

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., P. W. Wazer, L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, 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, 1918.

MOTOR CARS IN NORTH CAROLINA

A MOTORIZED STATE

A table which appears elsewhere shows how the counties of North Carolina rank in motor cars, the counties being ranked according to inhabitants per motor car on August 1, 1928. The parallel column gives the number of motor cars in each county as reported by the Automotive Bureau, State Department of Revenue.

Guilford continues to lead North Carolina counties, both in total number of motor cars and in inhabitants per motor car, with Mecklenburg a close second in both respects. Guilford has 24,660 motor vehicles, or one motor car for every 3.8 inhabitants. If passenger cars alone are considered, Guilford and Mecklenburg average almost exactly one passenger car per family.

Yancey county continues to rank last in inhabitants per motor car, with about one car for every five and a half families. Graham has only two hundred and thirty motor cars has fewer cars than any other county.

On August 1, North Carolina had 440,258 motor cars, or one for every 6.6 inhabitants.

Motor Cars by Areas

It is interesting to note the distribution of motor cars by geographic areas. Most interesting of all is the fact that with the exceptions of Wake, Wilson, Pasquotank, Chowan and Edgecombe counties, all the counties that rank above the state average in inhabitants per motor car lie west of the state capital, and are all in the piedmont area except Buncombe. The first twenty counties except Wake are all in the western half of the state. The central piedmont country has a big lead over the rest of the state in the ownership of motor cars.

There are two other areas that make a good showing in the ownership of motor cars, namely ten counties centering around Wilson in the heart of the combination cotton-tobacco belt, and the five counties in the northeastern corner of the state known as the Albemarle country.

The tidewater country south of Albemarle sound makes a poor showing in the ownership of motor cars, while the poorest showing of all is made by counties that lie west of the Blue Ridge. With the exceptions of Buncombe and Hayswood, the counties west of the Blue Ridge rank from eighth to one hundredth. Five tidewater counties and one piedmont county fall in this low-ranking group.

Guilford county has more motor cars than the twenty counties combined that fall at the end of the accompanying table. She has almost as many motor cars as the seventeen mountain counties combined, including Buncombe. Buncombe has more motor cars than all the rest of the counties west of the Blue Ridge combined.

There are eighteen counties that have one-half of all the motor cars in the state. There are four counties in the state each of which has more motor cars than the entire state had in 1915, and a fifth county with almost as many. Guilford and Mecklenburg combined have more than three times as many motor cars as the entire state had in 1915.

Record of Growth

The following table, based on figures compiled by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, except the 1928 figure, shows the growth of motor cars in North Carolina since 1915.

Year	Number of cars	Inhabs. per car
(Dec. 31) 1915	16,410	140.0
1919	109,600	23.0
1920	140,860	18.4
1921	148,627	17.6
1922	182,555	14.5
1923	248,414	10.9
1924	302,232	8.9
1925	340,287	7.9
1926	385,047	7.4
1927	430,499	6.8
1928 (Aug. 1)	440,258	6.6

Since the average family contains nearly five persons, it is seen that there is today almost a motor vehicle per family in North Carolina. In 1915 there was only one motor vehicle for every thirty families, upon an average. We have approximately twenty-seven times as many motor cars in the state today as we had thirteen years ago.

What Motor Cars Mean

The number and distribution of motor cars is perhaps the best single index of wealth and income. Practically everybody who can afford a motor car, and many a person who can not, has a car. Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Buncombe lead in order in motor cars; they are the first three counties in taxable wealth per inhabitant; while Mecklenburg was first, Buncombe second, and Guilford fifth in federal tax returns in 1925.

High ratios of motor cars mean not only abundant wealth and ready cash, but they also mean improved highways, town and city centers rapidly increasing in population, enterprise and wealth, and disappearing areas of static and stagnant life and livelihood. 'Low ratios of motor cars,' says Mr. Branson, 'mean poor roads, inaccessibility to market centers, plenty to eat and wear perhaps, but little ready cash in circulation, and humdrum existence—as in the remote rural counties and rural townships.'

The Saturation Point

How many motor cars is North Carolina destined to have? What will be the saturation point? A few years ago there were those who were bold enough to predict the saturation point, but the present number of automobiles is far beyond the dreams of the most optimistic predictors. There are now approximately twenty-five million motor cars in the United States, or an average of one motor car per family. North Carolina is not far behind the national average and is gaining ground.

The table above shows that since 1920 we have been increasing our motor cars at the rate of approximately forty thousand cars a year, some years more, some years a few less. We had one hundred and forty thousand cars in 1920, two hundred and forty-eight thousand in 1923, three hundred and forty thousand in 1925, and four hundred and forty thousand on August 1, 1928, while several thousand will be added before the year comes to an end. In less than a year there will probably be a half-million motor cars in North Carolina, which will be not quite a motor car to the family. Our guess is that we will continue to increase our number of motor cars even after we have passed beyond an average of one car to the family. There is probably a saturation point but manifestly such a point is in the remote future in this state.—S. H. H., Jr.

KNOW NORTH CAROLINA

Governor McLean has called a conference of the presidents of all state institutions of higher learning, representatives of the state department of public instruction, the state historical commission, the state board of education, administrative officers of the public schools, and the state textbook commission, to consider ways of furthering the teaching of state history in North Carolina public schools. The conference will be held October 8, in the hall of the house of representatives. In announcing that the meeting had been called, Governor McLean said: 'North Carolina is not known even to its own citizenship. A casual conversation with people who are otherwise highly intelligent will reveal the truth of this statement. This condition grows out of the fact that somehow our schools and colleges have failed to leave our young people with an enthusiastic interest in our historical development and its relations to the present, or with a buoyant confidence in our social and economic future. This is a situation which in my opinion should be remedied as speedily as possible.'

'The common welfare demands that our children in the public schools become better acquainted with the state. Such knowledge would increase their respect for our institutions. It would clarify their comprehension of the struggles and sacrifices through which we have passed. It would give them a clearer vision of our aspirations for the future. Out of it would come a greater love for the state. On this basis would rest a more loyal support of the great enterprises in which we

FORWARD-LOOKING MEN

The future works out great men's purposes; The present is enough for common souls, Who, never looking forward, are indeed Mere clay, wherein the footprints of their age Are petrified forever.

—James Russell Lowell.

are now engaged and those other undertakings upon which we must enter in the future. If we are to meet the future with intelligence and courage, we must know the implications of the past.

'Our history is rich in stories of deeds of heroism and patriotic service. It is a fascinating chronicle of a fine and sustained endeavor of a sturdy and determined people to grow and to achieve. It bears a most intimate relation to the longer story of national development. The knowledge of our history should be intimate and accurate. No greater sources of inspiration for our youth could be found.'

'The public schools have made a considerable effort to acquaint children with these facts. Adequate source material has been unavailable. Much of the material in use is unsuited for this purpose.'

'Along with the historical background should go a study of the natural resources of the state and their development through the construction of railroads, hard-surface roads, and other means of transportation. The location of power plants, the building of manufacturing establishments, and the improvement in farming should be considered. The economic growth of the state is closely linked with the social, intellectual, and moral development of the people. These relations should be analyzed and clarified.'

'In order that the public schools may perform the duties that naturally fall upon them in relation to all these matters, it is necessary that they be supplied with an abundance of usable materials and with teachers who are thoroughly saturated with a knowledge of them.'

'On the teacher-training institutions devolves the duty of preparing such teachers. On the administrative officers of the public schools falls the duty of seeing that this enterprise is carried out.'

'In consideration of all these facts and of the needs of the schools, I am calling a conference of both text book commissions, and the heads and representatives of all the state institutions of higher learning, of representatives from the department of public instruction and the historical commission, and certain administrative officers of the public schools, to meet with the state board of education to devise ways and means to meet this urgent situation. \* \* \*'

COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

In an attempt to reduce the cost of government in Tennessee, Mr. T. R. Preston, chairman of the state tax commission recently appointed by the governor, and Mr. A. L. Childress, state tax superintendent, have suggested a reduction in the number of counties. This idea was probably prompted by the startling fact that county government in Tennessee costs nineteen times the amount spent for state government. Governor A. E. Smith of New York, it will be recalled, recently suggested a similar reduction in the number of New York counties, with the same idea of economy in mind.

State Consolidation

There are two methods by which the desired reduction in the number of counties, and thus the cost of government, can be realized: first, the natural absorption of a small county, or of several small counties, by a large county, and second, the more artificial method of consolidation of all counties into a smaller number of units by legislation or constitutional amendment. Both plans either are being worked out or have been suggested for Tennessee. It is altogether logical that such a movement should start in Tennessee. This state has inherited the English county in as pure form as any commonwealth which can trace its

institutional origins directly or indirectly to the mother country, yet the state's administration today is a notable example of what can be done in state administrative reorganization.

In 1919 two counties consolidated; in 1927 the county courts of two counties agreed to a consolidation, and a measure requesting permission to consolidate will be presented to the next legislature; and two state officers have presented a plan for redistricting the state, reducing the number of counties from ninety-five to less than fifty. To some observers these are startling facts. At all events, they show that some attempt is being made to explore the 'dark continent of American politics.'

Tax Rate Cut in Half

In 1919 Hamilton county, with Chattanooga as the county seat, absorbed James county, the legislature granting its permission upon the request of the latter and the acquiescence of the former. This absorption of a small county by a larger county has proved successful. The tax rate in James county has been cut in half, and at the same time improved roads have increased from less than five to over forty-five miles, and schools are now in session eight and nine months as compared with four months during the year before the consolidation. In general, the county is in a much better condition than ever before.

Because of this successful experiment, Meigs county, which borders Hamilton on the north, held a joint court meeting with Hamilton last year, and it was agreed that the two counties should sponsor a bill in the next legislature to allow Hamilton county to absorb Meigs. The tax rate in Meigs county now is \$4.00, while in Hamilton it is \$1.40.

With the same idea of tax reduction in mind, in answer to a request for suggestions as to the means of reducing

taxes from Mr. Preston, chairman of the state tax commission, president of the Hamilton National Bank of Chattanooga, and president of the American Bankers' Association, Mr. A. L. Childress proposed that the ninety-five counties of the state be consolidated into eleven units, comprising on an average eight or nine counties, and each with an area of some 3,750 square miles and a population of about 211,384. These new counties should be grouped around an important town, the highway and railroad center of each district. In order to overcome the sentimental objection to changing county names, Mr. Childress suggested that the eleven new units be named as follows: George Washington county, John Sevier county, Robert E. Lee county, Andrew Johnson county, Benjamin Franklin county, Andrew Jackson county, James K. Polk county, Sam Houston county, Davy Crockett county, James Madison county, and Bedford Forrest county.

Under the present arrangement of counties, each of the ninety-five units supports, on an average, twenty principal officers, costing the average county some \$200,000. For the total number of counties this means 1,900 chief officers and an annual expenditure for this item alone of \$19,000,000. Assuming that a similar plan of internal organization would be followed in the new units, the total cost would not greatly exceed \$2,200,000.

Of course many objections to the plan will be raised, for it is no small undertaking to reduce the number of counties from ninety-five to eleven. Therefore, as a matter of expediency, Mr. Preston has suggested that the number be reduced to about fifty, and that the method be that of absorption, as has been employed in the case of Hamilton and James counties. Certainly a beginning of reform could be made by grouping several counties about the four chief cities of the state, i. e., Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga; and the process has actually begun in the Chattanooga district.—John W. Manning, Vanderbilt University, in The American Political Science Review.

INHABITANTS PER MOTOR CAR AUGUST 1, 1928

In the following table, based on data supplied by the State Department of Revenue, Automotive Bureau, and estimates of population, the counties are ranked according to the number of inhabitants per motor car, automobiles and trucks combined, on August 1, 1928.

Guilford continues to lead both in number of cars, with 24,660, and in distribution, with 3.8 inhabitants per motor car.

Yancey ranks last with 26.7 inhabitants per motor car. Graham has fewest motor cars, with 230.

State total of motor cars on August 1, 1928, was 440,258. Passenger cars numbered 396,295; trucks 43,963. On October 4, 1927, we had 411,295 motor cars, of which 379,200 were passenger cars and 32,095 were trucks.

State average, one motor car for every 6.6 inhabitants.

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Table with 4 columns: Rank, County, Number motor cars, Inhabs. per motor car. Lists counties from Guilford to Yancey with corresponding statistics.