

MCDOWELL.

McDowell county lies on the eastern flank of the Blue Ridge, near its highest parts, which exceed in this region an elevation of 5,500 feet, and its territory may be described as mountainous. Its average elevation is more than 1,500 feet, and it is for the most part drained by the headwaters of the Catawba river. The southern and broader end of its triangular territory is traversed east and west by the South mountains, a long eastward projection from the Blue Ridge. Along the course of the Catawba river and some of its chief tributaries are wide tracts of sandy and alluvial bottoms, which are very productive. The hilly and mountainous tracts have the usual variety of gray and yellowish oak uplands soils of medium fertility and mixed forests of oak, pine, chestnut, etc. Reddish clay loam soils, with a preponderant oak forest, are found in patches here and there in the middle and southeastern sections. A large proportion of the soils of the county are well adapted to the better grades of tobacco, and the agriculture of the county has the great advantage of an abundance of limestone in the northern and middle sections. The forests abound in large quantities of the finest timber; walnut, oak, poplar, chestnut, pine and locust being the chief varieties. There is a large amount of valuable timber on the slopes of the Blue Ridge and in the mountain coves, which must become the foundation of important manufactures, and then there is an indefinite amount of water-power.

Col. H. C. Demming, Secretary and General Manager of the Marion Bullion Company, gives the following in regard to mines and minerals:

"In the townships of Brackett, Dysartville and Old Fort, corporations known as the Marion Bullion Company and the Marion Improvement Company have been operating during the past 11 years. They have erected machinery, and adapted labor-saving appliances from time to time, until now their various operations do the work of more than 1,500 men. The pay-roll in addition, numbers from 5 to 100 hands, depending upon the men and character of work, and the season of the year. The principal operations are gold mining by placer, sluice washing and hydraulic; also quartz mining,--more than thirty veins have been opened. The total output of the properties from the first mining more than sixty years ago is estimated at \$1,176,000. In addition there has been a large quantity of mica mined, and five veins have been opened. Monazite has been extensively mined, most of the mineral going to Europe. In addition they have been mining quantities of garnet, white granite, flagstone, vitrified brick clay and many gems--the total product in gems amounting in value to \$66,000 May 1, 1896. During 1895 and 1896 thirty-three small diamonds were found, also a number of rubies and sapphires from corundum deposits, which have also been mined to some extent. The companies have recently had classified 156 species of minerals found on their properties. Exhibits from mines--almost altogether of gems--received highest awards both at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, and at Atlanta, Georgia, 1895."

Considerable attention has been given to the culture of tobacco, a clear, bright tobacco of fine texture being produced. The chief crops are corn, wheat, oats, rye and buckwheat, and in the matter of fruits, apples of fine flavor and size are conspicuous. All fruits do well, but the winter apples cannot be excelled.

Fine bottom lands are found along the Catawba river, which rises on the mountain sides of this county, and thence flows through the county in a continuity of broad fertile valley. Other fine valleys are those of Turkey Cove and North Cove. Besides the Blue Ridge on the north and west, the South mountains and their continuation lie on the south side of the county, and continue to be, as they have been for more than half a century, productive fields of gold placer mining.

The Western North Carolina railroad passes through the county, and the Charleston, Cincinnati and Chicago road is complete as far as Marion, and gives new and independent connections east and south.

Marion, the county seat, now has a population of about 1,000. It is the trading center of the county and of the counties of Yancy and Mitchell, it being their nearest railroad point. It has improved rapidly for the last year or two and is still improving. A bank has begun business in the last few months, and a furniture factory and a locust pin factory are now being erected in the town.

It is especially adapted for all kinds of wood-working factories on account of the cheap timber and good railroad facilities. The great number of trees, the bark of which is used in tanneries, makes it especially favorable as a location for a tannery. It now has two tanneries, a tobacco factory, a rectifying establishment and several minor industries.

Old Fort, at the foot of the mountains, before the Revolutionary war the seat of a fort planted there to hold the Cherokee Indians on the other side of the mountains, is a summer resort, has some manufactures, and a population of 300.

McDowell county has 309,265 acres of land, valued at \$608,801; and 1,360 town lots, valued at \$104,732.

Of domestic animals there are--648 horses; 974 mules; 1,461 cattle; 6,588 hogs; 1,817 sheep.

Product of taxation--for state uses, \$1,999.45; pensions, \$453.71; schools, \$4,891.19; county, \$12,705.24.

Population--white, 9,114; colored, 1,825; total, 10,939.

TEMPERATURE.

From records extending over a period of twenty five years the mean annual temperature of the State has been determined to be 59 degrees Fahrenheit. The means for the three regions for the different seasons of the year are as follows:-

	Spring.	Summer.	Autumn.	Winter.	Year.
Coastal Plain	58	77	62	45	61.
Piedmont Plateau	59	77	59	43	60.
Mountain	56	72	56	40	56.
For the State	58	76	60	43	59.

Surprise! A look back in time from:

NORTH CAROLINA AND ITS RESOURCES. STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.
RALEIGH. WINSTON. M. I. & J. C. STEWART, PUBLIC PRINTERS AND BINDERS.
1896.