

# A RHAPSODIC APPRECIATION OF THE SANDHILLS

## Adam Made a Big Mistake in Locating Eden, But His Posterity Have Finally Corrected It By Following Neill McNeill Into the Sandhills

By BION H. BUTLER

### A Sandhills Residence Deliberately Chosen.

It was no accident or chance that made me a resident of Moore County, for the decision to locate here was made after an acquaintance with much of the whole United States, and when my wife and I finally picked Moore County, North Carolina, it was with other places on the list, including East Tennessee, Central Texas, a couple of sections in California, with Central Kentucky and a bit of Georgia as possibilities. We had a small acquaintance with the old world to consider, those old traditions of family ties, and the attraction of some of the pleasant places on the European continent and on the British Islands. We had contact with the busy industrial life of Pennsylvania, New York, the lake country, the far west, and for a long time we discussed the question as to where we would finally tie ourselves in and establish a permanent home and association. It was very deliberate and studied, and when Fort Bragg was established and it looked at one time as if the government might take our entire possessions as a part of the land needed for the big post we discussed again where we would go if we were to be ejected from our Sandhill lodgment. The decision was that we would pick another location as close as we could find one in our own neighborhood. A period of forty years has only strengthened the views we gained in the earlier days before making our actual location here.

### Judgment Confirmed By Thousands

That my judgment was not at fault is indicated by the example of the many thousands of other people who have since then come to the North Carolina Sandhill country to make permanent homes and pleasant villages, and the hundreds of thousands who come here for temporary residence and for shorter vacations and outing. The class of people who are inclined in this direction include a superior type, well to do, intelligent, friendly, from all over the world, from all ranks of life and from all occupations, and a more democratic population I know of in no place. Hither now come the professional man, the big manufacturer, the educator, the small tradesman, the man of great wealth and the man of limited means, a cosmopolitan gathering, and these folks have built in Pinehurst and Southern Pines two of the most pleasant villages I know of in the world.

### Why, When, and How the Pioneers Came

As to the why of it—that is old as the hills. Generations ago this was the happy hunting ground of the Indian. The ridges abounded in buffalo, deer, and other wild life, which ranged the hills and drifted seaward with the pasturage. The Indian found here subsistence until the white man came two centuries ago, three lines of approach being followed. As near as I can determine, about two hundred years ago to a day the Scotch settlers began to approach the Sandhills from the mouth of the Cape Fear, and the Ulster Scotch, those Irish migrants whose ancestry had crossed over from Scotland, commenced to settle a little to the eastward of Moore County. But other groups of these same Scotch-Irish who began to come into Philadelphia about the same time were picking up that old trail on the road that is laid down on Mitchell's map of 1755; the "Great Wagon Road" that came out by York, Lancaster, Winchester, and across the Dan and down into the Yadkin country and across the ridge at Southern Pines and on to Fayetteville and Wilmington. They came to the upper Deep River country, and on to the West of us, and Quakers drifted this way also, with some English and a few Germans. Along with the early migrants from Pennsylvania came the Rev. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian preacher sent by the Presbytery of Philadelphia on a missionary trip to North Carolina. In his diary he mentions the Sandhills, and preaching at two or three points between the Uwharrie River and Longstreet and Fayetteville, his route leading him over the ridge at Southern Pines and through the heart of Pinehurst. He is the father of the Presbyterian Church in this section, and that church is practically the mother of the development that has followed his pioneer trail.

Moore County attracted the Scotch on the south side, the Quakers and English in the northern section, and a few others here and there to add to the mixture. A good type of people, grounded on that old democratic doctrine of Presbyterianism, which being interpreted into an ancient tongue says "vox populi, vox Dei," and has been the foundation of our national policies. To a goodly land came a goodly people, and their posterity has gone out into the world to help in the creation of a great nation, contributing its share of men who have stood highest

in the councils of the nation, including one president, cabinet officers, governors, educators, legislators, leaders in all lines. A goodly land and a goodly people, and such it remains to this day.

Those things that attracted the Scotch and the Quaker and the others also beckoned to the more recent tide of settlement, and it is pleasing to record the fact that streams of goodly people moved this way from all directions. Today here is one of the most interesting and cosmopolitan populations on earth. Here are representatives from practically every State of the Union, from many nationalities, including almost everything except the Oriental, sprinkled freely with the sons of Ham, a few of the ancient Israelites who are the fathers of our religious and moral development; in other respects we include rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant chief—a well-balanced composite population and an enjoyable neighborhood. Not long ago in Southern Pines a spring festival was held, and a feature of it was a reunion of old slaves, a reunion of New Englanders, a small reunion of old Confederates, a small reunion of old Federal soldiers, and a sight that probably never will be seen again in these United States was a parade in which were a group of old slaves, a group of old Federal soldiers who had fought to free the slaves, the commander of these troops about a hundred years old, a group of old Confederates, who had fought against the army of freedom with the Confederate commander well up toward a hundred, and in line the veterans of the Spanish war, the veterans of the war against Germany, and in all these groups many separate States were represented. Ours here in the Sandhills is one of the most cosmopolitan but most harmonious populations on the globe, and that is one of the reasons why everybody likes to live here.

### A Most Delectable Climate

Climate is one of our alluring factors. A neighbor from my old town of Pittsburg dropped in at our house a few days ago. He told of snow up there in Pennsylvania the previous week, and was amazed that strawberries were ripe here and the woods filled with blossoms, and gardens green and folks beginning to reach for the electric fan instead of the electric heater. Bar none, this to me is the most delectable climate I have ever encountered and I have tried out a lot of them. As a comparison, I lived for a time in Nevada, where the Carson River is a pleasing little stream bringing down from the mountains the water from the melting snows of summer. But down that river a few miles the river ends. It does not run into the sea. It evaporates a portion of its water, and the rest is absorbed ultimately by the sandy soil of the desert into which it runs. Not only the springs out that way dry up, but the rivers and creeks do the same intolerable thing. Here in the Sandhills the streams are alive and clear and friendly. Our hills are not abrupt snow-clad mountains, but verdure and forest-covered knobs that are a delight to the eye, and a picturesque bond that holds us close to Nature at her best. My house stands among the trees, on one of a group of three little knobs, the higher ridges rising in the distance of a couple of miles, squirrels climbing the porch posts, deer tracks occasionally within two hundred feet of the house, Bob Whites calling in the tangle on all sides, and a wild turkey this minute with a nest at a point, I do not propose to disclose. And when a man one day asked me if I did not want to go back to Pittsburg to live I told him candidly not unless I should be locked in the Penitentiary where I would be safe from being overrun by the crowds and the insane rush of traffic of all kinds. I have been over in that country north of the head of the Euphrates River where the Garden of Eden is said to have been located, but it is my opinion that if Adam had been familiar with the head of the Cape Fear he would have picked the Sandhill country rather than that inhospitable territory in Asia.

### When the Sandhills Were Self-Sufficient

As Abraham, the migrant from Chaldea, grazed his cattle in the pastures of Canaan, so the expatriated Scot ranged his flocks on the hills and valleys of the Cape Fear pine woods, and thrived. In America he had freedom, and room, and the bounties of Nature at his command. The forests afforded him an occupation, and a congenial surrounding. Up on Deep River the clay hills permitted the English potter to carry on his handwork. The handy artisan set up gun factories, and some iron smelting was undertaken for a time. Every community had its grist mills, its smith shops, and its craftsmen who wrought in their various lines. The Sandhills in the earlier day were the scene of many delights and much good fellowship and companionable and helpful neighbors

who built well their share in the creation of the commonwealth. Sunshine came with the clouds and clouds with the sunshine, but probably with all the sombreness that fell to the fate of this region its rewards were as satisfying as has been the lot of the people of most places. The traditions and community history of the Sandhills preserve many interesting tales of a fine group of people.

### The Loss of the Pines Usher in a New Era

Then one day the folks awakened to the fact that they were cutting out the magnificent pine forests which were their heritage, and for a brief period the "sandbarrens" became a sort of mild reproach. But the railroad that was built down into the Sandhills to haul out the lumber and mutilate the fine old forests had another effect—it brought people here to see what was going on as the mills were cleaning out the pine timber. Of the number of observers was a quaint and interesting Wadesboro printer, John T. Patrick, and he was endowed with a marvelous vision of the restoration of the pine forests, of the pleasures of life here in these little mountains, and of the many blessings that had been conferred on this particular region. Patrick set on foot a scheme to settle the lands with people from New England and the Middle States, and his intuition was so accurate that the idea ran away from him so far that he never had the audacity to imagine anything like its outcome. Frank Page, a lumberman from near Raleigh, followed the railroad down this way with his boys, and they opened saw mills in time to help start the new development; Asaph M. Clarke, an astounding Pennsylvania soldier of the Civil War, drifted in, and Dr. G. H. Sadelson, a Northern physician, and Pierre Stebbins and Dr. W. P. Swett, and other folks attracted this way from the North by Patrick's remarkable descriptions and predictions, and before the revolution was realized Southern Pines was becoming a novel sand-topped village with many things that fascinated the Yankee visitor. James Tufts, a philanthropic Boston manufacturer, came this way to see what all the noise was about, and he bought several thousand acres to provide room for a retreat for people he thought ought to get out to the open country, away from the cities and under different conditions of life. Mr. Tufts started something, but it lost its bearing and developed a realization he had never dreamed of. It far outclassed his intentions, and brought here great numbers of interested folks, among them many well-to-do people who have become enthusiastic over what was to be found in the Sandhills, and the result is that Moore County has become one of the leading counties of North Carolina, and in many respects the best known section of the Central South.

The natural conditions were easy for everybody to see, and it so came about that as people drifted this way they took a hand in doing things. Pinehurst grew as one of the great playgrounds of the continent. Fruit growing developed amazingly. The ease with which cheerful homes could be built, with all of Nature's help in creating the setting for a haven in winter and a paradise with a Garden of Eden for a setting, allured people toward the Sandhills in steadily increasing numbers as the fame of the territory spread abroad. James Tufts picked up Donald Ross, a young Scot who came to this country about the time Pinehurst was getting acquainted with its budding village existence and Ross and Tufts established the Scotch game of golf in America. This proved to be a place where horses thrive, so admirable in every way that when the government found that a big artillery camp was required the spot selected was on the outskirts of Southern Pines, and there today is the greatest artillery range in the world, and steadily a great artillery school for soldiers is growing, and Fort Bragg, a next door neighbor of Southern Pines and Pinehurst, is a prominent feature in the advancement of the Sandhills, for it is a big social adjunct and an interesting point for visitors.

With all the factors working together the natural advantages of the Sandhills, the climate, the convenience to the large population of the country which is alert to the opportunities of a nearby winter resort and play ground, many new people come this way constantly and the surprising growth of the Moore County region is one of the marvels of the State. With railroad and highway facilities, with flying field and airplane travel, with all the advantages that come from electrical power and light, with the fine hotels, the pleasant villages, the elaborate homes that a well-to-do class of people create, and all of the adjuncts that people of means assemble for the convenience and enjoyment of life, the sandhill area is about as nearly a paradise as men know how to make.

### The Future Brighter Than the Past

But the story is by no means told when the prevailing conditions are told, for the days that are ahead are as definitely forecast as the days that are gone are depicted by a story of the creation of the communities in Moore County. The older citizens,

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