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Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt, 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, 1912.

## FARM TENANCY IN 1920

### TEN-YEAR GAINS AND LOSSES

In this issue of the News Letter we are carrying a table ranking the counties of the state according to the percent of decrease or increase in the number of farms in each county operated by tenants. In 1920 we had 16,038 more farms in the state than in 1910, but we had 10,172 more farms operated by tenants and only 6,956 more farms operated by farm owners. We had 9.5 percent more tenants than ten years ago and only 4.2 percent more farm owners. The ten-year gain in favor of tenancy was only in conformity with the drift into tenancy that the state has been showing since the Civil War. Every census period reveals a gain in tenants, both in number and as a percent of all farmers. Today 43.5 percent of all our farms are cultivated by tenants. And the gain will continue, for it is a fatal law that the more prosperous and populous a region becomes the fewer are the people who live in their own homes. This is especially true of city populations. It should not be true of country populations, but our methods of agriculture, especially in the South, make impossible any other movement than towards tenancy.

### Decreasing Areas

Forty-two counties in North Carolina have a smaller number of farm tenants today than ten years ago. Some of these same counties also have a smaller number of farm owners, because the number of farms decreased in 38 counties. The counties that have fewer tenants today are all the Mountain counties except Graham and Clay, 21 counties in the Piedmont belt, and six counties in the Tidewater area, all having a sparse farm population. New Hanover leads the state in ridding herself of farm tenants. They decreased almost half during the ten years. To the Mountain counties go the laurels for making the biggest reductions, the losses ranging all the way from 39.7 percent in Cherokee to 10.3 percent in Ashe. The Mountain counties have always been an area of home and farm owners and this policy is becoming even more conspicuous than ever in the past.

The Hill counties taken together have fewer tenants than ten years ago and more farms operated by owners. Twenty-one counties in this area actually have fewer tenants, while the others made only slight gains as a rule.

### Farm Tenancy's Paradise

During this same ten-year period every single one of the Coastal Plains counties, the paradise of farm tenancy in this state, gained in the number of farms operated by tenants. The gains run all the way from one percent in Nash county to 94.1 percent in Pamlico county. Think of a county's doubling its farm tenant population during a single decade! This is what happened in Pamlico. And why? Simply because cash crops, cotton and tobacco, are encroaching on Pamlico and other counties in the Tidewater and Lower Cape Fear regions, which, until recently have not been large producers of these two crops.

The Coastal Plains counties, the area of vast cotton and tobacco production, are increasing in tenant farmers at such a rapid rate as to be alarming to the thinking man. This is the big agricultural area of the state, the area that leads the entire world in tobacco production and that produces around one-twelfth of all the cotton grown in the nation. And it is these two cash crops, crops that are in every way suited to tenant methods, that are precipitating the eastern half of our state into a land of tenant farmers. Not only are they tenants, but they are share tenants, or croppers, the lowest form of tenancy. It is very little removed from serfdom itself. And in some counties of this area four-fifths of all farms are already cultivated by tenants and their number is steadily increasing as time passes. This has been true ever since the Civil War and the trend will continue for decades to come—unless the type of farming is changed. There are no indications that it is being changed.

In a few more decades England herself will not have a larger percent of tenants than the eastern half of our state. Tenancy in England is almost as good as land ownership. Not so with us.

### Conspicuous Gains

Pitt and Wilson grow a good bit of cotton but in addition they are two of the leading tobacco counties of the nation. Tenant farmers in Pitt number 1,205 more than ten years ago, a gain of 39.5 percent. In Wilson they number 985 more and the increase was 41.8 percent. Edgecombe has 917 more tenants, Wayne 790, Johnston 741, Sampson 728, Lenoir 652, Craven 485, and Harnett 479 more than ten years ago. So it is for the entire eastern half of the state except six Tidewater counties that, as yet, are practically free from tobacco and cotton. Most of the tobacco counties in the northern part of the Hill area and the cotton counties to the south made gains, but the gains were not large, as these areas have other crops, and farm production is more diversified.

### The Outlook

Does the fact that the great agricultural plains of the eastern half of our state are already farmed by an overwhelming tenant class, and a rapidly increasing tenant class, cause any great alarm to the masses of our people? We seem to be complacently unconcerned about this condition. We seem not to realize either the causes or the effects that are sure to accompany this evil drift. The eastern half of our state is based on agriculture, even the towns themselves are wholly dependent on agriculture. This is the section that causes our state to hold such a high rank as a producer of farm wealth. If you ask why, if we produce such enormous quantities of farm wealth in this area, the farmers themselves do not accumulate more, we answer that the reason lies largely in the inefficient, wasteful, crude, and ill-conceived cropper-tenant farmer system that overwhelms this area. The system is perilous. We are almost glad we do not know how many farmers who were farm owners, or on the verge of ownership, have lost their farms through foreclosures and other causes since the census was taken in 1919. Certainly a great mass of farmers who relied on the supply-merchant system have gone under. Tenancy has made a great gain, due largely to the fact that a large percent of our farmers fail to provide their own food and feed crops.

Recently the papers of the state carried an article by a farm journalist stating that a large percent of our eastern farmers were underfed, because they could not secure more food supplies from the merchants! If it were not deplorable it would be humorous. The first business of a farm is to feed itself and then produce all the cash crops it can. A farmer who does not produce food enough for his family and livestock, but produces only cash crops, must suffer what inevitably comes to a gambler sooner or later, for our cropping system is a gamble with prices. We have been taught the lesson time and again but have never learned it permanently.

An increasing tenant population makes democracy increasingly in peril. The Anglo-Saxon has a lust for land as has no other race and if this lust is not satisfied and becomes increasingly difficult to satisfy, then we are likely to drift into chaos. If democracy is ever dethroned in this nation it will be by the landless, homeless masses, and not by home and farm owners. Improving social conditions in the great tenant stretches of our state is becoming a difficult task. Tenants are a migratory class that develop little love for any community and a weak social consciousness. We are face to face with a situation that demands a solution. Building up an efficient farm system and social conditions that are satisfying and wholesome in an area steeped in tenancy is a dream that will never be realized.—S. H. H., Jr.

### OWNERSHIP OR TENANCY

The last ten years has seen a rapid increase in the percentage of farms cultivated by tenants. Along with this has come a distressing slump in the social and recreative activities of farming districts which is having its influence in driving the best type of farm-bred boys and girls to the city.

The temporary leasing of land is often

### THE COMMUNITY

Justice Louis D. Brandeis

The great America for which we long is unattainable unless the individuality of communities becomes far more highly developed, and becomes a common American phenomenon. For a century our growth has come through national expansion and the increase of the functions of the federal government. The growth of the future—at least the immediate future—must be in quality and and spiritual value. And that can come only through the concentrated, intensified strivings of smaller groups. The field for the special effort should now be the state, the city, the village. If ideals are developed locally the national ones will come pretty near taking care of themselves.

an advantage both to the owner and the tenant, but the creation of tenancy as a permanent feature of agriculture would be an unmitigated misfortune. A rural community made up of farm owners has better houses, roads, and schools than a community of tenants. Whatever the owner puts in his farm to improve it is his own. Whatever the tenant takes out is largely his own. What he puts in, in the way of capital, knowledge and skill in maintaining soil fertility, goes largely to the land owner under our present short-sighted and short-timed tenancy contracts. The result is, the tenant does not nail boards on the barn, does not plant trees along the roads, or take any interest in doing any of the things that are needed to make rural life satisfactory.

Ownership has other values. It exerts a great influence on human character. The owner of a farm has a special pride in the fact that he is a permanent member of the community and that he has a stake in everything which builds up its social and economic life. Tenantry, in America, is on the contrary migratory, and tenants are rapidly becoming class conscious and discontented. Unless this is checked, we are certain to face the same unrest and disorder that led to revolution in France and Russia and to avert which some of the most enlightened countries of Europe have made national aid to farm-buying a government policy.—Report of the California State Land Settlement Board.

### THE NEW CLUB YEAR-BOOK

The 1919-20 Club Year-Book of the North Carolina Club at the University has just come off the press and is ready to go into the mails. Those people who have made requests for this book have already been mailed copies. This bulletin goes free to any person in North Carolina who writes for it, as long as the supply lasts. If you have not already made a request, and would like a copy, send a card to the Extension Division, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

A table of contents of this book has already been printed in the News Letter. It is a 200-page book of condensed information and discussion on such wide-awake Carolina problems as Public Education, Public Health, Transportation and Communication, Home and Farm Ownership, Race Relationships, Public Welfare, Organized Business and Life, Civic Reform, and The New Day in Carolina.

The North Carolina Club Year-Book is an annual publication issued by the Rural Social Science Department of the University. The 1919-20 book, State Reconstruction Studies, is the work of two score University students working under the direction of the Rural Social Science Department, and in collaboration with the Reconstruction Commission appointed by Governor Bickett.

If you wish a copy write today before the issue is exhausted.

### CLUB WORK IN IREDELL

The beautification of the farm home itself, and of its surroundings, is the latest step in a consistently graduated plan among club workers in the Southern

States. The realization that a widely extended effort was necessary to obtain satisfactory results made home and school improvement the object of a campaign conducted in April in Iredell county, N. C., under the direction of the home demonstration agent of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State agricultural college. Hundreds of men, women, and children throughout the county entered into the plan with zest. Numerous prizes were offered by business firms to stimulate interest. Snapshots were taken of school houses, front and back yards, dining rooms, living rooms, bedrooms, before and after improvements were made.

The community of Mt. Mourne won a prize of \$100 for making the most improvements in schools, homes, and grounds. This progressive community held a successful fair; it obtained an increase in the teachers' salaries and an extra month added to the school term; through it another grade was added to the course, and by many social diversions the active cooperation of all its citizens was encouraged. Furniture, china, and money were awarded to those changing old, unattractive rooms most pleasingly for the least outlay. For the most convenient kitchen a washing machine was given.

The benefits of electricity on the farm were brought out by debates, school-children's compositions, and various other devices. The success of the campaign lay in the awakening of the "improvement" spirit, which seized hold of the county and contributed much toward setting up ideals and standards of comfortable living, of good judgment, and good taste.—Press Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

### COTTON MANUFACTURE

Here before us is a statement to the effect that North Carolina has won distinction in the manufacturing world largely through the initiative and enterprise of her own people.

It occurred to North Carolinians who were growing cotton that they might profitably convert this cotton into cloth, and eminently successful have they been.

Three-fourths of all the new looms and spindles set up in the South in 1920 were set up in North Carolina.

There are now 513 textile mills in the state, compared with 180 in South Carolina and 173 in Georgia.

North Carolina embraces more mills that dye and finish their own product than any other Southern state.

The largest hosiery mills in the world are located at Durham, N. C.

The largest towel mills in the world are located at Kannapolis, N. C.

The largest denim mills in the United States are located at Greensboro, N. C.

The largest damask mills in the United States are located at Roanoke Rapids, N. C.

Winston-Salem contains the largest underwear factory in America.

Gaston county, with around 100 mills, is the center of fine-combed yarn of the South.

Texas grows more cotton than any state in the Union, but as yet Texas is only incidentally in the business of converting cotton into cloth.

Right recently two mills of considerable size have been started up here in Waco, with the latest improved machinery, one a twine mill and the other a cloth mill.

The matter of another mill is under consideration; it should be pressed until the final consummation.—Waco Times-Herald.

## FARM TENANCY IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1920

### Percents Increase or Decrease, 1910-20

Counties ranked from high to low. Total increase in farms 16,038. Total increase in farm tenants, 10,172, or 9.5 percent.

Rural Social Science Department, University of North Carolina.

DECREASES			INCREASES		
Rank	County	Percent decrease	Rank	County	Percent increase
1	New Hanover	46.4	47	Currituck	3.9
2	Cherokee	39.7	47	Hertford	3.9
2	Henderson	39.7	49	Iredell	4.7
4	Madison	34.5	50	Orange	5.1
5	Wilkes	31.8	51	Durham	6.2
6	Gaston	30.7	52	Northampton	7.0
7	Jackson	30.1	53	Montgomery	8.0
8	Brunswick	29.5	54	Forsyth	9.0
9	Transylvania	29.3	55	Clay	10.5
10	Swain	27.1	56	Jones	10.7
11	Randolph	26.0	57	Lee	12.2
12	Lincoln	25.3	58	Halifax	12.4
13	Hyde	24.3	59	Wake	13.4
14	Alleghany	22.5	60	Rockingham	15.4
15	Yadkin	20.5	61	Franklin	15.5
16	Burke	20.1	61	Pasquotank	15.5
17	Buncombe	19.3	63	Camden	16.2
18	Carteret	19.0	64	Warren	16.4
19	Yancey	16.5	65	Perquimans	17.4
20	Catawba	16.4	66	Anson	18.0
20	Macon	16.4	67	Richmond	21.1
22	McDowell	15.8	68	Columbus	22.0
23	Davie	14.8	68	Graham	22.0
24	Haywood	12.9	70	Bertie	23.9
25	Alexander	12.5	71	Caswell	24.8
26	Tyrrell	11.4	72	Onslow	25.7
27	Ashe	10.3	73	Johnston	25.9
28	Surry	10.2	74	Chowan	27.9
28	Union	10.2	75	Beaufort	29.7
30	Vance	8.0	76	Scotland	30.9
31	Chatham	6.6	77	Wayne	31.5
32	Stokes	6.2	78	Martin	33.7
33	Mecklenburg	6.0	79	Greene	35.6
34	Person	4.7	80	Moore	36.3
35	Cleveland	4.6	81	Pitt	39.5
35	Cabarrus	4.6	82	Bladen	40.4
37	Polk	4.1	83	Lenoir	40.9
38	Rowan	3.9	84	Pender	41.5
39	Stanly	2.6	85	Wilson	41.8
40	Guilford	2.2	86	Gates	42.4
41	Rutherford	0.6	87	Edgecombe	43.0
42	Alamance	0.0	88	Washington	46.8
42	Dare	0.0	89	Sampson	47.9
			90	Harnett	50.8
			91	Duplin	53.4
44	Nash	1.0	92	Craven	61.5
45	Granville	2.9	92	Pamlico	94.1
46	Davidson	3.2			

Note: (1) Avery was formed in 1911 out of Watauga, Caldwell, and Mitchell, and does not appear in the 1910 Census. In the area occupied by these four counties the number of farms operated by tenants decreased 33.6 percent between 1910 and 1920.

(2) Hoke was formed in 1911 out of Cumberland and Robeson. In the area covered by these three counties the number of farms operated by tenants increased 31.2 percent during the same period.

(3) Cleveland, Currituck, Dare, Durham, Gaston, Harnett, and Wake had their boundaries slightly changed during the last Census period, but the territory gained or lost was so small in each instance, that the figures for them in the above table are approximately correct.