

Farming In Martin County Without Cash Crops In 1860

Diversified Farming Was Pronounced Then

Farmers Of County Knew Nothing Of Peanuts or Tobacco

Ten Crops Were Grown and Stock Was Plentiful On Farms in County

Despite the progress made in agriculture during recent years, the cold facts recorded in the old records prove that present-day farmers can go back ninety years and learn something in the way of diversified farming.

Possibly the sowing was hard in 1850 for farmers in Martin County, but a review of census figures for the period gives mute evidence to the fact that this was a land of plenty possibly without the modern conveniences.

Tobacco and peanuts were unheard of, or at least there wasn't a stalk of tobacco or a bunch of peanuts included in the farm program of that day in this county. But the farmers ran the scale when it came to other crops. Strange as it may seem, the cash crops as we know them today hardly figured in the farm program ninety years ago. While the common rule today is to argue over tobacco and peanut and to some extent cotton allotments, the farmers of that period embraced a balanced schedule.

With no tobacco or peanuts to trouble them, the farmers first centered their attention on food and feed crops and livestock. Cotton was grown on a very limited scale, the 1850 census showing that only 89 bales were produced in the county that year. When it came to other crops, the farmers of that day produced far more in proportion than is produced today. It is fairly apparent that corn was the ranking crop, the report showing that 267,477 bushels were produced in 1850. There were 2,880 bushels of wheat produced. Oats and rye were grown in fair quantities. The sweet potato crop, believe it or not, held a ranking position in the farm program, 119,067 bushels having been produced that year. Then there were 6,462 bushels of Irish potatoes, 38,307 bushels of peas and beans, 3,528 pounds of honey and beeswax, 12,067 pounds of butter. To round out the farm program as far as food was concerned,

1850 POPULATION

Ninety years ago there were 8,307 people in Martin County as compared with 26,111 in 1940. The population was made up of 2,355 white males and 2,262 white females; 152 free colored males and 171 free colored females; 1,758 male slaves and 1,609 female slaves.

The population in this county while increasing fairly steady in the past century is now only about three times greater than it was in 1850.

the county produced 2,365 pounds of rice.

Volumes have been written in the past decade or two about milk. It is apparent that the farmers of ninety years ago in this county talked little about milk—they had milk. The census shows that there were 1,925 milk cows, or more than two cows for every family living in the county at the time. As for the livestock program, the 1850 farmers were so far advanced that present-day farmers should feel ashamed of themselves. In addition to nearly 2,000 cows, there were 500 steers, 5,023 "other cattle," 6,945 sheep and 21,680 hogs. The horse was the accepted work animal, the census listing 1,122 horses against 292 mules. The order has been reversed during the intervening years and now the tractor is stepping in to effect a reversal of the present order. There are new innovations, but it is fairly apparent that the farm program has got to go back almost a century and pick up some of the things it cast aside before it can get anywhere.

Farm production for 1850 is compared with that for the year 1939, as follows:

	1850	1939
Wheat, bu.	2,860	130
Rye, bu.	50	310
Oats, bu.	4,165	20,480
Corn, bu.	267,477	361,800
Rice, lbs.	2,365	
Cotton, bales	89	4,856
Wool, lbs.	10,647	
Irish Potatoes, bu.	6,462	88,890
Sweet Potatoes, bu.	119,067	212,740
Honey, lbs.	3,528	500

The cotton production is for the year 1940, and the honey production is estimated for the year 1939.

Peanut production in 1939 amounted to 23,144,000 pounds as against

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL OF YESTER-YEAR



The above picture of the Jamesville School was taken about 1905 and is about one of the best of its kind available today. It is reproduced here through the courtesy of Mrs. Pattie Wallace, of Jamesville. Professor A. Corey and Mr. Wendell Hamilton identified the young group as follows:
 Top row, left to right: Charlie Woolard, Pearl Davenport, Pugh Ward, Minnie Bailey, Ella Stubbs, Connie Griffin, Henry D. Hardison, Roland Stallings, Dock Hardison, Tilly Ward, Mary Hassell.
 Next to top row: Lucian Hardison, Kathelene Wallace, Annie Mae Allen, Julian Hassell, John-

nie Mobley, Grady Gurkin, Mayo Stallings, Burnie Mae Fagan, Blanche Davenport, Irene Stallings.
 Third row: Willie Mobley, Carrie Ward, Effie Brown, Marie Stallings, Helen Bailey, Marion Jackson, Paul Ward, Joe Davis, Lillie Bell Hardison, Wendell Hamilton, Perlie Modlin, Odie Bowen.
 Fourth row: Lillian Davenport, Stella Rooks, Willie Bowen, Ruth Roberson, Ruby Alligood, Sudie Roberson, Teddy Jackson, Fannie Warrington.
 Bottom row: Zeno Davenport, Hunter Davis, Janie Brown, Mable Sykes, Myrtle Coltrain.
 Seated: Hildah Ward and A. Corey.

Cured Leaf May Carry Diseases

The Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, in a bulletin on tobacco diseases, says cured tobacco is the source of most of the mosaic infection of tobacco plants before and during transplanting. Therefore, men working around the plantbed should not use natural leaf for chewing or smoking. Pockets should be brushed out, if natural leaf has been carried in them, and plug or twist tobacco substituted. Pipe smokers should use canned smoking tobacco rather than natural leaf. Manufactured cigarettes probably are safe. It is preferable, however, to use no tobacco whatever when working in plantbeds.

none at all in 1850. In 1939, there were 15,865,943 pounds of tobacco produced in this county as compared with not a single pound in 1850.

Rules of the Road . . .

ON DIMMING LIGHTS

Sec. 94, Motor Vehicle Laws of North Carolina: "The head lamps of motor vehicles shall be so constructed, arranged and adjusted that they will at all times . . . and under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road produce a driving light sufficient to render clearly discernible a person two hundred feet ahead, but any person operating a motor vehicle upon the highways when meeting another vehicle, shall so control the lights of the vehicle operated by him by shifting, depressing, deflecting, tilting or dimming the head light beams in such manner as shall not project a glaring or dazzling light to persons in front of such head lamp."

In other words, dim your headlights when meeting another car on

Average Acreage On Farms Higher

North Carolina's average farm in 1940 was 67.7 acres, or 3.2 acres above the 1930 average, based on the United States Census, reports T. L. Stuart, junior statistician of the State Department of Agriculture. "Land in farms last year totaled 18,845,338 acres in North Carolina, or about four per cent more than reported in the 1930 census," he added. "The average value per farm was \$2,647 last year compared with \$3,018 in 1930."

"The average value per acre for 1940 decreased during the 10-year period from \$46.75 in 1930 to \$39.09 in 1940. . . . The highway at night. The law requires it, courtesy suggests it, safety demands it."

Better Living On The Farm Is A Possibility

BALANCED

Martin County's housing facilities were perfectly balanced with the needs in 1850 according to census figures for that year. There were 923 dwellings for the 923 families.

Apparently there were no apartments, but more than likely large families lived in the homes of that day, as a rule. Housing facilities of that day would offer a startling comparison to those of today when people live on wheels, in shacks, lofts and cellars, deserted stores and business buildings, with many having no home at all.

A Master Farmer And His Tenants

Speaking of his plans for reducing expenses and increasing farm income during 1941, Master Farmer E. M. Meares, of Marion County, S. C., in a letter to the Enterprise

Farmer presents the following ideas on landlord-tenant relations. "Under the 50-50 share system, followed on the farm, sweet potatoes, and other crops, I find that first of all, a practical working relationship should be in operation between croppers and myself—never giving

any reason to doubt the sincerity of any argument or order standing entered into regarding business. Therefore, through such an understanding, the majority of farm men have remained with me for a number of years. I have felt that it was my duty as a landlord to improve the living quarters on my farm in every way possible, providing comfortable houses. With this in mind, a program for building and repair has been in operation. Important both to me and farm men on my farm has been the program for production of food and feed requirements. As much land as is needed to grow food and vegetable crops for home use is provided rent free. Even though all of the above conditions are met fairly satisfactorily, I have never felt that farming could be successful unless the principle of self-help and hard work was employed as a continuous institution on the part of each farm family. There are master farmers in Martin County but few have been recognized."

Need Is Urgent To Diversify Program On Farm In Future

New Program Calls for Pastures, More Livestock and More Food-Feed Crops

By GUY A. CARDWELL

Now that world conditions have largely curtailed export trade, the steps are being taken for crops to make the farm pay. The average farmer must be diversified due to the present world trade must be utilized. The local home by the cultivation of food crops. I would therefore strongly recommend to farmers of Tidewater Virginia and the Carolinas that they give immediate and serious consideration to crop diversification, keeping in mind particularly crops that will not only mean a better living on the farm but crops that will bring in some cash every month in the year. Some money is

needed to buy the things that a well-rounded operation, for the purchase of land and farm implements, cannot be produced on the farm. Sweet potatoes, and other crops, for the home of all, a practical working relationship should be in operation between croppers and myself—never giving

any reason to doubt the sincerity of any argument or order standing entered into regarding business. Therefore, through such an understanding, the majority of farm men have remained with me for a number of years. I have felt that it was my duty as a landlord to improve the living quarters on my farm in every way possible, providing comfortable houses. With this in mind, a program for building and repair has been in operation. Important both to me and farm men on my farm has been the program for production of food and feed requirements. As much land as is needed to grow food and vegetable crops for home use is provided rent free. Even though all of the above conditions are met fairly satisfactorily, I have never felt that farming could be successful unless the principle of self-help and hard work was employed as a continuous institution on the part of each farm family. There are master farmers in Martin County but few have been recognized."

South where opportunities are so plentiful for the production of home supplies. To maintain livestock on the farm in any form requires that pastures and food crops must come in addition of a substantial increase in livestock. In the past it may not have been easy to find a ready market for the sale of small farm supplies, but under present conditions, with increased industrial employment, and

(Continued on last page, this section)



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