

THE PILOT

Southern Pines North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Where there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike."—James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

School Boards Should Be Elected

If a machine runs smoothly, it doesn't necessarily mean that it's the best possible machine—or even that it is the best machine for the job it is doing.

It's human nature not to look beneath the surface or examine the whys and wherefores if things roll along pretty nicely.

We're thinking these thoughts in connection with the way county school boards and a good many city school boards are chosen in North Carolina.

We have no reason to believe that the county board of education, and the Southern Pines board of school trustees are not doing as good a job as would similar groups elected by the people. Maybe they are doing better jobs than would 100 per cent elected boards.

We're not thinking in terms of next week or next year, but rather about what is the most satisfactory way to fill public offices in a democracy in the long run. If good and capable men and women fill appointive offices that handle thousands of dollars of the public's money and administer educational systems that have a personal importance to practically every family in the county or city—we can congratulate ourselves on our good luck, but not our good judgment.

It may sound misleading to say that county boards of education are not elected, as they are nominated by Democrats—and Democrats only—in the Democratic primary in May of one year, but then are appointed by the General Assembly in the Spring of the following year.

Regardless of all other considerations, this lag of nearly a year between "election" and taking office is a mockery of responsive democratic government. It is a glaring example of the "lame duck" muddle that was eliminated from the Federal government more than 20 years ago when the President and Congressmen, elected in November, did not take office until the following March.

County board of education members

generally think of themselves as elected officials, but look what happened this year in Watauga County when the representative in the General Assembly wanted to appoint one county school board and the senator wanted to appoint another group. They never got together and now Watauga's county board of education is to be chosen, or maybe has been chosen by this time, by the State board of education—taking the matter completely out of the hands of the local folks of whatever faction.

As for city unit school boards, they are elected in some cities and appointed in others. In Southern Pines, members of the school board of trustees are appointed by the town governing body, the town council. Little-d democracy presumably enters the picture because the people have elected the council and so the council can speak for the people in choosing school officials.

This is what is known as keeping politics out of education, but it is our observation that the politics of appointment are at least as involved and potentially vicious as the politics of election.

One result of the lack of school board elections at town and county levels is growing public apathy about school affairs. School business tends to become hidden business, because no candidate is compelled to defend openly his stand on school issues in order to hold his office in a free election.

It is our opinion, therefore, that school elections on both town and county levels, should be non-partisan, just as the Southern Pines town council election is non-partisan, and also that these elections should be held at a time when no other election is being conducted. Such a procedure would instill new vigor and public interest in operation of the schools and might bring out as candidates persons who would have much to contribute as school administrators and who now either can not or will not advance themselves for such a public office.

Historic Sites Drawing Interest

Inquiries to the North Carolina News Bureau about historic buildings are becoming so numerous that it has issued a new bulletin entitled "Historic Homes and Buildings" which is available free upon request to the Department of Conservation and Development at Raleigh.

Although the bulletin lists 141 structures in 49 localities, it represents, says the News Bureau, "only a sampling" of the historic buildings in North Carolina. It lists, for instance, the Shaw House in Southern Pines and Old Bethesda Church near Aberdeen, but not the "House In The Horseshoe," site of a Revolutionary skirmish, in Moore County's Deep River Township. Of course, restoration work at the House In The Horseshoe is not complete and interest in the bulletin is focussed on buildings that are open to the public. Yet many of those listed are not indicated as open to visitors.

What interests us here is not whether or not the House In The Horseshoe is listed, but that "inquiries . . . are becoming so numerous." Enough persons, in and out of North Carolina, are interested in the architecture and other tangible evidences of the past to sit down and write to the State News Bureau for more information—indicating not a casual interest, but a real desire to know more about the historic sites of the state and presumably a desire to visit them too.

In displaying this interest in old things, the public is catching up with the relatively small number of astute and informed persons who for years have been trying to preserve historic buildings and articles from destruction. In ap-

proving the present widespread interest in the past, we do not neglect to honor the pioneering persons who have fought for years for preservation and recognition of the past, when it was not an especially popular viewpoint.

Such persons are members of the North Carolina Society For The Preservation of Antiquities which has a number of members and two officials in this area—Mrs. Ernest L. Ives of Southern Pines on the board of directors and George H. Maurice of Eagle Springs as vice-president for the Eighth Congressional District.

A key to the current interest in antiquities may be found in the first paragraph of a letter sent recently to members of the above-named Society by Mrs. Charles A. Cannon of Concord, president, who had been directing the activities of the Society from a sickbed.

The letter opens: "We had a marvelous annual meeting in spite of the fact that I couldn't be there." And then this: "Indeed great was our awareness that we do not inherit Freedom but that we must work, fight, even die for it. Our ancestors did just that."

The motto quoted at the bottom of the Society's stationery may offer another clue to the rising interest in historical things: "To preserve and revere our past is to insure our future."

The average man may not be consciously aware of the philosophical implications of his interest in the past, but we believe that the implications are there and that people are looking backward in time not as an escape from the present, but in order to gain inspiration and strength for the all-too-often uninspiring nature of life today.

They're Saying

The Child In Need

What happens when a father or other breadwinner in a family dies or becomes incapacitated? We're looking now at the problem of the dependent child in North Carolina through the eyes of a revealing study published by the State Board of Public Welfare. Some of the answers are astonishing.

In 1937 North Carolina became a part of the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program under the Social Security Act. By legal definition a "dependent child" is "a needy child under the age of 16 or under the age of 18 . . . if regularly attending school, who has been deprived of parental support or care by reason of the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity of a parent, and who is living with . . . (a close relative) . . . in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home." Such a child qualifies for assistance with the cost borne largely by the Federal Government but shared in by the State and county. And in brief this aid is a substitute for the old-fashioned child's home.

North Carolina emerges from the study (made by an outside agency) with fairly good marks. For instance:

Children in this State are aided for a shorter length of time—in 72 per cent of the cases for less than three years—because of effective rehabilitation work.

Juvenile delinquency "is almost non-existent in ADC families and many of these children have been outstanding in scholarship, citizenship, and leadership."

Average monthly payments to the some 45,000 children—one of the smallest numbers proportionately in the country—average around \$57 per family, or a little more than \$15 per person. Small as this is, it is only a certain percentage of the minimum need.

Death of the father accounts for 28 per cent of the North Carolina cases; desertion for only 15 per cent; and one out of five cases is brought about by the father's being in an institution, usually prison.

The study accords North Carolina's program credit for "money well spent." The grants of course are a pittance by modern living standards and costs of living, yet in this important area of humane concern a great deal has been done for a very little. Today's dependent child in North Carolina is tomorrow's leader. Surely that is praise enough.

—Editorial from THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN



The Fourth-Ranking Reason In N. C.

Desertion And Welfare Payments

During the past year, there has been considerable publicity given in Moore county to problems created by fathers who have deserted their families. The problems included efforts of the courts to locate fathers in other states and force them to pay for support of their families, through the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act; and also problems of providing for the needs of abandoned families through the county Welfare Department, usually by Aid to Dependent Children payments.

One case was uncovered last year, during a court trial of a father, in which apparently there had been collusion between the absent father and the "abandoned" mother in order that the family might receive Welfare payments. While this kind of thing is rare, it tended to arouse public suspicion of a procedure that is an invaluable social service in the vast majority of cases.

Funds Less Needed?

Because tax funds are used in Welfare payments (of which the county's share runs to only about one ninth of the total, the remainder coming from State and Federal sources), the public has a direct interest in the administration of Welfare funds. Occasionally there is an assumption that these funds are less needed than Welfare Department administrators contend; sometimes the current "prosperous times" are cited to bolster the argument that Welfare needs are over-estimated.

Statistics of the State Department of Welfare show that death of the father in a family is the chief cause in North Carolina for

instituting Aid to Dependent Children payments. Desertion is the fourth-ranking cause.

Desertion as a cause for receiving aid to dependent children is discussed and placed in its proper perspective in an article in "Public Welfare News," quarterly publication of the State Board of Public Welfare. This article follows:

Desertion by a parent is less frequently the reason families receive aid to dependent children (ADC) in North Carolina than in the nation as a whole.

About 15 per cent of the families receiving ADC in North Carolina need this help because a parent has deserted, according to studies by the State Board of Public Welfare. In the nation as a whole this cause is responsible for about 26 per cent of the ADC cases.

In every case of desertion where an ADC grant is involved, the county superintendent of public welfare gives the name and all information available regarding the whereabouts of the deserting parent to the law enforcement officials. The courts have the responsibility for following through to secure contributions from the deserting parent for his family. A Federal law effective since July, 1952, gives added support to the long time efforts to enforce North Carolina's support statutes.

Death First Cause

In North Carolina, desertion is fourth in order of frequency among the reasons aid to dependent children is needed. Death of the father comes first with 28 per cent of the cases occasioned by this cause. Incapacity of the

father is second with 23 per cent. Fathers in an institution (usually prison) is third with about 19 per cent in this group. In only 15 per cent of the ADC cases has the father deserted his family.

The facts for the nation show that the incapacity of the father is the major cause, followed by desertion, then death of the father as the third cause, and only eight per cent of fathers in institutions.

North Carolina is one of 52 jurisdictions which have the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act which provides a legal method for requiring a deserting parent to contribute to the support of his dependent children in another state or jurisdiction. In this State the Superior Court is designated as the court having jurisdiction in the initiation of action under this law when the dependent children are in this State. That court also executes similar actions for out-of-State dependent children whose deserting parent is in this State.

Washington, D. C., is one of the few major jurisdictions which does not have this law.

Court Action

Court action is necessary in requiring a deserting parent to contribute to the support of depend-

Mirror of Life

Newspapers, of course, are concerned with news. Unfortunately, the unusual is newsworthy. Newspapers may look with considerable regard on the millions of good people who go about their daily tasks with normal courage, humility and good spirit; but extremes are news—either extremes of goodness (like Albert Schweitzer) or extremes of badness (like Joseph Stalin).

Palmer Hoyt, editor and publisher of the Denver Post, set forth the mission of a good newspaper (in its news columns) when he wrote as follows:

As I see the daily newspaper, it is a mirror of contemporary life. It must, if it is to be a good public servant, reflect life as it is. If crime and violence be a part of our life, then the mirror must show crime and violence as it must also show constructive and unselfish actions. All elements of our life must be shown in the mirror of the daily newspaper in this proper relation and balance.

The problem, we admit, is securing "proper relation and balance." It is not easy to do, and the job becomes more difficult when some newspapers distort the balance of the news by playing crime and violence all out of proportion to their real news value.

—The Greensboro Daily News

Grains of Sand

Two Leland Stories

Two stories by John A. Leland, brother of Mrs. E. T. McKeithen of Aberdeen and son-in-law of S. B. Richardson of Southern Pines, appear in current magazines of national circulation.

"The Enemy At Home" is in the July issue of The American Magazine and "Ambush On The Camden Road" is in Colliers for July 8.

Mr. Leland's wife is the former Emily Richardson of Southern Pines.

Mr. Leland has been an invalid for the past 17 years. His writing for major magazines began several years ago and he has had two stories in The Saturday Evening Post. He was able to write in longhand for some time but now, we are informed, must dictate to his wife who then types up the manuscripts.

Friends in the Sandhills have followed his career with interest. Against odds that to many persons would be insurmountable, he is achieving notable success in the difficult and demanding field of magazine fiction.

In New York City

We are most pleased to hear that Professor Allen, who was principal of the Southern Pines High School in the late 1920's and to whom we referred in this column last week as "the late Professor Allen" is living in New York City, as is Mrs. Allen, and we express our most humble regret at the wording of our reference to him.

Old Post Card

A post card received in the mail from J. B. Gifford of Southern Pines, now summering at Thousand Island Park, N. Y., pictures "Oak Hall," a Southern Pines Hotel which looked vaguely familiar as we glanced at it—a large, rectangular, three-story building with a veranda around the two visible sides.

"Just came across this among some old papers," Mr. Gifford wrote on the card. Thought you might be interested. In case you don't remember, it is a part of the present Southland Hotel."

A big sign in white letters, "Oak Hall," extends from the front of the hotel toward an obviously unpeaked street.

When several weeks ago, we queried whether any one knows the location of the "Ozone Hotel" which had been mentioned by a visitor to the Pilot office who said that his father worked there more than 50 years ago, we have heard from two sources that this, too, was the Southland.

There is no date on the post card from Mr. Gifford, to indicate when the picture of Oak Hall was made.

Any information about either Oak Hall or the Ozone Hotel will be welcome.

Thanks to Mr. Gifford for his contribution to The Pilot's collection of local history items.

ent children, according to the studies of the State Board of Public Welfare which supervises the county-administered welfare program in North Carolina.

The fact that the whereabouts of a large proportion of the deserting parents is unknown makes it exceedingly difficult to get satisfactory results, the studies showed.

Over against cases in which full information cannot be obtained, however, there are hundreds of cases in which payments from the deserting parents are secured as a result of the efforts of the welfare department in cooperation with the law enforcement officials.

Desertion by a parent and the resulting needs of the children emphasize the service which can be rendered by case workers in county departments of public welfare as they counsel with the remaining parent and children on their family problems, the studies indicated.

The PILOT

Published Every Thursday by THE PILOT, Incorporated Southern Pines, North Carolina 1941—JAMES BOYD—1944

Katharine Boyd Editor
C. Benedict News Editor
Dan S. Ray Gen. Mgr.
C. G. Council Advertising
Mary Scott Newton Business
Bessie Cameron Smith Society

Composing Room
Lochamy McLean, Dixie B. Ray,
Michael Valles, Jasper Swearingen

Subscription Rates:
One Year \$4.6 mos. \$2.3 mos. \$1
Entered at the Postoffice at Southern Pines, N. C., as second class mail matter.

Member National Editorial Assn. and N. C. Press Assn.