

# The Southport Leader.

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## STEVENS & FARRELL

Editors and Proprietors.

SOUTHPORT, Brunswick Co., N. C.

SOUTHPORT, N. C., JANUARY 1, 1891.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR.

On this first day of eighteen hundred and ninety-one, the LEADER sends greeting to its many friends, wishing them, one and all, a very *Happy and Prosperous New Year.*

Another book has been added to the world's history, a volume marked, "1890." The past year was marked with the usual vicissitudes of crimes, casualties, storms on sea and land, commercial agitations and failures. The principal disturbances at home and abroad have occurred during the latter half of the year. The Argentine Republic craze, with its speculative inflation of values, and the issuance of a fiat currency, was suddenly ended, causing monetary disturbances in Europe and the United States. This was followed by loss of confidence in this country, causing a depression in values, less commercial activity, and the failure of many leading houses. General business shows improvement at the close of the year, however, with signs of renewed confidence.

Congress has attracted more attention than usual during the past year, as the legislation has affected the interests of all classes in this country. The chief legislative discussions on the increased Pension list, the McKinley and Federal Election bills, were followed closely by the voters, who expressed themselves forcibly in the November election. Sectionally considered, the South shows the greatest advancement, and her commercial interests were never in as good condition. To-day, Southern resources, mineral, agricultural and industrial, command the attention of the world.

In the political world, a new claimant for office, is expected in the Farmers' Alliance Party, which occupies a very strong place, and threatens the formation of a new party. Death has removed many persons, familiar to the public, whose loss will be felt. In medicine, Dr. Koeh's consumption cure marks the most notable discovery of the year.

From distant lands have come from time to time, reports of famine and distress, which are usual each year, although the Christian world contributes largely towards the amelioration of existing evils in those countries. Considered from all sides, the past year has dealt kindly with the world, and while the new year may not treat us as well, the world looks hopefully, and with confidence for a new and better year, in which the doubts of the past will be dispelled, with a fulfillment of its promises. The year 1890 is no more.

With the knowledge and experience of the past, the New Year should not be entered with, doubt or hesitation, but with a determination on the part of all mankind to make 1891, bear a grander and nobler part in the world's history than any previous year.

### FIXING THE LIABILITY.

The able exposition, regarding the position which the County Commissioners occupy, and the situation of Brunswick County's records, published in another column, written by Mr. Iredell Meares, of Wilmington, can-

not fail to impress every property holder in this County, who reads and thoughtfully considers the subject. Mr. Meares, in his article, clearly shows the present existing state of affairs in our County Records, and the necessary remedies.

The Commissioners are elected to serve the interests of the people and carry out the laws. Their duties are clear. If uncertain they can easily consult the law. And yet our Commissioners must be greater than the laws, if actions are any indication. To whom are our County Commissioners amenable? Appointed by the Magistrates, they have ignored instructions from them. Elected to work for the interests of the people, we find no interest served. What benefits do tax-payers receive year by year from the Commissioners?

The County buildings are going to decay, and only prevented from falling to pieces by a semi-occasional patch. The public records are kept in a cupboard, to be stolen or destroyed. Criminals are put into a building, disreputable beyond description, and their confinement becomes an outrage on decency, a farce as an imprisonment, their stay being a question left to their individual wish. Our poor, placed at a distance, as though their unfortunate condition was a crime. With these conditions existing, what do tax-payers receive for the money, which year after year is paid out, but nothing to show in return.

If the Commissioners are thus neglecting both the wishes of those who gave them their office, and the people whose interests they should protect, whose interests are being served? Are the Commissioners autocrats, without responsibility to any one? Or is it simply a per diem office, with mileage attachment?

The tax-payers of Brunswick County cannot afford to ignore the present state of their County affairs. They are taxed, but not benefited. It is not the tax which the people dread, simply as a tax, but they demand some equivalent return for the money which they pay out for improvements. At present, property holders' interests are endangered by the neglect of the Commissioners to carry out the law for the protection of the County's records. The Commonwealth is disgraced by its jail and poor house. The remedy is known. It only needs carrying out.

Until the Commissioners fulfill their duties, they, and they alone will be held liable for injuries arising from a neglect to provide safe-guards for Brunswick County's interests. The Magistrates have instructed, the people desire protection. The Commissioners must alone stand responsible and liable, they must answer for the shame which attaches to our jail and poor house, and the dangers which threaten our records.

### THE BANK OF GERMANY.

The recent excitement in the money markets of the world has led financiers to observe closely the various monetary systems of Europe in order to note the elasticity with which they can accommodate themselves to the various needs of commerce. None of them, we are told by the London Statist, has during the year borne the tests of the fluctuating demand better than that of Germany. This fact has led the Statist to give its readers an elaborate account of the monetary arrangements of that empire. The Bank of Germany has an authorized issue of about \$70,000,000. It can increase this sum to any amount by issuing notes against the coin and bullion it holds, and it may, in addition to these, issue notes to any amount it pleases, provided that it pays a duty of 5 per cent upon the excess. Under these provisions it will be seen that when money is plentiful and interest is less than 5 per cent the bank will withdraw any notes that it may have issued in excess of the amount authorized, for it cannot then afford to pay the duty imposed by the Government upon the excess. But when these notes are withdrawn, if bullion be carried out of the country and notes issued on bullion have to be withdrawn from circulation, and money becomes scarce and interest high, the bank can at once proceed to issue any amount of notes that it pleases until rates drop once more below 5 per cent, when self-interest will dictate an end to the expansion. This system has been put to a severe test during the year, but it has not been found wanting. The Statist says: "In theory, no doubt, there is

much to be said against the system, but practice proves that it works well. The Berlin Bourse has not been thrown into utter alarm, and trade has not been unduly harrassed. Not only did the German system save the German market from a severe crisis, it availed also not merely to stop the serious drain of gold, but it turned the current and attracted a large amount of metal." The writer thinks that money matters in England would have been much better and trade less inconvenienced during the recent crisis if the Bank of England like that of Germany were empowered to issue notes in excess of its authorized issue and its coin and bullion, on condition of payment of a Government duty.—San Jose Mercury.

### PRESS COMMENTS.

The LaGrange School Girl, of the third quarter, is at hand. We notice its continued good appearance, also are glad to learn of the increased prosperity of the school, (Kinsey Seminary), which it so ably represents.

Mr. Hal W. Ayer, city editor of the Raleigh State Chronicle, has accepted the position of private secretary for Col. L. L. Polk, President of the Farmers Alliance. Our best wishes go with him in his new position.

The destruction of the office of our friend the Winston, N. C., Twin City Daily, we heard with great regret. The Daily will only be temporarily embarrassed, however, and will undoubtedly arise from the ashes with greater strength and enterprise. Fire cannot "down" the Daily.

### REVIEWS.

Belford's Magazine for January contains the usual interesting variety of articles, both prose and poetry. Under the head of Physical Culture, "A Sexagenarian" writes enthusiastically on "The Fine Art of Walking." He describes the mental, moral and physical effects of the habit of taking regular walks, and asserts that any attack of "the blues" will be cured by this treatment. An account of the life of George D. Prentice by Junius Henri Brown is interesting and full of anecdote. The complete novel this month is "Sarz: a story of the Stage" by Celia Logan. Belford's Magazine \$2.40 a year, Belford Company New York.

### PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL.

James Anthony Froude declares that the late Cardinal Newman bore a striking resemblance to Julius Caesar.

Lord Arundel, heir of the Duke of Norfolk, is afflicted with the triple misfortune of being deaf, dumb, and blind.

J. M. Sourbeor has purchased the Parson's (Kas.) Journal and will run it as a Prohibition paper. A man who has carried a name like that all his life should not be blamed for being a Prohibitionist.

Mrs. Owen Connolly, widow of a wealthy Irish-American, has just given her splendid residence in Charlotte-town, Prince Edward Island, Canada, to the Sisters of Charity, to be used as a boarding-house for ladies.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes' remarkable vitality is ascribed to his regular habits. The rooms he occupies are equipped with barometers, thermometers, and various other meters to prevent his incurring the slightest risk of taking cold.

Congressman Kennedy of Ohio, who has been receiving an unusual share of public attention lately, entered the war as a private and rose by successive steps to Brigadier-General. At the close of the war he studied law and has since practiced at the bar.

Mr. Walter Potter, the "young Napoleon" of the lately-exploded firm of Lovell & Potter, was one of Boston's high-rollers. It was his delight to give fine dinners and jollifications at one of Boston's best known hotels; and at one of these banquets, given in celebration of the success of a deal in Texas lands, it is told that at 3 o'clock in the morning the members of the Germania orchestra were summoned from their beds. Not a single glass of wine and a cigar were thought sufficient, but a bottle and a box. This dinner, which has never been equaled in Boston for sumptuousness, is said to have cost Mr. Potter \$2,500.

### OUR COUNTY RECORDS.

#### An Opinion in Regard to the Safety and Correctness of Our County Records.

WILMINGTON, N. C., December 22.—

You ask for an expression of my views as to the condition and danger of the county records, in Brunswick County, and the recent action of the Commissioners in declining to act upon the resolution of the Magistrates to issue County bonds to repair the Court House, build a Poor House, and to construct suitable vaults for the preservation of the County records.

I shall confine my remarks to the condition of your records and the necessity of their proper preservation. In the fall of 1889, I was employed by a northern syndicate which had entered into stipulations with certain corporations, and bound itself to the purchase of upwards of \$60,000 worth of property in the neighborhood of Southport, to examine certain titles to property upon which they had options. I spent sixty days in a close examination of your records and feel therefore competent to speak of their condition.

In the first place, the register of deeds books are not properly indexed. The index up to the time of the induction of Mr. Ruark into office was kept comparatively well, although it is full of inaccuracies and omissions, and was not consolidated as required. There are eight or nine volumes of the books, which I am informed were kept by Mr. Ruark, that are not cross-indexed at all, and through which it is impossible to trace the chain of titles to any property. I was put to the necessity, in order to find the chain of title to certain property in Brunswick, to ignore the index altogether, and beginning at book A to turn page by page of all the books in the office, and to examine the description of each conveyance on the records in order to find the deeds I was in search of.

The law makes it the plain duty of the Commissioners, (See Code, Section 3663), "at the expense of the County, to cause to be made and consolidated into one book, a general index of all the deeds and other documents in the registers office," and the registers duty to keep such index. And it is further made his and their duty, (See Code, Section 3664), that the said index "shall state in full the names of all parties, whether grantors, grantees, vendors, vendees, obligors or obligees, and shall be indexed and cross indexed, so as to show the name of such party under the appropriate letter of the alphabet."

The County of Brunswick is without any such book as required by law and made the absolute duty of the Commissioners to provide. The effect is to depreciate the value of every man's property in the County, for it gives rise to uncertainty as to titles, and creates the impression abroad that the County titles are not good. My own opinion is, that if these books are overhauled and a proper index provided, that this feeling will be seen to be unfounded. I have reason to know that in consequence of this confusion and looseness in your records that their value was prevented from being invested in the County within the last two years, not less than \$100,000, and this investment would have been followed by the greater development of industries for which the land would have been purchased. There is another danger which the County incurs in permitting these records to remain as they are. Suppose A were to sell his farm to B at a good price. B's attorney cannot find the title of A, because the records are not kept properly and therefore B declines to complete the purchase. Now, it transpires that the title was on record, but not indexed, and A has suffered by not being able to sell his property. The County will be liable to A in damages for the loss he has sustained. And I do not know any suit I would press with greater pleasure, and in the hope that it would awaken public officials to the sense of their duty.

I found that their has never been in the Clerk's office a proper system of indexing, the records of divisions of lands between tenants in common, the records of wills, and papers effecting land, which operate in law as conveyances. In searching for such papers, I have frequently found original reports of commissions, dividing land, which had never been recorded, and in one particular case to a tract upon which now rests twenty or more titles. It is simply a crime against the property holders and people of Brunswick

County, that this condition of things should remain, and it seems to me that action should be taken at once to correct the evil. Mr. Doshier, than whom no man could be more faithful and competent, during his incumbency has overhauled and endeavored to straighten out the original papers, as far as can be done, but what is needed is the careful record of papers, in books as provided by law, and to do this, special compensation should be made, as it involves the overhauling, recording and indexing of papers, for nearly one hundred years back.

There is another matter of still more vital importance and that is there should be provided proper safes or vaults for the preservation of these records. Suppose fire were to break out in the Court House. What means have you to check it? If it should occur, records and court house would be destroyed before the records could possibly be saved. If a tag boat can burn at night to its waters edge, at the wharves at Southport, without scarcely any one knowing of it, how much more so could the unprotected Court House go. Let your records be destroyed and your litigation about titles, and other matters, would be never ending.

Col. Saunders, Secretary of State, told me sometime since that records and litigation in certain Eastern Counties, the court houses of which had been burned a half century or more ago had not yet been settled and straightened, and only two years ago did the Court House in Moore County burn, destroying all the County Records, and the county and people are to-day involved in expense, anxiety, trouble and litigation in consequence.

It seems almost criminal indifference upon the part of County officials, who are charged to know and protect the interests of the people, to hesitate in taking action to correct this evil, and I am sure there is not a property holder in the county, understanding and realizing the importance of the work could possibly object to the officials completing it at once. But even if they did object, the law is plain and direct which compels the proper indexing and preservation of the records, nor will it require a popular vote, as it is a "necessary expense."

IREDELL MEARES.

### LACONICISMS.

He that calls a man ungrateful, sums up all the evil that a man can be guilty of.—Swift.

The brightest blaze of intelligence is of incalculably less value than the smallest spark of charity.—Nevins.

The cheerful heart, like the kaleidoscope, causes most discordant materials to arrange themselves into harmony and beauty.—Anon.

Poetry is the blossom and fragrance of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotion, language.—Coleridge.

The years write their records on human hearts as they do on trees, in hidden inner circles of growth which no eye can see.—Saxe Holm.

That silence is one of the arts of conversation is allowed by Cicero himself, who says: "There is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it."—Hannah Moore.

Pride, ill nature, and want of sense, are the three great sources of ill manners; without some one of these defects, no man will behave himself ill for want of experience, or what, in the language of fools, is called knowing the world.—Swift.

There is inestimable blessing in a cheerful spirit, when the soul throws its windows wide open, letting in the sunshine and presenting to all who see it the evidence of its gladness, it is not only happy, but it has an unspeakable power of doing good. To all the other beatitudes may be added, "Blessed are the joy-makers."—Anon.

Miss Elizabeth Gates is the richest unmarried woman in Buffalo. Miss Gates, by good business management, has added very considerably to the \$1,000,000 left to her by her father, at one time President of the Western New York and Pennsylvania railroad.

Princess Victoria of Prussia, daughter of the late Emperor Frederick and granddaughter of Queen Victoria, is about to marry a German Prince, and will have a dowry of 10,000,000 marks. Her annual allowance will be 75,000 marks, besides such gratuities as Emperor William may bestow on her.

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As an investment these lots are safe and sure to advance in price.

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