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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF CHOWAN COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA

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( STUDIES IN HISTORY, ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC LAW

EDITED BY THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Volume LXXVI ]

[Number 1

Whole Number 179 )

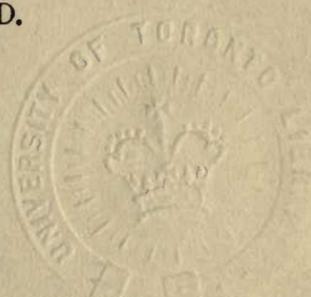
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF  
CHOWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

1880-1915

BY

*Wren*  
W. SCOTT BOYCE, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor in Economics  
Connecticut College for Women*



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New York  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., AGENTS  
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MY DEVOTED  
FATHER AND MOTHER  
NEITHER OF WHOM HAS EVER  
STOOD IN MY WAY



## PREFACE

WHEN I first planned this study, it was my ambition to write the economic and social history of Chowan County from the date of its first permanent white settlement down to the present time. Preliminary investigations, however, soon convinced me that nothing like a complete history along the lines I proposed could be written for the entire period of white occupation. Since Byrd's work, published in 1736, comparatively few economic or social facts have been recorded. The writings on this section since then, that have been preserved, are principally of either a political or a military nature; hence any alleged economic or social history of the county covering the last half of the eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth century, written now, would, it seems to me, be largely a matter of pure inference. I have therefore thought best to begin my account with a period well within the memory of those now living. Some of the advantages of this policy are quite obvious. In the first place I am then setting down facts attested, not by one individual, but by as many individuals as I have thought necessary to interview. Furthermore, the interpretations of these facts can be had from many angles, and, what is more, from those who have played important rôles in the history of the county during the era under discussion.

The particular year (1880) chosen as one limit of the period is of special advantage in that it is a census year, and thus certain data, otherwise unobtainable, are furnished ready to hand. Many of these census data are also valuable both in checking up data gathered from the people by me

personally, and in checking up my own observations and conclusions. The time when this sketch begins is sufficiently far removed from the close of the Civil War for conditions to have become fairly normal. This in itself is of no small advantage. What is probably the greatest advantage of all, however, from the standpoint of whatever value this study may possess, is the fact that I myself was at this time already on the scene of action, and have personally observed and experienced the major part of the processes, conditions, and transformations herein recorded.

Although this period of three and a half decades is a comparatively short one, it nevertheless encompasses the majority of the most important of the economic and social changes which have taken place since the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Many of the customs, conditions, and methods of living in 1880 were quite similar to those described by Lawson and by Byrd, writing between 1700 and 1740.

During the period under discussion, in manufactures the people largely passed from the domestic to the factory type; in agriculture, from the hand tool to the machine tool, and from man power to that of animal, steam, and gas; in education, from the education of the few to the education of the many, and from a non-reading to a reading public; in commerce, from the condition of a high degree of neighborhood self-sufficiency, and even individual family self-sufficiency, to that of contributing to and drawing from the markets of the world; in gratification of wants, from a pain to a pleasure economy.

The information which follows with reference to my fitness to do what is here undertaken, is in recognition of every reader's right to know what has been the opportunity of an author to obtain a knowledge of the facts whereof he presumes to speak, his ability faithfully to describe and correctly

to interpret them, and the likelihood of his so doing. Chowan is the county in which I was born and reared, but the past eighteen years I have spent chiefly in living and in traveling in other parts of the country. Much of this living has been not simply "among," but actually "with," the people. In fact I have had occasion to break bread with people from practically every state in the Union, and that under their own roofs. Although the more recent years have been spent largely in other portions of the country, frequent visits to Chowan have kept me in touch with events there. Moreover, the summers of 1912, 1913, and the summer and fall of 1914, were spent traveling among, and stopping with, the people in the county, for the express purpose of securing first-hand knowledge of present-day conditions.

It has been far easier for me, being a native son, to obtain the unvarnished facts than it would be for a stranger, and being a product of the times and conditions which I presume here to portray should make me more sympathetic in my interpretation of these facts than would be an outsider who had had only a brief sojourn in the county. On the other hand, my rather wide business and social relations with those in various parts of this and other countries should give me a greater perspective, a higher degree of accuracy, and a keener sense of justice regarding the interpretations, than is likely to be possessed by any one who has always resided in the locality.

From the foregoing the reader naturally would expect the method of arriving at the alleged facts to have been largely that of observation and personal interview, and in this he is quite right. It has not only been my privilege to witness practically every process and condition herein mentioned or described, but it has also been my fortune to have been directly concerned with most of them. The only thing at all in question is the degree of their generalness, and here

every estimate of mine has been checked up and corroborated by persons who are admittedly among the most intelligent and scientific residents of the county.

In most cases, estimates have been given in figures rather than in such vague terms as "a great many," "a large number," "only a few"—terms which connote different things to different individuals. Because of the method followed, the reader will at least not have to guess at what the estimates are.

In considering the estimates one should ever remember the following:

1. That all of them, unless otherwise stated, are for the entire population, including colored as well as white.

2. That the colored element constitutes more than half the population.

3. That only a half-century ago practically the entire colored contingent was cast adrift with nothing but its bare hands to earn a living in a territory already completely appropriated by the whites; and that while they have made a creditable showing, thus far but comparatively few (possibly five per cent) have attained to the degree of wealth reached by fifty per cent of the whites.

If the foregoing facts be kept in mind, estimates which might otherwise appear unreasonably small, will be seen to be more in accord with what one would expect.

In this study I have had four ends in view: first, to give a picture of the life and customs of the people in 1880; second, to give a picture of the life and customs of the people at the present time, together with some of the most prominent economic and social aspects of the intervening period; third, to set forth the main causes of the remarkable economic and social changes that have taken place within the last three and a half decades; fourth, to point out

the principal factors which so long delayed Chowan's awakening, and which continue not only to retard but even to prevent the full realization of its enormous possibilities. Features seeming to be particularly characteristic of the section have been especially stressed.

Every locality has certain words and expressions that are distinctly its own, and uses certain common words and expressions in a peculiar sense. It has been my constant effort to make the present product appear indigenous to the locality treated—to make it such that a “native” would at once recognize the author to be one of his own kind. Localisms, as well as colloquialisms, wherever they would fit in, have been given preference over the more formal language, for I see no reason why it is not just as important to preserve records of language customs as it is to preserve records of social, economic, or any other custom. An explanatory note has been subjoined wherever it was thought the meaning of any term might not be clear to an “outsider.”

Several of my Chowan friends have taken considerable interest in my effort—sufficient interest to read over the monograph while still in manuscript form, and give me their valued criticisms before it was too late to take advantage of them. Much of whatever value the work may possess is due to their timely suggestions. Some of these good friends, although agreeing that the picture here sketched is fully in accord with fact, nevertheless have felt that I was doing the county an injustice to portray actual conditions without making a comparison with conditions in other sections of our country. Each time this criticism has been offered I have replied that while I knew from actual experience that Chowan was neither much worse nor much better than numerous other counties in this and other southern states, nevertheless, I was unable for lack of both time and space to present a sufficient array of facts to justify a

comparison. I have attempted to write of Chowan only. Should the reader's unfamiliarity with conditions in the South cause him to think this county any worse than hundreds of others, he might profitably spend some little time in getting better acquainted with the great country in which he lives.

In the preparation of this study I have received aid from many and varied sources, and any merit the work may possess, is, in large part, due to others. Those who have contributed are so numerous—too numerous to mention here individually—that to the great majority of them I can only express my thanks in blanket form. There are some, however, who have given so much of their valuable time—in furnishing information, in giving timely suggestions and criticisms, and in helping prepare the manuscript—that their services deserve a personal recognition, and this I most heartily accord. In this category are the following: Mr. Frank Wood, Mr. W. J. Berryman, Mr. J. O. Alderman, Dr. Richard Dilliard (all of Edenton, N. C.), Mr. Walter M. Hollowell (Belvidere, N. C.), Miss Edith Lawrenson (Camden, N. J.), and Prof. R. E. Chad-dock, of Columbia. While I owe much to all of these I owe still more to Mr. Noah M. Hollowell (Brevard, N. C.). It is to Prof. Henry R. Seager, however, to whom my indebtedness is greatest. He has not only read the manuscript at least twice and suggested valuable revisions but has also performed the laborious task of proof-reading it. To all who have assisted in any way, I am most grateful.

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PART I  
ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL LIFE



## CHAPTER I

### PHYSIOGRAPHY

#### LOCATION AND SIZE

CHOWAN COUNTY is situated in the northeastern part of North Carolina, in the angle formed by the junction of the Chowan River and the Albemarle Sound, which bound it on the west and south, respectively. On its eastern border is Perquimans County, and on its northern, Gates. The above-named sound and river furnish the county with some 40 miles of water frontage accessible to fair-sized river craft. In size, Chowan is the smallest county in the state, comprising 178 square miles or 133,920 acres.<sup>1</sup>

#### TOPOGRAPHY

"In general the surface of the county consists of level, undulating, gently rolling, and rolling areas, interspersed with many small swamps and slight depressions."<sup>2</sup> The elevation ranges from 50 feet to nearly sea level, with more than 50 per cent of the area below 20 feet, and a considerable portion below 10 feet. Less than 1 per cent of the area has an elevation as great as 50 feet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both the *Twelfth* and *Thirteenth U. S. Censuses* state that the county has "approximately 165 square miles" or 105,600 acres. This approximation was arrived at, however, before the recent survey, in 1903. Just why it was not corrected in the last census I do not know.

<sup>2</sup> *House Documents*, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, 1906-1907. Field Operations, Bureau of Soils, vol. lxxv, no. 352, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Geological Survey. *Topographical Maps*: Edenton quadrangle, 1903; Hertford quadrangle, 1905; Beckford quadrangle, 1906. The estimate as to the per cent of area at various elevations is my own based upon these topographical maps.

## SOIL

Northward Chowan county consists of sandy, upland piney woods, except narrow tracts along the river and some of its tributaries, where cypress swamps of considerable extent are found, and there are also large areas of oak flats. The southern portion of the county, lying near the sound and south of the Yeopim river, is characterized by a gray clay-loam soil and mixed oak and pine forest growth, and is for the most part very productive.<sup>1</sup>

The soils of Chowan county are sedimentary in origin and are derived from the Columbia formation. This formation consists of sands, sandy loams and silt loams interspersed with many small swamp areas of peaty and mucky material. This section of North Carolina has been covered several times by the Atlantic Ocean, and the materials constituting the Columbia formation were brought down from the Piedmont section of the state and deposited under water.<sup>2</sup>

Exclusive of the swamp areas, which cover more than 13 per cent of the county, the soil is pretty evenly divided between the two general types known as the "Norfolk series" and the "Portsmouth series."<sup>3</sup>

The Norfolk series occurs in areas where the drainage has been fairly well established. The soils are light in color and have a small organic-matter content. The soils of the Portsmouth series occur in the large interstream areas where the drainage is imperfect, and there has been an accumulation of large quantities of vegetable matter, giving to the soils a brown or black color.<sup>4</sup>

The Norfolk series, as a rule, needs comparatively little artificial drainage, is of a warm nature, and easily culti-

<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Census Reports* for 1880, vol. vi, p. 563.

*House Documents, op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

vated. Much of it, however, leaches very badly. The Portsmouth series, generally speaking, is of a closer texture, colder, and more difficult to cultivate, than the other type. Moreover, it requires considerable artificial drainage and also washes and gullies rather easily.

#### CLIMATE

In the matter of climate the people of Chowan are especially favored. The years are not made up of long, cold winters and short, hot summers, one shifting abruptly into the other; nor are the years made up of hot, dry seasons followed by sultry, rainy ones. Only those who have experienced these two types of climate can fully appreciate the climate of Chowan. Here the four seasons are quite pronounced, and spring and fall—the two seasons usually considered the most delightful of the year wherever the four seasons are found, and the two of which so many climates are almost, if not altogether, bereft—are the longest seasons. There is seldom any winter until after Christmas, and by the 20th of March usually spring has set in. Summer does not begin till about the 20th of June, and by the 1st of September the autumn days are already proffering their greetings. You of Chowan who have sojourned in other climes—you can never forget your glorious spring and fall days which make one feel that it is really good to be alive.

Another beauty of the climate is its comparative freedom both from monotony, and from great extremes of heat and cold.<sup>1</sup> People who have lived in certain sections of California, for instance, know how tiresome even good weather can become. There, where mild, clear days follow each other in long successions, one finds himself feeling that a hail-storm, a cyclone, a blizzard—almost anything to break

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 1, p. 261.

the dull monotony—would be a welcome change. Bright sunshiny days are very desirable, and Chowan has them, but they come interspersed with rainy ones. Coming thus, they are appreciated as they never could be if there were sunshiny days only. The rain is just as welcome as the sunshine; each heightens the pleasing effect of the other. The average annual number of clear days is 168, while 98 other days are partially clear, leaving only 101 on which the sun fails to shine at all.<sup>1</sup>

Those from Chowan who have wintered in the North and Middle West, hugging steam-pipes and coal-stoves for days at a time while the mercury was out beyond zero and still traveling away from that center—they can appreciate the short, comparatively mild winters of Chowan. Though there are never any great extremes of temperature here, the range from  $0^{\circ}$  to  $101^{\circ}$ <sup>2</sup> is quite sufficient for variety. Even these extremes come seldom and are of short duration. In only two of the past eighteen summers has the temperature exceeded  $98^{\circ}$ ,<sup>3</sup> while the average of the highest single temperatures reached each year was only  $96.6^{\circ}$ .<sup>4</sup> There seldom comes a night when one does not need some cover, if sleeping out in the open or in a well-ventilated room.

The records for the low end of the thermometer show that only once from 1896 to 1913 did the mercury touch the zero point, and for sixteen of the eighteen years it never went below  $11^{\circ}$ , while the average of the lowest single temperatures reached each year is but  $13.4^{\circ}$ .<sup>5</sup> The days on which the temperature in the sunshine fails to rise high enough for the ground to start thawing are considered very cold, and seldom occur. Generally there are from one to three snows a winter, but the fall is usually light,<sup>6</sup> and rarely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. tables 2 and 3, pp. 262-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 1, p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 3, p. 263.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. table 1, p. 261.

is the ground covered for more than two or three days at a time. The killing frosts cease early in the spring and hold off till well along in the fall,<sup>1</sup> thus giving a growing season of sufficient length to produce two crops annually on the same piece of ground, with the exception of cotton, which crop requires the full season in which to mature.

#### PRECIPITATION

The distribution of the average annual precipitation of 49.39 inches, with a mean variation of only 5.49,<sup>2</sup> while not uniform throughout the year, nor even during the growing season, can hardly be called bad, when the average highest monthly precipitation is only seven and three-quarter inches, and the average lowest, more than 1 inch.<sup>3</sup> Frequently there are days at a time with no rain fall, but as far back as the records go not a single month has passed without some precipitation.<sup>4</sup> Such is the precipitation and its distribution that the farmer whose land is well drained and in good tilth, is practically certain of a fair crop, even in the most unfavorable years.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. tables 2 and 3, pp. 262-3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. tables 1 and 3, pp. 261 and 263.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 1, p. 261.

## CHAPTER II

### POPULATION

#### TIME OF THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

SINCE the psychology as well as the environment of a people has much to do with its activities, and since certain traits are handed down little changed thru many generations, some knowledge of the first white settlers of Chowan, and of the later additions, would seem quite apropos. The first permanent white settlements made in North Carolina were in the territory at present embraced by Chowan and the adjoining county of Perquimans.<sup>1</sup> It is not known, as in the case of the Jamestown, Plymouth, and some other colonies, just exactly when the beginnings of these settlements were made. It is known, however, that the Virginia colony—the outskirts of which by 1640 were not over sixty miles from the Albemarle Sound—was quite firmly established from 1630 on; that the Albemarle locality was a very desirable one as regards climate, productivity, and accessibility for the smaller vessels<sup>2</sup> of that time; that it was comparatively easy of approach for people from Virginia coming either by the sea route or inland (there being several water courses leading from this section up into Virginia, or near the line); and that the Virginia colony was constantly

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 30 volumes (1886-1914, Raleigh), vol. i, pp. ix-x.

<sup>2</sup> In the early colonial period Roanoke inlet had, at times, as much as fifteen feet of water, tho the depth varied from month to month and from year to year, eight-foot draft vessels not infrequently striking in passing thru. Cf. *Colonial Records*, vol. i, pp. 99-100.

throwing out prospectors seeking to better their conditions. In view of these facts it is quite probable that the Albemarle region was receiving settlers from this source at least as early as 1650.

There are also preserved to us documents which indicate that Europeans were settled here by 1650, or very soon thereafter. Item no. 374 in Book A<sup>1</sup> of the Perquimans County Records is a recorded deed made to George Durant on March 1, 1661, by the King of the Yeopim Indians. In this deed mention is made of another tract of land "formerly sold to Sam. Pricklove." In 1663 the Lords Proprietors commissioned Berkley "to constitute and appoint Governors and all other necessary Officers both military and civil, and to make, enact and ordayne Lawes by and with the advise and consent of the freemen of the said Province or of the greater part of them there delligates ore deputies." He was empowered to "nominate, constitute and apoynt such persons as he shall conceive fitting to be and continew Governor of all that parte of the province aforesaid which lyeth on the north east side or starboard side entering the river Chowan now named by us Albemarle river."<sup>2</sup> By 1666 the Albemarle country had become of such importance in the production of tobacco, that the Maryland General Assembly in passing an act that no tobacco be cultivated in said province during the year 1666, made it conditional on the following clause: "Provided that the Honble Sir William Berkley and the Assembly in Virginia, and Wm. Drummond Esqre Governor of Carolina and the Assembly there doe make the like Act in their several & Respective Assemblies . . ."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This book is still in the office of the Register of Deeds in the Perquimans county courthouse. I had the keen pleasure of consulting it in the summer of 1914. A copy of the deed is also in the *Colonial Records*, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Colonial Records*, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

## ORIGIN OF THE FIRST WHITE SETTLERS

According to the historians the first white settlers of Chowan were people—many of whom had some means<sup>1</sup>—from other English-American colonies, especially Virginia. Lawson, the earliest historian of this region says, “A second Settlement<sup>2</sup> of this Country was made about fifty Years ago [his travels in North Carolina began in December 1700], in that part we now call *Albemarle-County*, and chiefly in *Chowan* Precinct, by several substantial Planters, from *Virginia* and other Plantations.”<sup>3</sup> Bancroft says:

The first settlements on Albemarle Sound were a result of spontaneous overflowings from Virginia, and other Plantations. . . . Albemarle had, in 1665, been increased by fresh emigrants from New England and, two years later, by a colony of ship builders from the Bermudas. . . . The suppression of a fierce insurrection [Bacon's Rebellion, 1676-77] in Virginia had been followed by vindictive punishment; and “runaways, rogues, and rebels”—that is to say, fugitives from arbitrary tribunals, non-conformists, and friends to liberty—“fled daily to Carolina, as their common subterfuge and lurking place.” Did letters from Virginia demand the surrender of leaders in the rebellion, Carolina refused to betray the fugitives.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samuel A'Court Ashe, *History of North Carolina* (Greensboro, N. C., 1908), vol. i, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> White's ill-fated Roanoke settlement of 1587 he has previously mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> John Lawson, Gent. Surveyor-General of North Carolina, *A New Voyage to Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of that Country: Together with the Present State thereof. And a Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel'd thro' several Nations of Indians. Giving a particular Account of their Customs, Manners, &c.* (London: 1709), p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> George Bancroft, *History of the United States from the Discovery of the Continent* (D. Appleton & Co., 1885-6, New York), vol. i, pp. 410, 420, 424.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

*Qualifications of Contemporary Writers.*—What was the nature, character, or psychical constitution of these settlers? Some light has already been shed upon this question by citations in the previous paragraph. Bancroft was, of course, writing of the past, but happily there are three men—Lawson, Byrd, and Brickell (who may be considered contemporaries of the first settlers)—who have left us interesting first-hand accounts of the early Carolinians. Both Lawson, one time surveyor general, and Brickell, a physician, lived and traveled in the state for years, and it is therefore reasonable to suppose that they knew pretty well the people of whom they wrote. Byrd was one of the commissioners from Virginia appointed by that state to assist in running the Virginia-North Carolina line, which line was run in 1728. In considering Byrd's account, written sometime between 1728 and 1737, the reader should ever bear in mind that the most of the Carolinians with whom he came in contact were those living in the strip of territory which Virginia wanted to take from Carolina; that he was a loyal Virginian; that for various reasons many Virginians of this period had an intense prejudice against, and contempt for, the Carolinians. The extremely biased attitude of Byrd is quite patent all through his *Dividing Line*.

*Reasons for Quoting at Length.*—The large space devoted to excerpts in this connection is justified on the following grounds: first, they will aid the reader in forming his own estimate of the people of Chowan in early colonial times; second, the present white residents are to no small degree descendants of the early arrivals; third, the extracts furnish one the best means of insight into the character of both the new settlers and their new environment that can be had from contemporary sources; finally, they foreshadow many of the tendencies and conditions exist-

ing here today, thus helping us to understand the present situation.

The amount of corroborative testimony of the three chief historians who were contemporaries of this early period is rather remarkable, especially when we consider the fact that two of the writers were inclined to picture conditions over-rosy, and the other one, over-dark. The citations follow :

*Observations and Opinions of Lawson.*—As the Land is very fruitful, so are the Planters kind and hospitable to all that come to visit them; there being very few Housekeepers, but what live very nobly, and give away more Provisions to Coasters and Guests who come to see them, than they expend upon their own Families.

. . . . Some of the Men [in Carolina] are very laborious, and make great improvements in their Way; but I dare hardly give 'em that Character in general. The easy Way of living in that plentiful Country, makes a great many Planters very negligent. . . . The Women are the most industrious Sex in that Place. . . . The Women are very fruitful; most Houses being full of Little Ones.

. . . . As for the Constitution of this Government, it is so mild and easy, in respect to the Properties and Liberties of a Subject, that without rehearsing the Particulars, I say once for all, it is the mildest and best establish'd Government in the World, and the Place where any Man may peaceably enjoy his own without being invaded by another; Rank and Superiority ever give place to Justice and Equity. . . . Besides, it is worthy our Notice, that this Province has been settled, and continued the most free from the Insults and Barbarities of the *Indians* of any Colony, that was ever yet seated in *America*; which must be esteem'd as a particular Providence of God handed down from Heaven, to these People; especially, when we consider how irregularly they settled *North-Carolina*, and yet how undisturb'd they have ever remain'd, free from any foreign Danger or Loss, even to this very Day. And what may well be look'd upon for as great a Miracle, this is a Place

where no Malefactors are found, desearving Death, or even a Prison for Debtors; there being no more than two Persons, that, as far as I have been able to learn, ever suffer'd as Criminals, although it has been a Settlement near sixty Years; One of whom was a *Turk* that committed *Murder*; the other, an old Woman, for *Witchcraft*.<sup>1</sup>

*Observations and Opinions of Byrd.*— We perceiv'd the happy Effect of Industry in this Family [Timothy Ivy's], in which every one lookt tidy and clean, and carri'd in their countenances the cheerful Marks of Plenty. We saw no Drones there which are but too Common, alas, in that Part of the World. Tho', in truth, the Distemper of Laziness seizes the Men oftener much than the women. These last Spin, weave and knit, all with their own Hands, while their Husbands, depending on the Bounty of the Climate, are Sloathful in everything but getting of Children, and in that only Instance make themselves useful Members of an Infant-Colony.

. . . . Tis natural for helpless man to adore his Maker in Some Form or other, and were there any exception to this Rule, I should expect it to be among the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope and of North Carolina. . . . They account it among their greatest advantages that they are not Priest-ridden. . . . One thing may be said for the Inhabitants of that Province, that they are not troubled with any Religious Fumes, and have the least Superstition of any People living. They do not know Sunday from any other day, any more than Robinson Crusoe did, which would give them a great Advantage were they given to be industrious. But they keep so many Sabaths every week, that their disregard of the Seventh Day has no manner of cruelty in it, either to Servants or Cattle.

. . . . Surely there is no place in the World where the Inhabitants live with less Labour than in N Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of Raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People.

<sup>1</sup> Lawson, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-4, 83-4, 166-7.

Indian Corn is of so great increase, that a little Pains will Subsist a very large Family with Bread, and they may have meat without any pains at all, by the Help of the Low Grounds, and the great Variety of Mast that grows on the High-land. The Men, for their Parts, just like the Indians, impose all the Work upon the poor Women. They make their Wives rise out of their Beds early in the Morning, at the same time they lye and Snore, till the Sun has run one third of his course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open Air; Tho', if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a Small Heat at the Hough [hoe]: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard with their arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat.

To speak the Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives.

. . . . Some Borderers, too, had a great Mind to know where the Line wou'd come out, being for the most part Apprehensive lest their Lands Should be taken into Virginia. In that case they must have submitted to some Sort of Order and Government; whereas, in N Carolina, every One does what seems best in his own Eyes. . . . Wherever we passed we constantly found the Borderers laid it to Heart if their Land was taken into Virginia: They chose much rather to belong to Carolina, where they pay no Tribute, either to God or to Ceasar.

Another reason was, that the Government there is so Loose, and the Laws so feably executed, that, like those in the Neigh-

bourhood of Sydon formerly, every one does just what seems good in his own Eyes.<sup>1</sup>

*Testimony of Brickell.*—The Planters by the richness of the Soil, live after the most easie and pleasant Manner of any People I have ever met with; for you shall seldom hear them Repine at any Misfortune in Life, except the loss of Friends, there being plenty of all Necessaries convenient for Life: Poverty being an entire Stranger here, and the Planters the most hospitable People that are to be met with, not only to Strangers but likewise to those who by any Misfortune have lost the use of their Limbs or are incapable to Work, and have no visible way to support themselves. . . .

It is admirable to observe the Prosperity of several Adventures to *Carolina*, in the memory of Man; and how many from the most despicable beginning in a short time, by Gods blessing and their own industry, are arrived to as splendid Fortunes, as any have in other *British* Provinces on this Continent.

. . . . There is Liberty of Conscience allowed in the whole Province; however, the Planters live in the greatest Harmony imaginable, no Disputes or Controversies are ever observed to arrise among them about their Religious Principles. They always treat each other with Friendship and Hospitality, and never dispute over their Liquor . . . By this Unity of Affection, the Prosperity of the Province has increased from its first rise, to this Day. But though they are thus remarkable for their Friendship, Harmony and Hospitality, yet in regard to Morals, they have their share of the Corruptions of the Age, for as they live in the greatest Ease and Plenty, Luxury of Consequence predominates, which is never without its attendant Vices.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Writings of "Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia Esq."* (published in 1737), edited by John Spencer Bassett (New York, 1901), pp. 56, 58, 61, 75-6, 63, 87.

<sup>2</sup> John Brickell, M. D., *The Natural History of North Carolina with an Account of the Trade, Manners, and Customs of the Christian and Indian Inhabitants* (Dublin, 1737), pp. 30, 46, 36-7.

*Views of Bancroft.*—Almost all the American colonies were chiefly planted by those to whom the uniformities of European life were intolerable; North Carolina was planted by men to whom the restraints of other colonies were too severe. . . . The settlers were gentle in their tempers, enemies to violence. Not all their successive revolutions had kindled in them vindictive passions; freedom was enjoyed without anxiety as without guarantees; and the spirit of humanity maintained its influence in the paradise of Quakers.<sup>1</sup>

*Summary and Conclusions.*—While some statements in the above citations may be somewhat over-eulogistic in their tone, the fact remains that Carolina was remarkable for the amount of harmony and lack of violence within its borders during the early pioneer days. In order to realize something of the great value to the colony of being “not troubled with any Religious Fumes and Superstitions,” we have but to recall some of the conditions in New England where there was little religious toleration,<sup>2</sup> and where numerous men and women of sterling worth were jailed, tortured, and some even hanged, all because of superstition—belief in witchcraft.<sup>3</sup> There were some political and religious disturbances but they were mostly injected into the colony from the outside.<sup>4</sup> When left to themselves the colonists settled their own differences, abated their own nuisances and righted their own wrongs, with much justice and mag-

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 51-66.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. Col. Records, op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 709-10, for the disturbance caused by stopping the practice of allowing one to “affirm,” or “declare.” The Quakers, as is well-known, refused to “swear,” or “take an oath.” Under Queen Anne, an act was passed in England (effective also in the colonies) to the effect that no one should hold office prior to taking certain oaths. The Quakers in Albemarle refusing to take these oaths, were dismissed from the assembly and courts of justice. Of course this made trouble.

nanimity. Although they contended most vigorously for what they considered their rights and were never cowed by unjust authority, they nevertheless manifested surprisingly little malice, or revenge. They seemed satisfied if the brewers of trouble were either stilled or removed. All they wanted was to be left alone to work out their own destiny. Along with this spirit of freedom, justice, and fair play, there also dwelt a spirit of equality and democracy foreign to anything known in the neighboring colony of Virginia whence many of the early Carolinians came.<sup>1</sup>

#### REASONS FOR EARLY IMMIGRATION TO CHOWAN

*Rôle of Religion.*—What prompted the first settlers to immigrate to Carolina? Some doubtless came from a desire to escape the discomfiture caused them by religious enthusiasm and intolerance elsewhere, but it can hardly be said that these pioneer settlers came because they wanted to worship God in some special manner not allowed where they had previously lived.<sup>2</sup> No one was molested in Carolina for worshipping as he chose and yet there was not a church-house in the province till 1702, or 1703, some forty or fifty years after the first settlements, and then only after the assembly of the province had ordered one built at the public's expense.<sup>3</sup> In 1709, Gordon, a man sent over by some Church-of-England society, writing home to the secretary of the society, says, "Chowan is the westernmost, the largest and thinnest seated: they built a church some years ago, but it is small, very sorrily put together, and is ill looked after . . . ." <sup>4</sup> Another minister of the Church of England writes back to the society in May 1717, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Records of N. C., op. cit.*, vol. i, *passim*; Ashe, *op. cit.*, vol. i, *passim*; Bancroft, *op. cit.*, vol. i, ch. vii, and vol. ii, ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. supra*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Col. Records, op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 543-45, 558-60, 709.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 711.

I went this winter 7 times to the Church in the neighborhood (i. e. that is 4 miles distance) and met not a congregation; so indifferent are our Gentry in their Religion they had rather never come to church than be obliged to pay me anything, they cannot endure the thoughts of it: they wonder I do not leave the country and their debt would be paid; that is the way they have treated all of my Function before me and would have the world believe they are no changelings.<sup>1</sup>

Writing back to the society again, in June of the same year, he says of the church wardens and vestrymen of Chowan, "It is all one to them whether they have a minister & church to go or not."<sup>2</sup>

If any have thought the first settlers were Quakers flying from religious persecution, it may probably come as a disappointment to them to learn that the known facts fail to support such an opinion.<sup>3</sup> Edmundson visiting Carolina in 1672 found only one Quaker family. The journals of both Edmundson and Fox indicate that the first Quakers in Albemarle were those who embraced the faith after removing hither.<sup>4</sup> This fact is also attested to in a letter by Governor Walker of Virginia to the Bishop of London<sup>5</sup> in 1703, and again by one of Gordon's letters (May 1709) to the "secretary"<sup>6</sup> (presumably of the foreign mission board).

*Economic and Political Motives.* — No, the first immigrants to Albemarle came not as persecuted saints seeking a place to worship God according to their own views, but as men and women seeking a bigger economic and political freedom than they were then enjoying. Some were driven out of Virginia immediately after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676-77 (twenty years or more after the first settlers came

<sup>1</sup> *Col. Recs.*, vol. ii, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. xviii-xxi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 571-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-18, 227.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 710-11.

to Carolina) because of Berkley's revengeful activity,<sup>1</sup> but undoubtedly most of them came for the purpose of making a better and easier living.<sup>2</sup> The "Lords Comgrs for Trade" inquired of the Virginia Council in 1708 the cause of the "removal of the Inhabitants of this Colony into our neighboring Plantations & the way to prevent the same." The Council replied, in substance, as follows: first, the want in Virginia of desirable land convenient to settle which is still unpatented and open to settlers; second, the much easier terms of acquiring land in Carolina; third, the difficulty of collecting debts owed in Virginia by those who remove to Carolina.<sup>3</sup> Saunders in the prefatory notes of the first volume of the *Colonial Records* says:

It is perhaps a very flattering unction that we lay to our souls in supposing our State was settled by men seeking religious freedom, but unhappily there seems to be no solid foundation for the belief. So far as we can see, the moving causes of immigration to Albemarle were its delightful climate, magnificent bottom lands and bountiful products. Immigration, in early days, divested of its glamour and brought down to solid fact, is the history of a continuous search for "bottom land."<sup>4</sup>

#### GROWTH AND LOCATION OF THE POPULATION

*Growth During 1790-1870.* — The *First U. S. Census* (1790) accredits the county with a population of 5,011. The increase for the next 20 years was very slight, on an average less than 3 per cent for each decade. The next decade (1810-20) showed an increase of 22 per cent. From 1820 to 1870, a period of 50 years, the population was stationary. In fact, it was actually a small fraction of 1

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 467-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ashe, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Col. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 690-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

per cent less in 1870 than it was in 1820.<sup>1</sup> Since the county was visited by no serious epidemic, war, famine, or other decimating factor in either of these periods, and since there is no reason for thinking that the fruitfulness of the people, commented on by the early historians,<sup>2</sup> had all of a sudden greatly decreased, it is highly probable that not a few were emigrating. As this was a period when vast numbers all along the Atlantic coast were flowing over the mountains into the fertile valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries, it was only natural that many of the more restless and ambitious spirits of Chowan should hear and answer the alluring call of the West.

*Growth During 1870-1910.*—During the past forty years there has been a steady increase in the population, but the increase, both absolutely and relatively, has lessened with each successive decade. The increase over the previous decennial count dropped from 22.5 per cent in 1880<sup>3</sup> to 10.2 per cent in 1910.<sup>4</sup>

*Rural and Urban.*—Chowan has one town, and only one—Edenton. According to the 1850 census (the first to enumerate the town and rural inhabitants separately) it contained 1607 people—nearly one-fourth of the county's population. Each of the three censuses following credited it with a population ranging from 6.4 per cent to 22.6 per cent smaller than that for 1850; the 1850 figures were not again attained till 1890. The census for that year showed a 59.5 per cent increase during the decade immediately pre-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 4, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., *supra*, pp. 26-7, also Brickell, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> This is the largest percentage (it is also the largest absolute) increase shown by any decade since the inauguration of the federal decennial census.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 4, p. 264, for the number at various census years.

ceding.<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of separate enumeration the proportion of the population of Edenton to that of the whole county has fluctuated from slightly less than two to ten, to practically three to ten. In other words, during this period Edenton has contained, in round numbers from twenty to thirty per cent of the county's entire population.<sup>2</sup>

*Recent Foreign Immigration.*—In 1769 there were in and near Edenton men of prominence—some of national reputation—from several of the other colonies, and from Ireland, France, Scotland, and England.<sup>3</sup> During the past hundred years, however, there has been very little immigration of any sort into Chowan. Few, even, have moved in from the adjoining counties. In 1870 there were only 75 native Americans in the county who had been born outside of the state, and 74 of these were from either Virginia or West Virginia. In 1880 there were in the county 110 people from Virginia, and only 54 from all other states and foreign countries. It is thus seen that at the beginning of the period which it is here proposed to cover, the most of the very small immigration was coming from the same source whence it came in the early days—from Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

The first separate enumeration by counties of the foreign born was in 1860. That year there were 12 in the county from foreign lands. Two decades later there were only 6 of this class, and the highest recorded for any census year is 23 for 1890. The average for the six decennial years for which these data were gathered is only 16. In 1870,

<sup>1</sup> It was during this decade that the first railroad reached Edenton and that the first big saw-mill was erected there. Much other construction work was also gotten under way during this period.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 5, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell* (New York, 1857), pp. 30-36, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 5, p. 265.

for the first time, account was taken of the native born of foreign and of mixed parentage. There were just 24, the highest number recorded for any decennial year. In the 1880 census, this item was left out. The average was under 17 for the three censuses following.<sup>1</sup>

*Origin, Color and Nativity of Present Inhabitants.*— From the foregoing it is quite clear that the growth of Chowan's population for at least the past one hundred years has been overwhelmingly by natural increase from the native stock. But this is only what one might expect. Embracing part of the oldest settled portion of the state, being naturally one of the most accessible sections and one of those most favored by nature in general, Chowan, as a matter of course, was one of the first counties to fill up. Those who have come in during the past three-quarters of a century have come in for special purposes. The labor of the one cotton-mill in the county is largely from other parts of the state. Those coming from Virginia in the seventies and eighties were mostly colored laborers who came to work at the saw-mills, in the lumber woods, and on the railroads. The whites from other states have been interested primarily in lumbering, saw-milling, railroading and manufacturing, while the few from foreign countries have been nearly all traders of some sort or other. There is now only one farmer of foreign birth in the county.

In 1910 the foreign born and the native born of foreign and of mixed parentage totaled only 34, about three-tenths of one per cent of the entire population. In other words, 305 out of every 306 of the inhabitants of the county were native stock of more than two generations back. In fact these people are descended from Americans for so many generations back that probably less than one per cent of them

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from table 5, p. 265.

outside of Edenton, and comparatively few there, know from just what part of the world their ancestors came. The progenitors of probably 98 per cent of the present population came either from Africa or the British Isles. Slavery was well established in the colonies when Albemarle first began to be settled.<sup>1</sup> The blacks came in along with the whites, and at every census except the second (1800), the colored population has outnumbered the white, the average excess for the thirteen decennial censuses being 10 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

From the foregoing pages, even though nothing further were said, one could form a fairly good idea of the nature of the present population. The pages following, however, portraying as they do the life of these people for the past three and a half decades, will give to him who has the interest to continue, their character in considerable detail.

<sup>1</sup> Whites, Indians, and Negroes were all held in bondage at this time. Ashe, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 4, p. 264.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the subject. It begins with a discussion of the early attempts to explain the phenomena of light and heat, and then proceeds to a more detailed account of the development of the theory of the ether. The author then discusses the various experiments which have been devised to test the theory, and finally comes to the conclusion that the theory is still in need of further investigation.

The second part of the book is devoted to a more detailed account of the theory of the ether, and to a discussion of the various experiments which have been devised to test the theory.

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PART II  
DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC LIFE



## CHAPTER III

### AGRICULTURE IN THE EIGHTIES <sup>1</sup>

#### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE

CHOWAN in 1880 was (and continues to be) preeminently a farming county. The other industries were largely what might be termed "bye-industries"—occupations followed intermittently by the farmer when he felt that he could leave his farm for a few days or weeks. In fact, as these were carried on, many of them might almost be said to have constituted part of farming, so undifferentiated were they from, and necessary to, the actual farm work. Few of the various occupations had called into being special classes who followed them and them only; consequently the farmer was forced to carry them on himself in order that his farming might go on to the best advantage. The agricultural interests of the millers, merchants, carpenters, cobblers, schoolmasters, and blacksmiths not infrequently yielded them a larger return than did their trade. Even many of the professional men (lawyers, physicians, clergymen) received a considerable portion of their income from their own farms, some of them actually doing farm labor.

With the exception of those living at the county-seat, a town of less than fourteen hundred, the entire population of the county (in 1880, 7,900) lived on farms, and

<sup>1</sup> The "eighties" in this volume will always refer to those of the nineteenth century.

the vast majority of the townspeople had farming interests.

#### GETTING LAND READY FOR CULTIVATION

At the time that this account begins no large amount of land was being cleared, but many of the more substantial farmers were taking in some new ground every few years; a few cleared a little practically every year. So, in order to obtain a complete picture of agriculture, and obtain it in its proper chronology, let us first look at the process of getting land under the plow.

*Timber.*—At this time timber, except the very finest of heart and such other timber as was near streams large enough to float it, had little or no value. On land that was to be cleared it was simply an incumbrance to be gotten rid of with the least possible cost. The larger trees, except what few were used for rails, boards, and building purposes on the place, were generally “deaded.”<sup>1</sup>

*Deading.*—There were two or three reasons why the trees were “deaded” rather than cut immediately. In the first place, it was thought that if the trees were deaded, instead of being cut down green, some of the strength drawn by the tree from the soil would flow back to it. Again, trees would season better standing than when lying on the ground, and so were more easily burned. Lastly, the deaded pine trees were frequently left standing for a few years after the ground had actually been brought into cultivation. Since the larger stumps were never removed till after the land had been farmed for years, it caused no added inconvenience in working the land to leave the entire dead trees standing for one or

<sup>1</sup> The “deading” process is simply the chopping of a line some two inches deep around the tree with an axe. This line is anywhere from 18 inches to 4 feet above the ground.

two seasons,<sup>1</sup> and had the advantage of allowing one to put his ground in cultivation more quickly. The trees could be taken care of later when the farmer had more time, and besides, they made most excellent firewood. As a rule, however, the trees were all cut and burned before the land was put under the plow. The larger trees were deaded from one to three winters before the beginning of the actual clearing, which started with the cutting and burning of the smaller trees and undergrowth. Later the larger trees were cut down, cut into sticks that could be handled, and with the assistance of the neighbors heaped together. This process of heaping was known as "log rolling."<sup>2</sup>

*Roots and Stumps.*—After everything was burned off, the ground was hoed, every inch of it, by hand, with an ordinary grubbing hoe. On an average this required from twelve to fifteen days to the acre, and at that, removed only the roots and smaller stumps, the larger ones being left. All except the pineheart stumps rotted within a few years. These latter were "lightwood"<sup>3</sup> and were good for from twenty-five to one hundred years, or longer, if they were not removed. The only way the farmer knew of doing this was to dig them up. If this had been attempted at any time within two or three years after clearing (before sufficient time had elapsed for the rotting away of the sap), the getting up of the worst of them would have taken one man a week or

<sup>1</sup> Those who followed this practice often left the trees so long that the limbs would rot, fall off, and tear up the growing crop. In case of winds, whole trees would sometimes blow down, doing considerable damage.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 181 for the social features of "log-rolling."

<sup>3</sup> "Lightwood" is pine wood that is thoroughly saturated with turpentine. The best of it will last almost indefinitely, either in the ground or out of it.

more. Even after they had stood for ten or fifteen years it frequently required a half-day or more to get one up. For this reason they were left for years, occupying much space and interfering with cultivation. The prevalence of stumpy land was and is one of the factors making for the slow introduction of improved farm tools and machinery. Many a plow has been wrecked on these stumps, and many a plowman's patience severely tried by them. Many horses will not plow in stumpy ground, especially if they are fretful and have a tendency to kick. Often when plowing a fractious horse, as you pulled the plow out to go around a stump, he would strike a trot and perhaps jerk the plow against the stump or an uncovered root, causing the handles to fly up and deliver you a "solar plexus" if you were a man, and an "upper-cut" on the jaw if you were a ten- or twelve-year-old lad, either of which was of sufficient force to have caused you to "take the count," had it not been that you were hanging on to the plow handles for dear life.

The "grubs" (roots and small stumps hoed up) were raked together and burned. In this way much of the vegetable matter was taken off the land at the start, instead of being allowed to lie and rot and thus increase the humus. The method followed doubtless gave a better crop for the first year or two, but the land wore out and washed away far more quickly than it otherwise would have done, besides yielding, after the first few years, a smaller annual return.

*Fencing.*—The land cleared, the next thing was to fence it. This, too, was a slow and laborious process. To cut and split two hundred ten-foot rails in average-splitting timber was considered a fair day's work.<sup>1</sup> Far more fell

<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise stated, a "day's work" always means a day's work for the average able-bodied man.

below this number than went above it. In this section "mauling" (splitting) rails has for generations been synonymous with "hard work."

The fence was laid in the form of a continuous succession of "w's" a bit flattened out, the corners or angles being a little more than right angles. This is what is known as the "worm fence." A legal fence was ten rails high, scotched, and as the phrase went, "pig tight, bull strong, and horse high." On this basis a good man could cut and maul enough rails in a day to run forty yards of fence, provided he had fair timber.

*Ditching.*—If the land was to be ditched, it was commonly done the year it was deeded. Had there been more ditching done there would have been fewer drowned-out crops, especially, upon the type of soils known as the "Portsmouth series."<sup>1</sup> The few ditches used were not only open—tile draining being unknown—but were too shallow to properly take off the water.

#### SIZE OF FARMS

Altho in 1880 Chowan had a few large farms, it was primarily a county of small ones, the average number of acres of improved land per farm being 50.3. For 45.1 per cent. of farms the average was 14.6 acres, or less, and for another 23.2 per cent. the average was only 31.5 acres.<sup>2</sup> The average number of acres of improved land per "standard work animal"<sup>3</sup> (the equivalent of a mature horse or mule) at this time was 34, which may be regarded as constituting a one-horse farm. Measured then in terms of "standard work animals" used to till them, more than two-fifths of the farms averaged less than half-horse in size, and almost another quarter averaged

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 10, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 51, 274.

under one-horse, leaving fewer than one-third of the farms (31.7 per cent.) that were more than one-horse.

#### FARM IMPLEMENTS

*Amount and Value.*—Agriculture here was distinctly a hand industry carried on with few and simple tools. With the possible exception of the cotton planter, there was nothing among the farmer's implements that would be classed as a machine. There were no weeders, no cultivators, no mowers, no manure spreaders, no peanut planters—in short, no machinery of any kind—just a few simple tools. Commercial fertilizers were all distributed with the hand, and all other manures were spread by hand with a shovel from a cart, fifty loads<sup>1</sup> being counted a good day's work. The average value of tools and machinery per acre of improved land for the whole county was 64.5 cents.<sup>2</sup> If on this basis each farm is credited with tools and machinery in proportion to its size, more than 45 per cent of them had less than \$9.50 worth of farming implements, and more than another 23 per cent. less than \$22.50.<sup>3</sup> As noted in the previous paragraph, less than one-third of the farms (in fact little more than three-tenths) were more than one-horse in size, and yet, as a rule, it was only on a two-horse farm that all the implements necessary for even the low standard of cultivation then in vogue were found. Such implements as cradles (known also as scythes) and cotton-planters were owned by only a few. Frequently there were only two or three of each in a whole neighborhood of five or six square miles. This state of affairs necessitated a considerable amount of borrowing among the smaller farmers.

<sup>1</sup>A "load," in this treatise will always mean a load for a one-horse team.

<sup>2</sup>Calculations made from table 6, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup>Calculations based on tables 6 and 10, pp. 269, 273.

The number and kind of implements commonly found on a representative two-horse farm were about as follows :

- Two carts and wheels
- One rail-cart body
- Two turn-plows
- One cotton plow
- Two sets of plow gear
- Two sets of cart gear
- One spade
- Two shovels
- One pitchfork
- One grubbing hoe
- Six weed hoes
- One hand rake
- One harrow
- One grass blade

*Carts.*—The cart is a two-wheel vehicle having a body five feet long, three feet wide, two and one-half feet high, the two sides permanently boarded up to within six inches of the top rail and the front end boarded up about halfway, while for the remainder of the front end and entire hind end there are boards (one fore board and two hind boards) that can be put in and taken out at will. When it is desired to close the six-inch space below the top rails, a thin board is either wattled in or tied on. The wheels are five feet high and two inches on the tread. The axle, while now occasionally of iron, in former days was practically always of wood. The body rests directly upon the axle, the putting of springs under a cart never even being considered.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Occasionally there was seen what was known as a "spring cart," but this was a light affair just for "knocking about in" (driving around to the store, or elsewhere, with only a small load).

On a farm where there were two carts one was invariably a "tumbler" (tip cart), built especially for hauling dirt and other materials that were to be dumped. This differed from the other cart only in that its load could be dumped without unhitching, and that the wheels were frequently from six to twelve inches lower than the regulation height, a feature which made loading much easier. This cart was used not only for hauling dirt and manure, but for all rough or dirty work. The first cart described was known as the "Sunday" or "best" cart. Possibly one farmer in fifty owned a wagon, and one in a hundred a buggy. Hence, with the exception of rails, lumber, and sometimes bales of cotton, the vast majority (more than ninety-five per cent)<sup>1</sup> of all hauling and traveling was done in carts. A "seat board" could be arranged so as to seat two persons comfortably, that is, as comfortably as it is possible to be when sitting on a hard board in a springless vehicle running over rough roads. This was simply a plain board some eight inches wide, extending across the body of the cart and resting upon the bottom rails on either side of the body, the rails being some twenty inches above the flooring of the cart. The seat board could be put in and taken out at a moment's notice. When more than two grown persons were riding, it was generally taken out and all hands stood up, or else some chairs were put in and all sat down. The latter was usually the case when there were women riding who had passed the girlhood stage. Sometimes, in order to make the board a bit easier, a folded bedquilt, an old coat, or an old sack, was spread on it. Occasionally a quilt was spread on the cart bottom, and everybody

<sup>1</sup> My own estimate.

curled up on it. A cart would hold six or eight adults. If this many were riding together they lined up on both sides, using the top rails as hand-holds.

In each top rail were either five or six slits, or five or six staples. Into these were placed hoops upon which was stretched a canvas. When thus arranged it was usually known as a "covered-cart," but sometimes as the "Gates county buggy."<sup>1</sup> Covered carts were used chiefly by the "carters"<sup>2</sup> in hauling to and from Norfolk, and were a familiar sight along the principal roads leading to that city.

The description of the cart has been given thus minutely because it has played, and continues to play, such an important rôle in the lives of these people, and because it seems to be a product of this section. So far as I have been able to learn, this type of vehicle is known nowhere except in Chowan and the three or four adjoining counties, and I am not aware of a description of it anywhere else in print.<sup>3</sup> It seems to have originated in Gates, the county just north of Chowan.

*Rail-carts.*—The rail-cart body was simply two long shafts held together by cross-bars, into the ends of which were placed "rounds" (wooden pegs eighteen to twenty inches long) to hold in the rails, lumber, or other material. The rail-cart was comparatively little used except at certain seasons of the year, so had no set of wheels of its own. When it was needed, the carts were "shifted"—one of the regular cart bodies taken off the wheels and the rail-cart body set on in its stead.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Harper's Magazine*, vol. xiv, p. 443 (March 1857). The writer says further, "The buggy, so called, probably in derision, is a cart covered with a white cotton awning."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 135-8.

<sup>3</sup> There are some pen sketches of the covered cart on p. 447, vol. xiv. of *Harper's Magazine*, but no verbal description.

*Plows.*—The turn-plow was used for plowing all crops, except the first and second plowing of cotton. The cotton plow was used for cotton only.

*Hoes.*—The weed hoe generally used was the sort known as the "ellwell." This was a hoe which, instead of having a small shank or neck fitted into a helve, had an eye two inches or more in diameter, into which the helve was fitted. This big eye, reinforced, covered a quarter or more of the back of the hoe, making it about twice as heavy as an ordinary shank, or goose-neck, hoe, and causing to collect on it a great mass of dirt, which still more increased the weight. This feature was especially aggravating if the dirt was a bit sticky. The grubbing hoe was used for hoeing new ground and for hoeing up dirt that was to be hauled into the field.

*Pulverizers.*—The only varieties of pulverizers used were the clumsy harrows and rakes. The frame of the harrow was made of wood, and frequently also the teeth. If the ground was at all rough, it choked up very badly, and in general was very inefficient. The rake, a hand affair, often of wood, was used for raking up straw, and for raking up roots in clearing new ground.

*Gearing.*—A cart gear consisted of a pair of hames, a collar, a bridle, a saddle, a back band, a pair of lines, and a pair of tugs, the latter being usually of leather in 1880, tho now iron chains are used almost exclusively.

The plow gear was simply a cart gear minus the saddle, back band, and tugs, plus a special back band, a singletree, and traces, which in the eighties were frequently of leather. At present, few, if any, use anything other than chains.

## WORK ANIMALS

*Oxen.*—In 1880, 14.3 per cent of the “work animals” (all mature oxen, horses, and mules) of the county were oxen. In calculating the number of “standard work animals” the mature horse and the mature mule are both considered “standard work animals” and two oxen are reckoned as equivalent to one of them.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, however, for many purposes this is far too high a rating. For instance, in plowing, two oxen will do about as much in a day as will one horse. Now, if a person could work twice as many oxen as horses, two oxen would be worth as much for work as would one horse. But it so happens that one man can plow just as many horses as oxen, which means that in plowing oxen one has to feed and pay two hands (if working hired labor, and if one’s own force, it amounts to the same) to get the plowing of one horse done. Thus, for plowing, the value of the ox dwindles to rather small proportions. When it comes to hauling and traveling beyond very short distances, his value is again quite small, tho for short hauls he is good, and especially so if the ground is either very rough or very muddy. The chief advantages in working him are the following: first, he can be fed much stuff which many horses will not eat; second, when not at work he can be let loose and allowed to forage for his own living; and third, when incapacitated for work he can be turned into beef.

*Horses and Mules.*—What mules and horses there were, were mostly light-weights of medium quality, and frequently in too thin order to do their best possible work. But even if they had all been first-class animals, and if two oxen were equal to one good horse, there would still

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table II and foot-note to same, p. 274.

have been far too few for the proper tilth of the acreage under cultivation. In 1880 there was one "standard work animal" to every 34 acres of improved land.<sup>1</sup>

#### SOIL PREPARATION

*Plowing.*—Seldom, if ever, was the ground properly prepared for planting. In the first place it was scratched from three to five inches deep, rather than plowed. The vast majority of all plowing was done with single animals, most of which, as noted in the previous paragraph, were small, and many of a rather poor quality. In some sections a person seen plowing a two-horse team would have created no small excitement, and one caught plowing his land twelve or fifteen inches deep would have been considered by many a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. When first cleared, the soil, except that in the swamps and bottoms, ranged from six to thirty inches deep, with comparatively little of it more than ten inches.<sup>2</sup> The manner of cultivation, instead of increasing the depth, served only to decrease it. It was thought to be almost a crime to turn up any clay, or yellow dirt; subsoiling was little known, and practically nothing was done to prevent the continual washing away and leaching out of the soil. Consequently, after a few years' cultivation, much soil became so thin and its productivity so low, that it would be allowed to grow up again into forest.

*Pulverizing.*—Disc harrows and other modern soil pulverizers had not yet put in their appearance. Even the inefficient ones above described were little used, since the value of making the soil fine and loose was not appreciated. It was no rare thing to see the hard, close variety of lands covered with clods ranging as high as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table II and foot-notes to same, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Field Operations, Bureau of Soils, op. cit., p. 229 et seq.*

ten inches or more across. The harrows of that time had little effect on such land, even when used on it, and so it was frequently necessary to take hoes and beat a few clods to pieces in order to get enough loose dirt to cover the seed.

#### MANURING

*Commercial Fertilizers.*—As for manure, comparatively little was used. In 1880 the average expenditure for commercial fertilizers per acre of improved land in the county was approximately fourteen cents<sup>1</sup>—for all farms, an average of \$7.04 each.

*Barnyard Manure.*—Counting horses, mules, and work oxen, there was, on an average, one work animal to every 31.6 acres of improved land.<sup>2</sup> These constituted the principal stock from which any manure was made. What few cattle there were, other than work oxen, mostly ran loose in the woods, and frequently for months at a time were never seen by their owners. Those that did happen to come up were rarely penned, but instead, lay out in the road in front of the gate, befouling the approach to one's home, and in general, making of themselves a nuisance, when they might have been making some much-needed manure. Many of the farmers made no manure at all, except that from their one or two work animals, and possibly a load or two in the hen house. The more industrious, however, made a bit wherever they could. For instance, where hogs were penned for a few weeks before killing, they would be penned<sup>3</sup> upon forty or fifty loads of dirt hauled in from the woods. Some made another forty or fifty loads of pretty fair manure at the back door of the kitchen where the dish-water and other

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from tables 6 and 12, pp. 269, 275.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 11, p. 274.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 74.

sewage was dumped.<sup>1</sup> A few made "lots" (enclosures) for their cattle, hauled in dirt, and secured twenty or thirty loads of manure in this way.

*Woods Mold, Swamp-Mud, Fence-lock Dirt and Ashes.*—During the interval between the time when crops were laid by in the summer and the time they were housed in the fall, some went into the woods and dug up and hauled out dirt. Part of this was dumped in single loads on the ground that was "lying out" (not being cultivated that year), and later spread either broadcast or down between the old rows, and part was hauled up into banks to stay till the spring, when the stables (these were cleaned out only in spring) were cleaned out and their contents composted with this dirt. A few went into the swamps, which became fairly dry in the late summer and early fall, and hauled out great banks of swamp mud. Others raked out their fence-locks and hauled this into the fields. Occasionally in winter some would go into the woods, cut down the undergrowth, and burn it for ashes, which were valuable as a fertilizer chiefly because of the potash they contained. The commercial value of what ashes one man could thus produce in a day would probably not exceed twenty-five cents.

<sup>2</sup> *Burnt Dirt, Fish-offal, and Marle.*—About this time there came in the custom of burning or smoking dirt. The method of doing this was to make a pile of two or three turns of wood, or old rails, fire it, and when it got to burning well, smother it with leaves or pine straw, and then throw on a load or two of dirt. After it was all thoroughly covered up, two or three holes were poked thru it to give it just enough air to keep the fire going till the wood was all consumed. These heaps

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 216.

would sometimes burn for a week or ten days. The aim was to keep them burning, or smoking, as long as possible, for the longer they burned the better the dirt was thought to be. It was the passing of the smoke thru the dirt, rather than any burning it received, that was supposed to enrich it. Whether or not this burning or smoking which the dirt received was of any value, I have never learned. By many, smoked dirt was highly praised; nevertheless, the effort to make manure by this process has been practically discontinued for years. Along the Chowan River and Albemarle Sound was a strip of territory from two to five miles wide in which was used most of the offal from the fisheries. This fish-offal is splendid manure. A few farmers also hauled out some marle.

*Crop Rotation.*—Except a few peas (locally known as “corn-field peas”), which were planted<sup>1</sup> in the corn at the time of hilling<sup>2</sup> it, the planting of leguminous or special nitrogen-producing crops for the purpose of enriching the soil was rarely practiced. Even the peas sowed in the corn were more for hog-feed than for fertilization. Not only did few, if any at all, practice any sort of a systematic crop rotation<sup>3</sup> designed to increase, or even to maintain, the soil fertility, but it was a common thing for one crop to be planted on the same piece of ground fifteen or twenty years in succession. The idea that more could not be taken off the land than was put on it without leaving it to just that extent depleted, seems never to have dawned upon them. Many farmers

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes they were planted in hills between the hills of corn, but the more usual method was to sow them broadcast.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, foot-note p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> There was crop rotation, to be sure, but usually the object was to more thoroughly “skin” the land, rather than to increase its productivity.

let a portion of their fields lie out each year to "rest." They seemed to think that land got tired much like human beings, and similarly, needed a vacation. The land lying out grew a coat of vegetation, which if plowed in (it was often burned) added to the soil some much-needed humus. This was the prime good of the "resting." Most land, after a few years' cultivation without manuring, ceased to bring enough to pay for the labor expended in working it. Much was tilled long after this point had been reached. Often land was tended that did not yield an annual average of three bushels of corn to the acre. The remark often heard, "That man won't get seed corn," not infrequently proved to be true prophecy.

#### CROP PLANTING

All seed, except cotton, were planted by hand, and even cotton seed, by some farmers were still being rolled in wet dirt and sowed in the primitive way. This was quite generally the case when only a small piece of cotton was planted.

All crops were planted on high beds. In the case of sweet potatoes, the bed could not be plowed up high enough to suit some people, so they actually raked it into a ridge from one end of the row to the other with a hoe. Having the crop on a high ridge both increased the difficulty of tillage and hastened the drying out of the ground, thus lessening the crop yield. It also radically influenced the method of cultivation, being one of the causes of the slow introduction of such modern farm tools as the various types of weeders and cultivators, since these, in order to be very effective, must have crops planted comparatively level.

*Planting Corn.*—In order that the tediousness of the

process of planting may be to some extent realized, let us look at the details of planting corn, which will serve as a fair illustration. After the bed was ready, a man with a horse and either a "streaker" or a plow, "streaked it out" (ran a light drill on the top of the bed), another person followed with a gauge<sup>1</sup> and dropped the corn, while a third person followed him with a hoe, and covered it. If the ground was at all rough it took four men to follow one horse and plow—one to streak, and three to drop and cover. If it was in good condition so that the grain could be covered with one's foot, and if the distance was guessed at instead of being marked off with a gauge, five men, and occasionally four, could keep two horses going.

#### CROP CULTIVATION

*Crude Methods.*—With only the few simple tools previously described,<sup>2</sup> cultivation was of necessity very crude and laborious. But after making all due allowance for poor tools, the methods followed were far more inefficient than they might have been. To begin with, the ground was commonly broken up only from three to six inches deep on a level. This usually started in March, but many did not finish till late in May. Of course, there was some planting done in the meantime, much of the ground being planted very soon after breaking. Most ground was plowed but once before being planted. The harrow was little used by any, and by many not at all, consequently the ground, especially stiff-land soil

<sup>1</sup> A corn gauge was a forked stick with the prongs held at the distance desired by a cross piece. It was turned with one hand, while the corn was dropped with the other. Gauges were always used by children since they were not able to accurately judge distances; they were used by some grown-ups.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 46-50.

(Portsmouth series type), was nearly always rough and cloddy.

Tillage was done according to custom rather than according to either science or common sense. There was a definite way in which each crop should be tended, and a definite number of times it should be gone over with the hoe and plow. The customary routine was followed almost religiously, regardless of seasons or peculiar conditions. For instance, sweet potatoes were worked twice with hoe and plow; corn and cotton, three times. The one all-dominating, immediate purpose of the farmer was to kill grass. The idea of stirring the soil to stimulate the growth of crops, or to prevent the coming of grass, seems not to have occurred to him. His policy of never touching stuff until after it had come up and grown to a fair size, the fewness of the times he worked it, his crude, antiquated methods of tillage, and the fact that in summer grass grows very rapidly, meant that his crops were generally "right" grassy before each working. This was especially true in wet weather. Even if the season was dry and he had worked his crop clean of grass, he seldom started back over it until the grass had again largely taken possession. Why should he work when the thing—grass—he was working to kill was not there? At least this seemed to be his attitude.

In order to see the progress that has been made since the beginning of the period under discussion, and as a record for future reference, it may be well to outline the methods of cultivating the principal crops.

*Manner of Working the Chief Crops.*—Cotton was "barred off"<sup>1</sup> on one side, chopped out, then "dirted"

<sup>1</sup> "Barring off" was throwing the dirt from, rather than to, the growing plant, with a turn plow. This process put some dirt down between the rows, ready to be worked back to the plants at the next cultivation. It also covered up the grass in the middle, and so killed it.

(a little dirt thrown up around the plants) on one side with a cotton plow in small casting. In a few days, sometimes the same day, the other side was barred off and dirted. Since the cotton was never worked until it was large enough to be "blocked out,"<sup>1</sup> at its first working it was frequently full of grass, the getting out of which nearly uprooted the plants. When in this condition, the process of cutting it out was far more slow and tedious than it would have been had the grass been kept down. Since no effort was made to cut it to a stand, the next task was to thin it out—a back-breaking job which usually fell to the lot of the small children. In two or three weeks it was "grassed" (all grass either pulled up with the fingers, or cut out with the weed hoe), the middles split out (the ridges, which were made between the rows when dirting, plowed up) with a cotton plow in big casting, and the cotton again dirted. The next and final plowing was four furrows to the row with the turn-plow. The plow was immediately followed by hoe hands who were supposed to cut out or cover up any grass left uncovered, and pull the dirt up around the plant where the plow had failed to lap it. Many made hills around the plants even where the dirt was lapped. This last working was known as "hilling," or "laying by."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The seed were drilled, from eight to twenty times as many being put as there were plants wanted. This seeming wastefulness was simply a precaution to secure a stand. When the cotton got about six inches high it was gone over with a hoe and cut into hills the desired distance apart. This process was known by several terms, such as "chopping," "cutting out," and "blocking out."

<sup>2</sup> Both these terms are descriptive, one expressing the method of working, the other the fact that it was the final working. In the final working of all crops the dirt was literally hilled up around the stalk, many even raking up from the middle of the row most of the soil that happened to be left by the plow.

Corn was barred off, leaving a balk of some twelve inches wide (it was left wide for fear of injuring the plant), which had to be "wed"<sup>1</sup> off. In two or three weeks it was grassed and two furrows thrown to it with the turn-plow. This was known as "half-hilling." From two to four weeks later it got the four hilling furrows with the turn-plow, and a working with the hoe. Corn had even a larger hill made around the stalk with the hoes than did cotton.

After the sweet potato ridge became covered with grass from one to three inches long (sometimes it was as long as a man's hand), it was wed off from top to bottom on both sides. This ridge was so large that there was a space from ten to fifteen inches wide on each side that had to be cut with the hoe. After weeding they were barred off, if this had not been done before the weeding. In a few weeks the vines were turned out of every other middle, and the middles plowed four furrows to the row. The vines were next turned out of the unplowed middles, and these run out. The hoe followed, completing the piling up of dirt around the sprout, in other words, completing the hilling process.

*Hilling.*—In hilling all crops the ground usually was plowed deeper than when it was broken in the spring. As a rule the plow was put down to the hard-pan, a bit of which frequently was turned up. When only every other middle was hilled out at first, and the remaining ones a few days later, crops did not appear to suffer much, if the ground was in proper order and rain followed soon. But many plowed out every middle as they went, and did it when the ground was very wet—fre-

<sup>1</sup> To "weed" was to shave off the grass and weeds very lightly with a weed hoe. "Wed" rather than "weeded" was used as the past tense.

quently turning up in long, slick rolls from one end of the row to the other. In case this working was followed by several days of hot sunshine and no rain, the stuff nearly died. This was especially the case with corn. It would "fire up" (the leaves turn permanently yellow, and many of the lower ones dry up completely) and never reach its former possibilities.

#### SUMMARY

If the object had been to exhaust the land as quickly as possible, the method of cultivation followed by many could have been little improved upon. As previously stated, when the land was cleared much of the vegetable matter was raked up and burned instead of being allowed to lie and rot for two or three years and open up and enrich the soil. In the second place, land was scratched rather than plowed, hence was far more subject to washing than if it had been broken deep, and also suffered far more severely from both wet weather and dry. Third, much of the land was poorly drained and frequently became so water-sobbed that it produced hardly anything at all. Fourth, the principal crops—corn and cotton—were crops that were cultivated so late in the season that there was time for but little vegetation, which might act as a winter cover-crop, to spring up after their final working. Fifth, the legumes, except peas, were almost never planted, and the peas were largely for hog-feed rather than for the improvement of the soil. Sixth, in the spring of the year the corn stalks were cut down and burned, and the fields that had vegetation heavy enough to burn, were generally fired over in order to get the grass and weeds out of the way for plowing. Seventh, comparatively little commercial fertilizer or manure of any kind was used, and it was no uncommon occurrence

for land to be cultivated year after year without any manure whatsoever. The result of such methods was that much land which produced well when first cleared, at the expiration of four or five years fell to half, and even less, of its original productivity. This fact in turn caused a continual abandoning of land to grow up again into forest.

Not only did the method of cultivation exhaust the soil, but it was of the kind that gave small return for the labor spent. Breaking the land shallow caused crops to be far easier damaged by both wet and dry weather than if it had been broken deep; plowing the growing crops comparatively deep, especially when hilling, plowing when it was too wet, waiting for grass before working—all greatly lessened the crop yield. Not a year passed but that much stuff was seriously injured by every one of these causes. Grass hurt in two ways: first, it fed on the food that would otherwise have nourished the cultivated crop; second, when the crop got "right" grassy before being worked, it was so nearly uprooted in getting out the grass, that it never became what it would have been, had it been worked in time. There was enough work done, but it was not rightly directed. For instance, in the case of corn (the other crops were tilled in a similarly wasteful and inefficient manner) the total work after planting was eight times to the row with a man and horse, and three times with a man and hoe—the expenditure of enough energy, if properly applied with the right sort of tools and machinery, to have kept in a better state of cultivation three times the acreage that was cultivated by the method in vogue.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHIEF FARM PRODUCTS IN THE EIGHTIES

#### QUANTITY AND DISPOSITION OF CROPS

THE principal crops <sup>1</sup> in order of their acreage, were corn, cotton, oats, sweet potatoes, wheat, peas, and Irish potatoes. The farmers were each producing largely for the consumption of their immediate families. While a small portion of all the various crops raised in the county was sold, probably more than ninety-eight per cent of the total production, with the exception of cotton, was consumed within less than thirty miles of the site of its origin, the greater part being consumed on the farm which produced it.

Cotton—the one crop planted especially for market—occupied, according to calculations based upon the 1880 census, slightly more than one-fourth of the entire acreage in actual cultivation. The average production of lint cotton per farm (including all farms) in 1879 was about 1400 pounds, or something less than three bales. Per capita of the entire population of the county, the lint cotton production was about 130 pounds.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is seen that the crop which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 8, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> The figures given here are calculations based on data found in tables 5, 6, and 8, pp. 261, 265, 271, respectively.

The bale has not always been the same. In the *Tenth Census* 453 lbs. of lint, and in the *11th census* 477 lbs. of lint, respectively, were recorded as a bale. For many years, however, the bale has been standardized at 500 lbs., and wherever referred to in this treatise, unless otherwise indicated, it is this standard bale that is meant. The actual bale varies within certain limits. More than 99 per cent of the bales, however, will be included within the limits, 450 lbs. and 600 lbs. At many gins it is

was depended upon to furnish most of the ready cash, was comparatively small, and that if each person had received the proceeds<sup>1</sup> of his proportional share, it would have been only a small sum. But many raised only a little cotton and others none at all. Probably more than three-fourths of the entire crop was produced on fewer than one-third of the farms, the majority of the farmers having only a "cotton patch." There were not a few who produced less than a bale, and so sold their crop in the seed to the local merchants.

A small number of farmers raised more than enough corn to serve them, but this went to their neighbors who had failed to raise what they needed. The county as a whole did not supply itself. The wheat produced was not sufficient to make the county's flour, notwithstanding the fact that there was comparatively little used.<sup>2</sup> The oats produced by each farmer were largely fed to his own stock.

Some land was given over entirely to peas, but the major portion was raised in the corn, being either planted in hills, between the hills of corn, or else sowed broadcast at the last plowing of the corn. The census for 1880 does not give the acreage devoted to this crop. If it were any other

customary to charge a flat rate (say \$2.50 or \$3) for ginning and baling, regardless of the size of the bale. At other gins the charge is so much for baling, and so much per hundred pounds of lint for ginning. Where the former practice obtains, obviously it is to the farmer's interest to make the bales large, and a good size bale is preferred in any case. Hence in the early part of the season when the cotton is heavy and packs well, the bales are large, ranging from 550 lbs. to 600 lbs. The largest ginner in the county told me that when he was charging a flat rate, he put up one bale weighing over 900 lbs. Three pounds of seed cotton is reckoned to one of lint. Good cotton, however, makes more than one to three: not infrequently 1400 lbs. of seed cotton will make a 500 lb. bale of lint.

<sup>1</sup> In 1880 "upland middling" was selling for about 12 cents a pound.

<sup>2</sup> Many families had flour only once or twice a week, and not a few went for weeks at a time with none whatever.

crop, knowing the usual production per acre and presuming the number of bushels given <sup>1</sup> to be correct (it most likely is too large), a close approximation could be made. Owing to the conditions of their cultivation, however, this cannot be done. In calculating the acreage for all crops, 200 acres have been allowed for peas. A few found their way to outside markets, but they were mostly consumed at home, hogs and people both coming in for a share.

Sweet potatoes, like peas, were produced both for the hogs and for the table. Irish potatoes were more of a garden vegetable than a field crop. Most families planted just enough to have a few to eat during the growing season. Comparatively few were eaten after they matured.

As for hay, it was not made. Less than seventy-five tons were mowed in 1879,<sup>2</sup> and this little was mowed with an ordinary scythe or hand grass-blade. So far as I have been able to ascertain, in 1880 there was not a mowing machine in the county. For forage the farmers "pulled fodder" (stripped the corn leaves from the stalk). This is a hot, nasty job, besides being a slow, wasteful, un-economic method of getting forage. To save three hundred pounds a day in fair weather is good average work per man. During the fodder-pulling season (the most of it is stripped in August), the weather is frequently rainy. As a consequence, probably from a third to a half of the fodder is more or less damaged (some of it to such an extent that it is worth scarcely anything) before it is taken in. Much of it is taken up before it is well cured, in order to escape probable rains. The following day this must be thrown out, sunned, and put up again that night. In many cases this process has to be gone through with for two or three days, especially if the fodder is rather green and there

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 8, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

is little sunshine. Again, at this time of year thunder storms frequently come up very quickly in the afternoon. If one has fodder down, at the first indication of a rising storm he musters all hands into the field, where they work as if fighting fire till the fodder is gotten up or the threatened storm has either blown over or driven them to cover.

#### FRUIT

Most farm owners had at least one or two grape-vines and a few fruit trees. These latter were principally apple, but there were some peach and pear. The grape was usually the scuppernong, a variety claimed to be indigenous to the eastern section of the state. Both as to flavor and juiciness this grape is probably unsurpassed, but its shipping qualities are poor. The fruit trees were mostly hardy seedlings. While the varieties were few, there were some very good ones, which for home use have been little improved upon. Of apples, there were the "piney woods seedling," the "horse apple," the "matamuskeet," and the "green Jonathan;" of peaches, the "red June" and the "yellow press."<sup>1</sup> These were all favorites. Neither the grape-vines nor the fruit trees received much attention after once being set out, and yet they seemed to thrive well. Not a few that had been in bearing for more than a generation were still good producers in 1880.

While many a farmer had not over ten or twelve trees, and from ten to twenty square yards of grape-vines, there were some who had from fifty to a hundred trees, and some who had from one- to two-thousand square yards of vines. No fruit was shipped away. A few peaches, pears, apples, and grapes were hauled to the near-by towns, and a considerable quantity of grapes was hauled to Norfolk. There

<sup>1</sup> Local names.

was some wine made from the grapes and some brandy from the apples. Both of these beverages were largely consumed in the immediate localities of their production.

#### LIVE STOCK AND LIVE-STOCK PRODUCTS

*Free Range.*—In 1880 only about one-third of the land area of Chowan was under fence, or “improved.”<sup>1</sup> The other two-thirds was free range, that is, anybody’s stock was at liberty to graze on all unfenced land without let or hindrance. Whether the owner of stock owned thousands of acres of unfenced land, or owned none at all, made no difference in the privileges accorded his stock. Much of the free range was most excellent for cattle, sheep, and hogs, and yet there was comparatively little stock raised.<sup>2</sup> Except a few hogs and some barnyard poultry, many farmers bred no stock at all.

*Mules and Horses.*—The *Tenth Census* does not report the immature mules and horses separately from the mature. Judging, however, from the figures of the following censuses,<sup>3</sup> and from my own knowledge of general conditions, I think it a liberal estimate to place the annual average number of colts foaled as one to every thirty or forty farms. The probable cause of the lack of horse breeding was the lack of pastures, not more than one farm in twenty having either a permanent or temporary pasture of any sort. Generally speaking, where colts and their mothers have to be fed from the barn entirely there is little or no profit in breeding horses. But why the lack of pastures? Since the possibilities were by no means poor, the only answer I can suggest is the lack of knowledge of the possibilities for pastures and of the means of developing them, coupled with a failure to realize their value.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 6, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 7, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

*Sheep*.—Like the horses, the sheep bred were a negligible quantity. The one great drawback to sheep-raising—that which kept it from being a highly profitable industry to the county—was the presence of so many good-for-nothing dogs. In 1878 the county had 684 sheep, and 768 dogs. During the year these dogs destroyed 85 head of sheep, while only 17 head were lost from sickness.<sup>1</sup>

*Beef Cattle*. For every head of cattle reported in the *Tenth Census* (1880), there were more than three head of people, and this in a county two-thirds of which was free range and much of which of such quality that cattle (excepting the few that were milked) did not even need to be wintered. In no case were they fed any at all (unless milked) more than four months of the year, and then usually only a very small amount of cheap forage, such as corn shucks and wheat and oat straw. The *Tenth Census* makes no mention of either the number or value of cattle annually sold or slaughtered, but in the census following, the number given as sold "living and slaughtered" is 135, and "slaughtered for home consumption," 45.<sup>2</sup> Both the general conditions and the total number of cattle reported in 1880 being practically the same as in 1890, it is highly probable that the number of cattle sold and slaughtered was about the same. Of those sold for beef, some were driven to Norfolk (sixty or more miles distant, depending upon the point in the county from which they started), some sold in Edenton, and some butchered on the farm and peddled out among the neighbors.

*Milk Cows*.—Nearly all the cattle of the country were the "piney woods," or scrub stock. Not until the census of 1890 was there any effort made to ascertain the quality of the stock. At this time the census enumerator was able to

<sup>1</sup> *North Carolina Hand-book*, pp. 212-18, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 9, p. 272.

find but ten thoroughbreds, and but fifty five others that were as much as one-half pure blood.<sup>1</sup> It is well known that the scrub stock is a poor producer, both of beef and of dairy products, especially the latter.

Not only was the quality of the milk cows poor, but the number was small. In the *Tenth* and the *Eleventh Censuses* there are only three divisions of cattle: "working oxen," "milch cows" and "other cattle."<sup>2</sup> In view of this fact it is quite likely that many cows used for breeding purposes only, were reported as "milch cows," and that the figures for the latter are therefore too large. But, even taking the figures as given for 1880, there were only 10 milk cows in the county to every 107 people. The production of milk and butter not being one of the strong points of this native stock, even when accorded the best of treatment, under the treatment actually received little could be expected; and in this there were no favorable surprises.

It was customary to shut the calves up in small enclosure or else allow them to run loose in the fields, while the cows were forced to run in the woods and rustle their own feed. The calves were never taken from their mothers and raised by hand, but instead were turned to them once every day. In fact the time allowed the cows with their young was the one inducement to them to come home and be milked. The calf was allowed to suck for a very short time just before the cow was milked, and then after she was milked it was allowed to suck her dry. Sometimes one or two teats would be left unmilked for the calf, especially when it was young, or in an enclosure where it found very little to eat. During the first month or six weeks the calf was allowed to stay over night with its mother, but after then its mother was usually milked mornings, and it was

<sup>1</sup> Page 300, volumes on Agriculture, *Eleventh Census*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 7, p. 270.

allowed with her from a few minutes to an hour or two only, immediately after the milking. As a usual thing, the cows were milked only once a day.

If the cows were fed any at all, it was frequently just enough to make them stand while being milked—sometimes a few nubbins, or green “shoots.”<sup>1</sup> For the first eight or ten weeks they came up mornings regularly and early. But as their calves grew older, and the time allowed with them was cut shorter, mother-love gradually gave way to other considerations, and the home-comings were no longer either regular or early. They would begin by remaining away till the middle of the morning, then till noon. Being milked late one day, probably the next day they would not come at all. This irregularity made bad milk, and so very soon they would be allowed to dry up. Less than ten per cent of the cows were milked during the winter months. When allowed to dry up in the early fall, as was the common custom, if fed at all, the feeding did not start till December or January, and stopped about the middle of April when the grass and trees began to put out. The feeding being only barely sufficient to tide them over the winter, the spring found them thin and weak.

Most of the calves were dropped during March and April. May and June were the best months for milk and butter, for it was then that the free pasturage of the woods was at its best. Probably three-fourths, or even more, of the total annual dairy production took place during these months. By the spring, feed in the barn was getting low, so the cows that calved early were fed but little, and the calves allowed most of the milk. Thus the dairy product before May was small. By August, the flow of milk was slackening considerably, and by September many cows were no longer milked.

<sup>1</sup> Forms of ears of corn bearing no grain.

*Dairy Products.*—Under the conditions outlined, the dairy product was necessarily small. The *Tenth Census* makes no report on the milk production, but according to the butter report, the county produced less than 13 ounces of butter for each inhabitant during 1879. The first milk report was that of the *Eleventh Census*, for 1889. The dairy product in that year was under 23 quarts of milk and 11 ounces of butter for each person in the county. The milk production per cow was less than 85 gallons for the entire year. Reckoning 120 days as the average milking period for each cow, the daily output per cow was well under 3 quarts for 4 months of the year, and nothing during the other eight.<sup>1</sup> Many a cow was milked that gave less than 2 quarts a day.

The milk and butter produced was largely consumed by the immediate producers. The few cattle sold<sup>2</sup> brought their owners, on an average, not over fifteen or eighteen dollars a head. Thus it is seen that cattle made only a very small return to the county, either financially or otherwise.

*Hogs.*—Of the domestic animals on farms, hogs were not only by far the most numerous but also the most general. Probably ninety per cent of all farmers (both owners and tenants) raised at least a few. The county more than raised its meat,<sup>3</sup> though many people consumed but little. The more substantial farmers, especially farm owners, usually butchered from eight hundred to two thousand pounds, and a few as high as from five- to ten-thousand pounds.

<sup>1</sup> These calculations are based upon the census data found in tables 7 and 9, pp. 270, 270. As noted above, it is quite likely that some mere breeders were classed as "milch cows." This, however, is probably more than made up for by those milked more than four months in the year.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> In this treatise the word "meat," unless otherwise indicated, refers to hog meat, as is the local custom.

Except on special occasions, such as all-day religious meetings, when some of the families participating would kill a "pig" that had been put up and fattened for the particular affair, practically all pork was killed during the winter months. More than ninety per cent of it went on the rack between the middle of December and the last of January. Some farmers would occasionally keep a few hogs, if they were fattening well, over into February. There were two very salient reasons for killing at the time specified. In the first place, the hogs by this time had eaten up what was intended for them. In the second place, it is hard to save meat, especially large joints, unless the weather is fairly cool. The winters in Chowan being relatively short, only a limited amount of weather suitable for butchering was expected, hence everybody prepared to butcher when this weather came.

Whether destined for market or for home consumption, the hogs were always slaughtered right on the farm. Sometimes one had a few he wanted to kill either earlier or later than he did his others, and so would have two hog-killings during the season, but the majority did all their killing in one day. Help was furnished by one's' neighbors without remuneration, except what they ate and drank and the few haslets they carried home with them. (It was customary for each of those who helped to take a haslet or two home with him if he cared to.) On the day following the killing, the meat was cut out and salted down (except that which was sold right off the rack), the "lard dried up,"<sup>1</sup> and the sausage meat chopped up.<sup>2</sup> This work required about one-

<sup>1</sup> The rendering of the trimmings of fat from the entrails, and from the meat in cutting it out, was known as "drying up the lard."

<sup>2</sup> Possibly there were a few sausage mills in the county then, but if so they were not in general use, hence most, if not all, of the sausage meat was chopped up with a knife.

third as much help as did the killing. In certain sections those who helped in this work would be given some spare ribs, or backbone, to take home with them. As a matter of course, in asking and receiving aid, one always entailed upon himself the obligation to give aid in return when called upon.<sup>1</sup>

Hog cholera was the one great drawback to the raising of pork. This dread disease claimed numerous victims almost every year. It was not an uncommon thing for cholera to break out in a neighborhood and destroy from 50 to 75 per cent of all hogs, and in some droves make a clean sweep. The *Eleventh Census* is the first and only one thus far to make any report by counties of the hog mortality. According to it there occurred among the hogs in the county in 1889, 2,100 deaths, a number more than 37 per cent as great as the number consumed.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not the death rate for that year was greater than the average, one is unable to say definitely. The fact, however, that, of the last four, this is the only census which reports the number of hogs as smaller than the number of people at the time of the enumeration, may indicate that for 1889 the hog mortality was above normal. At any rate, it is a well-known fact that the annual average mortality was relatively high, and was due almost entirely to the one disease—cholera. As a conservative estimate, I should say that one year with another twenty per cent as many died as were slaughtered; in other words, one died for every five killed. The loss of one out of every six, or whatever the proportionate loss was, if it could have been established as a definite tax, would not have been so calamitous. But much feed was raised for the express purpose of fattening hogs; consequently, when one lost all, or a large proportion of them, a good

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 181 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Calculations made from table 9, p. 272.

part of his feed was also lost. Thus there was a double loss, aside from the demoralizing effect upon the industry caused by the great uncertainty constantly prevailing.

If cholera could have been stamped out, dressed pork could probably have been produced at a profit for something like three cents a pound. For ten months of the year hogs secured much of their living right in the woods. Besides such feed as roots, grasses, bugs, and worms,—found in all parts of the county—in certain parts in certain years there were great quantities of chinkapins, acorns, huckleberries, and beech- and pine-mast. Thus it was that in some years in some sections hogs would be in “good order” (fair condition) when given the run of the fields, notwithstanding that since being weaned they had had little or nothing except what they themselves had foraged. Many people fed their hogs, except their brood sows and small pigs, scarcely at all until they were turned into the fields. In the fall, after crops were housed, all hogs to be fattened that season were put into the fields to pick them, that is, to eat the peas, potatoes, and whatever else they could find. Some killed their pork right out of the field, but the majority “put up” (penned) their hogs after they had cleaned the fields, and corned them for a time, the length of time depending, within certain limits, largely upon whether or not it was thought they were making sufficient gains to leave a fair margin after deducting the value of the corn fed to them.

Not only did hogs entail comparatively small expense in feeding, but they also demanded very little attention. The sows pigged in the woods, making their own choice of location for the purpose. In fact, they seemed to do better when at large than when enclosed. If the weather was cold they began making a tremendous bed of bushes, leaves, and straw two or three days previous to the prospective litter.

Under existing conditions the breeds were necessarily

those that could largely shift for themselves. This, however, is far from saying that only poor breeds could do this. Now and then some good blood would be brought in, but since everybody's hogs ran in the woods together, no one could do a great deal toward breeding up his own stock, beyond the selection of his brood sows. Thus it was largely a case of the stock of all improving together. This would have been all right had not the ignorance, selfishness, and short-sightedness of some prevented them from coöperating in the general betterment. For instance, many would let their scrub males run till they were a year or more old before castration. By and large, the hogs bred tended towards the long-nosed, heavy-shouldered, big-bellied, small-hammed type—the type which produces the least amount of the most desirable meat. Being scantily fed, their growth was slow. Many at twelve months old would not have dressed 50 pounds. As a rule they did not seem to fatten well till they were a year or two old, hence those butchered would have probably averaged a year and a half. Even at this age they rarely ever dressed as much as 200 pounds. One that dressed 250 pounds was a "big hog."

*Poultry.*—The raising of poultry was well-nigh universal among farm owners and the better-class tenants. The number kept by any one family, however, was seldom large, it being very rare to find as many as a hundred chickens attached to any one household, and chickens constituted some eighty per cent or more of all poultry raised in the county.<sup>1</sup> Numerous families had fewer than a dozen head of grown poultry. For the rural population as a whole, there were on June 1, 1880, only 196 head of poultry (exclusive of spring hatching) of all kinds for every 100 people.<sup>2</sup> From thirty to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 7, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations based on *U. S. Census* data found in table 4, p. 264, and table 7, p. 270.

forty hens was the usual maximum per family. It had been found out from experience that this number produced about as many eggs (sometimes even more) as a larger number did. The reason for this seeming anomaly is not far to seek. When fed at all, the chickens were always given corn, hence had to forage most of their nitrogenous or egg-producing food, and in many cases they had to forage all their food. Such things as bugs, worms and kitchen scraps found about the place, amply supplied a small number, but since they ranged only a comparatively short distance from where they roosted, a large number found these sources of supply quite inadequate to their needs.

While not usually keeping many laying hens, some of the more industrious housewives (this was the one outdoor industry in which the women dominated) raised from fifty to two hundred spring chickens for sale annually. Nearly all who kept chickens sold a few young ones in the spring and summer, if nothing more than the roosters among those hatched for layers. In the fall of the year some of the old hens would be sold off to make room for the pullets just coming in.

Though chickens constituted the major portion of the poultry, there were also some turkeys, ducks and geese. The turkeys were raised almost entirely for market. During the late fall and winter months they were dressed and carted to Norfolk. Except a few to raise from the following year, the entire flock was killed every season. Ducks, seemingly, were bred because some people fancied them, rather than because of the financial return they made. They were poorer layers than hens, their eggs sold for the same at the stores,<sup>1</sup> and when the ducks themselves were put on

<sup>1</sup> At Easter time retailers on the Norfolk market could get from two to four cents per dozen more for duck eggs than for hen eggs, but the producer seldom knew the difference.

the market they brought no more than the hens. Geese served in a double capacity—that of grass-killers, and that of feather-producers—besides selling well when put on the market dressed.

The first-named service of the goose, that of killing grass, was of no mean value to the cotton grower when crab-grass was the principal grass, as it was on many farms. This grass was considered a great delicacy by the goose and a great plague by the farmer. A flock of forty or fifty geese was probably equal to one hoe hand for keeping down grass in cotton after the cotton was once cut to a stand, provided they were put in on time. Geese lay early in the spring, hence could be set and hatched off in time for the goslings to be large enough to do good work soon after the cotton was ready for them to go into it. In the very act of killing the grass by eating it off they thereby obtained most of their livelihood. Since they were near maturity by the time cotton was laid by, their production necessitated but small expense, and this was much more than made up for by the labor they saved. In the fall they were good for a half-dollar apiece, or they could be kept for feathers.

Practically all of the more substantial families slept on feather beds, except during a few months in summer, and some even all the year round. A newly-married couple usually started housekeeping with one or two beds, either given them by their parents or bought by themselves, and as the family grew, raised feathers for other beds. The best feathers, in fact nearly all feathers<sup>1</sup> used, were taken from geese and ducks. Since picking seems to go so hard with ducks, and since they are comparatively small and re-feather comparatively slowly, only a few were ever picked, hence geese were the main source of supply.

<sup>1</sup> Some few people, when they dressed chickens, saved the feathers, but they were always of very poor quality, and were never used except by the poorer classes.

By far the greater portion of all poultry and eggs found its way to some outside market, principally Norfolk. Less than twenty per cent of either was consumed by the producers.<sup>1</sup> Most people had them to eat only at rare intervals. At the big, all-day church meetings,<sup>2</sup> with dinner on the grounds, it was customary to have chicken, also when company was expected for a Sunday dinner, usually a chicken was cooked. As for eggs, once in a great while they were served for Sunday morning breakfast, or when visitors were present. Also, when one was sick he was generally allowed to have what eggs he wanted; this was one of the few pleasant things about being sick. But the times when either eggs or poultry graced the family bill of fare, except on the special occasions mentioned, were few and far between for the vast majority.<sup>3</sup>

During six or seven months of the year there was neither much to sell, nor much to barter for the little necessities and luxuries usually obtained from the country stores. For many, poultry and eggs constituted the principal articles marketed from the last of February till the middle of September, when the fall crops began to come in. They were either picked up by the carters (who, at certain seasons of the year, scoured the country buying anything and everything that was salable on the Norfolk market),<sup>4</sup> or toted off to the stores and traded for such things as kerosene, coffee, sugar, molasses, tobacco, and snuff. And this was done in spite of the fact that the prices received were low. Grown ducks and chickens brought from twenty to thirty cents a head, geese from forty to fifty cents, and turkeys from eighty cents to a dollar. For months at a time—the time

<sup>1</sup> My own estimate, based upon a general knowledge of conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 135 *et seq.*

when hens were doing their biggest laying—eggs sold at the country store for eight and ten cents a dozen, and often went as low as six cents.

*Cash Handled by the Farmers.*—From the facts given in this and the preceding chapter it is seen that the vast majority of farmers handled very little money. In fact many a fairly substantial farmer with a good-sized family, handled less than a hundred and fifty dollars a year. For the simple life they were leading, however, they did not need much money. They were producing most of what they consumed, whether it was little or much, and consuming most of what they produced. If they hired labor, much of it was paid in supplies, so they got along quite well with very little actual cash.

## CHAPTER V

### AGRICULTURE, FRUIT CULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND POULTRY RAISING IN 1915

#### AGRICULTURE

HAVING described somewhat fully the general conditions of agriculture and its allied industries in the eighties, it will suffice to sketch rather briefly the changes which have since occurred in the industry. These changes have been largely along three lines—principles and methods, variety of crops, and production.

*Changes in Methods and Principles.*—In 1880 it could hardly be said that many people of Chowan had any principles of farming other than to imitate their fathers and grandfathers. But we now come to a period in which we find a few people who want to understand the underlying causes of things—the whys and wherefores. For the vast majority, however, it is still enough for them if they know that a certain action is likely to produce a certain result. Of course, the voluntarily blind—those who refuse to see the results obtained by the new methods—are still present.

What are the changes in method? In the first place some farmers are actually breaking up their land, instead of merely scratching the surface.<sup>1</sup> A few break up their land with two-horse teams. Not only is the ground plowed deeper, but many put their seed-beds into much better condition than formerly. Discs and various types of special harrows are now freely used. Nearly every one is doing all

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 52, 61-62.

his planting, except the setting-out of sweet potato sprouts, with special planters. A beginning has been made in scientific crop-rotation, that is, a rotation which returns something to the soil as well as takes something away. Now and then a farmer is found who is actually radical enough to plow in a crop of clover or peas. Some few act as if they had learned that they cannot take more off their land than they put on it, without making it poorer to just that extent. While there may not be much more manure per capita made on the farm than formerly, quite a few have discontinued the practice of burning all the vegetation off their land in the spring of the year, and the great majority are using some commercial fertilizer. According to the 1910 census the expenditure for commercial fertilizer per acre of improved land in 1909 was 13.5 times what it was in 1879, just three decades previous.<sup>1</sup> Most people have also decided that they can spend their time to better advantage than in hauling common dirt from the woods into their fields.

One of the biggest changes is in the actual working of the crops. They are now much more properly worked, and with far less human labor than in the eighties. Harrows, cultivators, weeders, combination plows, and other special machines, some of which work a row or more at a time (while at the same time permitting the operators to ride instead of trudging along behind), have, by many, been largely substituted for the turn-plow and weed hoe. Many farmers have told me that while formerly it required from two to three hoe hands to follow one plow, now one can follow from two to three plows. The up-to-the-minute farmer no longer waits for his crop to become covered with grass before working it, but instead, often begins before it comes up and keeps right on as long as he can get into it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 12, p. 275.

without injuring it. When following this method, there is little hoe work to be done, except in case of a very wet season. In traveling through the county, I have observed that, by and large, the greatest amount of machinery is used and the least amount of hoe work done on the farms of the white farmers who are cultivating their own land and largely with their own, rather than with a hired, force. It seems that neither the negro tenants nor the negro laborers, as a rule, handle the more complex farm machinery to much advantage.

In the housing of crops, the chief advance has been made in the picking of peanuts. This is all done now, and satisfactorily so, by machinery, while until twelve or fifteen years ago it was all done by hand. A good hand-picker working steadily can pick about four bushels a day. A machine picker handled by two men <sup>1</sup> can pick four hundred bushels, or more, a day. Had it not been for the invention of a successful picker the increase in the production of peanuts would have had to stop long before now, because of the inability to get them picked off. Incidentally, the cost of picking has been cut down to from a third to a fourth of what it would otherwise be. There have been some thrashers for cowpeas, but thus far they have not been very successful. The soy-bean thrasher, however, is

<sup>1</sup> As a usual thing five or six men work around a peanut-picker, but the extra men are not engaged in the actual picking. They hand the peanuts up to the picker, place the sacks, take them away when full and sew them up, and take away the vines—all of which work had to be done just the same when the nuts were picked by hand. In fact, for the same amount of nuts, it requires far more extra time when picking by hand than when picking by machine, and for two reasons: in the first place, in picking by hand the work is drawn out over a much longer time, requiring the attention of one or more persons (besides the pickers) at various intervals; second, instead of having one person to deal with, there are several, whose work must be measured up, usually every day, if there are many pickers.

a success, having attained to a fair degree of perfection within the past four or five years. Only a few peas are raised for market, and these are mostly picked and flailed by hand with a hoop-pole. Cotton must still be picked by hand, a fact which greatly curtails its production. The capacity for picking, however, seems to have increased from fifty to one hundred per cent during the past thirty years. This is probably due to two causes: first, an actual increase in capacity for picking; second, a production of better cotton, making it possible for one of former capacity to pick more. Many now pick from two to three hundred pounds a day in the early part of the season, while in the eighties comparatively few picked more than a hundred pounds a day.

Some idea of the degree of change from the antiquated methods of the eighties to the more modern methods of the present may be gained from the fact that in 1880 the average value of farm implements and machinery per acre of improved land was 64.5 cents, while in 1910 it was \$2.75—more than a quadruple increase. What is most significant is that more than 75 per cent of this total increase occurred during the last decade.<sup>1</sup> From my own observations, I am confident that the next census will show the present decade to have made an even greater increase in the value of farm machinery used than did the previous decade. These facts would seem to indicate that the Chowan farmers are only just beginning to wake up.

Other facts which indicate the degree of improvement in cultivation, are the change in the quality of the "standard work animal," and the increase in their number in proportion to the improved land area. In 1880 more than 14 per cent of the work animals on the farm were oxen.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> These calculations are made from table 6, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> For the data and calculations of this and the previous paragraph cf. table 11 and footnotes to same, p. 274.

service of the ox, however, in the capacity of a farm animal is now practically a thing of the past. In 1914, during more than a six months' stay in the county traveling back and forth all over it, I saw but one ox being plowed, and learned of only one other. Possibly there were two or three more, but the few work-oxen now in the county (in 1910 estimated at 20) are used mostly for hauling, either on the farm, or in the log woods.

Not only has the efficiency of the "standard work animal" been increased by the ox having been practically dropped out, but also by the mules and horses having been considerably improved. They are larger now than formerly, and on the whole much better fed. Hand in hand with this increasing efficiency of the "standard work animal," has gone the cutting down of the number of acres he has to work. From 1880 to 1910, the average number of improved acres per horse dropped from 34 to 22.3—a decrease of 34.4 per cent in the short space of 30 years. Furthermore, in 1880 the work animals had to do much more work that was not strictly agricultural than they have to do now. Then, most of the cotton raised was ginned by horse power, a majority of the seines were hauled by horses, much of the produce marketed was carted from twelve to sixty miles, and the traveling was done largely with horses. At present, all cotton is ginned by steam, there are no more seines pulled, most farmers are near some railroad station, making it no longer necessary to cart produce very far, and all traveling of more than a few miles is done either by rail or by automobile. Less than ten per cent of the produce now has to be carried more than five miles, and the larger part of it less than three. As for traveling, the horse is now seldom driven so far from home but that the return trip can be made the same day, and many use the automobile almost entirely.

*Variety of Crops.*—When we compare the variety of crops grown in 1880 with those grown in 1910 we note two radical changes. Wheat, a crop ranking in average fairly close to oats and sweet potatoes, which held third and fourth place respectively, has dropped out entirely; the peanut crop which was so insignificant in 1879 that the *Tenth Census* took no account of it, has increased in acreage to within a few acres of cotton, and in market value, probably has a slight lead.<sup>1</sup> In acreage, cotton and Irish potatoes have remained about the same, while corn, oats, peas, and forage have each actually decreased. The increase of the sweet-potato acreage has just about kept pace with the increase in population.

A new crop—the soy-bean—has been receiving considerable attention during the past four or five years. In view of the following facts—that it will produce something on almost any of the land, that it yields a crop while at the same time improving the land, that it is easily cultivated, that it is one of the best and cheapest hog-feeds that can be grown here, that there is a good market for the bean, that there is already in use a fairly satisfactory machine for threshing out the bean, making the cost of gathering from a third to a fourth of what it would be by hand—in view of these facts, the soy-bean is destined to attain a high degree of importance in the very near future.

*Production per Acre.*—Turning to production per acre, if the census figures for 1879 be compared with those for 1909 it will be seen that they register very little change in productivity per acre for the three crops—corn, cotton and sweet potatoes—which were the most important in both periods. The facts in the case, however, seem to justify a very different conclusion. I personally have interviewed

<sup>1</sup> Since the rise in cotton prices during the present European war, the market value of the cotton crop has again taken first place.

a number of the most successful farmers all over the county and they tell me that they are now raising from two to three times the amount of produce per acre they were raising thirty-five years ago. My own observations, going back some twenty-five years, are in strict accord with their testimonies.

Of course, there are some farmers who are producing no more per acre now than they were in the early eighties, but these are in the minority. Many farmers who were then making from eight to fifteen bushels of corn per acre are now making from twenty to thirty bushels. Several men in the county have produced well over a hundred bushels per acre. In 1914, I myself stood in a piece of corn which measured out 137.5 bushels per acre. Thirty-five years ago few men in the county would have believed that an acre could be made to produce so much. With cotton it is the same story over again. In the eighties from a half to three-quarters of a bale was considered good cotton. The average for the county, according to the *Tenth Census* (1880), was only 166 pounds of lint—a third of a bale (500 pounds) per acre. Many acres fell far short of this amount. During the last five or six years not a few farmers have produced from a bale to a bale and a half per acre for their entire crop.

Not only does the testimony of the farmers contradict the census reports in this particular, but the reports themselves offer additional proof of the discrepancy. From 1880 to 1910, the acreage of improved land decreased more than 6 per cent,<sup>1</sup> while the amount spent for commercial fertilizer in 1910 was 12.6 times the amount spent in 1880,<sup>2</sup> and the value of farm machinery in 1910 was practically four times what it was three decades before.<sup>3</sup> Why this

<sup>1</sup> Calculations based on table 6, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 12, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> Calculations based on table 6, p. 269.

tremendous increase in the use of commercial fertilizers if they produced no results? The principal manure made on the farm was (and continues to be) that from work animals, which from 1880 to 1910 increased some forty per cent in number.<sup>1</sup> Since the value of manure is being more and more realized it is most probable that the increase in "stable manure" was at least as great (most probably greater) as the increase in the number of work animals, which are its source. Does any one conversant with the facts suppose that all this extra amount of manure, the far better tilth that now prevails, and the beginning made in the planting of leguminous crops for building up the soil,<sup>2</sup> are necessary to keep the land up to the low fertility of the eighties? Again, by far the greater part of the annual income of the farmer is from the field crops. Orchard products have decreased both in bulk and in value owing in part to the State's having "gone dry," and in part to the damage done in recent years by the codling moth and other fruit pests. Population increased more than 43 per cent<sup>3</sup> from 1880 to 1910. With this augmentation in the number of mouths to feed, with a somewhat smaller fish-catch,<sup>4</sup> and with the live stock production<sup>5</sup> remaining about the same, if the soil productivity has not increased, then what has been the source of the phenomenal increase in economic welfare observable on all sides?<sup>6</sup> Surely not a few thousand dollars worth of vegetables sold, nor the small manufacturing interests which furnish employment for less than 600 people at any season of the year, and part of the time for even a much smaller number.<sup>7</sup> Again, if land productivity has not increased,

<sup>1</sup> Calculations based on table 11, p. 274. <sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 80 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Calculated from table 4, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 14, p. 279.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. table 7, p. 270.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. xx.

<sup>7</sup> Estimated. Cf. *infra*, pp. 117-118.

why did land more than treble in value from 1900 to 1910? <sup>1</sup> It was certainly due to no artificial boom, to no land advertising, to no land speculation. Produce prices rose to some extent, but nothing to compare with the rise in the price of land. Believing that the foregoing facts amply sustain my contention, I shall here rest the case.

From agriculture in its more narrow sense, let us turn to fruit culture, animal husbandry, and poultry raising, which, in reality, are only other branches of the general subject of agriculture. This is especially true when carried on as here in Chowan.

#### FRUIT CULTURE

Orchard products have decreased in bulk, quality, and value. Very little fruit, even of medium quality (except grapes) can now be raised without spraying. And since no one sprays, the result is that (exclusive of grapes) many a fair-sized orchard does not annually produce a single bushel of non-defective fruit. Aside from grapes, the county is not even supplying itself with fruit. Much of that consumed in Edenton, even during mid-season, is now shipped in from the outside. Large quantities of good-qualified apples and peaches could be raised here if only a little care were taken with the trees, but the time has passed when all one has to do is to plant the tree, and thereafter gather the fruit.

#### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The general conditions regarding the breeding of live stock and poultry and the handling of their products, for the majority of the people, have changed but little. The free range still exists, though for hogs it is far inferior to what it was in former days, due to the fact that most of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 6, p. 269.

mast-bearing trees have been cut. The breeds of hogs and cattle are still largely scrub, though the strains of good blood intermingled are on the increase.

The horses, mules, and sheep bred, continue to be a negligible quantity.<sup>1</sup>

The number of cattle has actually decreased. And while there are probably a few more good-blooded milk cows, the increase in the number was not sufficient in 1909 to show in the milk and butter report of that year.<sup>2</sup>

Hogs have increased in number, but the increase has failed by more than eight per cent<sup>3</sup> to keep pace with the increase in population. It should be noted, however, that the retardation of increase in hogs, as compared to increase in population, is more apparent than real. At the time of the *Thirteenth Census* (1910), the average age of hogs when slaughtered was three or four months less<sup>4</sup> than it was at the time of the *Tenth Census* (1880), which means that a smaller proportion of hogs are now kept over from one season to the next than formerly. A larger per cent of those pigged in 1909 were killed the following season, than of those pigged in 1879, which, in turn, lessened the number to be enumerated the following year. Of course, the true test of the relative increase or decrease of the hog product is not the number of hogs on hand at any one time, but rather the annual output of such products as lard, pork, and bacon. If this item were given in the census reports I am inclined to think that it would show an acceleration of increase, in comparison to population increase, instead of a retardation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 7, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 9, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Calculations made from data of table 4, p. 264, and table 7, p. 270.

<sup>4</sup> My own estimate.

The cutting down of the age of hogs slaughtered has been brought about by two factors—better breeding and better feeding. Many farmers have improved their stock of hogs to the point where it is no longer necessary for them to become a year or two old before they will fatten. The approach to the balanced ration, however, has doubtless had far more to do with this than has the breeding. The more intelligent farmers now know that the growing animal needs a comparatively large amount of nitrogen-bearing food, or legumes. A great many more have learned by sheer experience that young hogs do far better when allowed to run on either peas or peanuts while eating potatoes, than if fed on potatoes only. With the spread of the cultivation of peanuts, the hogs, since they have always had the run of the field after crops are housed, came into a source of especially good muscle-building food by force of circumstance, rather than by any premeditation on the part of the farmer. Also, the recently introduced soy-bean is now being planted to some extent for hogs, and is proving to be a very high-grade, as well as a cheap feed.

#### POULTRY

In numbers, poultry<sup>1</sup> has remained about the same. The egg production, however, was nearly two and three-quarter times as great<sup>2</sup> in 1909 as it was in 1879. This increase doubtless was due to the introduction of better-laying breeds and to some approach to scientific feeding. Many people no longer feed their chickens on corn alone.

<sup>1</sup> In table 7 the number for 1910 is nearly double that for 1880, but the former is for "poultry of all kinds," while the latter is "exclusive of spring hatching," which I estimate to be at least equal in number to the mature poultry.

<sup>2</sup> There was an increase during three decades of 172 per cent. Calculations from table 9, p. 272.

## CHAPTER VI

### FISHING IN THE EIGHTIES

#### RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF FISHING

FROM the standpoint of the labor and capital employed, there was in 1880 no industry that could claim to rank second, or even third, to agriculture. Fishing was next in importance, but, according to the best estimates from the known facts, only about four per cent of the taxable property values in the county was given over entirely to this industry.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, in addition to this specialized capital, a certain amount reckoned as agricultural, which was devoted to seine-fishing during the season—roughly speaking, from the 1st of April to the 10th of May (about six weeks) on the river, and from the 10th of March to the 15th of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 13, p. 276. In 1880 the fishing equipment was not recorded separately from other personal property, but in recent years this has been done. In 1914 all property of Chowan county was listed at \$3,709,255, while the fishing properties alone were listed at \$29,337 (figures furnished by the county registrar of deeds direct from the tax books), less than one per cent of the total. It will be observed (table 13) that the list value of the fishing apparatus is less than one-third (30.3 per cent) of the estimated market value (\$96,838). In 1880 the taxed property values (exclusive of solvent credits) of the county amounted to \$750,648. (*North Carolina Executive and Legislative Documents*, Session 1881, Raleigh, N. C., Document No. 4.) Assuming that all property in 1914 was listed at the same per cent of its market value as were the fishing properties, and assuming that the same percentage held for 1880 as for 1914, the market value of all property in 1880 was \$2,478,204. On these assumptions the estimated market value of the fishing properties for 1880 (\$102,700) was 4.14 per cent of the value of all property in the county.

May (about nine weeks) on the sound. Under the latter class of capital were the mules and horses used in pulling in the seines, where this was done by horse power. The labor, too, employed in fishing was labor which at other seasons of the year was engaged chiefly in farming; but even if the time of the horses, mules, and men occupied in fishing should be capitalized and the amount added to the specialized capital of this activity, the aggregate would still be comparatively small.

#### IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF APPARATUS

At the time when this account begins, gill-nets, pound-nets, hand seines, and power seines—both horse and steam—were all being operated. Of the first there were comparatively few in use, and these were the short, stake-net variety set principally for shad. Some were set for herring, but the herring caught this way were a negligible quantity. Pound-nets had recently been introduced (1869) and their possibilities were fast being realized, though seining was still the all-important method—probably responsible for eighty-five per cent of the total fish-catch.

#### POUND-NETS

*Advantages Over Seines.*—The pound-net has three big advantages over the power seine, its only rival in herring fishing. In the first place, a much smaller amount of labor is required to beach a given quantity of fish. Secondly, the labor force can, in a large degree, be regulated according to the size of the catch, which fact makes it unnecessary to keep numerous hands on the pay-roll for several weeks before the fish begin to run in large quantities. The power seine, on the contrary, requires about the same complement of labor force—aside from the cutters<sup>1</sup>—when the catch is small as

<sup>1</sup> The cutters are those who head and gut the fish.

when it is large. Third, only certain beaches are practicable as seine-landings, while the pound-netter can land his fish almost anywhere he can get a canoe ashore. Another feature of pound-netting is that, from the standpoint of catching fish, a small amount of capital invested produces proportionately as great results as does a large amount.<sup>1</sup> With the seine this is not true. There is first a considerable outlay for cleaning up the beach and seine-ground. Then one must have sufficient capital to rig up and fish a seine long enough to reach well out into the water, else it is needless for him to fish at all, except when the fish are playing in close to shore, which never occurs more than a few days during a season, and some seasons hardly at all.

*Responsible for the Break-up of the Fish Monopoly.*—From Cannon's Ferry on the Chowan river clear down to the Albemarle sound, and along its shore to the Yeopim river—practically the county's entire water-front of some forty miles—one would find in 1880 a power seine every few miles. Sandwiched in between were the small operators of hand seines, gill-nets, and pound-nets. Under the conditions existing prior to the introduction of pound-nets, the fishing industry of the county was practically monopolized by a very few—probably fifteen or twenty—comparatively well-to-do people.<sup>2</sup> This monopoly existed for two reasons: first, a few people owned all the best sites; second, only a few people had the capital necessary to establish and maintain seine fisheries. To start one of these, even on the river, required an initial outlay of some four

<sup>1</sup> This is hardly true in handling them, though the proportional advantage of a large amount of capital is not very great even in this respect.

<sup>2</sup> The few little hand seines and gill-nets operated were almost negligible when their catch was compared to the total catch of the county. Cf. table 14, p. 279.

or five thousand dollars, while the big seine fisheries on the sound were rigged out at an expense of from eight to fifteen thousand dollars each. With the coming of the pound-nets this monopoly melted away. As above stated, a pound-net fisherman can land almost anywhere. Also, at this time he could begin business on a very small scale, hence those who had only a little capital, but who, nevertheless, wanted to fish on their own responsibility, now had an opportunity. Some of the first pound-netters were those who had formerly fished seine on wages. Not a few persons started with a total capital outlay well under three hundred dollars, and operated but one or two nets. In 1880, few if any persons or partnerships operated more than four or five pound-nets. In fact, at that time this number was considered a big stand, while at present the larger operators fish from twenty to thirty pound-nets.

#### SEINES

*Hand Seines.*—The hand seine was a small affair of from seventy-five to two hundred yards of shallow netting, and required only from four to six people to handle it. These seines were shot by boats propelled by man power, and also were hauled in by man-power windlasses. They were fished intermittently, since, because of their fewness of yards, it was useless to haul them except when the fish were playing in close to the shore. The men would make a haul, say in the morning, and if there were no fish they would hang up till the afternoon, and if there were still none and no prospects of any soon, they would hang up till the next day. When there was a big run of fish on, and coming in close, these little seines would sometimes catch from fifty to seventy-five thousand herring a day for a day or two in succession.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have it on unquestionable authority that on one occasion a certain hand seine of 140 yards (exclusive of rope) caught between 140,000 and 150,000 in two days.

*Power Seines.*—At this time there were eight horse-power seines and four steam seines being fished. The former were shot by boats propelled by men, each of the two boats having from six to twelve oarsmen, the number depending upon the size of the seine. They were pulled in by windlasses drawn either by horses, mules, or oxen. The steam seines were shot by steam-propelled flats and hauled by steam-driven windlasses.

Seines on the river were from 600 to 1800 yards long, while those on the sound ranged from 2300 to 2500 yards in length.<sup>1</sup> This was the seine from staff to staff, in other words, the netting. In addition to this, the rope on the sea end was about as long as the seine itself, and that on the land end something like half its length. Thus, counting both the seine proper and the additional rope, the larger sound seines were from three to four miles long.

*Shooting the Seine.*—The rope and seine as they were unwound from the windlasses were piled up on the after-decks of two<sup>2</sup> bateaux, or flat boats, which were then either rowed or steamed out together to the center-bush (about a mile and a quarter from shore at the big fisheries). Here they separated, the "land-end" boat making a sort of semi-circle back to the beach, paying off first the seine and then the rope, while the "sea-end" boat either continued its course for some distance, then turned parallel to the shore, or else at once turned parallel to the shore, casting off its seine as it went. When the seine was all off and nothing remained but the extra rope, the boat headed for the beach. This operation was known as "shooting the seine."

On the river the "land end" was the end upstream, and on the sound, the end towards the river. The fish in

<sup>1</sup> For the location and size of the big seines, cf. table 15, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> The small hand seines used only one boat; two were used for the big seines in order to save time in shooting.

the river were supposed to be running upstream, and those in the sound to be making for the fresh water of the river, hence the reason for shooting the seine in the shape described—the open sea-end let the fish in, while the closed land-end headed them off.

#### SEINE-CREWS

*Size and Character.*—To man each of the big sound fisheries properly, some fifty men, twenty women (these latter were the cooks and cutters), and fifteen mules (for those pulled in by horse power) were needed. The smaller seines required help in proportion.<sup>1</sup> On the sound the whole force, except the managers, and sometimes one or two others, was colored. On the river, in addition to the managers and the crew captains occasionally a few others of the force were white. Sometimes white women cut on the river.

*Severity of the Work and Coarseness of the Fare.*—When the seines put in at the beginning of the season they never stopped, except on Sundays<sup>2</sup> and in case of a severe storm or some mishap, till the season closed. Notwithstanding this continuous operation, the positions of manager and of shore-engineer (in the case of steam-power seines) were the only positions for which double shifts were provided. Eating, sleeping, and resting took place when there was nothing else to do. Each person had his special work which had to be done at a certain time during the course of each haul. When this was done he was at liberty till this point in the next haul came around. For instance, the cutters and “shelter” men (those who helped at such work as

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed statement of the labor required *cf.* table 13, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Previous to the Civil War the big seines were fished Sundays as well as week-days. After the war there was no fishing from Saturday midnight till Sunday midnight.

washing, counting and salting) had from the time one haul was cleaned up till the next was landed. When there was a big run of fish on, they got very little time off. Occasionally, when tremendously heavy hauls came in, the seine would have to stop, and everybody lend a hand in cleaning up. All the leisure time the seine-haulers (those who had to do with the shooting and landing of the seine) had was from one to two and a half hours between the shooting of the seine and the coming ashore of the staff. Since there were only from three to six hauls (the number depending upon the size of the seine, weather conditions, and whether horse power or steam power was used) every twenty-four hours, it is readily seen that the spare time that they had was not sufficient to become any great burden to them.

Though the work was hard, necessitating much exposure, and at times calling for continuous application for several hours in succession,<sup>1</sup> and though the fare was rough—principally cheap whiskey, yeopon tea, corn-bread, fish, and molasses, with meat and flour only once or twice a week—nevertheless, seining seemed to have a peculiar fascination for the men and women who followed it.

*Whiskey.*—Whiskey was considered an absolute essential on every seine beach, both by laborers and proprietors. A man would just as soon have thought of starting up his seine without cooks as without liquor. It was thought to

<sup>1</sup> Previous to the war the fishing labor was largely recruited from among the free colored population of Chowan and the adjoining counties. The slaves liked to fish, but their owners, for the most part, refused to allow them to work on the fishing beaches because of the great exposure to which they were subjected. I have it from an old fisherman that previous to the war the men had neither oil clothes nor rubber boots. They even cut open the toes of their shoes so that the water could run out more quickly. Certain men had to stand in water up to their hips for an hour or so each haul. In later times these men wore either hip or waist boots, and so were protected.

protect one from taking cold. One former seine-proprietor said to me in all seriousness, "This was night and day work, and they [the laborers] had to have some stimulants." I have it from old seine-owners that it was the cheapest whiskey they could buy. It was dealt out differently at the different beaches, but the seine-haulers (they were the men most exposed) received a rather generous supply everywhere. They were usually given a gill at every haul,<sup>1</sup> while the shelter hands were given a gill two or three times a day, the women coming in for a "nip" on special occasions, for instance, when there were extra long hours on account of a big run of fish.

#### FISH-CATCH

*Quantity.*—Seine-owners aimed to "put in" (begin fishing) as soon as they thought they would be able to make bare running expenses. For the first ten or twenty days the catch was light, but during the height of the season the quantity was at times so great as to be almost incredible. I am informed by old river seine-haulers and proprietors that single hauls of a hundred thousand herring, besides the other fish, have been made on the Chowan river. The largest haul made at one beach on the sound during 28 years' operation (1879-1907) counted out 110,000 herring, 1200 shad, and 500 pounds of rock.<sup>2</sup> The largest haul at another sound fishery from 1890 to 1902 comprised 132,000 herring and 720 shad, besides some rock and "offal fish" (such as perch, gars, and suckers).<sup>3</sup> The average annual

<sup>1</sup> One old colored man who hauled seine in slavery days, told me that before the Civil War the seine-haulers received three gills every haul—one when they started out to shoot the seine, one when they came ashore, and one when the staff came in. Liquor in those days was quite cheap, selling around ten cents a quart.

<sup>2</sup> Information furnished by the proprietor from his records.

<sup>3</sup> Information furnished by the proprietor.

herring catch per plant around 1880 was about 1,750,000 for the steam-power sound seines, 1,500,000 for the horse-power sound seines, and 1,000,000 for the horse-power river seines. The average annual herring catch for all apparatus in the county was in the neighborhood of 1,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

*Variety and Disposition.*—From the standpoint of bulk, the fish caught were chiefly herring. This was also true of their value on the river, but on the sound the “iced fish”<sup>2</sup> (principally shad and rock, though a few perch, and in the early part of the season, a few herring) were nearly equal in value to the herring,<sup>3</sup> which were either sold fresh on the beach to the farmers, or corned and shipped. The river fishermen caught comparatively few “shipping fish” (fish shipped iced), though their herring catch was greater in proportion to their investment than was that of the sound fishermen.

The great majority of the people who bought their herring on the beach fresh, were from ten to twenty miles nearer the river fishermen than the sound fishermen, hence the former sold a much larger proportion of their herring without having to do anything to them, except cut, wash, and count them, than did the latter. As a rule the river men did not make preparations for salting, packing and storing, as the sound men did. In fact, many made little or none, and so were compelled to sell their fish as soon as they were caught, if they were catching more than a very few. These

<sup>1</sup> These figures are all estimates. For the basis upon which they are made, cf. note to table 14, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> The term for all fish iced and shipped fresh.

<sup>3</sup> The proprietor of one of the largest seines pulled on the sound informs me that his records show the average annual value ratio of iced fish to herring caught on his beach from 1880 to 1885 to have been about six to seven.

conditions made river prices far less stable than sound prices. When a big run of herring was on hand—sometimes when it was merely expected—the river fishermen would drop their prices in order to induce the farmers to come down for their annual supply. Knowing this, many farmers waited for these low prices, and for this reason sometimes missed getting any fish at all.

*Value.*—On the sound, herring rarely sold below three dollars a thousand, but on the river they went to two dollars nearly every season, and frequently to one dollar. The low prices never held long, however, for as soon as the big run was over (usually in a day or two, at most) the price would go back to about three dollars, which may be taken as the ruling mid-season price for seine herring. At that time the beach value of the annual herring catch (21,000,000) was in the neighborhood of \$71,000, and that of the iced-fish \$67,000, making a grand total of \$138,000 for the fish-catch per year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the basis of the estimated price per thousand of herring caught by the various kinds of tackle, and for the estimated total beach value, *cf.* note to table 14, p. 280.

## CHAPTER VII

### FISHING IN 1915

#### FASCINATION OF SEINING

There was always something exciting and peculiarly fascinating about the landing of a seine to which few persons ever became indifferent, no matter how often they witnessed the scene. It was a sight which never seemed to pall. Even the fish-hands seldom grew weary of watching a haul land. They might be sleepy and worn-out, but just before the seine was beached they almost invariably became wide awake and more or less excited. Somehow the seine engendered for itself in the hearts of the people a kind of sentimental attachment, and so at its passing many experienced the same poignant regret that others have felt at the passing of the buffalo, the blanket Indian, and pioneer life in general. But like so many other implements and processes which have had to give way to more efficient devices and methods, the seine was forced to succumb to its economic superior—the pound net.

#### COMING OF POUND-NETS

When pound-nets were first introduced (1869), the seine owners fought them—even tried to have a law passed to prevent their use. The few people who owned the seine beaches had heretofore, so far as commercial fishing went, practically owned the sound and river, altho nominally they were free for all to fish in. These beach

owners saw in the pound-net an instrument that was to take away from them their long-enjoyed monopoly, and, as is usually the case with "vested interests" when threatened, they "raised a howl." But it was of no avail. Because of the tremendous advantages possessed by pound-nets over seines,<sup>1</sup> the former multiplied at such a rate that within a very few years the seine owners noticed a decided falling-off in their catch. One by one they were forced to quit seining, since they did not care to operate their plants at a loss. By 1900 the annual average catch of the individual seines still running was only a trifle more than half of what it was around 1880. The catch of shad had dropped especially low. After 1902 there was operated in the county only one seine; this continued up to and including the season of 1907. Since then all commercial fishing has been done with pound- and gill-nets, the latter for shad only.

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FISHING

Other than the displacing of seines by nets, but few changes have been made in the fishing industry since 1880. Shad gill-nets are much longer now than then, and are anchored instead of staked. As regards pound-nets, some now use the double- instead of the single-heart, but many claim that there is little or no advantage to be gained by this innovation, and continue to use the single-heart. The one big change—the one chief step forward—has been the substitution of gasoline- for sail-boats.

The advantages of the gas-boat in pound-net<sup>2</sup> fishing over the sailboat are several. In the first place, three

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 92, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the gill-net men also use gas-boats as tenders.

men (they usually go three to a boat) can fish more than twice as many nets when using gas as when using sail, and what is more, with vastly greater ease. Second, they can fish at a far greater distance from their landing place, which allows fishermen to try their fortunes over a much wider area than formerly. Third, when a boat goes out, the time of its return can be figured with a reasonable degree of certainty, while in the days of the sailboat, the time of the return was rather a matter of conjecture. Fourth, one can fish in rougher weather with gas than with sail. Fifth, it is now possible to fish the nets fairly regularly, and usually as often as necessary, while in former days, if a big run of fish was accompanied by adverse weather conditions for sailing, many fish died before they were ever taken from the nets. Finally, fish are no longer damaged while enroute from the net to the beach, which in the days of sailboats was a common occurrence. Sometimes a boat would get becalmed, and the fish would be seriously injured before they could be got ashore. Because of the liability of the fish to damage, both in the net and while enroute to the beach, pound-net herring usually sold for fifty cents a thousand less than seine herring.<sup>1</sup> Under the present arrangements, pound-net fish should be as good as seine fish.

#### FISH-CATCH AND VALUE

For the five-year period 1909-1914, the herring catch averaged about 20,000 per pound-net annually. In 1914 there were licensed 999 pound-nets, 633 of which were on the river and 366 on the sound. Counting 20,000 to the net, the herring catch that season was 19,980,000—in round numbers twenty million. And the beach

<sup>1</sup> Cf. footnote to table 14, p. 280.

value, reckoning river herring and sound herring at \$3.00 and \$3.50 per 1000, respectively, was \$63,600. The average annual value of iced fish per pound-net for the same five-year period was about twelve dollars for those on the sound and fifty dollars for those on the river. On this basis the value of the iced fish caught by the pound-nets in 1914 was \$25,896. The estimated value of the gill-net catch was \$12,040, making a grand total of \$101,536 for the county's entire catch of fish in 1914.<sup>1</sup>

#### RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FISHING IN 1880 AND 1914

*Capital Invested.*—According to my estimates, the capital invested in fishing in 1880 was not only more than five times as great as it was in 1914,<sup>2</sup> in proportion to the total property value of the county, but it was also greater in absolute amount. The catch, too, was greater in the first period than in the second, both in amount and value. As may be seen by referring to table 14, page 263, the greatest loss in value has been due to the lessened catch of iced fish.

*Fish Consumption.*—The fishing industry of the county had a far greater comparative significance for the people in the eighties and nineties than is brought out by any of the facts thus far mentioned. At this time herring constituted the larger portion of the meat element in the diet of a majority of the people. Many a one had herring three times a day for days in succession, and little else besides, except bread and tea—his herring was

<sup>1</sup> For the basis of these estimates, and for further details, *cf.* table 14, and footnote to same, pp. 279, 280.

<sup>2</sup> In 1880 the capital invested was 4.14 per cent of the total taxed values of the county, while in 1914 it represented but .79 per cent of the total. *Cf. supra*, footnote, p. 91, and table 13, p. 276.

either boiled in clear water or broiled<sup>1</sup> on the coals; his bread was made of cornmeal and water only; his tea was "black yeopon" (tea with neither milk nor sugar).

With herring at two dollars and fifty cents a thousand (the average price when the family fish were bought was not more, the higher-priced fish of the early part of the season being, for the most part, marketed outside of the county) and corn at forty cents a bushel (the customary price around housing time, in the eighties and nineties), a dollar a month would procure for a person the most usual diet of much of the population. This source of cheap food, taken in connection with the mild climate, meant that a person could exist with very little work—and not a few of the inhabitants did so.

Of the annual catch of herring in the eighties, some forty per cent—from 8,000,000 to 9,000,000—were sold fresh on the beach. The county's consumption of these, however, was probably only about 6,500,000, since some were carted off to Virginia and peddled out, some sold

<sup>1</sup> Herring were put up in two ways—dried and pickled, corresponding to bacon and salt pork, respectively. The dried herring were either boiled in clear water and eaten just so, or after being boiled were then fried. By the first method no grease was required, and by the second, but very little.

Pickled herring that have been properly cured in the early part of the season when herring are fat, and then properly cooked, furnish a table delicacy that is seldom surpassed by any dish in its appeal to the appetite. They are at their best when split open, mealed, and fried right out of the water, after having been soaked for a few hours. To prepare them this way, however, requires a considerable amount of grease, and since grease was a rather scarce article in the vast majority of households, most of the pickled fish had to be cooked in a less expensive, even though less appetizing, manner. The greatest number of them were first soaked, in order to get rid of the surplus salt, then stuck on a reed and hung out on the side of the smoke-house to dry. After they had dried for a few days they could be either fried with very little grease or else broiled, which required no grease at all.

to farmers (who came down for them) from Nansemond County, Va., and a million or two sold to the farmers from Gates County, N. C.<sup>1</sup> In 1914 the beach sales were from thirty to thirty-five per cent of the 20,000,000 herring caught that season—reduced to absolute numbers, from 6,000,000 to 7,000,000. Probably about 5,000,000 of these were consumed in the county.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming that the estimates in the preceding paragraph are approximately correct, the 7900 population of 1880 consumed thirty per cent more herring than the population of 1914 (estimated on December 31 at 11,801<sup>3</sup>). Per capita, the consumption was more than double in 1880 what it was in 1914. This falling off of fish in the diet is one of the many indications of the vast improvement that has been made in the economic welfare of the people. It should by no means be understood that fish are thought to be a poor food. The point here is that the people have become better able to vary their bill of fare and eat fish only when their appetite calls for it.

<sup>1</sup> Some also were sold to carts from the adjoining county of Perquimans, but in all probability Perquimans sold fully as many (perhaps more) fish to Chowan as she bought of her.

<sup>2</sup> The estimates of this paragraph are based on numerous interviews with both the sellers and the consumers of fish, and upon my own knowledge of general conditions. Many families put up for their own use from eight to twelve hundred herring for each of its members. Besides those for their own use, not a few of the more substantial families put up some to sell, particularly to their hired hands and their tenants.

<sup>3</sup> The estimated population for December 31, 1914 was obtained as follows: To the population (11,303) on April 15, 1910, was added the product of the average monthly increase (8,819) during the previous decade by the total number of months (56.6) between April 15, 1910 and December 31, 1914. This is not a very exact method of calculating the population at intercensus periods, but sufficiently so for the present purpose.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MANUFACTURING IN THE EIGHTIES

#### TYPE OF MANUFACTURING

THERE was no sort of establishment in the county in 1880 that could be termed a factory in the modern sense of the term. Manufacturing there was, and in considerable quantities, but it was all of the domestic or hand variety. For certain work, such as making brick, sawing, and ginning, it was necessary for two or more people to co-operate, and such industries as milling and ginning called for a few hundred dollars capital outlay for plant construction. Most manufacturing, however, was by single individuals, laboring separately, and with few and simple tools of small value. The manufactured articles were practically all destined for home consumption, and largely for the consumption of the families of those directly concerned in their production.

#### ARTICLES PRODUCED

At this time the people of Chowan were rather near neighborhood, and to a large extent family, self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup> Aside from iron, salt, nails, a little cutlery and

<sup>1</sup> In slavery days the larger owners lived on or near the sound and the river, where was much of the best land as well as the best opportunity for marketing its products. After the invention of the cotton gin (1792) the big slave owners began turning their attention to the raising of cotton. As the production of cotton increased, that of other crops fell off, as did frequently also the domestic manufactures, hence many of the supplies formerly produced right on the plantation, were now bought. After the war, the freedmen for the most part

tableware, window-glass, some cooking utensils (such as creepers, pots, kettles, and frying pans), thread, pins, buttons, needles, the iron parts of some farming utensils, a few books, the saws and mill-stones of water-mills, the saws, mill-stones, boilers, and engines of steam-mills, the actual gins of the ginneries, and the belting and gearing of machinery, they were producing some, and in a majority of instances all, of everything the great mass of the people consumed. While they manufactured no cook-stoves, pianos, sewing machines, clocks, or watches, such luxuries as these were enjoyed by but few.<sup>1</sup>

They tanned some of their leather, made some of their shoes, hats, and caps, knit most of their socks, either knit, wove, or made from shirting many of their suspenders, spun and wove some of their cloth, and made practically all of the wearing apparel (except shoes) for the women and children and most of that for the men (except shoes, hats and the Sunday suits of a few). They grew the feathers for their beds, and the corn shucks, wheat straw, and cotton for their mattresses—all of which they put together themselves. They turned many of their bedsteads and chairs, and all of the covering they slept under was of their own make. Most of their kitchen furniture and utensils, such as tables, benches, cupboards, bread-trays, griddles, sieves, and brooms were home-made. They coopered most of their tubs and many of their barrels, casks, wash-basins, water-buckets,

remained on the farms of their former owners, either as tenants or laborers, and continued raising cotton and buying most of their supplies, though part of these came off their landlords' own plantations. These two classes—the owners of big farms and the negroes who worked them—by no means approached the degree of family self-sufficiency as did the majority of the white and colored families living in the sections where there had been the fewest slaves.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, ch. xx.

and dinner pails. They improvised by far the greater number of their own dippers, occasionally from conch shells, more frequently from cocoanut hulls, but largely from the common gourd, which was cut, scraped, boiled, scrubbed, and sunned to remove the "gourdy" taste and smell—said taste and smell, however, in spite of all these efforts, remaining to a more or less degree just as long as there was a piece of the gourd. All of their cradles and coffins, and most of their tombstones were made at home. All of their looms, spinning-wheels, cart-wheels, cart-saddles, carts, ox yokes, back bands, and tugs, most of their cotton-planters, and traces, and many of their horse collars and hames, originated within their own bounds. They made their rakes, helved their hoes and axes, and made and stocked some of their plows. They built their own boats and made their own seines, nets and fishing tackle in general. They salted down their own fish, butchered and baconed their own meat,<sup>1</sup> rendered their own lard, stuffed their own sausage, and boiled most of their own soap. Their tea (yeopon) was home-cured as well as home-grown, their corn-meal and much of their wheat-flour was home-grown, and their hominy was home-beaten. They brewed their own beers, pressed their own ciders and wines, and distilled their own liquors. They burned all their brick, tar, and coal (charcoal), rived all their boards and pales, rived and drew all of their shingles, hewed all of their sills and sleepers, many of their joists, laths and rafters, and much of their studding. Most of their doors were home-made, and not a few of them were hung on hinges of their own make and secured by locks of the same hum-

<sup>1</sup> Some of the big cotton raisers and most of the negro tenants bought the greater part of what meat they used, though many of them used but little.

ble origin. All lumber was hand-dressed, and all mouldings and most other trimmings were hand-made. The babies cut their teeth on home-made pacificators, and the older children played with toys of either their own or their elders' production. The number of physicians was small and the ability to pay them smaller, hence many of them secured a large part of their living from their own farms; while the people when wounded did the most of their own sterilizing and bandaging, and when sick, in no small degree made their own diagnoses, prescribed their own remedies, and filled their own prescriptions from drugs largely compounded from roots and herbs grown in their own fields and woods.

#### RÔLE OF WOMEN

In manufacturing, the rôle played by the women was of no less importance than that played by the men. For the most part they had charge of the food and clothing, while buildings, tools, furniture, and utensils were chiefly constructed by the men. In other words, the men made most of the articles that were of leather, wood and iron. The products of the women were turned out almost entirely by each in her own home. There was virtually no division of labor among them, each doing in her own home what the others were doing in theirs, and while some did certain work better than did others, there was the same kind of work for all. With the men, while each was to a greater or less degree his own carpenter and repairman, there nevertheless was some division of labor. Different men made specialities of different things which they did for the public when not working on their farms. For instance, some tanned, some cobbled, some coopered, some carpentered, and so on down the list of domestic manufactures.

## CAPITAL AND LABOR

As previously stated, certain manufacturing demanded an outlay of several hundred dollars for the erection of each plant in which it was carried on, and certain manufacturing demanded the coöperation of two or more persons. But the capital expenditure, except in the case of saw-mills, went largely to neighboring farmers for the labor of construction (only those parts were bought outright that could not be made locally), and the plants requiring the largest force for operation could run at full capacity with five or six hands. Thus it is seen that little capital left the county for the construction of plants, and little organization was needed to operate them. Frequently these plants were either owned in co-partnership by two or three people who did their own work, or by individuals who had sufficient force of their own to man them. In any case, the plants were owned and the labor furnished by the neighboring farmers.

With the possible exception of some of the millers of water-mills, and eight or ten people in Edenton, few, if any, depended entirely upon manufacturing for a living. Most men were farmers first, and carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, or whatever else they were, afterwards. By far the greater part of all manufacturing and building was done out of crop season, it being customary for all plants, except grist-mills, to lie idle most of the time when the farmers were busy in their fields.

## PERMANENT PLANTS

*Water-Mills.*—There were in the county five water-mills, all of which ground corn, three of which had machinery for making wheat flour, and two of which had saws. To man these, when grinding corn, only one person was needed; when grinding wheat, two were

frequently on hand; when sawing, from two to four were required. The water grist-mills ground every day when they had corn, except during occasional dry spells in the summer when they had no water.

*Steam-mills.*—The steam-mills, of which there were some four or five in the county, were erected first for sawing only, but later some of them added grist-mills for corn. They got little grinding to do, however (except when protracted dry weather temporarily threw the water-mills out of commission), because everybody preferred water-ground meal to steam-ground. Meal made by water power is no better than that made by steam power, when all other conditions are the same in each case, notwithstanding the fact that many think the contrary.<sup>1</sup> The trouble was, other conditions were not usually the same. The chief work of the miller at the water-mill was grinding, hence he became more or less of an expert. The millers of steam-mills, on the other hand, ground but one day<sup>2</sup> each week, and generally had but little to do then. The meal from the steam-mills was usually either too fine or too coarse, and occasionally burnt.

The steam-mills were small—ten or twelve horse-power boilers and engines—and did but one thing at a time. To man them when grinding, two men were required, and when sawing, from four to six.

*Gins.*—So far as I have been able to learn, all the gins in 1880 were driven by horse power. Of these there were probably twenty or thirty. Many of the larger plantations had their own gins. They could utilize their men

<sup>1</sup> No later than May 1915, I saw this old fiction being exploited by one of the biggest grocery firms in New York city.

<sup>2</sup> Usually Friday, but if they failed to get through on this day they finished on Saturday.

and teams for this work at times when otherwise they would have been doing comparatively little. The usual capacity was two bales a day, working four horses and four men. By using two shifts of horses, driving hard, and working both early and late, some gins occasionally put out four bales a day.

#### BRICK-MAKING

Making brick, the only other manufacturing process not considered which called for the labor of several people, required little but water, clay, sand, and labor. First, the prospective brick-maker picked out the least fertile spot on his place that had good accessible clay; then, with a hammer, hand-saw, axe, some nails, and a few boards and poles obtained from the near-by woods, he knocked together, within a few hours, a crude mill for grinding and mixing his material, and a shelter of similar rough character for protecting his dry bricks from the rain; next, he dug a hole in the ground near-by for water, and, finally, he made five or six molds, which completed his special equipment. It took one horse to pull the mill, and from four to six men to tend it. Thus manned, the output was from four to six thousand bricks a day, or about a thousand per man. This has reference to the actual making of the bricks and putting them on the yard; the work of hacking them and putting them under the shelter being extra. Quite often, however, one was not troubled with this latter work, for showers frequently came up and melted them down before they were dry enough to hack. On an average, one year with another, something like a third of the bricks put on the yards were lost in this way. The customary size kiln was around thirty thousand. Some seasons, when the weather was especially unfavorable, it was

necessary to put out twice this number in order to have the usual size kiln.

Most of the bricks were made in July and August after crops were laid by. Then in the late fall, after crops were housed, twenty-five or thirty of the neighbors would be asked to meet at the brickyard on a certain Monday morning and help "set" (kiln) them, which was an all-day job. If one had "good luck," in other words, if his bricks had been properly kilned and he had good wood and knew what he was doing, he finished burning by the following Friday or Saturday night. Occasionally, however, when he had "bad luck," it was necessary to burn over Sunday.

#### SUMMARY OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

In infancy, the people of the Chowan of 1880 were swaddled in home-made clothes, rocked in home-made cradles, and placated with home-made toys; in childhood, they pulled home-made wagons and stole home-made jams; in youth, they courted their sweethearts on home-made benches and took them "joy-riding" on home-made carts; all thru life they dressed largely in home-made apparel, fed on home-grown and home-prepared foods, sheltered themselves in houses constructed from home-made materials, slept upon home-made beds and under home-made covering, exhilarated their drooping spirits with home-made cordials, salved their wounds with home-made ointments, and stilled their pains with home-made remedies; when the death-angel finally summoned them to their reward, they were laid out on home-made mattresses, encased in home-made coffins, carted off to the grave in home-made vehicles, and their last resting place, were marked by home-made tombstones.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They were usually of lightwood, or red cedar, with the name, date of birth, and date of death cut on them with a pocket knife.

## CHAPTER IX

### MANUFACTURING IN 1915

#### FACTORIES<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of the factories that were operated in Chowan in 1915:

#### CLASS I

#### RURAL PLANTS WHICH RUN INTERMITTENTLY, AND SUPPLY ONLY NEIGHBORHOOD DEMANDS

<i>Steam Power</i>	<i>No.</i>
Saw mills <sup>2</sup> .....	12
Shingle mills .....	6
Planing mills .....	6
Grist mills .....	3
Cotton gins .....	15
 <i>Water Power</i>	
Saw mills .....	1
Grist mills .....	3

<sup>1</sup> Blacksmith shops, carpenter shops, and general repair shops, of which there are several, have not been included, although they produce a few articles, especially carts. They have been left out of account because (1) the amount of machinery used is small, (2) they are usually operated as one-man establishments (except in heavy work, when a helper is needed), and (3) the work is principally that of repairing.

<sup>2</sup> One of these shipped 75,000 feet out of the county during 1914, one "only a very little" (it cut only about 300,000 feet during 1914, and principally for local trade), and one other from which no definite report was obtained, shipped out a very little.

## CLASS 2

PLANTS 50 PER CENT OR MORE OF WHOSE PRODUCTS ARE CONSUMED IN CHOWAN, AND 90 PER CENT OR MORE OF THE REMAINDER IN THE FIVE OR SIX ADJOINING COUNTIES

Saw mills .....	1
Sash, door, and blind mills .....	1
Grist mills .....	1
Brick mills .....	2
Fertilizer mills .....	1
Ice factories .....	1

## CLASS 3

PLANTS PRODUCING ALMOST WHOLLY FOR MARKETS OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY

Peanut mills .....	1
Cotton mills .....	1
Veneer mills .....	1
Saw mills .....	1
Planing mills .....	1
Cotton-seed oil mills .....	1
Canneries .....	2

## NUMBER, SIZE, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FACTORIES

The above table of factories lists sixty plants. Strictly speaking, however, this number is too large, since in many cases four or five of the units listed actually constituted one plant. For instance, in "Class 1" all the shingle-mills, planing-mills, steam grist-mills, and several of the cotton gins are run in connection with saw-mills. Counting as only one plant the various units which in each case are located together and operated as one plant, there are only thirty-five.

We have now arrived at a period when we have real factories that contribute to world markets—factories whose office and managerial force are equal in size to the whole crew of the largest plant in operation in 1880—factories whose laborers follow factory work for their entire subsistence, rather than as a mere supplement

to their agricultural activities. As yet, however, only a beginning has been made. The manufacturing interests which help supply outside markets are small, and the people who depend solely on factory work for a living are few. The forty-one units in "Class 1" run intermittently, have their labor supplied mostly by persons whose chief business is agriculture, and with the three exceptions noted, cater only to neighborhood wants. Another feature of this class of plants is that for the most part they work up only the raw material brought to them by those who are going to take the finished product away, and, omitting the cotton, use it in their own families. Except the water grist-mills (which probably operate, on an average, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty days a year each at full capacity, and require only one man to run them), these units in 1914 operated from twenty to ninety days each, and required from two to ten men each to man them.

In 1914 there were in the county only four manufacturing firms, namely, "Edenton Cotton Mills," "Wilks Veneer Co.," "Branning Manufacturing Co." (saw-mill and planing-mill), and "M. G. Brown" (saw-mill, sash, door, and blind-mill, and grist-mill), that employed as many as ten men each for 150 days during the year. The total number of employees of these four firms fluctuated around 350, and the plants were operated from 270 to 314 days each. The other plants of "Class 2" and "Class 3" either required fewer than ten hands, or operated less than half time. The brick-yards, for instance, operated about eight months in the year, but more than half the time they required only from four to six men each. Several of the extra men tended little crops. One of the canneries operates only in the herring-roe season, which is of but few days duration each spring. The other cans roe, green peas and tomatoes. It probably runs on an average about forty

days a year, all told.<sup>1</sup> These canneries work from ten to seventy-five hands (mostly colored women) each, the number depending upon the kind of material they are putting up and the amount they have on hand. For instance, a much larger force is needed when canning tomatoes than when canning roe, because in canning tomatoes the greater part of the work is peeling.

#### PASSING OF HOUSEHOLD MANUFACTURING

As for manufacturing in the home, it is fast becoming a thing of the past. The hum of the spinning-wheel, the chuck, chuck of the shuttle, and the bang, bang of the loom, are no longer familiar household sounds. Knitting has gone out of fashion, and the few who do occasionally knit a little buy their yarn already spun. The point was reached some years ago where "ladies wear silk hosiery and never knit a stitch." Probably forty per cent of the entire clothing of women and children and eighty per cent of that worn by men, is now either bought ready-made, or tailored to measure by some merchant tailor. This buying of clothes instead of making them is confined to no class or color. It is no uncommon sight to see a Negro day-laborer wearing a suit of just as high-grade tailoring and material as the suits worn by the best-to-do whites in the county. Hardly any of the men and boys now wear home-made outer garments even for every day working clothes. The ubiquitous overalls—the presence of which in any place, along with tin-can goods, is a sure sign that it has been hit by civilization—can now be had for the three-year-olds as well as for the grown-ups. In 1880 there were few if any

<sup>1</sup> In July 1915 the owner of the plant which handles both roe and vegetables, told me that in 1914 he ran about ten days with peas, six weeks with tomatoes, and with herring-roe in 1915, a day and a half. Much of this time, however, he was not running full capacity.

overalls, and in the nineties they were like certain "shows" at county fairs—"for men only." Few are likely to forget the keen sense of delight they experienced when at the age of fifteen or sixteen they slid into their first suit. No military or naval officer ever donned his first stripes with greater pride than did these lads their first dollar suits of blue overalls and jump-jackets. It was a proclamation to the world that they at least thought they had "arrived."

The manufacture of household and kitchen furniture has now almost entirely left the domestic stage; practically all furnishings now being acquired, except a few tables and some bed clothing, are bought from the stores, which in turn receive them from the factories. With farming machinery it is the same story over again. Except carts, cart-wheels, and cart-saddles, nearly all farm tools and implements are factory-made. As for local coopering shops, they remain largely as a memory only. In the matter of foods the showing is much better. The more substantial farmers—almost all farm owners—still put up their own meat, lard, and fish, and have their own corn-meal ground. A considerable amount of home-canning also is being done, a practice not known in 1880. Nearly all good housewives now try to put up some fruit each year. Not nearly so much of this is done as should be, but a beginning has been made, and during the past three or four years some have canned a few vegetables. The people now buy all their flour (notwithstanding the fact that they consume five or six times as much per capita as in 1880) and most of their soap, though many of the older housekeepers still make their own laundry and kitchen soap. Nearly all the yeopon bushes have been hoed up, and the tea now drunk is usually Lipton's, or some other foreign brand costing from thirty to seventy cents a pound, though not one whit better than the yeopon, which each family formerly cured for it-

self, or else bought from a neighbor at thirty or forty cents a bushel (a bushel being sufficient to supply a big family from six to eight months, even though each member imbibed quite freely twice daily).

Much of the construction material for dwellings, out-buildings, and fencing now comes from factories. All of the brick and much of the roofing are factory-made. Probably forty per cent of both dwellings and out-buildings put up within the past two years have been covered with paper, slate, or tin—all factory stuff. When shingles have been used they have been mostly sawed ones rather than the hand-drawn article of other days. Formerly most out-buildings were covered with boards. To make these, first-class timber is required. Since this has nearly all been cut, few, if any, boards are now being riven. All heavy timbers formerly were hewed, but now they are sawed, and all dressing, beading, tonguing, and grooving are done by machinery. The carpenter finds comparatively little use for his plane any more. In fact he is fast approaching the point where he is a mere assembler of materials already prepared for him. Nearly all dwelling doors, mouldings, and trimming are machine products. Gardens are no longer enclosed with wattled pales, but with poultry wire, and probably sixty per cent of the farm fences are woven wire, while iron posts are already beginning to replace the wooden ones.

If civilization means marketing what you make and buying what you use, a survey of the past thirty-five years would seem to indicate that the people of Chowan are well on the way to that goal.

## CHAPTER X

### LUMBERING

#### LUMBER SITUATION IN 1880

IN 1880 practically the whole county, except the cultivated land and the retimbered old fields, was in virgin forest. A good part of the timber cut for home use was cut on land soon to be cleared, and if it had not been, the annual growth was more than equal to the small annual cut for local purposes. Most landowners had more timber than they thought they could ever utilize, and since it had little or no market value, they ascribed little value to it. Thousands of feet were heaped up and burned for no other purpose than to get it off the land that was to be brought under cultivation.<sup>1</sup> Farmers would gladly have given away the timber on land which they intended to clear, simply to get rid of it.

#### HUMBUGGING TIMBER OWNERS

When the railroads were projected, lumber men associated with the railroad companies came through and bought up for almost nothing the majority of the timber lying near the proposed tracks. Conditions being as stated in the previous paragraph, it was easy for the buyers to make their own terms. They paid less than twenty-five cents a thousand feet (board measure) for much timber that now, only thirty years afterwards, would sell for from \$5 to \$6 a thousand, and was worth then from \$1.50 to \$2,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 42, 43.

according to the selling price of lumber in the open market. They stipulated in their contracts that they were to have free right-of-way anywhere they chose to run across a man's land, all the free timber they needed for construction purposes, and the privilege to cut the timber whenever they pleased. Since much of the timber was bought by the acre, this last clause was of much value. Some of the lumber was not cut for several years after it was bought, and by the time it was cut the natural increase during the intervening years was of more value than the purchase price agreed upon. Only part of the price was paid when the timber was bought.

The first railroad (Norfolk & Southern) in the county was opened for business in 1881, and the second (Suffolk & Carolina) reached the county in 1887. With the railroads came in the big lumber companies, and in ten or twelve years they had cut over most of the best timber that was easily reached. They were eager to make the biggest possible profit in the shortest possible time, and as they had paid so little for the timber they hardly had to consider this item of cost at all. Even when they bought it by the acre, it paid them to cut only the best, and then move on to other virgin stands.

#### LOCAL OPERATORS

*Their Disadvantages.*—In the wake of the big companies followed numerous small operators, principally natives. However, the timber owners by this time had begun to wake up and so these small operators had to pay something like market value for what they cut, usually from four to eight times the amount paid by the companies who bought early. Not only that, but most of the timber they bought was either a considerable distance from the railroads, or else on land that previously had been cut over by the big firms. The

great majority of them had little capital, and so were neither able to put in tramways to reach the timber, nor able to buy large enough bodies of timber to make it pay to put in tramways. The result was they had either to "scrap" after the big operators (handle inferior stuff which they had refused), or else haul their timber a long distance.

At times there were probably fifty or sixty people in the county owning some logging apparatus, and from five to eight hundred men all told engaged in cutting and hauling lumber and ties. Many of these loggers had less than a hundred dollars worth of equipment. A goodly number started with only one yoke of small oxen, or of cheap horses or mules. Some few of these prospered and eventually became fair-sized operators, but many did not. The "little fellows" were at the mercy of the railroad companies, who showed much favoritism in sending out cars. After one had worked and strained for weeks with his one little yoke of oxen, and pulled several thousand feet of timber to the railroad tracks, it frequently would lie there till it was damaged from a third to a half of its value before the company would send cars on which to load it. Since the operator did not know enough to make the company pay for the damage, he simply suffered it himself. In this way many lost the little they had previously made either logging or otherwise.

*Effect on Agriculture.*—Logging became very popular. Almost everybody for hire preferred working in the woods to working on the farm. In fact it soon began to be difficult to hire farm labor, while at the same time people were almost begging to be hired for the log woods. Accompanying the growing difficulty of obtaining farm labor was a slump in cotton prices.<sup>1</sup> These two facts, taken in con-

<sup>1</sup> From 1880 to 1890 "middling staple" (the best grade of cotton produced here) averaged on the wholesale markets well over ten cents

nection with the fact that the lumber men seemed to be making more money than any other set of people, caused many farmers, who, as a matter of course, knew nothing at all about lumbering, to start logging as a side line to their farming. This all too frequently meant the neglect of their farming interests.

*Local Saw-mills.*—For twenty years or more the vast majority of timber cut was shipped out of the county as logs, and so the money paid for working it up went to those outside of the locality. Only two big saw-mills have ever been located in the county—one at Montrose and one at Edenton. The first ran only a few years. The second began operations in 1888 and is still in service. The greater part of the timber it has handled, however, has come from outside the county. Since the cutting of most of the best timber, a few mills sawing from three to eight thousand feet a day have been put down at various places in the county. But none of these run regularly, and besides, they saw principally for home consumption. At present, of the fifteen mills in the county, only five ship any of their product whatever.<sup>1</sup>

#### VARIETY AND DISPOSITION OF TIMBER PRODUCTS

The principal commercial timber was gum, cypress, poplar, oak, and pine. From the mill-ponds<sup>2</sup> and swamps

a pound. In 1890 it was selling above eleven cents, while the next year it was bringing about eight and six-tenths cents. This downward trend continued for some eight years, and during part of the time many farmers sold cotton below five cents. *Cf. House Documents*, vol. xxxix, p. 76, no. 15, parts 1-3, "Commerce and Finance." July-September, 1902, 57th Congress, 2d Session, 1902-3. *Cf. also, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, Bulletin 149 (whole number), "Wholesale Price Series," no. 2, p. 83.

<sup>1</sup> *Cf. supra*, pp. 99, 100.

The topography of the county being comparatively level (*cf. supra*, p. 17,) wherever a water-mill was erected the damming of the stream

came the first two. The gum was sent to the butter-dish, crate, barrel and basket factories. The larger cypress timber found its way to the shingle mills, while from the smaller trees, railroad ties were cut and hewn. Around the edges of swamps and in moist places in general, grew the poplar timber. This went to the veneering mills, furniture factories, and butter-dish factories. Only a very little oak was shipped except some that was made into cross-ties. Most of what merchantable oak there had been in the county had been made into staves in earlier times. The principal timber was yellow pine, which grew all over the county except in the swamps and mill-ponds. Both the quantity and value of all other varieties of mill timber was small in comparison to pine. It was cut into lumber for general building purposes.

#### TIMBER SITUATION IN 1915

Since the coming of the railroads into the county, practically all the forest has been cut over, much of it from two to four times, and so today there is very little first-growth timber standing. In fact there is comparatively little mill timber of any sort. After most of this had been cut, cross-tie "getters" went through and made ties out of the hearts<sup>1</sup>

to get sufficient power caused water to pond up over a considerable area. Within the area over which the water stood constantly at a depth of two feet or more, all the trees except cypress died. Along the margin of the ponds where there was sometimes water and sometimes none, the flora was of the swamp varieties.

<sup>1</sup>As is well known, pine sap when exposed to the weather soon rots, but good heart will last for years; in fact the best pine heart hardly rots at all, but rather, just gradually weathers away. Much of the first-growth pine had splendid heart, both as to size and quality. The lumbermen who came through first not only cut the best trees, but they carried away only the best portion of those they did cut, often leaving a large part of the top end in the woods. Nearly all that was not practically clear of knots was left. In a few years the sap rotted away leaving the best hearts as good as ever.

of the pine tops left by the lumbermen. Everything has been cut so close on many tracts of land that there is now not enough timber left to furnish lumber for necessary building. Not a few landowners are even without sufficient timber for fence posts unless they use sap posts, which get very "tender" (weak) in one year's time, and rot off in the course of two. The policy followed by many serves to intensify the scarcity. No longer possessing any mill timber for market, they are now selling off all the pine trees (the only fast-growing timber trees in this section) that will make a stick of piling twenty-six feet long, measuring six inches in diameter at the top. They appear to have little regard for posterity. In fact their attitude seems to be that of Louis XIV when he said, "After us, the deluge," presuming they think that far ahead, which, however, is not very probable.

## CHAPTER XI

### COMMUNICATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMERCE IN 1880

#### PREREQUISITES OF COMMERCE

AMONG the prerequisites of commerce are diversity of natural resources, division of labor, accumulation of stock, and ways and means of communication and transport. Aside from the advantages for fishing and transportation offered by the Chowan River and the Albemarle Sound, the natural resources, while differing in quality in different sections, were quite the same in variety throughout the county. As has been previously noted, there was comparatively little division of labor, if the family be reckoned as the unit of production. Under these conditions, the most of whatever trade there was, was necessarily with people beyond the county's borders.

Possessing an accumulated stock, or surplus of goods, which one is willing to exchange, and possessing the information as to who has other goods he is willing to exchange in return, the next question the prospective trader must consider is that of transportation; for the comparative ease or difficulty of transportation largely determines, or at least to a considerable degree limits, the class of goods which will be traded in. If the route is long or difficult, only those products of small bulk and weight in proportion to value can bear the expense of carriage; and if the time enroute is considerable, only such goods as do not rapidly deteriorate will go to market. Furthermore, in order to obtain the largest returns it is not enough merely to know that certain

goods can usually be exchanged at a certain place for some value or other; one needs to know, in addition, the time when the exchange can take place to the best advantage. For this, quick and trustworthy means of communication are necessary.

#### MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

*Post-office.*—What were the means of communication in 1880? Including Edenton, there were six post-offices in the county. Edenton was served both by steamers and by stage-coach, one or two of the other post-offices were served by steamers, and the remaining ones were on star routes. Many people were from five to ten miles from any office, and frequently received their mail not oftener than two or three times a month. There were others who received no mail at all; many a one died at a ripe old age without having received a piece of mail during his entire life.

*Telegraph.*—The county was first reached by telegraph in 1879 (the year just previous to the beginning of the period covered by this treatise). The only station on the line was at Edenton. This was comparatively little used at first, and affected the people in the upper end of the county hardly at all.

*Travelers and Traders.*—The only remaining means of communication was through travelers and traders. The information that many of the people in the country districts secured relative to prices of produce was principally that furnished by the class of traders known as "carters."<sup>1</sup> Since it was to their advantage that the people from whom they bought should think produce cheap, the information they gave out in regard to market<sup>2</sup> prices was not always

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 135-7.

<sup>2</sup> The market referred to in this treatise is always the Norfolk market, unless otherwise stated. This was the nearest and most accessible market that was at all sensitive to world, or even national, conditions.

reliable. The merchants who bought country produce had the same reason for keeping the people in the dark concerning prices as did the carters. Thus it was that the producers knew very little about the market value of their products. It was probably because of these conditions that for many things there had come to be established certain customary prices which changed but little from season to season, or from year to year, regardless of market fluctuations.

#### TRANSPORTATION

*Railroads.*—As measured by present-day standards, transportation facilities were very inadequate. In 1880 the nearest railroad shipping point was Suffolk, Va., thirty odd miles from the upper end of the county, and some forty miles further from the extreme southeastern end.<sup>1</sup>

*Waterways.*—The greater part of the North Carolina coast is fringed with a chain of long, narrow, sandy islands called "the banks." These vary in width from a few yards to two miles, and are separated from the mainland by large bodies of water known as "sounds." Connecting the sounds with the ocean are several inlets, some of which at various times have been navigable for small boats. Until the digging of the canals it was through these inlets that the sea-going commerce of the whole Albemarle region had to pass.

Chowan has enjoyed more or less water transportation ever since the beginning of the first white settlements, but as far back as recorded history goes the inlets have been shallow, have been constantly filling up, and their channels constantly shifting: hence their navigation has always been rather precarious even for small craft. Some of them

<sup>1</sup> Those in the lower end of the county were about as near to Norfolk as they were to Suffolk.

have filled up entirely, and where once the sound connected with the sea, houses now stand. At no time since Chowan was settled has there been more than a few feet of water in any of them. Thus all except light-draft vessels, those drawing not over six or eight feet of water, have been precluded from coming in at all.<sup>1</sup> No sea-going vessel has traded with Edenton since the Civil War.<sup>2</sup>

Once inside the Albemarle Sound the conditions for navigating it and the rivers emptying into it have always been fairly good for small craft. The products of the surrounding territory, however, were, and continue to be, quite similar; hence there has been little occasion for exchange with the producers of neighboring counties. Because of these facts—lack of good inlets to the sea and the similarity of products of the adjacent country—the possession of a rather elaborate system of inland waterways has been of comparatively little value to the county. What the people of Chowan wanted were means of transport to outside markets where they could trade the wares of which they had a surplus for those they lacked. The Dismal Swamp Canal and the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal offered outlets to world marts, but the former was only six feet deep and the latter seven-and-a-half, hence none but light-draft boats could be accommodated.<sup>3</sup>

*Wagon Roads.*—In the summer time the roads of the clay sections, which compose about half the county, were usu-

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Weaver, *Internal Improvement in North Carolina Previous to 1860*, Johns Hopkins University Studies, vol. xxi, pp. 144-5.

"Internal Improvements in North Carolina," *North American Review*, vol. 12, pp. 22-28.

*Hints on the Internal Improvement of North Carolina* (New York, 1854), pp. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> Information furnished by Richard Dillard, who has been port doctor since 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *Bureau of the Census Report* (1880), vol. iv, p. 753.

ally fair for dirt roads to which little attention was given, but in winter they frequently became so bad that an empty cart was itself almost a load. The roads of the sandy sections were heavy most of the time, both winter and summer. The roads in all parts of the county could have been made pretty good as dirt roads go, and with comparatively little expense, but they were worked, or rather neglected, by that time-honored, unjust, inefficient plan of requiring all able-bodied males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five living on a given road, or section of it, to put in on it an equal number of days each year. Each had an overseer who decided how many days, within a maximum limit,<sup>1</sup> it should be worked. Some overseers would spend a half day annually on their allotments, while others would work five or six days on theirs. The work, however, was never arduous. The men went late, quit early, and worked light while there, some of them doing practically nothing except talk. In fact the whole affair was largely a social gathering.

Instead of the roads being graded up in the middle so that the water would "sheet off," they not infrequently were lower in the middle than anywhere else. What little work was done, was done in the fall of the year, hence the dirt thrown in the roads would not have time to harden before the winter-freezes, with the result that for that season they were often worse than if they had not been touched. The sandy roads were never clayed, nor the clay roads ever sanded. This could have been done at small cost, since the different types of soil are usually so close to each other that the haul is short.

In winter and spring considerable portions of the roads

<sup>1</sup> This limit was rarely ever reached, though sometimes an overseer who had been angered by the men would warn them out the full number of days simply to "get back at them."

between Chowan and Norfolk were even worse than those in Chowan. Not only were they tough and full of great holes, but on the road usually traveled by those going from the upper part of the county to Norfolk there were no less than four swamps which had to be forded. During wet spells and after big rains the water often rose so high in them that it came up into one's cart. At times these swamps were so deep that crossing was dangerous, and when frozen over, it was still more hazardous. At high-water one of them was some four hundred yards long.

At this time the majority of the ducks and chickens sold were carted to Norfolk alive. In loading they were put in a coop and suspended from beneath the cart. Except during dry times there was nearly always enough water in some of the swamps to give them a good wetting, and, when the swamps were full of water, they would be immersed for such a long time that it was a common occurrence for several of them to drown. In winter it was especially hard on chickens, for those that did not drown would nearly freeze after getting wet all over.

*Service.*—In 1880 there were two transport lines between Edenton and Norfolk, each maintaining a regular tri-weekly service. One was a stage via Elizabeth City, carrying mail and passengers only. The other was a combined rail and steamer route, handling mail, passengers, and freight. This latter route was via Franklin, Va. A line of steamers plying on the Chowan and Black Water Rivers between Edenton and Franklin connected at Franklin with the Seaboard and Roanoke railroad, running between Weldon, N. C., on the Roanoke river, and Portsmouth, Va.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there were irregular steamers and sailing vessels

<sup>1</sup> Portsmouth and Norfolk were then as now, practically one city, there being ferry service back and forth between the two places every few minutes.

from Edenton and other points along the county's coastline to Norfolk and Baltimore via the afore-mentioned canals. Vessels even went up some of the small creeks. Another means of transportation—that of private conveyance—played an important rôle, particularly in the upper end of the county. Much of the produce marketed from this section, and a considerable number of fresh herring from the Chowan River and Albemarle Sound, went to market by horse and cart.

Some little produce was carried to Suffolk, Va., tho the usual market was Norfolk, which by the country road ranged from 60 to 80 miles from different parts of the county.<sup>1</sup> The hauling thru the country was practically all done with one-horse teams carrying from four hundred to a thousand pounds to the load, the size of the load depending upon the condition of the roads and the size of the team. The round trip required from three days to a week.<sup>2</sup>

Transportation to and from Chowan, whether by water, water and rail, or horse and cart, was slow at best, and rather expensive, except for timber products, salt, salt fish, cotton, and such other goods as could stand a long, uncertain trip by sail without serious damage.

#### COMMERCE

*Articles Traded In.*—The principal articles traded in were as follows: outgoing—timber products, fish, melons,

<sup>1</sup> Those in the lower end went by a different route from that taken by those in the upper end. Hence the difference in the distances from Norfolk to the upper end and from Norfolk to the lower end, was not the distance from one end of the county to the other.

<sup>2</sup> By driving both night and day, those in the upper end of the county could make the trip, stand market, and return, all in three days and two nights. If one had a horse that was used to going to Norfolk and would keep the track, he could lie back and sleep, but it was killing to the horse to have to travel both day and night.

cotton, pork, bacon, peas, eggs, poultry, grapes, huckleberries and cattle; incoming—dry-goods, shoes, hats, notions, hardware, confectionery, tobacco, and snuff. The cattle were driven to market, while the grapes and huckleberries, most of the eggs, poultry, pork and bacon, and some of the fish, were hauled by the carters. The greater portion of the remainder of the outgoing products and the major portion of the incoming were shipped. In the upper end of the county, however, quite a few goods were brought in by the carters.

*Country Merchants.*—There were two classes of middlemen—the “merchant” and the “carter.” Each individual merchant kept a small stock of the goods most in demand by his neighbors. His stock consisted of certain varieties of hardware, drugs, notions, dry-goods, shoes, hats, groceries, tobacco, snuff, and confectionery. This carrying of a general line of merchandise was characteristic to a greater or less degree of all country merchants, tho in Edenton there were some merchants with special lines. In reality each country merchant kept a miniature department store, tho the assortment was necessarily meagre, since the biggest of the merchants carried but a few hundred dollars worth of goods. For days, and even weeks, at a time, many of them would be out of the articles most frequently sold.

A goodly portion of the merchant's business was barter, or the trading of “store” goods for farm products. He bought tallow, beeswax, poultry, eggs, bacon, cotton, corn, peas, wood ashes, rags, and such home-manufactures as socks, tubs, chairs, bread-trays, horse collars, hames, axe helves, and cart-saddles. He took in comparatively little actual cash at any time, and hardly any at all except in the fall of the year. From sixty to seventy-five per cent of the

mercantile business was done on a time basis, payment being made in the fall. Many a one who paid up in November or December would again be trading on time by February. Numerous accounts and parts of accounts were carried over from one year to another. In poor crop years this was especially prevalent. Under such conditions the merchants were forced to buy on time, which meant high prices both to themselves and to their customers, even to those who paid cash.

Transactions were small. Merchants made many a deal, trading manufactured goods for farm produce, in which the total values involved on both sides did not exceed three or four cents. People frequently would walk a mile or two to a store for the express purpose of buying less than five cents worth of goods. They would bring as little as a pound or two of seed cotton, one or two quarts of corn, a gallon or two of ashes, a pound or two of old rags, or one or two eggs. If the value of the produce a person brought in amounted to as much as six or eight cents, it was nothing out of the ordinary for him to make four or five purchases, probably one or two cents worth of tobacco, and a like amount of snuff, of candy, and of sugar. Much of the small stuff, like that mentioned above, which was sold during the spring and summer months went for snuff and tobacco. Many people seldom went to the store without buying these articles. Their use was common among a large body of the people, both young and old. Some few formed the tobacco habit so early in life that they could not even remember the time.

*Carters.*—The class of middlemen known as carters has already been referred to. They were both freighters and

<sup>1</sup>The proportion here given is based on interviews with various merchants in the county.

traders, who dealt in country produce destined for outside markets. Some of this they obtained from the merchants who had collected it in exchange for "store" goods, but they probably secured the larger portion direct from the producers. They drove around thru the country and bought up whatever marketable stuff they could find for sale. When one had gathered a load, he packed his cart, drove to Norfolk, and there in the open market-place sold to the consumer direct.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the farmer folk preferred selling to the carters rather than to the merchants, because they could usually get about as much in cash from the carter as they could in "trade" from the merchant, and with cash they could buy cheaper. Most merchants would not pay cash for produce, because their profits were expected largely from the goods they sold to the farmers rather than from those they bought of them. Of course, they frequently made on both ends of the deal, but they figured principally on the merchandise they bought to be sold. The merchant sold on a comparatively staple market; that is, when he bought his goods he knew about what he was going to sell them for. Not so with the carter; his selling market was ever fluctuating, hence he never knew what he was going to get for the produce he was buying. This was one of the factors which tended to make him buy everything as low as he could, if the article was one with no standardized price. For instance, in buying an old lady's spring chickens there was no price standard, except in so far as the old lady judged they

<sup>1</sup> Some preferred to "lump" (wholesale) all or part of their loads to the huxters (who stayed on the market all the time) to retailing it themselves. This saved them some trouble, but usually brought them in less money. However, where one had a whole load of one product, for instance eggs, he could not retail them all out in one day, so always wholesaled some of them, as it was very rare for a carter to stand market two mornings with one load unless practically forced to.

were about the size she had sold the year before for a certain price. In such deals there was a lot of higgling.

Aside from the business out of which he made his profits, at times the carter also did a considerable "accommodation" business—business from which he neither expected nor received any cash returns. His neighbors and others from whom he bought produce felt that they had a perfect right to send by him to town for anything the country stores did not keep, or which could be bought in town to much better advantage. It not infrequently happened that he took up more time buying goods for his neighbors than he did in selling out his load. He brought out such things as ladies' millinery and the better-class dressgoods, and even wares troublesome to haul, like bedsteads, plows, and trunks. Where the article had considerable weight or bulk, a small charge was made for freight, otherwise there was no charge whatever.

The carter's life, while not all sunshine and roses, was nevertheless fascinating to many. Carters usually traveled two or more together, and so there was little occasion for lonesomeness. In fact, unless the weather was especially bad, or something serious the matter, nearly every one was in high spirits during the whole trip. On the return their natural humors were often made still more hilarious by the presence of the "pint tickler" and the "little brown jug."

At different points along the way there were exceptionally good feeding places. Of these there were two general classes—the pine thickets and the churchyards. When the weather was cold the thickets were usually chosen, since they acted as windbreaks, and also furnished plenty of fire-wood. When it was warm the churchyards were quite popular, as there was usually plenty of water and some breeze. Where the churches were set in thick woods, with only a small open space around them, they were good stop-

ping places all the year round. Here the carters fed and watered their horses, built fires, made coffee, warmed and ate their victuals, spun yarns, joked one another, and slept.

Some followed carting as a business, going nearly every week. Usually they had little crops which sometimes they worked, and which sometimes the grass took. Then there were others who made only a few trips a year, just to carry their own produce to market and to make purchases for their families. In the upper end of the county the merchants themselves hauled part of the produce they took in and part of the goods they sold.

## CHAPTER XII

### COMMUNICATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMERCE IN 1915

#### COMMUNICATION

*Mail Service.*—During the last thirty-five years the means of communication in Chowan, as elsewhere in this great country of ours, have been remarkably developed. The majority of families outside of Edenton are now served by rural-free-delivery mail routes. On October 14, 1914, there were seven of these in the county, covering a total of 162 miles.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there were three miles of a route starting from an adjoining county. Since then a second route from an adjoining county has come in, adding twelve more miles, so that the county now has about a mile of rural-free-delivery route for every square mile of territory.<sup>2</sup> More than ninety per cent of the population<sup>3</sup> are now within a mile of either some post-office or rural route, and are getting their mail daily.

*Telegraph and Telephone.*—There are now only two telegraph stations in the county. Certain sections, however, are well served by telephone, there being four companies represented, with a total in the county of eighty miles of poles and two hundred and thirty miles of wire.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C.

<sup>2</sup> The county has 178 square miles of territory. *Cf. infra*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> My own estimate.

<sup>4</sup> Data furnished December 7, 1914, by the Tax Clerk of the State of North Carolina Corporation Commission.

In addition, there is a private line of some twenty miles in length. There is still another line, which is owned by the railroad and extends into the county for about five miles. This line has only one telephone in the county. All lines have long-distance connections.

#### TRANSPORTATION

*Railways.*—In the field of transportation, advantages have also been tremendously increased. On December 16, 1881, the first railroad in the county was opened from Edenton to Norfolk,<sup>1</sup> thus bringing the Edenton section of the county into direct rail connection with the outside world. The nearest railroad shipping point for four-fifths of the farmers, however, was still from five to twelve miles distant, and not until 1887, when a second railroad (starting from Suffolk, Va.,<sup>2</sup> and terminating in the upper end of the county on the Chowan river) was opened, was this condition changed. Some thirty or forty per cent. of the farmers were still left from five to twelve miles distant from any by-rail shipping point. The next significant change in transportation conditions was in 1901 when the owners of the last-mentioned road began shifting the southern end of the road-bed toward the center of the county and extending the line toward Edenton, which was destined to be the new southern terminal and to which place it was opened in 1903. The change gave the county a railroad running pretty well through its center for about twenty miles, and brought all, except comparatively few (principally in the south-eastern point of the county), within five miles of a railway. On January 1, 1910, a bridge across the Albemarle Sound, replacing the old ferry system between Edenton and

<sup>1</sup>*Poor's Manual of the Railroads of the United States* (annual numbers, 1868-1915, New York), 18th annual number (1885), p. 383.

<sup>2</sup>From Suffolk there were three or four lines running to Norfolk.

Mackey's Ferry, was opened for traffic,<sup>1</sup> and thus was completed a direct all-rail route between Edenton and all principal points south and west.

*Water Carriage.*—With the development of rail transportation, water transportation has gradually dwindled. One small steamer plies between Edenton and Franklin, making three trips a week, and an occasional light-draft sailing vessel makes Edenton or some other point along the county's coast line, but the greater part, probably ninety-five per cent of the transportation to and from the county is now by rail.

*Wagon Roads.*—For some eight or ten years now the roads have been worked by taxation. In the clayey sections, where they cut up badly in times of wet weather, the most of them have been better drained and partially graded so as to shed the water; and a few miles of the worst have been sanded. While what has been done thus far is significant rather because of what it promises than because of its amount, nevertheless, the roads, on the whole, have been much improved over what they were in the eighties.

#### COMMERCE

*Carters.*—The business of the carter, which in the eighties was of considerable importance, has almost vanished. There are a few who buy chickens and eggs and personally sell them in the Norfolk market, but they buy the majority of these from the country merchants rather than from private families, and instead of carting them to Norfolk, usually they send them by rail. Furthermore, these men now generally have to pay something near net wholesale Norfolk prices, whether they buy from the farmer direct, or from the merchant.

*Merchants.*—The merchants have become so numerous

<sup>1</sup> Poor, *op. cit.*, 43d annual number (1910), p. 469.

that competition among them for the farmers' trade is rather keen, resulting in their having to pay the farmer close to Norfolk prices for what he has to sell. Most chickens now are sold by weight rather than by the piece as they were formerly, hence it is easy to compare the prices of different merchants, and if one is paying more than the others, he gets the trade. Practically everybody still sells his eggs locally, since hardly any one produces enough to pay him to make individual shipments. Many, however, ship part or all of their own poultry and certain other produce they raise for market.

While the importance of the carter class of middlemen has dwindled to small proportions, that of the merchant class has considerably increased both as regards numbers engaged and volume of business. Although many of the more substantial farmers either ship their own produce or sell it on the spot to the agents of commission houses,<sup>1</sup> much of the farm produce is still handled by the local merchants. More than half of their merchandise goes out on a credit basis,<sup>2</sup> with a promise to liquidate in the fall. Sometimes the merchant has a crop-lien, sometimes there is a mere verbal understanding that the crop shall go through his hands, and sometimes the debtor brings it to him simply as a matter of choice. The idea is pretty general that the city commission merchant will treat the local merchants better than he will the farmers, since the latter individually have comparatively little produce to ship. For this reason, some who ship their own stuff, ship in the name of some local merchant.

With the vast improvement in the general economic wel-

<sup>1</sup> Peanuts are the principal product sold to agents.

<sup>2</sup> The merchants, whom I have interviewed on this point, estimate that from sixty to seventy-five per cent of the mercantile business is done on time.

fare, and with the change from a condition where the people consumed most of what they produced and produced most of what they consumed to a condition where they sell much of what they produce and buy much of what they consume—with these changes has come a big increase in the quantity and variety of goods carried by the general merchant. Besides dry-goods, groceries, drugs, stationery, hats, shoe, confectionery, snuff, tobacco, and hardware, some also handle furniture, farming utensils, cold drinks, millinery, and clothing. In short, many aim to supply practically all the demands of their customers, except a few special wants of the more fastidious. It should be noted, however, that the big mail-order houses are now doing considerable business in this section, a fact which is cutting into the trade of the local dealers, and which may eventually force them to discontinue certain lines.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LABOR AND WAGES

#### CONDITIONS IN 1880

*Labor Supply.*—Labor in 1880 was both plentiful and cheap. One could hire all he wanted of any kind he wanted, for any length of time he wanted, and at any time of the year he wanted. Farm hands of both races and sexes, fish hands—colored on the sound, mixed on the river, and domestics of both races—all were anxious to work, and were not so very particular about either the kind of work or the length of the hours.

*Rates of Wages.*—There were day hands and monthly hands. Men doing common labor by the day received from forty to fifty cents and board, and from fifty to seventy cents and “board yourself”—twelve to twenty cents a day being reckoned as the cost of boarding a laboring man. The higher prices were received in summer when the days were long and hot and the greatest amount of labor needed. Sometimes as high as seventy-five cents a day and board was paid for especially hard work, for instance, pulling fodder. The very best carpenters received from \$1.25 to \$1.50 and board, while the ordinary ones received from 75 cents to \$1. Seine hands, except captains and seine menders, whose wages ranged from \$2 to \$2.50 a day, received from \$1 to \$1.35 and board. It must be remembered, however, that this was night-and-day work, with much exposure, and, when the fish were running heavy, very little time for eating and sleeping.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 96, 97.

Some of the monthly hands worked the year around, but a large number worked only during crop season—from about the first of March till the last of July, receiving from eight to ten dollars a month with board and lodging. Those hired for crop season only generally received from fifty cents to a dollar a month more than the same grade of hands working by the year. Twenty-six working days were counted a month. Some hands were paid for straight time, rain or shine, others were paid only for the time that they worked. While the day hands received a little more per day during the time they worked than did the monthly hands, the work of the former was very irregular and uncertain; they could get work only for a few days at a time, or in the most busy part of the season when some one happened to need extra help.

As previously explained, at this period much hoe work was done—at certain times from two to four hoe hands being required to follow one plow. Many farmers depended almost entirely on day hands to do their hoe work. One seldom had to lodge them, and it was necessary neither to feed nor to pay them except when they were actually working. While this may have been of advantage to the farmer, it was hard on the laborer.

For day labor, women received from twenty-five to thirty cents and board for housework. One would wash throughout a long hot August day for her board and twenty-five cents. For light work like sewing, they received from fifteen to twenty cents a day. By the month, the year round, their wages ranged from three to four dollars. Many worked both in the house and in the field for this price. When working in the field they not only worked with the hoe but even cleaned up the new ground, hauled dirt, stripped fodder—in fact did almost anything there

was to do except ditch, maul, and plow, and some doubtless did these things.

*Hours.*—The eight-hour-day system for either men or women, if ever thought of, was a mere dream that few dared to mention and none expected to see come to pass. In the country, during six or seven months of the year, the hired girl turned out about four o'clock in the morning to prepare breakfast. If she worked outdoors, after cleaning up the dishes, she went to the field and stayed till time to cook dinner.<sup>1</sup> After dinner she went back and stayed till time to cook supper. When supper was over she had to clean up the dishes, rarely finishing till after eight o'clock. The only time she had off was Sunday afternoons.

#### LABOR AND WAGES IN 1915

*Scarcity of Labor and the Method of Securing a Supply.*—In 1880 laborers were hunting jobs; at present just the reverse is true—jobs are hunting laborers. The time was when one could hire all the labor he wanted, and when he wanted it, without previously making any special provisions, but that time is no more. Unless one has plenty of labor living on his own land, ordinarily he is unable to hire hands at the very times he needs them most. Because of this condition the great majority of farmers who do much hiring aim to keep settled on their own places sufficient labor to supply their needs. To attain this end the usual custom is to furnish families (mostly colored), rent free, cheap one- or two-room shanties, fire-wood, and small garden plots. It is a common thing for a tenant of this class to have a "side crop" of two or three acres of cotton which he cultivates on halves. In furnishing free quarters, fire-wood, and garden, the landlord appeals to that side of human nature

<sup>1</sup> If it was an extremely busy season with the farmer, frequently his wife would do the breakfast dishes and get dinner.

which is always looking for and expecting something for nothing, and in this way he induces families to take up their residence on his land. By renting such families a few acres on halves, ordinarily he is able to hold them through the crop season, when they might otherwise pull up and leave him when he is busiest.

Such families as above described are, in reality, not tenants, but rather hired laborers domiciled on the employer's premises, and more or less controlled by him. They promise to work for him whenever he needs their services. At other times, if they are not needed in their own little crops, they are at liberty to work wherever they see fit.

While the above variety of tenant pays nothing directly for his shack, fire-wood, and little patch of garden (sometimes only a small space around the shack in which he lives), he usually gets from twenty-five to fifty cents a day less for his labor than he could command in the open market. Sometimes the landlord agrees to furnish these tenants work whenever they want it, but almost invariably at a comparatively low rate of wages. This class of laborers is largely composed of those with little capacity for self-direction, less ambition, and almost no initiative.

*Rates and Services.*—The wages of monthly hands on the farm now run from \$12 to \$20 a month, besides board and lodging. In the mills and lumber woods, labor generally is paid by the day, the wages of common labor ranging from \$1.10 to \$1.60. Men working on the farm by the day receive from 75 cents to \$1, sometimes with and sometimes without board. Pound-net hands, who formerly were paid from \$15 to \$25 a month, now receive from \$25 to \$60, and the work is far less arduous. For example, now the boats are all run by gas, while formerly they were sailed when there was wind, and when there was none they had to be rowed. One of the biggest pound-net fishermen on

the sound told me that if fishing were carried on now without gas he could get no hands at all.

Women receive from sixty to seventy-five cents without board for field work. On an average the wages of women on the inside are more than double what they were in 1880, while the work they do is about half what it was then. In the eighties and early nineties the women who cooked usually washed, ironed, and nursed (cared for the children). Now, especially in town and sometimes in the country, the servant who cooks expects to do nothing else: the same is true of the nurse, so a third person has to be called in to do the washing and ironing.

In Edenton (the only town in the county) the servants rarely live on the premises. The washerwoman either comes to the employer's home for a couple of days in the week to do the washing and ironing, or else carries the clothes to her own home. The latter is the more common custom.<sup>1</sup> The cook ordinarily comes in about seven o'clock in the morning, cooks breakfast and dinner (dinner is always the midday meal), cleans up the dishes, and is away by two or three o'clock in the afternoon, in many cases not to be seen any more till the following morning. She eats breakfast where she works, but refuses to eat dinner there, claiming that she much prefers to eat at home; so, when she leaves, she carries away with her a turn of victuals—not infrequently enough for a good-sized family. In fact many a man who has a cook has not only to pay and feed her, but also to put up with her carrying away a large part of what several others eat. This condition is expressed in some lines of a song, which run thus:

“Why do I need to work so hard?  
I got a wife in de white fo'ks' yard.”

<sup>1</sup> In the rural districts the former prevails.

While formerly there were plenty of house-servants to be had at from three to four dollars a month, now one has to pay from six to ten dollars, and let them do as they please. In fact many a person seems to consider himself lucky if he gets one under any conditions.

*Causes of Increased Wages of Men.*—Why this rise of from 75 to 125 per cent in money wages? In the first place, there has been a tremendous increase in the per-capita production of wealth and a general rise in prices. In agriculture the increased productivity has come about through a greater dissemination and more general application of the modern principles of agriculture, together with a wider and more efficient use of improved farm machinery. In manufacturing it has come through the substitution of the factory type of industry for the household type. The increase in prices has come about principally by reason of two economic changes, one of which is universal and the other local. The first is that a greater cheapening has taken place in the production of gold—due to the application of new processes and the opening up of new fields—than in the production of commodities in general. The second is the great increase in the transportation facilities of Chowan since 1880 which now enables producers to secure prices that are controlled by world- rather than by local-market conditions. This increased productivity and rise in prices have made it possible for the employer to pay more than formerly. But this is only one blade of the shears which cut off a bigger wage for the employee. The employer, as a rule, raises wages not simply because he is able to, but because he is forced to. The factor that has forced employers to grant higher wages—the other blade of the shears—has been the diminished relative supply of workers due to the widened demand for workers and to their migration to other localities. The increased demand has come from several sources.

In agriculture, while improved methods of cultivating and housing, and a somewhat smaller area under cultivation,<sup>1</sup> make less labor in general necessary in this industry than formerly, nevertheless there is needed more labor of able-bodied men, because of the fact that much of the planting, hoeing, and gathering, which the women and children formerly did by hand, is now done by tools and machinery operated by men. The fishing does not require as many hands as it did three and a half decades ago, but, owing to the longer season for pound-nets than for seines, the sum total of the labor done by men is probably about the same.<sup>2</sup> The building of the railroads, the manning and the keeping of them in repair, commercial manufacturing, and the cutting, hauling, and milling of the timber have all resulted in entirely new demands for labor. With increased formal education and increased means of travel and communication, the market value of labor has become much better known. With the spreading of this knowledge, many of those with the most ambition, energy, and initiative having labor for sale, have migrated to places where its value could be more nearly realized.

*Causes of Increased Wages of Women.*—The rise in the wages of women doing house- and farm-work is due to causes somewhat different from those which effected the rise in the wages of men. Women have not gone elsewhere in search of work; furthermore, not only has the work usually allotted to them decreased rather than increased in proportion to the increase in population, but the absolute amount they now do, even in the house, is far less than it was in 1880. Much of what they formerly did has been transferred to the factory, and that which is left is much more easily and quickly done now than then, by reason of the use of modern devices. In the fields the work done by women

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 6, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 13, p. 276.

is probably less than fifty per cent of what it was in the early eighties.

With an absolute decrease of some forty or fifty per cent <sup>1</sup> in the amount of work done by women now from that done by them in 1880, and with a 49.3 per cent. increase in population, if there were no further data at hand one naturally would expect the supply of female labor to be greater in proportion to the demand than in the eighties, and, as a result, that lower instead of higher wages would prevail. Just the contrary, however, is the case. The decrease in the supply of female laborers has gone on at a more rapid rate than has the decrease in the supply of work for them. This anomaly is explained by the terms "pride" and "growth of material welfare." Pride and the general improvement in economic conditions which has enabled an ever-increasing proportion of the people to maintain their pride, are the two main factors which have caused the present dearth of female laborers.

*Growing Opposition to Hired Female Service.*—Altho hired female (as well as male) labor in 1880 was predominantly colored, there were still a limited number of white women to be employed for almost any kind of work they were physically capable of doing, whether in the field or in the house. At present this class of hired labor is very near the vanishing point. A few white women and girls work outdoors during the chopping and housing season, but, as a rule, they are members of the families who cultivate the farms on which they work. Some white women still pick cotton for hire, but this is by the pound, and not by the day or month, which they consider a very different proposition, since in the former case one is one's own boss and can come and go when she pleases.

Now that all planting, except the "setting out" (trans-

<sup>1</sup> My personal estimate.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations made for June 1, 1915.

planting) of sweet-potato sprouts, is done by machinery; all peanuts picked off by machinery; and comparatively little hoe work done—not much field work formerly done by women, aside from picking cotton, is left. For this reason, if for no other, one would expect to see comparatively fewer women in the fields than in the earlier days. But there is a more potent reason still. For years many of both sexes have been especially prejudiced against a white woman's doing ordinary farm labor. A goodly number of women who had it to do for a living felt exceedingly chagrined if caught at it, no matter how poor they might be. Some would even run and hide if a man was seen approaching. With the growth of economic well-being an ever-increasing proportion has been enabled to avoid such work.

Probably ninety-five per cent of the rural and sixty per cent of the urban white families, and nearly all of the colored, still do all their domestic work, while the remaining five and forty per cent, respectively, hire much of their cooking, washing, ironing, and nursing done. As for hired white domestics, there are probably not a half dozen in the county working as servants for a straight wage. The few white women who live out, do so under the express stipulation that they are to be considered and treated as members of the families with whom they live, rather than as hired servants. They do not do the housework while the other women of the family sit back and "play lady"—they simply help the other women, and their remuneration usually comes as does that of a wife or daughter (in so far as the remuneration of these latter comes in the present)—in the shape of food, shelter, clothing, and recreation.

Prejudice against work for women decreases as we proceed from hired field labor to business and professional labor. The scale, arranged in a descending series, is about as follows: hired field labor (except cotton-picking), hired domestic labor, field labor for one's own

family (except cotton-picking), domestic labor for a family in which one has been adopted for an indefinite period, cotton-picking for hire, cotton-picking for one's family, domestic labor for one's own family, clerking in a store, stenography, teaching. There are still a few of that variety which believes that any useful work whatsoever ill befits a lady.<sup>1</sup> This type of parasite has been, and continues to be, an incubus on the county, however, not so much because of the number of them the county has been forced to maintain in idleness and frivolity, as because of the feeling they have helped to engender and foster among the working classes—the feeling that women cannot work without compromising their dignity to a greater or less degree, the degree depending upon the kind of work performed.

*Colored Women Follow in the Wake of White.*—This feeling of injured pride—a feeling quite distinct from, and not to be confounded with, plain ordinary laziness—which attacks many white women on exposure to work, is an affection which had spread to their colored sisters. There may never have been a time when both white and black did not occasionally experience a sense of more or less aversion to certain kinds of severe physical exertion, but there was a time, and that not very long ago, when the blacks did not feel disgraced by having to work. The white race has itself to thank for the fact that the colored contingent of the county's population has been inoculated with this deadly virus—false pride.

The colored women are more and more quitting the fields. The great majority will not hire out to do field work. As hired servants they are also withdrawing from the domestic sphere. The best colored families (economically and intellectually speaking) positively refuse to allow their daughters to hire to white people for any kind of menial service whatsoever.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 256, 257.

It is claimed by some of the most prominent colored men that they are obliged to keep their daughters from contact with white men in order to keep them from being grossly insulted. Just how big a rôle this factor plays in keeping colored girls out of the service of white men it is hard to say. However, the following facts are pretty well established and generally admitted: First, that a colored girl has absolutely no protection from being grossly insulted by a white man if she happens to be caught alone with him; neither has she any redress whatsoever, for no court would for a moment entertain her complaint. Second, that the greater the proportion of white blood a colored girl possesses and the more educated and refined she is, the greater the efforts made by white men to seduce her.

Two incidents related to me in the summer of 1914, whether fact or fiction, at any rate show the trend of opinion among a certain element of the colored people. They are as follows: The daughter of one of the "leading citizens" (a lawyer) of Edenton went over to the home of a colored woman and informed her that she was looking for a cook. Did this colored woman reply that she had been longing for just such an opportunity? No, no, not at all! The reply was, "I, too, am looking for a cook, and have been for several days." Another white woman who approached a colored woman on the subject of the latter's cooking and washing for the former, obtained this response: "When you go home, look in de glass an you'll see yo' cook, and a few years later ef you'll look in dat same glass you'll see yo' wash'oman."

The numerous reports which have come to me, and also my own observations, force me to the conclusion that the last-mentioned lady of color was uttering a prophecy which is even now in the process of being fulfilled. It is the common experience of many who are actually in need of domestic help that they are unable to obtain it.

PART III  
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL LIFE



## CHAPTER XIV

### FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE EIGHTIES

#### READING MATTER

BOTH the means of formal education and the ability to utilize them were very scant in 1880. What few books there were, were chiefly copies of the Bible and of elementary school-books. Many a home had no book in it of any sort. Along in the nineties there was seen an occasional volume secured from traveling book-agents, which contained, according to said agents, the combined knowledge of the legal, clerical, and medical professions, the wisdom of the sages, both past and present, business forms and usages, instruction as to how to act and what to wear at various high-society functions, cooking recipes for numerous dishes the names of which the people could not pronounce and the materials for which they did not possess, and sundry other "valuable information." Their need for such literature was just about as urgent as the need of African bushwomen for evening gowns.

Newspapers and periodicals, except a few in Edenton, were rarely seen. A four-page weekly, *The Clarion*, was published in Edenton in 1880, but, with all an editor's vivid imagination, its circulation was reported as only 525.<sup>1</sup> Few people in the county, outside of Edenton, knew of its existence.

<sup>1</sup> N. W. Ayer & Son. *American Newspaper Annual* (Philadelphia), vol. for 1881, p. 119.

## UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR READING

For three very good reasons the amount of reading done was exceedingly small—for the vast majority, almost nil. In the first place, many were unable to read at all, and most of the others read so poorly that they obtained little meaning and less pleasure from what they did read. Second, as has just been stated, many had nothing to read, and even the most favored possessed little that was at all attractive. Finally, the principal light at night, especially in the rural sections, was that furnished by a lightwood knot, which gave an unsteady light of constantly varying intensity; besides, it emitted so much heat that if one sat near enough to see well, his face was burning. Practically the only means of communication for ninety per cent of the population was personal intercourse. The great mass of the people knew little or nothing of what was going on in the outside world.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Equipment.*—As for public schools, the few that existed were pitiable, archaic apologies from the standpoint of both equipment and instruction. The buildings were rough, small (usually about 16 x 20 ft. and 7 to 8 ft. pitch), one-room structures that were neither painted, ceiled, plastered, nor papered. At one end was a door; at the other, an open fireplace. The furnishings consisted of a blackboard (some three feet square) that was seldom used, one chair and either a table or lock desk for the teacher, and from eight to fourteen two-seated desks and some backless benches for the pupils. Everything was home-made. Not only were the desks uncomfortable, but in many schools there were far too few to seat the average number in attendance, much less those enrolled. Even in the late eighties one could sometimes see from fifty to sixty children in a schoolroom with desk capacity for only about twenty-four. Under such

conditions, usually three would crowd on each of the desks, and the remaining ones would have to use the benches—simply rough plank with two pegs in each end. It was customary for the older children to preëempt the few desks, leaving the younger ones to occupy the benches, which were frequently so high that the feet of the little folks swung clear of the floor. These slab benches had at least one point in their favor: on days when there was a “small house,” they could be pitched up on the joists and thus gotten out of the way. When there was a “full house” with “standing room only,” one in the far end of the room from the teacher, in order to reach her, would either have to hurdle several benches, or else serpentine in and out among them.

*Fitness of Teachers.*—The teachers, on the whole, were woefully deficient, having had little formal education of any kind, and no special training whatever in the art of teaching. If one could blunder along over a simple text and “cipher” through the “rule of three,” little else was required. Occasionally the school committee secured some boy or girl preparing for college, or who had had a year or two in college, but all too frequently the teachers were those who had obtained most of what book knowledge they possessed from schools similar to those they were attempting to teach. When the committee went to hire a teacher, it usually spent far more time considering the price demanded than the qualifications offered. In the biennial report for the school years of 1881 and 1882 the state superintendent says of the state at large, “Cheap teachers are preferred because of their cheapness, however incompetent, to well-qualified teachers, if increase of qualifications requires recognition by increased salaries.”<sup>1</sup> Chowan

<sup>1</sup> *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, North Carolina, 1881 and 1882, p. 21.*

was no exception. For the four-year<sup>1</sup> period 1881-4, the average salaries per month were \$23.98 and \$22.04 for white and colored teachers, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the committee had no great range of choice in the selection of teachers when paying such small wages. One of the most deplorable features was that often the small salary paid was more than the person employed was worth. Those hired as teachers were not those making teaching a profession. Teaching was simply a side-issue with them. The position was frequently passed out to someone in the neighborhood because of his or her needs, rather than because of any special fitness for the work. The few who had made any preparation for teaching went where they could be hired for longer terms and at bigger salaries. After commenting on this fact, the state superintendent continues as follows:

The large number of teachers of public schools, who did not attend the Normal Schools, were incompetent, wanting in habits of study and in a knowledge of how to study to advantage and consequently non-progressive, knowing nothing of any studies except such as they had imperfectly learned at the ordinary schools [the public schools which we are now reviewing] and nothing of the improved methods of teaching and school management.<sup>3</sup>

*School Term.*—The schools were supposed to “keep” four months in the year, generally divided into two terms—one of five or six weeks in the late summer after crops were laid by (beginning the latter part of July), and the other during the winter.

<sup>1</sup> The record for 1880 is lacking, hence the average for a four-year instead of a five-year period, is given.

<sup>2</sup> The calculations are based on data found in the *Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina*, for the years indicated.

<sup>3</sup> *Biennial Report, op. cit.*, for 1881 and 1882, p. 22.

*Courses of Study.*—Every pupil had a Webster's spelling-book (known as the "old blue-back," because of its blue pasteboard binding) whether he had any other book or not, and the first year or two of his school life, after having learned the alphabet, was spent in spelling out of it as he held it in his hand. After a while he got a reader of some kind, not always one suited to his stage in the world of literature, but frequently whatever happened to have best withstood the ravages of time and children as it came down through the family. Those further advanced had some sort of an arithmetic, grammar and geography. All were given some practice in writing. Few ever finished with the "blue-back," for after going partly through "spelling out of the book" and being turned back several times, the pupil began spelling "by heart," which usually lasted the remainder of his school career. The words were arranged according to length, and the few who accomplished the feat of spelling through "by heart," will probably never forget how their bosoms swelled with pride as they rolled out those seven and eight syllable words towards the latter part of the "old blue-back." They were spelled something as follows: I-n, in, c-o-m, com, incom, p-r-e, pre, incompre, h-e-n, hen, incomprehen, s-i, si, incompreheni, b-i-l, incomprehensibil, i, incomprehensibili, t-y, ty, incomprehensibility. In later days, some of the more "progressive" teachers substituted dictionaries<sup>1</sup> for "blue-backs" in the case of the more advanced pupils, and required the meanings of the words in addition to their spelling. Being promoted to the dictionary class had one advantage—it made one think he was moving along, which is always stimulating.

*Classification.*—Aside from the "blue-backs" there was little uniformity in the school-books, they having come down

<sup>1</sup> These had been recommended by the State Board of Education.

from various generations, and often from sundry neighborhoods. It was a common experience to find in a school pupils in the same grade and subject with books by two or three different authors. The exception was to find those in the same grade and subject with the same book. In his report for 1880 the state superintendent speaks of the "very serious evils of the diversity of text-books,"<sup>1</sup> and recommends legislation for securing uniformity. Aside from the "by-heart" spelling groups, and some of the higher reading classes, grading and classification was slight. From forty to fifty recitations in the five-and-a-half-hour teaching-day was the usual number.

*Recitations and Methods of Instruction.*—Much of what was learned during the few weeks of school was forgotten during the long intervals between, which fact was used by the teachers as an excuse for turning back the pupils at the beginning of each term. This turning-back, regardless of what the pretext or reason might be, if for more than a brief review, always tended to discourage the more ambitious children. Sometimes this was doubtless the proper procedure; sometimes the teacher thought it was when it was not; sometimes it was done for reasons best known to the teacher herself, though generally suspected by the pupils, and freely alleged among themselves and their parents—she did not want to push them beyond her own depth, especially in arithmetic.

The usual routine was to start off mornings, after having had a few verses from the New Testament, with the three or four "by-heart" spelling classes, followed by the "book-spellers," and these in turn by those still battling with the alphabet. Each child had from four to six recitations daily. The "book-spellers" and the "alphabet-learners" had no

<sup>1</sup> Annual Report for 1880, p. 65.

variation in their work, but simply one recitation after another of the same thing following in monotonous succession. The last ten minutes preceding the one-hour noon recess was frequently devoted to writing.

In all schools mathematics was the residual claimant. After the spelling, reading, geography, and grammar lessons had been "said," which ordinarily was not later than the middle of the afternoon session (usually earlier), the more advanced pupils "ciphered" till school "let out." Those who had arithmetics used them, and for the others the teachers would "set down sums" on their slates. Except for those who were attacking the multiplication table, there were no recitations whatever in mathematics. Everybody worked at his seat, assuming that he worked at all, while the teacher spent the time in looking over answers, helping out those who were "stuck," setting down sums for those who had no books, and "hearing the lessons" of those who were not far enough advanced to be "doin' sums."

If a child wanted a word pronounced, or any other information whatsoever concerning his work, he felt at perfect liberty to interrupt the teacher regardless of what she might be doing. In fact, the frequent consulting of the teacher was considered commendable, since it was supposed to indicate industry on the part of the child. The children in their seats, when trying to "get their lessons," "said them over" in stage whispers, thus creating a constant roar, and making it necessary for those reciting to speak rather loud so as to be heard by the teacher. This in turn caused those who were attempting to study to have to whisper a little louder in order to be able to hear themselves. During the period of from three to twelve minutes allotted to a recitation, the teacher attempted to "hear lessons." Amidst all the distractions caused by loud whispering, recitations, and the

running to and from the teacher and in and out of doors by the children, studying was well-nigh impossible.

*Expenditure for Public Education.*—Thus far only a general picture of the nature of the county's public schools has been presented. A few statistical facts taken from the reports of the state superintendents of public instruction may help the reader better to realize the actual conditions. The amount of public moneys paid out for teaching white children from 1880 to 1883, inclusive, averaged \$1.35 annually per head of the white school-population. For teaching colored children during the same period, the annual average was \$1.28 per head of the colored school-population.<sup>1</sup> If the total expenditures for all public-school purposes in the county for 1880 be divided by the total population of the county, according to the 1880 census, it will be found that the county spent that year for the training of its youth, only 26.6 cents per head of the entire population. The average annual expenditure for all public-school purposes for the four-year period, 1880-3, was 50.3 cents per head of the entire population<sup>2</sup> of the county.

*Value of Equipment.*—Some conception of the paucity of material equipment devoted to public instruction may be gained from the recorded value of the public school property. In 1880 the property set apart for the use of 1142 white school-children was valued at \$2090, or \$1.83 per head. If this seems small, how about that for colored children? The public school property for the use of 1844

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 17, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> The population for 1881, 1882, and 1883 is arrived at by adding to the population of 1880 one-tenth of the increase between 1880 and 1890, for each additional year. This method of calculating population for intercensus years is not strictly accurate, but sufficiently so for the present purpose. Even if a more refined method were used the accuracy would be more seeming than real.

of these was valued at \$243, or 21 cents per head.<sup>1</sup> To express it in slightly different terms, for every 100 white children of school age the county owned land, buildings and furnishings to the value of \$183, and for every 100 colored children of school age it owned \$21 worth of material equipment for training them. Even in 1884 conditions were but little improved.<sup>2</sup>

*Attendance.*—From equipment let us turn to its appreciation as evidenced by school attendance. Judged by this criterion, the negro, who had the least to appreciate, was the most keenly alive to its value. In 1881 more than half of the colored school-children were enrolled, and there was an average attendance of nearly one-third of the colored school population. This is low, to be sure, but when we examine the records of the white children we find that they can boast an enrollment of only slightly more than one-third and an average attendance of less than one-fifth. Even if the ratio of average attendance to school population be taken for the four-year period, 1881-4, the ratio is 7.9 per cent. higher for colored than for white.<sup>3</sup>

*Reasons for Small Attendance.*—Some few parents may have kept their children home because of the poor quality of the schools, but if there were any of this class they constituted only a small fraction of the total. Most parents were ignorant of the value of an education, and actually did not care if their children did grow up into manhood and womanhood knowing nothing of books. Many had the attitude frequently heard expressed in words similar to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 20, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. tables 18 and 20, pp. 284 and 286, respectively. Aside from the public schools there was the Edenton Academy, and two or three little elementary private schools of about the same rank as the public schools.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. table 19, p. 285.

following: "I never had no larnin', un I got along somehow, un my younguns kin do de same." Many kept their children home because of false pride—kept them home for no other reason than that they were unable to dress them quite so well and to send them off with quite so good a lunch as some other families did. This same false pride manifested in various forms has been and continues to be one of the greatest hindrances to progress known to the county.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 150 *et seq.* and *supra*, p. 255 *et seq.*

## CHAPTER XV

### FORMAL EDUCATION IN 1915

#### GENERAL STATEMENT

WHILE there is still an abundance of room for improvement in the county's public school system—in regard to material equipment, qualifications of teachers, attendance, and length of term—nevertheless much progress has been made in certain directions during the past three and a half decades, as may be seen by referring to tables 16-22, pages 282 *et seq.*

#### LOCAL TAX

Probably one of the biggest steps forward is the advantage taken, by some, of what may be termed the "local-option" law, placed on the statute books of the state in 1901. This law enables a majority of the qualified voters of any district to vote a special tax on both polls and property to be spent exclusively in their own district.<sup>1</sup> A district which imposes this extra tax on itself is known as a "local-tax district." In 1914 there were six of these, embracing six white schools and four colored,<sup>2</sup> all of which had come into the fold since 1909.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Public Laws of North Carolina*, Session 1901 (Raleigh, N. C., 1901), ch. iv, sec. 72, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> There were then nineteen white rural districts and fifteen colored. Where there is a colored district, as a rule it covers practically the same territory as that covered by the corresponding white district. Certain sections of the county, however, have almost no colored people. Thus it comes about that there are more white districts than colored. The few colored children in these almost solid white districts are transferred to others.

By July 1915, one district had dropped out of the local-tax column, and two others had entered it. The one that dropped out contained one white school and one colored. One of those that adopted it had no colored children and the other was so completely gerrymandered that almost all the colored were left out. There were then in July 1915, seven white rural schools and three colored, operating under the local-tax system.<sup>1</sup>

#### SCHOOL PROPERTY

*Buildings and Equipment.*—In the summer of 1914 the county superintendent made the following statement to me:

Previous to 1909 the county had no modern school buildings in the rural districts. Since then two one-room, three two-room, one three-room and auditorium, and one four-room, modern buildings have been erected for the whites. All of

<sup>1</sup> The facts of this and the preceding paragraph were furnished me by the county superintendent. In October 1916 (after the above was written), this same official stated to me that there then existed nine rural local-tax districts for white and five for colored. This local-tax territory, according to his figures, embraced 67 per cent and 28 per cent of the white and colored school population, respectively.

The law which made provision for the levying of special school taxes permits any degree of gerrymandering the ingenuity of the whites can devise. From the foregoing percentages it looks as if they had exercised the privilege rather freely. The fact is, however, conditions are even worse than these figures would indicate. When the Edenton graded school district was formed in 1903 it was gerrymandered to such an extent that in 1910, when more than 59 per cent of the population of the incorporated town of Edenton were colored, less than 22 per cent of the school population in the graded school district were colored. (Calculations made from tables 5 and 19, pp. 265 and 285 respectively.) Whole sections of the town, where only negroes lived, were cut out, while at the same time white territory from one to two miles beyond the incorporated limits was included. Combining the school population of the Edenton graded schools with that of the other special tax districts, there were included, in November 1916, 76 per cent of the white but only 32 per cent of the colored.

these are in local-tax districts. As yet there are no modern buildings for the colored, though some fairly good ones.<sup>1</sup>

All buildings for both races are now either ceiled or plastered; seventeen of the nineteen for the whites and eight of the fifteen for the colored are painted;<sup>2</sup> seventeen of those for white are furnished complete with patent desks. Only three of the colored schools have any patent desks, and only one is furnished complete with them, while six are furnished with home-made desks, and the remaining six, or two-fifths, are furnished with benches.<sup>3</sup>

*Value.*—The value of the public-school property for the white race increased from \$2090 in 1880 to \$30,300 in 1914, or more than fourteen times, while the public school property for the colored race increased from \$243 in 1880 to \$6400 in 1914, or more than twenty-six times.<sup>4</sup> Looked at from the standpoint of the number of school children, the value of the property for the whites increased from

<sup>1</sup> By reference to table 17, p. 283, it will be seen that during the five school years 1909-10—1913-14, the average annual expenditure for new buildings and repairs was \$2330 and \$136 for white and colored, respectively.

According to an interview with the superintendent in November 1916, since his statement to me in 1914, the following additional construction had been undertaken: for white children, one one-room and two two-room modern buildings completed, and one two-room and two three-room modern building in process of construction; for colored, one one-room modern building erected (the first and only modern building in the county for colored), and one three-room building enlarged and remodeled so as to approach rather near state specifications. During 1916 Edenton put up for its white children a modern school-building, which, when completely equipped, will have cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

<sup>2</sup> These facts were furnished by the county superintendent in April 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Facts regarding the seats were taken from the state superintendent's *Biennial Report* for 1912-13 and 1913-14, which gives the conditions existing at the close of the school year 1913-14.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 17, p. 283.

\$1.83 per head in 1880 to \$18.21 per head in 1914, and for colored the increase was from 21 cents per head in 1880 to \$3.48 per head in 1914.<sup>1</sup>

#### EXPENDITURES

Not only has the value of the school property increased several times over since 1880, but the same is true for "total expenditures." During the period of 1880-3 the average annual per-capita expenditure for the total school population was \$1.65. For the five-year period 1909-10—1913-14 the average was \$4.89.<sup>1</sup> The increase, however, seems to have been largely devoted to the white children. The item of expense for teaching is given separately in both periods and so can be compared. For teaching whites, the average annual expenditure per head of the white school-population for 1880-3 was \$1.35, and for the colored the corresponding figure was \$1.28. During the five school years 1909-10—1913-14 the average annual expenditure was \$5.46 and \$1.37 for white and colored respectively. In other words, while the expenditure per head of the white school-population for teaching white children for the latter period was more than four times annually what it was for the former, that for the colored hardly increased at all. Reduced to percentages, the increase for whites was 304.4 per cent per head and for colored, 7 per cent.

#### TEACHERS

*Training.*—The degree of fitness possessed by the teachers is considerably higher now than in the eighties. During the five-year period 1909-10—1913-14, of the public school teachers of the county, 30.6 per cent of the white and 13.4 per cent of the colored held college diplomas, while 66.9

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 20, p. 286.

per cent of the white and 82.4 per cent of the colored had had "normal training."<sup>1</sup> It should be added, however, that the normal schools not only do high school work but many even do grade work, and that a number of the teachers have had only a few months even of this. Furthermore, the attendance at either a two-weeks teachers' county institute or a four-weeks' summer school (required of each teacher every two years) is reckoned as "normal training." It is thus seen that the phrase, "normal training," is not very definite and frequently means very little. As the county superintendent recently expressed it, "It [normal training] is a rather uncertain quantity." Notwithstanding the improvement noted in the quality of the teachers, most of them are still sadly lacking in any special training for teaching; many have not had more than the equivalent of a four-year high-school course, and some not even that.<sup>2</sup>

*Feminization.*—Formerly much of the teaching was done by men, but this is no longer the case. From 1909 to 1914 all white teachers in the county, except the city superintendent and one rural teacher, were women. Since 1914, aside from the city superintendent, they have all been women. For the most of these latter, teaching is merely a method of marking time while waiting for the matrimonial car. Not expecting to follow very long the teaching of the children of the public for a livelihood, they quite naturally prefer "tending" a good "prospect" to "boning" for special training in public school work. The colored schools still have a few male teachers, but here also, the women are gradually replacing the men.

<sup>1</sup> Calculations made from data found in *Biennial Reports, op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> In his *Biennial Report* for 1912-13 and 1913-14, p. 25, the state superintendent says, "I am profoundly convinced that efficient teaching and efficient supervision are the most pressing needs of our public schools at this time."

*Salaries.*—The rate of pay for white teachers has been considerably increased since the eighties. Their average monthly salary in the rural schools for 1913-14 was \$39, an increase of 62.6 per cent over that (23.98) for the period 1881-4. In some of the local-tax districts the increase was still more. The pay of colored teachers has increased very little, their average monthly salaries in 1913-14 being only \$25.43, as against \$22.04 during 1881-4, an increase of but 15.4 per cent. The regulation salary for the white rural teacher holding a first-grade certificate is \$40 a month, while for the same grade colored teacher it is only \$27.50. The white and colored teachers with second-grade certificates receive \$30 and \$22.50 respectively.<sup>1</sup> The average amount paid to each rural teacher for the school year 1913-14 was \$237.90 to the white and \$128.48 to the colored. The average annual salary paid to teachers during the five-year period 1909-10—1913-14 was \$186.77 to the white and \$103.89 to the colored.<sup>2</sup>

#### INSTRUCTION

*Task of Teachers.*—Uniformity of books is now required, and so the teacher is able to place all the pupils of the same grade and subject in one class. The number of subjects she may be called upon to teach, however, has about trebled,<sup>3</sup> and in 1914 twenty-two of the thirty-four rural schools

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 160, and table 21, p. 287, for salaries. The percentage increase is calculated from the salaries at the two different periods.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations made from data found in the *Biennial Reports, op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> "It [the law] requires . . . the teaching of thirteen subjects in the one-teacher schools. It is absolutely impossible for one teacher, with as many children as are to be found in the average rural school in seven grades, to do thoro work in so many subjects." State Superintendent J. Y. Joyner, in his *Biennial Report* for the years 1912-13 and 1913-14, part i, p. 31.

were still one-teacher establishments<sup>1</sup> holding from twenty-five to thirty-five recitations daily. Such institutions of learning can be called graded schools only by courtesy.

*Short-sightedness.*—One great drawback has been and continues to be the multiplicity of school districts. For the whites there are twenty,<sup>2</sup> including Edenton, and this in a county with an area of only 178 square miles, more than 13 per cent of which is swamp in which no one lives. Thus, on an average each school serves a territory of less than nine square miles, including the swamps. Each individual wants the school located just across the road from him, and if he cannot have a fairly good school of two or three teachers right at his door, he frequently fights for the little one-room school. An additional half-mile or mile nearer the school means far more to him than does the quality of the school.

*Length of Term.*—During the five-year period 1909-10—1913-14 the average rural school term in the regular districts was about twenty weeks for whites and eighteen for colored. In the local-tax districts the terms were two or three weeks longer. Thus far, however, the majority of the local-tax proceeds has gone for better equipment and higher-priced teachers.

*Attendance.*—In any case, probably more significant than the length of the term is the number in attendance. Taking the whole county, for the whites, during the period 1909-10—1913-14 the annual average of the percentages which the average attendance formed of the school population was

<sup>1</sup> *Biennial Report, op. cit.*, part ii, pp. 155 and 158. In October 1916, the county superintendent informed me that for the school year then about to begin, nine of the eighteen white rural schools and seven of the fifteen colored would start with two or more teachers.

<sup>2</sup> Since this was written, two white districts have consolidated, making one less.

48.9, as against 29.7 for the period 1881-4. The corresponding figures for the colored were 43.6 and 37.6. In the rural schools the average attendance for the five-year period 1909-10—1913-14 was only 2.1 per cent less for colored than for whites, but in Edenton the difference was much greater. Here were found the highest for white (55.6), and the lowest for colored (35.4). The poor showing for the colored, however, is at least partially, if not entirely, accounted for by the fact that several of them were attending some one of the three colored private schools.<sup>1</sup> For the later period the attendance was better for both races than at any time before, and yet during this period, on an average, less than three-fourths of the school population was enrolled, and less than one-half in regular attendance.<sup>2</sup>

#### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Edenton has three colored denominational schools, whose total enrollment for 1914-15 was 220.<sup>3</sup> Some thirty or forty per cent of the pupils, however, come from counties other than Chowan. One of these schools does work of such quality that its graduates are able to get first-grade certificates in the county.

There are no regularly taught private schools for whites. Occasionally some woman will run a little "pay" school for small children when the public school is not in session.

#### LITERACY

Since the dispelling of ignorance is the principal avowed aim of the public-school system, the degree to which this

<sup>1</sup> According to the superintendent of one of these schools, the three had enrolled in 1914-15 about 40 pupils (some 30 per cent of the total negro school-population) from the graded-school district of Edenton.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. table 19, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Enrollment furnished in April 1915 by the principal of one of the schools.

has been effected may be taken as a certain measure of its efficiency. The one great trouble, however, in applying this criterion, is that there are statistics covering neither the amount of ignorance existing in 1880, nor the extent to which it has since been dissipated. The only thing bearing on this point at all concerning which we have statistics, is illiteracy. This itself is very unsatisfactory, since the test of literacy—the ability barely to read and write, which, according to the Bureau of the U. S. Census, places one on the literacy side of the fence—in no way indicates the amount of formal training. This test simply establishes a minimum; those who have had the equivalent of the first two or three primary grades are classed with those who have completed a university course.<sup>1</sup> This test, however, is of value in that it shows the number below the minimum, and by comparison of different periods, the trend of the population as regards literacy.

The first U. S. Census report on illiteracy by counties was for 1900, and so the only facts which indicate the direction and rate of change are those brought out by a comparison of the opposite ends of one decade only. In 1900 practically two-fifths (39.6 per cent) of the native males of voting age were classed as illiterate. Ten years later this proportion had decreased to slightly more than one-fourth (26.1 per cent). Among the total native population ten years old and over, illiteracy declined from 37.6 per cent in 1900 to 18.6 per cent in 1910, a drop of almost 50 per cent. For the colored of this age-group, the fall was from 51 per cent in 1900 to 25.5 per cent in 1910, a fall of exactly 50 per cent. Of the

<sup>1</sup> "In general the 'literate' population in this report should be understood as including all persons who have had even the slightest amount of schooling, while the illiterates represent persons who have had no schooling whatever." *U. S. Census report for 1910*, vol. i, p. 1185.

group ten to twenty years old, inclusive, only 4.9 per cent in 1910 were classed as illiterate.<sup>1</sup> The only gratifying thing about the foregoing figures is that they show that the dark cloud of illiteracy is being gradually rolled back. The facts, however, that one of every four of the adult native males and one of every six of all natives ten years old and over are unable to read and write, proclaim rather loudly the inefficiency of the county's public school system in the past; and the fact that in 1910 practically one out of every twenty in the group from ten to twenty years old, was unable to communicate with his fellow human beings except by personal intercourse, would seem to indicate that something was very seriously lacking somewhere, even quite recently. It should be remembered, however, that the few rural local-tax districts have all been established since 1909, and that the few modern buildings in the county have been erected since the same date. These developments clearly indicate an awakening interest in the public-schools on the part of the people whom the schools are intended to serve, and we may confidently expect the next decennial census to show the percentage of illiteracy among those from ten to twenty years old to be considerably lower than it was in 1910.

#### READING

In closing this chapter a word should be said in regard to the reading now being done. The three factors—poor lights, the inability of any but a small per cent to read with ease and understanding, and the scarcity of anything attractive to read—chiefly responsible for the small amount of reading in the eighties, have been greatly changed. Though the light in a great number of the homes is

<sup>1</sup> For the statistical facts of this paragraph, *cf.* table 22, p. 287.

still poor, it is vastly better than it was; and in many it is comparatively good. The percentage of those able to read with both pleasure and profit to themselves has increased probably fivefold, while the amount of reading matter has increased probably an hundredfold. Not only has the number of school text-books increased considerably, but in the summer of 1914 no less than nineteen of the twenty public schools for whites and ten of the sixteen for colored had small libraries of well-selected books of their own.<sup>1</sup> With possibly one or two exceptions, these had all been installed since 1909. Notwithstanding the progress made, however, aside from school-books, hymn-books, and Bibles, at least eighty per cent of the homes still are almost, if not altogether, destitute of books. There is also a great dearth of standard magazines. These go into not over five per cent of the homes.

The amount of reading now done is probably a hundred times what it was three and a half decades ago. Much (perhaps the greater part) of this increase, however, has been in newspaper reading. With the increased means of knowing the outside world and the increased ability of taking advantage of these means, there has grown up an increased desire to know what is going on nationally and internationally, as well as locally. To satisfy this desire, resort is usually had to the newspapers. The majority of home owners and some tenants are now regular subscribers to one or more papers. The accompanying list gives the newspapers with the largest circulation in the county.

<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by the county superintendent.

NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION<sup>1</sup> IN CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., DURING THE FIRST  
QUARTER OF 1915

Publication	Location	Character	Circulation		
			Daily	Semi-weekly	Weekly
Advance .....	E. City, N. C. . .	General .....		5	
Albermarle Observer.	Edenton, N. C. .	" .....			394
Biblical Recorder . . .	Raleigh, N. C. .	Denominational			77
Christian Advocate ..	Raleigh, N. C. .	" "			38
Independent. ....	E. City, N. C. .	General .....			105
Ledger-Dispatch ....	Norfolk, Va. . . .	" .....	43		
News & Observer . . .	Raleigh, N. C. .	" .....	47		
Progressive Farmer ..	Raleigh, N. C. .	Agricultural . . .			228
Virginian-Pilot. ....	Norfolk, Va . . .	General .....	332	212	
Totals .....			422	217	842

<sup>1</sup> The circulation of these publications was furnished by their respective managers. A few other newspapers have a very small circulation here, but statistics cannot be given, as the managers who were written to failed to reply.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SOCIAL CUSTOMS

#### VISITING IN THE EIGHTIES

THE country people of Chowan were great visitors. It was customary to load up the whole family (anywhere from four to ten persons), drive over to a neighboring family, and there spend the entire day, without having previously given any notice of the intended visit. The favorite day for such all-day visits was Sunday, so on Sundays most families usually made ready for company even though they were expecting no one in particular. Three or four times the amount of such things as cakes and pies necessary for the immediate family were generally prepared the day before. The other foods were largely prepared after the visitors arrived.

If it was a fine day and one wanted to go visiting, he arose before daylight,<sup>1</sup> had an early breakfast, and got off soon after sunrise, lest someone should come to visit him and catch him home before he could get away; or lest the people he intended to visit should themselves go visiting before he arrived. He stayed all day, generally for supper as well as for dinner, enjoying the best his host could give, and frequently far better than he was really able to afford. Some people liked company so well and entertained so lavishly and much, that they nearly "broke themselves up." It was

<sup>1</sup> Early stirring was necessary for a woman who had breakfast to cook, four or five children to wash and dress, and herself to "fix up," before starting.

nothing extraordinary for some families to have from ten to twelve persons for both dinner and supper of a Sunday, which in turn meant from two to six extra horses to feed.

#### VISITING IN 1915

Friends and relatives still drop in on each other unannounced, but more and more is it becoming the custom to inform one's prospective host of an intended visit. And while visiting still continues, the amount done is greatly reduced. This is doubtless largely due to the more widely spread ability to read, and the far greater supply of reading-matter. Now, one does not even have to go from home for the neighborhood gossip, since this is furnished by the county weekly. Thus, under present conditions many can get more information by staying at home than they can by visiting. As for social intercourse, there are abundant opportunities for that at public gatherings, of which there are many more now than formerly.

#### GANGS IN THE EIGHTIES

*Gang Defined.*—Whenever a farmer had a piece of work which was too great for his own force to tackle effectively, he had a generally recognized right, provided he himself was of the neighborly sort, to call for free assistance from as many of his neighbors as were necessary to its accomplishment. A group of people thus brought together was known as a "gang." The essential distinction between such a gathering and any other body of people laboring together, was that a member of a gang expected no financial reward. By helping his neighbors he simply retained their good wishes and sustained his own right to call upon them for aid on similar occasions. The only direct expense upon the person having a gang was the cost of the food and drink, it being customary for him to furnish plenty of liquors—

of which both sexes and all ages freely partook—and plenty of something good to eat. It was in setting the table on such occasions that good housewives had an opportunity to prove their quality. These were the times when they made, upheld, or lost their reputation of being the “right sort.”

*Log-rolling.*—Log-rollings offered the best opportunity of any of the gang meetings for one to try out his skill and strength against others of his neighborhood, and were especially attractive to the young and the physically vigorous. The logs were not really “rolled,” but toted—picked up on five-foot hand sticks, two men to the stick, and carried. When a man wanted to demonstrate his physical superiority over another, he challenged the other to tote with him. If his challenge was accepted, when they got under a heavy turn each would try to lift so much from his end of the stick that the other could not “come” (lift his end), or if he did come, would eventually be either pulled down, or made to drop it. When a fellow could not come up with his end, or was pulled down, he was said to be “mashed.”

*Hog-killing.*—At all big gangs a few of the neighboring women generally were asked to come over and help cook and serve.<sup>1</sup> At hog-killings, however, women as well as men were needed to work, and hence were asked. They “rid the chitlings” (stripped the fat from the entrails), helped wash them (the washing was often done at some running branch where, if the weather was cold, the ice had to be broken in order to get to the water), then turned and rewashed in warm water those that were to be used as casings for the sausage meat.

About the only time men and women were ever weighed was at hog-killings. After the hogs were all dressed and weighed, each man would hang on to the balance hook and

<sup>1</sup> This was necessary, especially if there were no girls in the family, since comparatively few families in the rural districts had any servants.

have himself weighed. Then the women would be called out. Not being supposed to be able to hang on, as did the men, a rope swing would be attached to the balance hook and the women were weighed sitting in this swing.

*General Attitude Towards Gangs.*—The chief gangs were house-movings, log-rollings, brick-settings, and hog-killings. Few people objected to going to legitimate gangs—gangs such as those just mentioned. In fact, a person felt somewhat snubbed and piqued if all those around him were asked to a gang and he was not. It meant, in substance, that the fellow having the gang felt more or less unfriendly towards him and hence cared to have no more dealings with him for the time being. A gang, however, to cut a man's wood, or to maul his rails—except in special cases, for instance where he had had a long spell of sickness—was not considered legitimate, and hence was looked upon with disfavor. Such gangs were not customary, and it was felt that anyone having them was simply trying to get out of doing his work himself.

Gangs, while called together to do some piece of work, were, nevertheless, quite enjoyable. They were looked upon as a variety of outing, or picnic to which the great majority of people, if not exceedingly busy with their own work, were fond of going. They were truly social functions which afforded much real, wholesome pleasure and diversion. This is evidenced by the local expression, "hog-killing time." To say to a host or hostess, on taking leave, "I've had a hog-killing time" means "I have been most delightfully entertained, and have enjoyed myself immensely." Why should gangs not be enjoyable occasions? The conditions to make them so approached the ideal—a social crowd, an opportunity to match one's skill and strength with that of his fellows; enough work to create a good appetite and stimulate a vigorous digestion, the best things to eat and drink

which the section afforded, always some, frequently not a few of the fairer sex, the feeling that one was doing his duty by his neighbors, and the knowledge that his aid was in reality aid being stored up against the time when he himself should have need of the combined efforts of several.

#### GANGS IN 1915

Gangs now are largely a thing of the past. Most of the timber has been cut, and it if had not been, no one would think of heaping it up and burning it, since there is a market for it. Now, when one is going to clear a piece of land, he first hauls off the mill timber, if any, and then cuts the smaller stuff up for fire-wood; so there are no more logs to roll.

Bricks are no longer made around through the country where they happen to be needed, but instead are now shipped in by people who follow brick-making as a business, and who set their own bricks as they make them. So there are no more brick-settings to go to.

House-moving gangs have also become far less frequent. In the first place, now, when a person is going to build, he usually does more planning than was customary years ago, hence is not so likely to find within a few years that his buildings need to be rearranged. This makes far less moving necessary than formerly. In the second place, many of those who have houses to move, now hire it done by some one who is equipped for such work.

Hog-killings are the principal gangs left. Even these have lost much of their erstwhile glory and social importance. The chief stimulator of hilariousness, gaiety, and good-feeling at all gangs was liquor. The knowledge of its presence was to a great many the one inducement to attend. With the conversion of some to total abstinence and the adoption of state-wide prohibition, strong drink has

both lost favor and become somewhat difficult to obtain. For these reasons some no longer have liquor at their gangs. Others would gladly dispense with it, but serve it in order to have sufficient help and to keep the help in good humor. In fact not a few claim that it is absolutely essential to let it be known that there will be plenty of liquor, if one wants plenty of help.

#### MARRIAGES IN THE EIGHTIES

*Ceremony.*—The marriage ceremony was a very plain, simple affair. If the match was acquiesced in by the parents of the bride, the function nearly always took place at her home—church weddings occurring only at rare intervals, and in the rural sections hardly at all.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of course, at least a brief ceremony was absolutely essential, in order that the law be satisfied, but this ordinarily lasted not over five to eight minutes. At the appointed hour, if everything was ready, the prospective bride and groom (the bride leaning on the groom's arm), followed by from two to six other couples (known as "waiters"), marched into the room where the guests had assembled. The person officiating then either read, or repeated from memory, a short form, and pronounced them man and wife. There was no music, no flowers or other decorations, no ring—in fact, this performance, aside from the accompanying "waiters" (frequently these were omitted), was reduced pretty close to the bare essentials.

*Invitations.*—Sometimes a general invitation was sent out for everybody in the neighborhood to come over and "see the thing well done," and frequently the women of the neighborhood received special verbal invitations, but written and engraved invitations were seldom used. In any case, it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Marriage Register of Chowan County*, which is preserved in the county court house.

was customary for every one who learned of an expected marriage to attend the function if he cared to. The men always did this, and the women too, if they knew no other women of the neighborhood had been specially invited. If a meal was to be served after the ceremony, unless there had been a general invitation, only those specially bidden remained for it. If a couple wanted to be married privately, their only method was to keep the time and place a secret.

*Festivities.*—Probably a majority served meals (either dinner, or supper, depending upon the time of day) to at least a few of their close friends and relatives, while some made an effort to feed everybody who came. Frequently, however, the ceremony was performed after supper time (supper here comes about sunset, and not in the early morning hours between midnight and daybreak), which did away with the expense of feeding. When the marriage was at night, the young people often would stay around till bed time and have a few games, or, if the "old folks" would permit, a dance. Occasionally the more wealthy would have two or three days of feasting and frolicking. Except in very rare instances, the only honeymoon trips ever taken was the trip from the home of the bride to the place where the two were going to try out their new venture.

*Pay of Functionaries.*—The ceremony was performed both by ministers of the Gospel and by justices of the peace. Neither of these functionaries ever made any charge, and it was a rare thing for either of them to receive any remuneration<sup>1</sup> whatsoever, other than the verbal thanks of the groom, and not always that. Most people seemed to think that it was conferring a favor on a man to ask him to drive his own horse five or ten miles in the cold (more than half

<sup>1</sup> From interviews with various people on this point I should estimate that less than five per cent in the early eighties paid anything to either the magistrate or the minister.

of the marriages took place during the winter months) to perform free a marriage service.

*Choice of Functionaries.*—To be married by a minister was by some few considered more genteel. With most couples, however, the question of who should legalize the life co-partnership was of little or no concern, the deciding factor being that of convenience. This is evidenced by the fact that during the period 1878-1882, 46.2 per cent of the white couples<sup>1</sup> embarked for the momentous cruise without the presence of any divine to make intercession in their behalf. And yet, so far as any one was ever able to discover, those who were handed their clearance papers by representatives of the Gospel weathered the storms on the matrimonial sea no less badly than did those who had received theirs from the hands of the representatives of the law. Furthermore, so far as success in the present life was concerned, it seemed to make little difference whether one sponged on the minister or on the magistrate.

#### MARRIAGES IN 1915

*Present-day Eclat.*—The words “pomp” and “formality” denote the trend of a considerable number of the present-day marriages. In many cases there are decorations, flowers, flower-girls, music—things which formerly were hardly known, especially in the rural sections. Many now send out either written or engraved invitations—another innovation.

There probably are fewer wedding dinners and suppers

<sup>1</sup> This figure is calculated from the records of the *Marriage Register op. cit.* Only 36 per cent of the colored marriages within the same period were performed by justices. This small per cent I attribute not to any special prejudice in favor of ecclesiastical marriages, but rather to a certain commendable pride in patronizing their own color. If married by a justice, it usually meant being married by a white person, while if married by a minister, one of their own color could be secured.

now than in the past, and the guests to those that occur usually are only those who have received a previous special invitation. Furthermore, these invitations are being more and more restricted to intimate friends. Thus, the informal, free-and-easy style of the "good old days" is fast passing away, and stiffness and formality are being substituted in its place. Now and then a couple go on a two or three days' trip, long enough for the local sheet to take cognizance of it, with the probable result that some of their acquaintance who know no better, are led to believe that they are making an extended bridal tour. The only customary bridal tour, however, still continues to be the trip from the place where the couple are married to the place where they are to start their new home.

*Choice of Functionaries.* — Fewer marriage ceremonies among the whites are performed by the clergy now than thirty years ago, members of this profession at present officiating on less than two-fifths of such occasions.<sup>1</sup> Some might interpret this fact as meaning that the people are coming to have less regard for the sanction of the church in matrimony. I think, however, that such an interpretation would be entirely false, for, as pointed out on page 186, a civil marriage in the eighties was just as acceptable to the vast majority of people as was an ecclesiastical one—convenience usually being the determining factor as to which kind a couple elected. Those of the present day who apply to a minister to "tie the knot," when it is not a mere matter of convenience, do so, in most cases, because it is considered

<sup>1</sup> During the five-year period November 1, 1909 to October 31, 1914, only 38.9 per cent of marriages among the white race were "solemnized" by the special representatives of the church. During the same period, 80.9 per cent of marriages among the colored people were graced by the presence of ministers. These calculations are made from the *Marriage Register*, *op. cit.* Regarding the high percentage of ecclesiastical weddings among the colored, *cf. supra*, footnote, p. 186.

more fashionable to have a minister. When the magistrate officiates, about all he does is to either read, or parrot off, a short, long-since out-of-date service, during the course of which he obtains the formal declaration of the couple to live together as man and wife "so long as you both shall live." The preacher, while using essentially the same archaic form as does the justice, nevertheless makes his service longer and more ceremonious, and so lends a bit more *éclat* to the occasion.

The real reason for the falling-off in the percentage of services conducted by parsons is an economic one. It is now becoming the custom to fee them when they assist at such functions. Probably seventy-five per cent of those married by parsons today make some compensation. The magistrate is also remembered now by some twenty per cent<sup>1</sup> of those whom he joins together. There is a big difference, however, between feeing a magistrate and feeing a parson. If the former, in marrying a couple, is not hindered more than two or three hours, and receives as much as a dollar for his trouble, he, as well as the couple served, feels that he has been amply rewarded; not being accustomed to having gifts showered upon him, he is well pleased if he is liberally compensated for his time. On the other hand, there seems to be a feeling among both the clergy and the people that when the preacher "joins a couple in the holy bonds of matrimony," he should be feed not according to the services rendered, but according to the financial ability of those served. Some even go so far as to intimate that the size of the fee paid to the preacher by the groom is a just measure of the latter's appreciation of his newly-acquired mate. Because of these absurd, though rather general, impressions, one who would hand a dollar to a justice

<sup>1</sup> This percentage, as well as that for ministers, is an estimate based on interviews with those who perform such services.

and feel that he was fully discharging all obligations, would feel quite mean and stingy if he should donate less than five dollars to a minister for a similar service. Thus it comes about that one who wants to pay for what he gets, and at the same time wants full value for what he gives, goes to a justice, unless he wants his marriage to be a sort of society function.

#### FUNERALS AND BURIALS IN THE EIGHTIES

*Popularity.*—Strange as it may at first blush seem, burials were much more largely attended than were marriages. There were some good reasons, however, for this seeming anomaly. Burials always came in the afternoon, which made them much more convenient for the women and children to attend than marriages, which, as already noted, not infrequently occurred at night, and occasionally in the forenoon. Another reason for a large attendance at a burial, if the deceased was an older person, was that usually he was far more widely known than was a beardless youth leading an eighteen-year-old to the altar, and that all who knew him well felt it their bounden duty to attend the last rites and ceremonies performed in his behalf. Again, a large number of people actually felt that, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting."<sup>1</sup> Then, too, most families tried to have a "funeral"<sup>2</sup> when one of their members died, notwithstanding the fact that this frequently meant the driving of twenty-five or thirty miles to get the promise of a preacher, who in turn had to drive another twenty-five or thirty miles in getting to and

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes vii: 2. The text was frequently quoted on such occasions.

<sup>2</sup> There is a distinction made in this county between a "burial" and a "funeral." The former is simply an interment, while the latter is the service held by some minister of the Gospel.

from the place. These funeral services were an added attraction, as the people were fond of being preached to.

*Coffins.*—Practically all coffins were made in the neighborhood where they were used. A few carpenters made a speciality of this work and so kept lumber on hand for the purpose. The higher-priced coffins were made of poplar, while the others were made of pine. On rare occasions they were made of walnut, which was considered very fine. All cases were of the common yellow pine.

*Preparing the Corpse.*—When a person died, some of the neighbors (men if it was a male person other than a small child, and women if it was a female person or child) would come in, wash, dress, lay out the corpse, and measure it for its final earthly compartment.

*Sitting Up With the Corpse.*—If the death occurred after midnight, it was considered bad form to bury the body until the afternoon of the second day following, since to do so earlier was thought to show too great a desire to get rid of it. The night the corpse lay in the house several of the neighbors would come in and sit around and talk till bedtime. All would then go home, except two or three who remained to sit up with the corpse all night. The immediate family went to bed early.

*Boxing the Corpse.*—On the day of the burial some of the neighbors would dig the grave, and one of them would go for the coffin. After the crowd had assembled (anywhere from one-thirty to three o'clock in the afternoon) at the former home of the deceased, six men (women, if the body was that of a woman), one each at the head and foot of the body and two on each side, with towels under it, would lift it from the bed and place it in the coffin. Next came the funeral sermon, if there was to be one.

*Funerals.*—In delivering the sermon the preacher usually stood either in the door of the house or on the piazza. The

women of the audience stayed either on the inside of the house or on the piazza if there was sufficient room, the men remaining on the outside. Ordinarily there were some rough planks placed on blocks in the yard for the people to sit on while listening to the sermon.

The funeral sermon consisted of three parts: the recounting of the admirable qualities of the dead—the other kind being slurred over, as a matter of course; the consoling of the bereaved relatives; the exhortation to the neighbors and friends to be always prepared for death, which, they were assured, “cometh as a thief in the night.”

It not infrequently happened that a preacher could not be secured to perform the funeral ceremony at the time of burial. In such a case the funeral occasionally was preached at church several months, and even years, afterwards. Thus it was quite possible for a man to take his second wife to his first wife's funeral. Usually, however, when he had good prospects of a recruit to take the place of her who had fallen by his side, he bestirred himself and concluded the funeral rites of his first mate before entering upon the wedding festivities of his second, and so obviated what might have been a rather embarrassing situation.

*Burials.*—After the funeral most of the assemblage went to the grave. If this was near, as it often was, five or six men would carry the corpse, otherwise it was put into a cart and hauled. When the grave was close by, the coffin was usually opened at the house so that every one who cared to could take one last look at the deceased, but if the grave was some distance away, this part of the ceremony took place there. Occasionally the dead was viewed at both the home and the grave.

The principal service was at the house, but after the corpse was lowered into the grave there frequently was another brief ceremony, provided a preacher had been secured.

After this was over, the clods would begin to rattle upon the grave planks, the by-standers taking turns at shoveling in the dirt; and soon the matter of giving out the allotted "six feet of earth" would be completed. Then the crowd, rather serious and sorrowful, would slowly turn away.

*Funeral and Burial Expenses.*—The necessary expense connected with leaving this "sinful world," provided one succeeded in passing out without running up a heavy doctor's bill, was rather small. There was no carriage hire, since everyone furnished his own conveyance, or else walked. As for flowers,<sup>1</sup> no one ever thought of having them at a funeral. The preacher, if one was obtained, was supposed to throw in his services as did all the others who assisted; and so the only financial cost to the family, save doctors' bills, was the price of the coffin, the coffin-case, and a few rough planks to place in the grave just above the case. One could have an elaborate funeral at a cost of from twelve to fifteen dollars, a less pretentious one at from eight to ten dollars, and a modest one for as little as six or seven dollars.

*Grave-yards.*—There has never been a general cemetery in the county, except in Edenton, but simply family burying-grounds, or "grave-yards." The corpse rarely was carried more than two miles, and in a large number of cases—probably forty per cent—was interred on the farm where death occurred.

*Grave-marks.*—Some families placed little roofs over the graves of their dead members. Some set up wooden slabs (which, if of good quality, would last twenty-five or thirty years) having the name and date of birth and of death carved thereon. Only a very few, the comparatively well-to-do, indulged in real tombstones displaying fancy mottoes

<sup>1</sup> Only once, till within the last few years, did I ever see any flowers at a funeral, and these were sent out with a corpse shipped from a town thirty miles away.

and proclaiming the good qualities of their relatives who had crossed the great divide.

#### FUNERALS AND BURIALS IN 1915

*Ceremoniousness.*—Burials, like marriages, are tending away from the simple style of procedure and towards the formal and ceremonious. These now are occasions for showing off and attempting to make an impression upon one's neighbors. The near relatives frequently dress in mourning, a custom which until recently was unknown in the rural sections, and the dead are laid to rest beneath wreathes of flowers.

No longer is the body carted off to the grave in a pine box hurriedly put together by some local carpenter. The coffin now is not a coffin, but a "casket,"<sup>1</sup> and factory made. It is very probable that this factory-made article is far less durable than the one used a few years back, but it looks a little better, costs considerably more, and so everybody is satisfied. It is frequently brought out in a two-horse hearse from one of the little neighboring towns. The undertaker himself usually drives the hearse, and acts as funeral director, a function formerly performed by volunteers from among the neighbors. Pallbearers are no longer always those who happen to be standing near at the time, but often are especially selected. Occasionally these are selected several hours beforehand and notified. In other days, any one who felt so disposed took right hold, with no hesitation whatever, and helped to do anything that was to be done.

*Other Changes in Former Customs.*—It used to be the

<sup>1</sup> As is well known, the difference between a coffin and a casket is the shape. Many, however, use the term "casket" either because they think it a more polished term for coffin, or else because they think a casket is a high-grade coffin. As a matter of fact, though, not a few caskets are now used.

custom for no one who was in anyway related, either by blood or marriage, to the dead, to have anything to do with the body, either as pall-bearer or otherwise. Just the reverse of this custom now seems to be coming into favor. Another custom that is coming in is the feeing of the man who preaches the funeral. Probably ten per cent of the families having funerals now make some little donation, say from one to five dollars (sometimes a joint of meat, or other provisions), to the minister officiating.

The introduction of the foregoing innovations seems to be robbing funerals of much of the somber enjoyment they formerly furnished the people.

CHAPTER XVII  
THE CHURCH IN THE EIGHTIES  
POPULARITY

WHATEVER may have been the attitude of the early settlers in this section towards God, the church, and religion,<sup>1</sup> certain it is that by the beginning of the period under discussion the attitude of the people generally was most favorable. This is evidenced by the fact that 50.6 per cent of the county's population in 1890<sup>2</sup> were church communicants, while only 45.8 per cent of the population were above nineteen years old, and 57.1 per cent above fourteen years old.<sup>3</sup> Of the communicants, 96.7 per cent were either Methodists or Baptists,<sup>4</sup> both of which denominations enroll as members only those who, after supposedly reaching the age of discretion, make application of their own free will and accord to be taken in. Both, also, frequently "withdraw fellowship from," or "turn out," members who refuse a certain degree of conformity to their teachings. Thus the church membership of the county was composed almost entirely of those who voluntarily came into the church, and who lived so as to stay in. It was quite the thing to "belong to church." In fact, one who had passed his twenty-fifth year and was still outside the pale of the church, was looked

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 27-33.

<sup>2</sup> There were no church statistics published for 1880, the year with which this treatise begins.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. table 24, p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. table 23, p. 288.

upon with a certain degree of suspicion. Church membership was a recommendation of real worth, if one wanted to secure a position of trust, either public or private. The few who had made no profession of faith, for the most part believed in the cardinal principles of the Christian religion and had little or no criticism to make of the ordinary doctrines of Protestantism: their allegiance was withheld either because they felt that many of the church members were not trying to live up to their profession, or else because they themselves wanted to enjoy the pleasures of "wild-oat-sowing" a while longer.

#### POWER AND DEMANDS

Although the majority of the church population<sup>1</sup> (in 1890, 64.6 per cent) subscribed to the faith of that most democratic of religious organizations, the Baptist,<sup>2</sup> the church as an institution, nevertheless, had a tremendous power. To be sure, it made few demands upon its adherents, but those it did make were generally conceded to be just, and were more or less complied with. From the negative side, on joining the church one was supposed to quit dancing, playing cards,<sup>3</sup> using profanity, and getting drunk.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 23, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> In the Baptist church the members of each local organization are dictated to by no one, and they know no law or creed except that adopted by themselves, and for which they claim to find sanction in the New Testament. "Baptist church polity is congregational or independent. Each church is sovereign so far as its own discipline and worship are concerned." Cf. *Special Reports of the Bureau of the Census: Religious Bodies*, 1906, part ii, pp. 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> This was true of all the various denominations having a following in the county, except the Protestant Episcopal and the Catholic, which, as is well known, object to neither cards nor dancing. These two churches, however, claimed, in 1890, but 3.3 per cent of the total church communicants of the county, and most of these lived in or near Edenton, so they had little effect upon the general sentiment in the rural districts.

A member might be called to account for being drunk and making of himself a public nuisance, but never would he be disciplined for merely drinking. Drinking in those days was a mark of gentility. One drank to show himself a good fellow, whether he cared for drink or not. "Ardent spirits" were even served to the preachers. In fact, to have failed to set out a generous supply of good liquors when the "man of God" came around would have been considered a serious breach of hospitality. On the positive side, one was expected to support his local organization both by his means and by his presence at its meetings.

#### MEETINGS

*Baptist.*—The Baptist churches (except the one in Edenton) had two regular meetings each calendar month. These were held on a definite Sunday (the 1st, 2d, 3d, or 4th) in each month, and on the Saturday preceding. Regular church services on Sunday began at 11 A. M. and lasted from an hour and a half to two hours. On Saturday there was a short devotional service (beginning at the same time as on Sunday) consisting of songs, prayers, and a sermon, followed by a "conference," or business session.

While women are generally considered more religious than men, in the rural sections of Chowan the men of the Baptist faith attended nearly twice as many regular services as did the women. Saturday seems to have been "men's day," and only a few women were ever present.<sup>1</sup> On Quarterly Meeting Saturdays (every third month) a few more of the women usually came out than on the other meeting Saturdays. This was the time when the "roll-call of the sisters" was supposed to take place, but, as a matter of fact, it was usually dispensed with by unanimous vote,

<sup>1</sup> It was a common thing to see a congregation of a hundred and fifty having not more than four or five of its members women.

since by the time this item of business was reached everybody was hungry and wanting to go home. On Sundays the women came out in full force.

*Methodist.*—The individual Methodist congregations had no regular week-day meetings, their business sessions being held at irregular intervals. When a number of things demanding the attention of a local body accumulated, there would be a call-meeting for the sole purpose of considering them. There never was any church service on such occasions. Aside from these differences their meetings were much the same as those of the Baptists.

*Edenton Congregations.*—In Edenton the three principal denominations—Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist—usually held two services each Sunday, morning and evening.

*Special.*—Besides the regular monthly meetings, there were special all-day meetings, with free dinner on the ground for the general public. The principal ones of this class were the "Conferences" of the Methodists, the "Unions" and "Associations" of the Baptists, and the revivals by both the Methodists and the Baptists. Probably the most important—most important because the most frequent—of these, were the revivals,<sup>1</sup> locally known as "protracted meetings." Most congregations had one every year or two, lasting for about a week. Usually during the first two or three days, services were in the afternoons only, while during the rest of the week they were held all day.

#### PLACES OF WORSHIP

*Grounds.*—The church houses were nearly always built in the woods. The undergrowth would be trimmed out for an acre or two around the house, leaving the trees for shade

<sup>1</sup> Revivals are not common in the Episcopal and Catholic organizations, but these two branches of the church had but a small following in Chowan. Cf. table 23, p. 288.

and hitching posts. The woods beyond the grove was the only toilet for either men or women, the men going in one direction and the women in another.

*Buildings.*—With the exception of two brick houses in Edenton, the church buildings were all plain wooden structures. Probably three-fourths of those for white people were painted and plastered, the other fourth and most of those for the colored being simply unpainted and unplastered barn-like hulls. Several of the white churches antedated the Civil War, and still retained the galleries formerly used by the slaves. Most of the churches had two front doors (usually, also, one or two in the back) from each of which led an aisle to the rear, where was located the pulpit. There were three tiers of seats down the main body of the house—a tier of short benches on each side, and a tier of long ones in the center—and one tier of three or four benches on each side of the pulpit, the one on the men's side of the house being known as the "amen corner."

*Seating Arrangement.*—The women sat on the right side (going in) and the men on the left. If a man took a woman to church he went with her as far as the woman's door, where he left her to find a seat as best she could (there were no ushers, so everybody found a seat for himself), and then backed off and went in at the men's door. In a general way the seating was as follows: The deacons and older men occupied the "amen corner," the corresponding corner being occupied by the older women. On the side tiers were the men and women of the next generation, with their children. On the center tier were benched the young people of both sexes, but, as a rule, not interspersed. In fact, many churches had a railing running the full length of the middle tier of seats for the express purpose of separating the sexes. If a youth took "his girl" to church he could sometimes muster sufficient courage to sit with her on this middle tier,

but this was so rare that it was much noticed whenever it occurred. During the special all-day meetings, there was some mixing up of the sexes in the seating, but even then it was confined largely to the center tier and to the near-grown and recently-grown of the unmarried, it being most uncommon to see a man sitting with his wife.

*Spitting.*—This segregation of the sexes was a very real protection to the women. All along the left-hand tier sat numerous tobacco-chewers who experienced no qualms at flooding the “house of God” with tobacco spittle. In many churches there were distributed over the men’s side of the house little pine boxes (having either sand or sawdust in them) to spit in. If a “spit box” happened to be near, the chewers would take pot-shots at it; but if none was there, or they failed to hit the receptacle, it was all the same to them. Some seemed to take special delight in seeing how big a puddle of tobacco spittle they could make on the church floor. It was no uncommon thing for individual men during a single service, to squirt tobacco juice over a space as large as a Merry Widow hat.

#### BABIES

The whole family, babes in arms as well as grown-ups, went to church. Some few babies were “good” and would sleep through most of the service, but the vast majority were not of this order. Some crawled around on the pulpit under the preacher’s feet; some frolicked up and down the aisles eating cake, biscuit, and candy; some of the more ill-disposed bawled most of the time, irritating the entire congregation and drowning out the voice of the preacher for everyone, except those very near him. One might think that the mothers would have had the common sense and the courtesy to remove the youngsters when they persisted in disturbing the whole house, but most of them did not. Nor

did the preacher dare seem to notice these manifold distractions to both himself and the audience. If he did, forthwith both men and women were up in arms against him, and his head was likely to get the axe at the next annual election, if in a Baptist church where each congregation elects its own pastor, and, if in a Methodist, things usually became so unpleasant for him that he would utter a prayer of thanks when transferred to another field. Many preachers, in order to especially ingratitate themselves into the good graces of the women, frequently would say something to this effect: "Mothers, come to church and bring your babies. They don't bother me."

#### DOGS

In summer, when the doors were open, the dogs had free range of the house. They came in for two reasons—sociability and something to eat. It was their custom to trail the babies all about the house, eating that which they dropped, or threw away, and not infrequently that on which they were still gnawing. Sometimes two or three dogs would engage in a pitched battle in the open space down in front of the pulpit. When such encounters took place the pious deacons would lend a vigorous hand, or rather foot, thus increasing the uproar and arousing the wrath of those whose dogs were being kicked about. At some churches there were worthy brethren who were self-appointed dog-whippers, and who, in order to properly perform this service of their Lord and Master, were accustomed to carry into the house the keenest horsewhip they could find on the church grounds. Apparently nothing did their righteous souls so much good as to come down with all their might upon the innocent-looking hounds, causing the poor belabored beasts to let forth yelps that could be heard a mile away.

## MUSIC

The rural churches had no organs, or other musical instruments, and for two very good and sufficient reasons: first, many church-goers in the country thought instrumental music had no place in church, some even going so far as to call it the work of the devil; second, there was no one to play. What music there was, was singing by the congregation of the old-time slow, simple tunes. Seldom was the range more than an octave, or the notes shorter than an eighth.

## DOCTRINES AND TEACHINGS

Besides the distinctive doctrines of its different branches, the church as a whole, as represented in Chowan, taught most of the principles set forth in the "Apostles' Creed," a burning hell<sup>1</sup> where all unbelievers were to pass their future existence in unceasing agony, and a heaven for those few<sup>2</sup> who hearkened to the "inner voice." The salvation taught was the "salvation by faith" rather than "by works"—salvation by self-denial rather than by generosity. "Works" were by no means left untouched in the exhortations of the ministers,<sup>3</sup> but it was argued that "works" followed genuine

<sup>1</sup> Hell was declared to be "seventeen times hotter than a brick-kiln,"—the hottest thing known in the rural districts.

<sup>2</sup> One favorite quotation of the ministers was, "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii: 14); another which enjoyed much popularity was, "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. xxii: 14.) This is still the teaching. No later than September 1914, one of the best-educated ministers who ever visited the county said to me in a private conversation that in his opinion not more than twenty million of the present sixteen hundred million population of the world (The World's Almanac for 1915 states the population of the world for 1912 as 1,643,000,000) were genuine Christians, and that only the Christians would be saved.

<sup>3</sup> "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and "It is more blessed to give than to receive," were passages often quoted by the spiritual pilots

faith as "the night the day"—that works were the natural fruit of faith—hence it was faith that was emphasized. The life to come was stressed rather than the life which now is. The people were taught to endure the sufferings of this life for the sake of that fuller and richer life into which the righteous would enter when their earthly existence was over. All who while on earth failed to accept the New Testament plan of salvation, were to be paid in full at the final great reckoning when the "just Judge" would mete out to each of this class his dues "according to the deeds done in the body." These were those who elected to remain under the law. All such, if they failed in one particular, were guilty of the whole, and since no one was supposed to be able to live without offending in some point, theirs was considered a hopeless case. By believing in Christ one escaped justice and obtained mercy instead.

Heaven was a sort of loafers' paradise<sup>1</sup>—a place where there was nothing to do but laze around "in shining robes and starry crowns," admire "the gates of pearl and the streets of gold," and, with the angels, sing "hallelujahs to the Lamb."

#### PREACHERS

The preacher most in favor was he who could do the most fluent and loudest talking, relate the most harrowing death-bed occurrences, paint the most lurid pictures of hell, and do the most scorching of poor damned sinners in the shortest period of time. It was "preaching," not the exposition

to induce the close-fisted to part with their cash, as they were starting the stewards and deacons out after the "silver offering," which usually, however, turned out to be largely a "nickel and copper offering."

<sup>1</sup> This notion of heaven is expressed in the lines of many of the popular hymns. Some of them are as follows: "There is rest, sweet rest, in heaven." "Every day will be Sunday by and by."

of the Bible, that the people wanted; the slow, deliberate, scholarly, discourse upon the Scriptures, appealing to the reason, called forth little enthusiasm. The minister who could appeal most strongly to the feelings and stir up the most excitement was considered best. This type of minister was especially in his glory at "protracted meetings." Unless one could picture hair-raising, tear-starting scenes he was no good on such occasions. The successful revivalists were those who dealt in such exhortations as the following:

Young man, young woman, you know that in refusing to hearken to the Saviour's voice you are trampling with unhallowed feet upon the fervent prayers of that dear old sainted mother of yours who loved you so much and who has now gone on to receive her reward. Fathers, mothers, have you forgotten the voices of the little ones who used to climb upon your knees and put their little arms about your neck? These little ones now await you in glory. Why will you harden your hearts? This was God's discipline to you. Must He still further wring your hearts in order to bring you to accept His terms? Sinners, this may be your last chance. God says, "My spirit shall not always strive with man."<sup>1</sup>

#### SOCIAL FEATURES

*Place of Communication.*—The church served not only the religious side of the natures of these people, but also the social side; in fact, it is highly probable that this latter was the more important of the two. The paucity of artificial means of communication, together with the small amount of book-learning, made it necessary that the dissemination of most information be done by personal intercourse. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gen. vi, 3. They did not balk at taking any phrase out of its original connection and making whatever application of it that happened to suit their purpose.

church was one of the chief, if not the chief, centers for the interchange of ideas and general gossip. Many people arrived early, and not a few stayed out under the trees talking till long after the services had begun, while some never went in at all. After services were over, almost everybody visited for a little while. The all-day meetings with dinner on the ground were especially attractive, because of both the elaborate free dinners and the unsurpassed social opportunities afforded by the interval between the forenoon and the afternoon sessions. Many of these big meetings, the revivals in particular, came off in the late summer and early fall. As this was a time of comparative leisure with the farmers, and as the meetings were the biggest attractions going, they were exceedingly popular. On such occasions as these, lovers enjoyed the rare good fortune of sauntering around together and privately pouring out to each other their fancied feelings. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the church-ground was the place where many a bargain was made that sealed the fate of two lives "for better or for worse."

*Place of Exhibition.*—The church was also the chief place for the display of millinery, the flashing of jewelry, and the exhibition of numerous lace-trimmed white petticoats. At this period, instead of wearing a single invisible petticoat, or none at all, it was customary for the women when "dressed up" to wear as many petticoats as they could well move around in. From three to four was the minimum worn even in summertime, and from that on up to eight and ten were worn on special occasions. Young girls who were planning visits out of the neighborhood frequently borrowed the best petticoats of their girl friends in order to make a big display in this class of lingerie.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are facts given to me by women who were then leading social lights. They are also attested by numerous others.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CHURCH IN 1915

#### CHURCH POPULATION

THE church population of the county in 1906 was larger than the population above fifteen years old, the figures being 592 and 590, respectively, out of every 1000 of the entire population. During the period from 1890 to 1906 the ratio of the church population to the total population increased 8.6 per cent. In other words, the number of church communicants rose from 506 out of every 1000 of the total population in 1890 to 592 in 1906.<sup>1</sup> This percentage increase in church membership was doubtless due not to any marked increase in either morals or religion, but rather to the fact that people come into the church at an earlier age now than formerly. Children—almost babes in arms—are now not only welcomed, but by many preachers are even urged to become members of the church.<sup>2</sup> Thirty years ago such practice would have been generally disapproved. Some question it now. Once in the church, one is likely to stay. Some few voluntarily drop out for a while, and from a few others the church from time to time withdraws fellowship because of

<sup>1</sup> Thus far the U. S. Census Bureau has collected reliable church statistics at only two dates—1890 and 1906. *Cf.* table 24, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> In September 1914, I heard one of the most popular ministers that ever preached in the county relate in a revival the story of a six-year-old girl who came into the church under his ministry. This little girl, so he stated, was one of the best church-workers he had ever known. He gave the incident to influence the parents against objecting to their little ones joining the church.

their refusal either to be disciplined or to bear some of the expenses of the organization; but these usually come back and die in the church, if they live much past middle life. But few make "profession of faith" after reaching their twenty-fifth year, and so the shoving back of the age limit not only gives a longer period in which to bring them in, but also includes a more impressionable one.

#### PLACES OF WORSHIP

*Grounds.*—The rural churches are still located in groves, but with the increase of population and the concomitant increase of clearings, some no longer are immediately surrounded by dense forests. A very few congregations have therefore thought it necessary to build privies on the grounds, but for women only.

*Buildings.*—Of the church edifices of the county, only five<sup>1</sup> (four for white and one for colored, all located in Edenton) are brick, the others being of wood. But the houses of worship of both races are much larger, finer, and more comfortable than formerly. Most of them are painted, plastered, and carpeted, and some have towers and stained-glass windows. The improvement in the seats has been especially marked. Where formerly they were excruciating, straight-back benches made by local carpenters who paid no attention to the shape of the body, now they are frequently factory-made, and if locally made, some regard is had for the comfort of those who are to use them. A very noticeable change is the absence of the spittoons, and the presence of more inviting floors as the result of less spitting. This is another evidence of the increase of decency, and of a growing knowledge of the principles of sanitation and hygiene. The latter also is further evidenced by the fact that many

<sup>1</sup> Another is now (August 1916) under construction, in Edenton.

of the church buildings (for colored as well as for white) now have their windows fitted with weight and cord, thus permitting ventilation from the top as well as from the bottom. It should be added, however, that this convenience is all too little used.<sup>1</sup>

The more recently built places of worship have only one front door, and some of them three aisles instead of two (one center and two wall), and two tiers of seats in the main body of the building instead of three. In the rural districts the men and women, for the most part, still sit separately, though this custom is not so strictly adhered to as formerly.

*Music.*—Instrumental music has been introduced. Practically all of the white churches and a few of the colored now have organs, and generally there is some one on hand who can get some sort of music out of them. On the whole the music is faster and more pretentious than in the eighties. Many churches now try to have some semblance of a choir.

*Other Items.*—While certain conditions have changed considerably, others have changed hardly at all. The type of minister most preferred is about the same as it was three and a half decades ago, while the distraction caused him and the audience by fractious, bawling infants has abated but little, if any. The youngsters still crawl and romp over the house nibbling biscuit and cookies, and are still trailed by the hungry-looking, wistful-eyed curs of the neighborhood.

#### TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES

The essential principles of the church have remained about the same. Dancing and card playing (except in Epis-

<sup>1</sup> So far as I have observed, it is used even less in the white churches than in the colored. Even in summer it is common to see white churches with modern windows, ventilated only from the bottom.

copal and Catholic bodies) are still classed with swearing, drunkenness, gambling, and whoring. Goodness is not enjoined from principles of rightness and justice, but rather as a matter of policy—it is a paying proposition: “believe and be baptized and thou shalt be saved,”<sup>1</sup> shout the preachers—saved from an eternal hell to an eternal heaven. Justice for the righteous is not the thing promised or desired, but rather mercy. The wicked—the unbelievers<sup>2</sup>—those who want some evidence of the truth of a proposition before they are willing to accept it—these constitute the major portion of those destined to receive justice. For the others, justice is to be escaped by believing the chief tenets of the church and supporting it and its undertakings more or less willingly. It is generally less. In fact, not infrequently is the support just as little as the member thinks possible to give and still have his name retained on the books of the church. Living a clean, decent life and practicing all the virtues said to have been taught by the Christ both by word and deed, avail-eth nothing, so far as the after life is concerned, unless one believes the New Testament story of Christ, the story of creation, and the entire host of other Biblical tales, such as the accounts of the exploits of Noah, Moses, Jonah, Sampson, and Daniel—tales which tax rather heavily the credulity of many. Doubtless there are some who are positively unable to accept the whole of such teachings, but if so, they, for the most part, have the wisdom to keep quiet, even though they stay out of the church.

<sup>1</sup> A variation of Mark xvi: 16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

<sup>2</sup> Unbelief is considered the most dangerous of all sins, since it is thought to be the one sin which if persisted in by a person will eventually drive the spirit away for good and all, leaving such person in an irredeemably lost condition.

## SEEING THINGS IN A NEW LIGHT

Some of the ablest thinkers and warmest friends of the church have begun to realize that such conditions as those above outlined tend to foster the very thing they would most like to avoid—a mercenary church membership, consisting of two varieties: the hell-scared, heaven-bought variety, and the self-seeking, policy-pursuing variety. Those of the former class are impelled by the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. Those of the latter class lack the blind faith of the former and in their lives repudiate the doctrine which teaches one to endure privation here for the right of hoping to enjoy plenty hereafter. In other words, they value rather highly present earthly goods and discount very heavily future celestial wares, but at the same time have the keenness to recognize in church membership a business asset of no mean value, and the hypocrisy to exploit this asset to the limit of their ability.

The true friends of the church—the honest supporters of her socializing activities—are beginning to wonder if it might not possibly be of more service to mankind at large if all self-styled Christians should occupy the time which they dedicate to the Lord, in trying to apply to their present, everyday living, principles said to have been enunciated by the One they claim the founder of their religion, instead of frittering it away in discussing wrongs alleged to have been committed by the Jews nearly two thousand years ago. In a word, some of the far-thinking and best friends of the church are beginning to feel that the people in general would attain a much higher degree of soul development as well as of civic development, if the leaders stressed living rather than believing—stressed the desirability of securing economic, political, and social justice here, rather than the desirability of securing a lazy, indolent, heavenly existence hereafter.

The conception of God as a potentate whose sole business throughout eternity will be to sit upon a great white throne and listen to the servile flattery and cajolery of His comparatively small number of subjects saved by Him from a burning hell; and the conception of heaven as a place where there is nothing to do but sing the praises of a Saviour and idle one's time away in a material luxury far surpassing anything ever dreamed of by mortals—these conceptions of God and heaven are still the ones most generally current. There are, however, a few who have begun to ask themselves the question, "How could the citizens of any true republic or democracy ever have evolved such ideas of God and heaven?" Some have answered this by saying that it is impossible, since life philosophies arise out of life conditions, either mediate or immediate; and that such notions could have been conceived and brought forth only by a people afflicted with poverty, laziness, oppression, and slavery. That they are unsuited to the people and conditions of Chowan county today is becoming the conviction of an increasing number.

#### CHURCH LOSING IN COMPARATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

*Causes Outside the Church.*—The meetings of religious bodies, especially in the rural districts, still continue to be the most important social functions. It is to these that many go to see the latest styles and to display their own most recent wardrobe acquisitions. Such affairs as Sunday-school picnics, Methodist Conferences, and Baptist Unions and Associations are still the occasions for some of the largest gatherings that occur. For some years past, however, these meetings have been losing in relative significance. The closer proximity to city attractions due to the coming of the railroads, the big railroad excursions to certain towns, the increased means of communication, the increased percentage

of the population able to utilize these means of communication, and the big public picnics by some of the fraternal orders—these have all tended to lessen the social importance of religious gatherings.

*Causes Within the Church.*—Two moves within the church itself have helped along the tendency. The first is the recently introduced custom of not serving dinner at the big revivals. The second is the action that has been taken against allowing anything to be sold on the church-grounds. Along in the eighties and nineties, whenever there was an all-day meeting, or series of meetings, numerous stands for the selling of such things as cold drinks, ice cream, confectionery, and cigars, would be erected on and around the church-grounds. These stands added greatly to the sociableness and enjoyableness of such occasions, without, according to the opinions of some of the most influential church members, detracting anything from the possible good effect of these occasions upon the community. Nevertheless, this institution has been done away with by the whites (some of the colored churches still retain it) “in the name of the Lord and on behalf of the moral and spiritual welfare of the general public.” Some of the church members claim that this was done by the preachers because they thought the stands might get a nickel which otherwise would have found its way into their (the preachers’) pockets. It was probably, however, a concession to those carping critics who feign a superior devoutness to the great majority of people, and who affect to believe that anything which gives real pleasure, other than singing sacred songs, praying prayers, and preaching precepts, is fathered by a certain personage known to them as “His Satanic Majesty, the Devil.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### SANITATION AND HYGIENE

#### CONDITIONS IN THE EIGHTIES

*Flies.*—The words “sanitation” and “hygiene” had little meaning, either in theory or in practice, to the people of Chowan in the eighties, barring a very few exceptions. There was probably not a person in the county who made any effort whatever to screen either the cook-room or dining-room against flies. Some had progressed sufficiently to consider flies an unnecessary evil that would have to be tolerated, but many thought they were especially ordained by God to teach patience and forbearance to His erring children, or for some other purpose known only to Himself and which His creatures had no business to try to pry into. In summer the food was cooked amidst a swarm of flies. One ate comparatively few mouthfuls during the hot season that had not previously been inspected and sampled by flies. After the food was once on the table a few families of the higher economic classes had some one to stand by with a bunch of peacock feathers, or some other shooping apparatus, and keep the flies away while people ate. In most homes, however, one had to dispute possession with these death-laden pests as long as there was a morsel to be possessed.

The principal screening done against flies was that done for the babies against yellow- and other biting-flies. As for the house flies, the babies shared their attention with the grown-ups. Of course, when screening against biting flies,

house flies were also excluded, but the former bothered only a few weeks in the year, while the latter were in great profusion for seven or eight months in the year. In fact, the house fly was much like the poor—always on hand. Many a time have I seen infants lying sleeping with open mouths, in and out of which flies were swarming like bees in and out of a hive.

*Mosquitoes.*—As for mosquitoes, at certain times of the year they made life miserable at night. Some few tried to protect themselves with mosquito netting, but this never made anything but a very poor screen. It was delicate and easily torn, hence usually remained intact for a short time only. Another objection to the netting was that it seriously hindered the circulation of air. The usual method of protection for the vast majority of people was to close all doors and windows to the sleeping apartments just before sunset—the time when the mosquitoes began to put in their appearance. After supper they would sit outside till bedtime, fighting the pests and dreading the hours between then and dawn. When they went to bed they had the choice of raising a window and continuing the battle till they gradually sunk into unconsciousness, or of sweltering in a close, stuffy room on a summer night in a southern clime. Many people were afraid of “night air,” others were afraid of imaginary night prowlers, so the greater number chose the latter alternative—shut up everything.

The fact, however, that the vast majority of the dwellings were not tightly built, being neither ceiled, papered, nor plastered, rendered conditions, as regards ventilation, less bad than at first might seem. Is it any wonder that a people thus environed should think of heaven as a place “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A line in one of the church hymns.

*Unfenced Dwellings.*—Comparatively few houses, possibly one per cent, were paled off from the "lot" (barnyard) or fields, hence the poultry littered the space around the dwellings, and not infrequently came inside to pick up the crumbs, and to share, along with the cats and dogs, the between-meal lunches passed out to the children. When the hogs were turned into the fields in the fall of the year, often they, too, were allowed to visit around the house and even to sleep under it. It hardly needs to be added that they rooted the yard full of great holes, which, after a rain, became stagnant pools.

*Wells.*—The well was simply an uncovered, shallow hole in the ground, from eight to fifteen feet deep. The curb, which usually extended all the way from the bottom up, was sometimes made by nailing boards on a square frame, but the more durable and artistic ones were those made from hollow cypresses. The water was almost invariably lifted by the fork-sweep-handpole method. Vessels used as buckets were of various sorts, such as coffee pots and small dinner pots that had already served their time in the kitchen, hollow cypress knees, square boxes, and a few first-class cypress or juniper buckets made in bucket shape.

Hard by the well stood the watering trough which was a dug-out log. To this came the horses, and sometime the cattle and hogs, the last named especially during the late fall and early winter months when they were picking the fields. Another accessory was a bench. Here the pickled herring were soaked and washed. Here also the clothing and vegetables frequently were washed and the water dumped. The water which drained off from the trough, fish bucket, and wash tub made a puddle beside the well much to the delight of the ducks and geese (also of the hogs, when they were in the field). The general aspect and odor were, to put it mildly, far from inviting. This is that type of well which has been immortalized by painters, poets, and musicians.

*Ash-heaps.*—The dish-water and other sewage from the kitchen, except what was carried to the hogs or dumped at the well, was deposited at the back door of the kitchen. A few of the more industrious farmers turned this into an asset by hauling a heap of dirt to catch the sewage, which in turn enriched the dirt, making several loads of manure. This was known as the "ash-heap," taking its name from the fact that some people also dumped their ashes here. This ash-heap could be kept comparatively decent by putting on a load or two of dirt every few days. In the summer time, however, when it needed attention most, everybody was busy with his crop, hence it received very little. And so, whether the sewage was utilized in making manure, or simply poured out on the ground at the back door of the kitchen, there was usually present a hideous cesspool. On hot sultry days the odor, which was one of the accompaniments to meals, was something terrific.

*Privies.*—Privies, like many other conveniences in the rural sections, were largely conspicuous by their absence. The women went out behind either the hen-house or the smoke-house, and the men behind either the barn or the stables, while the small children not infrequently utilized the chimney-lock.<sup>1</sup> Outside of Edenton, possibly five per cent of the families had privies. From a sanitary standpoint, however, conditions were not infrequently about as bad where the privies were as where they were not, since many never disinfected them at all. Their chief advantage was privacy. These conditions, in connection with the fact that most children went barefooted for seven or eight months in the year, made for the spreading of the hook-worm and various other diseases.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Many of the houses had their chimneys built on the outside. The angles made by such a chimney and the house were known as the chimney-locks.

<sup>2</sup> See U. S. Farmers Bulletin No. 463.

## CONDITIONS IN 1915

Many conditions, in the case of most people, are much the same now as they were three and a half decades ago. It will suffice in this section to note the direction in which the changes are taking place.

*Screening.*—During the past few years, thanks largely to some Government bulletins, two or three physicians, and a newspaper or two, a few people thruout the county have begun partially to realize what a menace to health are flies and mosquitoes. Within the past four or five years considerable screening has been done, and at present possibly fifty per cent of the families have made some attempt to screen against mosquitoes and flies in their living-apartments. Doubtless, however, their action has been prompted largely by the desire for immediate comfort and the feeling that screening is coming to be “the thing,” rather than by any desire to preserve and improve health.

A fair beginning also has been made in screening against flies in the cooking and eating apartments. Probably twenty per cent of families now have their dining-rooms, and ten per cent their kitchens, screened. This leaves the vast majority, however, still cooking and eating amidst the flies. Even those who attempt to screen where they cook and eat, still have an appreciable quantity of these disease-spreaders.

*Unenclosed Dwellings.*—There are still only a comparatively few rural dwellings, possibly two or three per cent, having permanent enclosures shielding them from the visitation of the poultry and other barnyard inhabitants.

*Pumps.*—For drinking purposes the driven well (or pump) has now largely taken the place of the open well described on page 215. Probably ninety-five per cent of the families now have access to driven wells. A prominent

physician<sup>1</sup> said to me in the summer of 1914, "Driven wells have done more to improve the health of Chowan county than any other one thing, screening not excepted."

*Sewage Disposal.*—Possibly five per cent of the rural families now have underground drains and another five per cent surface drains, which take the sewage off into the fields seventy-five or a hundred yards from the house. The kitchen back-yards of the other ninety per cent have been only slightly, if at all, improved from what they were in the eighties.

*Privies.*—Privies have now become the rule, being on the premises of probably ninety per cent of the families, but they are about as little sanitary now as they ever were. The dogs, chickens, and flies still have free access to most of them, and only a comparatively few people spread around them any sterilizing or germ-destroying material.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richard Dillard, Edenton, N. C.

## CHAPTER XX.

### NECESSARIES, COMFORTS, AND LUXURIES IN THE EIGHTIES.

#### PHYSICAL COMFORTS.

If it were possible for one of the present age, knowing nothing of the past, to draw back the curtain and look upon conditions as they were in 1880, he would be amazed to see people with so few of the material things of the world extracting so much genuine pleasure out of life. Even those living now who were living then, are puzzled over the matter when they stop to think about it.

*Buildings.*—Take the dwellings. The majority of the people were housed in small, one-story structures—mere sheds—of from one to three rooms. Probably the most common model of the comparatively good-livers was the large one-room, single-story building, shedded on both sides. The back shed had two small rooms with an open hallway between; the front shed had a small room on one end, while the remaining space served as a porch, and was known as the “piazza.” This general style was frequently varied somewhat: a partition might run across the big room; only one side might be shedded; or the sheds might not be built when the big room was, but later on when the owner felt able, or his growing family reached such proportions as to demand more room. Only a very few were two-story, but many of them had stairways leading to the lofts, which were used for sleeping rooms.

Not only were the dwellings not tightly put together, but not more than four per cent of them in the country, nor twenty-five per cent in town were either ceiled or plastered. So scarce were painted two-story houses in the rural sec-

tions that they served as prominent landmarks. Probably from ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent of the dwellings were frame structures, and the others log, there being but two brick dwellings in the county.

Tho only a small per cent of the dwellings were of logs in 1880, and few, if any, were erected after that date, in the rural districts probably sixty per cent of the kitchens and smoke-houses, and ninety per cent of the barns and stables were made of logs. Many doors were hung on wooden hinges and secured by wooden fastenings. These latter were of three types—the bar, the latch, and the lock. An inside bar could be used on all doors except those thru which first entry and final exit were made. The inside latch was on the front door of many dwellings. If it was desired to have these front doors so that none other than the owner could enter without some trouble, it was necessary to use locks. But many people never cared to have their doors locked when away, and so fastened them with an inside latch. This latch was no protection whatever against thieves when the owner was away (probably few locks are), since it was operated by simply pulling a string which hung in plain view on the outside. It was, however, a certain protection to one's person, for when one was on the inside he could draw the string in after him, and then no one could enter without forcing the door. But there was little fear of crime against either one's person or property. The principal reason why most people closed their doors was to keep out dogs, chickens, mosquitoes, cold, and "night air."<sup>1</sup> For such purposes the wooden latch was of just as much value as the best of locks. If one who kept only a latch on his front

<sup>1</sup> Most people were terribly afraid of "night air" and so shut their doors to keep it out, just as if one could breathe any sort of air at night except "night air."

door happened, on leaving home, to meet some one going to visit him, and he was not able to turn back, he would say something to this effect; "I can't go back now, but you go ahead. You'll find the latch-string on the outside o' the door; just go in and make yourself at home till I return." From such conditions as are here typified, arose that expression of cordial welcome, "For you the latch-string always hangs on the outside." Many never locked their barns or smoke-houses, but some did (feed and provisions were about the only things ever stolen), and here it was that the wooden lock was most frequently used. It is more difficult to pick than is the ordinary factory-made tumbler lock.

Nearly all dwellings, including the log cabins, were covered with good hand-riven and hand-drawn shingles,<sup>1</sup> while the outbuildings (such as barns, stables, and smoke-houses) were covered with rough boards,<sup>2</sup> just as they were riven from bolts of timber. In other words, the boards were never drawn. Many dwellings had no windows other than wooden shutters, which, when closed, shut out all the light except what came in thru the cracks (rather numerous) and open doors.

*Household Furnishings.*—Few floors were burdened with those unsanitary contrivances known as rugs and carpets. The neat housewife, after scouring the floor (some scoured every three or four weeks, or oftener) frequently

<sup>1</sup> By "drawing" is meant the shaving down smooth with a drawing-knife. Before being drawn, a riven shingle is in reality nothing more than a short board. It has to be smoothed and tapered with the drawing-knife to become a shingle.

<sup>2</sup> A "board" in this section is always riven, never sawed. Sawed boards are called plank. The board usually is about one-half inch thick, from four to eight inches wide, and from two and a half to five feet long. The length and width depend upon the ease and straightness with which a tree splits, together with the use to which the board is to be put.

sprinkled clean, white sand over it. The few carpets there were, were mostly rag carpets. Garments no longer fit for service in their original capacity, were torn into strips of from one-half to an inch and a half wide, their ends tied together, and with a twisted cotton warp, woven into carpets.

The furnishings, both of most dwellings and kitchens, were scant, simple, and chiefly home-made. Modern conveniences had only begun to make their appearance in a few homes. Not more than twenty-five per cent of the homes had any sort of timepieces in them. Thus it probably came about that all the houses were built to square with the points of the compass, rather than with the public thoroughfares past them. When the sun shone straight in the doorway the housekeeper knew it was time to "blow up" the hands for dinner. When there was no sunshine, dinner-time was guessed at. Possibly three or four per cent of the families had sewing machines, tho the great mass of the people still did their sewing by hand; and it must be remembered that this was a time when ninety-five per cent of the clothing worn was made up in the home—not bought ready-made from the stores, as is most of it today.

*Cooking and Cooking Utensils.*—Possibly ten per cent of the families had cook-stoves. The others cooked on open fire-places. The principal cooking utensils, even of most of the best families, were a pot, a creeper<sup>1</sup> (a spider) or two, a long-handle frying-pan, a tea-kettle, a griddle, and two or three wornout hoes. Such food as beans, peas, greens (in fact practically all vegetables except sweet potatoes), hominy, and much of the meat, was cooked by boiling in the pot. Some few had big ovens for baking sweet potatoes, and some were baked in creepers, but probably the

<sup>1</sup> The creeper at this time was a heavy cast-iron pan some three or four inches deep, covered with a lid, and stood on three legs about three inches high. The handle was from twelve to fifteen inches long.

bigger half was roasted on the hearth before the fire, or when the fire was low, in the hot ashes. The old hoes were used for baking corn-bread on. The "hoe-cake"—a pone of corn-bread baked on a hoe that had already lived out its usefulness as a farm utensil—in Chowan had not yet passed into the realms of fiction. Many met it face to face three times a day. Much of the salt fish was broiled on the coals. As all cooks know, it takes quite a little grease to fry most fish. With the majority of families, grease was a rather scarce article, and so some method of cooking fish other than frying was necessary. In broiling, no grease at all is needed.<sup>1</sup> Most baking, other than that previously mentioned, was done in the creeper, while the frying was done either in the creeper or in the frying pan. To bake in the creeper, it was set on the fire and coals heaped on the lid. It was in this receptacle that was cooked that famous dyspepsia-producing Southern dish known as "hot biscuit." The much-prized apple and peach "jacks" (kinds of pies—the New England "turnovers") were cooked either in this or in the frying-pan.

*Food.*—The food of more than ninety per cent of the people consisted chiefly of corn-bread, salt herring, sweet potatoes, bacon, and yeopon—ranking in importance in the order named.<sup>2</sup> In the summer, and fall some vegetables and fruits were eaten, but many had very little of either, since they put forth little or no effort towards having a garden or orchard. The art and custom of canning fruit and vegetables had not yet been introduced here, and the country stores handled neither canned goods nor dried-fruits; so aside from the dried-fruits put up by the individual housekeepers, there was neither vegetables nor fruits, except in season.

<sup>1</sup> *Cf. supra*, footnote, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. supra*, pp. 104, 105.

There was very little fresh meat eaten, except around hog-killing time, and on special occasions, such as all-day religious gatherings.<sup>1</sup> Now and then during the late summer and fall someone would butcher a yearling, or a mischievous cow, and peddle out the beef among his neighbors. But even when such an opportunity for having fresh meat was offered, many could not take advantage of it for the simple reason that they had not the wherewithal to purchase. While most families raised some poultry, the major portion of this, together with the eggs, was either sold to carters, or toted off to the stores and there bartered for such articles as snuff, tobacco, sugar, coffee, and spool thread.<sup>2</sup> When there was special company present, chickens and eggs were frequently served. The fact that most delicacies were usually reserved for use when company was on hand, was doubtless the chief reason why children were so delighted to see visitors come. During the commercial fishing season, those near the beaches could have fresh fish after they became cheap. Everyone had a few messes of fresh fish when the supply for the year was being hauled in. There was also a little fishing with hook and line and small gill nets in the mill-ponds and streams during several months of the year. In the fall and winter many secured a little fresh meat by hunting. Hunting and fishing, other than that described in chapter vii, however, were followed more as diversions than as means of obtaining a livelihood.

Sweetening of every sort was scarce. There was a little molasses made, some molasses and sugar bought, and now and then there was a person who kept a few bees.<sup>3</sup> Yeopon tea, the principal hot drink for the majority of people, was usually served "straight" (with neither milk

<sup>1</sup> At these special meetings every one who brought dinner had some sort of fresh meat—either chicken, pork, or beef.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. table 9, p. 272.

nor sweetening). Much of the coffee, also, was served without "trimmings." Comparatively few families milked, and as there were no dairy products brought in, except butter and cheese into Edenton, and, in the winter months, a small amount of cheese into the country, the consumption of dairy products was comparatively light.<sup>1</sup> So few children had any milk to drink when growing up that probably more than half of the people lost the taste for it and refused it even when it was to be had.

*Clothing.*—Clothing was coarse, ill-fitting, and not even abundant. Practically all of it, except the Sunday suits of a few men, was home-made, and much of it was still home-spun and home-woven. There was many a man in 1880 who had never owned an overcoat, or pair of gloves, nor had on an undershirt. Overshoes were practically unknown in the rural districts. Gloves and overcoats for children, especially boys, were rare exceptions. Sometimes a child used one of his mother's or father's old coats when the weather was very cold. Most children went barefooted all the time, except during the winter months. Each child received, as a rule, only one pair of shoes a year, said shoes being turned over to him along in the latter part of November or the first part of December. It was a common sight to see children stark barefooted running around the premises on cold frosty mornings.

When a woman bought a piece of millinery in those days she did not turn over a small fortune for it, nor did she discard it for a new piece on the next change of the moon. In most cases it was worn as long as it looked fairly decent—usually for two or three years. It was only the especially favored few who could boast a new hat each year, and she who could do so each season was indeed a rarity. Not only was there saved much hard-earned cash, as compared

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 68-71.

to now, in buying millinery, but also a great deal of time. Although a woman had a new bonnet only every two or three years, she nevertheless did not spend several days picking it out and trying it on. The fact is, the bonnets of a great many of the women were selected and purchased by the men,<sup>1</sup> or, to speak more accurately, selected by the salesman and paid for by the men. The prospective man-buyer called for a hat of either the latest, or of some special style, and, since the question of fit, then as now, rarely entered into the selection of a woman's hat, if the price could be agreed upon, the clerk wrapped it up, accepted the price, and the transaction was consummated. What an enormous amount of time would be saved for both buyers and sellers to-day if such a plan were still in vogue!

#### THE FINE ARTS

*Music.*—Turning from the physical necessities of shelter, food, and clothing, to the things of a more aesthetic nature, we find the fine arts—music and painting—but meagerly represented. In the category of musical instruments, few people had anything more pretensions than an accordion, and these were found in not more than one home in thirty. Probably there were twelve or fifteen fiddles (an average of one to every hundred homes) scattered thruout the county. The principal instrumental music was that made by an ordinary ten to twenty-five cent “harp” (mouth-organ). As for a parlor organ or piano, while there were few homes with them, hundreds of people had never heard either, and scores of grown folks did not even know what they looked like.

Many in the upper end of the county well remember the

<sup>1</sup> Rural milliners had not yet made their debut, and comparatively few women went to town, except those near-by, hence it came about that many of their hats were bought by men. *Cf. supra*, p. 137.

first time they ever heard an organ. The occasion was a big Sunday-school picnic, about the middle eighties. A kind-hearted old gentleman who had recently bought an organ for his daughter allowed it to be carted to church. His daughter, who was probably the only one in the audience of four or five hundred people who could perform on it, did the playing. It was a great time. The only fault that most of the audience found with the music was that the organ played scarcely any, except when the congregation was singing. Now and then one caught strains of it above the voices of the singers and fancied what it might be if only the singers would hush and allow the organ to be heard unaccompanied.

*Pictures.*—Few walls were adorned with pictures. Probably ninety per cent of the homes in the rural districts and seventy-five per cent of those in town had no pictures in them whatsoever, other than a few small tintypes of some of their relatives and friends. There were no advertising posters, or calendars, and even few medical almanacs.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally one might see in a home a few cheap lithographs of such inspiring (?) scenes as "The Separation of the Sheep from Goats at the Last Judgment," and "The Agony of Poor Damned Souls in Hell." Probably not over five per cent of the homes had any sort of framed pictures in them. The lack of pictures, however, was not because there was no appreciation of the beautiful. Many children saved every piece of paper with a bit of coloring on

<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1914, I heard a mother talking to her thirty-six-year-old son in regard to the day of his birth. She was telling him that by certain calculations, and by comparison with certain established dates, she had discovered that the date which had always been given as his birth was a day earlier than his actual birth. When asked for an explanation of this discrepancy, her reply was, "Son, when you came along we had neither clock nor almanac, and didn't have until after you were a great big boy." This was in a family of the better economic and social class.

it that fell into their hands. Much of their time in school was spent swapping "thumb-papers."<sup>1</sup> Those with pictures on them were highly prized. Probably nothing pleased most children more than the gift of a picture thumb-paper. The little blue and red bits of cardboard with Scripture texts on them, received at Sunday-school, were treasured not so much for the text as for the coloring. The grown people displayed the same keen delight in color and pictures as did the children. Anything of this nature that chanced their way they preserved, and sometimes pasted upon the walls of their homes.

#### TRAVEL

Travel of more than a few miles from one's residence was very light. Of the women, ninety per cent had not been over thirty miles from home more than once or twice during their entire lives, and many had lived and died without ever being ten miles from the place of their birth. Probably seventy-five per cent of the men went to Norfolk (sixty miles distant from the upper end of the county) at least once or twice during their earthly careers, but this was as far as ninety-five per cent of them ever strayed. The majority of people had little business away from home; their social visits were largely confined to the people in their immediate neighborhood, and they had not yet acquired the habit of traveling for the mere sake of being on the move. Besides these things, the means of long-distance traveling were both meager and expensive, and most people were not able to afford such luxuries, even if they had cared for them.

<sup>1</sup> A "thumb-paper" was a piece of cardboard, either plain or with a picture on it. Besides being attractive, if it was either colored or had on it a picture, it also served as a book-mark and as a protection to the book. Unless the child had something upon which to rest his thumb while going over his lessons, he frequently actually wore out the spot on the page where the thumb rested—a rather sad commentary on his rate of progress.

## CHAPTER XXI

### NECESSARIES, COMFORTS, AND LUXURIES IN 1915

#### PHYSICAL COMFORTS

Many things that in 1880 were reckoned as comforts and luxuries, are to-day looked upon as necessities. In other words, the standards of material welfare in the county have been considerably raised during the past three and a half decades, and this has been confined to no race or class. There has been a general moving up along practically the entire line, altho there has been, as one would expect, some shifting of places.

*Buildings.*—The barns of not a few people to-day would make fully as comfortable living quarters as did their dwellings thirty-five years ago. Log dwellings have disappeared. So far as I have been able to ascertain, not a single log structure in the county is now occupied as a dwelling. Very few even (probably not over five per cent) of the log kitchens and log smoke-houses remain, and not over ten or twelve per cent of the log barns and stables. Of the white home owners, fifty per cent of those in the rural districts and ninety per cent of those in Edenton have their dwellings painted, and either ceiled or plastered. Of the colored home owners, the percentage is about five and forty per cent for the county and town, respectively.

The two-story dwelling is now all the fashion in the rural sections. Almost without exception, every one in the rural districts who has put up a dwelling of more than two rooms within the past ten years, has built it two stories. There seems to be a general feeling that a two-story house gives a certain amount of prestige that is not conferred by a one-

story house, even tho both cost the same. Another movement of late years is to have the dwelling and kitchen connected with each other, either by joining together, or with a porch between; formerly the more usual custom was to have the kitchen set off a few paces from the dwelling.

Not only has a great improvement taken place in dwellings, but the same is true of the outbuildings, as above intimated. As many as thirty or forty per cent of the farm-owners now have fairly decent barns and shelters. Thirty-five years ago it would not have run over eight or ten per cent. As many farmers now have painted barns as in 1880 had painted dwellings.

Comparatively few wooden hinges now remain, and most home-made fastenings, especially for dwellings, have been supplanted by the factory-made article. Most barns and kitchens are now fitted with locks, tho many of them are seldom used.

*Household and Kitchen Furniture.*—Household and kitchen furniture has increased in variety, quantity, and elegance, tho in many cases where the factory product has been substituted for the home-made, elegance has been purchased at the price of durability. Probably ninety per cent of home owners and fifty per cent of all other families now have sewing machines; for cook-stoves, the percentage is about ninety-eight and seventy-five, respectively. As for time-pieces and lamps, they are in practically every home.

*Food.*—In the matter of food there has also been considerable advancement. The variety has been increased, and such things as coffee, sugar, and flour, which were the luxuries of the comparatively few well-to-do families, are now consumed by all, and by many, about as freely as desired. The introduction of home-canning makes it possible for all farmers to have their own fruit and vegetables the year round, but the possibility is all too little appreciated.

Less than five per cent of the families can any vegetables other than tomatoes; and while, perhaps, eighty per cent of the white families and fifteen per cent of the colored can some fruit each year, probably less than ten per cent of the families can as much as ten gallons of fruit annually. A majority of the white families and a few of the colored put up a gallon or two of preserves each year. These, as well as the canned fruit, rarely ever see the light except on Sundays or when company is around. Preserves seem to be considered a greater delicacy than plain fruit. In fact, they are frequently served during the height of the fruit season by those who have an abundance of fruit, in preference to the fresh fruit. Comparatively little fruit is eaten, except in fruit season, and then between meals just as it is gathered. Raw fruit is almost never seen on the table, and the little cooked fruit served, is mostly in the shape of pies or preserves, especially in the rural districts. The wholesome, easily prepared, stewed fruit or fruit sauce, is very rarely served. For weeks at a time many people never taste fruit of any sort.

The present small consumption of cooked fruit is due probably to habits formed in less prosperous times, rather than to any dislike of fruit. Unsweetened cooked fruit is not relished by many, and so in earlier days when sweetening, especially sugar, was expensive and the purchasing power of most people small, it was quite natural that little fruit should be cooked; and the habit of regarding sugar as a luxury became so fixed that now, under vastly changed conditions where sugar is one of our cheapest energy-producing foods, the idea that sugar is an expensive delicacy still prevails even in many of the better-class homes.

Vegetables, like fruit, are used but comparatively little by the rural population, except in season, and then by many only sparingly. Many people make little or no pretense

whatever of having any garden, and the gardens of a majority are comparatively inferior. For weeks at a time during the season in which vegetables may be grown, many a so-called farmer gathers absolutely nothing in the way of garden stuff. As above noted, hardly any vegetables are canned, and, excepting sweet potatoes, almost none stored; the farmer hates to buy from the stores anything that he himself produces; hence it comes about that vegetables out of season are especially rare in the rural districts. There is still very little milk and butter produced<sup>1</sup> or consumed. For months at a time sixty per cent of the people never taste butter, and most of the poultry and eggs are sold. By March the sweet potatoes (except those for planting) of a great many families have been either eaten or sold, or else have rotted, and so, for many of the people much of the time, the principal diet is cheap flour, made into poorly cooked biscuits, corn-bread, salt pork or bacon, and herring.

#### AESTHETICS

*Dress.*—When it comes to dress, the transformation that has taken place here within the last three and a half decades is probably greater than that in any other phase of the economic or social life. Even the day-laborer now disports himself in tailored-to-measure garments of the latest cut and pattern. When buying wearing apparel now, the questions of fit and fashion are ones uppermost in the person's mind, those of comfort and warmth coming in only as secondary considerations. Silk hosiery, fancy lingerie, and the latest Paris creations in frocks and millinery may now be seen at any public gathering, even in the rural districts. The vast majority of both white and colored, dress well.

*Music.*—One who presumes to sing something other than

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 9, p. 272.

a "sacred song" is no longer, by reason of the fact, considered hellward bound. Instrumental music is coming to be fairly common, and not infrequently fairly good. Most of those desiring piano lessons can have them at from twenty-five to forty cents apiece.<sup>1</sup> Of the home owners with daughters from ten to twenty years old, probably fifty per cent of the white and twenty per cent of the colored have either a parlor organ or a piano. There are also many other families that have one or both of these instruments.

*Pictures.*—Pictures are still few. In less than ten per cent of the rural homes will there be found anything more pretentious than advertising picture-calendars and enlarged totypes and photographs of relatives. These latter are probably in seventy per cent of the homes of whites and forty per cent of those of colored, in both town and country. They are cheap, blown-crayon reproductions put in by traveling picture agents who succeed largely by working on the feelings of the women. For the most part, they are woefully poor—the very antithesis of anything aesthetic or artistic. However, they probably serve one useful end—by constantly reminding one of from what hard-looking ancestors he sprang, they may tend to mitigate that affection commonly known as the "swell-head." In Edenton, twenty per cent of the families may have pictures, other than the above-mentioned enlarged portraits, which they think enough of to frame. The probable reason for such a slight manifestation in this direction of the love of art is that pictures have not become the fashion. It is another case of habits having been formed under different conditions and not being altered when the conditions changed. As is well-known, pretty fair reproductions of the works of many of the best

<sup>1</sup> These are usually given by the public-school teachers who happen to know a little music. This is in no way, however, connected with the public-school work.

artists can be purchased for a few cents each, and there are scarcely any people who could not have some of these neatly framed in their homes, if they were really anxious for them.

*Other Expressions of the Artistic Sense.*—The hanging of pictures on the walls of one's home, however, happens to be only one of the many ways in which one may display his aesthetic tastes. With the coming of better times to nearly every one in Chowan, the artistic instinct has been expressed in various ways. Attention has already been called to the remarkable improvement in dress, dwellings, school houses, church buildings, and the furnishings of homes. The premises now are better kept and meals more appetizingly served than formerly; and fine-looking horses and rigs are vastly more abundant, to say nothing of the numerous automobiles. It may not always be possible to distinguish the love of mere display, the desire to outdo one's neighbors, and the tendency to imitate, from the true love of art; but the same is the case everywhere else, and so if the marks of an aesthetic nature are present, who would presume to say that they are due to other than aesthetic sentiments?

#### TRAVEL

With the coming of the railroads and of better economic conditions, travel has both greatly increased and become far more general. While, in 1880, comparatively few women and children under eighteen had ever visited Norfolk (the nearest seaport and trade center), probably a majority of the adults now fifty have at some time or other made the trip and gotten a glimpse of the outside world. Many of those who grew up under the old conditions, however, have never undertaken the journey, and for eighty-five per cent or more of the people Norfolk still stands as the farthest limit of their wanderings from home. Some few have traveled rather widely.

PART IV  
CONCLUSIONS



## CHAPTER XXII

### PROGRESSIVE AND RETROGRESSIVE FACTORS AFFECTING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is the purpose of this chapter to point out some of the most influential forces, both physical and psychological, which at various times have played upon the people of the county. It may be well, however, first to review the situation briefly.

#### SITUATION REVIEWED

*The Eighties.*—Domiciled upon a territory with a soil most of which was easily drained and easily cultivated, and much of which was of high natural fertility, with a climate having an abundance of both rainfall and sunshine fairly well distributed thruout the year, and lacking the extremes of both heat and cold yet at the same time possessing ample variety for the highest mental and physical stimulation—domiciled amid these favorable surroundings was a group of people (for the most part native-born of native stock that came originally from either Africa or the British Isles) many of whom in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were living, in numerous respects, in a manner very similar to that in which their forbears had lived two centuries before. There was comparatively little division of labor and the majority of the white families were to a remarkable degree individually self-sufficient. To the great mass of the people luxuries were almost unknown, comforts were few, and many lacked even the bare physical necessities—lacked the necessary food and clothing to perform the amount of common labor which they were potentially capable of. Excepting a very small per cent, they had

little knowledge of, or communication with, the outside world. A large percentage of the whites—to say nothing of the blacks, the vast majority of whom could neither read nor write—were illiterate, and judging from the small amount of money spent on education and the small school-attendance, it would seem that the majority were satisfied to have their children grow up knowing just as little as they themselves knew.

*Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen.*—The picture we get a third of a century later is quite different. It is probable that greater economic development was experienced during this short period of three and a half decades than in the previous two centuries. With this development has come the attendant results of material prosperity. Modern conditions are being ushered in on all sides. That the general economic welfare is tremendously improved over what it was, is evidenced by the fact that many of the luxuries which only a very few affected in the eighties, are now considered among the necessaries even of the poorer economic classes. Illiteracy has been cut down until it is probably not over one-fifth what it was in 1880, and the general public are now taking an interest in, and learning of, things and events beyond their immediate surroundings.

#### QUERIES REGARDING THE LONG PERIOD OF SLOW GROWTH AND THE RECENT TRANSFORMATION

The long period of little or no progress, and the radical transformation since the eighties, can hardly fail to impress even the most casual reader, and to raise in his mind questions as to the causes of these seemingly anomalous facts. Why did this community so long remain in a comparatively static state? What was the principal cause or causes of the great awakening? Have the factors which so long delayed progress ceased to operate? What are the

chief drawbacks of the present day? To him who has studied at all attentively the pen pictures sketched in the preceding pages, the answers to these queries, if not in full at least in part, are doubtless already quite patent. Out of consideration, however, for that class of readers which usually takes time only for the statement of a thesis and the final conclusions, and in order to set forth concisely just what I myself consider the broad, general influences shaping the life of the people here depicted, I have appended the discussions following.

ALLEGED CAUSES OF THE SLOW DEVELOPMENT EXAMINED  
AND EVALUATED

*Agrarian Policy of the Lords Proprietors.*—One of the two facts which have been the most frequently claimed by Carolinians themselves to have been the chief drawbacks to the state's early development, and which were especially applicable to Chowan, was the general policy of the Lords Proprietors to grant to any one person only about what land they thought there was a possibility of his putting to some practical use. The excerpts following are typical of the writings on this point:

Two forces tended to keep it [North Carolina] a poor colony, thus giving a turn to its later character. In the first place,<sup>1</sup> it was the policy of the proprietors to grant the land in small holdings, 640 acres being the usual maximum quantity. . .

It is . . . probable that the economic disadvantage of small estates and of the lack of commerce [due to the lack of harbors] induced the better class of immigrants to go to Virginia and South Carolina, thus leaving North Carolina for less substantial settlers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The second force he considered to be the lack of harbors, *cf. infra*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Bassett, J. S., *Constitutional Beginnings of North Carolina*, Johns Hopkins University Studies, vol. xii, pp. 110-12.

The basis for the notion that the agrarian policy of the Proprietors was detrimental to the Albemarle region, is probably a letter by Tho. Woodard, appointed by the Lords Proprietors to be "Surveyor for the Countie of Albemarle." Writing to Collaton (a Lord Proprietor) in June 1665, he said, among other things:

. . . The Proportione of Land you have allotted with the Rent and Conditione are by most People not well resented and the very Rumor of them dis-courages many who had intentions to have removed from Virginia hether. . . .

And it is my Opinion . . . that it will for some time conduce more to your Lordshipe Profit to permit men to take up what tracts of land they please at an easie rate, then to stint them to small proportions at a great rent, Provided it be according to the custome of Virginia. . . .; their being no man that will have any great desire to pay Rent (though but a farthing an acre) for more land than he hopes to gain by. Rich men (which Albemarle stands in much need of) may perhaps take up great Tracts; but then they will endeavor to secure Tenants to help towards the payment of their Rent. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Land in America with no one living on it was worth nothing to the Proprietors, and their only object in limiting the size of the grant to any one person was to secure as many bona-fide settlers as possible, and to have them live thick enough to be of some mutual protection to one another. They were willing to make almost any concession that would promote the population of their domains, as they themselves declared. But they could see no advantage either to themselves or to the settlers for a person to own several times as much as he was able to utilize.<sup>2</sup>

The instructions of the Proprietors on two or more occasions would seem to set 640 acres as the usual maximum

<sup>1</sup> *Col. Records, op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4, 186, 845-6.

grant, and yet it is quite clear that there was always a provision for larger grants to be made direct from the Proprietors themselves,<sup>1</sup> indicating that they were ever ready to convey as much land to any one person as he was able to turn to advantage.

In 1669, among other instructions to the governor and council of Albemarle, the proprietors gave the following:

You are to take notice that we doe grant unto all Free persons that doe come to plant in Carolina before the 25th of December 1672 And are above the age of sixteene yeares, sixty acres of Land And to the said Free persons for every able man servant with a good fyerlock 10 lbs. of powder and twenty pounds of Bullets sixty acres For every other sort of servant fifty acres.<sup>2</sup>

This rather looks as if they were willing to supply the greatest plenty of land to all honest settlers. Furthermore, the order to grant but 640 acres to one person seems to have been interpreted in Albemarle as meaning that no person should be granted more than 640 acres in one place.<sup>3</sup>

On purely selfish grounds the Proprietors, presuming they had ordinary intelligence, would naturally have done everything they reasonably could do to attract the more "substantial" settlers, and as a matter of fact this class of settlers did come, as is attested by contemporary historians.<sup>4</sup> It is also a fact that large grants were made.<sup>5</sup> At the first U. S. census enumeration (1790) the colored population of Chowan county outnumbered the white, and with one exception has done so in every enumeration since.<sup>6</sup> In view of the fact that the colored people were mostly slaves, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Col. Records, op. cit.*, pp. 186, 556, 706.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 186 and vol. ii, p. 457.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. supra*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Colonial Records, op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 845-6.

<sup>6</sup> *Cf. table 4*, p. 264.

further fact that only the comparatively well-to-do people owned slaves, the large number of blacks in Chowan is a further evidence that "substantial" settlers did come in.

Even in 1880 from eight to ten acres were about as much ground as one person could work. Certainly in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the means and methods of farming were still poorer and the crops, except cotton, much the same as they were in 1880, one person could cultivate no greater number of acres. On this basis a 640-acre tract would need thirty or forty able-bodied laborers to cultivate it, even though only half of it was worked. At least half as many more would be needed for domestic manufactures and general household duties. Thus the usual grant was quite sufficient for the agricultural operations of fifty or sixty able-bodied men and women. Not many settlers came to America in colonial days who were able to put in the field so large a force. Furthermore, the hogs, cattle and sheep—which were among the main sources of food, clothing, and other articles of consumption—had free range of all unfenced land; and little or none was fenced except what was under cultivation. There was no limit to the number of live stock one might let loose on the free range. Another source of income was the forest products. There is scarcely any doubt that the settlers gathered as much of these as they chose to from any and all land yet ungranted. A third source of income was the sound and rivers, which in the spring of the year were teeming with fish. These three great sources of supplies, which were free to all who would exploit them, together with a 640-acre tract, would support a good-sized family.

Considering all the foregoing facts, it is rather difficult to see how the land policy of the lords proprietors was very prejudicial to Chowan.

*Lack of Harbors.*—The second of the two most fre-

quently alleged causes for the slow progress prior to recent years, was the lack of good harbors, or more strictly speaking, the lack of access to the harbors permitting direct trade with the outside world. Says Bassett:

In the second place [the first was the above-discussed policy of the Proprietors] the earliest settlements in the state were in that part [at first Chowan and Perquimans and later the tide-water section in general] where uncertain harbors prevented a direct trade with England. The settlers were thus left to an unprofitable commerce with older communities in America. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Much testimony similar to the above might be piled up, but to do so would be unnecessary, since the question of transportation has already been discussed. It should ever be remembered, however, that the lack of transportation facilities was a very real and vital handicap, and a handicap which, tho at various times it has been greatly decreased, is still far from being a negligible quantity.

*Civil War.*—In recent times the one thing most frequently cited by Carolinians as causing their state's slow development during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, is the effect of the Civil War. Many of the leading men of Chowan hold very strongly to the same opinion as regards the progress of their own particular county. Omitting the question in so far as the state as a whole is concerned, let us examine the question bearing directly on Chowan.

What are the facts in the case? In the first place no regular land engagement ever took place in or near the border of the county. Second, while there were a few horses taken, some provisions and clothing, which were destined for

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional Beginnings, op. cit., p. 110.*

the Confederate forces, captured along the water-courses, and some burning (confined largely to one estate) and general pillaging done (mostly by the "Buffaloes")<sup>1</sup>—there

<sup>1</sup> In the early part of the Civil War there was a detachment of Confederate soldiers encamped at Gatesville, the county seat of Gates, an adjoining county of Chowan. In this detachment was one Jack Fairless, a native of Gates. He was said to have committed theft, and for the alleged crime was taken by his comrades in arms to the side of a swamp where he was soundly thrashed and one side of his head was shaved. (One of the soldiers who helped to administer the punishment lived in Chowan till his death several years ago. He was known to me personally.) Soon after this episode, Fairless deserted and proceeded to collect, principally from Chowan, Gates and Perquimans, a band of followers, who very probably never numbered more than a hundred. These fellows made headquarters at Winfield, a large estate on the Chowan river. They called themselves "Union" men, and eventually secured federal uniforms, but when the Union authorities called upon them "to take the field," most of them "took to the woods" instead. Few, if any, ever did any fighting, their activities being chiefly that of robbing their former neighbors, wantonly destroying their property, and pestering them in general. As regards pensions, they have been treated as Union soldiers.

In the federal reports these marauders are styled "home guards," but down in the section of their origin they have never been known by any other name than that of "Buffaloes." This term of rank opprobrium is applied only to the "home guards," and has never been used to designate the natives in general of the North Carolina coast, as Funk and Wagnalls' *New Standard Dictionary* implies.

The esteem in which the "Buffaloes" were held by the federal naval officers who knew them, is indicated in the official reports of these officers, preserved to us in the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies* (Washington, D. C., 1899).

Lieutenant-Commander C. W. Flusser, U. S. S. Commodore Perry, Plymouth, N. C., Sept., 19, 1862, writes to Commander H. K. Davenport, Newbern, N. C., as follows: "My dear Davenport: I sent to Edenton yesterday to arrest some thirty men who had formed themselves into a company to attack our home guard thieves at Winfield." (*Official Records*, series I, vol. viii, p. 78.) The justification for this characterization is suggested in the following letter:

U. S. S. SHAWSHEEN,

*Off Plymouth, N. C., September 28, 1862.*

*Sir:* In obedience to your order, I submit to you the following report

was no great amount of ruthless destruction of property and no wholesale foraging. Third, no large body of soldiers of either the Northern or the Southern armies ever quartered in, or even marched thru, Chowan. Fourth, no large number of the population was killed during the war. This statement is born out by the fact that from 1860 to 1870 the native white population increased 3.4 per cent, which was 1.7 per cent greater than the average decennial increase for the four decades previous. Fifth, prior to the Civil War most of the best land of the county was held in large tracts by a very small minority of the people, who cultivated it with slaves. Land and negroes constituted the major portion of their wealth, and since farm-land with no one to work it is of little immediate value, the war, by freeing the slaves, wiped out much of the wealth of the slave-holding class.

in regard to proceedings of a company of home guards stationed at Winfield, Chowan County, N. C. On my arrival there on the 18th of September I found out of sixty-three recruits only twenty present; the others had gone to their homes or elsewhere, as they chose. The captain was in a state of intoxication, threatening to shoot some of his remaining men, and conducting himself in a most disgraceful manner by taking one man's horses and making other people pay him the money to pay for them, and this, too, from people who were well disposed towards our Government. He had some eight or ten horses when I went there, gotten in this way. He has no control over his men, and [by] the manner in which he conducts himself he is doing much injury to the Cause of the U. S. Government. Some of the men that have gone have taken their arms or guns with them; the ammunition has all been smuggled out and sold to citizens for liquor; what remaining arms there were I took on board for safe-keeping. On the 21st, Captain Fairless went off and left his men, as he said, to go to New Berne by way of Suffolk. His men say they will serve under him no longer. They are now left in charge of a man they call lieutenant, with no clothing, no rations; are dependent on the county for subsistence.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. J. WOODWARD,

*Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.*

Lieutenant-Commander Chas. W. Flusser,

*Senior Naval Officer Present.*

(*Official Records*, series 1, vol. viii, p. 95).

In the course of time many of the larger estates, it being found unprofitable to work them with hired labor, were cut up into small tracts and sold off to the poorer classes. Thus, one result of the war has been to give a larger number of the county's population an opportunity to own a "place in the sun."

So, while one of the immediate effects of the war upon the better-to-do classes (a very small proportion of the population) was an immense shrinkage of their wealth, the masses, even of the whites—to say nothing of the blacks, who obtained their freedom—lost little or nothing. On the other hand, taking the county as a whole, there was a great gain in that there was set up a condition destined (1) to break up many of the larger land holdings and thus permit more of the poorer classes to acquire pieces of land upon which they might earn a living; (2) to change the attitude of a majority towards labor. These two processes—the subdividing of the larger tracts of land and the changing of the attitude towards labor, especially the latter—are in a large measure responsible for both the recent great increase in per capita wealth and its far more general diffusion.

From the foregoing facts it would seem that instead of being a drawback, the Civil War, tho operating indirectly, nevertheless has been the most potent factor in stimulating progress.

*Slavery.*—The one all-preponderant factor which held back Chowan, as well as the South in general, was the institution of slavery, and its aftermath. While slaves were not as abundant here as in some other sections of the country, the notion that work with one's hands was not honorable—a notion which has always been a concomitant of slavery<sup>1</sup> everywhere—was quite prevalent. Says Helper, a Southerner, writing in 1857:

<sup>1</sup> As one of the contributing causes of the break-up of the Roman Empire, Robinson gives, "the existence of slavery, which served to

In the South, unfortunately, no kind of labor is either free or respectable. Every white man who is under the necessity of earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, or by manual labor, in any capacity, no matter how unassuming in deportment or exemplary in morals, is treated as if he was a loathsome beast and shunned with the utmost disdain.<sup>1</sup>

If this false attitude towards labor always disappeared when its progenitor, slavery, disappeared, one of the most serious and blighting results of slavery would be non-existent. But as a rule the long-standing mental conceptions of a whole people do not about-face overnight. The people of Chowan present no exception to this rule. This "opposition to white labor," as one prominent business man in the county put it to me, is still very much alive, and continues to retard economic progress, and since all other progress is limited by economic progress, continues to retard progress in general.

In one of a series of unsigned articles appearing in *The Newberne Weekly Journal* in 1888, under the caption, "Why We Do Not Flourish," the writer sums up his views as follows:

The prime cause of our trouble is extravagance. Extravagance is waste. Our extravagance is very plainly a waste of time. The disposition to waste time—to be lazy—some attribute to the climate. A very much more important factor is the disposition to live as one's neighbors who can buy and pay for us a dozen times over.<sup>2</sup>

discredit honest labor, and demoralized the free workmen." J. H. Robinson, *History of Western Europe* (Boston, 1903), p. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Hinton R. Helper, *Impending Crisis of the South* (New York, 1860), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *The Newberne Weekly Journal* (Newberne, N. C.), vol. xi, no. 4, April 26, 1888. The files of this paper were consulted in the State Library, Raleigh, N. C. The writer is here speaking of the whole eastern section of North Carolina, and what he says applies especially to Chowan.

Furthermore, this spirit of "opposition to white labor" carried over to the slave population, so there was "opposition to black labor." What was the result? As soon as the slaves were freed, and thus given the right to put their sentiments into practice, instead of half the population trying to lead a life of leisure, the whole population began striving for that end.

The colored, as well as the whites of the lower economic classes, take their cue from the whites of the upper crust, and so it was only natural that they should be overtaken by this pauperizing attitude toward work. The way the blacks pattern after the whites was pretty well summed up by an old colored man in the upper end of the county five or six years ago, about the time the first automobiles came in. Talking to a white friend of his one day he expressed himself about as follows:

White man got him a cart; nigger got him a cart. White man got him a buggy; nigger got him a buggy. Then white man he goes an' gits him a top-buggy. Well, nigger gits him a top-buggy, too. White man's boun' he's goin' ter git ahead o' mister nigger, an' so he goes an' he gits him a 'mobile. Mister nigger got ter take a back seat now—caint git him no 'mobile. But jest as soon as white man begins to sell his secon' han' 'mobiles mister nigger 'll have him one sho. You betcher life he will!

The prophecy of this keen observer is already being fulfilled.

Not only is slavery responsible for much of the present-day aversion to useful physical exertion, but most of the slipshod, wasteful, inefficient methods of agriculture described in chapters iii-v must also be debited to its account. The attitude which slavery engendered not only prevented

<sup>1</sup> For other illustrations of this copying *cf. supra*, pp. 153, 154.

improvements from originating here, but also caused the adoption of those which originated elsewhere to be delayed for years after it (slavery) had passed away.

*Time System.*—A third retrogressive factor, and one which is still active,<sup>1</sup> was the habit of buying “on time” (on credit). Most people who could buy on time did so. In preparing the first annual report, the state commissioner of labor wrote to farmers in every county and upon the replies received, based his report. In this document he comments as follows:

The mortgage and lien bond system gets more attention [in the replies received in answer to the Commissioner’s questions] than any other topic, and very properly, because the facts gathered and presented show that more evils have come to the farmers of the State on account of the mortgage and lien bond system than from any other, and indeed from every other source. It has proved a worse curse to North Carolina than drouths, floods, cyclones, storms, rust, caterpillars, and every other evil that attends the farmer. Wherever they have depended upon this system to furnish them their supplies, the farmers are in debt, and wherever it has been the custom of the farmers to raise their own supplies there the people are free from debt and the community thrifty. The cotton belt of North Carolina from the reports made is worse off financially than any other part of the state. This may be attributed to raising a money crop. It is an easy matter to sell cotton when it is gathered. Cotton is as easily handled almost as money, and therefore the merchant wants cotton for his supplies. He does not want hay, clover, grain, potatoes, &c., they are too much trouble to handle, and when a farmer proposes to raise these articles it is impossible to get supplies from a merchant. The merchant insists upon a cotton crop, because of

<sup>1</sup> Of the several merchants interviewed in 1915, not one estimated his time business at less than 50 per cent of his total transactions and some placed the estimate as high as 90 per cent of the total.

the facility with which he can handle it. The same may to a large extent be said of a landlord—rent is usually demanded in lint cotton. All the tendencies in the cotton belt, therefore, are for the cultivation of money crops, and the results are perfectly apparent—the farmers of the cotton belt are more heavily mortgaged than any other section of the State, and they are worse off generally. The table and remarks in this chapter prove that fact. Take the figures and remarks from twenty of the most western counties, beginning with Cherokee, where the least mortgaging for supplies is carried on, and it will be found that the farmers are better off and there is a more cheerful spirit than in the cotton belt where the money crop is relied on. . . .

In the eastern counties, the average [rate of interest paid when buying on time] is at least 40 per cent. . . . A farmer who pays it is carrying on a useless game, in which he must sooner or later lose all he has. . . . It is useless to talk about diversified crops to a man who pays 40 per cent for supplies. There is no system of diversified crops that will enable him to pay such a price it makes no difference what kind of a crop may be raised. . . . The facts and the figures in this chapter alike prove that the bane of the North Carolina farmer is the lien bond and mortgage system, and their sequence a failure to raise home supplies.<sup>1</sup>

Commissioner Jones uses rather strong language in his comments upon the time-system, and without doubt it was and continues a great drawback to the people. The time-system, however, was only a secondary or derived factor, due largely to the opposition-to-labor attitude, which in turn was sired and fostered by slavery, as brought out above. Indeed, the very extracts here quoted are evidence tending to prove that slavery had much to do with the time-system.

<sup>1</sup>-Commissioner W. N. Jones. *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1887), pp. 76-7.

The western counties where the commissioner found the least mortgaging for supplies and the most cheerfulness, were the very ones in which slaves were the fewest. In Cherokee, where, according to the report of 1887, there was the least amount of mortgaging going on, the slave population in 1860 was less than six per cent of the total. Taking the territory now included in the eleven westernmost counties (in 1860 this territory was embraced in seven counties), the slave population was less than eleven per cent of the total. How was it in the eastern counties where the supply-system was at its worst? In Chowan, in 1860, more than fifty-four per cent of the population were slaves, and in the eastern counties generally, with two or three exceptions, slaves constituted from thirty to sixty per cent of the entire population.<sup>1</sup>

*One-crop System.*—The one-crop system—especially stressed by Jones and others—also received its initial impetus directly from slavery. Cotton is a crop which requires no very special care, and its cultivation in accordance with the methods of slavery days, and even of the eighties, lent itself to standardization more readily than did that of most other crops. A man was required to weed so many rows, or pick so many pounds. When after the war the freedman began farming for himself, he knew more about raising cotton than anything else, so quite naturally favored cotton, as did the landlords and merchants.

*Summary.*—The primary factors, then, to which the long sleep of this section was due, were, first and foremost, the false attitude toward labor engendered by slavery; and, secondly, the lack of transportation facilities. Besides the two secondary or derived factors—time-system and one-crop

<sup>1</sup> The percentages given here for the slave population are calculated from data found in the *Eighth U. S. Census Report* (1860), vol. on Population, pp. 358-9.

system (already noted), both children of slavery—there were among others of slavery's progeny, the general ignorance of the masses—ignorance of what to do and how to do it, the lack of forage crops, the lack of nitrogen crops for enriching the soil, the great dearth of milk cows, and dog-culture instead of sheep-culture—all tremendous drawbacks.

#### CAUSES OF THE AWAKENING

To what is the awakening now going on due? There are numerous factors which have contributed and which still continue to operate. A certain thing produces an effect, which in turn becomes a cause producing other effects, and so on *ad infinitum*. The two great factors, however, which are more or less responsible for most of the others are the changing attitude towards labor, a metamorphosis permitted by the abolition of slavery, and highly accelerated by the second great factor—the improvement in communication and transportation facilities, or as Dr. Richard Dillard tersely expressed it to me, “the whistle of the locomotive.”

*Railroads.*—The coming of the railroads has given to many a means of marketing certain products, but it has done something far more significant than this—it has opened up the outside world to large numbers, and allowed them to get acquainted with some of the material comforts that it is possible for one to enjoy. With this acquaintance there has been aroused in some the ambition to own a greater abundance of the good things of this world, and for some time this ambition has been supplanting the ambition to lead a life of leisure. In other words, there has been set up a new standard of values which is largely responsible for the change in the whole economic and social aspect of the county. Work is becoming popular with many in the better-to-do classes, and this is having its effect on the less-well-to-do. Com-

paratively few eschewed work in the past because they disliked physical exertion, but rather because of the low esteem in which work was held, and so only a change in social values was necessary to set in action much labor force that heretofore had been a potentiality only.

*Change of Attitude Towards Labor.*—Since Chowan possesses a genial climate and a comparatively fertile and easily tilled soil, and possesses neither good accessible harbors, mineral wealth, nor water power, very naturally the people have turned to the soil for their chief income. With a change of attitude towards work, more people have ceased to use their heads merely for hat-racks. They now bethink themselves not of how they can escape labor, but rather of how they may get the greatest possible return for their labor, which is quite a different attitude. This change of viewpoint has meant the adoption of better tools and better methods. Now and then there has been one who has had the common sense and the courage to admit to himself that possibly he did not know absolutely all there was to be known about farming even tho he had been on a farm all his life. In this state of teachableness he has begun to read the farm journals. Of course, he has not been able to accept at once all the theories put forth, but he has tried out some of those which have seemed the most reasonable to him. It has taken courage to do this, especially because of the fact that frequently his neighbors have attempted to ridicule him about "trying to farm by the newspapers." But, as he has found that the new theories, when followed, produce better results than former practices, he has gathered fresh courage and enthusiasm which have gradually spread to the least uninstructible of his neighbors. There are still those who think that they know all that there is to be known about farming, altho they have never read anything on the subject, and yet even these are adopting a few of the

new improvements in methods and machinery which they see their neighbors using. Some of them do not know any better than to think that most of the ideas that they are taking from others originated with themselves, but they nevertheless are producing more, which is the main thing just now, for their children will thereby be given a better opportunity to obtain the right point of view and some knowledge of the true principles of agriculture.

With the change of attitude towards work, not only has there been more work done, but each working unit has gradually become more and more productive. Increased production, due to both a greater amount of work and more efficient work, has made possible the realization of certain of the newly aroused ambitions, which in turn has served to stimulate to still higher ambitions, and thus what was an effect has become a cause to produce a still greater effect.

*Diversification of Crops.*—A third factor has been an increase in the number of money crops. Until the nineties, cotton had for years been the main-stay for ready cash. Of course, there was the fish, pork, bacon, cattle, eggs and poultry, but cotton brought in more than all the others put together, and was the crop relied upon for money by most of the larger farmers. In 1890 the average annual price for upland middling on the New York market, was above eleven cents. It then began a downward trend which it continued till 1898, reaching an average for that year of less than six cents.<sup>1</sup> During the latter part of this period thousands of bales were sold which netted the farmer less than five cents a pound—a price well below the actual labor cost of producing it. So the farmer was forced to turn to other crops, or else play a losing game. A few peanuts had been raised by an occasional farmer since the eighties, but some of these

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics*, no. 181, p. 110.

the hogs were allowed to run on, and the crop was small at best. As they were selling at a fair price, the farmers began to plant more and more of them for market. From 1902 till the present European upheaval, cotton, generally speaking, has sold pretty well, nevertheless the peanut acreage has continued to increase, and in 1909 was equal to that devoted to cotton.<sup>1</sup>

During the period of low cotton prices a third crop—sweet potatoes—began to be raised for market. The prices on these, however, are rather uncertain, and they do not always keep well,<sup>2</sup> so with the return of good cotton prices, and with peanuts selling well, only a comparatively few potatoes have been shipped in the more recent years.

*Rise in Prices.*—A fourth factor which has helped to usher in better conditions has been the more or less general rise in the price of practically all farm products since about 1902. Manufactured goods also have advanced in price, but on the whole not in the same proportion as the agricultural products sold by the Chowan farmer; so the farmer has been getting the long end of the deal, as compared to what he got formerly.

#### PRESENT-DAY VITALITY OF THE OLD RETROGRESSIVE FACTORS

All the retrogressive factors, both primary and secondary, above discussed, are still operating, but with an ever-lesening force. The means of transportation for non-perishable products are, for most sections, fairly good, though for perishable stuff they are still rather poor, there being no direct

<sup>1</sup> Cf. table 8, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the sweets raised for market are dug in the fall, stored right in the fields, and shipped in winter and spring. The manner of storing is to put from twenty to eighty bushels in a pile, cover with pine straw, and then with earth. Some farmers have a small opening at the top, and build a shelter over the whole hill; others cover the potatoes "head and ears," and leave them without shelter.

fast-freight line between here and the more important markets, and the express rates being higher than much of the produce is able to bear.

While opposition to labor for men, as a social principle, is practically a thing of the past, the same can hardly be said as regards labor for women. There are still some who feel it beneath their dignity to engage in any sort of useful work, and consider it a mark of enviable distinction to lead a useless, parasitic life. Furthermore, their attitude is looked upon with favor by certain of the male sex who think that every honorable man should strive to support his wife and daughters in idle leisure. Even many of the women who are forced to work for a living, have so far imbibed these false ideas towards work, that when caught at it, they feel much compromised and quite often immediately proceed to give a lengthy excuse for being thus engaged. A few of the most advanced and optimistic thinkers, however, observing the progress recently made along economical, psychological, and sociological lines, believe that their fellowmen and women of Chowan will ere long throw overboard such poverty-making, life-blighting, soul-destroying notions and accept in their stead the modern, democratic, socialized point of view—the point of view that not only each man, but each woman as well, unless incapacitated, should pull her own weight, and, in addition, contribute something to the general public good.

Already there is a growing sentiment in the county that any able-bodied person, man or woman, who fails to earn his or her own support is either a mendicant or a thief and should be dealt with accordingly. When this sentiment becomes general, as it seems destined to do, then the shirkers and not the workers will be on the defensive; then the woman caught working will not feel called upon to apologize, but the woman, as well as the man, who persists in constant

loafing — persists in wasting good food which otherwise might go to make brain and brawn that would enrich the world—this woman will feel impelled to give some sort of an explanation as to why she is merely encumbering the earth.

#### CHIEF PRESENT-DAY DRAWBACKS

This, the closing section, need be little more than a brief recapitulation of the rest of the chapter. We saw above that the long sleep was due apparently to the combined effects of slavery and the lack of transportation facilities; and that the awakening began with the beginning of the change in attitude towards work — this change being permitted by the abolition of slavery, and accelerated by the increasing means of transportation, which operated by bettering the opportunities for marketing produce and by opening up to the people the outside world. We have seen at every stage of the narrative, as well as in the sections immediately preceding, that while the old forces of retrogression are gradually being weakened, they nevertheless are still powerful enough not only greatly to retard the county's development but actually to check it far short of the realization of its possibilities.

Tho no new retrogressive factors have come to light within recent years, the old ones, as above intimated, still have sufficient vigor to employ, for years to come, the efforts of all those interested in the county's economic and social improvement. There is the false attitude towards useful labor still existing. There is still a deficiency in the means of transportation—in the wagon roads, in the railroads, and in the waterways. There is still a woeful lack in the formal training, both in quantity and quality, of the youth. Illiteracy is still very prevalent, and aside from some little beginnings in one or two of the colored districts, no effort

is made in the schools of the county to familiarize the child with the every-day things of life—the things with which he is going to have to do in order to earn a living. What little training the school gives the child is the kind which “tends to educate out of contentment without educating into efficiency”—tends to make the child dissatisfied with his present work without fitting him for any other.

The lack of proper preparation of the soil, the lack of proper cultivation of the plant, the lack of forage- and nitrogen-crops, the lack of animal husbandry, the time-system—all these are errors which it will take a long time to correct.

The most hopeful aspect in the whole situation is that the awakening has actually begun, and that all indications seem to justify the expectation that it will continue till the vast majority of the people have approached their potential development under the then existing state of the arts and sciences.

APPENDIX  
TABLES

REVISED  
TABLES

TABLE 1<sup>1</sup>  
CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., EDENTON STATION: 1896-1913

Year	Temperature (degrees Fahrenheit)				Precipitation (inches)						
	Annual mean	Highest	Date	Lowest	Date	Total for year	Greatest monthly	Month	Least monthly	Month	Total snow fall
1896.....	60.9	95	Aug. 8	11	Feb. 22	44.93	5.91	Sept.	2.13	Apr.	13.02
1897.....	61.1	95	June 30	12	Jan. 29	42.56	6.22	May	0.98	Apr.	0.5
1898.....	61.1	95	June 26	16	Feb. 12	57.54	10.03	May	1.38	Feb.	T
1899.....	60.2	98	Aug. 5	5	Feb. 14	52.24	9.48	Aug.	0.30	Sept.	23.0
1900.....	61.1	101	July 7	12	Jan. 2	42.10	5.58	Jan.	1.25	Oct.	1.0
1901.....	....	....	.....	14	Feb. 24	....	....	....	....	....	....
1902.....	60.8	98	July 19	18	Feb. 13	51.08	6.95	Nov.	1.78	Dec.	10.0
1903.....	60.8	96	July 12	13	Feb. 18	46.88	5.97	July	0.81	Sept.	4.0
1904.....	57.7	96	July 19	12	Feb. 17	47.37	7.80	July	0.50	Apr.	10.0
1905.....	59.1	96	June 23	12	Feb. 16	58.67	9.47	July	1.65	Nov.	7.0
1906.....	61.0	98	June 30	17	Feb. 3	....	....	....	....	....	....
1907.....	59.1	96	July 10	16	Feb. 7	....	9.40	July	0.82	Jan.	11.0
1908.....	60.2	92	June 20	18	Jan. 24	56.54	10.23	July	1.67	Apr.	6.0
1909.....	....	....	.....	13	Dec. 30	....	....	....	....	....	....
1910.....	59.5	96	July 3	11	Feb. 7	55.71	9.43	June	1.00	Nov.	....
1911.....	61.4	96	June 24	22	Mar. 17	41.32	5.35	Dec.	0.90	May	....
1912.....	60.5	98	Aug. 13	0	Feb. 12	42.07	7.20	June	0.40	Aug.	21.0
1913.....	62.7	99	July 14	20	Feb. 13	52.40	7.20	Sept.	0.90	Apr.	1.0

<sup>1</sup> Source: North Carolina section of the U. S. Climatological Service of the Weather Bureau.

TABLE II<sup>1</sup>  
 CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., EDENTON STATION:  
 1896-1913—Continued

Year	Killing Frosts		Number rainy days	Sky		
	Last in spring	First in autumn		Number clear days	Number partly cloudy days	Number cloudy days
1896.....	Apr. 8	Oct. 19	114	137	135	94
1897.....	Apr. 22	Nov. 13	114	164	101	100
1898.....	Apr. 6	Nov. 26	103	140	107	118
1899.....	Apr. 6	Oct. 22	99	191	107	67
1900.....	Apr. 5	Nov. 17	76	201	58	106
1901.....	Mar. 17	Nov. 7	..	....	....	....
1902.....	Mar. 7	Oct. 23	79	173	78	114
1903.....	Apr. 5	Oct. 29	83	179	85	101
1904.....	Apr. 20	Nov. 7	76	163	111	92
1905.....	Apr. 17	Nov. 14	86	161	90	112
1906.....	Mar. 21	Oct. 12	..	....	....	....
1907.....	Apr. 2	Oct. 25	75	....	....	....
1908.....	Apr. 4	Nov. 2	79	138	122	106
1909.....	Apr. 11	Oct. 14	..	....	....	....
1910.....	Mar. 16	Oct. 30	84	177	88	100
1911.....	Mar. 24	Nov. 3	67	163	85	117
1912.....	Mar. 17	Nov. 16	68	....	....	....
1913.....	Mar. 18	Oct. 22	82	201	76	88

<sup>1</sup> Source: North Carolina Section of the U. S. Climatological Service of the Weather Bureau.

TABLE III

COMPUTATIONS FROM, AND INTERPRETATIONS OF, TABLES I AND II

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Temperature (degrees Fahrenheit):	
Average annual mean.....	60.5
Average of maximum temperatures <sup>1</sup> .....	96.6
Average of minimum temperatures <sup>2</sup> .....	13.4
Precipitation (inches):	
Average annual .....	49.39
Average variation from average annual .....	5.49
Average highest monthly (1896-1913) .....	7.75
Average lowest monthly (1896-1913).....	1.09
Average number of rainy days annually.....	86
Sky:	
Average number clear days annually .....	168
Average number partly cloudy days annually .....	96
Average number cloudy days annually.....	101
Killing Frosts:	
Latest in spring (covering 18 years) April 26. In 18 years, only 4 later in spring than April 8. Earliest in fall (18 years) October 12. Only 2 in fall earlier than October 22. Average annual number of days between the last killing frost in spring and the first in fall.....	
	215
The fewest possible number of days between the last killing frost in spring and the first in fall <sup>3</sup> .....	
	173
The fewest actual number of days in any year between last killing frost in spring and the first in fall .....	
	186

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<sup>1</sup>The "average of maximum temperatures" is obtained by taking the highest temperature registered each year during the period 1896-1913, adding these together, and dividing the sum by the number of years.

<sup>2</sup>Obtained similarly to that of the "average of maximum temperatures."

<sup>3</sup>That is, from the latest spring frost any year during the period 1896-1913 to the earliest fall frost during this same period, there is an interval of 173 days. The earliest and latest frost did not happen to come the same year, hence the fewest actual number of days is greater than the fewest possible number of days.

TABLE IV<sup>1</sup>

COLOR AND GROWTH OF POPULATION OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1790-1910

Year	Population			Population increase over previous decade		Per cent. of population		Population per square mile	
	White	Colored <sup>2</sup>	Total	Number <sup>3</sup>	Per cent	White	Colored <sup>4</sup>	Total	Rural <sup>5</sup>
1790	2,382	2,629	5,011	....	....	47.5	52.5	30.4	....
1800	2,592	2,540	5,132	121	2.4	50.5	49.5	31.1	....
1810	2,409	2,888	5,297	165	3.2	45.5	54.5	32.1	....
1820	2,839	3,625	6,464	1,167	22.0	43.9	56.1	39.2	....
1830	2,761	3,936	6,697	233	3.6	41.2	58.8	40.6	....
1840	2,865	3,825	6,690	-7	-0.1	42.8	57.2	40.5	....
1850	2,939	3,782	6,721	31	0.5	43.7	56.3	40.7	31.0
1860	2,979	3,863	6,842	121	1.8	43.5	56.5	41.5	32.4
1870	3,081	3,369	6,450	-392	-5.7	47.8	52.2	39.1	31.6
1880	3,633	4,267	7,900	1,450	22.5	46.0	54.0	47.9	39.5
1890	4,010	5,157	9,167	1,267	16.0	43.8	56.2	55.5	42.2
1900	4,406	5,852	10,258	1,091	11.9	43.0	57.0	62.2	43.7
1910	5,144	6,159	11,303	1,045	10.2	45.5	54.5	68.5	51.6

<sup>1</sup> These data are compilations and simple calculations from the *U. S. Census Reports*.

<sup>2</sup> This includes both free and slave. Prior to the abolition of slavery the number of free colored at each census enumeration was as follows: 1790, 41; 1800, 67; 1810, 99; 1820, 156; 1830, 168; 1840, 160; 1850, 109; 1860, 150.

<sup>3</sup> A minus sign (—) means a decrease.

<sup>4</sup> The average excess of colored over white for the thirteen decennial censuses is 10 per cent.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1850 the population of Edenton was not given separately from that of the rest of the county.

TABLE V<sup>1</sup>

COLOR AND NATIVITY OF POPULATION OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., EDENTON  
GIVEN SEPARATELY: 1850-1910

Subject	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Total population.....	6,721	6,842	6,450	7,900	9,167	10,258	11,303
White of— <sup>2</sup>							
Native parentage .....		2,959	3,045	3,627	3,974	4,367	5,111
Foreign or mixed parentage .....			24	.....	13	23	14
Foreign birth.....		20	12	6	23	16	19
Colored .....		3,863	3,369	4,267	5,157	5,852	6,159
Birth place of Native Population							
North Carolina.....			6,349	7,736	.....	.....	.....
Virginia.....			74	110	.....	.....	.....
West Virginia.....			.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Maryland .....			.....	11	.....	.....	.....
Pennsylvania .....			.....	10	.....	.....	.....
New York.....			1	9	.....	.....	.....
South Carolina .....			.....	4	.....	.....	.....
Georgia .....			.....	4	.....	.....	.....
All other states .....			2	10	.....	.....	.....
Population of Edenton:							
Total population .....	1,607	1,504	1,243	1,382	2,205	3,046	2,789
Per cent of county .....	23.9	22.0	19.3	23.7	24.0	29.7	24.7
Colored .....	1,075	953	.....	.....	.....	2,092	1,669
White.....	532	551	.....	.....	.....	954	1,120
White of—							
Native parentage.....						922	1,100
Foreign or mixed parentage .....						19	7
Foreign birth.....						13	13

<sup>1</sup> Source: *U. S. Census Reports*.

<sup>2</sup> The censuses for 1850, 1860 and 1880 did not publish separately, by counties, the "white of native parentage" and the "white of foreign or mixed parentage."

THE U. S. CENSUS DEFINITION OF "FARM LANDS," "FARM,"  
"FARMER," "IMPROVED LAND," AND  
"UNIMPROVED LAND."

A "farm" for census purposes is all the land which is directly farmed by one person managing and conducting agricultural operations, either by his own labor alone or with the assistance of members of his household or hired employees. The term "agricultural operations" is used as a general term referring to the work of growing crops, producing other agricultural products, and raising animals, fowls and bees. A "farm" as thus defined may consist of a single tract of land, or a number of separate and distinct tracts, and these several tracts may be held under different tenures, as where one tract is owned by the farmer and another tract is hired by him. Further, when a landowner has one or more tenants, renters, croppers, or managers, the land operated by each is considered a "farm."

Enumerators were instructed to report as a "farm" any tract of three acres or more used for agricultural operations, no matter what the value of the product raised upon the land or the amount of labor involved in operating the same in 1909. In addition they were instructed to report as farms all tracts containing less than 3 acres which either produced at least \$250 worth of farm products in the year 1909, or required for their agricultural operations, the continuous services of at least one person.<sup>1</sup>

In 1880 the instructions were as follows: "Farms," for the purpose of the agricultural schedule, include all considerable nurseries, orchards, and market gardens, which are owned by separate parties, which are cultivated for pecuniary profit, and employ as much as the labor of one able-bodied workman during the year. Mere cabbage and potato patches, family vegetable gardens, and ornamental lawns, not constituting a portion of the farm for general agricultural purposes, will be excluded. No farm will be reported of less than 3 acres, un-

<sup>1</sup> *Thirteenth Census* (1910) vol. v, p. 22.

less five hundred dollars worth of produce has actually been sold off from it during the year.<sup>1</sup>

For 1890 the definition of a farm was essentially the same as for 1880. For 1900 the instructions said: A farm, for census purposes, includes the land under one management, used for raising crops and pasturing live stock, with the wood lots, swamps, meadows, etc., connected therewith, whether consisting of one tract or of several separate tracts . . . Market, truck, and fruit gardens, orchards, nurseries, cranberry marshes, green houses, and city dairies are "farms": *Provided*, the entire time of at least one individual is devoted to their care. This statement, however does not refer to gardens in cities or towns which are maintained by persons for use or enjoyment of their families and not for gain.<sup>2</sup>

A "farmer" or "farm operator," according to the census definition, is a person who directs the operations of a farm. Hence, owners of farms who do not themselves direct the farm operations are not reported as "farmers." Farmers are divided by the Bureau of the Census into three general classes according to the character of their tenure, namely, owners, tenants, and managers.<sup>3</sup>

Farm land is divided into (1) improved land, (2) woodland, and (3) all other unimproved land. *Improved land* includes all land regularly tilled or mowed, land pastured and cropped in rotation, land lying fallow, land in gardens, orchards, vineyards, and nurseries, and land occupied by farm buildings. *Woodland* includes all land covered with natural or planted forest trees, which produce, or later may produce firewood or other forest products. *All other unimproved land* includes brush land, rough or stony land, swamp land and any other land which is not improved.<sup>4</sup>

The Census Bureau did not attempt to secure a report of

<sup>1</sup> *Tenth Census* (1880) vol. iii, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Twelfth Census* (1900) vol. v, p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> *Thirteenth Census* (1910) vol. v, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

the acreage and value of all land suitable for agriculture. It did not take any account of such land held solely for speculative purposes and not actually utilized for agricultural productions. It did not account for land owned by states or the United States, or of land occupied by forests if not in the same tract as land used for agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

The total land in farms by no means equals . . . the total area of the county or of the state. . . . The difference is made up of many items. There are the sites of buildings and the grounds connected with them, whether isolated or in villages or cities; there is the space covered by public highways, canals, and railroads; there are the tracts of land owned by non-residents or by persons who are not farmers. In this latter class of lands is often included a vast extent of pasturage and woodlands, especially the latter. In some states the great body of the forests is held by speculators or lumber mill operators, who are not farmers in any sense of the term.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Thirteenth Census* (1910) vol. v, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Tenth Census* (1880) vol. iii, p. xi.

TABLE VI<sup>1</sup>

LAND AREA, FARMS, FARM PROPERTY, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1880,  
1890, 1900 AND 1910

	1880	1890	1900	1910
<i>Number and Size of farms</i>				
Population .....	7,900	9,167	10,258	11,303
Number of farms classified by size:				
Under 3 acres .....	....	....	6	.....
3 to 9 acres .....	34	19	22	52
10 to 19 acres .....	76	54	85	117
20 to 49 acres .....	213	163	316	360
50 to 99 acres .....	166	154	187	255
100 to 499 acres .....	197	196	196	184
500 to 999 acres .....	18	27	19	10
1000 acres and over .....	12	10	2	5
Number of all farms .....	716	623	833	983
Color of farmers:				
White .....	....	....	538	601
Colored .....	....	....	295	382
<i>Land and Farm Area</i>				
Land in farms .....	85,233	80,773	72,528	74,563
Per cent of land area in farms <sup>2</sup> .....	80.7	76.6	68.7	70.6
Improved land in farms .....	36,052	32,863	34,972	33,793
Per cent of farm land improved <sup>2</sup> .....	45.3	48.2	40.7	45.3
Per cent of land area improved <sup>3</sup> .....	34.1	30.9	33.1	32.0
Average number acres per farm <sup>2</sup> .....	119	130	87.1	75.9
Average number improved acres <sup>3</sup> per farm	50.3	52.7	42.0	34.4
Approximate land area .....	105,600	105,600	105,600	105,600
<i>Value of Farm Property</i>				
All farm property .....	707,347	913,390	882,545	2,447,002
Increase over previous decade <sup>3</sup> , dollars ..	206,043	—39,845 <sup>5</sup>	—39,845 <sup>5</sup>	1,564,457
Increase over previous decade <sup>4</sup> , per cent. ....	27.7	—0.4 <sup>5</sup>	—0.4 <sup>5</sup>	177.3
Land <sup>6</sup> .....	....	....	493,300	1,554,342
Buildings .....	607,909	785,010	233,800	534,785
Implements and machinery .....	23,262	26,940	40,040	99,994
Domestic animals, poultry and bees .....	76,176	101,440	115,405	264,881
Per cent of value of all farm property <sup>2</sup> in—				
Land <sup>6</sup> .....	....	....	55.9	63.5
Buildings .....	85.9	85.9	26.5	21.9
Implements and machinery .....	3.3	3.0	4.5	3.8
Domestic animals, poultry and bees .....	10.8	11.1	13.1	10.8
Average Values:				
All property per farm <sup>2</sup> .....	988	1,466	1,059	2,489
Land and bldgs. per farm <sup>2</sup> .....	849	1,260	873	2,125
Land per acre <sup>7</sup> .....	4.84	6.59	6.80	20.85

<sup>1</sup> Source: *U. S. Census Reports.*<sup>2</sup> The figures for 1880, 1890, and 1900 are my own calculations, based upon the U. S. Census data.<sup>3</sup> These figures are my own calculations.<sup>4</sup> Figures for 1890 and 1900 are my own calculations.<sup>5</sup> Decrease.<sup>6</sup> Neither in 1880 nor in 1890 were the values of the land and the buildings recorded separately.<sup>7</sup> The value of the land in 1900 was 67.8 per cent of the value of the land and buildings taken together. Since the values of the land and buildings are not given separately for either 1880 or 1890, the per cent for 1900 is taken as a basis for the separate calculations given for these years.

TABLE VII<sup>1</sup>  
DOMESTIC ANIMALS, POULTRY AND BEES ON FARMS, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.:  
1880, 1890, 1900, 1910

	1880	1890	1900	1910
<i>Domestic Animals</i>				
Farms reporting domestic animals ..	.....	.....	.....	952
Value of domestic animals...dollars	.....	.....	.....	252,215
Cattle:				
Total number .....	2,394	2,382	2,571	2,303
Dairy cows.....	736	618	558	560
Other cows <sup>2</sup> .....	.....	.....	641	737
Work oxen <sup>3</sup> .....	163	137	139	74
Calves <sup>4</sup> .....	.....	417	559	402
All other cattle .....	1,495	1,210	674	530
Horses:				
Total number.....	653	703	998	897
Mature horses.....	.....	677	962	862
Colts (spring and yearling) .....	.....	26 <sup>5</sup>	36	35
Mules:				
Total number.....	385	406	528	789
Mature mules.....	.....	.....	524	778
Colts (spring and yearling) .....	.....	.....	4	11
Swine:				
Total number .....	8,475	7,860	10,482	11,367
Mature hogs .....	.....	.....	.....	5,183
Spring pigs.....	.....	.....	.....	6,184
Sheep:				
Total number .....	375 <sup>6</sup>	525	348	701
Goats:				
Total number.....	.....	.....	241	120
<i>Poultry and Bees</i>				
Poultry <sup>7</sup> (all kinds):				
Total number.....	12,759 <sup>8</sup>	25,707	25,132 <sup>9</sup>	24,373
Chickens.....	.....	22,062	20,919	.....
Turkeys.....	.....	1,294	575	.....
Geese .....	.....	1,366	2,557	.....
Ducks .....	.....	1,035	1,081	.....
Value of all poultry.....dollars..	.....	.....	7,235	12,251
Bees:				
Number of colonies .....	.....	.....	.....	344

<sup>1</sup> Source: *U. S. Census Reports.*

<sup>2</sup> The term "other cows" refers to those that are breeders only. These cows are not milked during the year in which the enumeration occurs. Cows that are not milked one season may be milked at other seasons. In both the tenth and the eleventh censuses, "other cows" are classified under the head of, "all other cattle."

<sup>3</sup> The censuses for 1900 and for 1910 do not classify work oxen separately. The figures for 1900 are for "steers 3 years old and over;" those for 1910 are for "steers and bulls over 2 years old."

<sup>4</sup> In the census for 1890, the classification is, "calves dropped in 1889." In the 1880 census, calves are classified under the head of "all other cattle."

<sup>5</sup> In the census for 1890, the classification is, "horses foaled in 1880."

<sup>6</sup> "Exclusive of spring lambs."

<sup>7</sup> The Eleventh and the Twelfth are the only censuses which give, by counties, the number of different kinds of poultry.

<sup>8</sup> "Exclusive of spring hatching." <sup>9</sup> "Number of fowls 3 months and over on June 1."

TABLE VIII<sup>1</sup>

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCTION, AND PRODUCTION PER ACRE,<sup>2</sup> OF PRINCIPAL CROPS, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1879, 1889, 1899 AND 1909

	1879	1889	1899	1909
Corn .....	13,877	12,941	12,583	10,235
bushels .....	143,156	133,330	144,000	107,878
bu. per acre....	10.3	10.3	11.4	10.5
Wheat.....	622	122	.....	.....
bushels .....	4,357	963	.....	.....
bu. per acre....	7.0	7.9	.....	.....
Oats .....	791	879	106	172
bushels .....	6,888	8,638	800	2,723
bu. per acre....	8.7	9.8	7.5	15.8
Rice .....	.....	193	109	.....
pounds .....	.....	50,953	37,752	.....
pounds per acre	.....	264	346	.....
Peanuts.....	21 <sup>3</sup>	890	3,909	6,061
bushels .....	113	29,276	167,921	234,526
bu. per acre....	5.4	32.9	43.0	38.7
Dry Peas.....	.....	.....	131	100
bushels .....	10,327 <sup>4</sup>	231	2,109	622
bu. per acre....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Hay and Forage..	100	246	595 <sup>7</sup>	39
tons .....	68	180	611 <sup>7</sup>	37
Sweet potatoes..	723	984	931	1,155
bushels .....	62,247	57,802	77,366	74,033
bu. per acre....	86	58.7	83.1	64.1
Irish Potatoes ...	100 <sup>5</sup>	120	152	112
bushels .....	4,189	4,308	10,097	6,919
bu. per acre....	.....	35.9	.....	61.7
Cane, Sorghum ..	.....	4	15	8
gallons .....	99	140	940	315
Cotton.....	6,047	6,282	4,769	6,163
bales <sup>6</sup> .....	2,014	2,254	2,494	2,601
lbs. of lint per	.....	.....	.....	.....
acre.....	166.5	179	261	212

<sup>1</sup> Compiled from the volumes on agriculture of the four *U. S. Census Reports* for the years indicated, except where it is stated otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> "Production per acre" are my own calculations.

<sup>3</sup> The 1880 census gives no data on peanuts. These figures are from the *Hand Book of North Carolina* issued by Commissioner L. L. Polk in 1879, pp. 212-18.

<sup>4</sup> The acreage for peas is not given in either the 1880 or the 1890 Census. *Cf. supra*, pp. 65, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Estimated acreage, using the number of bushels per acre in 1890, as a basis.

<sup>6</sup> These figures are for the standard bale of 500 pounds. *Cf. supra*, foot-note, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> I feel quite certain that these figures are much too large. It will be observed that they are far above the figures for either of the other census years. In all probability there were not over 100 acres in hay in 1899. Probably 90 per cent of the forage is "fodder." *Cf. supra*, p. 65.

TABLE IX<sup>1</sup>

LIVE-STOCK PRODUCTS AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS SOLD OR SLAUGHTERED  
ON FARMS, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1879, 1889, 1899 AND 1909

	1879	1889	1899	1909
<i>Dairy Products</i>				
Dairy cows on farms reporting on dairy products..... number	.....	.....	.....	163
Dairy cows on farms reporting milk produced..... number	.....	.....	.....	141
Farms reporting dairy products... number	.....	.....	270	.....
Milk—Produced..... gallons	.....	51,627	73,302	16,117
Sold..... gallons	1,539	.....	1,819	140
Butter—Produced..... pounds	5,960	5,928	7,900	4,508
Sold..... pounds	.....	.....	439 <sup>2</sup>	660
Value of dairy products, excluding home use of milk and cream.... dollars	.....	.....	.....	1,214
Value of all dairy products..... dollars	.....	.....	12,273	.....
Receipts from sale of dairy products. dollars	.....	.....	541	221
<i>Poultry Products</i>				
Poultry—Raised..... number	.....	.....	.....	32,628
Raised—value..... dollars	.....	.....	11,404	.....
Sold..... number	.....	.....	.....	15,711
Eggs—Produced..... dozen	24,024	34,029	86,560	65,338
Sold..... dozen	.....	.....	.....	45,059
Value of poultry and eggs produced.. dollars	.....	.....	.....	22,910
Receipts from sale of poultry and eggs dollars	.....	.....	.....	13,045
<i>Honey and Wax</i>				
Honey produced..... pounds	4,286	2,443	4,710	3,162
Wax produced..... pounds	308	112	380	166
<i>Wool</i>				
Wool—Fleeces shorn..... number	.....	427	237	507
Number of pounds.....	1,172	1,395	924	.....
<i>Domestic Animals Sold or Slaughtered</i>				
Calves—Sold or slaughtered..... number	.....	.....	.....	71
Other cattle—Sold or slaughtered... number	.....	181	.....	284
Cattle—Died..... number	.....	84	.....	.....
Horses and Mules—Sold..... number	.....	.....	.....	.....
Swine—Sold or slaughtered..... number	.....	5,605 <sup>3</sup>	.....	10,091
Swine—Died..... number	.....	2,100	.....	.....
Sheep and Goats—Sold or slaughtered..... number	.....	.....	.....	296
Receipts from sale of live animals .. dollars	.....	.....	3,396	5,054
Value of animals slaughtered..... dollars	69,854	.....	49,352	98,211

<sup>1</sup> Source: U. S. Census Reports.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated from the value of the amount produced and the value of the amount consumed, both of which are given in the twelfth census.

<sup>3</sup> The term used in the 1890 Census, is "swine consumed," meaning, I presume, the number slaughtered.

TABLE X<sup>1</sup>

FARMS CLASSIFIED BY SIZE, AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACRES PER FARM IN EACH CLASS, AVERAGE NUMBER OF IMPROVED ACRES IN EACH CLASS, AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH CLASS, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1880, 1890, 1900 AND 1910

Farms	Average no. acres per farm	Average number improved acres per farm in each class <sup>2</sup>				Number of Farms in each class			
		1880	1890	1900	1915	1880	1890	1900	1910
Under 3 acres.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	.....	
3 to 9 acres.....	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.7	34	19	22	52
10 to 19 acres.....	14.4	6.1	5.9	7.0	6.7	76	54	85	117
20 to 49 acres.....	34.5	14.6	14.0	16.6	15.6	213	163	316	360
50 to 99 acres.....	74.5	31.5	30.3	35.9	33.7	166	154	187	255
100 to 499 acres....	249.5	105.5	101.5	120.2	113.0	107	196	196	184
500 to 999 acres....	749.5	317.0	305.0	361.3	339.5	18	27	19	10
1000 and over acres	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12	10	2	5

<sup>1</sup>The "Average no. acres per farm" and the "Average no. improved acres in each class" are calculations from the *U. S. Census Reports*. The other data are compilations from the same source.

<sup>2</sup>The "Average no. improved acres per farm in each class" is obtained for the various classes as follows: Find what per cent of farm lands were improved for the year desired. The product of this per cent by the "average no. acres per farm" for any class, gives the "average no. improved acres per farm" for that class. For example, the average number of acres in the class, "20 to 49 acres" is 34.5. In 1880 45.3 per cent of farm land was improved. Now 45.3 per cent of 34.5 acres gives 14.6 acres, which is the average amount of improved land in 1880 in farms ranging from 20 to 49 acres. For per cent of farm land improved *cf. supra*, table vi, p. 269.

TABLE XI<sup>1</sup>  
 "WORK ANIMALS" ON FARMS, ACRES OF IMPROVED LAND PER "WORK ANIMAL," AND PER "STANDARD WORK ANIMAL," CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1880, 1890, 1900 AND 1910

	1880	1890	1900	1910
Horses .....	653 <sup>2</sup>	703 <sup>2</sup>	962 <sup>3</sup>	762 <sup>3</sup>
Mules .....	385 <sup>2</sup>	406 <sup>2</sup>	524 <sup>3</sup>	771 <sup>3</sup>
Work Oxen .....	163	137	139 <sup>4</sup>	74 <sup>5</sup>
Total number animals .....	1,201	1,246	1,625	1,607
Number of "work animals" <sup>6</sup> .....	1,141 <sup>7</sup>	1,186 <sup>7</sup>	1,551 <sup>8</sup>	1,518 <sup>9</sup>
Number of "standard work animals" <sup>10</sup> .....	1,060	1,118	1,501	1,508 <sup>11</sup>
Number improved acres per:				
"Work animal" .....	31.6	27.7	22.5	22.3
"Standard work animal" .....	34	29.4	23.3	22.4

<sup>1</sup> The figures for the number of animals are taken direct from the *U. S. Census Reports*. The remaining figures are my own calculations from the same reports. Cf. *supra*, table 7 and foot-notes to same, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> All animals both mature and immature are included in this figure, the censuses for 1880 and for 1890 making no separate report for the two classes.

<sup>3</sup> All animals, except yearlings and spring colts.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is for "All steers 3 years old and over."

<sup>5</sup> "All steers and bulls over 2 years."

<sup>6</sup> The "work animals" are all mature horses and mules, and all work oxen, in other words, the total number of beasts of burden, less the immature horses and mules.

<sup>7</sup> Immature horses are estimated to be 60.

<sup>8</sup> Deductions are made for 39 steers not work oxen, and for 35 immature horses and mules (the figures in each case are my own estimates).

<sup>9</sup> Deductions are made for 54 steers and bulls not work oxen, and for 35 immature horses and mules. (These figures are my own estimates).

<sup>10</sup> A horse, or mule old enough to do regular work, is taken as the "standard work animal," and two oxen are reckoned as equivalent to one horse or mule. The horses and mules raised in the county were never worked till they were three years old, or over. In order to arrive at the number of "standard work animals," the immature mules and horses are estimated, and their number, together with 50 per cent of the oxen, are deducted from the total number of mules, horses, and oxen.

<sup>11</sup> The number of work oxen are estimated to be 20; counting each a half, deducts 10 from the number of "work animals."

TABLE XII<sup>1</sup>

SELECT FARM EXPENSES AND RECEIPTS, CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1800-1910

	1880	1890	1900	1910
<b>Labor:</b>				
Farms reporting..... number.....				513
Cash expended.....dollars.....			46,900	81,246
Rent and board furnished.....dollars.....				8,911
<b>Fertilizer:</b>				
Farms reporting..... number.....				791
Amount expended.....dollars.....	5,043	8,146	15,750	63,800
Amount expended <sup>2</sup> per acre of improved land.....dollars.....	0.14	0.25	0.45	1.89
<b>Feed:</b>				
Farms reporting..... number.....				377
Amount expended.....dollars.....				15,007
Receipts from sale of feedable crops.....dollars.....				1,214

<sup>1</sup> Source: *U. S. Census Reports.*<sup>2</sup> Calculated from this table and table vi.

TABLE XIII  
 COMMERCIAL FISHING TACKLE OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., ITS ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE, AND THE LABOR FORCE  
 OPERATING IT: 1880 AND 1914

Class of Tackle	Number of units of each class	Average value per unit <sup>1</sup> (dollars)	Total value of class (dollars)	Operators <sup>2</sup>					
				Men		Number of man-weeks <sup>5</sup>	Women		
				Number <sup>3</sup>	Weeks <sup>4</sup> worked		Number <sup>3</sup>	Weeks <sup>4</sup> worked	
Sound seines (steam) . . .	4	10,000	40,000	200	9	1,800	80	9	720
Sound seines (horse) . . .	3	7,000	21,000	150	9	1,350	60	9	540
River seines (horse) . . .	5	5,000	25,000	150	6	900	60	6	360
River seines (hand) . . .	8	300	2,400	48	3	144	20	2 <sup>6</sup>	40
Pound nets:									
Nets <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	150	60	9,000	100 <sup>10</sup>	12	1,200	40	5 <sup>8</sup>	200
Boats <sup>9</sup> . . . . .	50	75	3,750						
Shore apparatus . . . . .	.....	per net 5	750						
Gill nets <sup>11</sup> (yds.) . . . . .	7,000	.....	800	15	8	120		.....	
Totals . . . . .	.....	.....	102,700	603	.....	5,514	260	.....	1,860
1914									
Pound nets:									
Nets <sup>12</sup> . . . . .	999	60	59,940	300 <sup>13</sup>	16	4,800	150	5	750
Boats <sup>14</sup> . . . . .	100	200	20,000						
Shore apparatus . . . . .	.....	per net 5	4,995						
Gill nets:									
Nets (yds.) <sup>15</sup> . . . . .	60,450	100 yds. 5	3,023						
Row boats <sup>17</sup> . . . . .	46	30	1,380	75 <sup>16</sup>	13	975		.....	
Gas boats <sup>18</sup> . . . . .	20	300	6,000						
Shore apparatus <sup>19</sup> . . . . .	.....	.....	1,500						
Totals . . . . .	.....	.....	96,838	360	.....	5,775	150	.....	750

<sup>1</sup> In the valuation of seines, all boats, shore apparatus, and seine grounds are included.

<sup>2</sup> The number of operators in each instance are estimates; but these estimates, as well as all others in connection with fishing, are based upon information obtained from twenty or more practical fishermen (both employers and employees) living in various parts of Chowan and adjoining counties, and from my own knowledge of conditions. The average number of either men or women operators, per unit of any class of tackle, may be found by dividing the figures in columns 5 and 8, respectively, for the class of tackle in question, by the corresponding figures in column 2.

<sup>3</sup> Columns 5 and 8 are obtained by multiplying the estimated number of men and women, respectively, required to man each unit of the class of tackle designated, by the number of units in that class.

<sup>4</sup> The number of weeks is the estimated average per unit in each class of tackle designated.

<sup>5</sup> A "man-week," and a "woman-week," is the labor for one week of one man, and of one woman, respectively. The number of the former for any class of tackle is the product of the corresponding figures in columns 5 and 6; and of the latter, of columns 8 and 9.

<sup>6</sup> Since hand seines were fished only intermittently, the women came only when it was expected they would be needed, and then were paid for cutting by the 1000. These facts account for the fewer number of weeks accredited to them than to the men in this class of tackle. This is the estimated average amount of time which they put in each season around 1880.

<sup>7</sup> Estimated.

<sup>8</sup> In pound-net fishing, the men who fish the nets are able to take care of the cutting till about the first of April, since the catch up until then is usually light. For this reason, women cutters are needed for only a few weeks of the season. On the river the cutters are paid by the 1000; on the sound some are paid by the 1000 and some by the day. The number of weeks given is for the full time for which payment was made.

<sup>9</sup> It is estimated that on an average, there was one boat to three nets. At this time they were rigged with sail, hence more were required than when using gas. Again, every fisherman had his own boat, and some of them had only one or two nets.

<sup>10</sup> Before the introduction of gasoline-boats for tending nets it took about twice as many men to handle a given number of nets as it does now. This accounts for a larger proportionate number of men for pound-nets in 1880 than in 1914.

<sup>11</sup> This estimate is little more than a bare guess, since no one seems to have any very definite idea as to the number of yards of gill netting fished in 1880. All agree that the number was small. The estimated value includes all appurtenances.

<sup>12</sup> The number of pound-nets were taken from the records of the county sheriff, who has to collect an annual tax on each pound-net, and on each 100 yards of gill netting.

<sup>13</sup> These figures are the estimated average number of men engaged for 16 weeks and are based upon the known number of nets, and such statements as the following regarding the number of men required to fish a given number of nets:—

“The men can fish 20 nets and handle from 15,000 to 20,000 herring per day, extra help is needed.” O. C. Byrum, Edenton.

“I employ from 7 to 8 hands for the entire season to operate 30 nets.” H. G. Wood, Edenton.

“From the middle of January to the middle of April only three men are needed to fish 15 nets and cut the fish. Three men can fish from 20 to 25 nets until the daily catch exceeds 10,000. From the middle of April on, from 1 to 4 extra men are needed, if the catch is more than 10,000 or 15,000 for a 15-net stand. An extra man is required for each additional 7,000 to 10,000 per day.” R. D. Boyce, Tyner.

“I use 7 regular men for 23 nets.” J. A. Woodard, Edenton.

Besides the regular men, all fishermen employ extra help when the fish are running heavy.

<sup>14</sup> It is estimated that on an average there is one boat to every 10 nets, averaging \$200 in value.

<sup>15</sup> The records of the sheriff show that in 1914 the tax was collected on 40,300 yards. It is customary for a fisherman to take out license, not for the number of yards of nets he owns, but for the number he expects to keep in the water: one needs about half as many more, since they must be taken out for cleaning, drying and mending. Hence it is estimated that license was taken out for not over two-thirds of the amount of the actual netting owned.

<sup>16</sup> Besides three men on the river, six men on the sound took out license to fish 300 yards, or less, of gill-net in 1914. Fishermen inform me that no one fishes so small an amount (their euphemistic way of saying that some people neglect to go thru the formality of taking out license for all the netting they fish), so I am counting two men to each set of license, and an additional two to each set authorizing the fishing of more than one crop. Since there were issued 38 licenses, 8 of which were for more than one crop (only one exceeded two crops), on the basis set forth we should have 92 men. A few of these, however, were not occupied all the time with fishing and some fished short seasons. For these reasons, the number is cut down to 75.

<sup>17</sup> Two men with one boat can fish a “stand” or “crop” (2,250 yards), keeping two-thirds of it in the water all the time. Thirty-eight men took out license in 1914. Each one of these had to have at least one boat. Eight of them fished more than one crop, so needed two row boats. This would give us 46.

<sup>18</sup> Those fishing far from their landing places usually use a gas boat for towing them in and out. It is estimated that as many as 20 of them have these boats, which, on an average, cost about \$500 each. Some cost as high as \$1,400.

<sup>19</sup> Many who fish gill-nets also fish pound-nets, and land everything at the same place, having no special shore apparatus for handling the gill-net catch; but even so, a certain part of the capital thus invested should be reckoned as capital engaged in gill-net fishing. The amount here given is a conservative estimate.

TABLE XIV<sup>1</sup>  
ESTIMATED CATCH OF FISH IN CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., AND ITS BEACH VALUE: 1880 AND 1914

Class of Tackle	Number of units in each class	Catch per unit		Total catch of each class			Value of total catch of each class (dollars)
		Herring (number)	Iced fish (value dollars)	Herring		Iced fish value (dollars)	
				Number	Price per 1000 (dollars)		
Sound seines (steam).....	4	1,750,000	6,000.00	7,000,000	4.00	28,000	24,000
Sound seines (horse).....	3	1,350,000	4,500.00	4,050,000	4.00	16,200	13,500
River seines (horse).....	5	1,000,000	1,000.00	5,000,000	3.00	15,000	5,000
River seines (hand).....	8	125,000	5.00	1,000,000	2.00	2,000	40
Pound nets (sound).....	75	25,000	200.00	1,875,000	3.00	5,625	15,000
Pound nets (river).....	75	25,000	50.00	1,875,000	2.50	4,688	3,750
Shad gill nets (sound).....	5,000 yds.	.....	1.00	.....	.....	.....	5,000
Shad gill nets (river).....	2,000 yds.	.....	.30	.....	.....	.....	600
Totals.....	.....	.....	.....	20,800,000	.....	71,513	66,890
1914							
Pound nets (sound).....	366	20,000	50.00	7,320,000	3.50	25,620	18,300
Pound nets (river).....	633	20,000	12.00	12,660,000	3.00	37,980	7,596
Shad gill nets (sound).....	39,800 yds.	.....	.30	.....	.....	.....	11,940
Shad gill nets (river).....	500 yds.	.....	.20	.....	.....	.....	100
Totals.....	.....	.....	.....	19,980,000	.....	63,600	37,936

<sup>1</sup> For 1880, the number of pound-nets and the number of yards of gill nets are not definitely known, but are estimated from numerous interviews. The number of seines has been furnished by men interested in fishing at the time. For 1914, the number of pound-nets and the number of yards of gill-nets were taken from the records of the sheriff, and their location given by him.

The catch is based on the amount of fishing tackle operated at the dates given, and the estimated average annual catch for the different units of such tackle, taking five-year periods—1880-4, and 1910-14.

The price per 1000 is the estimated average for the season's catch of each class of tackle. Generally speaking, the later the season, the cheaper the fish. In the early part of the season, in addition to the scarcity value, the fish are better in quality, and so sell for more even when salted. The sound seines put in three or four weeks earlier than the river seines, and herring started in the sound at from \$15 to \$20 per 1000. By the time the river seines had begun catching any to speak of, they were usually down to from \$3 to \$4. Furthermore, sound-caught herring are in a better condition than those river-caught—they are fatter and not so many of them spawned out—and so when caught even at the same time as those on the river, are worth more. This fact, in connection with the fact that the pound-nets on the sound begin to catch fish earlier than those in the river, is the basis for placing the price of sound-caught pound-net fish 50 cents per 1000 higher than river-caught pound-net fish.

Pound-net herring sold on the beach for 50 cents per 1000 less than seine herring, even under the same market conditions, because they were liable to damage, both by being left in the nets too long and in being brought from the nets to the shore on occasions when there was little or no wind. People buying fish to put up, much preferred those seine-caught. Many of the pound-net men made little preparation for salting down fish, and so frequently dropped their prices even more than 50 cents below the seine men, in order to attract the carters.

The hand-seine herring have been priced low, because the hand-seines never caught any except when the river was full of fish and consequently low-priced.

TABLE XV

HORSE AND STEAM-POWER SEINE FISHERIES IN CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., IN 1880, AND THE NUMBER OF YARDS OF SEINE FISHED AT EACH <sup>1</sup>

ON THE CHOWAN RIVER	
<i>Fisheries</i>	<i>Yards of seine</i>
Montrose .....	600
Woodley's.....	1,200
Winfield .....	1,000
Bill Holly .....	1,750
Cofield .....	1,800
Total .....	6,350
ON THE ALBEMARLE SOUND	
Drummond's Point .....	2,500
Greenfield .....	2,500
Robert's (Long Lane) .....	2,400
Long Beach .....	2,400
Sandy Point .....	2,300
Athal .....	2,200
Skinner's Point.....	2,300
Total .....	16,600

<sup>1</sup> My chief authority for the length of the different river seines is John Parish, Hertford, N. C. This gentleman fished seine on the Chowan river from 1865 to 1878, inclusive. My authority for the length of the different sound seines is Frank Wood, Edenton, N. C. Mr. Wood owned and fished for twenty-eight years one of the biggest and most modern seines on the sound.

The figures here given are for the seine proper, or netting. In addition to this, there was hauling rope, which, on an average, was about one and one-half times the length of the netting. Thus a seine put down as 2,500 yards long, was some 6,000 yards long, or between three and a half and four miles, if the hauling rope be included.

TABLE XVI<sup>1</sup>  
PUBLIC SCHOOL CENSUS OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1880-84, 1909-10, 1913-14

Year <sup>2</sup>	Territory	School population			Enrollment			Average daily attendance			Average term in days <sup>3</sup>		
		White		total	White		total	White		total	White		Colored
		Col.	total	White	Col.	total	White	Col.	total	regular	local tax	regular	local tax
1880.....	County...	1,152	2,294	444	1,038	237	383	620	80	.....	80	.....	
1881.....	County...	1,227	2,404	652	1,367	392	454	846	115	.....	115	.....	
1882.....	County...	1,239	2,487	607	1,342	426	446	872	115	.....	115	.....	
1883.....	County...	1,346	2,597	717	1,643	432	658	1,090	90	.....	105	.....	
1884.....	County...	1,361	2,645	860	2,090	575	762	1,337	91	.....	87	.....	
1909-10...	Rural.....	1,703	2,845	349	429	262	47	309	180	.....	180	.....	
	Edenton..	141	642	1,209	2,519	837	809	1,646	116	.....	91	.....	
	County...	1,844	3,487	835	2,112	513	738	1,261	90	98	82	96	
1910-11...	Rural.....	1,759	2,892	373	458	265	46	311	180	.....	180	.....	
	Edenton..	141	647	1,208	2,570	778	784	1,562	117	.....	86	.....	
	County...	1,900	3,539	897	2,036	517	676	1,193	107	125	85	103	
1911-12...	Rural.....	1,664	2,937	350	432	234	45	279	180	.....	180	.....	
	Edenton..	145	593	1,247	2,468	751	721	1,472	127	.....	89	.....	
	County...	1,721	3,530	880	2,151	556	803	1,359	100	114	82	85	
1912-13...	Rural.....	1,760	2,999	354	438	261	44	305	180	.....	180	.....	
	Edenton..	150	606	1,234	2,599	817	847	1,664	123	.....	86	.....	
	County...	1,695	3,605	969	2,339	612	893	1,595	118	128	103	106	
1913-14...	Rural.....	1,841	3,049	404	494	292	53	345	180	.....	180	.....	
	Edenton..	130	586	1,373	2,833	904	946	1,850	136	.....	.....	.....	
	County...	1,664	3,635	1,373	2,833	904	946	1,850	136	.....	.....	.....	

<sup>1</sup> Source: Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> In the eighties, the data were not given according to the school year.

<sup>3</sup> Given to the nearest whole day.





TABLE XIX<sup>1</sup>  
 SCHOOL-CENSUS FIGURES OF CHOWAN COUNTY REDUCED TO PERCENTAGES: 1881-4, 1909-10—1913-14

Year	Per cent. of school-population enrolled						The percentage which the average attendance forms of the school-population					
	White			Colored			White			Colored		
	Rural	Edenton	County	Rural	Edenton	County	Rural	Edenton	County	Rural	Edenton	County
1881.....	....	....	36.2	....	....	50.5	....	....	19.3	....	....	32.5
1882.....	....	....	52.6	....	....	58.9	....	....	31.6	....	....	36.4
1883.....	....	....	48.5	....	....	54.7	....	....	34.1	....	....	33.1
1884.....	....	....	55.8	....	....	68.0	....	....	33.6	....	....	48.3
Average.....	....	....	48.3	....	....	58.0	....	....	29.7	....	....	37.6
1000-10.....	75.3	60.7	73.6	71.7	55.6	71.0	50.4	52.3	50.9	44.7	33.3	43.9
1910-11.....	73.7	73.7	73.7	72.6	60.3	71.7	45.3	52.4	47.5	42.1	32.6	41.3
1911 12.....	70.5	78.1	72.5	80.5	56.6	67.5	40.6	52.2	43.5	40.6	31.0	39.9
1912-13.....	71.0	77.6	72.8	72.8	56.0	71.5	44.9	57.2	48.2	45.6	29.3	44.3
1913-14.....	80.2	88.6	82.5	74.4	69.2	74.1	50.7	64.0	54.3	48.5	40.8	48.0
Average.....	74.1	77.5	75.0	74.4	59.5	71.2	46.4	55.6	48.9	44.3	33.4	43.5

<sup>1</sup> The figures of this table are calculations based on table xvi.

TABLE XX<sup>1</sup>  
 PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE FOR TEACHING, PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE FOR ALL PURPOSES, AND PER CAPITA VALUE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY, FOR BOTH WHITE AND COLORED, CHOWAN COUNTY: 1880-4, 1909-10—1913-14

Year	Amount per head of white school population paid for teaching <sup>2</sup> white children		Amount per head of colored school-population paid for teaching colored children		Total public-school expenditure per head of entire school-population of the county	Value of school property for white, per head of white school-population		Value of school property for colored, per head of colored school-population <sup>3</sup>		
	Rural	Edenton	Rural	Edenton		Rural	Edenton	Rural	Edenton	County
1880.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.92	.....	.....	.....	.....	.21
1881.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.22	.74	.....	.....	.....	.29
1882.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.75	1.22	.....	.....	.....	.29
1883.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.39	1.75	.....	.....	.....	.30
1884.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.39	.....	.....	.....	.37
Average....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1.65	1.28	.....	.....	.....	.29
1909-10....	2.97	8.98	1.34	1.60	4.82	1.35	7.88	23.29	12.78	2.58
1910-11....	2.87	9.60	1.26	1.60	4.11	1.29	9.27	19.76	12.51	2.83
1911-12....	3.28	11.08	1.35	1.55	4.39	1.36	8.96	22.32	12.43	3.10
1912-13....	3.52	10.66	1.23	1.50	5.51	1.25	14.12	21.93	16.22	2.93
1913-14....	4.92	11.78	1.60	1.73	5.64	1.61	16.80	21.93	18.21	3.44
Average....	3.51	10.42	1.36	1.60	4.89	1.37	12.41	21.85	14.43	2.94

<sup>1</sup>The calculations are based on tables xvi, xvii and xviii.

<sup>2</sup>Since the superintendent of the Edenton schools does some teaching, and since he puts in practically all his time at the white school, in calculating the per-capita expenditure for teaching white children in Edenton, his salary has been included with that of the rest of the teachers.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. note 4 to table xvii.



TABLE XXIII<sup>1</sup>  
CHURCH COMMUNICANTS OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C.: 1890 AND 1906

Denominations <sup>2</sup>	Communicants			
	June 1, 1890		Dec. 30, 1906	
	Number	Per cent of total	Number	Per cent of total
Baptist (white).....	1,747	37.7	4,685 <sup>3</sup>	72.3
Baptist (colored).....	1,247	26.9	....	....
Methodist Episcopal South....	93	2.0	294	4.5
Methodist Episcopal.....	....	....	75	1.2
Methodist Protestant.....	....	....	19	0.3
African Methodist <sup>4</sup> .....	....	....	1,207	18.6
Colored Methodist Episcopal..	39	0.8	....	....
African Methodist Episcopal Zion.....	1,357	29.3	....	....
Protestant Episcopal.....	134	2.9	158	2.4
Other Protestant Bodies.....	....	....	26	0.4
Roman Catholic.....	17	0.4	19	0.3
All Denominations.....	4,634	100	6,483	100

<sup>1</sup> Compiled from the special reports on churches in 1890 and in 1906 by the *U. S. Bureau of the Census*.

<sup>2</sup> The *U. S. Census Reports* make no mention of the Friends, or "Quakers," in the county. There are probably some thirty or forty of this persuasion within its borders.

<sup>3</sup> The colored and the white Baptists are here given all together.

<sup>4</sup> Includes all colored Methodists at the time of the enumeration in 1906.

TABLE XXIV<sup>1</sup>

CHURCH COMMUNICANTS OF CHOWAN COUNTY, N. C., COMPARED WITH  
POPULATION 15 YEARS OLD AND OVER: 1890 AND 1906.

SUBJECT	June 1, 1890	Dec. 30, 1906
Total population .....number .....	9,167	10,955 <sup>2</sup>
Population 15 years old and over <sup>3</sup> ..number .....	5,234	6,463
Population 15 years old and over...per cent .....	57.1	59.0 <sup>4</sup>
Church communicants.....number .....	4,634	6,483
Church communicants .....per cent of population..	50.6	59.2

<sup>1</sup> The calculations in this table are based on data found in various *U. S. Census* reports.

<sup>2</sup> The average monthly increase of Chowan's population from June 1, 1900 to April 15, 1910, was 8.819. The population for Dec. 31, 1906, is approximated by adding to the population for June 1, 1900 (10,258) 8.819 for each additional month (79). The product of  $79 \times 8.819 = 697$ .

<sup>3</sup> The number of people embraced in the various age groups are not recorded by counties, so the per cent of the population 15 years old and over in the county is reckoned the same as that for the state. Taking this per cent of the county's entire population, gives the absolute number 15 years old and over.

<sup>4</sup> This is an average of the percentages for 1900 and for 1910.



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