

# The Mount Airy News.

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## AS COUNTIES ARE RUN IN NORTH CAROLINA

Survey of An Average County Made by Representatives of The University of North Carolina Brings to Light Many Interesting Points As to the Management of the County Governments in the State.

### COUNTY NAME WITHHELD BUT SOUNDS LIKE SURRY

The following editorial taken from the Charlotte Observer gives a review of the report of the survey that has just been completed by the University of North Carolina in its study of the management of county affairs as carried on in a county that is supposed to represent the average in the state. While the name of the county is withheld by the University yet all the facts as given out leads one to believe that Surry County is the one that was selected as a sample from which to make a study of the present system of county government that is in vogue in North Carolina.

The article follows:

It was noted in The Observer several weeks ago, that Mr. Paul Wagner, of the University of North Carolina, has been giving study to the insufficiencies in county government systems obtaining throughout the country, and had adopted The Southern Agriculturist as the medium through which to make his observations public. This paper submitted some of Mr. Wagner's preliminary statements, there having been promised forthcoming details of situations existing in one North Carolina county that has been selected as an example. An editorial note explains that "on account of an understanding entered into when this survey was made, the name of the county is withheld." But as the reader who might be familiar with situations in North Carolina counties gets well into the article, he may be able to make a good guess as to location of the county that is under discussion. Mr. Wagner tells us this much about it: The county contains almost exactly one per cent of the States area and slightly more than one per cent of population. It is a good agricultural county and has two brisk manufacturing towns. Now, as to situations in this county: The total value of all property listed for taxes in 1924 was \$27,169,307. This property probably represents about two-thirds of the county's wealth. On the whole farm land is assessed more nearly at its true value than town property. This is largely because there has been no reassessment since 1921 and town values have enhanced more than farm values. Even farm lands is not assessed at any uniform percentage of its true value. Careless methods of assessing and of keeping the tax records also results in the loss of much property from the tax books. For instance there were 2,734 town lots listed for taxation in 1922, 2,471 in 1923, and 2,823 in 1924.

The county-wide tax rate for the past four years has fluctuated from \$1.06 to \$1.22 per \$100 of taxable. In addition, there are a few special township levies for roads and schools. A table is submitted showing variations in levies from 1921, of \$1.10 for schools and roads and all other purposes, on a valuation of \$306,186, to the same levy in 1924 on a valuation of \$334,820. The present bonded indebtedness is \$1,369,000, or almost exactly five per cent of the taxable wealth of the county. These bond issues are distributed between county home, court house, roads, bridges, township and road debts and funding. To show for this indebtedness the county has a large number of good steel bridges, 400 miles of sand-clay and gravel roads and a splendid court-house. The jail is a fairly good one, but the county home is entirely inadequate. It is a brick building but is too small and is dark and gloomy.

There is the greatest laxity and waste in the collection of taxes. The sheriff and his deputy act as tax collectors. Although the law requires that he shall make a complete settlement of one year's taxes before he receives the tax books for another year, the sheriff of this county was serving his second term and had never had a settlement. In March, 1925, he had still failed to collect 2 per cent of 1922 taxes, 4 per cent of 1923 taxes, and 38 per cent of 1924 taxes. In other words, uncollected taxes amounted to \$147,808. Since taxes do not become delinquent until May

1, a large volume of 1924 taxes would still be collected; but most of the 1922 and 1923 taxes would be declared insolvent. Most of them would not have been insolvent if collected on time. This dilatoriness in collecting taxes means the loss of considerable revenue, and also deprives the county of the use of tax money and necessitates constant borrowing and the paying of interest. For instance, at the close of school year the sheriff still owed the school fund \$73,579. The school board had to borrow the money or make the teachers wait several months for their pay. Directly and indirectly, this looseness in collecting taxes is costing the taxpayers several thousand dollars a year.

The people elect a treasurer as custodian of county funds. The last treasurer's books were so tangled that it cost hundreds of dollars to get them audited. The audit revealed that he owed the county about \$22,000. He was totally incompetent, failed to keep his own money separate from county money, and it is quite possible that he was the innocent victim of fraud on the part of another. The treasurer preceding him also defaulted, and there is no doubt about his guilt. He still owes the county \$18,000. These instances illustrate the failure of popular election to secure competent and trustworthy officials. While dishonesty is the exception rather than the rule, incompetence is almost universal.

There is very little bookkeeping done in connection with the expenditure of county funds. There is no ledger or voucher record. In fact, there is no record of expenditures at all except the voucher stubs and a list in the Minute Docket of claims audited by the commissioners. Furthermore, these records are only those expenditures made from the general fund or the bridge fund. The highway board has its own secretary and treasurer and pays its own bills. The same is true of the school board. Interest on bonds is paid directly by the treasurer. The clerk of superior court pays witness fees. The register of deeds pays out poor relief after the dependent has been placed on the pauper list. He has the welfare officer review the list monthly so as not to make the mistake some counties have made of continuing payments after the beneficiary was dead. There is no attempt at classification of disbursements. There are no control accounts. There is no accounting worthy of the name. It is a loose, careless system which insures waste and invites corruption.

Each officer buys his own supplies. The jailer buys supplies for the jail, the janitor for the court house, the superintendent of highways buys road and bridge material. Usually, bills have the o. k. of some other official before being presented to the commissioners for their approval. All paid vouchers eventually come back to the county and are filed in the register's office, but without any control accounts there is no way of knowing where the county stands at a particular time, and it is difficult to locate an error.

A highway commission was established in April, 1919. By the end of 1924 this board had raised and spent \$1,327,615. Of this \$523,025 represented bond issues, \$213,762 represented short time loans, and \$590,818 had been raised from taxation or from miscellaneous sources. Nearly 400 miles of road had been improved, several good bridges built, and the county had acquired a large outfit of road machinery. The road board is a bipartisan board, has had a good business man for chairman, employed a capable road superintendent and has served the county faithfully. There has been a minimum of "politics" in the highway work and that largely explains results.

All of the officers of the county are paid salaries, except the deputy sheriff and the jailer. The sheriff receives \$5,000. The register of deeds \$3,000, and the clerk of court \$4,000. The sheriff also retains his fees. The fees in the register of deeds office amounted, in 1924, to \$4,347 and in the clerk of court's office to \$3,784. Each official pays his own clerical assistants. It will be

### UNCLE JOE CANNON REACHES 90th BIRTHDAY

"I Have Retired, and The New Generation Does Not Need My Advice," He Says.

Danville, Va., May 7.—Joseph G. Cannon celebrated his ninetieth birthday today among his home folk.

In the mid-western city from which he went twenty-three times to the congress of the United States, the aged patriarch planned his customary morning trip down town, reading of his mail and then tuning in on the radio.

Only the arrival of scores of congratulatory letters and telegrams and the visits of several formal delegations ever alters this birthday routine from which he seldom has deviated since he dropped the mantle of statesmanship four years ago and came home to rest.

But even his determination to pass the day quietly could not make the occasion an ordinary one. And to visitors who came the stalwart figure who has been Uncle Joe to them for fifty years was ready to wave a greeting from the veranda, a raising of the hand which once wielded in a grip of steel the gavel of the national house of representatives.

The omnipresent stogie was clenched between the teeth—a milder stogie, though.

To visitors he declined to express views on questions of the day, "even on my birthday."

"I had opinions, and expressed them, when I was in public life," he said. "Now, I've retired. The new generation does not need my advice."

### Farmers Have Bad Accident in Their Airplane.

Martinsville, Va., May 4.—Homer Carter died yesterday evening at Henry station as results of injuries sustained Sunday when he crashed in an airplane with Alonzo Martin, who was but slightly injured. Carter sustained two broken legs and a fractured jaw and probable internal injuries.

Carter aged 30, and a farmer, acquired a Curtis biplane some time ago after learning how to pilot it. He was considered an expert in the handling of his machine. Alonzo Martin, a neighbor, also secured an airplane and Carter rose with him on Sunday. They were about to land and were about 200 feet from earth when the plane hit an air pocket which sent the ship into a nose dive. Martin did not have time to flatten out and the machine was demolished.

### Thieves Get Away With 65 Automobiles During April

Raleigh, May 9.—Thieves and policemen ran a neck and neck race with automobiles for April, the thieves getting away with 65 and the police recovering 66.

This is one of the closest of all the contests. Often the stealings have gone far ahead of the recaptures and oftener still the theft department has done better than the robbers. Both departments of larceny and of police did a good month's work.

As usual the Ford was several times as popular with the thieves as any other make was.

noticed that these two offices are practically self-supporting. The treasurer receives \$1,200 a year, the welfare officer \$1,500 the superintendent of public health \$3,600, the county nurse, \$1,800 and the superintendent of schools \$3,000. The commissioners receive a small per diem.

Mr. Wagner's comment is that "there is much to be commended in this county, the highway administration, the public health service, the welfare work, the elimination of the fee system, and a rather exceptionally aggressive board of commissioners. The greatest weakness is the manner in which the taxes are levied and collected and in the lack of proper accounting. It may be reported, however, that within another year the county is to abolish the trusteeship as an elective office, appoint a combined bookkeeper and treasurer, and install a thorough system of accounting. This official will also serve as tax supervisor, and efforts will be made to correct abuses in that field."

The advice is that the county ought to go a step further and take tax-collecting out of the sheriff's office.

The general situation in this county is typical of all other counties in the State, with exception of the few that have modernized their systems, and in the disclosures made by this University student, the Legislature may find a subject for study and action.

## Talks By The County Agent

By H. E. White,  
Surrey County Farm Demonstration  
Agent

Mr. D. C. Blue of White Plains was in the Office of County Agent last week and he made a very good suggestion about the care of the newly set orchards of this spring. He finds if you will mulch the trees they will withstand the dry weather much better. Leaves, straw and other refuse can be placed around the trees and this will prevent the evaporation of moisture so rapidly. This should be done as soon as possible for some of the trees are probably being injured to a great extent by the present drought.

There have come to this office two valuable publications in the last few days. One of particular interest to poultry producers, Minnesota Farmers Institute Annual, Farm Poultry No. 38. This is without doubt one of the most practical books to be found on the subject. It sells for ten cents and can be secured from Director of Farmers Institute University Farm, St. Paul, Minn., by sending that amount. The other book is rather remarkable and one should be of interest to a great many building houses out of mud which is often done in many countries. It is claimed that satisfactory dwellings, poultry houses, hog houses and other useful buildings can be easily and cheaply constructed out of mud found on any farm. Are you interested in such? If so you can examine this book by calling at the Office of County Agent and look over the plans and methods used and if you then want to try your hand in building an unusual building and producing a sensation in the county then go ahead. While I am not advocating such in a big way yet it might be worth investigating for mud houses have been common for thousands of years in many countries.

Have just received the North Carolina Crop notes to May 1st. It seems that the tobacco farmers are rather optimistic for the future. According to reports of the intentions of the farmers there will be an increase in acreage of tobacco. There is an increase of new barns and new beds. Some of the new barns are intended to replace old ones but many have been built to take care of the larger crop intended, which is expected to average from 5 to 7 per cent more than 1925. The U. S. Department of Agriculture offers no hope of better prices for the tobacco farmer for another year. With this in prospect, what can you expect in the way of better prices? You should grow some tobacco of course but be sure that you make your living at home and produce enough of food for the family and for the live stock on the farm. Now is the time to make arrangements to have a supply of hay by growing soy beans, peas and sudan grass.

Sudan grass is selling at the lowest price in its history and that means that the cost of seeding per acre will be rather low. It is a wonderful catch crop and will produce a lot of feed in a short time. It is strictly annual grass and if sown early you can get from 2 to 4 cuttings easily. Stock like it and the feeding value is equal to timothy hay. Sow from 12 to 25 of seed or plant in drill. Since this is a grass it is not a soil builder.

Here is a soil builder but is not well known in the county, 100 Day or Speckled Velvet Bean. It makes a tremendous growth and is recommended for poor and worn out soils. They can be used as a forage crop as well as a soil builder. Vines grows so rank that it is practically impossible to cure for hay or turn under as green crop, but should be left undisturbed and let the frost kill the vines, then turn in stock and they can clean up the vines. After fattening your stock on them turn in winter or early spring turn under and the mass of vines will almost equal a heavy application of barnyard manure. Can be planted in May and June and can be used as a companion crop with corn. Plant one peck per acre in rows four feet apart and they should be inoculated like other legumes.

While I am not advocating any one farmer to plant a large acreage until he has given them a trial I think he can afford to try half an acre or an acre to get an idea of the possibilities of the plant. Personally I would not hesitate to plant more than this if you want it only for soil building with pasturage after frost. If you

## MT. AIRY HIGH SCHOOL EXERCISES BEGIN SUNDAY

Commencement Program Extends Over a Period of Three Days—Rev. W. A. Newell to Preach Baccalaureate Sermon and Dr. Potest, of Wake Forest, Will Deliver the Literary Address.

### Westfield Correspondent Drops Lark of School Fire Escape.

Westfield, May 10.—Dr. W. A. Newell, of Mount Airy preached the school commencement sermon Sunday afternoon to an audience that can appreciate an able sermon.

The school has been a success this term, the teachers have acquitted themselves with credit and approbation, and all would be welcomed back again but it is rumored that most of them expect to change their place of residence and occupation as well; the enrollment was 193 and the exercises, closing Monday night, reflect credit on the teachers and children as well.

Certainly they deserve an auditorium in the school building well and nicely seated and if we had four women and J. H. Lowe as a school board they would not submit to it as it is; no fire escape, not even a skinned pine pole reaching from the window to the ground, some awful day 100 bright, beautiful children will be caught in a panic and destroyed.

Mr. J. H. Lowe, 79, was out driving a two horse harrow at 7 o'clock this morning and walking at that.

Have had a nice rain and farmers will set lots of tobacco next week.

John Marshall is confined to his bed with rheumatism.

Little Blannie Hall, of Danbury participated in the Mother's Day service, much to the delight of the large audience.

### DIES IN AGONY OF HYDROPHOBIA

Fought Frenzied Animal With Bare Hands and Flesh Was Lacerated by Dog's Teeth.

Spartanburg, S. C., May 6.—Suffering indescribable agonies, S. P. West, night watchman at the Fairmont mills, died Wednesday at a local hospital of hydrophobia. Despite his intense sufferings Mr. West was conscious at times and coolly made arrangements for his funeral services.

Mr. West secured the Pasteur treatment for rabies, receiving the stipulated number of inoculations for 21 days, and his hand, lacerated by the dog, apparently had healed. Several days ago he complained of pain in one of the fingers on the wounded hand. In a few hours the pain became more intense and symptoms of convulsions developed. He was brought to a hospital here Monday.

Mr. West was attacked by a mad dog as he was at work in the boiler rooms at Fairmont mills about a month ago. He fought the animal with his bare hands and knocked the dog to the ground several times. Once, when the frenzied beast sprang at his throat, Mr. West slapped the dog in the face, and the animal immediately grabbed his hand. The dog's teeth tore through the flesh and almost severed two fingers from the hand. The animal clung desperately to the hand and Mr. West was forced to choke the dog almost to death before he could free his fingers.

give it a trial let me know that you intend to plant some so we can keep records on the project.

Farmers meetings will be held at State Road, Friday 14th, Oak Grove, Saturday 15th and at Zephyr Monday 17th, these will be night meetings and the subject discussed will be soy bean and the Mexican Bean Beetle. All are invited.

With the present prospect of an increase of tobacco in this state and no prospect of an increase in price it looks like it would pay to greatly increase the acreage of soy beans, cow peas and velvet beans. If we have richer soils we can leave off some fertilizer and make a great saving besides if we build up our soil we will be able to raise more and better grass with a great increase in the value of live stock. Live stock means richer soils and that is the greatest limiting factor in the production of farm crops in this country. We can't build soil by growing tobacco and using so much expensive fertilizers.

H. E. White, County Agent.

### THIRTY PUPILS IN GRADUATING CLASS.

The Mount Airy High School Commencement dates are May 16-17-18, beginning at 8 o'clock Sunday evening at Central Methodist Church when the baccalaureate sermon will be preached by Rev. W. A. Newell. A solo by Ben Johnson, a pupil of the school, will be a feature of the musical program.

The class play entitled "Come Out of the Kitchen" will be rendered at the National Theatre, Monday evening at 8 o'clock. The scene of the play, which is developed in three acts, is "The Dangerfield Mansion in Virginia;" the cast of characters follows:

Olivia Dangerfield, Almas Jane Ellen, Virginia Martin; Elizabeth Dangerfield, Almas Araminta, Kathleen Herman; Mrs. Falkner, Tucker's Sister, Katherine Ellis; Cora Falkner, her daughter, Almarie Inman; Amanda, Olivia's Black Mammy, Edna Beck; Byron Crane, from the North, Calvin Graves; Thomas Leferts, Statistical Poet, Worth Banner; Solon Tucker, Crane's Attorney and Guest, Dockery Wolfe; Paul Dangerfield, Almas Smithfield, Paul Webster; Charles Dangerfield, Almas Brindlebury, George Wright; Randolph Weeks, Agent of the Dangerfields, Wilson Barber. An admission fee of fifty cents will be charged for the play.

On Tuesday evening the regular commencement exercises will be held in the National Theatre, the program includes music by high school pupils with the main feature an address by Dr. William Louis Potest. Dr. Potest is president of Wake Forest College and one of the most distinguished educators of the State, it is indeed an honor to our people to have Dr. Potest to address the student body here. The public is cordially invited to attend these exercises.

Thirty young men and glorious girls compose the graduating class this year, as fine a student body and as well trained, we dare say, as goes forth from any school with the same equipment and advantages that our high school affords. The class roll follows:

Annie Eunice Allred, James Worth Banner, Mary Edna Beck, Arlyss H. Brannock, Ira Wilson Barber, Minnie Blanche Begmer, Annie Hiatt, Clarice Margaret Bowman, Mary Virginia Burke, Percy Irene Cook, Emma Laura Dobbins, Katherine L. Ellis, Treva Irene Fowler, Calvin Graves, Jr., Kathleen Mabel Herman, Lettie Wynne Herring, Harry Glenn Holyfield, Almarie Inman, Mary Eugenia Kapp, Thamar E. Kiger, E. Virginia Martin, Olive Elizabeth Newell, Isador Albert Schafer, Virginia Perkins, Bertha Tesh, Ida Mae Tilley, Marjorie Emma Worrell, Neeta Webb, Dockery Rendon Wolfe, George C. Wright.

The marshalls are Misses Annie Fawcett, Verona West and Lillian Johnson, Raymond Worrell, Wallace Shelton and Giles Smith of the junior class.

### CAROLINA MOTOR CLUB FILES NEW COMPLAINT

Winston-Salem, May 7.—Acting upon the complaints of the Carolina Motor club of Greensboro and the Winston-Salem Automobile club, Sheriff J. B. McCreary is investigating unfair tactics alleged to be employed by county officers in the arrest of motorists in the Winston-Salem-Greensboro and Winston-Salem-High Point highways.

Specific charges are that one officer secretes himself on the roadside and traps motorists, thereby taking unfair advantage of his office. It is contended that the officer is also technically enforcing the traffic laws of the state to a foolish extremity, citing the requirement of passing road intersections at a speed not more than fifteen miles per hour. The club officials estimate that it would take approximately four hours to drive from this city to Greensboro if the law was observed at the innumerable crossings.