THE PILOT

PUBLISHED EACH FRIDAY BY
THE PILOT, INCORPORATED
SOUTHERN PINES, NORTH CAROLINA

1941 JAMES BOYD 1944
PUBLISHER

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

ONE YEAR - - - - - $3.00
SIX MONTHS - - - - $1.50
THREE MONTHS - - - - .75

ENTERED AT THE POSTOFFICE AT SOUTHERN PINES, N. C., AS SECOND CLASS MAIL MATTER.

THE REAL ISSUE

There come times, these days, when it seems as if it were vitally necessary for our country to do about a dozen things at the same time. Each one seems as important as the others. The whole thing exerts an almost paralyzing effect on the mind and will. The terrific need to do so much, to make such tremendous decisions so quickly, breeds a feeling of utter helplessness. On countries such as ours which are the only ones capable of acting, the weight of responsibility is overwhelming.

When we place against such a background some of the leaders of today, our hearts quail before their seeming smallness and inadequacy of vision, while the division of opinion among the stronger spirits adds to our feeling of insecurity.

Right now four questions are uppermost in men's minds: the Greek question, the German question, the Russian question, the atomic bomb. Each one is of terrific importance and the time element enters vitally into each one. How can we decide them all, how can we find the experts, even, to work on them, how can our few top men possibly study so much, so quickly?

The importance of each of these questions, as well as all the others that crowd into the mind, is unmistakable, yet, actually, each one is less important than the great over-all question behind them. They are merely the trees in the wood that distract us from the real issue: are we to have internationalism and peace or nationalism and war?

It is time for America to stop, and look and listen. Why should we be called upon to take over the various strategic points in the world's periphery? Why must we feel obligated to take Britain's position as guarder of the world's highways? We are rapidly being pushed into that role, and some Americans are welcoming it. Henry Wallace, with no word of the United Nations, wishes us to lead a crusade for a world-wide version of the Common Man. That that individual direly needs a crusade, or anything else, to get him on his feet is a basic fact, but America already has one crusade started and that is the one to concentrate on.

The crusade for the UN and the Atlantic Charter is getting weaker daily, but it is still a going concern, and its successful conclusion will make all other crusades unnecessary. This is the body to police the world, to make all ideologies subservient to its own great cause, to bring to the Common Man his rightful heritage of freedom from want and fear and misery.

Let us insist that, if the UN is "not ready" to help us as our president stated, it be made ready without more ado. Let us cease being so terrified of immediate problems that we neglect and ignore the only means by which those problems will be brought to an end.

The way of the UN is the only way to peace. Let us insist that our country follow it.

THE WHITE CLIFFS

"Howling Gales Lash England": This is the headline describing the latest ordeal being suffered by the tight little isle. The story beneath tells of hurricanes, or rising tides and critical water shortage in London.

The English were superb when they rose as a man in response to their great leader's words and withstood the worst the Nazis could inflict upon them. In "blood, sweat and tears," they carried on, while in the clouds over London their boys fought the Battle of Britain. The saga of those boys will be sung as long as deeds of bravery are told.

There is a saga of bravery being played out right now, of moral and spiritual heroism, the equal of any in the history of gallant deeds that makes up the tale of Britain. This latest Battle of the Weather is the smallest aspect of it, simply the hateful background that makes perhaps an appropriate setting for the moral struggle through which England is passing.

It is hard for anyone but an Englishman to understand what their empire meant to Britain. One could safely say that every decision made, every question considered during the past century has been made against the background of the empire. How would such a step affect the empire. . . how would such a man qualify as regards the empire. . . these questions were always asked when great matters were to the fore. Now the change that started when the empire turned into the Commonwealth has during the past few months, assumed a rapid headlong pace, until the whole structure seems to be on the verge of crumbling.

While this was going on abroad, at home equally great changes were taking place. Earth-shaking decisions were being made in Britain's whole approach to domestic and governmental problems. And while this was happening, a coal famine hit the island at the same time as the coldest weather ever known. Blizzard after blizzard swept the country-side. And now come the hurricanes.

And what have the British been doing all this time? Perhaps the best way to describe it is to answer: "just what you would expect." With mouths tightly shut, they have taken up another hole in their belt and are plugging ahead.

Two recent letters from England, written during the coal strike, illustrate their attitude. One housewife writes

"We are in some ways unfortunate because we do so many things by electricity: cook, heat water, etc. But we have been able to get enough coke for one fireplace and do our cooking there. The saddest thing, to most of us, is the awful setback this is to our very creditable export drive and to our production in general. However, the country did need waking up and a real shock like this may do a lot of good."

The other letter writes of the cold. "We were very lucky," it starts, "We got into our new, (though really so ancient!) house long enough before the strike started so that we got it well-heated and dried out. Otherwise I really think our walls would have turned into solid blocks of ice, they were so damp. As it is, it is so cold here that if you spill water on the floor, it freezes before you can wipe it up. But all this purely local discomfort is incidental, in most people's minds. We are watching with such anxiety and interest to see how the great questions of today are to be worked out. Britain's position has changed and will change still more. Everyone realizes it and is ready to play whatever part we shall be called upon to perform in the great task before us all, of rebuilding the world into a better place."

With such spirit as that is it any wonder that Englishmen have led the world so long? Does anyone think for a moment, seriously, that they wont keep right on helping to lead it, helping to "rebuild the world into a better place?"

The Public Speaking

Editor, The Pilot,
Southern Pines, N. C.
My dear Mrs. Boyd:—

I have carefully read the editorial: "Referendum?," in last week's Pilot. It is apparent that the writer is standing with one foot in a beer-barrel and the other on the mountain of constitutional democracy, which, you'll have to admit, is some feat.

While it may be difficult in the present situation, to divorce the present issue from the liquor question, it is not agreed that the efforts of the citizens to reassert their right of suffrage are wholly influenced by their convictions on the liquor problem. There are wets as well as drys in this camp.

I have found no one, wet or dry, who denies that the will of the majority is being flouted in this matter. In effect, those who, by suffrage of the people, find themselves in temporary authority, are claiming, 1st, that they have the omniscience and infallibility necessary to determine the question, and the right to apply their own remedy regardless of the wishes of the people; 2nd, that the citizens (all of them, wet or dry) are peculiarly imcompetent to decide for themselves by constitutional and established referendum, just what is good for the county; ergo, THEY, by whatever means are necessary. will settle the matter themselves.

The original act, evil in intent and execution, denied to the people unfortunate enough to be citizens of Moore, the right of self-determination accorded by the Constitution and by the very act itself, while leaving the citizens of the other 99 counties with untrammeled rights of suffrage. Each succeeding postponement has constituted a separate and flagrant offense against the intelligence and dignity of every citizen of the county.

I do not know the present outcome of the matter, but I am convinced that such offensive conditions cannot prevail—not if our democratic institutions are to survive.

Sincerely yours,
R. E. Wicker

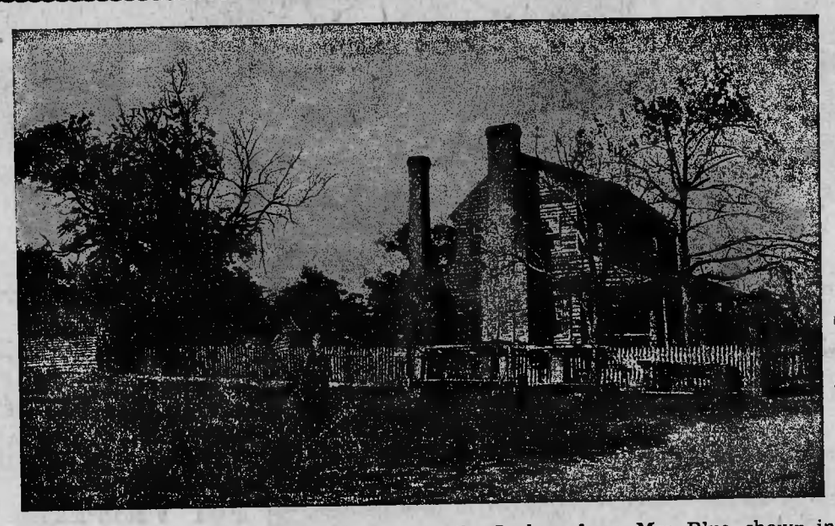
Editor, The Pilot:
Dear Madam:

I note in the last issue of The Pilot that all stores and business offices on West Broad Street, between New Hampshire and Pennsylvania avenues, are now lighted up at night. The Bank and my building appear to be the only buildings not so lighted.

This is to assure you and your readers that my building will be properly lighted upon completion of the remodeling process now going on, and I have so notified the President of the Chamber of Commerce.

I believe this is a good move for all concerned and I heartily concur in this program.

Sincerely yours,
EUGENE C. STEVENS.



Pictured above is the Blue house, now the Jonkers farm. Mrs. Blue, shown in the yard, used to wave to the Cameron girls when they walked by to school in Manly. On Sunday she would ask them in to rest on their way Home from Sunday school.

A Tarheel Tells About The Early Days In Moore County

One of the pleasantest ways a person can possibly spend an hour or so is to sit and listen to Frank Buchan tell about the early days as he recalls them in Moore County. The Pilot had that experience the other day, one of many such pleasant hours, and sat and chuckled and pondered and wondered to think of the great changes that had taken place, and at the same time, of the fundamental unchangeableness of our people and our countryside.

Early Schools

Our postmaster's earliest recollections start in Jackson Springs. He was born there in 1883, and when he was six, or maybe seven. he started to go to school. He doesn't remember too much about it, beyond being rather dazed and scared and that his older sisters took care of him. . . Frank was the littlest of the Buchan brood. But he does remember the teacher. His name was Mr. Perks, and it suited him. He lived along about where Pinehurst's Taylortown is now, and he walked to school and back every day. If a man who can do that isn't perky, we don't know the meaning of the word. Or should he have been called Hercules? Anyway, it must be between twelve and fifteen miles, one way. For this daily walk and for his school-teaching Mr. Perk was paid the munificent sum of $25.00 a month.

The family moved back to the Buchan stronghold of Manly in 1890 and there Frank's real schooling began. The building was about 18 by 24, he says, and into that building were packed as many as 75 children of all ages. One teacher taught them all, and they were squeezed in like sardines in a can. They all wrote on slates; the squeaking of the slates and the scuffling of the pupils produced such an uproar it was a wonder the roof didn't blow off.

The main thing Frank remembers about that school was the fighting. For the boys, that was the main recreation; in fact, there was no other. The town boys ganged up against the country boys: the town boys being those living in the metropolis of Manly, actually eight or ten times bigger than it is now. The country boys were the forlorn group who lived "out in the woods." Frank remembers that Frank Maples was one of them, and the David Cameron family was another. Miss Mary and her sisters used to walk back and forth to school from the old place out around the far curve of what we call Young's Road, a three or four mile stroll, each way. They must have passed the lovely old Sara Jane Blue Dower House, now the Junker place and changed beyond all recognition, on the way.

Next to the fighting, the teacher stands out in Frank's mind He was the meanest teacher he ever knew. Out of deference for possible relatives we forbear to print his name, but all former pupils will certainly remember it as well as our postmaster does. He licked every boy in school, given half a chance. Due to the over-crowding, if for no other reason, chances were plenty. There was always some kind of pushing and scuffling going on.

Frank remembers one time when three boys were called up on the platform for starting a rumpus. They had all been sitting together on one bench, and it was so short that the boys on each end had to sit, face out, with their feet stuck out and braced to keep from falling off. Naturally the temptation to turn the bracing into a backward shoving was irrestistible. First uproar occurred when, with perfect timing, they pushed back together and shot the boy sitting in the middle up into the air. Somehow order was restored, but the victim was out for revenge. He waited till the end-men were off guard, then took a deep breath and expanded himself in all directions, sending both his companions crashing to the floor.

That was too much for the teacher, and he hauled the three culprits up to stand before him. Eyeing them fiercely, he told them to: "Wait there," and left the room. Before they knew it he was back, brandishing in his hand a great pine knot. "Now," he said, "You can't fool me: I know which one of you did that. I'm going to count three, and then I'm going to hit the one who did it in the head with this pine knot. One—two—thr. . ." and the biggest boy lept from the platform. He tried to run, but the teacher caught him. Frank said he can hear now, and it makes him shiver to remember the boy's howls of pain coming from the little school-house, as the other children crept away when school was over.

Frank thinks the girls had an easier time of it. (We'll have to check with Miss Cameron on that.) He says they were never beaten, and insists they could get by with anything. His own big sisters saved him from many a whaling. They always took up for him and told the teacher if he tried to touch little Frank they'd tear him to pieces. That was when he was really little. Later on, when he was too big to accept such protection, he often joined the other culprits on the platform.

A rough business, schooling in those days, and what a long way we have come. Busses, electric lights, sanitary facilities, heated building, not to mention a chair for every student. And still we want more, and need more, too, for our children and their teachers.

Mailman Buchan

Our postmaster was mixed up with postal affairs, way back in them thar days, too; a fact of which we had not been fully aware before. It appears that he had the contract to carry mail on the Inverness-Manly route at the age of twenty, or thereabouts. Inverness was a post-office between Manly and Fayetteville.

At first the route went all the way to Fayetteville. The first carrier Frank remembers lived round about Pinehurst and walked the route, stopping at Inverness, Longstreet and one or two other hamlets on the way. Two weekly trips were made. The second man to handle it was rich enough to own a sorry mule; Frank remembers how thin he was.

He recalls well the postoffice at Inverness when he started in. It was in the bedroom of the two-room house, and the postman was an odd character. When Frank would bring the mail-pouch in he'd take it, unlock it and turn it upside-down. Out would fall the mail onto the floor, and the postman would get down on all fours and sort it into piles upon the bed. If there were any post-cards, he'd read them out loud. People would hear the mail was in and come to the door and shout: "Any letters?" and the postmaster would yell back; "No", or throw one out to the shouter, as the case might be. He knew everyone by voice.

He had a most destructive son, who would tear the pages out of catalogues when there was a picture he liked. The postmaster said he'd taken him out of school. "I bought him a book," he said, "and he just chewed it up. I figured there want no use to send him to school at that rate."

Frank told about another character who was much put out when his wife died. "She couldn't have picked a busier time," he said, "right in fodder-pulling time."

Changed? Not So Much

Pine-woods, little sandy tracks. one-room schools, two stills between Southern Pines and Manly. John McQueen holding a mission near Cameron, teachers legging it twenty-five miles a day and threatening their unruly pupils with pine-knots, and, later, the old mailman sorting his mail out on the bed. . . pictures of a time when life was simpler, more natural, harder, rougher, but when men's characters were as fine and strong, or as rough and mean as they are today; when the pines shone as green, when their soughing branches sounded like the sea, as they do now. And when Frank Buchan's chuckle was as infectious as it is now and his wit and humor as true. And when his understanding and his love for his own Moore County folks, was just as strong.

And that last might be said to be a two-way proposition. Like the two way mail-route our postmaster used to work.