

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

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

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

AUGUST 2, 1922

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.

VOL. VIII, NO. 37

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. E. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt, H. W. Odum. Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

NEGRO TAXABLES IN CAROLINA

NEGRO TAXPAYERS

The negroes of North Carolina have right around one hundred ten million dollars of taxable wealth on the county tax lists; which is nearly exactly five times the total in 1910. On an average the state over, they pay one dollar of every twenty-five paid into the local tax funds of the state. They pay nearly nothing into the state treasury to support state departments, state institutions, and state enterprises; so (1) because their individual properties and businesses are small, and (2) because legal exemptions in North Carolina are so large as to relieve them of taxes on inheritances and personal incomes. The same is true of taxes on negro corporation incomes. The exceptions are notable but they are very few. The automobile registration fees they pay cover the largest contribution they make to state support. Their per capita taxables in 1921 averaged \$135, against \$34 in 1910.

Their gains in taxable wealth in recent years have been made mainly in the town and city centers of the state. Very few negro tenants moved up into farm ownership during the last census period in North Carolina—only 834 all told, against an increase of more than five thousand farms by white farm owners.

Betrayed By Prosperity

The negroes were betrayed into extravagance and wanton waste by the flush times of the war period. The more primitive people are, white or black, the less they save and invest in homes and farms and productive businesses. Gains in taxable wealth indicate substantial gains in real civilization, and the negro race shows a steady march forward in property ownership since the middle sixties in every southern state. But in 1910-20 the ratio of negro farm owners in North Carolina suffered a decrease—from 32.7 to 29.2 percent. The same fact appears in other cotton-belt states. It is the first halt in the progress—the real progress—of the American negro since the war between the States.

Nevertheless nearly one-third of all our negro farmers are farm owners, not tenants, and they own a million one hundred sixty thousand acres. Put together, the farm land they own today in North Carolina makes an area as large as Mecklenburg, Gaston, Lincoln, and Cabarrus counties, with a hundred thousand acres to spare. In two counties of North Carolina, the negro farm owners outnumber the white farm owners—in Warren by 188 and in Halifax by 38. The farms are smaller, of course, but the number of negro farm owners is larger than the number of white farm owners in these two counties.

The per capita taxable wealth of the negroes ranges from \$237 in Alleghany, where the negroes are fewer than five in the hundred of population, to \$53 in Cherokee, another mountain county, where they are only two in the hundred of population. See the table elsewhere. Their best showing is made in Alleghany, Durham, Guilford, Buncombe, and Warren, in the order named. Forty counties are above the state average of \$135 per capita, and in all but five of these counties the whites are in the majority. The exceptions are Warren, Craven, Hertford, Bertie, and Greene, where the taxpaying negroes are mainly farm owners.

Two Different Problems

Students of the negro are not yet properly aware of the fact that the negro problem in general is two not one: (1) the negroes when thinly scattered among white majorities, where they feel the steady upward pull of the surrounding superior mass, and (2) the negroes when massed in solid black areas, as in nearly 300 of the 800 cotton belt counties of the South, where the superior negro feels the steady downward pull of the surrounding inferior mass.

As a rule the amassing of property by negroes is most rapid in white counties. Here their ten-year gains are most amazing, and here it is that hard-won property is best preserved and increased by succeeding generations. In the black counties the property amassed by a worthy negro is apt to be rapidly

dissipated by sons and daughters infected by the improvident humors and habits of the surrounding negro masses. The salvation of the superior negroes in a black county lies in segregation—in a social quarantine area, as Mound Bayou for instance, a prosperous negro city in a Mississippi delta county where the blacks outnumber the whites seven to one. In this little negro city are gathered the pick of the negroes of Bolivar county. The banks, the stores, and the industries are all owned and operated by enterprising negroes. It is a center of negro aristocracy protected from the downward pull of the reckless negro masses of the Delta country.

A White Man's Problem

Along with these two characteristic negro problems, there is a white man's problem in the cotton-belt counties of the South. It is the problem of white tenant farmers in counties like Warren and Halifax where white and black croppers in something like equal numbers live and work side by side. And where two races with different standards of living struggle for existence side by side, the race with the lower standards wins out unless the superior race is defended by superior industry, intelligence, and skill. This law of life is as nearly universal as any other we know in social science. It works with equal certainty in the mill industries of the North and East, in the Polish farm areas of the Connecticut Valley, in the Japanese and Armenian districts of California, and in the cotton-belt counties of the South.

The conditions of cotton farm tenancy are hard, but negroes thrive on conditions that destroy the whites; which accounts for the increase of negro farm owners in the South in 1900-1910, in ratios ranging from one and a half to seven and a half times the ratios of increase of white farm owners. Race protection by increase of intelligence and skill—that's the white farm tenant's defense in Warren and Halifax. These counties in particular need consolidated schools in county-wide systems, with teacherages and motor transportation trucks. And they must be quick in their decision about this means of defense, else the farm properties of white owners will soon be so deteriorated and social conditions so stagnant in country areas that the farmland will inevitably pass into the hands of negro farm owners. There are nine other Carolina counties in which country civilization is in similar peril—Anson, Scotland, Hoke, Northampton, Hertford, Bertie, Edgecombe, Pitt, and Craven.

What Property Means

Property is what one may call one's very own. When self-acquired it signifies (1) industry, the power to toil terribly in steady-gaited sort, (2) thrift, which is prudential foresight coupled with the power of self-denial, (3) sagacity or the clear-headed ability to think things through to a remote end, and (4) integrity—honesty, truthfulness, a sense of moral obligation, sobriety and the like. These are the qualities in a man that result in property. The lack of any one of these will make and will keep him an underling. They are signs of sterling worth in a man, white or black. They are signs of essential civilization. The qualities that produce property are the qualities that produce capital which is surplus property ready for use in the creation of other property. Christianity as a mode of life means character, character produces capital, and capital produces civilization.

Western civilization, such as it is, is the creature of capital, and the negro is winning his way out of jungleism into civilization in terms of property ownership.

And there is no other way. It is necessarily the way of struggle—struggle within himself for mastery over himself and struggle with outward, untoward circumstances. The negro as a race will never stand really possessed of anything that he does not win worthily for himself and by himself. Such progress as he has made as a race must be reckoned in property ownership. Aside from property possessions in

Released week beginning July 31 KNOW NORTH CAROLINA

Forest Protection

North Carolina with an area of 81,000,000 acres still contains approximately 19,500,000 acres of forest lands.

Roughly speaking, three-fourths of the mountain section, one-half of the piedmont, and two-thirds of the coastal plain region are still in woods. There is probably a slightly larger area growing softwoods, chiefly pine, than growing hardwoods. Much of this forest has been so cut and burnt for generations that there is little or no growing timber on the land and only slight prospect of any returning, unless fires are kept out.

The U. S. Census figures show that more than 50 per cent of the average North Carolina farm consists of woodland, yet most of this area is yielding less return per annum to the owners than it was twenty-five years ago. The demand for lumber, ties, poles, pulpwood, veneer, cordwood, etc., increases rapidly from year to year. Our furniture industry, the largest in the South, is having to go further and further for its supply of hardwoods and much of our building material is now coming from the extreme South and even from the Pacific Coast States. Prices are high now and undoubtedly will be higher. We must put our idle land to work.

How can we regenerate the forest which is already destroyed and keep productive that which is to be cut?

Several steps will probably be necessary with those lands which now contain no profitable stand of timber. Some may have to be planted to trees again; other lands may be seeded from surrounding trees and the young growth gradually form a forest. A prerequisite to every forestry operation, however, is the prevention of fires. Forest fires have destroyed at least one million dollars' worth of property in North Carolina per annum for many years past, and only recently has the area burned over each year begun to decline. The hopelessness of trying to secure adequate young growth to produce a profitable crop of timber with fires running over the area every year or two must be apparent to all. It is no use planting or providing seed trees or encouraging young growth if fires are to come along and destroy it. Both the State and Federal Governments are agreed that forest fires must be prevented and they are now starting out in earnest to do this. The counties are being asked to cooperate with the state in forest fire prevention and a number of them are taking up this work in earnest. The people are also being urged to do their part by being more careful in the use of fire. Only when all interests work together for fire prevention can the forests of the state yield satisfactory returns.—N. C. Geological and Economic Survey.

homes, farms, and businesses, Ford cars and silk shirts mean little or nothing or worse, for either blacks or whites.

The hope of the negro lies in the ownership of homes and farms, in barns and bank balances, far more than in spelling books and ballot boxes. Home-owning negroes are everywhere a community asset. Property ownership tethers a negro to law and order better than all the courts. It is the landless, homeless negro—the restless, roving, irresponsible negro whose habit is to roost on a new perch every night—who disgraces his race and endangers the

civilization of the South.

We hold firmly to the belief that civilization for any man or any race is rooted and grounded in the home-owning, home-loving, home-defending instincts. No landless, homeless race, white or black, can be socialized, civilized, or Christianized.

An economic interpretation of negro progress will be found in more elaborate detail in a chapter by E. C. Branson, in *The Human Way*. Students of the Negro Problem can get it from The Baker Taylor Co., 354 Fourth Avenue, New York.

A JOHNSTON COUNTY BOOK

Two young men at the University have written a complete history of Johnston county as part of their college course. This is a grand idea and the faculty of that state institution are to be congratulated upon the work they are doing. This will be valuable information to the people and it will make the work of these two young students worth something to the entire state.

This work required hard study and also some generosity on the part of some people of the county. There is some expense attached to the undertaking and it is the duty of every business man living in the county to contribute toward this expense by taking advertising space in the booklet. It is the very best advertising medium in the county. They will be mailed into practically every home in the county and the merchants and other business men who take space in the booklet will secure several extra copies.

If you know of any important event taking place in the history of this county, or if you know anything about

the county, jot it down and mail it to Messrs. George Ragsdale or William Sanders at Chapel Hill. It will be greatly appreciated. The booklets are expected to be ready for distribution by the first of August.

Again we say it is a grand thing and we want the people to aid in helping the young men out in this wonderful undertaking. It is the Carolina way of doing things which will be beneficial to the state.—Smithfield Observer.

BREAKING ALL RECORDS

It may not be news to say that North Carolina is breaking all her past records in the construction of highways. It is not yet generally understood, however, that at the end of this year the State Highway Commission will have completed or under contract improved roads costing \$25,000,000, an astounding record for two years' work.

No wonder other states are sending engineers into North Carolina to see how it is done. The Commission, supported by Governor Morrison and the Council of State, has already surpassed its expectations and is pressing to a goal the attainment of which will end forever whatever reputation this state may have had as a Rip Van Winkle.

Such movements as we now witness in road-building and in the improvement of schools and welfare institutions do not develop in a day. Aycock, Craig, and Bickett and those who stood by them in their campaigns for better schools and improved highways share in the glory of this fuller day. Those to whom has come the task of carrying forward great state enterprises have today a tremendous opportunity, and they have eyes to see it and hands for its fulfillment.—Asheville Citizen.

NEGRO TAXABLE WEALTH IN CAROLINA Per Capita in 1921

Based (1) on the 1921 Report of the State Tax Commissioner, and (2) on correspondence with the County Registers of Deeds.

Total Negro taxables \$110,000,000 in round numbers in 1921, or \$135 per capita, against \$34 per capita in 1910. Their taxable properties were multiplied five-fold in eleven years.

On an average the negro pays one dollar of every twenty-five dollars of the tax fund for local government.

They pay nearly nothing to support state government, because their individual properties and businesses are so small that they have no inheritances or incomes beyond the exemptions allowed by law. The same thing is true of their corporation incomes. The exceptions are notable, but they are very few.

F. D. Morris, Gaston County

Department Rural Social Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	Counties	Per Cap.	Rank	Counties	Per Cap.
1	Alleghany	\$237	49	Rutherford	\$122
2	Durham	215	49	Pender	122
3	Guilford	202	49	Halifax	122
4	Buncombe	195	52	Hoke	118
5	Warren	191	52	Lenoir	118
6	Currituck	189	54	Yadkin	117
7	Onslow	188	54	Davidson	117
8	Carteret	187	56	Burke	115
9	Person	186	56	Davie	115
10	New Hanover	182	58	Iredell	114
11	Brunswick	178	59	Jackson	112
12	Craven	176	59	Nash	112
13	Duplin	174	59	Harnett	112
14	Martin	173	62	Caswell	110
15	Orange	168	62	Chatham	110
15	Chowan	168	64	Henderson	109
17	Bladen	167	65	Richmond	108
18	Columbus	166	65	Scotland	108
18	Hertford	166	67	Washington	107
18	Polk	166	68	Dare	106
21	Wake	164	68	Northampton	106
22	Forsyth	158	70	Catawba	104
23	Rowan	157	70	Randolph	104
24	Avery	155	72	Alexander	102
25	Cumberland	150	73	Robeson	100
25	Perquimans	150	74	Swain	98
27	Surry	149	75	Lee	96
28	Johnston	148	75	McDowell	96
29	Vance	146	75	Union	96
30	Wayne	145	78	Wilkes	94
31	Jones	144	78	Anson	94
31	Alamance	144	80	Cleveland	93
33	Bertie	143	81	Caldwell	92
33	Greene	143	81	Franklin	92
33	Gates	143	83	Mecklenburg	89
36	Tyrrell	141	83	Mitchell	89
37	Granville	138	83	Transylvania	89
37	Madison	138	86	Cabarrus	87
39	Clay	137	86	Lincoln	87
40	Pasquotank	136	86	Macon	87
41	Stokes	135	89	Hyde	85
41	Beaufort	135	90	Edgecombe	83
43	Wilson	134	91	Gaston	81
44	Pitt	132	92	Stanly	78
45	Moore	129	93	Montgomery	77
45	Rockingham	129	93	Haywood	77
47	Watauga	128	95	Yancey	71
48	Sampson	124	96	Cherokee	53

Note: Camden and Pamlico are omitted because of lack of data. Practically no negroes in Ashe and Graham.