

THE PILOT

Southern Pines North Carolina

"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. Wherever 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.

The Sandhills and Foreign Visitors

Following up a recent editorial in which we suggested that Southern Pines take the lead in forming a host committee for foreign visitors who may come here under the program of the new U. S. Travel Service, we are pleased to report that the Service's director, Voit Gilmore, is enthusiastic over the idea, promised to help in any way he can and voiced the hope that Southern Pines might become a kind of "pilot town" in showing what American towns and cities can do to implement the government's extensive efforts to attract foreign tourists to the United States.

Mr. Gilmore says he has received expressions of interest and approval from several sources, and we feel confident that much more will be heard from the proposal soon.

The town Information Center is the logical coordinating agency for such a program of hospitality. This would involve registration of persons speaking

foreign languages who would be willing to serve as guides, participation by the three main civic clubs, all of which have international connections, and, we would suggest, the preparation of information sheets about Southern Pines and the Sandhills, in several foreign languages. These would not have to be elaborate—they could be mimeographed. No great number of copies would be needed and we feel sure that volunteer translators could be located to put a brief and simple summary of local information into the desired languages.

As for general hospitality, we have no fear that the Sandhills—which has been receiving and entertaining strangers from our own country for half a century—would not do a good job with foreign tourists now.

This newspaper will certainly do all that it can to make the proposed program a success.

What Protection from Official Laxity?

The "mess" that Moore County was allowed to get into in its handling of "vital statistics"—the registration of births and deaths—should be a lesson in the importance of official alertness and cooperation in responsible quarters.

A news story elsewhere in today's Pilot tells details of the situation and the shock of the county commissioners on learning from a State Health Department official out of Raleigh that Moore County has one of the worst records in the state in the handling of this important function and that 88 of the other 99 counties of the state had switched to a county-wide system of registration of births and deaths, rather than the township registrar system that had proven shockingly inefficient in Moore, but had been allowed to continue here, despite pleas from Raleigh that the system be changed.

The commissioners were as much in the dark as anybody else, until Monday. The state's suggestions, advice and pleas had evidently been shelved in the county health department, although the health officer told the commissioners Monday that he had, several years ago, consulted with the former chairman of the commissioners (not now on the board) and that the chairman had said that he favored the township registration system. There is no evidence that the state's request on the matter was ever presented to the full board of commissioners for their consideration.

Once the facts were made known to the commissioners Monday, by the official from Raleigh, they took prompt action to change the registration system.

Happy Ending to a Small Town Story

Two years ago, in an editorial, The Pilot said that it was "a tribute to the small-town world and to Southern Pines" that four young people who had hitherto been leading an aimless, wandering life of crime had been arrested here and were beginning to show signs of regretting their former ways.

"It is not beyond the bounds of possibility," we wrote at that time, "that their arrest in Southern Pines may be a turning point in the lives of these young people. At least they have had to sit still and think about their misfortunes—perhaps even begin to understand why they are in the fix they're in. The patient, shrewd and not unkind interrogation (by the late Police Chief C. E. Newton) to which they have been subjected may be showing them that there is a distinction between truth and falsehood and that they had better start facing the truth about themselves."

The young people's experience here did indeed work miracles with them. At their trial one of the girls was paroled into the custody of her mother and another was granted a parole not long thereafter through the efforts of the late police chief. The two boys went to prison for terms of more than 18 months (with time off for good behavior) and then the proof of the "miracle" wrought here took place.

First of the boys to be released from prison, a few months ago, came straight to Southern Pines, thinking of Chief Newton, the officer who had sent him to prison, as the closest and best friend he had in the world. He did not know that the chief had been shot dead in line of duty earlier this year. He was helped here financially and went on to Florida where he had formerly had friends.

Then, when the other young man, just turned 21, was released last month, he, too, came straight here and was shocked and grieved to find that Chief Newton was dead. Yet he found other friends who knew how much the Chief had done for the young folks. These new friends welcomed him and one family received him

One is appalled to think of the confusion that might have been averted if the matter had been brought before the commissioners, as it should have been, several years ago.

It is all the commissioners can be expected to do to keep up with current business brought before them, meeting once a month or occasionally more often in special session. Yet what had occurred in the matter of vital statistics points up the need for closer supervision of the operation of county departments, even those agencies like the health department that are units of State agencies, as well as being under county control.

The commissioners could hardly be expected to exercise such supervision personally—providing another argument, it seems to us, for instituting a county manager system which would provide an active, constant watchdog service on all county departments.

The vital statistics "mess" shows that a county department head who does not choose to reveal to the commissioners repeated requests by the state for reform in a situation involving his department can keep whatever is at stake a secret from the commissioners indefinitely—or until the state itself intervenes, as happened this week.

Although neglect might still be possible with a county manager digging into the operation of all county departments, it would seem to be much less likely.

Laxity in positions of responsibility is always dangerous. The vital statistics matter shows that it can't be assumed it does not exist in county agencies.

into their home while he was here and was influential in getting him a job in another town. He is now at work and living there.

It is the small-town, human interest angle of this story that fascinates us. For we doubt if the story could have been unfolded with quite the same happy outcome in any place but a small town—albeit this was a small town blessed with a police chief having extraordinary patience, kindness and interest in young people.

It was, in fact, not only the chief that influenced the outcome of the story. The arrest of the young people, while one of them was trying to rob the Catholic rectory, was made possible by citizen alertness in calling police on seeing suspicious actions and strangers in the neighborhood—that valuable alertness in the protection of the community that is so often lost in the crowds and impersonality of city streets. Then, too, other persons, in addition to the chief, took an interest in the young people while they were in jail here and in Carthage, awaiting trial. Such interest, such human contacts with persons who were concerned about them as individuals, as personalities, as potential good citizens, apparently had previously never been experienced by these rebellious and bitter young people.

"This case has shocked Southern Pines," said the editorial of two years ago. "It affords a close look at a type of young person that we read about in newspaper headlines and in more serious social studies: amoral, rootless, wandering and apparently unconcerned for the future. One wonders how many others like them there are on the roads."

And now we might add: one wonders how many others like them could be saved by the treatment accorded the quartet who were arrested here and who were at that time about as unprepossessing a group of delinquents as one could expect to find.

This story is indeed a tribute to Southern Pines.

"Timothy Tarheel! Long Time No See, Eh, Old Buddy?"



THE PILOT'S EDITOR SOJOURNS 'DOWN EAST' IN AUGUST

Maine's Coast: Rocks, Boats, Birds, a Wary Seal

Grains of Sand wouldn't be an appropriate title for this piece. There are precious few grains of sand in the place I'm thinking about. Instead: great rocks of granite, Maine granite.

Mostly it's grey, every shade imaginable of grey, with the shadows in the clefts deep purplish-black and the tops of the granite, where the sea and sun strike, bleached almost white. But sometimes the granite is pink: coral pink almost, and if you look closely you can see that it is full of tiny bits of shining mica or crystals, that catch the glint of the sun. There are long deep cracks in the pink granite undulating over the huge rounded rocks like snakes, sometimes for fifty or sixty feet.

The grey rocks form the coast of Frenchman's Bay. This is the bay, the next big bay from the Eay of Funday, down the coast—or "up," they'd say up there, because "down" always means "down East," in the opposite direction.

You find the pink rocks in only a few places on that coast. They are always dramatic, reaching like huge coral outcroppings out into the sea.

The best place to see them is at

a tiny fishing village to the east where the harbor entrance is flanked by headlands of pink granite. From their tops you look way down to the blue water and the clear wavering sea-bottom and, farther out, the lobster-pots bobbing. There are always gulls around the pink rocks, and sometimes clouds of tiny sandpipers swish by, so fast you can hardly see them. From the rocks you look back, to the right, to the tiny harbor of Corea. (Yes, that's the way we spell it down East. With a C, Jimmy.)

The harbor is pretty nearly empty now, in the day-time, but if you stay around you'll hear the lobsterboats' engines putting and soon, as the sun starts down, they'll be coming in around the point.

They pass Bar Island, lying across the entrance of this small harbor, and follow the turns of the narrow passage, past the hoeter, along the line of the near lobster-pots and one more little turn before they straighten out across the water for their moorings. The men are busy with their cargo, a mess of pots and cordage, dripping and slimy with kelp. Sometimes one of them will

look up as he goes by and raise his hand, the setting sun deep red across his face.

These Maine lobsterboats are very beautiful, besides being fine sea-boats. Though built by many different men and in different yards, they are always alike in their main lines. There is the same queuing bow, the same high grace to the sheer, the same slight swell followed by a long taper back to the stern. As you watch them now rounding the rocky point, sliding with such competence, such trim precision, through the water, you recall that the Viking ships had such flowing lines, and that it was on the coast of northern Maine that some of the Vikings are supposed to have landed. Is it impossible that they might have left a ship behind? Or even surprising that such ghost ships haunt the dreams and guide the hands of Maine shipwrights?

Several of the boats pull into the float where the long high ladder leads from the water up to the lobsterman's shack on its high stilts above. You can hear calls and talk and the dull "bong" of a pot hitting the deck or landing on the rocking float. The sun sinks lower, lower, bringing out deep blue shadows; the sky over the line of little houses along the shore deepens, while, over the opposite headland, clouds are turning copper-colored. Lights start coming on here and there. Under your feet, rounding and precipitous, the pink rocks turn fiery. The rolling wake of the last boat catches the light and glistens like molten gold. Time to go home.

Another time, you were watching water and rocks from the cabin porch high above the grey rocks of the bay. Directly across, the sun lay like a pumpkin in the western sky; heavy and static it looked at the end of its sunpath across the water.

It was the still time of evening. There was no wind. The tide was full in, only occasionally it lapped against the rocks. The only sound came from the nuthatches.

We were besieged by them this August. They were everywhere, especially in the firs. The big one, that grew so close to the ledge of rocks that you wondered what happened to its roots, was full of them. It shook from top to toe with little flutterings and fritterings. Every now and then you caught a glimpse of one of the birds, generally hanging head down at the end of a branch while he picked furiously at the cones above him. They were the red-breasted kind: extremely alert and fancy, spick and span. And busy, most likely, filling up for their long flight south. Sometimes you saw a larger bird and that was probably a cross-bill. There were quite a few of them around, though you didn't often have a chance to glimpse their odd criss-cross parrot-like bills. Obviously there are no bird or-

D'You See What I See?

See where that Denver policeman really did spy a safe being carried off in another policeman's car.

Might have saved the cost of his visit to the psychiatrist.

That police mess in Denver makes you think of the old days—that may still be going on—in New York City. Will Rogers had something to say about that. He said:

"It's getting so in New York that if a fellow is getting beat up he doesn't know whether to call the police or let well enough alone."

Science at Work

Among recently noted scientific projects in the news: An attempt to measure a "snail's pace"—how fast, or better, how slowly, snails actually do travel.

Checking the thickness of a "pea-soup fog"—does it actually approximate the density of pea soup?

How quick is "quick as a wink?"

In Sweden some scientists are smelling the breath of mice. 'Tis said the smell may be a clue to cancer under certain conditions.

Not an experiment, but notable in news of the animal world is the dog that died in England and was laid out in a black-draped coffin in the home of his master, while the city government considered erecting a monument to him.

Why? The dog had collected more than \$14,000 over many years, going around the city with a wooden bucket in its mouth, and signs attached, soliciting for such causes as flood victims and Hungarian refugees.

thodontists to install something elaborate in the way of braces.

Suddenly, down on the water below, there's a big swooshing splash. Something dove; there's just the big circle where it went down. It's the seal; it must be.

Of course, there are a good many seals, and they quite often may be seen swimming gracefully along to their ledges about a mile up the bay, but somehow it seems likely that it is always the same one who comes at about this time of a still evening to bask in the setting sun. You watch the sunpath and—there he comes. His sleek black head gleams as he slides his long snout up into the sunshine. He shakes himself and the drops fly off his grey whiskers. (You've got the glasses on him now, moving very, very quietly or he will dive instantly.) He turns over on his back and his furry tummy is like a shipling island. He lies there on his back, one flipper idly raised, the other keeping him steady. He looks asleep.

A cormorant, wings flailing rapidly, long snaky neck stretched forward like a spear, comes speeding through the air, heading for his roost on Jack's Ledge. Straight as an arrow he flies, looking strangely heraldic, like a creature in some old medieval bestiary. His course takes him directly over the seal.

The big black bird flashes in and out of the sun's rays and you follow his flight till he is a speck in the gathering dusk; then—the seal isn't there. So quietly you never noticed, he slid below, leaving not the slightest wrinkle on the water to show where he went down. Why did he go down: nothing to fear from a bird? Would he come up again? No answer to either question. The sunpath stays empty and though you search the bay's expanse, no dark, wet head cleaves the still, green water.

—KLB

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