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BIRTHS ATTENDED BY MIDWIVES

ATTENDED BY MIDWIVES

Elsewhere appears a table based on the recent annual report of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, State Board of Health, in which table the counties are ranked according to the percent of all white children born in 1925 who were delivered by midwives. The parallel column gives the percent of negro births attended by midwives.

Gaston county makes the best showing with less than seven-tenths of one percent of white births attended by midwives, the assumption being that the attendance of a doctor is preferable to that of a midwife at child-birth. Brunswick county ranks last with more than fifty-eight percent of all white births in 1925 attended by midwives. Of the nearly fifty-eight thousand white children born in the state in 1925, eight thousand one hundred and sixty-three were delivered by midwives.

Six mountain counties report no negro births attended by midwives. All told, only twenty-seven negro children were born in 1925 in these six mountain counties. Dare county with nineteen negro births reports them all attended by midwives. In a large number of counties in eastern North Carolina with large negro ratios more than three-fourths of negro births were attended by midwives. In nine eastern counties more than ninety percent of negro births were attended by midwives. Of the state total of 25,279 negro births reported, 17,825 or 70.55 percent were attended by midwives.

All told nearly twenty-six thousand births or about one-third of all births in North Carolina, white and black, were attended by midwives in 1925.

Geographic Distribution

The geographic distribution of the practice of midwifery makes an interesting study. The proportion of white children delivered by midwives in the Piedmont country is rather small. The ratios are high in the counties east of the falls line, or the Coastal Plains, and highest in the Tidewater and mountain counties, with the exception of a half-dozen urban counties.

At least four-fifths of all negro births in the eastern half of the state are attended by midwives. The ratio is considerably lower in the Piedmont counties as a rule, and lowest in the Carolina Highlands. There are only three counties in the eastern half of North Carolina with as many as one-third of the negro births attended by doctors.

The South Leads

Midwives appear to be more prevalent in the South than elsewhere. Quoting The Survey: "It was found that midwives were by far the more numerous in the Southern states. Thirty thousand out of the entire 45,000, practiced in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Virginia had 6,036 registered midwives, North Carolina 6,500, Mississippi 3,200, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York had five thousand. The remaining 10,000 of the total 45,000 were scattered among 26 states, an average of only 400 to each."

Who Are the Midwives

The Monthly Health Bulletin recently said, "The midwife of Robeson county is rather typical of the midwife of the South. Out of one hundred twenty-eight midwives registered, over one hundred are colored and only thirty-eight can read and write; the average age of each is fifty-six years, and the average number of confinements attended by each midwife annually is nine. Washe-manns were taken on sixty-three midwives and thirteen showed positive."

Further quoting the same article, "These midwives are, except in rare instances, ignorant, untrained, incompetent women, and some of the results of their obstetric incompetence are unnecessary deaths and blindness of infants, and avoidable invalidism, suffering and deaths of mothers. In most European countries the midwife has been a fixed institution for hundreds of years, and receives a strict course of training and supervision by the government. The training of the midwives in Germany,

where they are required to spend six months in a government obstetric hospital, under the instruction and supervision of trained obstetricians, is far superior to that which the great majority of physicians receive in this country before graduation. Holland, France, and Italy give a two-year, and Norway, Sweden, and Denmark a one-year course of training to their midwives. England faced this problem, and solved it as late as 1902 by the establishment of the 'Central Midwife Board,' by an act of Parliament entitled 'An act to secure the better training of midwives, and to regulate their practice.' The system is somewhat similar to that of Germany, the midwife being trained in an obstetric hospital for six months, licensed after examination by the Central Midwife Board, and their work supervised by the government. New York has established a training school for midwives, but it is too small to more than touch the problem in the city alone.

"From all information available, it seems that what is most needed in this country is the better training of the physicians in obstetrics—not to try to educate the midwife to the extent of the European countries. If this is done, she may become a fixed element in our social and economic system and assume a legal status which cannot later be altered. Broadly speaking, three standpoints are taken in this country—first, the midwife must be abolished; second, the midwife had best be ignored and left to her own devices; third, the midwife should be raised to a higher plane by proper state control and education. The first proposition is impossible until some better substitute for the midwife is provided to care for the large number of women she attends in childbirth. The second proposal is unworthy of consideration. The third proposition is at the present time the only practical way of dealing with the midwife problem—whether it has for its object the temporary safeguarding of helpless women and children, or finally the elimination of all but the educated midwives. Since the evil of the moment cannot be eradicated, the danger to the public can be minimized by some provision for the proper regulation, supervision and control of midwives by the state. The methods of regulating midwifery may be divided into three classes—restrictive measures carried to indirect abolition; educational restrictions; and, finally, registration and supervision. The purpose of regulation by educational restriction, generally speaking, is not to disturb the existing body of midwives, but to gradually replace them, by means of progressively elevated requirements and standards; by a smaller body of well-trained women; this method to be carried in the course of years to the point of practical abolition. The primary object of registration is to bring the midwives under the supervision of competent officials, so that their work may be subjected to some measure of supervision."—S. H. H., Jr.

FOR A FREE PRESS

The North Carolina Club at its last meeting had the privilege of hearing Josephus Daniels, former Secretary of the Navy, discuss the relation of democracy to the press. This year the club has been considering some of the problems of democracy, and in seeking a speaker for this subject it naturally turned to Josephus Daniels, who is both a brave and able editor and a great exponent of democracy.

We are living in a day, said Mr. Daniels, when democracy is flouted and scouted. All over the world there is a distrust of democracy. People are losing faith in themselves and are calling for a dictator. They want to shake off the responsibilities which democracy imposes. Autocracy is in flower in Italy, Russia, Spain and other countries, and many Americans are singing its praises. About 1913 there was a rebirth in democracy all over the world—in Russia, Japan, China, Persia, England and America, but today the pendulum has swung far back in the other direction.

Speaking of democracy and a free press, Mr. Daniels said the two terms ought to be synonymous. He quoted

WHERE FARMERS SPEAK

Yesterday I ventured the suggestion that salvation by politics is the great illusion of agricultural America, and that the farmers of America must do for themselves what the farmers of Denmark have done for themselves.

The Danish farmers have subjected themselves to the intolerable fatigue of learning the game of distribution or marketing all the way from the farm to where their products are consumed.

This conquest of knowledge has enabled the Danish farmers to secure control of their own economic destiny.

The gist of the accomplishment of the farmers of Denmark is this—they have lifted agriculture from the level of a domestic vocation to the level of a successful commercial enterprise. And, as Branson and other students of the Danish achievement have pointed out, the establishment of agriculture as a commercially successful enterprise has meant, in Denmark, five things:

First, the Danish farmers have resorted to the latest scientific methods of producing crops to feed the farm family and the farm animal.

Second, the Danish farmers have raised livestock through which their crop surpluses are converted into milk and meat products.

Third, the Danish farmers have established farm industries to convert these milk and meat products and other farm products into forms that will be saleable and satisfying to the ultimate consumer—such industries as creameries, cheese factories, bacon factories, egg packing plants, and the like—owned and operated by the farmers or their employed experts and business representatives.

Fourth, the Danish farmers have established sales organizations and financial institutions, controlled and conducted by the farmers on a co-operative basis.

Fifth, the Danish farmers have engineered the development of a political state whose service agencies are sincerely and scientifically kept busy in behalf of agriculture.

I can not but believe that all this carries a sound suggestion to the farmers of America. I do not mean to say that the farmers of America could import without change the system that the farmers of Denmark have created and expect it to work automatically. There are many differences between Denmark and the United States.

I am not suggesting that the farmers of America should slavishly copy the procedures of the farmers of Denmark.

I am suggesting only that the farmers of America should consider seriously the principles upon which the farmers of Denmark have acted.

Tomorrow I shall outline some of the differences between Denmark and the United States that American farmers must reckon with in any serious attempt to profit by the experience of the Danish farmers in scientific production and co-operative marketing.—Dr. Glenn Frank, McClure newspaper syndicate, by permission.

Thomas Jefferson's declaration that if he couldn't have both democracy and a free press he would take the latter, for democracy could not endure without it. The test of whether a nation is democratic or autocratic, said Mr. Daniels, is whether the press is free.

Press Commercialized

When our constitution was framed the editor was given a favored place above any other occupation, and the freedom of the press was guaranteed along with freedom of assembly and freedom of worship. It must be admitted that some papers hardly deserve this constitutional protection. A newspaper has no excuse for existence except as a public servant, and has no right to expect constitutional privileges if it becomes purely a commercial institution.

Many of the great metropolitan dailies are getting immensely wealthy. Single corporations own chains of newspapers, and the stockholders are

interested solely in dividends. Many of the large dailies have become the agents and apologists and defenders of privilege. Just how long they can remain so and retain constitutional protection is uncertain.

To believe in democracy today one must have a robust faith. Too many are indifferent. There was a time when men were willing to die rather than be denied a voice in government. It is not so now. They want to be relieved of the responsibilities of self-government; they ask for a dictator.

In North Carolina

What is the situation in North Carolina? Have the people drunk of the fountain of Macon, Vance and Aycock, or are they drinking the stale waters of federalism impregnated with gold? Unfortunately there is growing up in the state a spirit of materialism which is to be deplored. North Carolina must not become Pennsylvania-minded nor even Massachusetts-minded. It must preserve its native qualities. Cannot the state become enriched by industrialism without losing its soul? Can we preserve the essential principles of democracy?

Democracy, if it is to survive, must have the courage to combat evil in high places as well as in low places. The newspapers must not be silent in the face of injustice. Nothing is more disheartening than to see certain newspapers cavil and make sport when earnest men and women courteously point out existing injustices, and ask that the plane of life of the submerged multitudes be raised a little. Democracy often seems like a broken rope but it is the world's only hope. Democracy must be continued and it must go forward until it takes the last ramparts

of autocracy and privilege.

Mr. Daniels's speech will appear in full in the forthcoming Year-Book of the North Carolina Club.

SHOULD BE COMPULSORY

A bill offered in the legislature requiring all county officers to give bonds in indemnity companies was tabled. It should have passed. But county commissioners have the right to make the requirement, and should. In fact the citizen should refuse to sign a bond that can be given through an indemnity company. One who can make a bond through an indemnity company and passes that by to ask his friends to take the risk for him should be turned down. If he has no more consideration for his friends than to ask them to stand in his place to save the few dollars necessary to get an indemnity bond, his friends should have none for him. He doesn't deserve the consideration, and his attitude might well raise the question whether he is to be trusted.

Of course the average man giving a bond has no purpose to forfeit it. But the risk is there; and he who insists on imposing that risk on others displays an attitude that should give one pause before he puts his name on his bond. In the matter of county officers, and other public officials, straw bonds are not only possible but probable. It is a fact that very often people who are not worth over the homestead will readily put their names on an official bond. For that reason the law should require the indemnity bond—for safety as well as to relieve the private citizen from embarrassment. But in the case of county officers county commissioners may require indemnity bonds—if they will.

BIRTHS ATTENDED BY MIDWIVES

Percent of White and Negro Births Attended by Midwives, 1925

In the following table, based on Vital Statistics issued by the State Board of Health, the counties are ranked according to the percent of white births attended by midwives. The parallel column shows the percent of negro births attended by midwives.

State total of white births in 1925, 57,904. White births attended by midwives numbered 8,163, or 14.09 percent of all white births.

State total of negro births 25,279. Negro births attended by midwives 17,825, or 70.55 percent of all negro births.

F. C. Upchurch, Wake County

Department of Rural Social-Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	County	Percent white births attended by mid- wives	Percent negro births attended by mid- wives	Rank	County	Percent white births attended by mid- wives	Percent negro births attended by mid- wives
1	Gaston	43.95	.69	51	Johnston	71.16	15.93
2	Alamance	17.44	1.11	52	Henderson	46.96	16.10
3	Guilford	39.08	1.34	53	Hoke	85.83	16.66
4	Durham	48.35	1.77	53	Polk	68.57	16.66
5	Forsyth	68.31	1.82	55	Halifax	89.46	17.82
6	Mecklenburg	75.00	2.09	56	Stany	63.63	18.31
7	Orange	37.44	2.63	57	Moore	60.06	18.67
8	Buncombe	47.45	3.19	58	Caldwell	70.45	18.80
9	Cleveland	58.51	3.22	59	McDowell	25.00	19.20
10	Rowan	59.29	3.77	60	Scotland	85.41	19.44
11	Wake	63.05	4.70	61	Harnett	76.66	19.88
12	Wilson	66.14	4.94	62	Transylvania	0.00	20.00
13	Iredell	66.83	5.04	63	Montgomery	72.00	20.10
14	New Hanover	73.91	5.05	64	Pamlico	85.18	20.54
15	Rutherford	42.40	5.29	65	Northampton	87.65	20.57
16	Pasquotank	75.09	5.88	66	Beaufort	72.18	21.24
17	Lincoln	73.60	6.15	67	Jones	85.71	22.08
18	Rockingham	50.87	6.15	68	Sampson	83.94	22.10
19	Davidson	44.13	6.35	69	Craven	90.14	22.28
20	Edgecombe	73.95	6.60	70	Allegany	50.00	22.50
21	Richmond	70.40	7.43	71	Bertie	89.61	22.56
22	Greene	62.12	7.45	72	Hertford	85.09	23.65
23	Cabarrus	59.58	7.67	73	Cherokee	66.66	24.61
24	Wayne	59.84	8.22	74	Perquimans	78.20	24.82
25	Vance	76.87	8.62	75	Gates	86.95	25.35
26	Haywood	00.00	8.89	76	Alexander	75.75	26.48
27	Granville	59.90	9.03	77	Camden	82.69	26.65
28	Anson	81.09	9.09	78	Martin	90.13	26.91
29	Person	50.34	9.16	79	Onslow	85.84	29.49
30	Yadkin	44.44	9.60	80	Dare	100.00	29.65
31	Chowan	70.98	10.14	81	Carteret	63.15	29.83
32	Stokes	68.67	10.43	82	Tyrrell	92.85	31.64
33	Currituck	74.66	10.75	83	Watauga	0.00	31.95
34	Pitt	73.27	11.22	84	Yancey	20.00	32.33
35	Lee	78.06	11.65	85	Burke	72.22	33.50
36	Randolph	55.17	11.71	86	Jackson	53.84	34.92
37	Davie	67.53	11.76	87	Warren	91.74	36.31
38	Robeson	74.57	11.87	88	Macon	16.66	36.71
39	Lenoir	80.14	12.52	89	Washington	94.79	37.24
40	Chatham	68.44	13.21	90	Mitchell	0.00	38.49
41	Surry	21.05	13.75	91	Pender	97.03	38.84
42	Caswell	56.84	13.77	92	Bladen	91.00	40.05
43	Union	59.10	14.00	93	Ashe	12.50	41.03
44	Catawba	50.45	14.43	94	Avery	20.00	43.37
45	Duplin	68.09	14.52	95	Wikes	84.14	44.25
46	Franklin	73.58	14.92	96	Hyde	79.88	45.34
47	Clay	00.00	14.96	97	Graham	0.00	49.27
48	Nash	64.24	15.02	98	Columbus	84.94	49.62
49	Swain	36.36	15.67	99	Madison	33.33	50.90
50	Cumberland	77.52	15.87	100	Brunswick	90.69	53.60