

William D. Click



William D. Click known to thousands of newspaper readers, radio listeners, and television viewers as “Farmer Bill,” devoted 46 productive years to the betterment of West Virginia rural life and rural people.

Born in Kentucky, and a graduate of Berea College, Mr. Click came to West Virginia in 1914 as one of its first County Agricultural Agents. He served as Nicholas County in this capacity from 1914 to 1919; in Lincoln County from 1919 to 1921; in Wayne County from 1921 to 1930; and in Cabell County from 1930 to 1952.

Following his retirement from Cooperative Extension Service of West Virginia University, he became farm editor for the Huntington Herald-Dispatch, and farm program director WSAZ and WSAZ-TV.

Wherever he worked Mr. Click advocated the virtues of scientific agriculture and stressed the need for better farming methods. He organized 4-H Clubs, promoted poultry clubs, and was active in community affairs.

He helped organize the first 4-H Club in Nicholas County in 1914. He also helped organize the first Nicholas County Fair, and helped build the first silo in Nicholas County. He organized 4-H Clubs in Lincoln County, set up truck gardening market in Wayne County, established the Cabell County 4-H Camp on Davis Creek, and introduced scientific methods of farming in soil conservation, field crops, vegetables, poultry and cattle.

In community affairs he helped start the first Water System in Hamlin, helped start the first high school in Hamlin, helped organize the first high school in Wayne County, and helped start the water system in Wayne. Mr. Click was the first President of the West Virginia County Agents Association and was a member of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

His newspaper writing began during WWII when he concentrated on “Victory Gardens.” He continued his column until 1960. He used both the newspaper columns and the radio station airways for many years to reach people on the West Virginia- Kentucky-Ohio area with agricultural and gardening information. In 1960, he was the “Dean” of U.S. agricultural broadcasters in terms of years of continuous service. During his 46 years of agricultural service, he promoted the causes of scientific agriculture, 4-H and youth work, and rural community life in West Virginia.

The following quotation from an editorial in the Huntington-Herald-Dispatch that appeared following his death tells of the impact Mr. Click had on the citizens of the Huntington area.

“His field was that of scientific agriculture, but W.D. Click was at his best in cultivating friendships. That in itself was a science of planting the proper seeds.

“A few hundred people knew W.D. Click—literally thousands knew ‘Farmer Bill’ and news of his death yesterday touched those thousands.

“One would be hard put to find a man more universally admired than W.D. Click. All communities have a drought of men of his character.”