

# The State's Voice

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## MORE ABOUT MOORE AND ITS PEOPLE

### Judges Adams' Passing

The State's Voice of May 15, bearing a brief tribute to Justice Adams, had barely been circulated when the State was shocked by the news of his death. The words in praise of him living may stand as a tribute to him dead. Carthage has lost its most distinguished citizen; the State an able and upright judge. Here, as a fitting place, I may applaud the choice of Judge Adams' successor—Judge Schenck, a worthy son of a worthy sire.

### Moore County Towns

In the former article I wrote of Carthage and of some of its fine citizens. But space did not permit me to include Moore County's other good towns and villages, and I am taking space in this issue to do so—in order to make the sketch of Moore county more complete and because it is a pleasure to do so.

I have recently visited nearly every place in the county bearing a name. I missed Jackson Springs, which thirty years ago was a popular resort. Its good old hotel has now gone down, yet a few foregather at cottages to benefit from the use of the waters of the springs. I failed to find Niagara, where my friend J. V. Snipes, formerly of Chatham, is postmaster. It was not practicable to visit High Falls, in the northern tip of the county, where the cotton mill is still operated directly by waterpower. The cotton mill there belongs to the Jones family of Sanford and the Woody family of Guilford College and High Falls. Mr. J. Q. Reynolds, son of that fine farmer, miller, and merchant of the hill country of upper Moore, R. B. Reynolds, is superintendent of the High Falls mills. Near High Falls resides a former superintendent, Mr. G. C. Shaw, one of the leading citizens of upper Moore, who long served as county commissioner. And I had listed as a present-day commissioner Mr. L. R. Shaw—but Shaws are no rarity in Moore.

### Aberdeen a Wrecked Town

Aberdeen is the sore spot in Moore county. Only a few years ago it was one of the chief financial capitals of North Carolina and a busy and prosperous commercial community. Today the contrast is deplorable. Probably the primary cause of the collapse lies in the universal inclination to over-expand. But mismanagement cannot be readily eliminated as a more immediate cause of the debacle which resulted in the collapse of the great banking institution and the resulting impoverishment of the great family which built it up and directed its course during the years of its safe and sane career, as well as the impoverishment of other citizens not only of Aberdeen but of nearly a score of other towns in which units of the Page Trust Company were located.

One of these days, as I said months ago in commenting upon the unjust criticism which befell J. Q. Seawell, cashier of the unit at Siler City, the blame will fall where it belongs—and that will not be upon the sons of Frank Page, Sand Hills pioneer. Though Robert N. Page bore the title of president, I am authoritatively aware that the real executive power of the institution had been imposed upon another than a Page. I am informed that the actual control of the elder Pages ceased in the early 1920's. Few, if any others, in Aberdeen or other locations of Page Trust Company units suffered such financial losses as the Pages themselves, and assuredly none other the heart pangs. One could well believe that R. N. Page would be living today but for the failure of the Page Trust Company, of which he was nominally president.

From those pine barrens, so graphically pictured a hundred years ago or more by the writer of "Horse Shoe Robinson", the fortune on which the Page Trust Company had been based had been gathered in the course of a comparatively few years. It was shattered in a much shorter period, and there are no more pine forests from which to build another.

Yet Aberdeen still has some life. And among its citizens are numbered some of the finest characters I know.

### Some of Aberdeen's Worthies

It is out of the question even to mention all the worthy citizens of Aberdeen or any other town, but

in each there are some whom it is a pleasure to introduce to our readers.

One can hardly think of J. Talbot Johnson, fine lawyer and genial gentleman, without thinking of his deceased sire, J. MacNeill Johnson, great lawyer, poet and historian, who passed away only a few years ago at the age of 71. In the dedication of a book of poems to Talbot in 1929, his father speaks of him as the "companion of my early manhood, the business partner of my mature years—between whom and me there has always existed an unstrained comradeship seldom seen between father and son." That relationship was something beautiful, as is the reverence and high respect the son bears to the memory of his beloved parent.

The father was a descendant of one of the earliest arriving Scotch families and knew Scotch history as he did his ABC's. He was educated at Wake Forest College. Talbot went to the University three years and then to Wake Forest, where he received the LL. B. degree in 1912. He has been practicing law at Aberdeen ever since, as a partner with his father till his death. He now has as partner a young Virginian, Frank W. McCluer, a graduate of Washington and Lee University, whom Mr. Johnson characterizes as "bright, studious, and popular."

I did not think to ask Talbot just how it came about that his father married up in Chatham. Anyway, Mrs. J. McNeill Johnson was a half-sister of our good friend Alex Cockman, manager of the Hickory Mountain game preserve, a picture of whom with the dogs of his club you may have seen in the movies, for Alex and the dogs have been thus featured on the Pinehurst fields. Though Alex is a half-uncle of Talbot, the former, I suspect, is several years younger. Thus wrote the poet upon the sixtieth birthday of his beloved wife, daughter of old Chatham:

"Thou dearest one! oh how I love thee yet,  
So sweet, so fair, so bright, so sunny, still  
Fresh as the morning rose, a breathing flower."

Truly, it is a vast privilege for Talbot to have been born and reared in a home where such love dwelt. The wife "the radiance of whose faultless face ne'er grown dim," was Miss Annie Cockman, daughter of Mr. Mark Cockman of the Pittsboro community.

And here is T. B. Wilder, whom of Aberdeen's citizens I have longest known and esteemed. He is a native of Franklin, a graduate of Wake Forest with more than a dozen others of the class of 1882, of which class only three members survive, who will probably have met upon the Wake Forest campus before this is written, as the centennial celebration is calling all the old college's alumni home for the occasion. The other two survivors are Rev. D. W. Herring, long missionary to China, and Henry G. Holding, for many years auditor of Wake county.—Later: I note that Mr. Holding has undergone an operation for appendicitis.

### Two Interesting Sidelights

Mr. Wilder studied law under Judge C. M. Cooke and was long associated with that great legal master. Mr. Wilder is another who is versed in North Carolina tradition. For instance, with respect to Judge Cooke, he told me what is probably known to but few—that the middle name of Judge Cooke was "Mather," and that the Judge was a descendant of Cotton Mather of Old Salem (Mass.) fame. He tells of a monument ten miles above Louisburg to the memory of Matthew Dickinson, graduate of Princeton and first master of Franklin Academy, Louisburg, a school that was chartered, if not instituted, before the N. C. University was chartered. Dickinson had retired from teaching to study law at a country home. He had saved up several thousand dollars from a few years of school work—quite in contrast with teachers of the past century, except for a few brief years. He was an uncle of Cyrus W. Fields and of Donald (?) Dickinson, a member of Cleveland's cabinet. The Fields family had the monument erected. When the administrator of the young man's estate wanted to send the money to the Fields family he delivered it to Nathaniel Macon, who carried it to Washington and there delivered it to a senator from young Dickinson's own State, who on his return home delivered it to the legatees. I spoke of J. Vance Rowe in the last issue. But I

had forgotten that he was formerly a teacher down at Trenton and later ran a paper there for two years, which came to me at Clinton in exchange for the Sampson Democrat. He is a University graduate, A. B., plus law course. He has practiced in Aberdeen ten years and is now mayor and a candidate for judge of the Moore county recorder's court. He trained for the army but did not get across.

F. E. Flinchum is a successful Aberdeen merchant whom one can but like. He was born in Surry county, but was reared at Carthage, where his father and brother L. R. still reside, the latter being a candidate for county commissioner.

Mr. G. C. Seymour came from Georgia, but is thoroughly acclimated to the Sandhill section. He operates the Coca Cola plant. His brother, O. L., more recently came and is employed in the plant. J. W. Graham has long been a member of the Moore county board of education, and chairman of it for the last two or three years. He is a candidate unopposed to succeed himself. J. D. McLean is president of the Aberdeen Hardware Store, G. C. Seymour, vice-president. Here one also finds C. M. Wilson, who has been a fixture in the store since 1921. Rev. E. L. Barber is the highly esteemed pastor of the Presbyterian church, Rev. Mr. Ball of the Methodist. The younger Blues operate the Aberdeen and Rockfish railroad, built by the elder Blues. At the S. A. L. depot I find two Chathamites as agents and telegraph operators—T. A. Burns and J. G. Farrell, while across at the freight depot there is Mr. Pennington who married a Pittsboro girl, but I have already tarried too long at Aberdeen.

### Cameron, Vass, Lakeview

Here are three as pleasant villages as one can find anywhere. One wonders what all the people living in the good homes at Cameron do till he realizes that he is in the heart of the dewberry country and that Cameron is probably the largest dewberry market in the world. Marketing facilities identical with the strawberry marketing system at Chadbourn exist here. Berries are brought in for miles and sold for the spot cash. It is estimated that Cameron will ship 350 to 400 carloads of dewberries this season. Vass is also to have the Chadbourn marketing system. It runs Cameron a close second in shipments. Down in the business section of Cameron one finds Mr. H. P. McPherson, a native of Cumberland, but for forty years a merchant at Cameron. Mr. McPherson is a considerable planter as well as merchant. It is interesting to note the enhancement of land values in the Cameron section in the last third of a century. Mr. Cameron and his brother-in-law, Alex Turner, bought an old farm in 1902 which was then assessed at \$750. Until last year when the assessment value was reduced 25 per cent, the listed value had been \$21,000 for a number of years. Cotton, dewberries, and tobacco are the money crops. Mr. and Mrs. McPherson now own the whole plantation. Mrs. McPherson was a Miss Leach.

And here is Mr. L. B. McKeithan, another merchant, farmer, and also fertilizer dealer. His farm consists of 400 acres. His father before him was a merchant. He went down to Bladen for his wife—a Miss Ritchie of Clarkton.

W. G. Parker is telegraph operator at Cameron and a dewberry farmer. He came here from Wake 23 years ago, where he married Miss Margaret Borse. Mr. W. A. Muse is S. A. L. agent. He is a Moore county product, judging by his name. He and Mr. Parker have been together there for twenty-three years. At their store you will find Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Phillips. Mr. Phillips seems to be somewhat of a trucker as well as merchant, as he had home-grown asparagus for sale, which proved to be very fine too. I note that he has successfully introduced strawberry culture into his community.

At Vass is a cotton mill. It was built by Mr. A. Cameron, deceased, before he organized any corporation. It is still managed, and largely owned, I believe, by members of the founder's family. His son Alton M. Cameron is president; W. B. Graham, a son-in-law, is secretary and treasurer. Attorney W. D. Matthews of Southern Pines is another son-in-law.

Mr. Angus Cameron, the founder, made his fortune  
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