

Patrons of husbandry South Carolina Darlington Co.

HISTORY,

106
1875

DESCRIPTION AND RESOURCES

OF

DARLINGTON COUNTY,

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.



CHARLESTON, S. C.
THE NEWS AND COURIER JOB PRESSES.
1874.

201618591

[*Extract from Minutes of the Convention of the Granges of
Darlington County, at its Session at Darlington Court
House, May 13th, 1874.*]

Resolved, That the Committee on Immigration be directed to prepare a Pamphlet descriptive of the County and its resources, for distribution among the Granges of the other States of the Union.

J. A. LAW, *President.*

JOHN W. WILLIAMSON, *Secretary.*

DARLINGTON COUNTY,

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

SITUATION, BOUNDARIES, AND HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT.

Darlington County lies in the Eastern portion of the State of South Carolina, and is a part of the rich and extensive valley formed by the Great Pee Dee and its tributaries.

The General Assembly, in 1785, by what is known as the County Court Act, divided the famous old Precinct of The Cheraws into the three Counties of Chesterfield, Darlington, and Marlborough. In 1793, on the abolition of the County Courts, these, as well as the other judicial divisions of the State, received the name of Districts. The State Convention of 1868 declared that the judicial divisions of the State should, thenceforth, be denominated *Counties*.

The County is bounded on the Northeast by the Great Pee Dee River, which separates it from the County of Marlborough; Northwest by the County of Chesterfield, from which it is divided in part by Cedar Creek; Southwest by Lynche's Creek, separating it from the Counties of Sumter and Kershaw; and Southeast by the County of Marion, and Lynche's Creek separating it from the County of Williamsburg. It is of a very compact shape—approximating a square in form—contains 576,000 acres, and is, on an average, thirty miles square.

Darlington and the adjacent Counties lying along the Great Pee Dee, date their settlement from 1737, when a Colony of Welsh, from Pennsylvania, located on that River. To this Colony were added, shortly afterwards, a number of English, Scotch, and Irish families, some from Virginia, and

many directly from across the Atlantic. The people of the Pee Dee Valley are justly proud of these first settlers. Honest, energetic, intelligent, and religious, the impress of their character is still conspicuous in the country of their selection, despite the many changes that have taken place, and despite the incoming of men of every nationality; their form of Protestantism—the Baptist—still dominates; and among the prominent men of the valley their names have still a large representation.

The Welsh selected the Pee Dee Valley for the cultivation of hemp and flax, but the great natural inducements to stock raising—the extensive ranges, the fine native grasses, the abundant *mass* of the forests, and the immense cane-brakes along the streams—directed their attention to that more profitable business. Soon “Cheraw Bacon” became famous in distant parts of the country, and immense herds of cattle and horses were driven South to Charleston, and North as far as Philadelphia.

About the year 1745 the fortunate discovery was made that Indigo grew spontaneously in the Province, and was found almost everywhere among the wild weeds of the forest. Seed was imported from the West Indies, and soon the cultivation of this plant was found to be the shortest and easiest road to wealth. Stock raising still, though as a subordinate industry, received attention; Lumber was sent off in large quantities; Wheat, Corn, and Tobacco were produced in abundance, and Tar, Pitch, and Turpentine were among the exports. “Wealth poured in upon the Colonists from a thousand channels. The fertility of the soil generously repaid the labor of the husbandman, making the poor to sing, and industry to smile through every corner of the land. None were indigent, but the idle and unfortunate. Personal independence was fully within the reach of every man who was healthy and industrious.”*

With the beginning of the present century Indigo gave place to Cotton, as the chief source of wealth, and with what

*Ramsay's “History of the Revolution in South Carolina,” vol. 1, p. 7.

result is shown by the fact, that before the late war Darlington was among the very wealthiest of the purely agricultural Counties of the United States.

This brief history, which cannot be gainsayed, is in itself a demonstration of the wonderful agricultural resources of the County. We see a country which, in its brief history of not much over a century in duration, has presented to its people three distinct industries, of a character so remarkably profitable as to make to all, except the unfortunate or the criminally inert, the road to wealth short and easy, and to concentrate upon each, in its turn, to the neglect of other occupations, the energies of the people, physical and mental.

VILLAGES.

The County has within its borders four thriving villages: Darlington Court House, Society Hill, Florence, and Timmonsville.

Darlington Court House, the seat of justice for the County, situated near its centre, is a beautiful village, embowered in a grove of shapely and majestic evergreen oaks, with a population of between 900 and 1000. Here the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions for the County holds, annually, a Spring, a Summer, and a Fall Session.

Society Hill, the oldest of the villages, is situated in the Northeast corner of the County, on high and healthy sand hills, one mile from the Great Pee Dee River. A good bridge across the River connects the place with the County of Marlborough, and makes it the point of shipment, by River and Railroad, of much of the produce of that County. Society Hill had its origin, in the need felt by the planters of the River low lands for society and a healthy residence, and still deserves its name, its white inhabitants being distinguished for refinement and hospitality. It numbers between 500 and 600 inhabitants, is one of the loveliest villages of the State, and unsurpassed as a healthy and delightful place of residence.

At Florence, near the Southeastern border of the County, three Railroads meet, one of which, the Northeastern, has there its workshops. Its population is in the neighborhood of 1000. Florence is a thrifty and enterprising little town, is growing rapidly, and regards the future with grand and not unreasonable expectations.

Timmons ville, in the Southwestern part of the County, on the line of the Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad, is a busy and hopeful village of some six hundred inhabitants, having a fertile and well settled country around it, and shipping a large portion of the produce of the County.

Other villages are springing up, the most prominent among which is Cartersville, a Station on the Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad, in a mile of where the Road crosses Lynche's Creek, and passes beyond the limits of the County.

RIVERS, CREEKS, ROADS, AND MARKET FACILITIES.

A better watered County it would be difficult to find in the United States. From Northwest to Southeast, nearly parallel with each other, run across its territory Rivers, and Creeks deserving the name of Rivers, leaving between them only narrow strips of upland, while numberless small tributaries flow from the uplands to feed these larger streams. In whatever direction the traveller rides, neither he nor his horse can suffer for water. Wells need not be applied to; he finds numerous springs along his route, and every mile or two crosses running water.

Forming the Northwest boundary of the County—a distance of between thirty-five and forty miles—flows the majestic stream of the Great Pee Dee. The River rises in North Carolina, and empties into Winyaw Bay, near Georgetown. Its average width along our border is 150 yards, and it is navigable from its mouth to the town of Cheraw, in Chesterfield, about 120 miles, by air-line, from the ocean. Five Steamboats now find profitable employment upon its

waters. The River abounds in fish of fine quality, such as Catfish, Bream, White and Speckled Trout, White Perch, Redhorse, and Rockfish, while in the Spring the Shad Fisheries become profitable. The Swamp proper of the River has an average width of two and a half miles, and then comes what is known as the *upper low lands*, above high water mark, and with an average width of from one and a half to two miles. Of the Swamp proper, from one-third to one-half has been or is now under cultivation. The portions uncleared are covered by a growth of valuable trees, such as White and Red Oak, Cypress, Ash, Hickory, and Gum, and still repays the toil of the hunter in pursuit of Deer, Wild Turkeys, Ducks, and other varieties of Southern game. Along the banks of the Great Pee Dee the first Colonists of the valley located, attracted by its fertile lands, splendid timber, grazing facilities, and the abundance of its fish and game. Before the late war, the River along its Darlington border had been well embanked, and its low lands, thus protected from freshets, were so productive, that thirty dollars per acre was deemed not too high a price for clearing them from trees, and the opportunities for their purchase, at any price, were exceedingly rare. In 1865 a great freshet broke the levees and flooded the low lands. Coming at a time when emancipation and the other results of the war had reduced our people from riches to poverty, the disaster could not be repaired, and to this day the greater part of these valuable lands remain without proper cultivation. The owners are impoverished, and the lands can be bought at prices ranging from \$1.50 to \$5 per acre. Such an opportunity for speculation rarely occurs. The capitalist who would invest his money in the repair of the embankments, and the restoration of these lands, could not fail to increase enormously his wealth.

Leaving the Pee Dee, and riding Westward, the traveller would next come to Black Creek, the pride of the County. This stream, deserving from its size the name of River, rises among the high sand hills in the Northwest corner of

Chesterfield County, and winding with a serpentine course through the Eastern portion of our County, empties itself just below our Southeast corner into the Great Pee Dee. In its course through Darlington it has very little of swamp, its banks being mostly high and dry, and shaded by stately trees. Its bottom is of hard fullers earth, and it is fed mainly by innumerable springs of pure and cold water. The riparian lands of this stream are among the most healthy in the State, and though not unfit for the cultivation of Cotton, are distinguished in the County as fine grain lands. Owing to the absence of Swamp, the altitude of the country from which it takes its rise, and the character of its tributaries, there is no more delightful bathing stream; its waters are singularly pure and cold, its fish, though not numerous, are distinguished for fine flavor, and the hardness and whiteness of their flesh, and the current is unusually rapid. There is a general expectation among the people of the County, that Black Creek will, one day, become famous for its manufactories; and despite the difficulties arising from the want of a rock bottom, and the rapidity of its rise after a rain-fall, the opinions of competent engineers, who have studied its capacities, justify this expectation. The flow of water is constant, and the fall is estimated at three feet to the mile. The abundance of fine Pine Timber upon its banks for the construction of dams, the healthfulness of the country, mildness of the climate, both in Summer and Winter, vicinity to Railroads, cheapness of labor, and saving of transportation of the raw material, make the location a superior one for Cotton Factories. Sweet Afton deserved not more the admiration and song of a poet. Its pure waters vary in color as they pass from shallow to deep pool, its banks are adorned by a rich and varied foliage, and as it pursues its sinuous course, with every turn it presents miniature scenes of surpassing beauty.

Going Westward, the traveller next crosses Swift Creek, a fine stream, with rich low lands, then comes to High Hill Creek and Jeffries Creek, along both of which are some of

the finest farms in the County; then crosses Middle Swamp, Lake Swamp, Sparrow Swamp, Newman's Swamp, Deep Hole—all fine perennial streams—until, at last, he reaches Lynche's Creek, the Southwestern boundary of the County. This stream, like Black Creek, deserves the name of River. In its course along our boundary it forms an arc with a gentle bend. If, at a distance of six miles from the Creek, you draw a line parallel with it, between this and the Creek will be included what is now the most prosperous portion of the County. The lands are mostly divided into small farms, of about one hundred acres each; there are few negroes; Churches and School Houses are numerous; and the people, honest, intelligent, and industrious, as a general rule, raise their provisions, and make, besides, fine crops of Cotton.

Forming a part of the Northwestern boundary is Cedar Creek, a fine, never failing stream, fed by numberless springs. During the war of 1812, General D. R. Williams, an enterprising citizen of the County, established on this stream a small Cotton Factory, which, for many years afterwards, paid a handsome dividend on the capital invested.

The County possesses unusual facilities for travel within its borders, and for reaching market quickly and cheaply. Fine Roads abound, and these are good through all seasons of the year, the land being level, and the soil resisting well the wear and tear of travel. From Cheraw, in the County of Chesterfield, to Florence, runs the Cheraw and Darlington Railroad, visiting in its course the villages of Society Hill and Darlington Court House. From Cheraw a Road is being built to Salisbury, in North Carolina, which, when completed, will afford to the people of the County ready access to all parts of North Carolina, and will lead to the passage, through our borders, on the way to Charleston, of much of the produce of the Old North State. Florence is the Northern terminus of the Northeastern Railroad, running up from the City of Charleston, a distance of only 102 miles. Through Florence, also, passes the Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad, an important link in one

of the great lines of travel between the North and the South.

As has been said, five Steamboats on the Great Pee Dee afford cheap water transportation to the City of Charleston. Lynche's Creek was once navigable eighty miles from where it empties into the Pee Dee, and Black Creek thirty miles from its junction with the same River; and there only needs the removal of obstructions, consisting entirely of logs and trees, to render these streams again open to boats for the same or greater distances.

POPULATION—COLORED ELEMENT.

The County is divided into twenty-one Townships, differing but little in size. By the Census Report for 1870 the population is stated as 26,243, composed of whites 10,097, and colored 16,146. There is, however, a manifest error in the Report. The statistics from three of the Townships, in two of which the whites are largely in the majority, were either not forwarded, or were overlooked by the Department. Besides, it is believed that there is an error in the number of negroes in the Townships reported. At the time the Census was being taken, the colored people were in expectation of some bounty from the Government, and there was prevalent among them a rumor that their names were being taken with a view to the distribution of this bounty. Under these circumstances it is difficult to resist the conclusion that fathers, in many instances, exaggerated the number in family. By those best informed, it is believed that the present population of the County is some 30,000, the colored being between one-fourth and one-third in excess of the whites.

Negro slaves were introduced into the Pee Dee Valley very soon after the arrival of the first Colonists, and proved so valuable that their price quickly reached a high figure. Treated kindly, their natural increase was rapid, and, in addition, their numbers were constantly augmented by pur-

chase. In 1840 the colored element of the population in this County was slightly in excess of the whites, and, after that, rapidly went ahead. Darlington was, just after the war, the Headquarters of the Military occupation of the Pee Dee Valley, and, as a consequence, large numbers of negroes, inspired by hope and fear, flocked in from the adjacent Counties. But for the strong local attachments of the race, the negro population would, on account of their want of landed property, and their credulous and excitable natures, be of a very uncertain character. A slight inducement leads the negro off, but the old plantation, where he was born and bred, has attractions that rarely fail, in time, to bring him back. Thus, while numbers are constantly leaving the County, numbers are as constantly on the return.

Treated kindly, with few exceptions, while slaves, their emancipation led to no scenes of violence and bloodshed. Urged to take advantage of his opportunity, and do his worst, by vile men—the offscouring of the North, who followed the army of occupation—the negro could not rid himself of his attachment to his master's family, and was utterly unable to regard and treat as enemies those who had been his life-long friends. His conduct in this County, after emancipation, as in other Counties similarly situated, exposed, in the most striking manner, one of the delusions of the leaders of the abolition movement. The relation between master and slave was, as a general rule, distinguished by mutual affection and kind offices—this the abolitionist was naturally unable to understand. After the State was reorganized under the measures of reconstruction, the negroes, banded together in secret political leagues, under the most solemn of oaths, grateful to the Republican party, which had bestowed the boon of freedom, and, in their ignorance, fully persuaded that the carpet-baggers had been sent to them by the Republican party, to be their leaders, voted solidly against the respectable whites. Honest efforts have been made, and are still being made, to disabuse their minds, and to induce them to unite with the whites in the interests

of good government, but so far nothing has been accomplished. Meanwhile, in all concerns, except that of politics, there has been, and there is now, no real bitterness of feeling between the races. The negro treats the decent white man with all the respect of former days; to him, in preference to all others, he goes for advice and assistance; if in distress, it is to some member of old master's family that he goes with implicit confidence; and if any member of that family has come to grief, the slaves of the past are most likely to come to the rescue with sympathy and assistance. Despite, however, this kindly feeling and interchange of kind offices, politics remain a forbidden subject. Let the white man mention it, and immediately the negro becomes either silent or an assenting hypocrite. Even where, from superior intelligence, the negro is convinced that he should break through the trammels of party, his timid nature makes it impossible for him to go contrary to the majority of his race. Besides, he has been led to entertain the vain hope of speedily bringing about, by means of his political ascendancy, social equality; and this hope binds him fast to an organization and to leaders, the evil ends of which, and the corruption of whom, are now apparent even to his eyes.

Could an immigration of honest white men from the North be induced, of sufficient magnitude to give the majority to the whites in this and the other Counties of the State, similarly in minority, the political evils and social troubles that now impair the prosperity of this rich country, would soon disappear. Such a change would be, if anything, a greater blessing to the negro than to the white man, as, for obvious reasons, the present misgovernment of the State presses upon the former most heavily. A return by the means above indicated, to honesty and capacity in the administration of the affairs of the State, would reduce the heavy taxation, the greater part of which he is, though indirectly, made to pay, would bring about entire harmony between him and the white man; would remove from his mind many vain hopes and delusions that now interfere with his success in

life; would expel the only question likely to bring about a conflict of races—the question of social equality—from the dangerous field of politics; would teach the negro to hope for the gratification of this, his eager ambition, alone through the legitimate means of refinement, education, and wealth; and, lastly, would lead him to occupy contentedly his proper place in our social fabric. His strong vote, backed by kindly feelings and an intelligent sense of interest on the part of the better class of whites, would be a guarantee against any legislation inimical to his race; and, instead of, as now, being looked upon as a source of trouble and apprehension, the negro would again, as in the past, be justly regarded as a valuable element in the population.

In this County he has had, and still has, every encouragement to better his condition and render himself independent. As soon as our Courts were opened, after the war, and lands began to be sold, almost invariably, when large tracts were brought under the hammer of the auctioneer, they were cut up for sale into lots, small enough to suit negro purchasers, and after some little natural hesitation, landlords began, cheerfully, to let out their surplus lands to negro tenants. Numbers now own and work their own lands, and still greater numbers cultivate the land as tenants. Among these some are doing unusually well, exhibiting a rapid accumulation of property, and a consequent elevation of character. The large majority still obtain employment as house servants and as laborers on the farms and plantations. The money wages range according to the age and character of the employee, from \$5 to \$10 per month, and rations. The most popular plan of employment on the farm, however, is an arrangement by which the laborers receive a share of the crop—usually one-third—and buy their provisions from the employer, on a credit, until the crop is harvested. Theft and idleness were alarmingly common just after the war, but since have been rapidly and steadily on the decrease.

RELIGION—EDUCATION.

The prevailing forms of Protestantism in the County are Baptists, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. The Baptists are believed to be most numerous, though the Methodists are not far behind. A Catholic Church is being erected at Florence.

The educational advantages of the County would be all that could be reasonably desired—the system pursued being well devised and the appropriations large—did not the melancholy political condition of the State fail to secure an honest disbursement of the funds raised for education, and prevent the election and appointment of competent Superintendents and Teachers to preside over its interests. There is an average of three Public Schools to each of the twenty-one Townships, and, besides, Private Schools are numerous. According to last year's Annual Report of the County School Commissioner, while the scholastic population was near 8,000, the number in attendance on the Public Schools was 2,600.

SOIL—PRODUCTIONS.

Darlington County, only about sixty miles from the Ocean by air line, lies, as might be expected, within the alluvial formation of the State, being below the falls of the Rivers. The greater part of its territory is within what is known as the Third Section of the soil of the State, counting from the Coast, a region of an average width of thirty miles, lying between the Tide Swamp lands and the Sand Hills, and standing in the same relation to the Ocean that the Upper Low Lands do to our Rivers. It is of secondary formation, and abounds in shell lime stone. A rich stratum of this marl, containing on an average sixty per cent. of Carbonate of Lime, is exposed at points on Black Creek, Swift Creek, High Hill Creek, and Lynche's Creek, and is believed to be continuous, throughout at least all the space between these different localities. It is easily obtained in quantity, and its

great value in the improvement of our lands has been fully demonstrated. It neutralizes the acid principle of the soil, alters its texture and absorbency, quickens growth, and restrains the production of malaria.

Along the Northwest border of the County, widening as you go West, is a narrow strip of country, which belongs to the Fourth Section or Sand Hill Region of the State. These Sand Hills running through the State, about the same distance, everywhere, from the Coast, are believed to mark the line of the ancient shore of the Ocean, and to have once been washed by the waves of the Atlantic. This Sand Hill Region of the County is just beginning to be properly appreciated. In the past it has had no attractions for the farmer, its arable land being believed to be confined to a few narrow strips of rich soil in its hollows and along the banks of its streams. Quite recently a few enterprising men have demonstrated, by the indisputable evidence of profitable farms, that its area of land, capable of making a rich return to cultivation, is far more extensive than was supposed. It is covered densely by a valuable growth of Pitch Pine and Black Jack. Such of its lands as are apparently unfit for cultivation, afford a splendid pasturage and range for stock. Cattle and Hogs require, the year round, but little help from the farmer's barn, and no country can be better adapted to the raising of Sheep. The air is remarkably salubrious, and the water pure and pleasant. Taking the whole year round, there is no country more healthy; the Summers are very free from bilious, and the Winters from inflammatory diseases. These lands, so capable of being made highly profitable, range in price from fifty cents to three dollars per acre.

Leaving the sand hill country, the other lands of the County may be classed as Swamp Lands, Upper Low Lands, and Ridge Uplands. The Swamp Lands have been partially described in speaking of the Great Pee Dee. They are alluvial lands, of recent formation, and are wonderfully productive. Properly drained and protected from freshets, they produce from 40 to 75 bushels of Corn, and from 1500 to

2000 pounds of Seed Cotton to the acre. Long before the war efforts were made, by patriotic and intelligent citizens, to engage the State Government in the great work of reclaiming its Swamp Lands, but owing to various circumstances, unnecessary to mention, the scheme failed to become popular, except in certain localities, and nothing was done. The present State Government, with its burden of debt, is not likely, for many years to come, to be prepared to attempt the task. What has been done in the past, however, demonstrates that the work, great as it is, would prove not beyond the means of individuals, if efforts were made simultaneously. This reclamation of our Swamp Lands would open up for cultivation thousands of acres of the richest lands of the whole South, and, at the same time, by removing the only local cause of disease, would render our country one of the healthiest in the whole world. The work within the limits of this County, along the Pee Dee, would be mainly one of restoration—the repair of damages done by the freshet of 1865. No great amount of capital would be required to accomplish this, and it would be easy to demonstrate that the investment would prove exceedingly profitable. Not more than one-fifth of the Swamp Lands of the County have been or are now in cultivation.

The Upper Low Lands are, at present, the most valuable in the County. They are the finest Cotton lands, have a stiff clay sub-soil, and are susceptible of high and rapid improvement. With fair manuring, and ordinary cultivation, they yield from 1000 to 1800 pounds of Seed Cotton to the acre.

The Ridge Uplands have generally a thin soil, but are easy of enrichment, and repay most generously every effort made for their improvement. Before the war there prevailed a reckless use of our lands. Land and labor were cheap and plentiful, and the planter made little or no effort to keep up and improve the soil, but abandoned a field as soon as it showed signs of exhaustion, and in new clearings of his forest, sought fresh lands. After the war necessity led to

wiser conduct. Confronted by diminished capital, uncertain labor, and the unwonted evil of *theft from the fields*, the planter was compelled to confine himself to the fields around his dwelling, and to seek his support in the concentration of his money and efforts upon bringing these few acres to a condition of extraordinary productiveness. Such radical changes are not brought about in a day, but this agricultural reform has, under the pressure of necessity, advanced with rapid strides, and is now observable throughout the County. There are unusual facilities for this work of land improvement. Besides the manures of the stable yard and lot and the marl-beds of which we have spoken, the excellent Fertilizers made near Charleston, are obtainable on easy terms, and these, composted with the rich and abundant surf and muck of the near at hand forest and swamp, supply to the land just what it needs to enable it to do its best. Many an old field, long abandoned as worthless, has become, under this treatment, as highly productive as the freshest lands of the County, and one now rarely hears the old time talk of the poor and worn out lands of South Carolina. Mr. Calvin Rhodes, one of the best of our farmers, planting improved uplands, in the neighborhood of Swift Creek, that were formerly old fields, made last year (1873), on a 20 acre field, 25 bales of Lint Cotton, each weighing 500 pounds, and eight of the bales were gathered from five acres. Few intelligent farmers are now willing to risk their judgment in fixing a limit of cotton production to the capacity of our lands.

The Upper Low Lands and Ridge Uplands of the County, in farms and plantations varying in size from 100 to 2,000 acres, well fenced, and having upon them all needed buildings, range in price from \$3 to \$15 per acre, the terms of sale being usually one-third cash, and the balance on a credit of one and two years. Before the war land with us might justly be spoken of as a monopoly, and could rarely be purchased without the approval of neighbors. Since the war vast quantities have been thrown upon the market, while

the buyers have been few. Only within the last three or four years have the negroes, in any number, been prepared, by reason of their savings, to purchase; but the number now, with every year, is rapidly on the increase. These facts, with the political condition of the country, account for the price of our lands, and a present observable upward tendency. Looking to their intrinsic value, the price of our lands is strikingly low, as is illustrated, by constantly occurring instances of purchases of land entirely on credit, and the purchaser, in the course of two or three years, besides supporting himself and family, paying, wholly with the profit of his lands, the entire purchase money.

The great value of the Cotton Crop, and its consequent absorption of the labor of the County, has been attended by evils that are, just now, being fully understood and appreciated. This monopoly of the industry of the County has prevented the development of its manifold agricultural resources, discouraged a wise economy, and deprived us of that independence which is the fruit of a varied agriculture. Just after the war, as is well known, the price of Cotton was exceedingly high. The planter was induced to see in this the opportunity for a rapid rebuilding of his fortune, the necessity for economy was not felt, and he, naturally, kept up his old time, loose and extravagant mode of living and expenditure. Cotton paid so well, that it seemed foolish to devote an acre to anything else. There were not wanting those who called attention to the fact that the permanently prosperous farmers and planters of the past were they who made their own provisions; but these warnings were silenced by a short and apparently unanswerable mathematical demonstration. The price of Cotton gradually fell, but, unfortunately, in its fall, fluctuated to such a degree as to keep up hopes painful to be surrendered. Cotton has, therefore, continued to receive undue attention, and the planter, in too many instances, instead of rebuilding his fortune, has become a bonded slave to his factor, and powerless to turn back on a road which he now clearly sees is leading him to ruin.

This year (1874) though no great increase has been made in the area of Corn cultivation, the season has been so peculiarly favorable that there is every prospect of a provision crop large enough to meet the demands of the coming year. This opportunity concurring fortunately with a low price for Cotton, and a growing conviction of the folly of the past, will, it is hoped, produce a radical change, and lead our farmers, hereafter, to plant less Cotton and more Corn. The soil presents no obstacle. Though so well adapted to the culture of Cotton, it produces in abundance Corn, Wheat, Rye, Oats, Peas, and other provision crops. A good illustration, saving words, is furnished by the fact that Mr. W. E. Dargan, a young and enterprising farmer, in the neighborhood of Timmons ville, harvested early this Summer a crop of Red Oats, which measured out sixty-five bushels to the acre, and has now upon the same land a growing crop of Corn that cannot fail to yield him twenty bushels to the acre.

MINOR INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES—ORCHARDS—GARDENS—ORGANIZATIONS OF FARMERS.

Rice is raised almost entirely for home consumption, but could easily be produced in quantities for exportation, much of our soil being admirably fitted for the culture of a variety very little inferior to that of the Tide Swamp Region.

Every thrifty farmer has his Sweet Potato patch, yielding with little labor and attention, from 200 to 500 bushels to the acre. The Sweet Potato is more valuable in product than that of any root crop of more Northern climates, highly and deservedly as root crops are there prized. It is one of the chief articles of food met with on the table of the Southern farmer—cheap, palatable and nutritious—is easily preserved from crop to crop, and its exportation could be made very profitable.

The yield of Irish Potatoes is large, but difficulties, arising, perhaps, mainly from inexperience, have been met with in their preservation after removal from the soil, and

their culture is almost entirely confined to the garden. They come to maturity very quickly in our soil and climate, the early varieties being ready for use in April—and two crops, on the same ground, in the same season, are common.

In soil and climate the County closely resembles some of the most populous and most productive of the countries of the Old World, such as parts of India, China and Japan, and the portions of Europe bordering on the Mediterranean. Midway between extremes both of soil and climate, with few exceptions, the most valuable productions, both of the cold regions of the North and of the tropics of the South, can be grown abundantly within its borders.

The Vine can be cultivated with great success. Native vines, in their wild state, abound in our forests and clamber along our fences. Since the war, much attention has been given to this industry, and it has, already, become a marked feature in our agriculture. Young vineyards are common, and every year adds to their number, while such as have reached maturity bountifully repay the labor and attention bestowed by their owners. A successful vinegrower of the County estimates the annual value of his vineyard at \$1,000 per acre. The Scuppernong, Flowers and Thomas are the most certain, prolific and valuable of the vines cultivated; but other choice varieties, such as Concord, Clinton, Catawba and Isabella, though requiring more attention, do well and yield abundantly.

Plantations of Olive Trees have already succeeded in the State, and there is no doubt that the tree could be grown with profit in this County. The Tea Plant has been successfully grown, in the open air, in an adjoining County, and English Walnut and Pecan Trees do so well that in the last two or three years a good deal of intelligent interest has been manifested in their increase.

The soil and climate are admirably adapted to the Mulberry Tree. Groves of the best bearing varieties of the edible Mulberry were planted before the war, by many of our planters, for feeding hogs. The varieties that have been

found by experience to furnish the best food for the silkworm, can be easily and rapidly grown, and are hardy and luxuriant. There can be no doubt that the production of silk could be made a profitable industry in this country. In 1759 South Carolina produced 10,000 lbs. of raw silk.

The capacity of our soil and climate to yield many other valuable productions besides those mentioned, has been well ascertained, among the most prominent of which we mention Tobacco, Groundnuts, Flax, Hops, Castor and other Oils, Mustard, Pepper, Bhene Seed and Opium. Our forests and fields abound with medicinal herbs and plants having marketable value, such as Jessamine, May Apple, Jamestown Weed, Boneset, Golden Rod, Snakeroot, Pleurisyroot, Wild Horehound, Fennel, Queen's Delight, Mullein and Sumach.

Fruit of great variety and excellence is abundant during the Spring and Summer months. Peaches and Watermelons are in the greatest plenty, and if equalled elsewhere, in size and flavor, are certainly not surpassed. Blackberries, Strawberries, Apricots and Raspberries are ripe in April and the early part of May. Plums, early Pears, Apples, Peaches, Figs and Nectarines follow. Watermelons and Muskmelons continue from July to October. Late Peaches, Pears, Apples and Grapes come in during the middle and close of the Summer, and Persimmons and a variety of nuts in the Fall. Recently a lively and very general interest has been manifested in the extension and improvement of the fruit culture of the County.

It would be difficult to name a desirable vegetable that cannot be readily grown in our gardens. Vegetation being checked but a few weeks in the depth of Winter, the garden, changing its products with the seasons, supplies to the table the year round its best and cheapest food. The earliness and excellence of our vegetables would render their exportation common and profitable were there proper facilities for sending them promptly and safely to Northern markets. Among the favorite and most abundant productions of our

gardens we mention English Peas, Irish Potatoes, Asparagus, Green Corn, a variety of Beans, Squashes, Okra, Tomatoes, Salads, Onions, Beets, Egg-plants, Carrots, Cucumbers and Cabbages.

The forests, which still cover the largest part of the territory of the County, and are so distributed as to supply every farm with abundant fire-wood and lumber for fencing, building and repairs, are distinguished for their variety of handsome and valuable trees. Chief among these trees, and forming by far the larger part of our forests, is the Pitch Pine, which has been well said to be one of the "great gifts of God to man." "The forests of Pine are not only useful but beautiful. The characteristic moan of the wind through their branches, their funereal aspect, almost limitless extent, and the health-giving influences which attend their presence, all contribute to make the Pine an object of peculiar interest to the people of the Southern States. The terebinthinate odor of the tree, some electrical influence of its long spear-like leaves, a certain modification of 'ozone' (an allotropic condition of oxygen, see Faraday's examinations), are severally esteemed to modify the atmosphere and diminish the effects of malaria."* For fencing purposes, for boards, lumber, laths and shingles; for Tar, Pitch, Turpentine and Rosin—the foreign as well as domestic trade fully attests the value of the Pine; for fire-wood it is emphatically the poor man's candle; its leaves furnish an abundant material for manure and for medicinal purposes, and its seeds are edible and nutritious and are largely consumed by hogs.

Next to the Pine in abundance is the stately Cypress, the largest of the trees of the State. It grows in the swamps and along the banks of our streams. Its wood, soft and easily worked and yet resisting unusually well the action of weather and the changes of temperature, is used for making the interior work of houses, posts, shingles, staves, &c. Of

*Porcher's Resources of Southern Fields and Forests, p. 495.

other trees there are Post, Live, White and Red Oak, Maple, Poplar, Gum, Ash, Blackjack, Sycamore, Wild Locust, Birch, Hickory, Walnut, Dogwood, Holly, Juniper, Persimmon, Wild Cherry, Pride of India and Cedar. The Persimmon—one of the most valuable of our trees—abounds. The fruit, which is not ready for use until after frost, is very sweet and pleasant to the taste, yields on distillation, after fermentation, a quantity of spirits, and furnishes a most excellent Beer. The juice of the unripe fruit is said to be preferable to oak bark for tanning, and a black dye may be extracted from it. The wood of the tree is very hard and of fine grain, and has been used for engraving.

These varied resources would make to the farmer of the County the road to wealth short and easy, were he prepared to “make every edge cut.” In other words, could he find a market at his door for the many productions of his field, his garden, his orchard and his forest. But while he has every help and facility for the preparation for market of his Cotton, his Turpentine and his Lumber, and competing buyers on hand and eager to purchase, when he varies his industry, and seeks to sell some other production of his farm or his forest, he meets with no assistance, and finds that he must take upon himself all of the trouble, expense and risk of its shipment to and sale in some distant market. This difficulty is aggravated by his inexperience, and, most commonly, the result is pecuniary loss, the laughter of his neighbors, and a damper put upon his spirit of enterprise. The purchasing house is not likely to be established until the article to be purchased is produced in sufficient quantities to meet the demands of a large business, and yet production is limited and depressed by the want of a purchasing house. This difficulty can be overcome by a combination of capital and enterprise; but this combination the County does not possess, and is most sadly in need of. The prospect, however, is not without hope. Our people are thinking over and desiring, as they never thought over and desired before, the

development of the manifold resources of their soil and climate. There is no lack of enterprise, and though many have failed, some few are succeeding, despite all difficulties and discouragements, and are inducing others to join in their efforts. There is a well founded hope that many years will not pass before the County will be richer and more prosperous than ever in the past.

There are several prosperous organizations of farmers looking to the improvement of the agriculture of the County. An Agricultural Society, established long before the war, still exists, and holds an Annual Session, in the Summer, at which an Address is made and Reports read on various agricultural topics. Several years ago an Agricultural and Mechanical Fair Company was established, which now owns beautiful grounds, near Darlington Court House, is in a sound financial condition, and holds annually two Fairs—one in the Summer, for Fruit, Vegetables, and Flowers; and a General Fair in the Fall. The Patrons of Husbandry have established a number of Granges in the County, and these are full of life, rapidly increasing in numbers, and doing much for the elevation of the farmer and his occupation, the increase of his social enjoyments, and the introduction of skill and economy in the management of his financial affairs.

CLIMATE—HEALTH—INVITATION TO IMMIGRANTS.

The climate of Darlington County is a medium between that of tropical and of cold temperate latitudes. The Summers are temperate, and the Winters mild. The number of extremely warm days rarely exceeds thirty in a year, and during these the thermometer seldom stands above ninety-two degrees. Of these warmest days, it is not often that more than two or three come together. Thunder showers, often accompanied by hail, occur frequently, and greatly moderate the Summer heat; while a fresh breeze usually springs up in the evening, rendering the nights cool and pleasant.

The number of very cold days during the Winter does not exceed the average annual number of very warm days. Vegetation is checked for about six weeks. The ground is rarely frozen so hard or to such a depth as not to be quickly thawed by the rising sun. Ice of half an inch in thickness rarely occurs. It is not often that a Winter affords more than two or three light snows, quickly melted. In some years January, and in others February, is our coldest month. Fires are kept in our houses, with not unfrequent interruptions from warm days, from four to six months in the year. The architecture of our houses shows, palpably, that their builders looked more to protection from heat than protection from cold.

Rain is frequent and well distributed the year round. In July and August we have most rain, while May and June are usually our driest months.

An impression prevails abroad that the whole of lower South Carolina is very unhealthy; but this is an error easy to be exploded, by a comparison of our bills of mortality with those of sections of country having high reputation for health. The mildness and regularity of our climate is favorable to health, while the single local cause of disease—the malaria of our swamps and low lands—is easily avoided by drainage or location of dwelling houses on the healthy uplands.

These uplands, forming the largest part of the County, compare, in point of healthfulness, advantageously with the most favored sections of the United States.

Our sickly months are August and September, the rest of the year being healthy. In Winter, the diseases consist of Catarrhal affections and Pneumonia of a mild type, rarely producing permanent or organic injury to the lungs, with occasional Rheumatisms; in the Spring bowel affections—such as Diarrhœa and Dysentery—are met with, yielding readily to treatment, and rarely fatal, except among children; in the latter part of the Summer and the early part of the Fall, oc-

cur the Fevers produced by malaria. These Fevers of the Summer and Fall are either Intermittent or Remittent. The first is the most common, and is light in its character, and but little dreaded. The Remittent Bilious Fever is the only serious disease peculiar to the climate. Its treatment is well understood, and where medical assistance is promptly sought, the patient rarely fails to recover.

Instances of longevity are numerous in the County, there being now very many residents over the age of eighty.

Another false and injurious opinion that prevails abroad, concerning this and the other Counties of the State, is, that incoming strangers, and particularly settlers from the North, are, by the whites, not desired, and are received and treated with coldness. This opinion has arisen from a mistake as to the spirit with which our people acknowledged defeat and accepted its results, and from a knowledge of the scorn and contempt with which they have treated and still treat the carpet-baggers, who, coming to us after the war, avoided every honest avocation, busied themselves in arraying the negro against the white man, filled our public offices, and amassed fortunes by all manner of corruption and dishonesty. Such settlers as have sought their living by honest means, and have evidenced character, have had, and have now, no reason to complain of their treatment.

This pamphlet demonstrates the true disposition and desire of the white people of Darlington County. Prepared by direction of the Granges of the County, composed of its representative farmers and citizens, it is meant for distribution among the Granges of the other States of the Union, and particularly of the North and Northwest, as an invitation to honest men, of whatever political opinions, to come and join us in the work of developing our resources, and share with us the wealth and prosperity that must speedily result. It says to such settlers, you will be met, as you enter our County, by an organization of farmers, eager to give you a Southern welcome, and, by every practical assistance, to smoothe your way to an advantageous settlement within our borders.

With no ill will to the negro—believing that we subserve his best interests, as well as our own—we seek, by the peaceful means of immigration, to overcome the negro majority in our County, to restore to its offices capacity and honesty, to bring out the hidden riches of the land, and to make our County once again, as in the past, wealthy and prosperous.

R. W. BOYD, Darlington Court House,

B. F. WILLIAMSON, Darlington Court House,

JOHN A. WILSON, Society Hill,

Committee on Immigration.

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1874.

HISTORY,
DESCRIPTION AND RESOURCES
OF
DARLINGTON COUNTY,
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

CHARLESTON, S. C.
THE NEWS AND COURIER JOB PRESSES.
1874.