

# THE SPECIAL INFORMER.

ST. LOUIS PLATFORM—Unity and Fraternity.

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No. 7.

## North Carolina Farmers' Alliance.

President—Marion Butler, Clinton.  
 Vice-President—T. B. Long, Asheville.  
 Secretary-Treasurer—W. S. Barnes, Raleigh.  
 Lecturer—J. S. Bell, Brasstown.  
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 Door Keeper—W. H. Tomlinson, Fayetteville.  
 Assistant Door Keeper—H. E. King, Peanut.  
 Sergeant-at-arms—J. S. Holt, Chalk Level.  
 State Business Agent—W. H. Worth, Raleigh.  
 Trustee Business Agency Fund—W. A. Graham, Machpelah.  
 Executive Committee N. C. F. S. Alliance.—  
 S. B. Alexander, Charlotte, Chairman; J. M. Mewborne, Kinston; J. S. Johnston, Ruffin, N. C.  
 S. A. Legislative Committee—R. J. Powell, Raleigh; N. C. English, Trinity College; J. J. Young, Polenta; H. A. Forney, Newton.  
 S. A. Judiciary Committee—Elias Carr, A. Leazer, N. M. Culbreth, M. G. Gregory, Wm. C. Connell.

## North Carolina Reform Press Association.

Officers—J. L. Ramsey, President; Marion Butler, Vice-President; W. S. Barnes, Secretary.

### PAPERS.

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Progressive Farmer, State Organ, | Raleigh.         |
| Caucasian,                       | Clinton.         |
| The Workingman's Helper,         | Pinnacle.        |
| Watchman,                        | Salisbury.       |
| Farmers' Advocate,               | Tarboro.         |
| Country Life,                    | Trinity College. |
| Mercury,                         | Hickory.         |
| Rattler,                         | Whitakers.       |
| Agricultural Bee,                | Goldsboro.       |
| Alliance Echo                    | Moncure, N. C.   |

Each of the above-named papers are requested to keep the list standing on the first page and add others, provided they are duly elected. Any paper failing to advocate the Ocala platform will be dropped from the list promptly. Our people can now see what papers are published in their interest.

## Death of Col. Polk.

News and Observer.

On Monday morning, June 6th, we received a brief note from Dr. Hays of Washington, in which he stated that Col. Polk continued seriously ill—but that he hoped to get him well enough to attend the Omaha convention. This was the first intimation we had of the serious illness of the distinguished head of the Farmers' Alliance in the Union. From that day a sincere sympathy was felt throughout North Carolina, and we doubt not, throughout the entire South and largely in the Northwest, for Col. Polk in the distressing circumstances that thus, with apparant suddenness, put him in jeopardy while still in the vigor of active and robust manhood. The very suddenness of the attack augmented the general interest. On enquiry however we learnt that he had long been subject to the malady that

had now assumed so serious a nature, and that on previous occasions he had realized his possible danger.

But devoted to the work which absorbed his thoughts, wrapped up in a cause he was seeking to advance, he had not spared himself and taken no heed of the peril which incessant travelling and constant strain continually increased. Blood poisoning is said to have set in, accompanied with a failure of the heart to perform its customary function, and although his system responded at first to the efforts of his skillful physicians, and hope was entertained of his recovery, yet after a short struggle the end came and he passed away Saturday morning at 11:15 o'clock, at Garfield Hospital, where his wife and friends had been called to his bedside.

Colonel Polk is known so generally to our readers that it were almost superfluous to say aught in regard to his life and public services.

His personality was striking. He was a man of handsome appearance and fine address.

He was gifted with many personal qualities that lent a charm to his individuality; and in particular was he agreeable in conversation, and courteous and pleasing in his manner. As a speaker he was captivating.

To an easy delivery, and copious vocabulary, he united the fire of the orator and the zeal and warmth of an eager advocate. He was a handsome speaker, fluent, fearless and bold. His advanced positions always commanded attention, while the agreeable manner in which he presented his views won the favor of his audience.

The story of his life abounds in incidents. His father was Andrew Polk, a farmer of Mecklenburg, who however had removed to Anson, where Col. Polk was born April 24, 1837. When he was but fourteen, his father died, leaving him a good farm and a good name as an inheritance. Young Polk having had some early training took a course at Davidson College and especially studied agriculture.

In the spring of 1860 he was elected a member of the State convention, and later he enlisted as a private in Vance's Regiment, the 20th North Carolina, of which he became Sergeant-Major, and afterwards he was made first Lieutenant. In the summer of 1864 he was elected a member of the legislature. After the war he returned to his farm and was editor of The Ansonian. A few years later he laid off a part of his farm in lots and began the town of Polkton. Being a farmer, he became prominent in the State Grange and aided in drawing the bill to establish the Department of Ag-

riculture passed by the legislature of 1877, and he was elected the first commissioner of Agriculture for North Carolina. As such he was brought in close contact with the farmers of the State, but some friction arising he resigned in the spring of 1880 and became an associate editor of The Raleigh News. In September of that year the News was consolidated with the Observer, and Captain Ashe invited Colonel Polk to become associate editor of the News and Observer and he continued with this paper until the spring of 1881. His relations in the editorial business were extremely agreeable to him, but having concluded to open at Raleigh a large depot for the sale of agricultural implements, he turned his attention in that direction. We think he later started an agricultural paper at Raleigh, but soon became engaged in some business enterprises at the North. Subsequently he returned to the State and published the Progressive Farmer at Winston. Along about 1886 he removed his paper to Raleigh, and shortly afterwards was elected Secretary of the Farmers' Alliance, a new organization of the farmers then being started in the South. This position was of great assistance to him in bringing his paper before the farmers, and its circulation soon began to increase. In the meantime Col Polk had been commissioned on several occasions to represent the State in agricultural conventions and had become prominent in that connection. He was elected President of the Farmers' Alliance and was thrice re-elected to that position. As the head of that organization he had the satisfaction of seeing it increase in numbers, power and influence far beyond the most sanguine expectations of its founders.

His paper kept pace with the growth of the Order in North Carolina, and eventually reached the enormous circulation of twenty thousand, wielding an influence heretofore unknown among the people of this State.

More latterly the agitation which was used as an auxiliary to give the Farmers' Alliance strength led to the development of a sentiment in certain localities for a Third political party, and Colonel Polk was at the time of his death prominently spoken of as the probable nominee of that party for the Presidency of the United States. His sudden death thus cut short a career that had reached a national importance, and will be a source of sincere sorrow not only to his immediate personal friends, but to many millions of people from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico who had come to regard Col. Polk with all the affection of devoted followers.