Southern Pines Welcomes The New Season To The Sandhills

THE PILOT

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Moore County In Bed Of An Ancient Sea Has Thrived On Its Many Invasions

...ots, Lumbermen, Railroaders and ...sorters Built On Sand and Clay

By Bill Sharpe
(In State Magazine)

...e early morning a couple ... California traveling the road ... Carthage motored easily to ...minence of a slight ridge in ...e county when some strange ...onition led the driver to stop. ... the top of the ridge they ...d down upon an incredible ...—a great sea geographically ...y.

...om the dune upon which they ..., a beach of whitest sand ...ched, and in the distance ... the murmur of vast and ...ss water, carried to them on ...mp and salty breeze. But it ...an apparition. The murmur ... from the wind passing ...gh a forest of pines, which ... was hidden in a morning ... and the dune upon which ... stood, and the beach in front ... were the beginnings of the ...us Sandhills.

...of Sea

...is believed that the banks of ... are the modified cliffs fac... the ocean which once swept ... Piedmont North Carolina. ... seashore stretches across ...e from Sanford to the west... edge of the county and be..., and upon its heights in the ...al hardwoods of the Pied..., dwell the descendants of ...erite Scots, Dutch and English ...ers. South and east of the ...is the bed of the ancient sea, ... sparsely settled by Highland ..., but now teeming with a ...ization which has grown ... strata of turpentine, great ...w pine, steelrails, peaches, ... incongruously, the panicky ...sion of consumptives and ...comfort-giving qualities of the ...ised sand tiself.

...ore in some respects is a ...dleground" county, described ...ne native as a golden mean. ... addition to the division be...n clay and sand, the eastern ... of the county is in the Coast...lain, the western part in the ...mont.

...y Fine Streams

... altitude ranges around 600 ... and while the county has no ... large streams, it has scores ...mall ones, including Deep and ...er Little rivers, Drowning, ...e Governors, Bear, Cabin, ...ns, Deep, Aberdeen and other ...ks. Drowning creek, inciden..., is on the highway maps as ...ber river, a designation re...d by Moore historians, who ...the name was foistered upon ... by Cumberlanders and Rob...ians. The county's water is of excellent chemical quality and its physical quality is good except for moderately high turbidity in some of the larger streams.

Moore has a wide variety of soils—perhaps the widest variety in North Carolina, but it is not conspiculously fertile. It even includes a finger of coastal soil which points into the county in the vicinity of Cameron.

It contains a number of minerals, including gold and copper, but only pyrophyllite (talc) and sand, clay and gravel are com mercially exploited. Its economy is delicately balanced among agricultural, industrial and resort developments.

The countryside is dotted with small lakes and ponds, all of them manmade, and many of them originally used for mills. Thaggard's pond, the largest, was yielding bass and grinding grain long before the Revolutionary war.

Many Small Towns

It almost perfectly epitomizes North Carolina in having no large cities but several small towns. It is politically Democratic, has a mild weather with long growing seasons, and about 30 per cent of its rather scant population is colored. It has fair fishing, and barely fair hunting, and there is the typical North Carolina smell of tobacco and textiles in the air.

It originated in Scotch, English and Dutch settlements, but it had no colonial gentry to speak of, and its history was more one of hard work than of gory deeds. The county historian says there was scarcely a gentleman in colonial Moore, in the accepted sense of the word.

But with general statistics out of the way, this middle-state county appears one of the state's most exceptional and contradictory.

The line between clay and sand has had profound effects on the history and economic development of Moore. R. E. Wicker of Pinehurst, historian of the county's historical society, says that the first settlers of record were on the Deep River as early as 1747, in a section where Benjamin Williams, colonial governor of North Carolina lived and is buriedIn this section, too, is the Alston House, scene of a Revolutionary Tory-Whig skirmish.

Immigration into this northern portion of the county was fairly steady in the period 1750-70, and Carthage, the county seat, was settled in 1786. The clay belt continues to be the conventional farming area. It is the repository of the native lore of the county and its indigenous customs.

South Neglected

But the ridges of the sand, with their magnificent but unappreciated stands of virgin long-leaf pine, for a long time were considered worthless. This stand was the westernmost fringe of the great long-leaf belt which swept inland 150 miles from the ocean and extended to the Gulf. The pines occupied a country so forbidding that travelers passing through the country detoured around it, because the needle-carpeted floor of the forest did not even offer forage for livestock.

Then the first of many infiltrations to percolate into the Sands begun. Highland Scots entered through the "back door"—coming up from the Cape Fear Valley and following the streams, upon which they established small farms. According to Wicker, they probably did not come by choice. But desirable land to the southeast had been taken up, and the hardy newcomers grubbed out a hard living from the streams' banks.

They did not get along excessiveyly well with their clay neighbors. Almost to a man they had Crown sympathies, and the County swarmed with Tories. The notorious David Fanning organized them into bodies which harried the American patriots, and the county's Revolutionary War history is mostly concerned with the murder, arson and pillage characteristic of civil strife.

Land Taken Up

Building of the plank road coincided with a new surge in Moore's development. State-owned land in the Sandhills was now taken up in large tracts, often of 640 acres or more, and the great pines were bled of their resin, which was distilled and the turpentine hauled to Fayetteville.

Then came the railways.

A. F. Page, who moved to Aberdeen in 1881 from Cary in Wake county, headed a movement in 1885 to build a lumbering railway westward toward West End. His family ever since has been prominent in local, state and national history, and one member, Walter Hines Page, ambassador to Great Britain in World War 1, was one of North Carolina's strongest and wisest men.

The Page railway, eventually extended west to Asheboro was preceded in 1878 by completion of the Raleigh and Augusta Air Line (now the Seaboard). Somewhat later in 1892 John Blue constructed the 47-mile Aberdeen and Rockfish railway, and the Sandhills at last were bisected by modern transportation.

Lumber Boom

The lumber boom, overlapping the turpentine boom, was on, and cutting of the virgin forest proceeded rapidly, continuing until about 1910. To get the lumber out to the steam lines, lumbermen laid tracks for their tramways, using 4 x 4 lumber on cross ties of 4 x 8's. It was an era of speculation, suddenly shifting fortunes, and flimsy development. Manly as a shipping center and boasted 14 stores, 9 of which were said to contain bar rooms.

The northern end of the county got railways, too, and the Moore Central, which went into Cameron, was only recently taken up. The Norfolk-Southern was built in to Robbins.

This lumbering was depletion, not development, but indirectly it led to the more permanent prosperity of the region. In the early 80's, some unknown doctor in the north sent a tubercular patient to Manly in an effort to restore him to health. There he was visited by one John T. Patrick, industrial agent of the Seaboard, and Patrick, talking with his sick friend, either originated or picked up an idea which was to turn the word Sandhills from a description of despair to one of hope. The merits of sand were shortly to be trumpeted to the world.

Promotion Campaign

The railway commenced a substantial promotion campaign aimed first at aiding New Englanders. At that time, "consumption" was the most dreaded of diseases, and Patrick pictured, with perhaps more veracity than he intended, the Sandhills as a healing habitat for the diseased. New Englanders came in a slow but steady stream, settling along the railway track, and principally at Southern Pines. That stream of emigrants has never ceased.

Patrick had bought 570 acres at $2.50 an acre, which the natives probably thought was a rare bargain for them. It turned out to be a rare bargain for all concerned.

Dream Towns

The railway promoter laid out, on paper, some "dream" towns, many of which remained just that. Southern Pines, however, was one dream to become a reality, and into his plans Patrick built features which have blessed and cursed the settlement to this day. His blocks were standardized 400 feet tracts, each bisected by alleys leading into a 100-foot square. Ownership of the squares and alleys is how being disputed.

After Southern Pines, he laid out Pinebluff, also originally a health resort, then Roseland and perhaps others. Roseland flourished briefly, at one time boasting a newspaper, the Roseland Enter-

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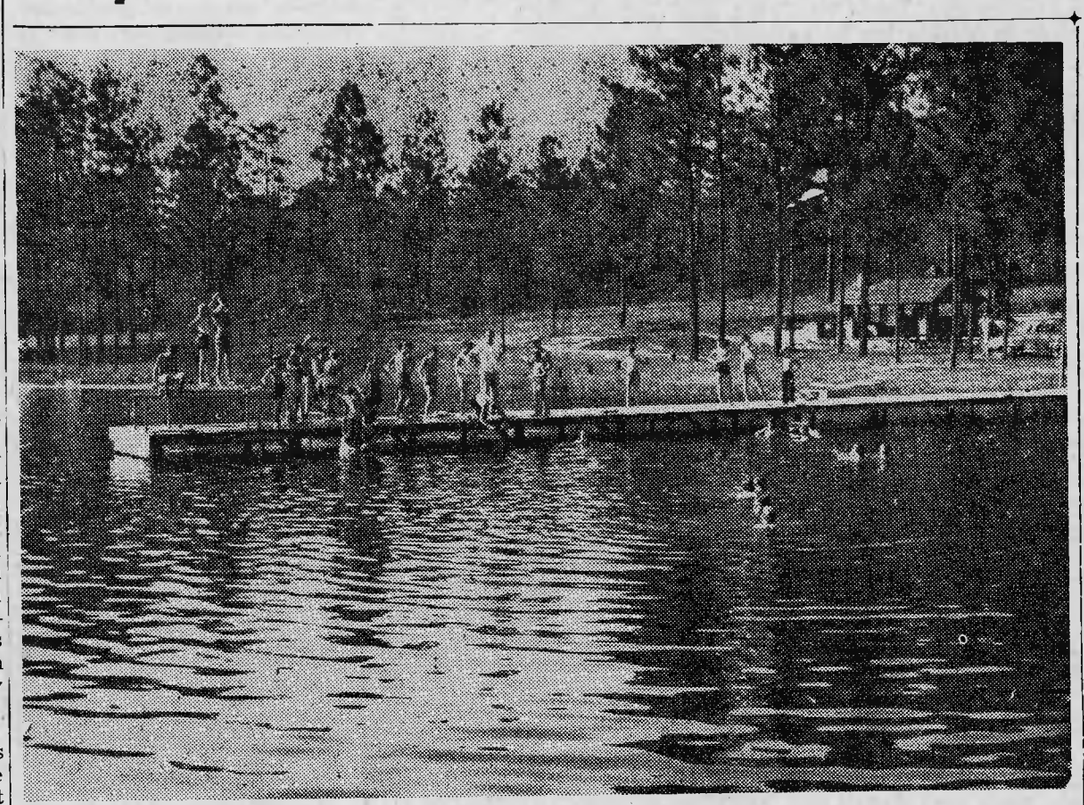
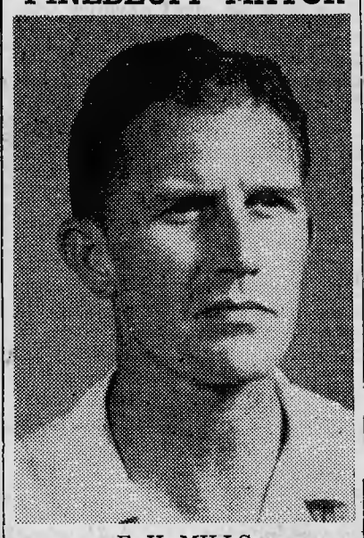
The Pinebluff library, owned and operated by the Pinebluff Li...y association, has a history dating back almost 50 years. The sign ... made by the late Hermon McNeill, noted sculptor, who had a ...e and studio at Pinebluff for many years.

People Have Moved To Pinebluff For Just One Main Reason

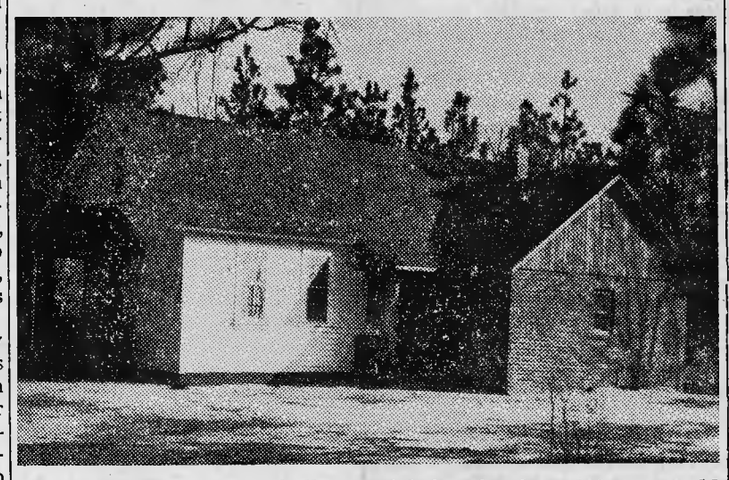


Beautiful Pinebluff lake, created in 1950 after the old lake on this site had been washed away. A bond issue voted by the citizens of Pinebluff made possible the building of a fine new dam and a lakeside recreation park. The picture above was made during the Moore District fall camporee of Boy Scouts in October 1951. (Photo by Emerson Humphrey)

PINEBLUFF MAYOR



E. H. MILLS



Pinebluff's new town hall, remodeled and enlarged from an old schoolhouse building.

Village Has Thrived On Immigrants Who Came "Just Because We Like It"

Practically nobody lives in Pinebluff who doesn't want to live there.

From the 1880's to the 1950's—the span of the recorded history of the community some seven miles south of Southern Pines on No. 1 highway—very few families have made Pinebluff their home through necessity rather than choice.

Citizens of Pinebluff grant that it is probably because nobody has had to live there that the town now or at least in the 1950 census has a population of 572, rather than five times or 10 times that number. But they'd rather have happy neighbors than a town 10 times its present size.

There are no factories at Pinebluff in which people have to work and so have to move there because of their jobs. No company maintains district offices at Pinebluff to which its employees are assigned, forcing them to move families to the community whether they like it or not.

Perhaps the only persons who have ever had to move to Pinebluff are church pastors who have been assigned there in the normal shifting course of their peregrinations from one charge to another—but if any of these have not liked Pinebluff they have not made it known. And today, one of the town's most respected citizens is a retired pastor who, with his wife, so liked the town that, after serving the church there for a number of years, returned later for a permanent home when the days of his active duty and travels were ended.

Enthusiasm

From the beginning, Pinebluff and its inhabitants have had an enthusiasm for their home town that has been termed inflated by the cynical but appears completely justified by the happy people who dwell spaciously and contentedly there.

John T. Patrick, original founder and promoter of the community in the 1880's and 1890's, did not limit his enthusiasm when, in a description appended to an 1894 map of the town, he described its qualities in terms not only of the United States but of the entire world.

"If you want to locate in the Southern States," the description on the map proclaimed, "recollect that Pinebluff, N. C., is the town that is being rapidly developed by Northern and Southern men and women of energy, enterprise and means. It is one of the healthiest locations in the United States and has as fine water as can be found on the globe, as pure as the Poland Springs water of Maine. ."

The water to which the founder probably had reference, according to an old-time resident of Pinebluff, is that of a spring now located on the property of the Pinebluff Sanitarium. This water was at one time bottled by Mr. Patrick in five-gallon containers and was used on dining cars of the Seaboard Air Line railroad.

Pure Spring Water

The water of the world-unsurpassed spring is not a part of the town's present modern municipal water system, but the water in the pipes of the modern system is rated by residents equally as highly. It is pure spring water requiring no chemical treatment. Regular checks by the State laboratories pronounce it pure as it comes from the ground.

While more crowded communities struggle to float huge bond issues for the expansion of their water systems, Pinebluff residents gaze fondly at their big 50,000 gallon tank that was installed in 1923 at a cost of between $4,000 and $5,000 dollars. Estimates of what it would cost to build it today run up to $50,000.

The 1922-1923 water bond issue of $8,000 not only paid for the tank but allowed installation of considerable footage of six-inch and eight-inch mains. It is typical of the Pinebluff community's combination of civic pride and civic apathy that, although the bond issue was carried and the water tank installed, there were only two members of the board of commissioners at the time, because it had not been possible to induce a third candidate to file for election to the three-man board.

As one of the two commissioners was frequently out of town on private business, the bond issue and management of this major improvement for the town was handled almost completely by the mayor and one commissioner. Pinebluff residents have been bragging about their water system for almost 30 years, but the election in which only two candidates for three offices could be mustered has been long forgotten.

Bigger Than Appears

Many a motorist entering Pinebluff from the North or South on No. 1 highway has noticed that, after passing the State highway city limits marker (including the notation that the town was declared a bird sanctuary in 1922), he drives for some distance through farmland, on the South, or woodland, on the North, before reaching an inhabited portion of the town.

Pinebluff, it seems, is bigger than he thinks. It is.

Within Pinebluff's town limits are farms, forests, one lake now and there used to be two, and, at least on the map, the outline for a good-sized little city.

Even the "built-up" areas of Pinebluff, where the streets have been cut through for years and there are street lights burning on all four corners of the blocks, there are square blocks on which there are only two or three houses. It is possible to live in the center of town and be out of sight of your neighbor.

This real estate promoter's nightmare is pleasing to Pinebluff residents. They enjoy the spaciousness and grandeur of a large town without the large town's crowding. For tax revenue the dispersion of Pinebluff's homes is not lucrative—but the town runs efficiently with a balanced budget. Town officials admit they sometimes dream of what it would be like to collect taxes on a normal number of homes around the blocks where mocking birds now nest in wild grapevines, but quickly realize that then would follow complexities of administration that would likely keep them meeting once a week instead of once a month. Then they relax.

Town Is Growing

Pinebluff, on the other hand, is proud of its development and growth in the past 20 years. From a census count of 289 in 1930. the town listed 330 persons in 1940 and then took its biggest 10-year jump to 572 in 1950. Spotted throughout the community are many new homes. Also important, practically every available structure, business, residential or nondescript, is occupied.

This contrasts with conditions of about 15 years ago when a town check showed between 30 and 40 buildings of all types vacant.

Though residents enjoy the uncongested dispersion of their village, every one prefers the prosperity, building and expansion of today to the conditions of 15 years ago. And nowhere does a stranger get a warmer welcome than in Pinebluff. In a greater degree than in most communities, Pinebluff accepts people as they are. Through the years, the town has known and harbored distinguished writers and artists, faddists and eccentrics, sportsmen and retired engineers, lawyers and doctors and seekers after health and happiness—and it has shown

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