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OUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR!

Butler Writes Interestingly of Pine Bluff, Past and Present



WHEN Samuel Jackson hunted out the spot in which to locate the Happy Valley for Ras-selas, Prince of Abyssinia, possibly the only reason he did not select Pine Bluff is because he did not know of the place which was to be created some considerable time after Johnson had delivered his "unclouded soul into the hands of his Maker." Pine Bluff is a scant ten miles down the road from Pinehurst, a road scant ten miles by measurement, and somewhat shorter by being a good road. When it comes to measuring distance I like the European plan. You ask a man over there how far it is down to Hoop Pole Center and he tells you half an hour, or to Wagon Wheel Gap it is an hour and a half. ¶ That is really what you are after, for if he says it is ten miles you can not tell whether it is ten miles that will take two hours of toiling through mud and over rocky impediment all the way, or twenty-five minutes of the smoothest travel on a macadam road you ever knew. ¶ Pine Bluff is about twenty-five or thirty minutes from Pinehurst if you motor with due regard for the law, and not quite so far for the man who thinks he is in a hurry to make ten miles in ten minutes and then stands around wasting half an hour to catch up with himself. ¶ I find on digging in the archives of Sandhills township that John T. Patrick designed Pine Bluff for a retreat for the men who sought to escape the bustle and excitement of Southern Pines in the early day when S. P. was in its less staid and dignified infancy. To do the thing right he put the town about a mile from the railroad, which resulted in having the station a mile from the town. At the station Patrick built a dam which made an attractive lake, and also gave an excuse to set up a printing press to print cheerful things about the Sandhills for distribution among the unbelieving Pharisees of the Baked Bean Provinces of the North Atlantic coast. Most folks will listen to a man with curly chin whiskers, and Patrick had a nice bunch. So presently some strangers were observed coming up the walk, and Col. Patrick chased the dog under the porch and told the newcomers to make themselves at home, and then Pine Bluff was begun.

A history of the deluge which forgot to mention Noah, would be just about as complete as a history of Pine Bluff that overlooks the Packard Brothers and J. W. Pope who have been so long and substantially identified with the town that to me Pine Bluff seems to be in the class with Gaul in Caesar's day, divided into three parts—Pope, Packards and the other part. Since Dr. Achorn came two more parts have to be added, for the doctor is an element also, which is likewise the case with the Port of Blue's Bridge, for although it is a couple of miles out of the

Village, every thing down that way is Pine Bluff until you get to some other place. And even if the Port of Blue's Bridge does happen to be the foremost Community of the Maritime Territory it is as justly and fully a part of Pine Bluff as the Philippines or Alaska are a part of the United States. ¶ Dr. Achorn discovered Drowning Creek and he rechristened it Lumbee River and staked it out with all its courses, deviations, stipes, winzes, lodes, etc., from the head of canoe navigation down to tide water, and he set a crew of marines to clearing it for navigation and so you could get a good view of the nooks where the moccasins might lie before the moccasin gets the first word. Those who have taken a canoe trip down the river tell of the charms of the stream, which is certain one of these days to become famous for its romantic pleasures, for it winds among a succession of interesting bits of scenery, fertile farms and thrifty towns and little villages, reaching the sea in the broad estuary of the noble river below Georgetown. ¶ Well, Col. Patrick marked off a place for Pine Bluff, and in it he included one of the finest big springs in the Sand Belt, probably to call attention to the fact that while North Carolina may be a dry state as the word is sometimes interpreted, the fine water of Moore County serves a certain drinking purpose, so the path to the Pine Bluff spring is kept well beaten although the town to be in style, has a system of water works. Yet good society likes to go to the spring, just as they do in other places such as Saratoga, French Lick and Baden-Baden.

Pine Bluff is a quiet place. The railroad whistles are a mile away. No shop whistles disturb. Now you know what happens to a town like that. It just attracts folks who like a clean, restful, quiet place where they can make homes to suit themselves, and where they can be sure the atmosphere is a prolonged undisturbed pastoral calm. You may think that mighty few of that sort of people are on earth, but you need to guess again. Pine Bluff made a hit from the start. Lots of mighty good people like a place where they can lie back on the grass and look at the clouds and watch the birds fly overhead; a place where not an earthly effort is required, and Pine Bluff meets the requirements to a thousandth of an inch. The town has grown up along the theories of restfulness. It has built pretty cottages, which are designed for homes. It has two or three hotels which provide on a scale which is neat as a pin, unobtrusive as you can imagine, and good enough for a king, or a pair of kings if you insist. You don't have to go down to the station to see the trains come in at Pine Bluff. They come in without any local help, and most of them whip right past the station without even taking off their hats. Fact is that Pine Bluff in a way scorns the trains. The folks who get there have no great need to think about trains again until it is time to be mustered out in the spring or furloughed home, and those who have not yet ar-