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PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

THE RURAL MIND

At the last meeting of the North Carolina Club Mr. L. M. Brooks presented a paper on The Rural Mind: Is It a Myth? The following is only a brief summary of Mr. Brooks's paper.

The answer to this question seems to be found in the writings of rather a large number of students of rural life, among whom are Professors Butterfield, Galpin, Gillette, Groves, Sims, Vogt, and Williams.

Although from the viewpoint of present-day psychology there can be no rural mind, since no group mind is held to exist, sociology finds certain characteristics common to country folk which differ from those of city dwellers. These differences arise wholly from environment. The outstanding feature of a rural environment is isolation, the bane of country life, though from it arise valuable social traits such as self-reliance, family loyalty, democratic spirit, and a generous helpfulness. Probably the most destructive trait fostered by isolation is fear, psychic fear not physical fear. Adult life is too often dominated by the chain of fear forged in childhood through the fear method of discipline: superstition, morbid funerals, ghost stories, unfortunate contacts at school, and with hired help. Thus, fear of the new and untried may result in extreme conservatism.

Unsocial attitudes are fostered by lack of play, particularly team play among both children and adults, largely because of geographical isolation but partly also because play is often deemed a waste of time. Among other destructive traits having their roots in isolation are adherence to custom, and self-sufficiency.

Changing Traits

The dependence on weather also has a great influence on the thinking of the farmer. It is either friend or enemy and must be reckoned with constantly.

All these traits, however, are changing in proportion as isolation is being overcome. They still persist in the more remote and inaccessible regions. Wherever isolation is being broken down by rural mail service, telephones, automobiles, good roads, movies, the radio, libraries, and consolidated schools, there cooperation is taking the place of individualism, and the rural attitude is blending with the urban. This result also is stimulated and hastened by improved methods of work, machinery displacing hoe farming.

The conclusion is, that while there is technically no rural mind, it is a convenient way of referring to the apparent average attitude and expression of the mind of rural individuals, which is fading out as isolation is eradicated, but which has made a wholesome contribution to the life of the nation.

MECKLENBURG SURVEY

A study of Mecklenburg County: Economic and Social, under the direction of the Department of Rural Social-Economics, is at the present time in process of preparation. There is perhaps no better sample county in North Carolina than Mecklenburg, a great industrial county, possessing excellent natural resources, with both city and rural problems, and producing all of North Carolina's major crops except tobacco. For this reason an effort is being made to provide in the Mecklenburg survey a bulletin excelling any one of the thirteen which have been issued by the Department—a bulletin which may be used locally by study clubs and civics classes in the high schools of the county. The historical background is being prepared by Miss Julia Alexander of Charlotte; the chapter on Mecklenburg County Towns by Mr. J. A. Person, Jr.; Natural Resources by Mr. J. S. Clark; Facts About the Folks by Mr. Edgar T. Thompson; Wealth and Taxation by Mr. A. T. Cutler; Schools and Churches by Mr. J. A. Honeycutt; Agriculture by Mr. Myron T. Green; How Mecklenburg is Governed by Mr. Paul W. Wager; How Charlotte is Governed by Mr. Edward Woodhouse; and Social and Civic Organizations by Mr. T. S. Clarkson. In addition there will be chapters on Industries, Problems, and Evidences of Progress.

It is hoped that the bulletin will be ready for the press by January and ready for distribution two or three weeks later. The effort is sponsored by the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce whose support has made possible the undertaking. There is no reason why a similar bulletin could not be issued for every county in North Carolina, and there will be when local citizens and agencies come to demand it of their county students at the University, and then support the publication of their efforts.—Edgar T. Thompson.

FOR BETTER FACILITIES

Some Southern states are increasing per capita expenditure for schools more rapidly than others. North Carolina leads the list, having multiplied her per capita expenditure by 16.66 in the twenty-two year period. Louisiana is second, with an increase of 10.92 times, and Alabama third, with an increase of 10.68 times. Maryland and Kentucky are the laggards, having multiplied their expenditure by only 4.29 and 4.10 respectively.

This basis of comparison measures the rate at which educational facilities are being improved. It does not indicate the present relative rates of expenditure, for states that have been most energetic in increasing their expenditures were laggards in 1900.

Low Per Inhabitant

Measured by this standard a different group takes the lead. North Carolina drops from first place to ninth, having spent only $8.33 per capita for schools in 1922. Oklahoma takes the lead with an expenditure of $14.35. West Virginia, below the average by the former standard, comes second by this, having spent $12.20, while Missouri and Texas came third and fourth with $11.94 and $10.79, respectively. This shifting is explained by the fact that in 1900 North Carolina stood at the bottom of the Southern states on a basis of per capita expenditure, and in climbing to ninth place has made greater relative progress than any of the others, while West Virginia stood third in 1900, and in stepping up one place made only a slight relative advance. On this basis Georgia is the tail-ender with an expenditure of $4.55 per capita, while Arkansas is next with $4.91.

A few states that in 1900 were leaders in per capita expenditure for public schools have lost ground relatively, although they have increased their per capita expenditures. While North Carolina rose from sixteenth to ninth place and Louisiana from thirteenth to seventh, Mississippi fell from eleventh to fourteenth, Arkansas from ninth to fifteenth, and Georgia from tenth to sixteenth.

Wealth as a Basis

Neither of the foregoing comparisons measures the effort the people of the states are making for better educational facilities. To get at this it is necessary to take the wealth into account. Measured by this standard, Oklahoma again takes the lead, having spent 0.77 percent of its wealth for public schools in 1922. Texas comes second, with 0.536 percent, and North Carolina is third with 0.488 percent. Arkansas is again the tail-ender with only 0.341 percent. Kentucky stands twelfth, Tennessee stands fourteenth, and Georgia fifteenth.

Nothing but an imaginary line separates the backward Georgia and Tennessee from the progressive North Carolina. Nothing but a similar line separates the backward Arkansas from the progressive Oklahoma. Why should the people of one state be so much less liberal in support of their schools than the people of another that has no better opportunities for obtaining the advantages of civilization? Does the difference lie in the people themselves, in their leaders, or—what may seem the same thing, but isn't quite—in a difference in political machines?—World's Work.

POPULAR KIND OF SCHOOL

Dr. E. W. Knight, a member of the faculty of the State University, who is in Denmark studying the educational system of that country, is writing a series of interesting articles for several of the leading North Carolina daily papers. The series began Sunday and will doubtless be read with interest and profit by many throughout the state.

One of the unusual things mentioned in his first letter about the Danish educational system was the folk high schools for grown people between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The object of these schools is to "awaken, enliven, and enlighten," and it is said that they have literally remade life for the Danish people and have been remarkable in producing a better civilization in that country. They have been largely responsible for the much talked of contentment and prosperity of the rural folk of Denmark. There are no admission requirements in these schools, no examinations, and no credits are offered, but they are for the purpose of awakening the people, enlivening them, and enlightening them. Schools of this kind must be an inspiration to any people and an invaluable aid in developing the best there is in them. Dr. Knight says: "Danish culture has been revived and restored and increased by these means. They have helped to produce a remarkably substantial, prosperous, and happy rural life in Denmark, which is said to have the broadest and most generous culture of any country in Europe."

We believe such schools would be a wonderful factor in broadening life and developing culture among our own people. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that some day a similar plan may materialize in the good Old North State.—Smithfield Herald.

KNOW NORTH CAROLINA
Educational Progress

The table which appears elsewhere presents at a glance the remarkable progress North Carolina has made in the field of public education during the last quarter of a century. We believe that no state in the Union can match our record of progress in public education.

In 1900 we were spending annually on all public education for all purposes approximately one million dollars. In 1923-24 we spent all told nearly 30 million dollars, 19 millions of which went for current expenses, and more than ten and a half millions for new buildings. New school buildings erected throughout North Carolina in 1900 cost all told $57,400.

The total value of all school property in North Carolina in 1900 was one million dollars. In 1924 our school property was valued at 60 million dollars, and at the present time it is valued at approximately 70 million dollars.

There were 1,190 log schoolhouses in the state in 1900, and 53 in 1924, only 4 of which were white schools.

The school teachers have increased from 8,320 in 1900 to 21,403 in 1924, and along with this growth in number of teachers there has been a great improvement in the quality of teachers.

In 1900 the average white teacher received a monthly salary of $24.79, while in 1924 the salary averaged $110.06.

The public schools of the state had an average term of 70.8 days in 1900 and 143.4 days in 1924.

Remarkable progress has been made with respect to enrollment and attendance during the last quarter century. In 1900 less than 61 percent of the school population was enrolled in school, and of those enrolled only 51.7 percent were in average daily attendance. In 1924 86.1 percent of the school population was enrolled and 72 percent of all children enrolled were in average daily attendance.

It is estimated that there were 30 high schools in all North Carolina in 1900 with a total enrollment of only 2,000 pupils. In 1924 we had 738 high schools with a total enrollment of nearly 64,000 students. However, in percent of students enrolled in high schools North Carolina still ranks low among the states of the Union.

The above are the more outstanding facts with reference to our marvelous progress in public education and every inhabitant of the state should know the facts and should feel proud of our achievement.

But that is not the whole story, and it would be unfair to fail to remind ourselves that, remarkable as has been our progress, we do not yet rank high among the states in public education. The rank of the state in 1922 was forty-second, and it is estimated that our present rank is fortieth. We have passed by eight states in twenty-four years, but we will have to pass by several more states before we can justly point with pride to our system of public education.

There is still abundant room for progress in every phase of public education in North Carolina, and especially with respect to our rural schools.

RURAL ELECTRIC POWER

XV. INDEPENDENT COOPERATIVE LINES

The last few articles have dealt entirely with the rural distribution of energy which has been generated at the central station of some power company or municipal plant. But what about the case of farmers who live in remote districts and have no access to this service? A map of North Carolina showing existing transmission lines indicates many parts of the Coastal Plain and Mountain sections, and even quite a few parts of the Piedmont section, that are so far from the nearest power line as to make service out of the question. Does it follow, then, that dwellers in these parts must necessarily be deprived of the admitted advantages of electricity? This question can be answered only by considering the alternatives to central station service.

Cooperative Projects

The chief alternative, of course, is for the farmer to get a water-wheel and dynamo, and rig up his own system on some convenient stream so that the idle water power may become a valuable source of farm power. There is one form of this enterprise that deserves special attention, and that is where several farmers cooperate for the purpose so that a single generating plant on one stream is made to serve a group of farmers living within a radius of one or two miles. This plan has been worked out in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, with considerable success.

The Annual Cost

But how would the cost of such an independent system compare with the cost of obtaining power from an electric company? Take, for example, a group of 10 farmers scattered over two miles of a remote country section. Somewhere near the center of the group runs a small stream, and the 10 farmers combine to install a 25 horse-power generating plant and set up a line of wires to the various houses in the group. The annual expense can be calculated approximately as follows, the estimates being taken as far as possible from conditions now existing in North Carolina.

25 H. P. Hydro-electric plant	$1,985
Power house and dam..	1,500
Two miles of line	1,700
Transformers and meters	480
Total investment.	$5,665
Interest and depreciation at 16 percent..	$ 906
Operating expenses, one year	150
Total annual expense	$1,056
Annual expense per farmer...	$ 105

How, then, does this annual burden per farmer of $105 under an independent cooperative system compare with the annual bill of those farmers who purchase power from an electric company? As far as can be determined the annual bills of rural customers in North Carolina run between $90 and $135. The average of a large number of bills in Pennsylvania is $102. The conclusion would seem warranted that the annual expense to each farmer cooperating in an independent system is in the same general neighborhood as the expense under the other system. No more specific conclusion can be drawn on account of the fact that the table given above is an estimate, although the individual items are based on actual costs.

But another question immediately arises. While the annual expense is complete to the extent that it includes interest on investment, where are the funds for the original investment of $5,665 to come from? One obvious answer is a loan from a bank, but the future will probably bring with it another answer, and that is the development of cooperative credit societies in agricultural regions. This question, of course, is outside the sphere of the present series of articles.—A. T. Cutler.

PROGRESS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION
In North Carolina from 1899-1900 to 1923-1924

The following table, based on the 1922-24 Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, gives the basic facts concerning the progress North Carolina has made in public education during the last twenty-four years. Although our present general status in public education is not such that we can point to it with particular pride, no state has made greater progress during the last quarter of a century than has North Carolina.

Items	1899-1900	1918-1919	1923-1924
Total school expenditure..	$1,062,304	$ 6,768,063	$29,747,076
Expenditure current expense.	$1,004,903	$ 5,850,129	$19,078,657
Expenditure capital outlay.....	$57,400	$917,932	$10,668,419
Value school property ..	$1,097,564	$16,294,859	$59,758,005
Average value per school house	$158.65	$1,977.77	$8,222
Number of log houses	1,190	124	53
Number white one-teacher schools..	5,047	2,712	1,633
Number of teachers..	8,320	15,037	21,403
a. White.	5,753	11,685	16,283
b. Colored	2,567	3,352	5,120
Average monthly salary..	$23.46	$56.83	$99.93
a. White	$24.79	$62.00	$110.06
b. Colored	$20.48	$37.18	$64.83
Average term in days	70.8	112.0	143.4
a. White	73.3	113.8	146.2
b. Colored	65.3	105.6	134.6
Average number days in school....	....	73.0	103.3
a. White	....	76.6	109.3
b. Colored	....	63.5	89.1
Total school population	657,949	832,839	921,315
a. White	439,431	567,415	628,132
b. Colored.	218,518	265,424	293,183
Total school enrollment	400,452	591,487	793,046
Total average daily attendance....	206,918	385,673	571,359
Percent of school population enrolled	60.9	71.0	86.1
Percent of enrollment in average daily attendance....	51.7	65.2	72.0
Number public high schools	*30	391	738
Enrollment in high schools	*2,000	23,665	63,857
Number state-aided rural libraries..	.....	4,686	5,070
Educational appropriations:			
a. Public schools, maintenance....	$100,000	$844,692	$1,678,750
b. Normal schools, perman'nt imp.	.....	†$315,000	$2,219,000
Maintenance....	$16,000	$113,950	$393,000
c. Higher institutions:			
Permanent improvement....	†$12,500	†$1,325,000	†$4,795,000
Maintenance	$65,000	$427,500	$1,425,000
Percent illiteracy	29.4	.....	**13.1
a. White	14.0	.....	**8.2
b. Colored	38.6	.....	**24.5

*Estimated
†Two years
**1920 Census