

The Charlotte News Tuesday, May 24, 1949 Another success story of the soil

One-Fifth Of Mecklenburg County Farmers Are Negro

About a fifth of the persons engaged in Mecklenburg farming are Negroes, the great majority of whom work either as tenants or hired hands. However, of the between 700 and 800 working on the soil, some 107 now own farms ranging from 20 to 125 acres.

And each year, more and more Negroes are buying their own land. W. B. Harrison, Negro County agent said in citing the advances made in the nine years he has been in the local office.

This will be Mr. Harrison's nineteenth year in agriculture. Before coming here, he was for many years superintendent of farms at A & T College in Greensboro.

Typical of the strides being made in the country, Mr. Harrison said, was that of John D. Connor whose farm is about eighteen miles northwest of Charlotte on Beatties Ford Road in the Caldwell section. Connor was a tenant farmer who had gone in the first four grades of school before quitting to work in the fields. He had seen his father struggle on someone else's land a lifetime with little to show for his efforts. That wasn't going to happen to him if there was any way to avoid it.

Connor's break came in the midst of the depression, with a little money he had saved, he was able to make a down payment on a farm. Each year he met the payments, until one day he owed 100 acres of good Mecklenburg dirt.

Opportunities

Now he is making sure that his family of eight boys and four girls have opportunities that he didn't. His youngest son is this year finishing high school as have all his children. One of his girls is a graduate of Johnson C. Smith University.

The Connor farm has some of the outstanding examples of strip farming and terracing in that section. Perhaps the biggest crop is cotton. Around 35 of his acres are planted in cotton and during the picking season the entire family comes together to pick with the result being usually around a bale a day.

He also raises the usual wheat and corn, and he has a registered Jersey bull in a herd which is being constantly improved. He milks eight of his cows. He also owns a truck and five mules, At the moment he is working on improved pasture lands of about 25 acres.

Farmer Connor is just one of a number of farmer tenants who have bought their own lands. Mr. Harrison pointed out. "The trend is back to the land that you yourself own."

