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## FARM OWNERSHIP AND TENANCY

### THE TENANCY COMMISSION

The Farm Tenancy Commission appointed during the last session of the Legislature has just returned from a thousand-mile incursion into the Tidewater country. The Commission covered thoroughly practically every county from the South Carolina border to the eastern edge of Hyde county, thence northwest through Beaufort, Martin, Northampton, Halifax, and other counties. The main objects before the Commission were to look into the possibilities of the Tidewater country for agricultural expansion, to look into the merits of the group settlement idea versus individual settlement, and to gather information on the financial policies of successful enterprises. Consultations were held with farm tenants, small farm owners, big landlords, lumber companies owning hundreds of thousands of acres of cut-over lands, chambers of commerce, and others. The following are merely a few of the impressions gathered.

The Tidewater country is a vast area eighty-five percent undeveloped, with the greatest agricultural possibilities of any similar area in America.

It is the most sparsely settled area possessing equal agricultural advantages in America.

It can become the Winter Garden of America because of warm moist climate, suitable soils, early maturity of truck crops, and nearness to northern markets.

It can become a great livestock area because it produces grasses as abundantly as any area in the United States. Cattle can be grazed ten months in the year and no winter housing of cattle is needed. But in several places where we ate there was no butter on the table; and where we had butter, it was a northern product. The cattle tick and lack of market for surpluses are the present drawbacks, together with a population that knows little about livestock.

### Big Landlords

It is the one area in North Carolina where big landlords reign supreme. A man with only five or ten thousand acres is a piker. Thirty thousand acres demands some local respect. One hundred thousand acres is doing right well. Landlords with three to ten thousand acres under cultivation were run across here and there.

The biggest landlord of them all told the writer that the concentration of land in the hands of a few people was the biggest curse of the Tidewater country. Many people are land poor. Every cent of capital is tied up in land, with no money left to develop it. The land is often heavily mortgaged and a clear title cannot be given to would-be purchasers.

Great fortunes have been lost in big drainage projects because no provision has been made to get actual settlers on the land. Several individuals and corporations offered to give the state ten thousand acres of drained land if the state would show them how to get men on the land. In one project three million dollars have been spent in drainage and there is not a farmer on the land.

### The Small Farmer

The most frequent cause of failure on the part of individual settlers is that they buy big farms, invest all their capital in undeveloped land, and have nothing left to develop the farm. Where farmers have come in and purchased small farms and reserved a part of their capital, they have almost invariably succeeded. In fact about the only successes the Commission found consisted of small farmers, both native and foreign.

For instance, at Castle Hayne there are thirty farmers owning from twenty to thirty acres each and last year they sold two hundred thousand dollars' worth of products. Twenty years ago this same body of land produced a total yield of five hundred dollars' worth of crops. One of these farmers owns twenty acres. His gross sales last year amounted to \$12,000. His net income was \$8,000. He built a handsome home out of his year's crops, lost \$2,700 in a local bank which failed, and still had cash on hand.

Another is a nurseryman. He owns a few acres, is actually using still fewer, has been on his place five years and is worth \$75,000. On one acre he had 80,000 plants which will in six years sell for seven dollars each. Each plant increases in value one dollar a year. It beats cotton and tobacco hands down.

### Tar Heels Succeed

These people are not all foreigners. The most successful settlement of them all is made up of native Tar Heels. The Commission is not interested in bringing foreign-born people into North Carolina. It is interested in placing native Tar-Heel farmers on farms under such conditions that they will gradually come into the ownership of the land. An intensive survey is being made of farmers who have failed and of farmers who have succeeded so that the causes of failures can be eliminated and the reasons for successes can be utilized.

The land and other natural resources of this state are nothing short of marvelous. We have in North Carolina 23 million idle acres. Nearly half the farmers of North Carolina are tenants. The Tenancy Commission is trying to discover measures whereby some of this vast tenant population can be placed on a part of this vast area of land that is now idle, under the most ideal social and economic conditions, so that after a few years they will own their farms and homes and will be better citizens of the community and of the state. The native Tar Heel, if given a chance, will make good.—S. H. H., Jr.

### CHURCH OFFERS AID

At the recent convention of the North Carolina Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held in Oxford, a resolution was carried to the effect that the social service commission of the Diocese co-operate with the legislative commission recently appointed by the late legislature in the matter of farm tenancy, looking both to publicity in matter and to actual service in developing religious life of the proposed tenantry communities.—News and Observer.

### RENTERS AND CROPPERS

Seldom has a University put forth a more pertinent social study than How Farm Tenants Live, by J. A. Dickey and E. C. Branson, just issued from the press of the University of North Carolina. So much has been written, in somewhat impressionistic form, of the "hill-billie" and the "cracker," that this first-hand, scientific investigation has the value of a real revelation. The fact that it comprehends only 51 tenant families living in Chatham county does not mean that it is not a perfect picture of farm tenancy in the South. There are 817,000 souls in the families of white tenants in North Carolina, and the picture given of these selected specimens in a single North Carolina county is accurately descriptive of them all. The fact that half the farmers of the South are tenants, not proprietors, is only one of the distressing facts brought to light; it discloses a type of tenancy that is peculiar to the South—that is, indeed, a product of conditions following the Civil War.

### A Different Problem

Farm tenancy is not uncommon in the North and in the West, but it is very different in its character from that of the South. The Western tenant is usually a man of capital, who hires a farm and operates it purely as a commercial transaction. He is, in a certain sense, a business man; one fifth the tenants of Chester County, Pennsylvania, possess capital ranging from \$3,000 to \$9,000 each, and one hundred tenants recently discovered in Iowa were operating with capital ranging from \$20,000 to \$60,000 each. Nothing like this is found among the farm tenants of the South. "Tenancy in the South is not a matter of deliberate choice on the part of farmers with operating capital; it is a sad necessity on the part of moneyless men. . . . It is a social estate." It is necessary first of all to revise current terminology. Ten-

### KNOW NORTH CAROLINA

#### The New Frontier

Before the vast land area of the west was penetrated by a railroad, the late James J. Hill, president of the Northern Pacific system, and called "the builder of the west," made this famous remark: "Land without population is a wilderness; population without land is a mob."

With our thoughts centered upon eastern Carolina and its vast undeveloped area, let us conjure with the Hill declaration, which is a veritable economic philosophy. The west was a wilderness without a population and since it was an immense pioneer proposition, it would have remained a wilderness without railroad transportation. The continental railroads cleaved the continent and the west became a romance. Transportation and romance combined attracted millions of population and North Carolina contributed a liberal share of that westward-bound population. Many of the west of Indiana, Ohio and Illinois, and about 20 states west of the Mississippi river, can trace their sturdy ancestors back to the good Old North State. Whithersoever Carolinians go, "North Carolina claims her children," and it is even so that she claimed Uncle Joe Cannon, who helped to make Illinois famous.

The denouement of the western romance has been reached and the day of romance for North Carolina is being staged. Horace Greeley's "Go West, Young Man," has been replaced by Roger Babson's "Go South, All who Seek Opportunities." Back of the western movement of population was the urge which appealed to the red-blooded pioneer. The latter-day urge of Roger Babson appeals to the capitalist and to the homeseeker for whom opportunities in the south are constantly being emphasized by the Boston house of Babson, known all over America and Europe. Roger Babson is a "bull on the south," and he says so every day in every way. The south is on Babson's map and North Carolina is in bas-relief on every map.

North Carolina put herself on the map and it is up to coastal Carolina to let it be known that it is a marvelously resourceful and advantageous section of progressive North Carolina. If eastern Carolina wants her share in the new romance of the times she must figure in the romance. Alluvial Carolina is a rich land largely without population. It contains only one-fourth the population that it should have and we must realize that the time to get population is right now.

The famous remark of James J. Hill was intended to emphasize the advantages, the uses, and the results of transportation and surely we all know what railroads running into the west did for the unsettled west. The west had to have railroads before it could be pioneered. Eastern Carolina has long ago been pioneered and its transportation facilities have been taken care of by 1,800 miles of railways, more than 1,000 miles of interior navigation, and five ocean gateways. With the means of transportation at hand and millions of betterments being provided every year by enterprising and progressive transportation companies, what an immense opportunity we have to attract tens of thousands of homeseekers into this veritable Eldorado, with most of the 22,000,000 acres of undeveloped land credited to North Carolina!

It would really take a book to emphasize the opportunities here for us and the right class of newcomers who can be attracted to this wonderful section because of its proved advantages of every description. Wilmington is the clearing house for all these advantages and opportunities.

Around Wilmington there is such a far-flung area to be settled that the late Secretary Lane called this section the "nation's new frontier," and it is just that.—Wilmington Star.

ants are divided into two classes, renters and croppers. The renters have a certain resemblance to the capitalistic tenants of the North and East in that they possess something in the shape of stock in trade. They own their own

farm tools, their cattle, their household goods; they can "run themselves," as the phrase goes. They are themselves separated into two classes, kinsman renters—sons, sons-in-law, nephews, and the like, who have been established on their farms by proprietor-relatives; and self-help renters, who have only themselves to depend upon. These two classes form the economic and social cream of Southern farm tenants, though their condition in life is not especially rosy.

### The Cropper Type

The tenant that gives especial cause for anxiety is the cropper, a type of agriculturist that is found only in the South. Though the cropper has been a feature of Southern life since 1865, and though there are now about 225,000 in the Southern States, the word describing him has only recently found lodgment in the dictionary. The difference between a renter and a cropper, lies in the fact that, whereas the first runs himself, the latter is run by his landlord. He possesses no property and has no permanent habitation. He is constantly on the move from farm to farm. "It ain't no trouble for me to move," says the cropper, "I ain't got nothing but er soap gourd and er string er red peppers. All I have ter do is call up Tige, spit in the fireplace and start down their road." The cropper is as restless and as itinerant as the Wandering Jew; with his bedraggled family he goes from place to place, cultivating one farm after another on halves. He supplies nothing except his labor and that of his wife and children; the landlord furnishes everything else—land, dwelling, firewood, work stock, implements, pantry supplies, and even small advances of money. When the crop is gathered he gets half, and with deductions made for these advances, the landlord gets the rest. This is certainly a strange way to pick up a living, yet the most discouraging fact is that the cropper himself, though an object of anxiety to college professors and social reformers, is entirely satisfied with his own lot and manages to extract a considerable amount of pleasure from it.

The cropper's self-satisfaction, however, is purely a manifestation of a sunny temperament; it has no relation to circumstances, for the external conditions of his life are about as hard as can be found anywhere in this country.

"The croppers," say the authors of this pamphlet, "are The Forgotten Men that Walter H. Page wrote about." Their dwellings are wooden shanties, sometimes mere log houses. "In more than half of these dwellings it is possible to study astronomy through the holes in the roof and geology through the cracks in the floor." They have an illiteracy rate of 10 per cent, their sanitary conditions are deplorable, their reading matter consists of an occasional weekly newspaper, patent medicines serve them in lieu of the doctor, their wives are hoe-hands in the fields, and their children are also set to work at seven or eight, boys and girls alike. The church and the Sunday school play little part in the cropper's existence, though moonshining and boot-legging are well developed occupations. His average money income is \$153 a year; on this—less than three dollars a week—he commonly supports a fair-sized family.

About one fourth of all the white tenants in the South are croppers. Though the outlook for this sedimentary population is not hopeful, the condition of the other tenants—renters, both self-helping and kinsmen assisting—is not so discouraging. These are not a degenerate race; the men are virile and industrious; and the women intelligent and fecund; their homes are commonly neat, though humble; and their farms are well cared for. Illiteracy prevails to a considerable degree; though the boys and girls frequently reach the high school grades. But the lot even of the renters is a hard one; how many Northern young men and women would care to marry on the prospect of a cash income of \$20 a month, which is all that these Southern renters can look forward to? The improvement of their opportunities is one of the great problems facing the Southern States. They are good stock, they are sound morally and physically, they are intelligent and industrious, they contain the makings of that robust yeomanry which is the salvation of any country. What can be done for them? California has developed a system under which the state, by making properly safeguarded loans to farmers, enables them to become proprietors. Apparently the plan is working well. Professor Branson believes that this idea, or some modification of it, can be applied in North Carolina and other Southern States.—The World's Work.

## NEGRO FARM OWNERSHIP

### In North Carolina in 1920

Based on the 1920 Census of Agriculture, showing the percent of all negro farmers in each county who own the farms they operate.

State average, 29.2 percent of all negro farmers own their farms. In Edgecombe county only 6.6 percent of negro farmers are farm owners, or about one out of every 16 negro farmers. Where negroes are concentrated tenancy is the rule, where negroes are scattered ownership is the rule. This is true for the entire United States.

W. L. Whedbee, Pitt County

Department of Rural Social Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	County	Percent owners	Rank	County	Percent owners
1	Dare	100	51	Rutherford	38.8
2	Mitchell	100	52	Warren	38.3
3	Transylvania	98.8	53	Craven	38.2
4	Graham	92.3	54	Pasquotank	37.3
5	Swain	92.0	55	Cumberland	36.9
6	Jackson	89.0	56	Stokes	36.7
7	Ashe	88.9	57	Chowan	36.8
7	Cherokee	88.9	58	Pamlico	34.4
9	Alleghany	81.6	59	Martin	34.1
10	Brunswick	81.0	60	Lincoln	34.0
11	Wilkes	78.3	61	Duplin	33.7
12	Caldwell	78.1	62	Vance	33.6
12	Avery	78.1	63	Washington	33.3
14	Randolph	77.9	63	Madison	33.3
15	Watauga	76.9	65	Harnett	33.1
16	New Hanover	76.6	65	Perquimans	33.1
17	Henderson	75.7	67	Iredell	32.1
18	Burke	75.5	68	Granville	30.9
19	Columbus	74.1	69	Bertie	30.6
20	McDowell	71.4	70	Rockingham	30.2
21	Pender	68.0	70	Montgomery	30.2
22	Surry	63.7	72	Hertford	28.0
22	Macon	63.7	73	Polk	27.5
24	Bladen	62.5	74	Caswell	27.4
24	Haywood	62.5	75	Hyde	27.1
26	Buncombe	61.2	76	Wake	25.8
27	Guilford	57.6	77	Durham	24.3
28	Forsyth	57.5	78	Robeson	24.0
29	Tyrrell	56.3	79	Halifax	23.9
30	Yadkin	56.2	80	Johnston	23.7
31	Carteret	55.2	81	Gaston	23.0
32	Clay	55.0	82	Northampton	23.0
33	Yancey	53.1	83	Camden	22.2
34	Currituck	51.3	84	Richmond	22.1
35	Moore	50.9	85	Nash	21.1
36	Davie	50.7	86	Jones	19.4
37	Gates	48.7	87	Franklin	19.2
38	Alamance	47.2	88	Hoke	18.4
39	Beaufort	45.7	89	Cleveland	17.9
40	Alexander	45.4	90	Wayne	17.3
41	Catawba	43.3	91	Anson	15.8
42	Sempson	42.9	92	Union	13.9
43	Davidson	41.8	93	Cabarrus	13.8
44	Chatham	40.6	94	Pitt	11.2
45	Orange	40.5	95	Scotland	10.1
46	Onslow	40.2	96	Greene	9.6
47	Lee	40.0	97	Mecklenburg	9.1
48	Person	39.8	98	Wilson	7.9
49	Stanly	39.4	98	Lenoir	7.9
50	Rowan	39.0	100	Edgecombe	6.6