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Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt, H. W. Odum.

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## CRIME IN NORTH CAROLINA

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One of the first steps in the crime studies being undertaken by the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina is a statewide survey and analysis of court records. At present two graduate students are making a statistical analysis of the superior court cases in the hundred counties of North Carolina for the two years ending June 30, 1925. The data for the study consist of the reports turned in at the end of each term by the clerks of the superior court of the several counties. These reports give the name of each person indicted and prosecuted during a term of superior court together with the offense for which prosecuted and how the case was disposed of. The clerk is also expected to give the age, race, sex, and occupation of each defendant, although this is not always enforced or complied with. Therefore, this social information is more or less incomplete and unreliable.

### Tabulating Data

Such facts as are given are being tabulated according to offense. A separate tabulation sheet is used for each county for each fiscal year, a total of two hundred tabulation sheets in all. This enables the student to compare county with county, and year with year for the number, race, sex, age, occupation, and treatment of defendants by the court.

In making these comparisons North Carolina has been divided more or less arbitrarily into four groups of 25 counties each, based partly on geographic, partly on social, characteristics. The different areas of the state show wide differences in race ratios, tenant farmers, urban population, textile spindles, illiterates, wealth, and income. The study is bringing to light some interesting relationships between crime and these sectional differences.

The tabulation summary sheet shows a total of 14,484 cases for the year ending June 30, 1924. That is not accurate, for some of the clerks failed to report all the cases. For example, the Gaston county reports showed convictions only, 404 of them. A trip to Gastonia brought to light 244 cases that were nolle-prossed, acquitted, or judgment prayed. Another source of inaccuracy lies in the fact that the clerk generally has no written record of age, race, sex, or occupation, but depends on his judgment and memory. It would not be amiss for the social workers of North Carolina to push legislation to introduce the collection of this information into the court procedure.

### Some Comparisons

Taking the records for what they are worth, we find reported 8,625 cases against whites, 5,543 against negroes, and 71 against Indians, leaving 244 cases unclassified. Using the 1920 census of population figures we find 5.66 superior court cases reported for each thousand inhabitants. This may be termed the superior court indictment rate. A recent number of the University News Letter carried the county indictment rates for whites and negroes. The comparison of the rates by sections is interesting. The following table shows the superior court indictment rate per 1,000 inhabitants for 1923-24.

Region	All	White	Negro
The State	5.66	4.93	7.37
Tidewater	4.74	4.13	5.60
Plain and Sandhill	4.94	3.86	6.18
Piedmont	6.14	4.94	9.99
Mountain	6.88	6.44	12.29

The tidewater section has the largest proportion of negroes and the lowest indictment rate. The mountain section has the smallest proportion of negroes and the highest indictment rate. Does that mean that the way to reduce the proportion of crime is to increase the proportion of negroes? Not at all. It means that a stable, stationary, and rural population is less liable to get into court than a shifting, growing, or urban population. There is one exception to this generalization; namely, failure of the former sort of population to conform to a new statute. This is illustrated by an excess of moonshining in the mountains and violations of the tick eradication statute in the tidewater section. This tick eradication statute

accounted for nearly ten percent of the cases in the tidewater counties.

### Points to Bear in Mind

Lest the reader draw too sweeping conclusions from these statements and others that follow, it might be well to suggest that these differences may be partly accounted for by (1) differences in law enforcement, (2) differences in the proportion of cases from county to county disposed of in the federal and the lower courts, and (3) differences due to failure of some clerks of court to report anything but convictions. Some counties have a county court having original jurisdiction over a majority of the cases that go directly to the superior court in other counties. As yet we have not attempted to determine the effect of these factors on our figures.

It is also interesting to note in connection with racial indictment rates that the higher the white rate the proportionately higher the negro rate. A possible explanation of this is that as the opportunity of the negro for satisfying community contacts and an adequate social life increases, the fewer the crimes he will commit. A comparison of crime rates by counties seems to bear out this theory, but it is the case worker's task to show actual causes.

### Crime and Status

Thieving has been considered a typical negro crime, yet in some counties there is little difference between the races, a fact which tends to show that it is a crime typical of a low economic and social status. While the larceny indictment rate for negroes throughout the state is three times as high as the larceny indictment rate for whites, yet in several counties, including Union and Cabarrus, the rate for whites is higher. The occupational distribution tends to bear out the theory that crime is more closely related to social and economic status than to racial differences. The casual laborer contributes the largest proportion of crime. The farmer's seasonal idleness, and opportunities for moonshining help to account for this. The mill worker's long factory hours give him less time and energy for getting into mischief. At the same time it is significant that the mill worker contributes more than his share of the crimes against morality. He has also a large proportion of bootlegging, gambling, and larceny.

### Age Factor

It may be surprising to learn that half of the people indicted in the superior courts were over 29.4 years of age, according to the reports of the clerks. A judge has recently remarked on the increasingly early age at which youths get into court, but the figures reported

### INCOME FROM LIVESTOCK

North Carolina ranks high in the gross production of crop values, and fairly high in crop values per farm. But in the production of agricultural wealth, which includes not only crops but livestock and livestock products, North Carolina ranks very low.

Our farm income from larger meat animals sold and slaughtered is small on an aggregate basis, while on a per farm basis we rank near the end of the list, if not at the very end. The gross income from all larger meat animals sold and slaughtered in 1919 was slightly in excess of thirty-eight million dollars. In 1920 it was \$29,693,000, and in 1921 it was only \$18,585,000. By larger meat animals is meant beef and veal animals, swine, sheep, and goats.

North Carolina has more than four percent of the farms of the United States, but she produces only slightly more than one percent of the larger meat animals sold and slaughtered. North Carolina ranks second in farms, but she ranks thirtieth in gross income from meat animals sold and slaughtered. Very probably she ranks last in average income per farm from meat animals sold and slaughtered. This is one of the major sources of farm income for the United States, but a very minor source in North Carolina. Which goes far to explain why North Carolina ranks so low in the production of all agricultural wealth, both total and per farm.

by the clerks of court do not support his views. The median age varies from 27.7 years in the piedmont section to 32.1 years in the tidewater section.

Urban and industrial life tend to bring down the average age of offenders. Furthermore, a larger proportion of the city population consists of young folks in the teens and the twenties. In the tidewater section it was generally the older farmers who failed to comply with the tick eradication statute. The liquor violations also tend to raise the average age. On the whole, these facts lead us to believe that crime is primarily a phenomenon of particular group attitudes and social maladjustment. Hence it is more common in the young. One tradition of the plain people is indicated by the proportion of violations of the prohibition statute. New and developing communities have large crime ratios because of the numerous readjustments they call for. Finally, there are varying levels of civic morale which are reflected in these figures.

Once again should attention be called to the tentativeness of all this. Before a student of crime statistics can come to definite conclusions he must have access to more accurate social records in the criminal court, he must analyze the records of other courts, he must make comparisons over a series of years to note trends, he must find some index

of local law enforcement, and he must make case studies. The greatest value of the present study is in defining the problem of how to go about investigating the causes of crime and the methods of controlling it.—F. S. Wilder.

### WHAT DO TAXES BRING?

Ever since the day the American colonists protested against the tax on tea (which very few drank) opposition to taxes has seemed to be inherent in citizens of this country. We have talked more about the amount of the tax than about what taxes brought to us. Every dollar of tax money wasted or spent extravagantly or needlessly should bring forth protest and action to secure a dollar's worth of benefit for every dollar's worth of tax collected. If people are assured of government economically administered and they are getting the worth of their money, you hear no general complaint.

The Smithfield Herald says "there is no kick coming when we get the worth of our money," and adds:

It is refreshing occasionally to come across a person who is not kicking on account of higher taxes. Such a man dropped into our office recently who had just paid his taxes, and we were interested in his attitude. Were they as much as last year or more? We inquired. "Well, more," he replied. Then he told us how recently he had been looking over some old papers which he kept in a little trunk bought for the purpose of preserving valuable records, and came across his tax receipts for 1903. The amount was a little more than three dollars. Twenty-three years have passed and last week he paid about eighty dollars tax. In the meantime he had acquired just half an acre of land more than he had in 1903. But now he has an automobile. He has plenty of feed for his stock, more valuable stock and better farming utensils.

When asked if he would go back to 1903, if he could, he gave an emphatic negative answer. Then he told how he used to haul fertilizer in the spring and often had to unload his fertilizer to get his horse and wagon out of the mud. And the schools. He has a child completing high school and others headed for the same thing. He appreciates the fact that a long-term school means the saving of a year in every three.

It is not taxes folks mind. It is not getting value in return that causes the rub. In every instance where the taxpayer feels that he is getting his money's worth, there is no kick on taxes.—News and Observer.

### FEWER FARM DWELLERS

A continued decrease in farm population in the United States is reported by the Department of Agriculture, which estimates that there were 479,000 fewer people on farms January 1 this year than on January 1 a year ago.

The department estimates the farm

population at 30,665,000 on January 1, 1926, compared with 31,134,000 on January 1, 1925, a decrease of 1.5 percent. These figures include all men, women and children living on farms.

The movement from farms to cities, towns, and villages in 1925 is estimated at 2,035,000, and the movement to farms at 1,135,000, a net movement away from farms of 901,000 persons. Births on farms during 1925 are estimated at 710,000, and deaths at 288,000, leaving a natural increase of 422,000 which reduced the loss due to cityward movement to 479,000.

The figures for 1924 showed a net loss in farm population of 182,000 persons. The gross movement from farms to cities in that year was 2,075,000, and the gross movement back to farms was 1,396,000, a net movement, not counting births and deaths, of 679,000 persons.

The large gross movement from farms to cities, which has been at or slightly above the two million mark since January, 1922, apparently decidedly overbalances the gross movement from cities to farms plus the increase on farms due to excess of births over deaths.

### CRIME IN MISSOURI

Missouri has anticipated its neighbors in arriving at the conclusion that before talking intelligently about crime one might do well to find out something about it.

One of the things it has definitely found out is that crime, at least in Missouri, is not a hazardous occupation. In St. Louis in the course of a single year there were 149 cases of homicide and 25 punishments; 12,701 burglaries and 107 punishments; 2,075 robberies and 85 punishments. The chances of escaping the penalty for murder were 5 in 6 in St. Louis and 10 in 11 in Kansas City; for robbery, 24 in 25 in St. Louis and 27 in 28 in Kansas City; for burglary, 24 in 25 in St. Louis, and 99 in 100 in Kansas City.

Punishment here means sentence. But sentence itself is subject to a very handsome discount. In more than 1,000 serious cases an average penal term of more than 60 months worked out actually at less than 12 months. A 99-year sentence resolves itself into 11.19 years. A life sentence works out at less than 11 years.

Before losing oneself in a study of the causes of crime and its cure, it is obviously in order to experiment with the simple device of catching the criminal and applying the laws that exist. In the current number of The Survey, Professor George W. Kirchwey deprecates the panic about crime waves, manifesting itself in outcries for severer penalties and new penalties. His fears would seem to have little basis. Whatever penalties we may write on our statute books, the chances are that the heavier they are the less they will be enforced, if we may judge from our present experience.

Nothing in the way of penal theory will affect one basic factor in the situation, which is the failure of the police to apprehend criminals. If in St. Louis only 85 persons received punishment in 2,075 cases of robbery, the courts were not entirely at fault. The total number of arrests was only 379. Nearly nine chances in ten of not being caught after committing robbery, and only one chance in five of being convicted after being caught—this is a condition of affairs that should greatly simplify the task of the many agencies now engaged in studying the subject.—New York Times.

### RELIGION IN OUR SCHOOLS

We do not seek tolerance. We seek brotherhood, understanding, cooperation. It is the great business of religion to unite, and not to divide. Unity does not mean uniformity. Minorities are the means of growth. Let us encourage differences so long as they contribute to the larger good. Minorities are more often right than majorities. Individuals are far more often right than minorities, many of them moving like blazing stars, counter to the direction of their times. No civilization is worth while that does not respect variety.

But while we respect variety, let us unite in spirit and service. Let us leave our theological weapons at the door and gather in the temple of brotherhood to do the things about which we agree; take hold as one man of the thorny problems of peace, industry, race relations, in round-table discussion groups and forums, where we can sit, all kinds of us, elbow to elbow. Let us put religion into the schools—not creeds, but religion. No one wants his child's mind to be the dumping-ground for twenty creeds; but surely Americans can unite in these practical ways upon the religion of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.—Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, The Literary Digest.

## CRIME AND SECTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN NORTH CAROLINA

For purposes of comparison of sections in the statewide analysis of crime being made by the University the state has been divided into four sections of 25 counties each. The figures in part one of the table below are based on the 1920 census unless otherwise stated. The crime facts are based on the superior court reports for the year ending June 30, 1924.

	I. General facts by sections:				
	The State	25 Tidewater Counties	25 Plain and Sand-hill counties	25 Piedmont Counties	25 Mountain Counties
Area, square miles	48,726	12,212	14,319	11,811	10,384
Population, total 1920	2,559,123	428,854	809,306	871,209	455,754
White population	1,785,115	246,504	464,552	664,329	419,730
Negro population	762,507	178,350	344,863	206,880	34,414
*Indian population	11,501	9,891	9,891	282,193	1,610
Urban population	468,622	79,283	111,041	282,193	46,146
Farms in 1925, per 1000 pop. 1920	111	110	126	90	125
Tenants in 1925, per 1000 population	50	51	79	35	26
Illiterates, per 1000 adults	131	139	155	112	166
Taxed incomes 1924, No. per 1000 pop.	26.6	23.3	23.5	35.0	18.8
Autos, Jan. 1924, per 1000 pop.	96.6	72.7	98.9	124.3	62.8
*i.e. Indians in counties in which Indians were indicted. Others included with whites.					
II. Crime facts.					
Total cases	14,484	2,007	3,996	5,347	3,134
Indictments per 1000 population	5.66	4.74	4.94	6.14	6.88
Per 1000 whites	4.93	4.13	3.96	4.94	6.44
Per 1000 negroes	7.37	5.60	6.18	9.99	12.29
Liquor violation indictments	3,887	354	969	1,485	1,079
Indictments per 1000 population	1.53	.84	1.20	1.71	2.37
Per 1000 whites	1.46	.68	1.02	1.53	2.29
Per 1000 negroes	1.63	1.05	1.40	2.26	3.22
Indictments for larceny	1,773	193	633	743	204
Per 1000 population	.69	.46	.78	.85	.45
Per 1000 whites	.48	.27	.47	.57	.35
Per 1000 negroes	1.28	.72	1.21	1.75	1.77
Median ages of all persons indicted	29.2	32.1	29.1	27.7	30.5
Median ages of liquor law violators	31.5	34.5	32.4	30.5	30.9