

RALPH W. PAGE

Sandhills: Good Place To Live

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and ideas crackle, whether in conversation or on paper. He favors a judicious use of vigorous epithets—not all of which end up in print.

He can give words savor and flavor—as in describing U. S. Middle Eastern policy as “a lot of sanctimonious stuff.” (“We have got the Jews to get out without any guarantees at all and have taken on Nasser and now what are we going to do with him?”) It's a treat to hear him say “sanctimonious.”

His laugh is famous—a kind of trademark. Old friends say he has not been sparing with it through the years. And he's laughing at himself as often as anyone else, they say.

Once on the Maine coast, in a heavy fog, a friend heard laughter. “That's Ralph Page—or his ghost,” was the judgment of the friend who did not know Mr. Page was anywhere near that area.

It turned out to be the real man. One can't imagine a less ghostly person. He is an individual in a sense that we are sometimes told is disappearing from American life: the product of an age and a tradition that honored conformity less than that doubtful virtue is honored today.

Take his column in the Bulletin, for instance. It doesn't have a title—merely Mr. Page's name and his picture over what he has written. The column is the man. The editors must feel that it needs no other description or emicement for the reader. People want to know what Ralph Page has to say about something or somebody in the news.

He is a grandson of Allison Francis Page, a lumberman from Cary in Wake county, who came to Aberdeen in 1881 to found a family that has played a notable part in various fields of endeavor through three generations, at local, state and national levels.

He is the son of Walter Hines Page who left North Carolina early in his life to become editor of The Atlantic Monthly at Boston and a co-founder of the publishing house of Doubleday, Page and Co., and who was best known as United States Ambassador to Great Britain during the first World War.

His Roots Are Deep  
Ralph Page, therefore, grew up in homes near Boston and New York, but he spent much time with his grandparents at Aberdeen and feels still, though much of his own life has been elsewhere, that his roots are deep in the Sandhills.

He attended Harvard Law School, practicing law in New York City until 1909. While at Harvard, he met his wife-to-be, Leila Tuckerman of Boston, then a student at Radcliffe College. Their son, Anderson Page, a former B-29 pilot, is now a lawyer in Philadelphia. Their daughter, Cary, died in a tragic accident while in her late teens.

After he left his law practice in New York until the depression years of the early thirties, Mr. Page led a varied and interesting life, with the Sandhills his base of operations.

With Raphael Pumpelly, he pioneered the development of Samarcand plantation, started growing peaches and sold or helped to sell large tracts of land in western Moore County, launching the booming—and eventually busting—peach business that drew together in a new pattern of life a group of industrious and light-hearted people who lived simply but well, setting a tone of social life that is still dominant in the Sandhills. The Pages had bought some land west of Pinehurst—where they built the long low brick house, “Garran Hill,” now the home of Robinson Cook. The terrace at the back, the tennis court and swimming pond they added later, were the scenes of much informal gayety and fun.

A writer of light verse par excellence, comical, light on his feet, a powerful singer of spirituals, of which he knew hundreds, the host won high fame as song-and-dance man at many a festive evening's entertainment.

Mr. Page wrote articles for such magazines as World's Work, Commerce and Finance, Current History, Red Cross Magazine and others. With Jerry Healy, now with Barnum Realty and Insurance Company here, and an advertising man, Mr. Page edited and wrote the Pinehurst Outlook which then appeared in a semi-monthly form.

He went from peaches into other business and into his family's banking activities. He recalls that at one time, he owned

as many as 800 acres of peach orchards.

About the time of World War 2, when his father was representing the United States in Britain, Mr. Page wrote the one book he has had published: “Dramatic Moments in American Diplomacy,” which reviewed friendly relations with France and Britain over this nation's history. It was well received and still rates highly in its field.

Twice in his life, Mr. Page has supported Republican candidates for President of the United States: he was for Theodore Roosevelt and, in 1928, was on a committee that helped to carry North Carolina for Hoover against Al Smith.

Though he later was a staunch New Dealer, he had special personal reasons for his two Republican loyalties. What happened after Hoover was elected is another story. The great depression of the early 1930's is a subject that Mr. Page has studied carefully and felt deeply.

Studied Depression  
In 1933, at the request of Robert McLean who now is publisher of The Philadelphia Bulletin and who formerly headed the Associated Press, Mr. Page made a nation-wide trip to learn and write about the effects of the depression and what the first Roosevelt administration was doing about that national catastrophe. He reported his findings in a series of syndicated newspaper articles.

Looking back on this time, he recalls how the country was divided between those who were pinched by the depression and favored the new program of government responsibility for human and economic conditions and those who fought these sweeping changes in approach to government—changes Mr. Page sums up in the phrase “the welfare stuff.”

During the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, he saw this pattern continue, and he saw it begin to change, with increasing prosperity for the nation. He sees Eisenhower's victories at the polls as the result of personal worship for the man—a worship that he views as irrational. But, also, he says this:

“Any administration collects two things. It collects barnacles, human barnacles, and it collects errors. If it collects enough of these, it gets thrown out.”

As an example of this proposition, in reverse, he cites the city of Philadelphia which has thrown out a barnacle-covered Republican administration for a new Democratic one.

Mr. Page remembers how hard the depression hit Moore County: “In 1933, one third of the county was sold out. Not a single farmer in the county could pay his debts. After I had seen those times, I had had enough of depression. I supported the New Deal from then on.”

During the 1930's, Mr. Page began his association with the Bulletin and took on a variety of assignments, including collaboration with the late Struthers Burt of Southern Pines and Jackson Hole Wyo., on conservation articles dealing with the bitter struggle between the government and cattlemen for control of land in Wyoming.

He began to do a column each day for the Bulletin and in 1941 became its Washington correspondent.

Promise In Unions  
Looking at the world scene today, Mr. Page feels like this: “The main strength of the free world,” he said, “is not going to be the kind of policy we are following in the Middle East. . . . (the bluff and bluster he had designated “sanctimonious humbug”). . . . The main strength will more likely be in the new set-up in Europe where six nations are proposing a customs and atomic energy union. There would be one more step to a federal union, then.

“A federation of Europe could be a powerful affair, especially if the British Commonwealth and the Scandinavian nations join.

“It has been recognized a long time that there has to be a solid front to meet the Soviets. A European federation seems to be the most practical way to do this—preferable to the other two propositions: world federation and Clarence Streit's Atlantic federation.

“The United Nations has its uses, but it hasn't any power. It's not possible to turn it into a world government. Nor can it be amended to get rid of the veto. Neither Russia nor the United States would surrender the veto power.

“You don't have to have a

AMEROTRON

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Tufted carpets. An important segment of this production is in Velvet weaves which are to be produced at the Aberdeen plant.

At present five different regular consumer Velvet lines are produced under the Gulistan brand name. In addition, a number of commercial carpets which hotels, theaters, institutions and other public buildings use are manufactured with the Velvet process.

The A. & M. Karagheusian Company was organized in 1905 by Arshag and Miran Karagheusian, the only children of an Armenian textile importer in Constantinople. Both moved to England in 1896 and decided, shortly afterwards, to establish an exporting business to the United States. The firm later developed into the largest importer of Oriental rugs in America, a phase of the company's operation still conducted in New York City.

In 1905 the brothers decided to enlarge their importing business by manufacturing domestic rugs, mostly reproductions of Persian designs that would sell at much lower prices than imported ones. They established a plant in Freehold.

In 1928 the company conceived the idea of chemically treating rugs so they would acquire the beautiful sheen of Oriental rugs. This completely new departure in fine carpets was named the “Gulistan Rug” and marked the beginning of the firm's use of the “Gulistan” trade name.

Gulistan carpets are sold nationally to a large network of distributors who, in turn, sell them to department, furniture and specialty stores. Working directly with these distributors is the Karagheusian sales organization established in major cities across the nation.

Executive offices are maintained in New York City. Present chairman of the board is Charles A. Karagheusian, son of one of the founders. Steele L. Winterer is company president.

world government. If you ever get the powerful fellows together, you do have a kind of world government. Suppose Russia had been benevolent after World War 2—you could have had that kind of world government then.

“Customs unions offer the best hope. People get over their animosities for the sake of prosperity. You might get unions in Europe, in Africa and elsewhere. Such unions could get wider and wider. Then maybe the big unions would get together.”

Racial Relations  
This practical outlook also marks Mr. Page's comments on racial relations—comments that are startling, compared with the dogmatic positions taken by both pro- and anti-integrationists.

The racial situation in Moore County, he says calmly, is “vastly better than it is in Philadelphia.”

He notes that the principal speaker at the 50th reunion of his Harvard class was a Negro. The point: that the Negro will find his place and reach his goal when he is ready to reach it.

As evidence of his contention that school integration agitation is “premature,” he cites the plain fact that practically nothing is happening in North Carolina. He asks: “Does any one want to do anything about it? Is any one in Moore County trying to do anything about it?”

The gist of his opinion, one gathers, is that there has been too much excitement about something that will work itself out when all concerned are ready—just as he sees a happier future for the world in slowly evolved customs unions, with widening influence, than in an all-out grand attempt at world government.

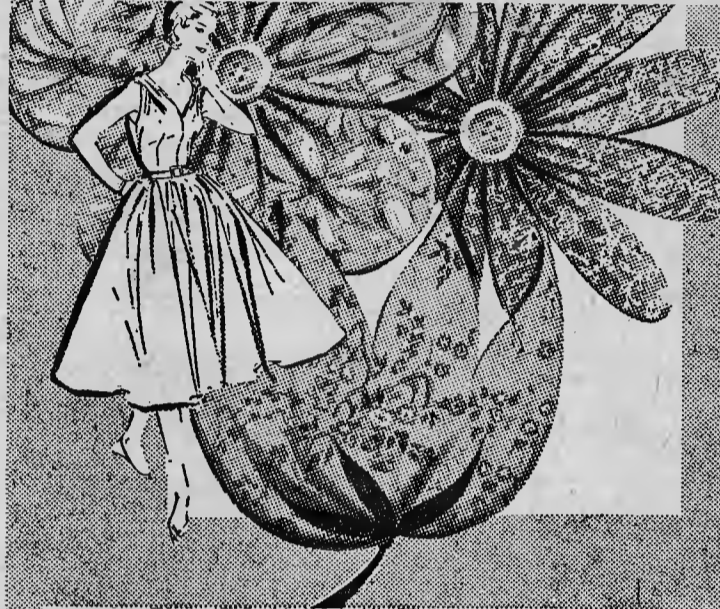
Moore County, this little native corner of a world in turmoil that Mr. Page has studied all his life, remains “the pleasantest place to be,” in his opinion.

“I see they have written the county's history up to 1847,” he said this week. “I hope somebody writes the history up to the present, too. There have been many changes. Fifty years ago, it was a big job to get to Carthage. In the Sandhills, the whole development has been since 1900. It was pretty primitive here, even in 1910. It seems to me there are more generals around here now than there were people then. It's interesting—very interesting what has gone on.”

A friend to whom this opinion was quoted thinks the modern history of Moore County, spanning Mr. Page's long and also interesting life, might be a suitable job for him to do, when he retires.

He retires, that is. Which isn't likely.

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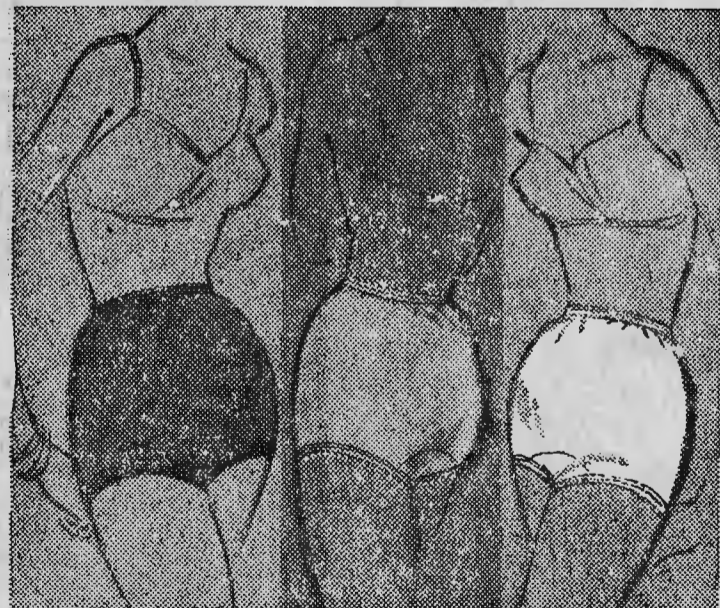
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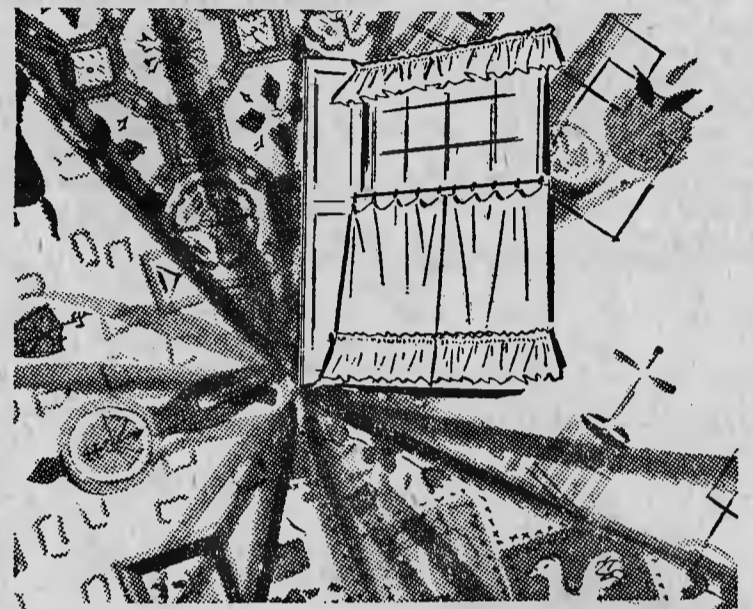
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