

FAIRS OF OTHER DAYS IN COUNTY

Mr. H. L. Carpenter Writes Interestingly of The Fair Association of the Nineties.

The following article, written by Mr. Horace L. Carpenter, of Rutherfordton, appeared in his column "Other Days", in The Rutherford County News last week. In view of the fact that fair week is just a few days away the article is being reprinted here.

The Fair

Every generation has something to look forward to in the way of amusement, and many there be who are beginning now to prepare for the Fair of 1930, just as the people were forty years ago; for on August 16th, 1890, there was organized the Rutherford County Fair Association. Forty-four of the county's substantial and enterprising citizens signed the charter. Only six of the original stockholders are now living viz: T. M. Lynch, S. O. Smith, Dr. W. A. Thompson, D. F. Morrow, J. C. Cowan and C. L. Miller. An old certificate of stock issued in the name of W. L. Twitty states that he is entitled to one share of the capital stock, but does not give the value, nor is the certificate dated; T. B. Twitty signs as president and Frank Reynolds, secretary and treasurer. This fair ground was located on property now owned by H. H. Harton, one mile East of the court house on road leading from the Seaboard to Southern station. Buildings were erected, and a fair held much in the way fairs are held today. Horse racing was a main feature, mostly by natives of the county. Manly McDowell, at one time Sheriff of Burke county usually visited the fair and brought over some fast horses. Many of the young men and boys distinguished themselves in foot and bicycle racing. There were many excellent well bred horses and mules entered for prizes. Imagine my gratification at one of the fairs when there was placed upon 'Byrd,' a beautiful and fast sorrel mare a blue ribbon for being the most handsome animal entering the grounds. This was the beginning of the breeding of Jersey cattle in the county, and Dr. Thompson entered some very pretty specimens

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from his dairy conducted at his country home, then called Cliffside. The poultry and swine exhibits, while not so large as now would compare favorably as to quality. There was a quantity of old time fancy work, quilts and bed spreads; considered one of the most interesting features of the fair. The culinary arts while not on as large a scale as of today were equal in appearance, and possibly superior in quality for the reason that no substitutes were used for butter and eggs. Sandwiches had not become the universal food from baby to grandpa, and a frying size chicken could be bought for ten cents. For three days annually large crowds paid the admittance fee of 25 cents many, coming from adjoining counties. The agricultural exhibit was exceptionally good, and counts in a measure to the remarkable yields of some of our farmers today. That which was looked forward to with the greatest pleasure for the younger set was the Fair Ball, which was conducted independently of the Fair Association, and usually held on the last night of the Fair in the Isothermal Hotel, a forty-four room frame building, erected in 1890, by a corporation composed of the citizens of the town; W. S. Guthrie was the proprietor. This hotel stood where the present county court house stands, and was burned to the ground one night in 1896. Here the young gathered for the most notable occasion of the year, and danced to the wee small hours to enchanting music rendered by the noted Italian String Band of Charlotte. I wrote to Clarence Kuester who first came here as a commercial traveler, wearing short pants, to give me the names of these very fine musicians. His letter follows:

Mr. H. L. Carpenter,
Rutherfordton, N. C.

Dear Horace:

I am certainly delighted to received your letter.

I can give you the information you want although it dates back to 1890 and I was just a small kid at that time, but recall the Italian String Band to which you refer.

This band was formed by an Italian by the name of Joe Vittia, who played the Italian Harp. He has died and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Charlotte. The colored man, member of this band was Chas. S. L. A. Taylor, who is still living in Charlotte and is an old man. He was active in Charlotte for years. He was Charlotte's first volunteer fireman. He carried off the North Carolina Regiment to Santiago, Cuba to the Battle of San Juan Hills. He left Charlotte as a Captain and when he left the war he was a Colonel and bears that title to this date. This negro man played the bass violin.

The other members of the band were Toney Panella, who played the first violin. He died and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery. The fourth member of the band was Mike Copellia, who played second-violin.

With the exception of the negro man, all members of the band were native born Italians. It was a wonderful string band and known to the old settlers to this day.

I am glad to give this information for the historic work you are doing.

Cordially yours,

C. O. KUESTER.

Charlotte, N. C., Oct. 31, 1929.

The Association experienced financial troubles, and was sold at foreclosure sale in September, 1899. A number of the old stockholders buying it in, including the ten acres of land, for the sum of \$143.78. Thus ended Rutherford's first fair, and along with it a considerable loss to the stockholders, and great disappointment to those who were anxious to promote the agricultural interests of the county. Their mistake was identical with the cause of failure of the numerous fairs along this line in the state; same being too much questionable amusement, and oftentimes shielding unintentionally, law breakers in fleecing innocent citizens out of their hard earned cash. Music for some of the fairs mentioned, was rendered by Rutherfordton's famous brass band; the names of the members I am anxious to obtain.

A Moor considers it a sin to cut head with a knife, declaring that heads were given for this purpose.

Mountain Farmers Profit From Sales Of Truck

An example of how the market gardens of the mountain section return an excellent profit to their owners because of the fine quality of the late truck crops grown there, is shown by the experiences of a group of Avery county farmers as reported by H. R. Niswonger, extension horticulturist at State college.

"These growers are selling snap beans, Irish potatoes, cabbage, large onions and a variety of vegetables from their gardens which return an excellent income," says Mr. Niswonger. "For instance, I have figures to show sales amounting to \$30,000 from the sale of snap beans, alone, in this county. One man, W. S. Wise, planted 2½ acres from which he harvested 15,000 pounds of beans that sold for an average of 5 cents a pound. More than 150 acres of beans were planted in the county. Several varieties were used. The beans were hauled by truck into eight states."

In addition to the beans, more than 150 acres were planted to Irish potatoes and Danish cabbage. The growers are having some success with the large Idaho Russett potato known to the dining car trade as the Idaho Baker. Cabbage growing is being standardized on the Reed's strain of Danish Ballhead. When hucksters were trying to buy the potatoes for 80 cents a bushel, the growers began to truck them out cooperatively and sold over 800 bushels in this way at \$1.26 a bushel.

A deal has just been closed by County Agent C. B. Baird through which he has contracted 15,000 pounds of the large onions. Some of these specimens weighed as much as 2½ pounds each and are of a good, smooth, marketable type.

Many Avery farmers make a good living selling the produce from their

diversified gardens to summer hotels and boarding houses. One man living on the outskirts of Newland, the county seat, averaged \$12 a week this summer from his sales.

MR. ED. TRAMMEL NEW COUNTY GAME WARDEN

Rutherfordton, Sept. 15.—Mr. J. Ed Trammel of this place has been appointed Forest, Game and Fish Warden of Rutherford county, effective September 16th. Mr. Trammel is a son of the late J. B. Trammel of this place and is a brother of Rev. Chas. B. Trammel of Columbus and Mill Spring. He has been fish and game warden for Chimney Rock this summer and is an energetic young man. He succeeds Mr. W. J. Hardin, who has held the office for some time.

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The Bible is the best seller. It comes near to outselling all other books put together. Last year's figures for the United States were 14,000,000 and for the world 36,500,000! Who buys them? Where do they go? What do people do with them? Who reads them? These millions of Bibles, abounding with life and light, but all that life and light banked up within the lids, idle and inert until some soul breaks the seals, and releases the throb and the radiance! When once considers how many homes harbor silent, unused Bibles, one feels like saying to the Bible societies, Hold! Let us have a moratorium on Bible selling for one year while we read what we already have. Some one has said, "We shout, 'O for a thousand tongues to sing,' when we don't praise our Redeemer, even with the one tongue we have in our heads!"—Cadman.

Lespedeza standing from 14 to 18 inches high on Stanly county farms was studied by a party of 15 influential farmers from Gaston last week.

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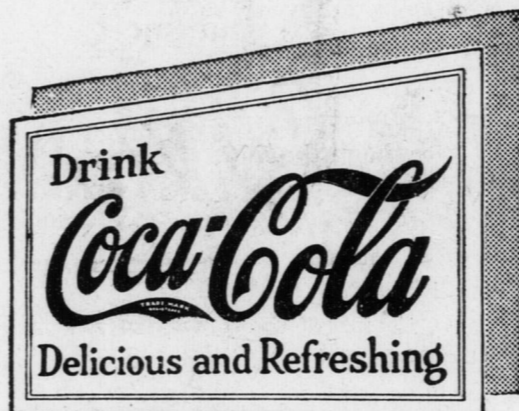
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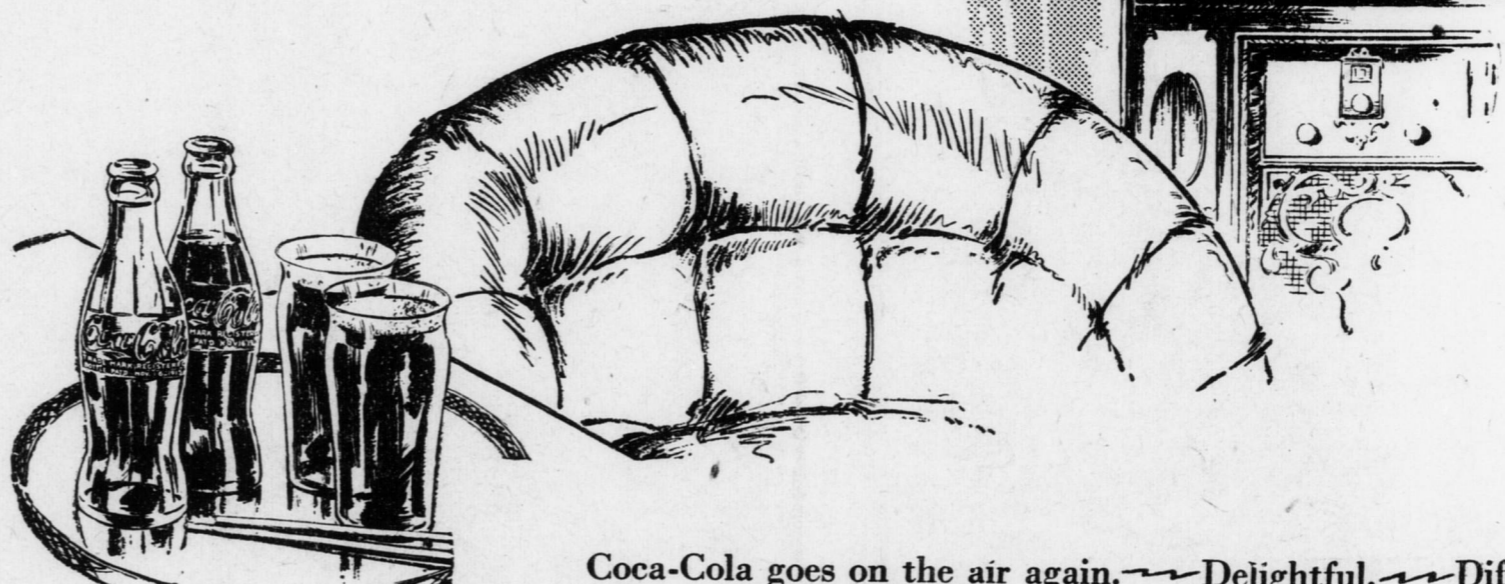
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