

## NORFOLK FAIR A GREAT AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXPOSITION

Visitors to the Norfolk Greater Interstate Fair will find this year the biggest and greatest agricultural exhibition that has ever been held in this section. F. L. Portlock, the county farm agent and director of the exhibit has been busy the entire summer working out what will be seen to be the most varied agricultural show the fair has ever exhibited. The cattle and swine show will be another big feature, while the dairy products will excel in every respect. Every farmer and agriculturist will do well to pay the fair a visit for every exhibition in the way of farm products will be of the nature to promote better and more consistent farming. The industrial exhibits will have the greatest number of manufactured articles and will show much that can be used by the farmer to a helpful extent. Farm implements and accessories of the kind that are necessary to successful farming and working models of practical machinery that will be helpful to the farm and the household as well will be exhibited. Lovers of horses will find over one hundred fine specimens on the grounds and those that like good harness racing will find some of the best steppers on the track. The amusement features have not been overlooked and the biggest kind of free attractions with a whale of a midway show will be in attendance. Music by two bands will enliven things, in fact there will be something doing every minute both day and night. The fair will open on Labor Day and will run both day and night, the dates are September the sixth to the eleventh inclusive. Railroad excursion rates have been arranged on all lines, so the whole family may come at reasonable fares.

### First Experimental Farmers

Three of America's greatest statesmen associated with the birth of our republic were farmers—Washington, Jefferson and Franklin. Each made important contributions to the science of agriculture.

Washington, on his estate at Mount Vernon, claims the credit of being the first American to attempt the raising of mules. While president he advocated a government department of agriculture, but the proposal met with little sympathy in Congress. More than 60 years passed before it was carried out.

Jefferson, squire of Monticello, invented a standard design for the mouldboard of the plough—a contribution of immense value in the development of the farm's chief implement.

Franklin was one of New Jersey's first experimental farmers. Retiring from business about 1745, he bought a 300-acre farm near Burlington and there conducted experiments on forage and grain crops until called to the service of his country.

Agriculture, declared Franklin, is "the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest of employments."

"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds."—Thomas Jefferson.

"The more I am acquainted with agricultural affairs, the better I am pleased with them; inasmuch that I can nowhere find so great satisfaction as in those innocent and useful pursuits."—George Washington.

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## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Watauga County financial affairs from June 1921 to June 1925, have fallen under auditorship of the firm of Emmett Smith and Co., and an elaborate summary of findings is given in The Watauga Democrat. The revelation of the state of affairs may be taken as typical of conditions existing in many North Carolina counties under the antiquated system of county government that has prevailed and for modernization of which a movement was recently launched by the publicity organization at Chapel Hill. It was found that the "final balances" due by two sheriffs for the several years from 1920 to 1924 footed up \$63,833.66. The auditors did not charge the penalties required by law, leaving that item to the judgment of the commissioners. There was indication of looseness in management of county road money; all tax books were found to be in "exceedingly bad shape," copies of the abstracts of listed taxables rendered to the State annually not agreeing in any particular with the tax books, these being full of errors and omissions. There was no record of partial or final settlement with one sheriff for the year 1922. In commenting on the status of the accounts of the sheriffs, the auditors say: "It is not known how much money it has cost the county on account of the careless and indifferent manner in which the tax records were compiled, in the lax and unbusiness like handling of financial affairs with the different sheriffs, but in our opinion the loss certainly must have run into thousands of dollars."

The auditors found that the only book of records kept of the general county fund except those of the treasurer, were the minute docket and the "Record of Claims Issued," both of which were inaccurate and incomplete. No attempt was made to keep track of revenue or expenses of the general county fund, so that it could be determined whether expenses were exceeding revenue, deficit being created and the county going into debt. We experienced great difficulty," says the report, "in determining the true status of the treasurer's accounts; for instance, he paid, and was apparently given credit for interest paid, banks for carrying county warrants, though no warrants were issued or record made of such interest allowed. No record made of note issued on December 7, 1922 to take up

warrants from Watauga County Bank, nor was any record made, even on the minute docket, of the \$20,000 note issued August 4, 1924, the proceeds of which were turned over to the school fund, and the present commissioners did not know of the existence of such an obligation until notified of the maturity of the semi-annual interest payment. The recording of the tax releases on the minute docket seems to have received careful attention, but the recording of the creation of bond issues, notes, etc., seem to have been ignored."

It is a surprise to the auditors that such lax and inefficient methods of conducting the affairs of the county "have not resulted in even larger deficits than those that exist."

For all this, the circumstance is to be borne in mind that there was no misuse of public funds in evidence. The county has simply lost money because of the independent manner in which its funds were administered as privileged under the existing system of government, and it is further to be held in mind that the situation in Watauga is a situation of duplication in many counties,

and all because of the antiquated system which the State has so long countenanced in the administration of county affairs. The Watauga revelations are submitted as additional evidence of the need for legislative attention to the important matter of modernizing the court house situation.—Charlotte Observer.

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