

Walter Hines Page: Southerner, ambassador, writer

Walter Hines Page of Cary was one of the first Southerners after the Civil War who believed that "sectional hostility was needless" and that North and South should be reconciled. He was also one of those Southerners who had to leave the South to achieve success — and yet who always remained a Southerner at heart. Journalist, editor and novelist, he became United States ambassador to Great Britain in the latter years of his life and was one of three Americans to be honored in Westminster Abbey (the other two were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Russell Lowell).

The full story of Walter Hines Page is told in a new book from the University of North Carolina Press: *Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American 1855-1918* (457 pp. \$15.95) by John Milton Cooper Jr., professor of history at the University of Wisconsin.

As editor and journalist, Page said what he thought. For a short time he edited the *State Chronicle* in Raleigh — and wrote the famous "mummy letter," for which he was criticized bitterly by the Old Guard and praised highly by his younger readers.

During 1885 Page berated North Carolina politicians as "warring, snarling, malodorous and pestilential little men" and North Carolina preachers for "preventing constructive work with the problem of liquor by preaching prohibition." He wrote that North Carolina was "the laughingstock among the States" and that "It is an awfully discouraging business to undertake to prove to a mummy that it is a mummy" — but that the "mummies" were opposed to new ideas, that the young people were leaving the state because "the mummies were driving them to drink."

When he was growing up in Cary (then called Page's Station), Page was sometimes embarrassed because his father, a hard-working saw-mill operator and turpentine distiller, was not an avid secessionist and did

not consider slavery a sacred institution. Young "Wat" was more interested in books and more influenced by his gentle and literary mother. After education at Bingham School and Trinity College, he taught for one summer in Chapel Hill — and his future wife was one of his students.

At one time Page considered entering the ministry — and his later zeal for reform may well have grown out of this early enthusiasm. Page observed how many North Carolina young people left the state for better opportunities elsewhere and decided that he, too, must follow this course. So he got a newspaper job in Missouri and later wrote

books

—By WALTER SPEARMAN—

Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American 1855-1918
by John Milton Cooper Jr.

Bargaining for Supremacy
by James R. Leutze

for *New York World* and the *Boston Post*, moving from there to the editorship of *The Atlantic Monthly* and later of *World's Work*, where he was free to express his political and social ideas.

Always concerned with racial problems in the South, he declared: "There is no undemocratic trait in the Southern people that is not directly accounted for by slavery and by the results of slavery." Wanting to write about the racial situation for the *Atlantic*, Page took a six-week trip through the South in 1899 and wrote his wife: "I threw every subject out of my mind but the Negro. I may turn black before I'm done!"

His keen interest in books led Page to join Frank Doubleday in forming Doubleday, Page and Co., which published Ellen

Glasgow, Booth Tarkington, Frank Norris, Booker T. Washington and Theodore Dreiser, as well as Thomas Dixon's Southern-slanted *The Leopard's Spots* and *The Clansman*. Page's first novel, *The Southerner*, was published in 1909 under a pseudonym and was, in many respects, purely autobiographical. It also gave Page a good opportunity to express his ideas about the South.

Despite the fact that his life work was established in the North, Page never really got away from the South. He frequently came back to North Carolina, maintained contact with his close friends, Charles D. Melver and Edwin A. Alderman, and aided them as much as possible in their drive to improve education in North Carolina. One of Page's most famous speeches, "The Forgotten Man," was given in Greensboro in 1897 to kick off the educational campaign. He insisted that North Carolina must develop one of the state's most neglected assets, the people themselves, by providing the education they needed.

Page saw his chief role in life as a post-Civil War conciliator between the North and the South. Not only did he encourage the Northern publication of Southern writers, but he worked extensively with the General Education Board (supported by Northern money) in improving race relations, economics and health in the South. His interest in politics led to his early backing of Woodrow Wilson, Southern-born president of Princeton University, for the U.S. presidency.

Author Cooper has organized adroitly the essential biographical facts about Page and has presented them to spotlight Page's role as an interpreter between the North and the South.

The relationship between the United States and Great Britain is seen in another light in another new book from the University of North Carolina Press:

"Bargaining for Supremacy: Anglo-American Naval Collaboration, 1937-1941" (328 pp. \$17.95) by James R. Leutze, associate professor of history at UNC and acting director of the Curriculum of Peace, War and Defense.

Professor Leutze recounts the struggle for naval leadership between the two countries in the days preceding and during World War II. Each nation, he points out, wanted aid from the other in the war against Germany and Japan; but each nation also was desirous of arranging the cooperation in order to come out of the war in a superior position. The juggling for power and position underlays all the conferences between the two nations, all the strategies of deploying naval forces and most of what sometimes appeared to be a holding back of genuine cooperation. Professor Leutze has taken a technical and complicated situation and presented its complexities in a logical and intelligible fashion so that the book never lacks coherence and readability.



These alert and purposeful youths are the H-Bombs. From left to right are Mitch Easter, Chris Chamis, Robert Keely and Peter Holsapple. This New Wave rock 'n' roll quartet will perform all original songs at 9 p.m. today in Great Hall, Carolina Union. Tickets are 50 cents. The H-Bombs travel to New York City for concerts Dec. 6 and 7 at Max's Kansas City, the club where Lou Reed's Velvet Underground got started. The H-Bombs will record next month on the Ork label in New York. Photo by Hillary Neufeld.

Black students must maintain identity

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but this is just not true," she said. "I have been brought up with values from a black culture, so I am different from someone with a white background."

Gordon Cureton, speaker of the Campus Governing Council, said he believes blacks must struggle for identity in a population that is mostly white. "You have to fight to maintain your identity at UNC," Cureton said. "To receive only an education from Carolina without becoming more aware of your identity is to lose out in the long run."

While segregation in some areas of the University community remains well-hidden, membership in fraternities is clearly divided along racial lines. Only one or two fraternities attract a

biracial membership from year to year.

In a February 1977 article entitled, "UNC fraternities and sororities: the last bastions of white supremacy?" several representatives of the Greek community said both blacks and whites are given an equal chance to rush a fraternity. However, students rarely pledge a fraternity dominated by the opposite race.

One fraternity member said, "I think the South has carried on traditions much more successfully than the North and they've fought change every

step of the way. People who join fraternities are the type that carry on these traditions."

Harold Wallace, student affair's director of special programs, said many black students encounter problems in the classroom.

"In recent years I have heard more complaints from blacks about problems with white teachers, and I believe there is some substance to these complaints," Wallace said. "This makes black students reluctant to receive help from white professors."

Tradition lives on in rural family

Continued from page 1.

logged Etta's eyeglasses.

Her duties included scraping the bitter green goo called skimmings from the top of the simmering juice.

Joe, red-faced from the steamy heat, was intent on turning out a fine batch of molasses.

"Old molasses makers used to claim it took 16 gallons of syrup to make one gallon of 'lasses," he said. "It takes 10 for a gallon of ordinary — 12 for thick. Sometimes, some juice, h't don't take as much boiling as the others. H'ts all in the juice. Some you can make 'lasses out of and some will burn."

"Old-time silver-drip (cane) is the best. I wouldn't make 'lasses out of nothin' else. You can tell silver-drip growing in the field as it's heading out. It'll just come up in the field and flop over — heavy-headed."

Just about mid-afternoon, Joe lifted his long-handled, flat skimmer to the wind, and thin, hairy strings of syrup curved in the breeze. He called this test "hairing off." It meant the molasses was ready.

The first batch oozed through the side-spout and strained through old sheet cloth into a five-gallon lard can. A length of cane dipped into the pal brought up a thick glob of syrup — black as midnight.

Tasting brought something akin to a smile to Joe's stolid face.

"With silver-drip, you can have cold juice at one end and 'lasses at the other all day," he said proudly. "I could make 75 gallons in a day if I had the juice."

Last year, the Millards made around 100 gallons and sold them for \$3 a quart. Local people and occasional tourists come to their farm each year to buy the molasses.

"Five years ago, they went for six to nine dollars a gallon," Joe said. But some people would buy the molasses and turn around and sell them to make a profit. "The man that makes 'em ought to get something out of 'em."

Commercial makers, Joe said, can make as many as 500 gallons in a day by using motorized equipment and by leaving the fodder (leaves) on the cane. This makes for bitter molasses called "throat-skimmers."

Joe's molasses is well known throughout the area. This day, a couple from Florida bought 12 jars — Christmas gifts for folks back home, the lady said.

A Green Creek farmer who brought the couple to the Millard's backroad home said, "These 'lasses are good. These other people, they make 'em to sell, not to eat."

As the afternoon wore on, Joe talked and skimmed and mixed. Moving slowly into memories, he chewed over each thought and word. His pocketwatch, pulled from his Red Camel overalls, read two o'clock — his time. Daylight savings time is one modern idea that Joe just won't mess with.

"Back in the '30s, when I thought it was law, I set my watch by it," he said. "But I found out it wasn't and hadn't done it since. Didn't like plowing and then breaking at 10:30 and then going back in the heat of the day. They say these highfalutin' people did it, so they all could play golf an extra hour. Not all laws are meant to be followed."

The late afternoon sun cut through leaves tinged autumn gold and red. Etta funneled heavy, dark molasses into the last of the orange juice jars collected from neighbors.

Ida and Mattie had gone through a stack of cane as high as the mule's head, and now Joe was running low on juice.

One of the family's 10 cats lounged under the

homemade wheelbarrow. Dolly, the cow, waited to be milked down at the barn, and all hands were getting hungry. Usually, Etta said, she fixed cornbread and milk for lunch on a workday, but today went so quickly and busily that no one thought much about eating.

One task remained before the last of the sweet juice flowed through as molasses: water had to be drawn from the well at the house and carried 50 yards or so to the pan. Gallons had to be on hand to keep the pan's sections filled as the final batch moved down; otherwise, the pan would burn up, Joe said.

Slowly, the family tended to the last of the molasses-makin' for the year. Jars of gold-black 'lasses vouch for their labors — jars that will be empty by this time next October, their contents sopped up by so many homemade biscuits in the winter to come.

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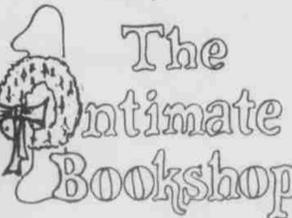
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