

Ernest Boyce Facing Soil Erosion Problem

Young Upper Chowan Farmer Adopts Effective Practices

According to R. C. Jordan of the Soil Conservation Service, Ernest Boyce, an industrious young farmer of the Sign Pine neighborhood of Chowan County, is conquering soil erosion on his Sandy Run farm. He is working effectively to establish erosion-control practices as outlined in his soil conservation farm plan which he developed with the Albemarle Soil Conservation District.

The farm on which Ernest lives is a good farm for the most of it. Two land areas, however, have been washing rather severely for a long time. On both of them the yellow clay subsoil has poked out its ugly face. The worst of the two has already lost 50 to 75 per cent of its top soil and was subject to lose much more since it lies on a 5 to 8 per cent slope. The field beyond its slope was being covered with sand and silt. Gullies of considerable size had formed and continued to grow. Both of these eroding fields were gradually getting worse. Soil fertility and the soil itself was being lost much too rapidly. Under the ravages of such accelerated erosion only a much worse situation could be anticipated.

Erosion control practices were planned in his farm conservation plan, but they were new to Ernest and to his community. Terracing and the companion measures suggested in the plan were not familiar practices and would require considerable effort and patience to establish. However, the unarrested deterioration of his land must be ended. He would put the planned practices on the ground and with such an action program "do his part."

That was Ernest's decision. With decision it became a resolution. As of now, one of the fields—the worst one—has been completely terraced. Three-tenths mile of terraces have been built. A permanent pasture of Ladino clover and orchard grass has

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been seeded, terraces and all. With this program—terraces and pasture—Ernest feels confident that he can stop growing gullies and bald spots and grow milk and pork instead.

The other field is still in peanut production. He plans to terrace it as soon as the crop is removed. It will not require a pasture cover though, but will be used continuously for row crops. The crop rows will be laid off on the contour, however, to aid in the control of sheet and gully erosion.

Ernest constructed his terraces with his "B" Farmall tractor and a three-disc John Deere tiller. A scoop pan was used to excavate high places in the water channel and to fill in the low places in the terrace bank. "It took hard work, too," Ernest reminds himself.

Of the results so far, however, he is manifestly proud. Surplus field water is no longer scouring down across unprotected slopes. It is being "walked" around the contour of the field and released gently into a wooded outlet by the terraces he labored to build. An aggravating problem has been largely whipped.

The soil conservation farm plan which outlined the erosion control measures for the Boyce farm was developed last January. R. C. Jordan of the Soil Conservation Service and E. S. White, vocational agriculture teacher of Chowan High School, assisted Ernest and his mother, Mrs. Carrie Boyce, to set up the plan. George Conner, Jr., Soil Conservation aid, assisted Ernest to survey and to construct the terraces in the field.

Mr. Jordan urges farmers to visit the Boyce farm for observation of methods and ways to control soil erosion.

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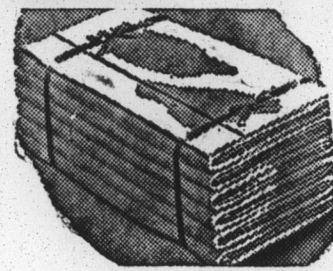
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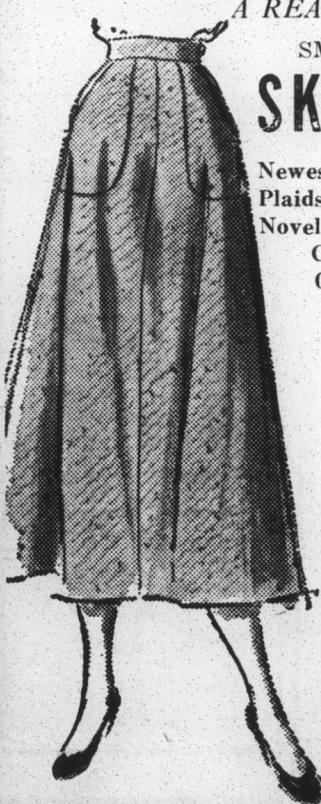
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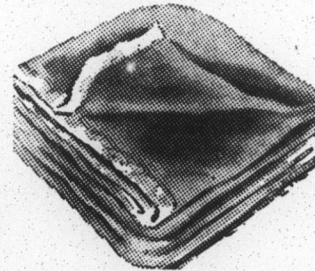
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