

CONCERNING CONWAY

State

Horry's County Seat.

May 23, 1936

BY DR. C. L. BUSBEE,
Mayor of Conway.

Conway is an old town. In the year 1723 one Alexander Skene, by order of the Lords Proprietors, prepared the first map of the village of Kingston, one boundary of which was Kingston Lake. In the very names which they chose did the early settlers seek to preserve their connection and identity and with the empire from which they had so lately sprung. After the Revolution and as a result of disfavor into which English royalty had fallen, the name of Kingston was discreetly dropped and the longer appellation of Conwayborough was adopted. That name, reflecting the trend of the time toward speed and brevity, was later shortened to Conway.

While our city enjoys this link with the past, it is not old in its point of view or in its aspirations. There has been none of the worship of things ancient to the exclusion of the desire for things which are modern and new. Kingston Lake, still so named, and the Waccamaw river, first so-called by roving bands of Indians, still form one boundary of the municipality. They flow, as they have always flowed, down the same channel toward the sea. But the hamlet nestling in their elbow, has "suffered a sea change into something rich and strange."

Business early found here a location where brains and energy would produce substantial rewards. The rich natural resources of the surrounding section provided the raw material for industry and commerce. First, turpentine and naval stores were the basis upon which the industrial fabric of the community rested. As these have disappeared lumber and agriculture have taken their places. Two lumber mills and three veneer plants provide employment for labor and a market for forest products. The largest producer of tobacco among the counties of South Carolina, approximately one-half of the payments to tobacco farmers through the operation of the late lamented AAA found its way into the pockets of farmers of Horry county. Beans, strawberries, Irish potatoes, lettuce, other truck crops and poultry provided the substantial year-round income which guarantees a solid prosperity.

Nowhere else has that prosperity found happier expression than in Conway's banking and financial institutions. We learned by rumor that beginning about the year 1929 and continuing until 1932 or 1933, there was in certain sections of the country what was known as a depression. No citizen of Conway could testify under oath as to the depression because his testimony would be based upon mere hearsay. Until closed by presidential order not one of our banks or loan associations ever faced the slightest trouble or had difficulty in meeting its obligations. "Business as usual" was the sign over the door of Conway's financial institutions, its stores and mills. The statement was recently made in the public prints and not by the Conway chamber of commerce that of all of the farms in the South owned by the Federal Land Bank of Columbia not one was in Horry county. This is the only county in the Southeastern states as to which that statement is true.

But a community whose only concern was the solvency of its people would not be a desirable community in which to live. There is found in Conway a happy balance between the

practical and the aesthetic. Few cities in South Carolina have been more zealous to preserve the natural beauty with which they have been favored. The many miles of paved streets and sidewalks have been laid with due regard to the preservation of magnificent moss-covered live oaks and other trees which are a distinctive feature of our landscape. Wistaria, Azaleas, dogwood, redbuds—all of the lush and tropical loveliness of costal South Carolina—here find picturesque expression. A park of nine acres, recently presented to Conway by the heirs of the late Benjamin Grier Collins, is being developed with discriminating taste into an arboretum of rare beauty.

No municipality in South Carolina has better facilities for wholesome recreation than has Conway. It is the gateway of forty miles of strand stretching from Little river to the north by Cherry Grove, Ocean Drive, Myrtle Beach, Spivey Beachh, and on to Murrells Inlet on the south. This strand at any point may be reached from the mainland without traversing any intervening marsh. Kingston Lake, the garnet Waccamaw and the Little Pee Dee, haunts of largemouth bass, bream and warmouth, lure the fisherman. Quails, doves, wild turkeys, deer and ducks abound throughout the county. For those whose being revel in the artistic, Brookgreen Gardens offer a sanctuary of natural and man-made beauty which cannot be duplicated in the Southeast. Mr. and Mrs. Archer M. Huntington, the owners, have placed in these gardens one of the world's really great collections of sculpture. There will be found more American bronzes than are housed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But it is not all of life to make a living or to enjoy recreation. Citizens of Conway have realized and are fully discharging two duties which rest upon any modern American city. They are providing handsomely for the education of their children and the care of their sick. The town's school plant represents an investment of more than a quarter of a million dollars. A modern colored school is now being erected at a cost of \$40,000. The Conway hospital, established some seven years ago by public subscription and a donation from the Duke Endowment, has enjoyed such growth that its facilities are now sorely taxed. A new nurses' home will be let to contract within the next few weeks and the plans are in the making for the building of a wing to the present hospital so as to practically double its bed capacity.

The Inland Waterway, recently opened to navigation, is only a few miles from Conway's limits. As travel over that artery develops and as the city's natural attractions become more widely known, this waterway will provide an impetus for solid and substantial growth.

I cannot do more than touch upon a few things of which we in Conway are proud. As a part of South Carolina we invite the state to share with us the satisfaction which we feel in the community where we live. To those of you who may be contemplating some new field for the investment of capital or perhaps some new community for the display of your talents, may we modestly suggest that you turn your eyes to the capital of that county in South Carolina which first greets the rising sun? It is symbolic that we in Horry county are the first to see the light.