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**NEWS LETTER**

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**NORTH CAROLINA CLUB STUDIES**

**OUR WILDERNESS AREA**

The subject considered by The North Carolina Club at the University the other night was Our Twenty-two Million Idle Acres: Why Idle, the Consequences, and the Remedies. The discussion was led by Mr. Lawton Blanton of Cleveland county. A brief report follows.

**Our Kingdom of Silence and Solitude**

Seventy-one percent of all the land in North Carolina is a wilderness of idle acres. Twenty-two million acres are in scrub pines, broomsedge, and like growths. Only nine million acres are under the plow and in pasture. Our waste area is more than double our cultivated area. There is enough idle land in the State for 250,000 new farm families, allowing 75 acres to each family and reserving 50,000 acres in each county for wood-lot uses.

The per cent of waste land ranges from 34.19 per cent in Alamance to 98.4 per cent in Dare. There are more people engaged in farming in North Carolina than in both manufacture and transportation combined. And yet we have enough idle acres to increase our country population 100 per cent. This is the more important when we consider that North Carolina produced in crops alone in 1915 wealth amounting to \$218,000,000 or about one and a fourth times as much wealth as the banks of the State have accumulated in 250 years. And mind you our farms created this enormous wealth in a single year.

**Larger Population and Greater Wealth**

North Carolina needs more people—not more tenants, but more home-owning farmers. The population of the State is too sparse. Our rural population in the State at large is only 39 to the square mile. We have nine counties with fewer than 20 people and three counties with fewer than 15 to the square mile. In these twelve counties there are nearly 4,000,000 wilderness acres. The idle land in the lower Cape Fear region alone almost exactly equals the entire farm area of Belgium.

If our farm population were doubled our country wealth would be increased \$407,000,000. This increase is reckoned on our present small per capita rural wealth of \$322. Their productive power would add \$175,000,000 a year to our present total of crops and animal products. It would mean larger support for churches, schools, roads, and public health. Denser population would help to decrease illiteracy, social aloofness, and the raw individualism that now retard organization and co-operative country enterprises.

**Why So Many Wilderness Acres**

About three million acres are at present too stumpy, steep and rocky, wet and acid to cultivate. But for the most part our wilderness area is due to bad social and political conditions, such as illiteracy, sparsity of population, mixture of races, speculative interest in rising land values, and a vicious tax system.

Mr. Blanton next showed how, in obedience to the natural law of segregation, white people are selling out and leaving districts where negroes are an increasing majority, while at the same time the negroes are seeking negro settlements. And further, according to Mr. Blanton, the land speculator is another great factor that is largely responsible for the vast area of waste land in North Carolina and throughout the entire South. The farm lands of North Carolina increased in value \$202,000,000 in the last census period, and land owners are holding their lands not to improve them but to reap this great profit in steadily rising land values.

**A Vicious Tax System**

A large part of the blame for this state of affairs should be laid at the door of our vicious system of taxation. The big land owner lists his land at from \$2 to \$5 per acre despite the fact that he is expecting to get from \$50 to \$60 per acre for it. In one township in the State 85,000 acres appeared on the 1915 tax list at 57 cents

per acre. Our rule is low tax values and high market prices.

On the other hand, the small farmer on his 50 acre plat works hard, improves his land and equips his farm. As a consequence his taxes increase and he is punished for his industry and thrift. He has been an active, productive citizen, adding value to his own property and to all other property in the community.

And he is penalized for it by our system of taxation, while the owner of idle lands is rewarded. It is profoundly immoral to punish industry and reward idleness.

**Our Landless Multitudes**

The consequences of such a condition in the State are far-reaching. For instance, the tenants and renters in our town and country regions in 1910 numbered with their families 1,158,000 souls.

They are landless and homeless in a State that contains 22,000,000 unoccupied and unused acres. And they cannot buy farms and homes because the prices are too far beyond their means.

It is useless to advertise North Carolina abroad so long as the owners of idle land are allowed to build around the State a Chinese Wall of high prices for town and country real estate.

**New Zealand's Way**

Twenty years ago New Zealand solved the problem of home ownership, by a graduated land tax. Henry Demorest Lloyd's account of this experiment ought to be familiar to thoughtful people everywhere. A wise adaptation of New Zealand's law is demanded in America. In this land of the free 55,000,000 of our 92,000,000 people in 1910 were landless and homeless.

In North Carolina our homeless people numbered in the Census year 1,158,000. They were 52.5 per cent of our entire population; in the United States they were 60 per cent.

Home and farm ownership is a fundamental condition of safe civilization; and our present tax system promotes increasing homelessness both in our city and country regions.

**AUTOMOBILES IN NORTH CAROLINA**

CLYDE C. MILLER, Watauga County

On June 30, 1915 there were 16,410 automobiles in North Carolina, or one for every 28 families in the State. Their total power was over 390,000 horse powers, while the horse powers used in our manufacturing enterprises in 1909 was only 378,000. We had \$8,208,000 invested in automobiles and only \$9,078,000 in public school property. We are buying motor cars at the rate of 30 per day. We are certainly not investing in public education at any such rate. On January 1 there were 21,084 cars registered with the Secretary of State—an increase of something like 80 per cent in two years.

During the year ending with last June \$1,886,000 was spent in North Carolina for gasoline and repairs, and only 1,698,987 on building, improving and equipping public schools.

During the same period \$1,575,000 was spent for tires alone and only \$1,412,000 for public school buildings and improvements.

Also \$3,726,000 was spent for the total upkeep of cars, and only \$3,428,000 was paid to the teachers and school superintendents of the State.

Our motor cars are so numerous that if they were placed end to end, they would extend from Greensboro to Winston-Salem with three or four miles to spare.

**Uncle Sam's Motor Cars**

In the United States as a whole there are 2,000,000 cars, or one for every ten families, 17 for every railway locomotive, and 28 for every railway passenger coach. They cost the people of the United States \$1,080,000,000 annually, of which amount tires alone cost \$192,000,000, or more than we spend on our navy. Six hundred thousand new cars were bought last year ranging in price from \$375 to \$10,000, totalling about \$450,000,000.

It takes a billion gallons of gasoline worth \$130,000,000 to run the 2,000,000 cars of the United States a year, and in

**THE SOVEREIGN PEOPLE**

Chief Justice Walter Clark

Under our plan of government the people alone are sovereign. Judges, governors, presidents, members of legislatures and of Congress are all alike servants of the people.

No right is given in any constitution to either department to supervise the action of the others. The sole supervisory authority is in the people.

Unless our form of government is a mistake, the more the people know the surer they are to go right.

The people can be trusted with their own government—else our republican form of government is a failure.

Hence Jefferson's utterance: said he, Whoever expects a people to be ignorant and free, expects what never was and never will be.

Hence the profound and unflinching belief of Jarvis in the education of the people of North Carolina.

addition 20,000,000 gallons of lubricating oil costing \$8,000,000.

Automobile accessories, garage expenses, and repairing costs \$300,000,000 annually. We have invested in cars a billion and a half dollars, and in 1916 another half billion dollars worth of cars will be made in this country alone. Two states have more chauffeurs than the soldiers and sailors of the nation.

**Where Cars are Most Numerous**

In North Carolina there are four main groups of counties in which cars are most numerous, population considered; one in the West consisting of Buncombe and Henderson; two in the Middle consisting of Gaston, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Stanley, Catawba, Iredell, Rowan, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, and Alamance in one group, and Richmond, Scotland, Moore, and Cumberland in the other; and one in the East consisting of Vance, Granville, Durham, Wake Johnston, Wayne, Lenoir, Craven, Pitt, Edgecombe, Wilson, Nash, Halifax, Bertie, Martin, Washington, Chowan, Pasquotank, and Currituck.

**No Cars in Three Counties**

The counties having the fewest cars are mainly the mountain counties, the extreme eastern and south-eastern counties, and the counties having the fewest and smallest towns.

Three counties had no cars at all, Alleghany, Mitchell, and Graham; at least none registered in Raleigh on June 30, 1915. On Jan. 1, 1916, Graham had none, Alleghany one and Mitchell four cars carrying State licenses. Hoke and Avery are omitted from the list for lack of population figures.

**Automobiles and Good Roads**

An examination of the good roads map of the State shows that the counties having the most improved roads are the counties with the most automobiles. Clearly automobiles stimulate good road building. For instance, Scotland is first in percentage of improved roads and fourth in automobiles. New Hanover is second in good roads and first in cars. The big city counties lead both in cars and improved road mileage.

Buncombe and Henderson rank high because they are city and tourist centers.

Another group of counties ranking high in automobile ownership extends from Gaston and Mecklenburg to Guilford and Alamance. This is the great manufacturing section of the State. In this group are some of our largest and most prosperous towns. Here are most of the cotton and cottonseed oil mills, tobacco factories, furniture and wood-working establishments of the State. Motor cars are a most significant index of the prosperity of these counties.

Another group of counties in the first division is composed of Richmond, Moore, Scotland, and Cumberland. These counties are among the foremost in cotton farming, and the market towns of these counties are rich in automobiles.

Another group above the State average in automobile ownership embraces 20 counties centering around Wilson and

**UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
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**OUR CITY SCHOOLS**

It is possible that we have sometimes failed to realize the strategic importance of the position occupied by the city schools of North Carolina. In a state which, like ours, contains no large cities, there can naturally be, as a rule, no sharp distinction drawn between the problems of city and country schools.

**City Schools as Models**

In many counties, the relation between city and country schools is close. The city school, with its better trained teachers, its better organization and administration, is, and should be, regarded as in a sense a model school for the country. The influence of its standards and methods should be felt throughout the rural sections.

**Institute Work**

The city schools exert a great influence in another way. Many teachers and superintendents from these schools serve during the summer as conductors and assistants in institute work. The influence which they exert is thus often wider than the county limits. The work of rural teachers in the West, for example, may

be moulded by conceptions held by teachers and school officials in the Piedmont or Eastern sections.

**A Heavy Responsibility**

Such facts make us realize the heavy burden of responsibility that rests on our city schools. Not only are they concerned with the problems of their immediate communities, but consciously or not, they are models for a wider neighborhood. Of these schools, as of no other part of the educational system of North Carolina, it can be said that they contain the promise and the potency of the educational future of the State.

**A Logical Consequence**

It follows logically that our city schools must continually subject their work to the most careful scrutiny. The presence of a professional spirit, good organization, proper standards of work, and a host of other things, are important in our city schools not only because of the service which they render to their communities—and this of course comes first; but also because ways of acting and feeling which are prevalent in them tend to become the prevalent educational attitudes of the State of North Carolina.

**AUTOMOBILES IN NORTH CAROLINA  
For the Year Ending June 30, 1915**

C. C. MILLER, Watauga County  
University of North Carolina

Rank	Counties	No. families to each	Total machines	Rank	Counties	No. families to each	Total machines
1	Currituck	12	121	50	Robeson	34	302
1	Guilford	12	985	51	Lincoln	36	95
1	New Hanover	12	515	51	Lee	36	62
4	Scotland	13	229	51	Randolph	36	160
4	Mecklenburg	13	983	54	Tyrrell	37	28
4	Buncombe	13	725	55	Rutherford	38	148
7	Davidson	14	415	56	Northampton	39	112
7	Moore	14	240	57	Perquimans	44	50
9	Richmond	16	245	58	Hyde	45	39
9	Forsyth	16	565	58	Caswell	45	65
9	Wake	16	745	60	Jones	48	36
12	Vance	17	228	61	Anson	49	103
12	Wilson	17	331	62	Union	51	129
12	Pitt	17	425	63	Columbus	52	107
12	Rowan	17	417	64	Surry	53	112
16	Edgecombe	18	351	64	Davie	53	50
17	Cumberland	19	365	66	Sampson	57	105
18	Durham	20	345	67	Burke	65	65
18	Martin	20	172	68	Dare	69	14
20	Nash	21	321	69	Chatham	74	61
20	Lenoir	21	215	69	Gates	74	28
20	Craven	21	237	71	Polk	76	20
23	Wayne	22	324	72	Duplin	78	65
23	Pasquotank	22	147	73	Pender	79	39
25	Cabarrus	23	228	74	Caldwell	80	61
25	Iredell	23	290	75	Alexander	82	28
27	Catawba	24	230	76	Onslow	83	34
27	Chowan	24	91	77	Haywood	84	50
29	Halifax	25	299	78	Stokes	85	47
29	Bertie	25	178	79	Camden	98	12
31	Henderson	26	124	80	Famlico	99	20
31	Washington	26	83	81	Carteret	102	27
31	Johnston	26	310	82	Brunswick	118	21
31	Stanly	26	148	83	Cherokee	122	23
35	Alamance	27	210	84	McDowell	123	22
35	Greene	27	95	85	Bladen	133	27
35	Granville	27	180	86	Yadkin	134	23
35	Gaston	27	265	87	Macon	162	15
39	Montgomery	29	101	88	Wilkes	173	35
39	Harnett	29	148	89	Watauga	225	12
41	Warren	30	135	90	Swain	416	5
41	Transylvania	30	47	91	Jackson	624	4
43	Orange	31	95	92	Ashe	762	5
43	Franklin	31	155	93	Clay	781	1
45	Person	32	107	94	Yancey	1,207	2
45	Hertford	32	95	95	Madison	4,026	1
45	Rockingham	32	223	96	Alleghany		0
45	Cleveland	32	180	96	Graham		0
45	Beaufort	32	188	96	Mitchell		0