

Letter of Hon. S. L. Patterson [Feb. 1899?]

I have been requested by Col
Grimes to give my impression of that
section of Eastern North Carolina in which
lie the counties of Beaufort & Pitt.

Though having no practical experience
in farming there, I have visited both
counties at times & under circumstances
which gave me fine opportunities to
study the conditions affecting the
business & operations of the farmers.

I found some things that surprised
me, I found a soil so easy of cultivation
that one mule & plow can till from
30 to 40 acres a season in corn or
cotton.

The soil naturally is not so fertile as
our alluvial bottom lands & yet is so
generally responsive to kind treatment
that yields of 8 to 10 barrels of corn, 1 to
1 1/2 bales of cotton, 600 to 800 lbs of yellow
leaf tobacco, 300 to 400 bushels of potatoes,

both kinds, & a like proportion of other
crops are not unusual.

(in Pitt & more prominent)
I found the finest fields of tobacco
I had ever seen in a country that,
until a few years ago didn't know
it called hair tobacco.

I found abundant-opportunities for
fencing & small fruit-industries, the
climate, soil, season, & market-facilities
all being propitious.

I found a nursery growing luscious
peaches, pears, grapes, & other fruits, besides
a bewildering array of ornamental trees
& shrubs & flowers to beautify and adorn
the homes of the people.

I found hospitable homes which gave
the stranger a cordial welcome. I

found a salubrious climate & pure
water, & a healthy, long lived people.

And among all these favorable conditions

I found the most surprising thing of
all - Much good land for sale at
prices so low that frequently one crop
yield would pay the price of the land.

It is not worth while to speculate here
why this is so - to go back to the time "before
the war", when great fortunes were
made on these same lands & handsome
estates accumulated to consider the
changes wrought by the war, the slow recovery
of the people from the uprooting of their
social & industrial systems.

It is sufficient that the country has

recovered, but with a resulting feature
of a surplus of farm lands, at very low
prices, & another result - that it is the
small farmer with industry, energy &
brains who reaps a harvest now instead
of the big planter with his broad acres &
many hands

In my judgment the conditions for
profitable farming in Eastern North
Carolina of which Beaufort & Pitt counties
form one of the best sections, are unex-
celled, perhaps unequalled, in any portion
of the United States, of which I have in-
formation, for the investor with limited
capital, seeking a congenial home

S. L. Patterson

The Hon. S. L. Patterson was ^{State} Commissioner
of Agriculture for some years ^{as such} & held Farmers
Institutes in Eastern N. C. —

~~He is now~~ The last Legislature
re-elected him to this position & he resumed
the duties of this office June 15, 1899 —