Historical Sketch Of Martin County

Abstract of Reports of J. R. Lanier and William Slade of Williamston

Taken from the census of 1880 and based on the reports of J. R. Lanier and William Slade, the following historical sketch offers pertinent facts about Martin County as they were found sixty-three years ago:

Population: 13,140; white, 6,661; colored, 6,479.

Area: 482 square miles; woodland, 175,116 acres.

Tilled lands: 56,377 acres. Area planted in cotton, 13,444 acres; in corn, 24,209 acres; in wheat, 940 acres; in oats, 1,447 acres.

Cotton production: 6,383 bales; average cotton product per acre, 0.47 bale, 678 pounds seed-cotton, or 226 pounds cotton lint.

Martin county is bordered on the north by the very tortuous course of the Roanoke river, the tributary waters of which for the most part drain it northward into that river. The larger part of its territory belongs to the region of level piny uplands, having a gray sandy loam soil. The higher ridge land, near the south bank of the Roanoke river. has a soil lighter and more sandy, and is characterized by a considerable mixture of long-leaf pine, and the average proportion of oaks and short-leaf pine, etc. Along the Roanoke and some of its tributaries there are extensive bottoms or alluvial lands, and about the head streams of its tributaries considerable tracts of swamp land.

The agriculture of the county corresponds in its main features to that of Edgecombe and the adjacent counties, but its soils are less productive, and its agriculture is less advanced, partly because of its large and profitable lumber industry in the great cypress swamps of the Roanoke. Marl is abundant, and is used to a moderate extent. Of the county area, 18.28 per cent is tilled land, of which 23.67 per cent is cultivated in cotton.

Abstract of the reports of J. R. Lanier and William Slade, of Williamston:

Our uplands are much better suited to cotton culture than the bottoms or lowlands, as we have barely season enough to grow cotton to perfection. We cannot get an early start on the bottom lands in the spring.

The common designation of the chief soil is piny wood levels, three-fourths or more of the county being of this kind, extending all through this and many of the adjoining counties. Its timber is mostly long-leaf or pitch pine, short-leaf pine, oak, and dogwood. The average thickness of the surface sail is from 6 to 20 inches, when it changes into the subsoil, which is mostly of a pale red or yellowish color. The chief crops are cotton, corn, wheat, oats and sweet potatoes, and the soil, when well fertilized, is well adapted to all. The proportion of cotton planted is about one-fourth or three-sevenths of this soil. It attains a height of from 2 1-2 to 3 feet, at which it is most productive. It inclines to run to weed when planted late on cold, rich bottom land, and in wet seasons, the best remedy for which is kainit. Fresh land produces in a good season from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of seed-cotton per acre, 1,425 pounds making a bale of lint. After two years' cultivation the product ranges from 600 to 800 pounds per acre, the same number of pounds being required for a bale. Carrot and hogweeds are most troublesome. Considerable damage is done in places by whas or gullies on the slopes.

Cotton shipments are made by staemboat to Norfolk, Baltimore and New York, at the rates of $1 to Norfolk, $1.50 to Baltimore, and $2 to New York.

Hectic Year For Tobacco Farmers

Now that marketing time is at hand, Martin farmers look back on the tobacco growing season as **a hectic one. Starting off with** good prospects, dry weather set in and uncertainty increased. The season as a whole has been an unfavorable one, but despite that there is some good quality tobacco in the county.

'Possum and 'Taters Part of Elaborate Menu for Stag Party Here Long Years Ago

Appearing right next to an advertisement citing Worthington's Family Remedy for colic, the following account taken from the columns of a 1903 issue of The Enterprise tells about a "straight-out stag party" given by tobacconists here with 'possum and 'taters constituting the main support in an elaborate menu:

"Last Friday evening Messrs. Allen, Cothran, Monk and Jeffress, the clever tobacco men, gave their friends quite a treat at the 'ranch,' as the Hassell House Annex is popularly called, where a sumptuous feast was spread.

"The guests of these popular gentlemen didn't fail to do justice to the good things put before them.

"The long hall was turned into a dining room, and a table was laid the whole length of it.

"It was an enjoyable occasion, everyone present had a good time and ate to their heart's content. The following gentlemen were present: C. E. Allen, J. F. Cothran, J. Y. Monk and C. A. Jeffrees, hosts; J. R. Robertson, K. B. Crawford, J. S. Cook, D. W. Morris, F. S. Upton, J. G. Staton, Wheeler Martin, W. M. York, W. M. Sitterson, J. T. Ragan, J. D. Leggett, W. A. Jones, W. T. Meadows, J. D. Laughinghouse, J. H. Page, W. T. Crawford, F. M. Pittman, of Kinston; A. E. Whitmore and Clayton Moore.

"Messrs. J. D. Leggett and W. M. York carried off the prize as champion 'possum eaters.

"The menu: Oysters—half-shell, fried and stewed; olives, pickles and celery; 'possum, 'taters and gravy; crackers, biscuits, corn bread, coffee and wines, liquors, beers and cigars."

Ups And Downs of Tobacco Farmers

Little explanation was offered, but apparently tobacco farmers had their ups and downs in this county as far back as 1903 according to an item appearing under the Williams Township correspondence taken from an old issue of the Enterprise under date of November 13, 1903:

"Last year the farmers were singing the 'Sweet By and By.' This year they are singing, 'Show Pity, O Lord, forgive me, I'll never plant any more tobacco as long as I live.'"

AMERICA'S MISS TEXACO

TEXACO Gasoline Motor Oils

We are at war and despite the fact that many of us are slow to realize it, many of the items and products we use will be rationed until the end of this struggle. This is true with gasoline but we'll continue to sell our quota and give our customers the best service of which we are capable. Never before was it more important to purchase the best gasoline and motor oils on the American market. In this case the best costs no more. Buy Texaco gas and motor oils.

Farmers Sell Your Tobacco and Peanuts In WILLIAMSTON

HARRISON OIL CO.