

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

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

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

MAY 19, 1926

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

VOL. XII, NO. 27

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. R. 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

HOMICIDES IN NORTH CAROLINA

INDICTMENTS FOR HOMICIDE

Elsewhere in this issue is a table ranking the counties according to the number of indictments for homicide per 100,000 inhabitants (1920 census) during the two years ending June 30, 1925. Those interested in comparing these rates with homicide rates outside of North Carolina should divide by two to get the annual rate.

Veteran readers of the News Letter will recall a somewhat similar study appearing in the News Letter for December 8, 1915. It is interesting to note that the rankings of the counties then and now correspond quite closely.

The reader should bear in mind that these figures are not for the number of murders occurring, but are for the number of indictments for murder and manslaughter. For the smaller counties there are not cases enough to make reliable comparisons.

Taking the figures as they stand we find the worst section to be Robeson and the adjoining counties of Scotland, Hoke, and Cumberland. The indictment rate for the Croatan Indians is 131, thirteen of the 91 indictments in the four above mentioned counties being against them. The indictment rate for negroes is higher than for whites. A table which appears elsewhere compares the various sections of the state and rates for whites and negroes. The indictment rate for homicides for whites was 16 per 100,000 whites. The rate for negroes was 55 per 100,000 negroes. Thus we see that, whether or not negroes commit murder and manslaughter three times as often as whites, they are indicted for such misdeeds three times as often. It should be remembered that some homicides result in no indictment while others result in two or more indictments.

Of the 712 indictments for the two-year period, 424 resulted in convictions. Of the convicted, 22 paid the death penalty and 195 were sentenced to prison for terms of five years or more. The other 227 convicted got off more lightly. Of course, some manslaughter sentences were for accidental deaths resulting from criminal negligence on the part of the person convicted. In other cases light sentences were imposed on the accomplices of the murderer.

How do these figures compare with the total number of homicides occurring in the state as distinguished from indictments for homicide? The bureau of vital statistics reports 560 homicides for the two years ending December 31, 1924. (This is the minimum number, since often homicides occur which are unreported.) In addition, there were deaths from undetermined violence. This is a homicide rate of 21.7 per 100,000 over a two-year period. The rate for the United States for those same two years was 20.1 per 100,000 population.

The United States is a murderous nation and North Carolina is a murderous state. Human life is held mighty lightly in a state that experiences such a large number of killings annually. We get very much wrought up when the state takes a life, but it might be well to remember that out of every one hundred indictments for homicide only three pay the death penalty, and less than 28 percent result in convictions carrying prison sentences of five years or more. The chances are in favor of a light sentence, even when convicted for homicide.

FOLK SCHOOL EXPERIMENT

There has recently been established in the Brasstown community of Cherokee and Clay counties what is known as the John C. Campbell Folk School, modeled after the Folk High School of Denmark, which is characterized as "an experiment in adult education." According to the Danish conception, "education is not a process to be measured by academic grades and degrees. The humble tasks of farm, shop and home have a cultural value more fundamental than that of books. Education should not discredit such labor but should give it meaning, breadth and depth."

Brasstown, North Carolina, was selected for this experiment because it is "a section poor, but capable of agricultural development, a natural center

for an area of some 50 square miles; it is on a good highway within 3 1/2 miles of Murphy, the terminus of two railroads; and about 100 miles from the markets of Asheville, Knoxville and Atlanta. Its greatest asset is its citizenship, a strong group of small farmers with a high reputation for integrity. Ninety-seven percent are land-owners. Their desire for a 'school which will help the country' is partially indicated by the following pledges made by 116 citizens: Over \$800 in cash; locust posts; telephone poles, building logs; building stone; firewood; native shrubs, trees and bulbs. In the first three years of the school, 1,495 days of labor, 397 with team. Yearly, 388 days' labor are pledged without time limit. In addition to this list, about 30 acres of excellent land has been pledged." This spirit of cooperation on the part of these farmers spells success for the experiment from the beginning and the results will be watched with much interest.

As one of the initial steps in this enterprise is cooperation, a Savings and Loan Association has been organized to encourage thrift and provide a source of production credit for the farmers of this community. At the initial meeting 16 men and women joined and subscribed 18 shares of stock, and the following officials were elected: Mr. J. O. Penland, President; James Clayton, Vice-President; Miss Margaret Butler, Secretary, Mr. John Deal, Treasurer.

This is the first Savings and Loan Association to be organized in this section of North Carolina, and its success will demonstrate to the farmers of southwestern North Carolina the benefits to be derived through a cooperative financial enterprise.—Market News.

IN THE OLD NORTH STATE

The renaissance of Dixie is nowhere so marked as it is in North Carolina, whose story is told today in The Sun. For ten years the nation has been watching this state clear with one great bound the morass of fifty years of poverty and depression to reach the level plain of a new century of promise and achievement.

There are those who say that good schools have worked the transition. Others point to thousands of miles of good roads and still others talk in terms of hydroelectric power. But perhaps they are nearer correct who go behind figures and statistics and point to courageous men who lifted themselves up by their own bootstraps and pulled their state with them—men who worked out their own destinies, and in doing so led their people out of the depths by teaching them the value of hard work and by inspiring them to success.

Duke and Reynolds, with a few mules and a few pounds of tobacco, laid the foundations of a great industry. Others of their stamp set up the small mills in the cotton fields, and today New England must look to her laurels as the textile leader of the country. Governors like Aycock and Morrison dotted the state with schoolhouses and lined it with modern highways. Another of the Dukes harnessed the streams from the mountains to move the wheels of the tobacco and cotton factories.

Yes, North Carolina has reason to be proud of her accomplishment, and even more so because she has played the hand alone and achieved her goal by the vision and toil of her own sons.—New York Sun.

MURDERS IN THE U. S.

"The economic loss to the nation from the 12,000 murders in the United States in 1925 was very serious." Thus Frederick L. Hoffman, consulting statistician to the Prudential Life Insurance Company of America, last week; and further: "The evidence (after comparing the U. S. murder rate of 11.1 per 100,000 for 1925 with the 10.8 rate for 1924) extending over a long period of years is quite conclusive that the normal American rate is now approximately twice as high as the corresponding rate for Italy, often referred to as the classic land for murder." Jacksonville, Florida, ranked highest in rate last year—72.3 per 100,000 (58.8 in 1924); Memphis next with 69.0 (69.7

KNOW NORTH CAROLINA As Florida Sees Us

What another great state, the development of which has amazed the world, thinks of North Carolina, is shown in the following from the Palm Beach, Fla., Times:

In all the splendid renaissance of the South today there are two southern states which stand forth as the first and foremost flowers of this rebirth. And in the case of each of them the secret of their mighty success is the coupling of good government and good roads and good people with natural blessings of climate and resource.

This is the tie that binds Florida and North Carolina today in mutual help and admiration and understanding. Floridians have been told of many beautiful places to spend the summer but the great majority of those who are persuaded to spend it anywhere else than in their own comfortable summer climate are apparently resolved upon North Carolina.

North Carolina today is experiencing a development and an increase in population and values which, in many respects, compares to that of Florida. This development is in some measure the reflection of Florida's own vast progress but it could not have occurred without much to offer on its own part. There are, of course, other summer lands of charm and beauty but none so accessible to the people of the South or to the prosperity which has recently come to those people. But North Carolina is more than this. It is already one of the first agricultural and industrial states in the Union. Its manufactures of furniture rank second only to those of Michigan; its tobacco growth is the greatest in America; its cotton mills rival in size and number those of Massachusetts; its mineral resources, timber, and water-power are assets of untold value. And it has established for itself an integrity of government, an educational system, and a network of highways which have secured and enlarged all of its national blessings. But, what is most important of all, North Carolina has people. People of refinement, of public spirit, of kindness, of perseverance, and dauntless ability. In these people all of the graces and background of the old South are linked with all the promise and vitality of the new.

in 1924). Immediately in lower line came Birmingham, Savannah, and New Orleans. All these are Southern cities.

In number of homicides Chicago topped the list—563 (509 in 1924; rate 18.8 against 17.5). New York came next—374, a decrease from the 387 of 1924. Third was Detroit—243.

No murders occurred in Newton, Holyoke, Haverhill, and Salem, Mass., or in Manchester, N. H. These cities range in population from 50,000 to 80,000.—Time, The Weekly News Magazine.

BEVERIDGE ON CRIME

Former Senator Albert J. Beveridge is one of the students of the crime wave who refuses to attribute it to the backwash of war. In proof he points to England, Germany, Italy, and France, where war hit more heavily but where there is far less law breaking than exists in our own country.

Mr. Beveridge, in his speech this morning to the lawyers assembled in Texarkana, blamed conditions here upon the deluge of laws and the evils of bureaucracy. "Everybody is so interfered with by impracticable legislation," he said, "that a public psychology of antagonism to all law has been created." There undoubtedly is a good deal in this; the mass mind of a country may be like the mind of a child who, loaded with too many and too involved tasks at school, throws his books and slate in the ditch and plays hockey.

The Indiana statesman is right when he says that while the Commandments which forbid a man to wrong his neighbor can be translated into statute laws against murder, theft and perjury, "not a line of the Sermon on the Mount

can be made effective by Congress or legislature."

Mr. Beveridge's speech is the plain statement of a man who feels strongly about American conditions. The Crime Commission might well consider his views.—New York Sun.

HOMICIDE AND LAW

During 1925, in Continental United States about 10,100 homicides occurred. This death-toll is more than fourteen times the figure which would have prevailed if the experience of England and Wales had occurred in this country! The city of Chicago alone, with a population close to the 3,000,000 mark, had more than twice the number of homicides in one recent year than occurred in the whole of England and Wales with its population of nearly 40,000,000! The homicide rate for the United States is six times that for Canada, our neighbor on the North!

No one can face complacently these startling and disparaging figures. The American public ought to know why and under what circumstances so many thousands of lives are sacrificed to the homicidal impulse and what is being done to effect prompt and just disposition of the cases presented to the prosecuting attorneys of our counties. On the first point, a number of efforts are under way by various agencies and commissions to study the circumstances which lead to so many crimes against the security of persons. On the second point, the Metropolitan Life Insurance

Company has endeavored to discover what police and judicial action follows homicide cases among its policyholders.

Facts are now available for the subsequent action in 611 homicides among policyholders of this Company in the years 1922 to 1924. At least one year was allowed to elapse before inquiries were sent to prosecuting attorneys of counties in the United States. In the first place, 86 of these cases were justifiable homicides, where persons were killed by officers of the law while resisting arrest or while in the act of committing crime. This left 525 assailants answerable to the law for taking human life. It developed that 54 assailants committed suicide and 13 died before arraignment. Of the remaining 458 assailants, 84, or 18.3 percent, had not been apprehended within one year after the crime had been committed! The 374 cases actually apprehended show an interesting after-history at the hands of the law. There were released by magistrates or grand juries, 108 persons against whom no case could be made, and eight were declared insane. There were actually brought to trial 268 cases or 56.3 percent out of an original group of 463 living assailants. In 62 cases the defendants were acquitted, and nine cases were still pending one year after the commission of the crime! A verdict of guilty was rendered in 187 cases, of which 170 were sentenced to prison for terms of varying length, eight cases were sentenced to death (seven executed and one case on appeal) and nine were released, either on suspended sentence or by being fined!—M. L. Ins. Co., Statistical Bulletin.

INDICTMENTS FOR HOMICIDE In North Carolina, 1923 to 1925

In the following table the counties are ranked according to the number of indictments in superior courts for homicide per 100,000 population for the two-year period ending June 30, 1925. The second column gives the number of indictments for homicide for each county during the two-year period.

Ten counties reported no indictments for homicide for the two-year period. Mitchell had the highest rate, 124 per 100,000 population. Robeson reported the largest number with 43 indictments for killings.

State total, 712 indictments for homicide for the two-year period ending June 30, 1925. State two-year rate, 27 indictments for homicide per 100,000 population.

Ethel Crew, Northampton county, F. S. Wilder, New Hampshire, Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina.

Rank	County	Indictments per 100,000 in-habs.	Number of indictments	Rank	County	Indictments per 100,000 in-habs.	Number of indictments
1	Ashe	0	0	51	Franklin	22	6
1	Camden	0	0	51	Granville	22	6
1	Currituck	0	0	51	Pamlico	22	2
1	Dare	0	0	51	Transylvania	22	2
1	Davie	0	0	55	Pasquotank	23	4
1	Graham	0	0	55	Randolph	23	7
1	Hyde	0	0	55	Swain	23	3
1	Jones	0	0	58	McDowell	24	4
1	Onslow	0	0	58	Yadkin	24	4
1	Yancey	0	0	60	Beaufort	26	8
11	Iredell	5	2	60	Buncombe	26	17
11	Person	5	1	60	Cherokee	26	4
13	Hertford	6	1	60	Vance	26	6
14	Montgomery	7	1	64	Richmond	27	7
16	Alexander	8	1	65	Gates	28	3
15	Macon	8	1	65	Guilford	28	22
15	Sampson	8	3	65	Wilkes	28	9
18	Alamance	9	3	68	Martin	29	6
18	Burke	9	2	68	Stokes	29	6
18	Rowan	9	4	70	Halifax	30	13
18	Warren	9	2	70	Northampton	30	7
22	Bladen	10	2	70	Watauga	30	4
22	Caldwell	10	2	73	Greene	31	5
22	Johnston	10	5	74	Forsyth	33	26
25	Polk	11	1	74	Gaston	33	17
26	Cabarrus	12	4	74	Pitt	33	15
26	Catawba	12	4	77	Craven	34	10
28	Caswell	13	2	78	Stanly	36	10
28	Rutherford	13	4	79	Moore	37	8
30	Davidson	14	5	79	Wake	37	28
31	Jackson	15	2	81	Union	39	14
31	New Hanover	15	6	82	Alleghany	41	3
31	Surry	15	5	83	Mecklenburg	42	34
34	Wayne	16	7	84	Duplin	43	13
35	Bertie	17	4	85	Henderson	44	8
35	Chatham	17	4	86	Lee	45	6
35	Lincoln	17	3	87	Brunswick	47	7
35	Orange	17	3	88	Lenoir	50	15
39	Anson	18	5	89	Haywood	51	12
39	Perquimans	18	2	90	Edgecombe	53	20
39	Rockingham	18	8	91	Wilson	54	20
39	Washington	18	2	92	Avery	58	6
43	Carteret	19	3	93	Nash	63	26
44	Cleveland	20	7	94	Cumberland	71	25
44	Columbus	20	6	95	Chowan	75	8
44	Madison	20	4	96	Scotland	77	12
44	Pender	20	3	97	Robeson	79	43
48	Durham	21	9	98	Hoke	94	11
48	Harnett	21	6	99	Clay	107	5
48	Tyrrell	21	1	100	Mitchell	124	14

Indictments for Homicides for Two Years Ending June 30, 1925.

	Rate per 100,000 total pop.	White rate per 100,000 white	Negro rate per 100,000 negroes
North Carolina	28	16	55
25 Tidewater counties	25	13	41
25 Plain and Sandhill counties	37	18	61
25 Piedmont counties	22	12	51
25 Mountain counties	25	22	61