

MARION PROGRESS

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF McDOWELL COUNTY.

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ROADS AND PUBLIC GOOD.

Prof. Jerome Dowd Makes Some Wise Observations Upon Western North Carolina Highways.

Jerome Dowd in Charlotte Observer.

I wish to offer some reflections on a trip I recently made with a horse and surry from Charlotte to Waynesville by way of Rozzell's ferry, Denver, Newton, Morganton, Old Fort and Asheville. I had made the trip several times before, and therefore had a good opportunity to compare the conditions of the country and roads as they are now with what they were many years ago. I was much impressed with the great improvements in agriculture in all the counties; the more commodious farm houses and the increase of intelligence and culture of the people. For natural mental powers I do not think that the people of any State equal the natives of North Carolina, and, with the spread of education, I think that the Old North State will take rank with the greatest Commonwealths of our Union. I observed an astonishing amount of progress in the towns of Hickory, Marion, Old Fort, Asheville, Canton and Waynesville. I found attractive stores, well-made streets, good water and sewerage systems, electric lights and beautiful residences and laws.

The highway from Charlotte to Waynesville varies much in character. I found the macadam road in Mecklenburg badly worn-out and in many places a mere bed of loose rocks. The dirt-road beside it was made abominable by the great number of loose rocks that had been washed or kicked off of the macadam, so that I was glad when I crossed Rozzell's ferry and got on the smooth clay-roads of Lincoln county. The roads in Catawba county are naturally pretty good but are spoiled in places by the old-fashioned, unintelligent method of working them by throwing heaps of loose dirt over the bed. Burke county seems to have made no progress in road building in forty years. The roads are a succession of precipitous hills, lined with mammoth gullies and made terribly rough by deep ruts. Very admirable and intelligent road construction is taking place in McDowell county and in a short time her main highways will be in excellent condition. The road from Old Fort to the top of the Blue Ridge, which I dreaded most, was not at all bad. The ascent is gradual and with a little smoothing would make an easy passage for the automobile. The Buncombe roads were the best I experienced in my journey. They are well graded and the macadam is much superior to that of Mecklenburg, the reason of which is, I think, a thicker layer of small rock. Haywood county has already a creditable system of graded and macadamized roads and is going forward with the work.

Outside of Mecklenburg and Buncombe there are no mile-posts and no signs at the forks of the roads. When a traveler comes to one of the many forks the best he can do is to guess which is the right way. When he comes to the next farm house he is kindly informed that he will be on the right road if he will drive back three

miles and a half and take the other fork. When within six miles of Old Fort I arrived at a fork in the road, and seeing no sign or human being to direct me, I followed the one which led straight ahead in preference to the one turning sharply to the left. The result was that I followed an old road that was nothing but a bed of big rocks skirting a creek, crossing it many times and often following in the middle of it for fifty yards. This negligence of the county authorities in not putting up signs at the forks and crossings of the roads is inhuman and outrageous and they ought to be subject to indictment for it. In Buncombe there are mile-posts and signs everywhere and you cannot escape a feeling of enthusiastic admiration for a people who manifest this regard for the public.

Now, I desire to make some suggestions to the people of the State who are interested in good roads—especially to the people of western North Carolina.

In all ages commercial and cultural development has followed the great highways of transportation. The old civilizations of Egypt, Babylon and Assyria were built up because they were in the current of the caravan and riveran transportation. When improvements in navigation changed the current of transportation to the Mediterranean the old cities of the caravan routes declined and those of Rome and Greece had their day of splendor. Later when the current of transportation changed from the Mediterranean to the north of Europe the cities of Greece and Rome declined in favor of those of the North. In the early history of America the centers of wealth and culture were along the old stage lines; then, with the coming of the railroad they developed along the currents of the steam car. We are now witnessing a new adjustment of transportation and a redistribution of wealth and culture. The railroad as a determining factor of wealth and culture is passing away and the new factors will be the trolley-car and the automobile. In ten years more motor-machines will be used on the farms, and motor-wagons will make regular trips into the country, bringing the produce to market and returning with the proceeds to the farmer's door. Pleasure-seekers will follow the lines of the best roads; men of wealth will locate and invest their capital in sections which have the best roads. There will be a new development and distribution of wealth and culture determined by the highways for the automobile and the trolley-car.

Therefore communities which recognize and prepare for this new age will reap a speedy and astonishing reward in prosperity; and communities which remain blind to the change that is in progress will remain backward or go into decadence. A system of good highways for automobiles in North Carolina will do more for the encouragement of new wealth and for general development than any other investment whatever. There is not one-tenth the number of automobiles in existence now that there will be ten years hence, and no time should be lost in getting ready for this revolution in traffic.

BIG PROJECT FOR MARION

Mr. John Yancey Proposes to Develop Property Near the Town Limits.

Considerable interest is being manifested in the proposed development of about 1,000 acres of land near Marion, which it is believed will be the means of bringing Marion into prominence as a summer resort.

Mr. John Yancey, jr., who has had considerable experience in big developments, owns about one thousand acres of land, some of which is in less than a half mile of the town limits and for the last few days has created considerable talk in and around Marion relative to the development of this property into three lakes, parks, residential sections and splendid roads.

The question of developing this property was first made public a few days ago and Mr. Yancey is now making propositions to the citizens of Marion, and it is believed that developments will be made at an early date.

Educational Rally at Old Fort.

There will be an Educational Rally at the Graded School building at Old Fort Friday night, September 1st. Two important subjects are to be discussed: The relation of the teacher and the parents by Solicitor A. Hall Johnston. Success in the school and its three essentials by Supt. D. F. Giles. Other able speakers are expected to be there with a good message. Let everybody come out and give these men, who are showing an interest in you and your children, a hearty welcome.

Very respectfully,
J. W. McCALL, Principal.

I give it as my opinion that the macadamized road, such as that of Mecklenburg, while highly creditable to its promoters in the light of twenty years ago, is totally unfit for the new age of transportation. The rain and the rapid-moving machines carry off the stone dust, and in a short time the larger stones begin, one by one, to loosen, until in the course of a year the road is an abomination for the horse, vehicle or automobile. Some kind of top dressing of tar or asphaltum will have to be devised to make the roads durable and enduring. If such top-dressing should cost more money it would nevertheless be an economy. The present macadam wears out in a short time and no community is rich enough to build a road that wears out and has to be rebuilt in five years. The best road is the cheapest.

In all graded but not macadamized roads the bed should be run over with a heavy roller. A packed clay road is the best in the world and the reason clay roads are bad is because they are not rolled.

The most astonishing thing to me is that when thousands of dollars are spent in building a road it is completely abandoned until worn out instead of being kept up by constant repair as a railroad or manufacturing company keeps its track and machinery in good condition. Loose rocks should be picked out of the roads and overhanging branches of trees that tear the top of your carriage and beat you in the eyes and knock off your hat should be trimmed.

Bird-Brown Wedding at Garden City.

Garden City, Aug. 16.—Our drowsy little village was aroused from her nap Wednesday morning, August 9th, on hearing there had been a wedding at 10 a. m. The marriage was a surprise to everyone. The contracting parties were Mrs. Bertha Bird of this place and Mr. W. J. Brown of Ashford. The wedding occurred at the home of the bride, witnessed by a number of relatives and friends. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Ira Erwin assisted by the Rev. Mr. Smith, both of Marion. The bride who is loved by all, looked very dainty and sweet in a handsome going away suit of tan. The stalwart groom wore a handsome suit of gray.

The happy couple left immediately for Marion enroute to Johnson City and other interesting points by way of the C. C. & O. railway.

We wish them a happy journey through life. "MIKE"

Death at Old Fort.

On August 9th Mrs. Bessie Cordell died at her home in Old Fort, after an illness of 18 days. Mrs. Cordell joined the Baptist church when quite young, and lived a devoted christian until called from her home below to her home above.

She is survived by a husband and one child, little Elith 10 months old, a father and mother, three brothers and two sisters and a host of friends to mourn her loss. Our loss is her gain. A. L. P.

Ice Cream Supper A Success.

The ice cream supper at Siloan last Saturday night was a success. There was a large crowd present and every body seemed to enjoy themselves. The proceeds which amounted to \$75.35 will be used to purchase an organ for the Methodist church. Miss Pearl Stepp was the winner of the contest cake which brought \$44.05. Those interested wish to thank every one present for their liberal help.

Survey for Central Highway Complete.

Raleigh dispatch, 19th.

State Geologist Joseph Hyde Pratt says the surveys for the entire line of the proposed great Central Highway from Beaufort and Morehead the length of the State to Asheville and the Tennessee line will be completed this week and that work is being pushed along many sections of the road. He estimates that about 25 per cent of the highway will be new road courses for the reason that sections of the road had to be relocated. He has just completed a trip over the greater portion of the road from Carteret county east and in the Black Mountain and the Caldwell county sections. A number of motied men and corporations have obligated themselves to build and donate a number of one mile sections of the road through the west. In a number of counties the convicts are being used for the work and private subscriptions are being used to provide for the maintenance of the road. Much the greater part of this great highway will be sand clay, though there will be considerable stretches of macadam, more especially in the Piedmont section—Durham, Alamance and other counties.

THE CENTRAL HIGHWAY

Dr. Pratt Says It Shall Go from Marion to Black Mountain via Greenlee and Old Fort.

Mr. W. T. Morgan, trustee of the Central Highway for this county, is in receipt of a letter from Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, State geologist, saying that the route of the Central Highway will go from Marion to Black Mountain via Greenlee and Old Fort. Mr. Pratt says:

"Our highway engineer has finally completed the various surveys that I wished made from the top of the mountain to Old Fort, which have been made in connection with determining the route for the Central Highway. After careful consideration of the cost of construction of the road along the different routes and the funds available for the work, it has been decided that the Central Highway shall go from Marion to Black Mountain, Buncombe county, via Greenlee and Old Fort; and then in going up the Blue Ridge will follow the survey recently made that will take the road by the Rock Quarry, Round Knob, Mill Creek, Long Branch, Swannanoa Gap, Bloumont, to Black Mountain. The survey from Swannanoa Gap to Old Fort has been carefully surveyed and stakes placed that accurately mark the route.

"I sincerely hope that arrangements can be made for beginning construction of this road right away. With the exception of one or two points, as where the road will cross streams and be on the side of a steep bluff and at a point near Round Knob, where there will be a certain amount of blasting, there is no reason why the road cannot be built 20 feet in width.

"When it comes to surfacing, I believe we will find that most of it can be graveled or made into a sand-clay road at comparatively small cost."

Bridgewater News.

Bridgewater, Aug. 22.—Mrs. M. L. Hildebran is visiting relatives at Hickory and Hildebran this week.

Millard Tate of Marion visited on the Creek last week.

A. P. Hunter made a business trip to Morganton Friday.

Mrs. Laura F. Kirkpatrick and little grand-son, Robert Kirkpatrick of Monroe, N. C. visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ballew last week.

Mrs. Pearl Kennedy of Nebo spent Friday here with her sister, Mrs. M. L. Hildebran.

W. J. Ballew made a business trip to Asheville Saturday.

Barn Kirkman of Marion spent last week here with his little friends Clyde and Guy Hemphill.

Sam Riddle of Pennsylvania spent Friday in Bridgewater.

Abner Seals left Thursday for Capron, Va. where he will join a bridge crew.

Harrison Winkler and his sisters, Misses Zada and Zelma Winkler, of Lenoir are visiting in Bridgewater this week.

Miss Ota Jarrette has returned from Hildebran where she spent a few days with her grand-mother.

Jack Phillips of Gaffney, S. C. spent the first of the week here with Robert Seals.

Miss Myrtle Hemphill was shopping in Marion Monday.

Miss Hattie Mae Ballew has entered Asheville business college at Asheville, N. C.

Messrs. Joe and Ged Giles of Marion spent Saturday in Bridgewater.

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