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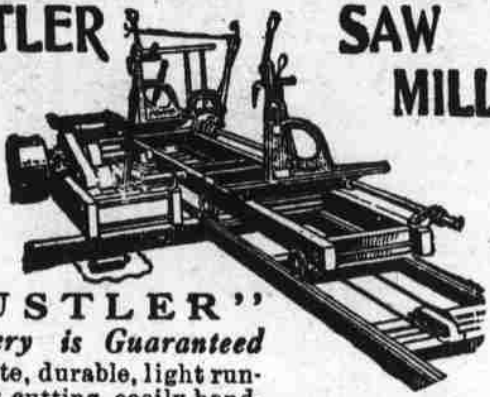
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Our Farmers' Union Page

Devoted to Education, Organization, Cooperation and Marketing

J. Z. GREEN, E. W. DABBS, C. C. WRIGHT, Contributing Editors

A Trip To Rowan and Cabarrus

By Clarence Poe

AT 3 A. M. the last Saturday before Christmas the two-room schoolhouse at Gold Knob burned down. Before 10 o'clock in the evening of the same day the patrons had met and subscribed enough money to insure the erection of a two-story building with suitable auditorium to take the place of the one-story burned building—and in nineteen days after the lumber arrived, the building was completed.

The foregoing is an illustration of the spirit that animates the Gold Knob neighborhood in Rowan County, N. C., and the presence of this spirit is largely due to the Local Farmers' Union.

"Meeting together and working together have simply remade the neighborhood," as one leader told us. "We used to be badly split up, with mighty little semblance of unity or cooperation. Now there is a spirit of comradeship and brotherhood that is

club in the South would adopt as the program for one meeting this fall. It was a "Seed Corn Meeting." Every member was required to go through his fields and select what he regarded as the best stalk of corn he found. He was then expected to bring this stalk of corn to the meeting and tell why he thought it best. Of course, all such important questions as size and type of ear, grain, cob, stalk, number of ears, etc., were thoroughly threshed out in the discussion. Men came from five miles around to attend this meeting, and it is regarded as perhaps the best meeting Gold Knob Local has ever had. For one thing, a lot of men who had always said they "couldn't say anything" in a meeting found it easy to explain the strong points of their favorite stalks.

The members of this Local joined in sometime ago and bought a pure-bred Berkshire sire, and at the time

ed. "You ought to have said something in your speech about home waterworks," one good lady said to us after we had finished speaking. "My experience shows that here is one of the most useful lines of progress." And we found others of the same opinion. Gold Knob Local Union is not the only one in Rowan whose members have purchased pure-bred cattle sires, and there are also a number of Percheron stallions in the county. An unusually large number of young colts were in evidence on the farms we passed through. Community fairs will be held this fall in a number of neighborhoods. At China Grove a farm life school has been established, largely through the efforts of the County Farmers' Union. The County Union not only led the campaign for the establishment of this school, but gave \$300 from its treasury as an aid in starting. And it should be said that while the Rowan brethren had a disastrous experience with one business enterprise, they didn't let one failure down them, but are probably stronger than ever before. The social life of the Rowan communities is also getting attention. A man told us there were five family reunions in the county the day we left.

There is one more fact about that Gold Knob school building we wish to commend, and that is having an ample auditorium upstairs for all community meetings. We doubt whether any neighborhood can spend the same money to better advantage in any other way. Have an ample, comfortable, well lighted hall with comfortable seats as a meeting place, always available, and then it's much easier to get regular meetings of Local Union, United Farm Women, corn club, canning club, debating society, musicals, etc. We also saw the creditable little building put up by Patterson Local, downstairs the warehouse, upstairs the meeting place. The brethren did the work themselves, but they failed to install the comfortable seats that distinguish the Gold Knob auditorium.

The next day after our visit to the Rowan County Farmers' Union we had the pleasure of attending the annual Cabarrus County Farmers' Union picnic at historic old St. John's church and schoolhouse, but we failed to make the trips over the county generally that we were able to make in Rowan. But we found evidence enough that the spirit of progress is abroad in Cabarrus.

The establishment of cream routes has helped farmers greatly, these routes now probably bringing in \$500 cash a month. "For example," one man told us, "I know a man who has just received \$35 a month on seven cows whereas before the cream routes were established, he used to have a tussle to sell his butter at 12½ cents a pound.

Coöperative drainage work has also helped many farmers living along the creek bottoms. The cost has been around \$20 an acre, but when you get those fertile, humus-filled bottom lands drained, they are very valuable. "I know several men," said Bro. A. H. Litaker, "who made 1,500 bushels of corn last year on lands from which they had previously been getting only a little dirty hay."

The Cabarrus County Union lost no time in passing a resolution and starting petitions requesting the county commissioners to appropriate the \$300 necessary to get the cotton-grading work for the county, and they will probably get it, whereas if there had been no farmers' organization in the county—if it had been a case of "what's everybody's business is nobody's business"—it might have been five years before the matter would have been presented to the county officials in any such emphatic fashion. "I don't believe we would have a county demonstration agent yet if it hadn't been for the Farmers' Union," said one speaker in the coun-

STATE FARMERS' UNION SONG

(Tune: "Auld Lang Syne")

WERE sons and daughters of the soil
Of this old Tar Heel State,
Where agriculture reigns supreme
And men cooperate;
Our Union fired with wondrous power
Now bids us onward move;
Coöperation is our theme,
Our slogan—"To improve."

Chorus:

Oh, Carolina, state so dear!
Let high our anthem soar;
All Union men unite to sing
Thy praises evermore.

A band of comrade farmers true,
Our aim is brotherhood;

To bring to every man and home
The best of rural good—
The best of crops, of tools and stock,
Roads, schools, and social life;
Together buy, together sell,
And silence hate and strife.

(Chorus)—

We love the country, made by God,
Its homes, made fair by man;
We claim with pride our sturdy sons,
Who boast the cheek of tan;
We love our homes wherein we dwell,
Our farms on which we toil;
We'll build the best state in the land—
On Carolina soil.

(Chorus)

an inspiration to everybody in this section."

And this spirit of brotherhood, we were told, shows itself in very practical ways. For example, every member of the Union tries to pay cash for his fertilizer. Well, some of the members simply haven't the cash at the time. In that case the other members chip in about a dollar apiece, and let the poor member give his note in payment, the note to mature in the fall and bear 6 per cent interest. "And it seems like we all feel better after we have done something like this to help out the other fellow, said our informant. "And has it happened," I asked, "that some members you were rather doubtful about have surprised you by responding manfully to this evidence of faith and confidence?" "Exactly," was the reply, "the fact that we trusted these men seemed to put them on their mettle, and they determined to show themselves not unworthy." The pregnant lines of Lowell come to mind:

"Be noble, and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

In yet other notable ways this Local Union has called out the finest qualities of its members. "It has been one of our chief aims," said Brother Oscar Phillips, "to develop leadership in the more quiet and retiring members. We put such men on committees and get them to work and to make reports, and the first thing you know, they have developed confidence in themselves, have learned to express themselves in public, and from then on all is easy."

Here is one sort of meeting that Gold Knob Local tried with great success last fall, and which we wish every other Local Union and Farmers'

of our visit they were much interested in the arrival of a young Jersey bull also bought on the cooperative plan. In the case of the pig, fifteen members paid about 65 cents apiece, each member having the privilege of breeding one sow continuously as needed. For each extra sow bred, a charge of 15 cents per pig is made. Non-members are charged 20 cents per pig. In buying the Jersey, seventeen members paid in from \$1 to \$3 each.

Gold Knob Local also saves quite a lot of money through the cooperative purchase of supplies—fertilizer, sugar, plows and tools, lime, fish, etc. The business agent either buys at Salisbury or orders at wholesale rates from other cities as he finds will prove cheapest.

Don't you jump to the conclusion, however, that the men deserve all the credit for the progress just reported. Here at Gold Knob, as in nearly every other community, a little investigation will show that the women have been stirring things up. Recently the women who had been nominally members of the Union, but, getting nothing out of the membership, got together and organized a club of United Farm Women. The Local Union meets twice a month on Thursday nights, and the United Farm Women's club meets on Saturday afternoons of the alternate weeks.

Rowan County, all in all, is one of the finest counties in the state, and the work of Gold Knob Local is only a specimen of the leaven that is leavening the whole life of the county. The farmers are getting better machinery, better livestock, and taking to clover, soy beans and cowpeas. The country homes are well above the average, usually pretty and well paint-