. During the past fall more than 10,000 pounds of crimson clover were ordered. All during the summer and fall the windows of the bank are filled with the most beautiful farm plants and fruits—the biggest watermelons, the most prolific cotton, little growing clover plants, seed and vegetables.

The Bank also publishes a little monthly pamphlet, Successful Banking and Farming News. This deals with county problems and items of interest. It contains stories of thrift, and contrasts the near-sighted "what was good enough for my father is good enough for me" farmer with the progressive farmer who buys pure-bred stock and high-grade seed and couples up with the bank. Health matters are taken up; suggestions to the farmer and farm-wife are given; and the people of the county are encouraged to contribute to this publication. It is a hard matter to get the farmer to read this magazine; however some improvement is being made along this line.

The Bank has recently adopted the policy of starting each child of the county along life's road with a bank account. They therefore have asked all Vital Statistics Registrars to send to them the name and all necessary information of each child born. The child is provided with a tiny bank book, showing a deposit of \$1.00. The parents are of course encouraged to enlarge this.

While the resources of the First National Bank have grown considerably during the last few years, it would be unfair to draw comparisons just at this time of financial depression. A great deal of the growth has come from the efforts along agricultural lines, but of

far greater importance is the lasting effect upon the county and the stronghold that the bank is building for itself in the hearts, minds, and interests of the dwellers in the county of Edgecombe.—Catherine Batts.

SCHOOL BONDS

In a recent issue of the News Letter we carried a study showing the per capita bond issue for schools of the various towns, cities, and some districts since January 1, 1921. This study did not pretend to take into account bonds issued before that date nor bond issues that will be voted on in the near future except a few cases of which we had knowledge. It was merely a presentation on a per capita basis of town and city school bond issues during the last six months. The total was so large that we were impressed with the importance education must have in the minds of North Carolinians. Otherwise these 87 towns would not have voted ten million dollars for school buildings in our present period of financial depression.

Several people have replied that we did their counties a grave injustice either because they had already taken care of their school needs, or are getting ready to do so. We are very sorry that our good intentions were misconstrued and we are presenting some of the facts relative to what these dissenting towns and counties have done and are preparing to do.

Gastonia

Gastonia wants the state to know that she is no laggard area and we are glad to give her justice. The \$50,000 issue already voted on was for a mill village school. Gastonia has provided good schools in the past and on July 18, she will decide a \$500,000 school bond issue and at the same time vote on an issue of \$800,000 for good roads. That is going strong, and we are glad to know

she has big things in mind and congratulate her most heartily.

Durham

Superintendent Pusey of the Durham schools writes that one more community, Durham, should be listed. She has embarked upon a school building program that calls for approximately \$1,250,000—\$650,000 of which is now available. Contracts now being let, together with those now being carried out, will total about \$700,000.

Mr. W. B. Cooper writes that New Hanover is completing one of the finest high school buildings in the state. The bond issue for this building was voted a year or so ago and our study was for the last six months.

Mecklenburg

Mr. W. E. Price of Mecklenburg wishes us to know that his county is no laggard. He writes:

"We are advertising two bond issues right now for two consolidated school districts. We already have six large consolidated schools. These buildings are erected of brick and are modern in every way, some of them costing as much as \$30,000 each. Of course, I speak of the districts outside of the city of Charlotte and what are commonly known as rural districts. We are planning a large new building at Newells, a consolidation of several districts, and will be ready as soon as the bonds are sold to start the building. The same is true of the consolidation of the districts in Long Creek Township with a new modern school building to accommodate the same as soon as the bonds are sold. We are also planning and are about ready to erect a new brick veneer six-room school building for the accommodation of three consolidated districts in the eastern part of the county; all of which I hope will prove to you conclusively that Mecklenburg is not a laggard county by any means in the matter of school facilities and school buildings."

We are glad to give the facts and to advertise counties like Chowan which have already constructed adequate buildings. Also we feel sure that Mr. Price and others can appreciate our inability to know what all districts are contemplating. Our six-months total was large enough to pass along to the public.

FARMS IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1920  
Percents Increase or Decrease, 1910-20

Counties ranked from high to low. Based on the Press Summaries of the 1920 Census.  
State rate of increase 6.3 percent. Total increase in farms 16,038. Total number of farms in 1920 was 269,763.  
Rural Social Science Department, University of North Carolina.

INCREASES			INCREASES		
Rank	Counties	Percet. Increase in number	Rank	Counties	Percet. Increase in number
1	Edgecombe	31.1	48	Rutherford	5.2
2	Lenoir	30.5	49	Bertie	4.9
3	Wilson	30.3	50	Chowan	4.6
4	Caswell	27.8	51	Iredell	3.7
5	Pitt	26.4	52	Stanly	3.0
6	Sampson	26.1	53	Polk	2.9
7	Greene	24.9	54	Yancey	2.7
8	Wayne	24.7	55	Chatham	2.6
9	Harnett	24.6	56	Cabarrus	2.2
10	Craven	23.8	57	Northampton	1.7
11	Scotland	22.9	58	Vance	0.7
12	Duplin	21.8	59	Stokes	0.4
13	Pamlico	21.6	DECREASES		
14	Moore	19.2	Rank	Counties	Percet. Decrease
15	Franklin	18.5	60	Alexander	0.2
16	Martin	17.9	61	Cleveland	0.4
17	Person	17.8	62	Cherokee	0.5
18	Johnston	16.6	63	Union	0.7
19	Warren	16.5	64	Montgomery	0.8
20	Lee	15.2	65	Macon	1.0
21	Rockingham	14.9	66	Davie	1.4
22	Washington	13.8	67	Bladen	1.7
23	Jones	12.7	68	Mecklenburg	2.1
24	Anson	11.2	69	Haywood	2.4
25	Orange	11.0	70	Jackson	2.4
26	Richmond	10.9	71	Surry	2.9
27	Wake	10.9	72	Randolph	3.5
28	Perquimans	10.8	73	Alleghany	3.9
29	Gates	10.0	74	Graham	4.1
30	Durham	9.5	75	Pender	4.9
31	Beaufort	9.4	76	Wilkes	5.0
32	Halifax	8.8	77	Hertford	7.7
33	Alamance	7.9	78	Tyrrell	7.9
34	Davidson	7.6	79	Lincoln	8.1
35	Pasquotank	7.6	80	Swain	8.6
36	Forsyth	7.6	81	Catawba	8.8
37	Granville	7.5	82	Henderson	9.0
38	Rowan	7.2	83	Madison	10.3
39	Yadkin	6.9	84	Transylvania	10.4
40	Camden	6.6	85	Buncombe	10.7
41	Guilford	6.5	86	McDowell	11.6
42	Nash	6.1	87	Carteret	12.6
43	Ashe	6.0	88	Hyde	14.4
44	Clay	6.0	89	Burke	14.6
45	Onslow	5.7	90	Brunswick	14.9
46	Currituck	5.6	91	Gaston	18.2
47	Columbus	5.5	92	New Hanover	23.1
			93	Dare	43.4

Note: (1) Avery was formed in 1911 out of Watauga, Caldwell, and Mitchell, and does not appear in the 1910 census. In the area occupied by these four counties the number of farms decreased 7 percent between 1910 and 1920.

(2) Hoke was formed in 1911 out of Cumberland and Robeson. In the area covered by these three counties the number of farms increased 12.6 percent during the same period.

(3) Cleveland, Currituck, Dare, Durham, Gaston, Harnett, and Wake had their boundaries slightly changed during the last census period, but the territory gained or lost was so small in each instance that the figures for them in the above table are approximately correct.