

THE PILOT

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"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Where there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike."
—James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

Good All the Way

The heroic fight of Captain Carlsen, as he stuck to his post aboard the Flying Enterprise, will take its place in the saga of the seas. The great tale runs back, beyond the edge of recorded history, back to the Norsemen, the Captain's forebears, slipping through the high green crests in their long ships, themselves, doubtless, following a tradition of the sea set long before.

Ever since men stood on a shore and saw the waves running in and, way off, the thin line of the horizon, some of them had to get out there. Somehow, in a raft or a coracle or a ship, they had to go to sea. Some wanted to see what was over the edge of the line, some went adventuring, lured by tales of treasure, and some just wanted to get out there and see if they could make a go of it, see if they or that deathly-deep rushing water would win out.

Captain Carlsen has got all those things in his blood. Besides them, he has something that people tend to deprecate these days in favor of qualities that seem, perhaps, more up-to-date. For nowadays a sense of duty may be considered an old-fashioned virtue. It sounds poky in our high-speed, stream-lined existence. Our world that defies the go-getter, the "success," the man with an eye always to the main chance, this world tends to skip over that part of the Carlsen story. A few fools even tried to make out the whole thing was simply a play to the gallery and the fortune in story and movie contracts which, it was expected, would come rolling in.

But, to his eternal credit, Captain Carlsen has turned down flat all such offers of quick gain. No one would grudge them to him, if, later on, when he has attended to his pressing business, he should accept them, but the idea of capitalizing on his adventure is not what interests him. That is: the job. He had a job to do: to get his ship to port, and he did his best to carry it through.

That is the part of the story that makes recommended reading for our young people. The heroism of the captain and of Dancy, too, the British mate of the Turmoil, who went to join him, giving up his safe position to carry out his part of the job: that story rings the gallant chimes of all great deeds, stirring men's hearts, sweeping their souls with a wave of gratitude and high cheer. Devotion to duty lacks the gallant ring; there is no flutter of banners, no laurel wreath or sound of rolling drums in sticking to your job. But if the end had been otherwise; if the rescue had failed or one of those giant combers had swept from the slanting deck that sturdy figure, we believe that is the epitaph that Carlsen would have chosen: "He stuck to his job, he was a good man, all the way."

Hail To the General

Last week it was announced that General A. V. Arnold, of Southern Pines, has accepted the job of heading the civilian defense of Moore County.

This seems to call for some editorial comment, but just what direction it should take has us puzzled. General Arnold's last job, before his retirement, was, as we recollect, head of the American military government in Korea. That was, of course, before the present trouble started, though plenty of trouble was brewing. In fact, much of the general's duty concerned the establishment of the line between North and South Korea, negotiations that involved long and anxious and, as it turned out, pretty fruitless dealings with the Russians.

From being at the head of things in Korea to being at the head of things in the Sandhills might be called an anti-climax, a jump from a great big blazing bonfire into a frying pan, so small as to be almost invisible. You might say the General was slipping. We refuse to consider it. We believe General Arnold would be the first to claim that to do anything at all in Moore County is better than doing it in Korea, and while his problems may be on a slightly different scale, they are right there waiting for him. We went so far as to say that he'll have as much trouble with them, though, or that an ornery Tarheel is in the same class as an ornery Russian. Perish the thought. Though when it comes to thinking he knows the best way to do a thing and refusing to budge an inch from the way he has been doing it for the last fifty years, and his daddy and his granddaddy before him, we'll match a Moore County Scot for stubbornness against Stalin himself, and win any time.

The thing is, though, these Scots and all the lesser folks in the Sandhills who may not have the blue blood of the Highlands in their veins, (OK, boys; we've got our claymore honed up and all set!) all of us are going to be on the General's side. That ought to make considerable difference. We're on his side and the fact that he is taking on this county job, giving up a

good deal of his loved hunting and gardening, no doubt, to work for his adopted home, makes everyone feel very grateful.

There isn't a doubt that the people of Moore County appreciate deeply the fine civic spirit of this outstanding officer in assuming this county responsibility. We feel sure he can count on the utmost cooperation in his task of building up the civilian defense organization of the county.

Sweeping Begins At Home

"Colorful" is a good adjective. But there are colors and colors. There is, for instance, what is known as "true blue" or "all white"; then there is "yellow," and, again, there is that shade of ambiguous sound but definitely not ambiguous meaning: "off-color."

The Pilot, in writing of Van Sharpe, last week, called his career "colorful." Surely a good many colors can be traced in the varied tale of this promoter who seldom, it would seem, got beyond the promotion stage into the solid business he may have envisaged. Certainly that solid business did not develop for the people he was trading with. If some of them feel like adding "off-color" to the list of adjectives qualifying the career of Mr. Sharpe we could hardly blame them.

This Moore County promoter who seldom succeeded in the many businesses he undertook here, who has creditors galore, whose place of business has worn a federal padlock, who failed to pay his taxes, even at a time when he was in good financial shape: this man was given a job of assistant in the bureau devoted to helping the small businessman. The appointment is one of the most ironically scandalous ever to be made. Sharpe was, apparently, helped to this position of trust and responsibility, by several congressmen, by friends high up in Washington and by friends in Moore County. Some of these friends may have been motivated not so much by friendship as by pressure, which seemed to them irresistible. The well-known "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" brand of politics may have entered in, or more sinister motives may have been at work: somebody may have something on somebody else.

It is likely that the public figures involved in this affair are aware of the hornet's nest they have aroused in the protest raised over this appointment. But it is to be hoped that those not in the public eye, the people here in Moore County who were most responsible, may take note of the reaction here at home.

They say that a new broom is needed in Washington. Pondering this colorful off-color incident, we are moved to ask: is it possible that a new broom could be used with profit here in Moore County?

Birds of One Kind or Another

When an editor has to write on Tuesday morning the piece that won't be read until Thursday or even Friday, it makes things awkward. Here is the sun pouring in the window, the air full of spring scents and bird songs, but what is it going to be like two or three days from now? Even the weather man hesitates to say. (Or ought to and too often doesn't.)

It's taking a chance, anytime, to write about spring things in the middle of January. But that's the way it is in the Sandhills and what makes it such a special place. Spring comes looping along almost any time at all. And looper right out of sight again, of course, in a matter of minutes, but you forget about that on a day like this.

The most exciting thing about the last two or three days is the appearance of the birds. They have come in chirping fluttering masses, just when we were beginning to think they had gone for good. Yesterday they held a field day complete with running races, jumping contests and aquatic games, around the bird-bath.

Juncos appeared first: snowbirds, some people call them. They sat around the edge, their smooth dark chests like neat little bibs, their yellowish beaks shining. All drank decorously by turns. Then came three pine warblers, followed by a purple finch and a gang of big white-throat sparrows. Another kind of sparrow hopped around among the ivy leaves, carrying on, to an exasperating degree, the sparrow game of bobbing his head out of sight just when, Peterson book in hand, you were going to be able to decide what kind he was. Big, long-tailed, with a very red-brown back and distinct red-brown striped head. Fox sparrow? Vesper? You'll never know.

A sudden flutter and scatter of the littler birds and a big fat cardinal plumped into the middle of the water with a big splash. He spent hours there, ruffling up dusty feathers, ducking his head, shaking the drops in every direction. He must have let out a shout of "Come on in, boys; the water's fine!" for a bigger fatter to-who plopped down beside him as the bath overflowed in cascades.

Another bird who appeared we could not identify. He was short-tailed like a nuthatch, brown-backed, with some olive on his chest, and a thin nuthatch-type head. Maybe he was a nuthatch, but he seemed too big and his coloring didn't fit any of the pictures. We wished for the Pilot's Birdman.

Acting on that impulse we called him up. "How's birds out your way?" we asked. "Good," he said. "Much better than any time till now. One bluejay, cardinals, titmouses, (or did he say 'mice?') bluebirds, towhees; of course plenty of juncos and whitethroats."

That's the way he can be: always 'of course' and 'plenty' about the birds you've been gloating over.

"But have you got a nuthatch-type, with a brown back, olive throat, thin head, short tail, long beak, bigger than a nuthatch?" we asked. "A what?" he said.

"Never mind," we said. "Only we've got it," and quickly rang off.

Grains of Sand

Our "international scoop" on sent him away for two years. the heroic Capt. Kurt Carlsen drew lots of comment last week. . . . We published the story of his airwaves friendship with our local radio ham Col. C. H. Burkhead. . . . In the story was the information that the captain of the ill-fated Flying Enterprise was a bachelor—then later in the week, of course, the papers had all about his wife and two little daughters, at home in Woodbridge, N. J.

Our readers wanted to know "How come?" . . . And we asked Colonel Burkhead "How come?" . . . He says he drew the inference of Carlsen's bachelorhood from the fact that the captain, speaking from the freighter, referred to his radio as being located in his "bachelor quarters aboard ship" . . . Also, when the subject of raising children came up, the captain had little to say, with the comment "I don't know anything about that—I don't see enough of them!"

"I guess I just jumped to a conclusion," the colonel reports. "After all, we didn't talk much about married life or kids. . . . We talked about weather, foreign lands, different cities and most often, of course, about radio—since he's a radio 'nut' the same as I am."

Colonel Burkhead, who has hundreds of radio pals all over the world, chatted with Carlsen only occasionally. . . . Talking with ships at sea, he said, is just as easy as with a land station. . . . Sometimes, of course, if conditions aren't right you can't get them at all—but when you can they come in as clear as a telephone conversation with your neighbor.

Silas Nicholson, of Kinston and Southern Pines, was one of the readers of The State to respond to the request of Editor and Publisher Bill Sharpe for recipes on cooking that old North Carolina dish, "possum and taters."

Silas was born and raised in Halifax county, a part of Eastern Carolina famed for the excellent cooking of old-fashioned country dishes. . . . On "possum and taters" he "lows in The State this week, "It's simple."

"All you do is put the possum in an open baking pan (same one you used for the Thanksgiving turkey) and place it in the oven (top part, not the broiling part) and cook at a very low temperature until done, basting every 30 minutes with a barbecue sauce containing only vinegar, black pepper and plenty of red pepper. "The reason for the red pepper is that the possum is very fatty, and you have to have that red pepper to stimulate the digestive organs to take care of the fat, or else you will be sicker than no little."

The taters should be cooked at the same time, not in the pan with the possum, but just throw them in the oven with the skins on and remove the skin after they are cooked—in other words, they are just plain country-baked sweet potatoes, and will go might good with possum in place of bread.

"I believe you should warn your readers that it takes a mighty good man to eat 'possum and taters.' In fact, chances are that if he can't drink likker from a fruit jar, he maybe should lay off possum and taters."

And Editor Bill adds, "There was one thing remarkable about these and other possum hints sent in. . . . Not a single person headed a recipe with 'First, tree your possum.'"

The recipe given above reminds us of a curious fact about Eastern Carolina cooking—they don't have "potatoes" and "sweet potatoes," but "potatoes" and "Irish potatoes". . . . Unless it's specified the potatoes are white ones, it's taken for granted they are sweet.

As in rural Virginia, they don't have "milk" and "buttermilk". . . . It's "milk" and "sweet milk"—and if the farmer's wife says she'll deliver "milk" you're going to get buttermilk right out of the churn.

Or maybe times have changed—do farmers' wives churn any more?

Very sincerely,
E. T. McKEITHEN

To the Pilot.
At the start of this New Year, Engineer-Director of Highway SAFETY Tarvia Jones, wants to pause and pay tribute to the press and radio of our State for their kindness and courtesy in our never-ending SAFETY promotion work.

Unquestionably we have to depend on the radio and the press to keep our highway users impressed with the fact that SAFETY is definitely an individual responsibility.

The SAFETY articles in the newspapers of our State and the radio SAFETY warning and requests for every one to be SAFE, cautious and CAREFUL have truly been worth untold amounts in preventing many accidents and fatalities.

I have read these articles and heard these radio announcements pleading with the public to please be SAFE and have observed that by far the large majority of drivers have been heeding these urgent pleas.

Unfortunately the public looks at the box score, but fails to realize the tremendous increase in both cars and drivers on the high-

way today compared to other years, when checking the records percentage-wise would reveal that we have been chalking up appreciably better records since 1933. True, one life is far too much to pay for speed, recklessness and carelessness, but if it wasn't for the cooperation given our SAFETY DEPARTMENT of Motor Vehicles by the radio and press, I shudder to think of what our traffic toll would be. So again I thank our twin assistants for all they have accomplished, from the bottom of my heart, and sincerely ask that they untiringly continue with renewed vigor their efforts to help us make every person SAFETY conscious.

Yours truly,
H. D. (Tarvia) JONES, Engineer
Director of Highway Safety Division

The Public Speaking

January 9, 1952

The Editor:
The most important objective of the Moore County Historical Society is to gather and assemble historical data relating to the early settlement and development of the County. Those persons who have interested themselves in this endeavor fully realize the scarcity of available material and that wide search often uncovers but little. The great loss for the County historian was the destruction by fire of our Courthouse in the latter 1880's and the further loss of old church records which were usually kept in the home of some church officer and were carelessly put aside.

Other than from the few volumes saved from the Courthouse fire and the few church records still in existence, limited information can be secured from the Colonial Records, old land grants, local laws of the State Legislature and early newspapers which have been deposited with the State's Historical Commission and University Library.

Historians say the most accurate history of a period can be secured from personal letters of that period. With this belief, the University of North Carolina several years ago inaugurated a campaign to collect old letters to be placed in the University Library. This campaign was pursued with such energy and enthusiasm and success that there is now gathered in this Library probably the largest collection of this kind to be found in the nation. Historical researchers from all parts of the country now come to Chapel Hill to study this material.

Here in Moore County, there are, in many homes, letters and old newspapers containing information of great value to the historian. It would be splendid to give or lend, as a public service, this material to an institution for safe keeping and for the historical researcher. Fortunately there have been provided in this County suitable facilities for just this kind of thing. This is the James Boyd Room in the Southern Pines Library.

This is an appeal to our citizens to examine their storage areas, the attic, old chests and trunks, and remove these documents to a place of safety and usefulness. By so doing a great service will be rendered the public in enabling our people to study, at first hand, such original documents.

Furthermore, to have such material available will be of inestimable help to the Moore County Historical Association in carrying out its major project, the compiling of a history of early days in Moore County. As chairman of the committee in charge of this work, may I urge everyone interested in our county to help us in this search for the material we must have to make this projected history a reality. A card addressed to me or to Mrs. James Boyd, notifying of possible material to be investigated, will receive prompt and grateful attention.

Your newspaper can help. Won't you?



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