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MOTOR CARS IN NORTH CAROLINA

A MOTORIZED STATE

Do you own a motor car? Perhaps not, but you will before many months. Everybody has a car or is planning to get one. At the rate we are buying them today there will be a motor car for every family in the state in three more years! Does it sound impossible? Perhaps so, but listen.

In 1915 North Carolina had one motor car for every 140 inhabitants. In that year there were ten counties that had a grand total of eighteen motor cars, and three counties had none. In 1919 the state had one motor car for every 23 inhabitants. In 1922 she had one motor car for every 17.2 inhabitants. On January 20, 1923, there was a motor car for every fourteen inhabitants in the state, and on April 13 we had a motor car for every thirteen inhabitants. The number of inhabitants per motor car is being reduced by three each year, so that in 1924 there will be one car for every ten inhabitants, in 1925 there will be one car for every seven inhabitants, and in 1926, at our present rate of purchase, there will be a motor car for every family, white and black, town and country, in North Carolina. You may not own a car in 1926, but your neighbor will have two, and maybe three or four. In many families today each member has his or her private car.

Gaining Momentum

We are buying automobiles in this and every other state faster than ever before. In 1915 North Carolina had a grand total of 16,410 motor cars, or one for every 140 inhabitants. Many wise ones agreed that we were on our way to bankruptcy with eight million dollars invested in motor cars! In 1919 we had 109,000 motor cars or one for every 23 inhabitants, representing an investment of nearly 90 million dollars. In March 1922 we had 150,312 automobiles, or one for every 17.2 inhabitants, representing an investment of 120 million dollars. On April 13, 1923, we had 204,500 motor cars, or one for every 13 inhabitants in the state, representing an investment, at \$800 per car, of \$163,600,000; and we are not broke yet. In fact we are gaining momentum.

On January 20 we had 187,880 cars. On April 13 we had 204,500, a gain of 16,620 in less than three winter months. We have bought more cars in eleven weeks than the state possessed in 1915. During the last year from March 1922 to April 1923 we purchased 54,188 motor cars, or at the rate of 4,500 automobiles a month. At the present rate of purchase there will be around 260,000 motor cars in North Carolina by the Christmas holidays. They are being bought at the rate of 200 a day.

Where They Are

Where do the people live who own all these cars? Mainly in the central part of the state, from Edgecombe to Catawba county, and not in the mountain nor tidewater areas. There is not a single county in either of these vast areas in which there are as few as twelve people per motor car, and only seven of the fifty-seven counties in these two areas are above the state average of one motor car for every fourteen inhabitants. The leading counties are located mainly in the great industrial area lying like a reap hook from Edgecombe, through Wake, Guilford, Iredell, Catawba and Gaston, along the Southern Railway.

Guilford leads North Carolina in the total number of motor cars with 10,777, and in people per motor car with one car for every 7.9 inhabitants. Guilford will soon have as many automobiles as the entire state possessed eight years ago. There are enough motor cars in Guilford to take the entire population of the county on a joy ride, by crowding in just a bit. By the end of the year there will be room for all to ride comfortably, for Guilford will buy more than 2,500 cars this year. She bought 2,263 last year.

Autos and Roads

Our rapid growth in motor cars is due very largely to our great road construction program. The counties which lead in motor cars are the counties with a large mileage of hard-surfaced

and other types of improved roads. The lack of autos in the mountain and eastern counties is due very largely to poor highways. Now that highways are being built in these sparsely settled counties the people are following the example of central counties and are buying cars at an unprecedented rate. Many of these counties purchased more cars last year than they possessed in March 1922. They have a long way to go to catch up with the counties which lead today, but give them good roads, and if good roads come can autos be far behind?—S. H. H., Jr.

RECORD PRODUCTION

With gasoline going up in price and in face of the predictions that the supply of gasoline will give out in a decade or two,—we consumed more gasoline last year than we produced, we are manufacturing more automobiles than ever before. Practically every factory is operating at full capacity. In March of this year 346,000 automobiles were turned out, which exceeds by 57,000 the best previous record, made in June of last year. During the first three months of this year more than 867,000 automobiles were made, or slightly more than twice as many as were made during the first three months of 1922. The prediction is for an output of about three million automobiles in 1923. It is well to remember that in 1915 there was a grand total of two million motor cars in the United States. We are making a million more cars this year than we owned in the entire nation eight years ago. About 60,000 of them will be sold in North Carolina, and they will cost us about fifty million dollars.

The Pity of It

The money will go for a good purpose, for the most part. Every person who can afford a car, and wants one, should have it. But did you ever stop to think how the automobile business affects the South? Not an automobile factory in the entire South. We have a few assembled car and truck concerns but we manufacture practically no cars. The money spent for motor cars by southern states represents cool cash leaving these states for a good long stay. It goes to Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, New York, and the other northern states manufacturing motor cars. These are the states that are growing in wealth faster than any other states in the Union. These states occupy an enviable position. They have nearly half the population of the United States working for them. Every owner of a motor car in the South is toiling daily for the owners of this vast industry, and the wealth spent on motor cars is being garnered by relatively a few people in a restricted area in the North. One automobile manufacturer owns railroads and coal mines, among other things, and has a checking account of two hundred million dollars.

North Carolina will spend around 75 million dollars this year in the purchase and operation of motor cars. Practically all this money will leave the state. It will take the gross income from the sale of our great cash crop cotton to pay our motor car costs. We will fail to accumulate that much state capital. That is one reason why North Carolina, although she produces an enormous amount of wealth annually, fails to get ahead in the accumulation of wealth on a per capita basis. And it is true for the entire South. We produce quantities of new wealth but retain too little of it. So far as motor cars are concerned it seems we cannot remedy this, but it is a pity.—S. H. H., Jr.

VIRGINIA HEARS PAGE 1,370 Miles in 18 Months

In the spring of 1921 the North Carolina Highway Commission started its organization in the building of our road system under the bond issue. At the end of 1922—say a year and six or seven months—we have constructed from the proceeds of this \$50,000,000 bond issue 1,370 miles of improved roads. Four hundred and forty-three miles of this was pavement and 930 miles of other

NORTH CAROLINA

As soon as you get to No'th Ca'lina
The roads and the towns get newah
and finah,
The people walk with a brisker step.
And even your motor has more pep.
The hookworm's banished, the country has
A lot more energy, pep and jazz;
The livest Northerner couldn't design a
Livelier State than No'th Ca'lina.

The farms look fatter, the hamlets
ain't
Quite ignorant of the sight of paint;
They're building roads, and they're
not content
With sand and clay, but they use
cement.
And the schools look good, and the
mills are busy
And each inhabitant owns a Lizzie,
Or a big twin six or some thing
finah,
As soon as you get to No'th Ca'lina!

This State's not dreaming of days
gone by,
There's a modern glint in each mortal's
eye;
And the village belles and village
beaux
Are as smartly dressed as the crowd
which flows
On Gotham's streets. You must
give 'em credit,
These folks are fully awake, you
said it!
You meet the boostah, you lose the
whinah,
As soon as you get to No'th Ca'lina.

—Berton Braley

types. We had, however, under construction on the last day of December, 1922, projects amounting to \$36,400,000, and, to show you the progress that we are making, our contractors' estimate for the month of November was \$2,200,000, and in December, on account of weather conditions, it was materially reduced, but still we paid out to the contractors \$1,200,000.

Attracts Contractors

At the beginning of 1922 the State Highway Commission, realizing the unusual conditions then prevailing in the labor and material market, and the incessant demands for roads in the state, and further realizing that it was an economic proposition to build roads faster than we at that time contemplated, determined that we would let to contract in 1922 1,000 miles of roads. This large program enabled us to induce contractors to come in from at least one dozen different states, and by awarding contracts, not in one, two or three-mile sections, but in eighteen, twenty and thirty-mile sections, we were able to induce the largest and best contractors in the Union to come to our state. Some of these men today on a single project have one quarter of a million dollars' worth of equipment. 14 Cabarrus 3,086 11.7
17 Durham 3,751 11.8
18 Edgecombe 3,358 11.9
18 Iredell 3,274 11.9
20 Stokes 1,682 12.2
21 Buncombe 5,567 12.4
21 Lee 1,133 12.4
21 Montgomery 1,168 12.4
21 Rockingham 3,754 12.4
25 Richmond 2,178 12.5
26 Pasquotank 1,409 12.7
27 Nash 3,393 12.8
27 New Hanover 3,379 12.8
29 Cleveland 2,776 12.9
30 Pitt 3,620 13.4
31 Lenoir 2,328 13.6
32 Hoke 904 13.8
33 Vance 1,718 13.9
34 Orange 1,839 14.0
35 Surry 2,354 14.1
36 Beaufort 2,173 14.2
36 Currituck 492 14.2
38 Cumberland 2,405 14.5
38 Granville 1,879 14.5
38 Yadkin 1,163 14.5
41 Stanly 2,041 14.6
42 Greene 1,163 14.7
43 Wayne 3,165 14.9
44 Davie 899 15.2
44 Transylvania 656 15.2
46 Martin 1,412 15.4
47 Camden 340 15.5
48 Caswell 1,030 15.6
48 Harnett 2,007 15.6
48 Henderson 1,213 15.6

Roads Best Investment

Today we are building roads at the rate of fifty miles of pavement and seventy-five miles of other type of roads per month. You say it costs money. You say that we are spending large sums of money. Yes, we are spending large sums of money, but in my opinion it is the best investment that any state in the Union can make. The very fact that we had large sums of money to spend enabled us to secure contracts at a much more advantageous figure than if we had been forced to let these projects in very short pieces.

Bond Plan Saves \$5,000,000

We are confident that we had a saving in the contracts let in 1922 by the method above described of at least \$5,000,000 over what the roads would have cost if we had been forced to continue this road-building program over several years' period. It is my opinion that we are going to have at the expiration of the expenditure of this \$50,000,000 enough additional tax caused by the expenditure of this road money to pay

every single dollar of it, and I want to tell you that some of these new citizens of North Carolina are going to come to our state from Virginia. We have heretofore populated the Eastern Shore of Virginia by North Carolinians moving to your territory, but now they are coming back home, and when once again they get the "tar" on their heels you are going to lose some good Virginia citizens.

Schools and Roads

North Carolina's activity is not confined to our road-building program. We are today spending \$25,000,000 in public school houses. We have today under construction and just being finished 800 new public school houses within the state. We are also appropriating additional buildings at our higher educational institutions amounting to about \$6,000,000.

What the People Say

But to get to the point, what do the people of North Carolina say about this expenditure? We have biennial terms of the Legislature, and just prior to the convening of the 1923 Legislature the State Highway Commission was convinced that we would have our expenditure for roads so far advanced that we would need additional money before the 1925 Legislature convened, so we prepared a bill increasing our gasoline tax from one cent to three cents per gallon, and asking for an additional \$15,000,000 bond issue for road construction. This passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 88 to 9. The Senate Committee took it up without argument, and approved it. Today I assume that it will pass by an almost unanimous vote in the Senate. This, I think, shows what the people of North

Carolina think of our road program. You may be sure that the legislator in North Carolina, and I assume in Virginia, has his ear closer to the ground than any animal living, and listening to the rumblings of public opinion.

Our Roads Save Gasoline

Some of you may say that we are taxing our people to death. No we are not. Here are some figures that will prove to you that the people of North Carolina love to be taxed when it is a paying investment. In 1920 there were shipped into the state 73,997,832 gallons of gasoline. There were at that time 142,284 automobiles in the state, or each automobile in 1920 used 520 gallons of gas. In 1921 there were shipped into the state 73,492,968 gallons of gasoline, and we had at that time 149,901 automobiles in the state, or each automobile consumed during the year 1921 490 gallons of gas. In the year 1922 we had shipped into the state 86,125,368 gallons of gasoline, and we had 181,955 automobiles, or each automobile in 1922 consumed 463 gallons of gas. This will show that a saving of each automobile in 1922 over 1920 was fifty-seven gallons of gas. This can be accounted for only by the improved roads in 1922 over 1920. This fifty-seven gallons of gas, multiplied by an average price of 25 cents, was a net saving to each automobile of \$14.25, or a saving to 181,955 automobile owners amounting to the tremendous sum of \$2,592,587.50. This is a saving in gasoline alone, not to mention the saving in oil, time, and the wear and tear of your machine and religion.—Frank Page, Chairman N. C. Highway Commission.

MOTOR CARS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Inhabitants Per Car in 1923

Based (1) on adjusted population by counties, and (2) on report from the Secretary of State, Jan. 20, 1923.

Total number of motor cars in the state on January 20, 187,880. April 13, the registration totaled 204,500 automobiles and trucks, or a gain of 16,620 in less than three winter months. State total March 1922 was 148,627 motor cars, so during the last year there has been a gain of 55,873 motor cars.

State average, one car for every fourteen inhabitants. Guilford leads with 10,777 motor cars or one car for every 7.9 inhabitants. Mitchell, Yancey, and Graham foot the list.

F. O. Yates, Union County
Department of Rural Social Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	County	Total No.	Inhabs. Per Car	Rank	County	Total No.	Inhabs. Per Car
1	Guilford	10,777	7.9	51	Union	2,346	15.7
2	Davidson	4,081	9.1	52	Bertie	1,612	16.1
3	Mecklenburg	8,976	9.5	53	Person	1,175	16.6
4	Alamance	3,528	9.6	54	Alexander	741	16.7
5	Rowan	4,854	9.7	55	Duplin	1,875	16.9
6	Wilson	3,913	9.9	56	Chatham	1,400	17.2
7	Wake	7,811	10.1	57	Anson	1,648	17.4
8	Moore	2,233	10.2	58	Craven	1,699	17.7
9	Scotland	1,492	10.5	58	Rutherford	1,894	17.7
10	Forsyth	8,202	10.6	60	Hertford	927	17.8
11	Lincoln	1,670	10.8	61	Perquimans	620	18.0
12	Catawba	3,244	11.0	62	Franklin	1,454	18.1
13	Gaston	4,969	11.2	63	Halifax	2,512	18.2
14	Johnston	3,626	11.4	63	Sampson	2,100	18.2
14	Randolph	2,738	11.4	65	Robeson	3,065	18.5
16	Cabarrus	3,086	11.7	68	Washington	618	18.6
17	Durham	3,751	11.8	67	Northampton	1,229	19.1
18	Edgecombe	3,358	11.9	68	Caldwell	1,060	19.8
18	Iredell	3,274	11.9	69	Warren	1,100	20.3
20	Stokes	1,682	12.2	70	Pamlico	374	23.1
21	Buncombe	5,567	12.4	71	Jones	438	23.5
21	Lee	1,133	12.4	72	Burke	997	23.9
21	Montgomery	1,168	12.4	73	Haywood	967	25.1
21	Rockingham	3,754	12.4	74	Onslow	590	25.2
25	Richmond	2,178	12.5	75	Bladen	776	26.2
26	Pasquotank	1,409	12.7	76	Pender	545	26.7
27	Nash	3,393	12.8	77	Tyrrell	170	27.7
27	New Hanover	3,379	12.8	78	Chowan	372	28.0
29	Cleveland	2,776	12.9	79	Wilkes	1,173	28.5
30	Pitt	3,620	13.4	80	Allegany	250	29.1
31	Lenoir	2,328	13.6	81	Columbus	1,039	29.6
32	Hoke	904	13.8	82	Polk	309	29.8
33	Vance	1,718	13.9	83	Hyde	272	30.2
34	Orange	1,839	14.0	84	McDowell	563	30.3
35	Surry	2,354	14.1	85	Watauga	402	34.8
36	Beaufort	2,173	14.2	86	Gates	296	35.6
36	Currituck	492	14.2	87	Carteret	400	39.8
38	Cumberland	2,405	14.5	88	Jackson	316	42.8
38	Granville	1,879	14.5	89	Brunswick	340	44.1
38	Yadkin	1,163	14.5	90	Cherokee	319	48.9
41	Stanly	2,041	14.6	91	Madison	400	50.1
42	Greene	1,163	14.7	92	Dare	97	53.7
43	Wayne	3,165	14.9	93	Ashe	347	62.3
44	Davie	899	15.2	94	Avery	163	65.4
44	Transylvania	656	15.2	95	Macon	198	66.2
46	Martin	1,412	15.4	96	Swain	187	75.7
47	Camden	340	15.5	97	Clay	63	77.6
48	Caswell	1,030	15.6	98	Mitchell	94	119.1
48	Harnett	2,007	15.6	99	Yancey	112	143.7
48	Henderson	1,213	15.6	100	Graham	29	169.4