

Sylvan Valley News

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A HOME PAPER FOR HOME PEOPLE—ALL HOME PRINT

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SOIL SURVEYS AND THEIR REAL VALUE

ENABLE FARMERS TO DO BETTER WORK

Department Official Explains Good to Farmers From the Surveys.

Not long since there appeared an article in the columns of the Progressive Farmer under the caption, "What are soil surveys worth?" which seemed to hit wide of the mark and to do considerable injustice to a movement everywhere looked upon as most worthy and entirely necessary. "What are soil surveys worth?" What is classification worth in any science, or in the study of any related set of facts? What would botanists of today do had not Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist, made his classification of plants? What would students of anatomy do today without a systematic classification of the bones, muscles and nerves of the human body? And what would a course in agriculture be worth today without a knowledge of soils? And what would a student of agricultural soils do today without the classification of soils begun by Whitney some ten or twelve years ago? It is hardly too much to say that the knowledge of agricultural soils in the United States and, to a great extent, in the world, bears a direct ratio to the progress in the proper classification and mapping of the soils in the United States.

Twenty years ago "pigs was pigs" and "soils was soils," and no one knew or cared to investigate any intrinsic differences existing among them. Our soil facts were in a most chaotic condition and remained so until Whitney came to the rescue and began to set things in order and to develop a science of soils hitherto unknown. True, Mr. King had done much good work on soils but his field was soil physics pure and simple and did not touch the all-important classification so necessary for a broad foundation on which to build a really important working knowledge of soils as related to crop production.

Today no agricultural college worthy of the name would think of graduating a student in agriculture without first imbuing him with a knowledge of the classification of the soils of his state, and, in a general way, those of the United States.

Furthermore, there is not an intelligent answer given today to a question concerning the fertilization of the soil, or the crop adaptation of the soil, that is not based on a knowledge of the given soil type. Soil types are individuals and must have, to a large extent, individual treatment. Therefore, when a farmer writes his state department of agriculture, his agricultural experiment station, or the United States department of agriculture, concerning the treatment of any particular soil on his farm, the answers to his questions, if reliable, are based on a knowledge of his soil gained from a study of the classification of the particular soil made by the U. S. soil survey or some other similar agency. Were these surveys not made how is any agricultural adviser to know what to tell John Smith about his soil management unless he actually visits John Smith's farm and personally inspects his fields—an impracticable undertaking.

The soil survey enables men to buy and sell at a distance without the usual danger of being cheated in a deal. Thousands of dollars are thus saved each year by reliance upon a faithful soil-map of the area in which the purchase is to be made. To illustrate, not long ago a man in Arkansas wished to buy a farm in North Carolina but knew

nothing of the kind of land the man had for sale. The man in Arkansas took up a soil map, together with the report on the area, and saw for himself just about what he might expect to find in that region. After asking the man a few well chosen questions he found the soil was a type known as Cecil Sandy Loam with a field of Cecil Loam lying at one end of the farm. He knew at once the crop value of this type of soil and sent his check for the price. Two years later the man in Arkansas came to North Carolina to see the farm he had purchased and before getting away was offered more than twice what he gave for it by a neighbor who had known the farm all his life and farmed on soil similar to that found on this place.

It is an open secret that many of the big land deals are based on the soil survey of the area in question. Were you in the west you would find men going from county to county appraising the lands on which prospective loans are to be made. Suppose a lumber company is about to buy a large tract of timber land. Would they not get an expert forester to tell them the amount of pine, oak, cypress, etc., on the area! Would you expect a big land company to do less? They also want some means of knowing what they are putting their money into before they purchase, and what is true in case of a big land company is true in the case of an individual farmer in Ohio or Michigan who wants to buy a small farm in North Carolina. He wants to know what he is getting before he buys, and you do not blame him. This information he may glean from a soil map which costs him nothing, perhaps, or a very little if anything at all, as these maps are nearly always made from moneys that would perhaps go to building warships, equipping navies, dredging rivers, subsidizing ships or a hundred and one other things that may never be worth a brownie to any farmer anywhere.

Now bear in mind that a correct classification is just as necessary to a study of soils as it is to the study of any other set of related facts, and that he who undertakes and carries this classification to successful termination is due just as much of our gratitude as any other systematist who succeeds in bringing order out of chaos.

Yes, so far as we know a chemical analysis is made of every soil type of any importance mapped in the United States. And this analysis means something, too. To illustrate, if the analysis of one of my soils showed a great deficiency of phosphorous, I may expect an application of phosphorous to give me good results. If my soil showed a great lack of potash, I may expect an application of potash to give me good results, etc., and this theory corresponds to actual experimental facts. On the other hand, if my soil showed a good amount of phosphate and potash I may get good results from an application of these elements because those in my soil may be locked up and unavailable to the plants. But if these elements are in the soil I can easily get them out by a liberal use of stable and green manure combined with good preparation and good cultivation. The chemical analysis will show you whether the elements are present in our soil, and this is what you want to know. If they are present you can get them out; if they are not there, you must supply them.

You are entirely correct. North Carolina has spent, in connection with the U. S. Bureau of Soils, thousands of dollars in soil surveys in the state. You might also have added that Alabama, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, and a number of other states have spent and are spending more than North Carolina and are likely to spend more in the future, until a good soil map of the entire state is completed.

You will find also, on investiga-

VEGETABLE RAISING IN WESTERN SECTION

OPPORTUNITY FOR CAB- BAGES AND POTATOES

Southern Railway Issues Inter- esting Booklet On These Vegetables.

The splendid opportunity afforded throughout the Western North Carolina region for the growing of cabbage and Irish potatoes is outlined in an attractive illustrated booklet which has just been issued by the Land and Industrial Department of the Southern Railway Company under the title "A Western North Carolina Opportunity." While considerable attention is paid to the growing of cabbages, potatoes and other truck crops in this section, the local market is under supplied for a part of the year, and the production needed to supply a large portion of the southeast when the crops from the mountain country should be available is altogether insufficient. In the growing of cabbages and potatoes, a crop for which the soil and the climate are perfectly adapted, and for which demand and transportation facilities give special inducements, a most profitable livelihood is opened to the man of small means. The same tools and equipment serve for both crops, and owing to the different requirements of the two crops it is easier to produce ten acres of each than twenty acres of either crop. The use of both crops in rotation eliminates the tendency to disease, as the pests that destroy or harm one crop will be starved out during the time the other crop is on the land. The booklet gives valuable information as to the methods of raising the combined crop; where to find the best markets, and refers farmers or homeseekers desiring advice to Charles W. Mason, agricultural expert for the Southern railway at Asheville. The Southern railway will give the booklet wide distribution in Western North Carolina as well as in sections from which desirable settlers are likely to be attracted.

SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENT

The graded school closed on Thursday of last week for the Christmas holidays. A general entertainment free to the public was given Thursday night, and in spite of the unfavorable state of the weather the auditorium was packed.

The exercises generally were prepared to suit the Christmas idea, especially in the pieces rendered by the lower grades. The children acquitted themselves well, and considering the lack of seating capacity, the order was excellent. All the performers in the play which ended the program were thoroughly familiar with their parts. Music was rendered by the orchestra, under the direction of Miss Wave Long.

The following was the program: Opening prayer, led by Prof. J. H. Bennett.

Selection by orchestra, "The Winning Flight."

Song by second grade, "Silent Night."

Pantomime by first grade children, "Christmas Candles."

Recitation by Woodford Zachary. Song by third grade, "Old Santa Claus."

Motion song by fifth grade, "Christmas Lullaby."

Evergreen drill, by eight girls. Quartette, "Star of the East."

Selection by orchestra. Play, "Jayville Junction."

The school will open again for the remaining half of the session on Monday, January 8th.

"UNCLE RUBE" PRESENTED

On the afternoon of Christmas day an entertainment was given at Rockbrook farm, the residence of Mr. H. P. Clarke, to the children and patrons of the neighboring schools. The entertainment was given by Miss Nancy Clarke, and invitations were issued, which were responded to by quite a large number of people.

The main hall of the building was turned into an auditorium with seating capacity for about two hundred. At the front end a stage was built for the performers.

The players who presented "Uncle Rube" at Brevard last spring had been engaged to give the same play before this audience. They were assisted by Miss Wave Long's orchestra. The characters were taken by the same parties as in the previous performance with the exception of Charles Ashworth, who was too ill to attend, and whose part was taken by Durward D. Bracker.

It is quite remarkable about this play—how it bears repetition. Given twice at Brevard, it had a better house the second than the first time. For an amateur performance it is also remarkable how well the players were suited to their parts. The members of this unorganized dramatic club went to the work with fine enthusiasm. Much credit is due to Mr. F. B. Ayres in his capacity as general manager. To the people on the other side of the river the show was new, and for them a fine Christmas treat which they thoroughly enjoyed, as it was impossible for an observer not to notice.

The orchestra, consisting of four violins, a cornet, cello and piano, made good music between acts, and showed the fruits of the excellent training given by its leader and teacher, Miss Long. As specialties between acts a quartette consisting of Messrs. Morris, Jollay, Cantrell and Osborne, entertained the crowd with their singing.

The play went through without a hitch and was a decided success. The appreciation of the audience was unmistakable. Hearty laughter alternated with the orderly quiet of interested hearers. The pleasure manifested by the children was sufficient reward for the players and the generous hostess.

All who went from Brevard were enthusiastic over the pleasures of the day and charmed with the fine hospitality of the Clarks, both towards themselves and also towards the people there assembled.

WEEKLY SCHOOL REPORT

FOR WEEK ENDING DEC. 22.

The week ending Dec. 22 seems to have been a time when the thought of Christmas was already influencing both teachers and pupils. Thirteen teachers failed to make any report at all. This is nearly half the number that are now teaching in the county. The schools reporting, all but two, show an average attendance of 50 per cent. Penrose High School had an attendance of 54.7 per cent. and Blantyre 52.9 per cent., both in Boyd township. The lowest attendance reported is 14.5 per cent, in District No. 1, Gloucester township.

The great educational problem before the people of this county just now is how to secure a better attendance on our schools. Every child should be in the school every day during the term. The question is how can such an attendance be secured? T. C. Henderson, Superintendent.

CARD OF THANKS

Please give us space to return thanks to the good people of Cedar Mountain for their help and faithfulfulness during the sickness and death of our dear little girl.

J. E. and E. J. HUNT.

MR. GUDGER EXPLAINS VOTE FOR PENSIONS

MAINTAINS HIS VOTE WAS PARTY ONE

Tenth District Congressman Has No Apologies For Criticized Action.

As noted in the issue of this paper last week Congressman J. M. Gudger, jr., of this district, voted for the Sherwood dollar-a-day Pension bill, which it is estimated will add something like \$75,000,000 a year to the \$160,000,000 which is already being paid from the national treasury to the Union veterans of the civil war. Mr. Gudger was the only congressman among the ten from this state who voted in favor of the bill, and his action has been severely criticised by the papers of the state almost without exception.

While not agreeing with the course taken by our representative, at the same time the News feels that in justice to Mr. Gudger his reasons for his vote should be given publicity, and below is reproduced a statement from Mr. Gudger:

"The last democratic platform," declares Mr. Gudger, "said, 'We favor a generous pension policy, both as a matter of policy, and as a matter of justice to the surviving veterans and their dependants.'

"At the time of the adoption of that platform the appropriation in round numbers was \$160,000,000. The first democratic congress elected and convened after that declaration appointed ten leading democrats on the invalid pensions committee and that committee unanimously reported the Sherwood bill. The democrats who signed that bill were Isaac R. Sherwood and Carl Nanderson of Chicago, George H. Lindsay of New York, John A. M. Adair of Indiana, Joseph J. Russell of Missouri, H. M. Jacoway of Arkansas, Michael E. Burke of Wisconsin, John M. Hamilton of West Virginia and W. J. Fields of Kentucky. George W. Kipp of Pennsylvania was a member of the committee, but he died last summer.

"The bill that this committee brought out was given right-of-way over all other bills and placed before the house for passage.

"First, the democratic committee, after a thorough investigation, filed a unanimous report favoring the bill.

"Second, the report of the committee was construed as an interpretation of the party platform.

"Third, the democratic leaders, without opposition, obtained the right-of-way for the bill.

"Fourth, a majority of the Democrats of the house voted for the bill.

"It was supported by the democratic Speaker Champ Clark, and the chairman of the democratic congressional committee James T. Lloyd.

"The intention of the bill is to equalize pensions, which are limited to \$10, \$20 and \$30 per month, according to the term of service. The amount carried by this bill is greatly exaggerated in the statement that it will cost \$75,000,000. The democratic committee estimate the cost at \$27,000,000, which I assume to be correct, as it made an exhaustive investigation.

"This appropriation will not increase the total appropriation, as a reduction will be made along other lines without injury.

"While my vote is being criticized it will be observed that I obeyed the command of the democratic platform, followed the leadership of the democratic speaker, the national democratic chairman, the democratic members of the invalid pensions committee and acted in concert with a majority of the dem-

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