EXPERIENCES OF A COUNTY AGENT IN USING SOIL MAPS IN TENNESSEE

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SOIL surveyors realize that a knowledge of the experiences of those using soil surveys is essential to soil survey work. It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to contribute to that need.

Carter County, Tenn., is located in the northeast corner of the state in the upper watershed of the Tennessee River. In the drainage area of the Tennessee River a series of dams has been constructed to control and use the water in the streams for the betterment of the people. The smaller rivers and streams of Carter County help to feed this great river system which makes the control and utilization of the water on the land in Carter County very important.

Carter County was one of the first places settled in the Tennessee Valley. The group of early settlers who crossed the Allegheny Mountains into the present Carter County drew up the first declaration of individual freedom and rights in America, known as the Watauga Association, formed in 1772.

In his book, “The Winning of the West”, (Vol. I), Theodore Roosevelt made the following statement about these pioneers: “They decided to adopt written articles of agreement, by which their conduct should be governed; and these were known as the Articles of the Watauga Association. They formed a written Constitution, the first ever adopted west of the mountains, or by a community composed of American-born freemen. It is this fact of the early independence and self-government of the settlers along the headwaters of the Tennessee that gives to their history its peculiar importance. They were the first men of American birth to establish a free and independent community on the continent. The Watauga settlers outlined in advance the Nation’s work. They tamed the rugged and shaggy wilderness, they bid defiance to outside foes, and they successfully solved the difficult problem of self-government.”

Many of the people in Carter County today are descendants of this original stock. Although the majority of our farm people have little book learning, they have plenty of “horse sense” and are rugged individuals, proud of their pioneer ancestry, slow to have confidence in new people and new ideas, but steadfast and loyal once they are convinced. This distinctive trait of the East Tennessee mountaineer must

Later history explains the varied agricultural conditions found in the county today. The peoples first settled the few fertile valleys of the county for agricultural purposes. The first crops produced by white man in 1769 on land that had been cleared and cropped by the Indians. Active cultivation have depleted the soils to extent. In the mountain areas of the county timber industry was largely responsible for a large number of people subsisting on soils which, according to foresters, should still be in timber—submarginal lands, unsuitable for In another mountain area the people left by that were adapted to growing grasses, fruits, and vegetables. In still another mountain area the timber industry were more fortunate in having such part-time farmers are usually more interested in their weekly pay checks than in the land.