Wednesday, June 27, 1984

Frank Page Was Prime Mover In Sandhills Growth

BY ROBERT MASON

\$10,000-a lot of money.

wandered down from the Virginia Virginia political establishment diggings. in Wake in 1824.

trade furnishing stringers for the businesses. pioneering Raleigh and Gaston Blue's Crossing became Abercourted and, in 1849, married somewhat earlier. Catherine Frances Rabateau, a Major spinoffs of the Page

Methodist. Five or so years later Frank Railroad, which became the either; when the Civil War broke railroad. out in '61, he formed no regiment The father was president when never misted his eyes.

Allison Francis Page, who had trying to get going again and to moved from a St. Joseph prospered before the Civil War raise a family. His family, if not but had fared no better than his his bank account, was substantial poor state in its aftermath, came when he took the Raleigh- national prominence, in 1899 from Cary to the Sandhills in 1880 Augusta Air Line cars to these to explore lumbering prospects. parts. His No. 2 son, 21-year-old He was 55 years old. Flings at Robert N., came with him. cotton and tobacco manufac- There were three younger sons turing had put him in debt and three daughters at home, and an older son, newly settled in St. ran the fledgling railroad.

Moving on was in his blood. The Joseph, Mo., breaking in as a first North Carolina Page, Lewis, journalist and freelance writer. back country to settle in Gran- and Robert erected a lumber mill ville County. There Lewis' son at Blue's Crossing in Moore did not suit him he brushed them Anderson was born in 1790. An- County and began feeding it trees aside and worked out his own derson acquired a 1,200-acre cut from a tract purchased from farm and 30 to 50 slaves. Also, he Archibald Ray, of the Bethesda ran a wagon train hauling market community. The father found a crops from Wake County, where boarding place, from which he he settled, to Petersburg, on the commuted to Cary on weekends, Appomattox River (which the and the son made do in two-room

favored as a port over Norfolk on After a year, Mr. Page built a the proposition that Norfolk was house and brought his family to too close to the ocean and hence Blue's Crossing. Soon he and the too far from commodities). An- four boys with him owned about derson's son, Allison Francis, 15,000 acres of timber stretching who was called Frank, was born southward and westward from their lumber plant. They opened

When Frank Page poked into logging roads and constructed the turpentine-drained longleaf tramways. In 1888 they pines that shaded mile after mile graduated to iron rails and fullafter mile of this region, he knew size steam locomotives. They exwhat he was about. As a young panded their mills and factories fellow he had got into the lumber and generated satellite

Railroad, then rafted logs down deen-officially in 1887, when the the Cape Fear River from Fayet- U.S. Post Office introduced an teville. In Fayetteville he had Aberdeen postmark, unofficially

strong-willed girl who had atten- lumber operation were the Page ded Louisburg Academy. Like Trust Company, a bank that the Frank, Miss Kate was a Great Depression ruined, and the Aberdeen and West End

bought 400 acres of woodland Aberdeen and Asheboro, was abeight miles west of Raleigh, near sorbed into the Norfolk and a rail line. He set up a steam- Southern and then the Southern powered lumber mill and founded systems, and lately has been born a village, which he named Cary again as the little Aberdeen and in honor of a Methodist fun- Briar Patch, chugging between damentalist who preached Aberdeen and Star. In 1890 Mr. prohibition. Frank hated rum. He Page retired from the lumber didn't think much of rebellion business and concentrated on the

and joined no company. He paid the railroad was chartered. allegiance to the Confederate Robert N. Page was secretarygovernment and sawed wood treasurer, Junius R. Page was when needed, but that was about superintendent, and Henry A. all. The South as it had been Page was general freight and "fo'de'wa''--before The War-- traffic manager. The final son, railroad was "the largest built by Frank C. Page, would add his During Reconstruction he was name to the letterhead. The first,

too busy to look back-too busy Walter Hines Page, having newspaper through a series of writing and editing positions to would become co-founder of a New York publishing house-but old Mr. Page worried about that one's husiness acumen

There was little doubt as to who President Page "employed a civil engineer," J.N. Cole wrote Within a month or so, Mr. Page in an admiring sketch of him, "but when plans of his engineer plans.'

Yet in 1898, Cole continued in "Biographical History of North Carolina," which Samuel A. Ashe edited, Mr. Page turned the Aberdeen and Asheboro over to his four sons in the Sandhills. Here they did well indeed, in civic and political as well as in business and agricultural affairs. Robert became the first mayor of Aberdeen, a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, a United States Congressman, and unsuccessful candidate for governor. Frank was appointed by Governor Thomas W. Bickett as the state's first proper highway commissioner soon after returning from France and taking off his World War I uniform as a major of army engineers. Junius,

nicknamed Cris, headed the bank and was a leader in introducing peach-growing to the Sandhills.

Cole judged Henry, state wartime food commissioner, legislator, and railroad executive, to be the ablest of the lot

"Had he chosen one of the professions, he would have doubtless come to an elevation few men attain," Cole wrote for historian Ashe. "Had he chosen journalism, he would have made a great editor. Had he chosen law, he would have taken rank with the masters. Had he chosen letters, he would have had companion with the great spirits of literature.'

Over in Raleigh, Josephus Daniels, editor of the News and Observer, was inclined to agreealthough he did not share Cole's elation that the 80-mile Page private capital in North-Carolina." Incident to an account railroad hauled. The story is who paid \$3.50 an acre for the bills. He will sit down and write a



Allison Francis Page

had surveyed as trees. He sought

how many acres were in a west

About 5,000, was the answer.

"I reckon any land would be

The Yankee took him up. Thus

Pages have lived to see that

was Pinehurst begun.

for all that?

of Judge Walter Clark's cam- familiar and maybe true. paign to be Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, the idea of creating a mild-Daniels wrote in "Editor in weather resort for people who Politics" (1941): couldn't afford Florida, explored

"Henry A. Page, president of the Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad, a railroad somewhat longer than it is wide, built by his father as a lumber road, and af- tract. terwards extended into three or four counties, took up the cudgels against Clark in The News and Observer. He was a brilliant writer. I sometimes thought if he had devoted himself to it, he would have been a more brilliant half. writer than his brother, Walter Hines Page. He wielded a trenchant pen and wrote interestingly and vigorously ... "

land increase in value many Besides eventually selling the thousands fold. railroad, the Pages sold the land that had nurtured the trees the to second-guess their forebears, fortune if they could pay their

timberland when all the value telegram of three or four hundred four-volume biography published was in the trees. The Tufts cash words two or three times a day. internationally. He too wrote of was pure bonus

Indeed, "Uncle Jesse" Page, a Methodist preacher back in Wake waste of it! Why, I never sent a telegraph in my life longer than for it has somehow pushed me County, based a sermon on the ten words. If I had two men like forward from the almost youthful transaction. Instructing a that I would get rich on my attitude that I had continued to congregation that everything telegraph line." God created was for man's foreseen use was found for it-and suddenly, lo and behold, a poor

region became one of the state's most valuable.

Josephus Daniels knew all the Pages. Robert was a groomsman at his wedding. As a young newsman in Wilson Daniels had gone to Raleigh at Walter's invitation to relieve him as editor of the State Chronicle for two weeks, and subsquently had assumed his chair. Allison Francis Page had helped him then by buying \$100 worth of stock in the Chronicle.

Mr. Page made considerably larger investments than that in Raleigh in his latter years. He built the Raleigh Hotel and Page Opera House. One day, Daniels said, Mr. Page paid him a call at The News and Observer, which Daniels had acquired and merged with the Chronicle. He brought advice. It was to devote less newspaper space to baseball and more to church news.

Upon Mr. Page's death in Raleigh in 1899, Daniels wrote: "Mr. A.F. Page was the best type of lumber kings in the South, but he was much more than that. He James W. Tufts, of Boston, with was an upstanding man of positive convictions and high character."

For all his grasp of commerce stumps that Allison Francis Page and ethics, Mr. Page could no more figure out his son Walter out Henry A. Page and asked him Hines than another North Carolina Methodist of his time, old Washington Duke, could fathom his son James Buchanan. And what would the Pages take Mr. Page recognized and appreciated his firstborn's brilliance, Daniels wrote in "Editor in worth a dollar an acre," Henry Politics." Nevertheless, "he replied, ready to come down by didn't think Walter knew a thing about a dollar. Walter had come on a visit to his father, who owned a telegraph line on his railroad out from Aberdeen. Mr. Page said, 'You know, if I had a man like Walt at both ends of my to Warren County, N.C., in 1874. But they have had little reason telegraph line, I would make a

Think of the extravagance and his father's death. It left him

assume that I held in the family," Walter Hines Page was Am- he confided to a friend. "It is a benefit, he said that after the bassador to the Court of St. severe shock to find that of a Sandhills pines were felled the James during the First World large group I am suddenly beland lay fallow until an un- War. His career is spelled out in a come the senior."

Washington Barracks.

"They sent for Carl, who was able to get an emergency furlough," Mrs. Patrick said. "He came to Southern Pines and was with his father when he died. I think he (the elder Patrick) was pleased with the development of developed as the then widely Southern Pines. It had running water, some paved streets, a lot of hotels and big houses."

The elder Patrick had been to visit his son and new daughter-in-law at Washington earlier that year. "He was a very strict dietician," she recalled. "There was no alcohol, no coffee, very little meat and you didn't fry anything, either. When he came to our house in Washington we just put the coffee pot away."

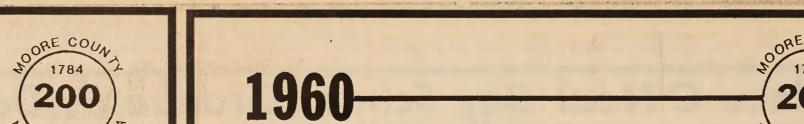
estate venture in Chimney Rock. has seven grandchildren.

'Daddy Patrick told me he had much." However, after his death thin.' she said a depression came along and it was necessary to dispose

of his land holdings. He is buried in Wadesboro. Mrs. Patrick's father, Henry Bilyeu, was one of the early noted horticulturists in North

Carolina. He has been recognized dewberry as a profitable crop. Bilyeu's father was a New Jersey fruit grower and the son grew up on a fruit farm, coming

MOORE COUNTY ACADEMY The Moore County Academy was established by legislative Bilyeu was a fruit grower there act in 1799. No records of the for 15 years but in 1890 came to school's operation survive, and



John T. Patrick (Continued From Page 1) pioneer settlers. He bought 20 acres east of the then town boundaries where he

had an extensive vineyard. This now is part of the Elks Club golf course. Then in 1903 Bilyeu bought 300 acres four miles west of Southern Pines which he acclaimed Pine Knot Farm. The crops there included dewberries and Delaware grapes which he introduced into Moore County.

This property, now known as the C. Louis Meyer farm, was Mrs. Patrick's home until about the time of her marriage to Carl, who she said, remained in the Army until he retired as a first lieutenant. He died in 1956 and is buried in Pinebluff.

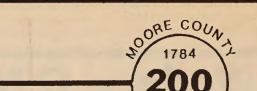
After her husband's death, Later in the summer of 1918, Mrs. Patrick worked as a Mrs. Patrick said she went to licensed practical nurse for some Chimney Rock to visit her 20 years. She and her husband father-in-law at the Esmeralda had four children, including twin Inn, in which she said he had a sons, Walter and John, another financial interest and which was son, James, and a daughter. run by Tom and Tillie Turner. He Ethel. All three sons served in also was engaged in another real the Air Force. John is dead. She

"Daddy Patrick was quite a planned to live to be 100 years character," Mrs. Patrick said. old," Mrs. Sadie Patrick "He was a big man at the time recalled. "He liked me very but he did spread himself very

COUNTY SEAT MOVED

In 1796, the county seat was permanently located on 60 acres given by Richardson Fagin, a beautiful tract on the Salem Road. In leisurely fashion, 64 lots were sold around the square where at last the courthouse was as a pioneer in establishing the built. Carthage was the classical name given the town.

Moore County as one of the its life must have been short.

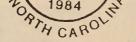




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