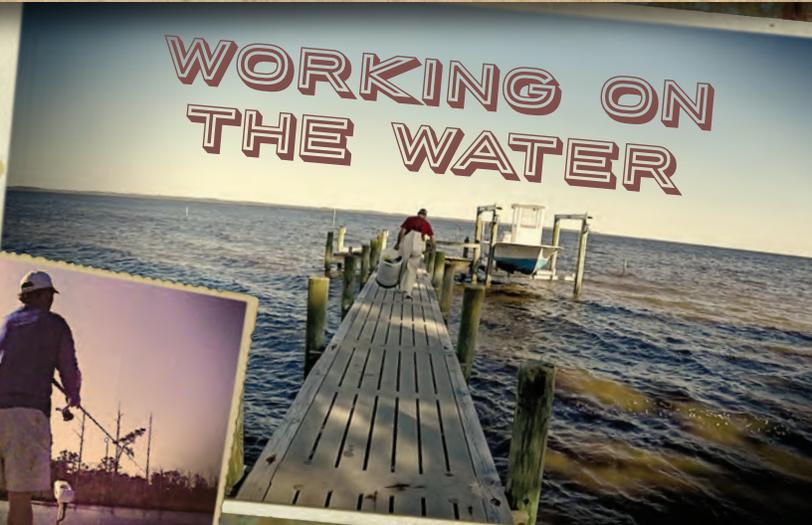




LIFE ²⁰¹⁵ *on the family*

Preserving North Carolina's Coastal Heritage Through Oral Histories





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WORKING ON THE WATER

Cultural Studies
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EDITOR'S WELCOME

GRANDDADDY'S NET

It is well-known that water is essential to life, but for many in Eastern North Carolina, water is also way of living. We have river people and swamp dwellers, those who prefer the sounds while others brave the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Without a doubt, Eastern North Carolina is rich in water culture.

Nearly everyone in the area has a story about water, whether it be a legend about the award-winning fish that got away or just memories of relaxing by the beach. Others cast their nets and crab pots each day to make a living. Working on the water isn't always easy; yet, for many, it is essential to everyday life. That is the focus of this year's edition of *Life on the Pamlico*.

Like many of the people featured in this year's edition, my foray into water life began before I can remember. On the banks of the Pungo River in Belhaven, my grandparents kept a small camper, and it was in those shallow river waters that I learned to swim and cast my fishing line.

My cousins and I would hold out our arms for balance as we carefully navigated the freestanding bulkhead to dip in string tied to raw chicken, hunting for crabs. More often than not, at least one of us would lose our balance and fall into the water, typically fully-clothed much to Grandma's chagrin. But sometimes it was worth it. We'd happily scoop the crabs off the bulkhead, and combined with the crabs in the Granddaddy's crab pots, it was usually enough for dinner.

When we swam, we'd pull up clams from the sandy bottom. One of our uncles would come the water's edge with a pocket knife, and we'd enjoy the clams still standing in the water, slurping the sliming organisms straight from the shell.

Other times, Grandma walked us out onto the nearby pier. She taught me how to bait my hook and to cast my line. I grew up fishing in the canals near their home in Wenona, but it was the lessons Grandma taught me on the dock that really gave me the confidence to say, "Hey, I can fish!"

It was also in those muddy waters that Grandma taught me the confidence to float and swim without fear of sinking.

Unfortunately, I lost my Granddaddy last year. I miss him very much. However, he remains in my memories, and some of my best memories of my Granddaddy are from the river.

My favorite memory comes from fishing Granddaddy's net. He'd don his waders, but I'd just jump into the water in my bathing suit. I had the honor of pulling the large, brown bucket by its short rope. To me as a little girl, it was a treat to be Granddaddy's second-in-command for a short period of time.

I was often fascinated by what the net would yield. A fish here, a crab there; dinner went into the bucket. I was always disappointed when we reached the end because fishing the net was always my favorite thing to do with my Granddaddy.

But on shore, Grandma would be waiting. As I grew older, I wondered if she was even using a recipe. Looking back, I'm pretty sure my Grandma's fish recipe consisted of "pour whatever is in the refrigerator into a bowl, then brush it on the fish." Whatever her recipe, Granddaddy slapped the fish we caught onto his little handmade grill. Impatient like many children, I'd be sent to the shore to explore, but soon I would be called back to eat a delicious feast. In fact, for many years I rejected fish in restau-

rants because it didn't look or taste like my grandparents' cooking.

My memories of the river are both unique and shared with the people who live and work on the many waterways in Eastern North Carolina. This edition of the *Life on the Pamlico* pays homage to centuries of water culture in this area.

The students in my Cultural Studies course collected stories, photos, and video that captures a sampling of what it really means to live and work on the water. In this edition, you'll find stories of people who work on the water each and every day. They fish, farm crabs, and move people from place to place. Others like the competition of sailing, or sharing their catch with those less fortunate.

In our Pirates section, we dig back into the history of our area, noting that even piracy was once a difficult profession that has ties to our water culture. Additionally, we've also dug into our archives to find a never-before-published story of a man who served his time in the Navy—yet another way the people in our area can find themselves connected to and working on the water.

Thank you for joining us for this edition of *Life on the Pamlico*. We hope you enjoy it!

SUZANNE STOTESBUTZ,
EDITOR



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Washington Waterfront
by Miranda Hollis

KENNY POWELL

THE GILLNET FISHERMAN

Kelsey Powell

The red sun slowly creeps over the dark trees that line the far river bank. A seagull glides through the air, flying just above the surface of the calm water. Then a boat motor starts, just as natural sounding to the Pungo River as the wildlife that lives here.

“The Gillnet Fisherman” is what he calls himself. Kenny Powell has been fishing on the Pungo since he moved here over a decade ago with his wife and six children. He started out by setting a 100-yard net. “Just for play,” he explained. “Then I got addicted to it.”

Powell never anticipated becoming a commercial fisherman although his childhood lent him experience. “I was born and raised on the water up in Virginia”, he said, adding that he had done much fishing as a young boy.

Powell’s small hobby on the river grew as he began repairing and reselling boats. Then in January 2009, he traded in one of these boats for a commercial fisherman’s license. The length of nets he was setting grew from 100 yards to about 1,500 yards.



Although Powell sets his nets throughout the year, spring and fall are his busiest seasons. Because he works a full-time job at the Pungo Wildlife Refuge, he must work his fishing schedule around his day job. He checks his nets in the evening and then resets them. The next morning he does the same thing, usually leaving at about 5:30 a.m. in order to arrive at his job by 7 a.m.

Powell’s family is involved in his gillnetting work as well. His children have been helping him in the boat

since they were young. Involving his sons is especially important to him. Currently ages 14 and 11, these boys prove to be a great help. But Powell does not only involve them for their assistance. He believes that working together on the river allows for special father-son time. He also believes in teaching his sons the valuable skills of fishing since he says that gillnet fishermen are a “dying breed.”

To Powell, the skill of gillnetting involves more than merely throwing nets into the water. He aligns his nets



parallel to the shore and tries to set them in “slews.” These are deeper spots along the river bottom, he explained.

Powell also has ways to outsmart the fish. For instance, he does

not set his nets in a completely straight line, but makes them bend in an S shape. “If you put it just straight,” Powell explained, “they might run down the side of it, and they might never get caught.” He has said often that sometimes the best way to catch fish is to think about what the fish might do.

Powell takes gillnetting seriously by persistently setting his nets even when he is catching few fish. “I say you never know what you’re going to get. The fish might come through that next night. And it has done that many times.”

Although fishing can be sometimes uncertain, Powell is able to predict what types of fish come at different times of the year. He says that in the fall, “the flounder will be really strong,” but he con-

tinues to catch flounder throughout the year. Trout season is in November and December, and he says that the commercial striper season is the month of March.

What does Powell do with his fish? His family is able to enjoy some of them, but the rest, he sells. He explained that he possesses a dealership license which allows him to sell to the public as well as to the local fish market.

The part of gillnetting that Powell most enjoys is the thrill of never quite knowing what to expect in his gillnets. “You never know what you’re gonna get,” he explained. “You always lose a fish somewhere, a big fish... and you’ve always got to pursue the big fish that got away.”



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

TITUS BROWN

CRUISING ON THE ROANOKE

JaNeisha Rodgers

Eastern North Carolina is home of the country life. The country life consists of good cooking and eating, hunting, and fishing. So many generations have been raised playing and running in the woods. However, while suiting up in camouflage with a shotgun hunting for a deer is fun, fishing may be the best quality of country living in Eastern North Carolina. Whether a person is on a boat in the middle of the river or just sitting in a

chair near the water, it brings peace. "Hearing the birds chirp and fighting away bugs is the life to live," says Titus Brown.

Titus Brown is a forty-year old African American male born and raised in Williamston, N.C. He was born at Martin General Hospital and raised as a country boy. Growing up, Brown enjoyed running in the woods, playing in the dirt, and making mud pies with his brother. But what he en-

joyed the most is when at the age of five, his father started teaching him how to fish.

His father, Joseph Brown, started a business where he fished four to five hours a day, and he sold the fish to families in the community. One Friday afternoon, Mr. Brown came home early because the fish weren't biting. When Mr. Brown pulled into his yard, he saw his sons Titus and Shawn playing in the yard, and his elderly neigh-





bor sitting on her porch. He spoke to his neighbor and noticed she wasn't cheerful. So he went over and found out that she didn't have money for food because she had to pay for her medicine. Being a good-hearted man, Mr. Brown went back to his truck and came back with a cooler of fish. He cleaned each fish for her, and he even spent the time cooking the fish for her.

Titus saw his father's good deed and knew from that Friday afternoon he wanted to help people like his dad. "Whether it be because of their medicine or just low on cash, the elderly need a little helping hand," says Titus. The next day, Titus and Shawn were dressed and ready bright and early, and their father took them fishing on the Mortoc Park pier on the Roanoke River. Mr. Brown taught his boys how to bait their hooks and throw the rods. However, the most valuable lesson he taught was how to be patient.

Throughout the years, Titus and Shawn continued to fish with their

dad and sell fish to other families. But, when he was 32, Titus had to take over the business completely because his father became ill. The Brown's business consists of the brothers going out on the water for four to five hours. After that fifth hour, the men gather their equipment and fish, so the fish can be delivered to the families. No one is charged for gas, and the price is \$15 for 25 fish.

During the summer, the pier is where Titus spends his afternoons fishing. "I feel peaceful and relaxed," he said as he started to prepare for this year's fishing. Before the brothers start taking orders again, their fishing licenses have to be renewed, new rods have to be ordered, and the coolers have to be located in the barn.

Once everything is set and ready to go, the brothers gather the equipment and go out on the boat. While on the boat, they set baskets (as their father taught them) and sit back and wait while listening to the sound of nature. The wait goes on between four to five hours. On a good day, the two will catch over 100 fish. After a day of fishing, they will go deliver the fish to the families. There are ten families who regularly place orders, and there are also three elderly women the brothers will clean and deliver the fish to. "I love the elderly because they are the ones who taught me everything I know growing up," says Titus.

Some look at fishing as a sport, but Titus looks at it as a way of giving back to his community and doing a good deed. Fishing and listening to the water do bring about peace and serenity. Even though Titus makes

money from the business, he doesn't focus on that. He enjoys the feeling of being able to help others. By fishing, he is able to help the elderly that need and appreciate the helping hand. Cleaning and giving the fish away is the icing on the cake, and it brings joy to his heart. "Everyone is not as fortunate as others and sometimes people need a little helping hand. Whether it be an elderly person or not, I love helping others anyway I can. But it's just something when I see how the elderly thank you and mean it. I always said I will continue to help people like my dad," says Titus.

Today, the Roanoke River and the various wetlands and swamps in Martin County provide an ideal location for fishing. In the country life, fishing is using a little arm muscle to throw that rod way out yonder and wait on the fish to latch on to the bait. Due to it being a popular hobby, some towns consider fishing a competitive sport and some hold tournaments to challenge who can catch the biggest one. Whether one looks at it as a sport or as a way to feed their families, fishing is a way of living. Sitting out by the water and listening to nature and maybe a few crickets can ease one's mind. Life on the Roanoke can be peaceful or one can even have fun by throwing a rod out there and reeling in a big one.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

DANNY MARSLENDER

TOURNAMENT FISHERMAN

Sidney Marslender

Here in Eastern North Carolina there are many things us country folks depend on: our good country cooking, hunting and wildlife, and, of course, the water. The water plays a big part here in Eastern North Carolina because we are surrounded by it. There are all sorts of jobs on the Pamlico River including oystering, crabbing, shrimping, netting, and my all time favorite, fishing. Recently, I met a man who shared for his love of tournament fishing and donating back to a good cause.

Danny Marslender is a loving and caring man who has spent his life on water because of his love of fishing. For this interview, he took me fishing to one of his hot spots, but it wasn't so hot. Unfortunately, at the time I interviewed him, the trout had not come in yet, so it was a quite slow day. After fishing for a good while, Danny began to talk about his fishing career.

His father and grandfather passed their love of fishing down to Danny when he was 5 years old. He started his fishing in fresh water, mostly in ditches, ponds, and canals testing his luck to hook a bass or bream. "You have to learn the



weather and the water. Whether the wind is blowing too hard or blowing in the wrong direction. You have to know the water because when it's clear, there the fish will be. When it looks like chocolate milk, there the fish will not be."

One of his favorite memories is of a time when he was fishing in a pond where he caught many bass. As Danny got older, his talent grew. "Well, it was mostly from experience from doing it every day and practicing with the help of my father. I moved to salt water by myself, and

from then I just kept going bigger to inshore fishing, to offshore fishing, to now, tournament fishing," he explained.

Danny started tournament fishing around the age of 18. His first tournament was at Lake Mattamuskeet for bass. He didn't place in that tournament, but he relayed that he caught some pretty fish.

Danny does most of his tournaments with the club called "Fishers of Men," which host four division tournaments. In those tournaments are opportunities to collect first,

"YOU HAVE TO LEARN THE WEATHER AND THE WATER."

second, and third place awards for bass, flounder, trout, and rock. He typically doesn't do tournament fishing alone; he has his best bud, Reid Radicliff, and sometimes his middle daughter, Madison Marslender, join him.

Danny said his biggest fishing tournament to date was held this past fall for the volunteer fire department in Belhaven, which raised money for cancer patients. Danny and Reid caught rock (striped bass) over 20 inches long. Their luck continued all day, and they won that tournament and collected \$660 for the 1st place spot. They donated their winnings back to the cancer society.



Danny won't reveal the location of his fishing hotspots, but he did say most of his tournament fishing is done in the Pungo River, Pungo Creek, and Hyde County area. He strictly uses artificial bait because tournaments do not allow live bait. Danny said, "We use artificial bait all the time anyways because we have a

lot of confidence in the bait we use." He wouldn't reveal the specific baits he used, claiming they were "top secret!"

Danny's love for fishing is obvious. It's not just about hooking a fish; it's also about the nature you get to see around you while doing it. While fishing together, we saw something rare. We saw not only one bald eagle, but four of them!

Fishing definitely brings relaxation even if you aren't catching anything. You get to see the beautiful sunrises and sunsets that Beaufort County offers us on the water. Danny said, "Grab a fishing line, and I'll be glad to take someone fishing because I love it. I love being out here!"



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

ALTON PARKER

FISHING – A WAY OF LIFE

Olivia Van Essendelft

In the Pamlico River, Pamlico Sound and surrounding areas, there are commercial and recreational fishermen. Mr. Alton Parker was born and raised on the water. Parker was born in 1955, and at the age of 10, he started fishing with his dad. CJ Parker worked full-time on the railroad, but he was also a part-time fisherman. Parker remembers getting up at the crack of dawn to help his dad fish in their 16-foot skiff and returning to fish again every night after his dad got home from work. Parker stated, “I would have to get the bait lines, baited with tipper, ready for the next day’s work.” They would catch fish, crab, and eels. Parker remembers sifting through the crabs and throwing the little ones back in the water. They did this at every pot. “It was a full day’s work to be doing it only part-time,” he said.

By 1977, Parker had become a full-time commercial fisherman. He bought himself a 45-foot shrimp trawler. At different times of the year for 15 to 20 years, Parker would go down to Georgia to fish for shrimp. Between trips, he would fish in the Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. He



"IT'S THE THRILL OF THE CHASE, LIKE AN ADDICTION."

says it's "the thrill of the chase", like an addiction to fishing to see what type of load you will be bringing in that day and seeing what you have accomplished. Parker also has a 32-foot Harker's Island brand crab boat. He needs a larger boat for the larger bodies of water due to weather conditions. "Smaller boats are better saved for the rivers and creeks," he said.

To meet the cost of living and to operate the cost of the boat, 800 - 900 crab pots need to be baited every day. Crabbing is usually done in the warmer months, and eel fishing is usually done in the spring and late fall. Eel is a delicacy in many parts of the world, but it is not very popular in the United States. Eels are also a little complicated. "Eels are shipped live, in boxes to their destinations, and they need to be alive for payment," Parker explained.

A typical day for Parker starts about 4:00 in the morning. "I drink at least three cups of coffee before I get out the door," he says. He drives an hour to get to Columbia, where his boat is docked; once there he puts his day's supply on the boat and sets off. He has 400 - 600 crab pots that he tends. He pulls them up, gets what he can out of the pots, and throws back what he cannot keep. Then, he baits the pots and moves on to the next pot. This is a long job, but it is necessary to make sure that he is close to the dock near 1 or 2 p.m. due to market hours.

Years ago, crabs went to the picking house where meat was taken from the crab and sold by the pound. Today, crabs are shipped live or steamed to different destinations. At market, crabs are categorized into three grades: Female, Jimmy (large male), and Jimmy #2 (small male). Parker's day is pretty much done on the water once he goes to market. He drives the hour back home where he equips his boat with what he needs for the next day's work.

"In order for any fisherman to have a good days work, they need to keep a close eye on the weather forecast," Parker said. Wind is a big factor for fishermen as it makes the water rough. He states, "Rain is just rain, but with the mix of the wind, thunder, and lightning, it is dangerous." Being a seasoned captain and having years of experience, Parker has come to know how to read the clouds. "If

a storm pops up, you need to find a safe harbor to wait out the storm." Parker adds, "Fishermen need to make the best of their fishing day, because they do not get sick-time or overtime. If you miss a day, you cannot get it back."

As a commercial fisherman, Parker must stay up to date on the regulations that fishermen are handed from the government. He remembers when he started back in 1977, there were 4,400 commercial fishermen whereas, today, there are around 1,400 with only 900 full-time. He believes that the number one cause for the decline in fishermen has been the regulations along with water quality and runoff from big industries. Parker believes some regulations are needless. Fishermen can only keep half of what they harvest because of these laws. Crabs have to be 5 inches from point to point. An



extremely large female crab needs to be thrown back because regulations state it is for restocking purposes. Immature female crabs have to be thrown back, but most fishermen do that anyway without the law being in place.

“Years ago there were boundaries on where to place crab pots and the depth you needed it to be,” Parker explains. Today, fishermen are able to put them anywhere. Regulations for different fisheries are set by seasons for what specific type can be fished at that time. There was never a regulation like that years ago. Red Drum, for instance, used to be on the endangered list, and any Red Drum measuring over 27 inches had to be thrown back. Today, that is still the case, but Red Drum has replenished itself off the list. Alton had once caught a 63-pound Red Drum and had to throw it back. It is what is known as “catch and release,” but Parker likes to say “catch and hot grease” because it makes a good meal.



Parker keeps his boat up-to-date on all the safety regulation equipment. Parker says, “The United States Coast Guard stops boats randomly to make sure that the proper lifesaving equipment is up-to-date and in working order.” Life jackets, whistle, fire extinguisher, and other equipment are inspected. Paying

close attention to your surroundings and what your task is keeps everyone safe. He has had some mishaps with some members of his crew, but thankfully, none have been hurt. He recommends his crew wear sunglasses, sunscreen, and anything else that will protect them from the sun’s harmful rays. Commercial fishermen look out for one another as well as recreational boaters on the water. Parker says he has had to find many a boater, and he has even recovered drowning boaters. The water can be a dangerous place if you do not know what you are doing.

Regardless of the regulations and dangers, Parker is a fisherman to the end because it is what he knows and what he will continue to do. Parker says, “Hard work never hurt anyone,” and adds, “It may not be a luxurious life to lead for some, but it’s my life, and it is good!” He enjoys every minute of every day for “the thrill of the chase!”



TOM COYNE

SAILING ON THE PAMLICO SOUND

Miranda Hollis

When you think of Eastern North Carolina, what comes to mind? Lighthouses, local barbecue, or sweet tea might be a few things that pop into your head. Maybe it's the enticing smell of salt water, the cry of the gulls mixing with crashing of the waves, and a gentle breeze. After all, what would eastern N.C. be without its beautiful and historic connection to the water? For some people, the water holds aesthetic value, hobbies, or local pastimes. For others, the water is home. Tom Coyne is one of the latter. "Working on the water has given me a career and a life path that I didn't have before," he said. "When I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, I didn't really have anything to pick from, and it sort of just snapped into place and felt right. Working on the water has given me a fulfillment that other jobs haven't."

Tom Coyne's life has been intertwined with the water since he was three years old. It has been a major part of his life since. Now 22, he's had the chance to visit many different places because of this connection. Coyne has traveled up



and down the east coast as well as halfway to the Bahamas. "I'll be circumnavigating in another two years, going around the world on my own vessel," he said. According to Coyne, you can go anywhere on a boat. His favorite place that he's been to so far has been Charleston, South Carolina. "It's very boat friendly; lots of sailors down there. It's a good place," he explained.

About a year ago, Coyne got his captain's license. The first thing

you need to become a captain is a year at sea. It's similar to obtaining a driver's license in that you have to record your time and have it signed by the captains you served under. A week-long training course and a few exams later, there are some forms to be filled. Once they're approved by the government and U.S. Coast Guard, you get sent your captain's license. Currently, Coyne has seven boats of his own, saying "You can never have too many. I started out

sailing on small boats, and as I got better at it, I wanted something bigger. It kind of snowballed, and now I've wound up with a 34-foot schooner and a 27-foot sloop."

In addition to being a captain on charter boats, Coyne works as a mate on the Schooner *Jeanie B.* to provide sailing charters on the Pam-

lico Sound. The boat gets its name from Captain Paul Del Rio's wife, Jennifer Marie Lee Sutton. Coyne started working on the boat when Captain Del Rio approached him about being part of the crew for a day. Coyne impressed the man with his work, and he was asked to come aboard regularly. He does service

work and rigging, and he can do most of the sailing if the need arises. "It helps to be a jack-of-all-trades," he said.

Coyne has guided charters along the North Carolina coast as well as from Charleston to Florida and back up to Washington. "A lot of what we do is based on family groups and businesses who simply want to take their friends out for an afternoon," he stated. "They can bring dinner aboard, and it's essentially a floating party. We have a good time most of the time we go out."

Coyne described his most interesting charter experience as one from a trip he took last fall from Charleston down to Miami. He said he "was in Fort Pierce and had a sea turtle come up alongside the boat. I hadn't seen a sea turtle before. That was the first time." According to Coyne, wildlife is occasionally curious about the boat as it's something different in their normal habitat.

In addition to his time spent sailing, Coyne also keeps up an online presence. In his blog, greenseavoyaging.wordpress.com, he describes his travels and posts pictures of where he's been. He said he started doing this so that his friends could keep up with where he was. In addition, it allows him to keep up with his own logs and journals and let other people partake in his sailing adventures. "It's always nice to share the travels," Coyne said. He fondly recalled what he loves most about his job: "The best experience I've had working on the water is when I can take people out,





especially kids, that have never been on a big boat or have never been out to sea and they can experience that firsthand for themselves. It allows me to relive part of that adventure spirit that I had.”

Coyne’s favorite thing about working on the water is “the fact that everything is unexpected. Each day is something new, and it’s always a surprise, so it never gets boring.” He has a lot in store for the future. Sailing around the world, which he plans to do alone, is only the beginning. Coyne explained, “I will be writing as a traveling journalist about the places I visit and will write articles for several sailing publications. Additionally, I will be filming for my

documentary.” He plans to film the documentary himself, and it will be based on his travels and how he does everything aboard his boat. Once he returns from his journey around the world, Coyne plans to “look towards running charters in the British Virgin Islands.” Also, this summer his novel will be coming out. Entitled *Michael Taylor Douglas: The Final Logs of the Cutter Proscion*, the book will be loosely based on some of his previous adventures.

Keeping the rich historical value of Eastern North Carolina is just another part of Coyne’s job description. According to Coyne, “North Carolina’s culture is based on the coastal trading that once occurred

on vessels similar to *Jeanie B.* no less than a century ago. As part of the crew on that vessel, I am able to keep the history and culture of this state alive so that others may enjoy it as I have.” The process for obtaining a sailing charter aboard the 72-foot vessel is relatively simple. More information about the charter schedule can be found on the website, jeanieb.com. With the ability to carry 25 people at a time, there’s plenty of room for friends and family. Passengers are even invited to participate with steering and working the sails.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

JAMES LEE COX

FROM THE SHALLOW TO THE DEEP

Doris Moss-Sadler

“It was the money!” exclaimed James Lee Cox, nicknamed “Joe”, when asked what influenced him the most to become a commercial fisherman. It doesn’t matter that the fishing business was already a part of his family’s history: his father, uncle, and older brother were professional commercial fishermen when Joe was young. Sometime in the year 1967, while still in high school, he made the decision to become a fisherman. “It was a great deal of money being made back then; it was nothing for us to go out to sea and bring home from \$1,000-\$15,000 a week. A dollar was a dollar in those days, and you could do great things with a dollar.”

While sitting at the docks of Swan Quarter, North Carolina, the 65-year-old native of Belhaven reminisces on his life’s journey as a professional commercial fisherman of 35 years. Joe began as a shrimper with Kearney Hopkin in the Pamlico Sound on a small boat. Then, he moved to a bigger boat with the Tates, a family of commercial fishermen well known up and down the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.



Joe has a smile on his face as he describes the 110-foot boat with its 48 horsepower, V-16 engine that carried four fuel tanks holding 10,000 gallons of fuel each. The auxillary generator was a V-12 engine. “That generator had enough power to power up 4-5 apartments. The boat slept 16 people and had 11 holes that the average bedroom in a house could fit into each hole. Now that shows you the size of the boat that I was on.”

Working on that massive boat with the Tates, Joe’s fishing career took him from the shallow sound of the Pamlico into deep waters of the Atlantic, sailing from Corpus Christi, Texas, all the way up to Nova Scotia,

Canada. As the seasons changed, the catch from the sea changed as well.

In the summer time, they sailed to Texas where “pink” shrimp was peaking. Then Joe, along with captain and crew, coasted up to Florida and South Carolina in the spring catching “green tails”, which are a better quality of white shrimp.

During the winter months, the crew sailed from North Carolina up to Nova Scotia for scalloping, lobstering, and fishing for flounders and monkfish. “A monk tail fish is a big fish, with a big head, big teeth and the only part you could eat was his tail. It was good eating. Even though I didn’t care too much for it (monk

tail), but everybody else said it was good eating,” says Joe.

Reminiscing about the great food, the harbors, the new places and the excitement of meeting new people reminded him of the perks of being a commercial fisherman. “But the best perk was the money,” recalls Joe, grinning. Most boats are shared at 40/60, meaning the crew gets 40 percent, the captain receives 10 percent and boat gets 50 percent of whatever money was made during that particular fishing trip. “But the boat that I was on shared 50/50. We knew we would come out on top with 50 percent, making more money than the average guy on the other boats. Most of the time the boat share out in the hundreds of thousands of dollars,

so you can imagine what that crew would make,” he explained.

Looking back, he recalls his most exciting and most disturbing times on the water. Catching 150 boxes of fish in one swing in four hours of flounder fishing was astonishing and exciting all at the same time, says Joe.

One of the most disturbing times Joe had on the water occurred fishing in only 75 fathoms, which is less than one mile down under the water. On this particular occasion, as the crew pulled the net up and dropped the contents out onto the deck, a dead man’s body came out of the net along with the fish! The crew scattered like mice and were afraid because they had never encountered

an unnerving situation as a dead waterlogged body.

Eventually, a few of the crew members mustered up some nerves, and they threw the body back overboard. Later, Joe and crew found out it was a German man that died on a Russian ship and was buried at sea. “Our crew couldn’t eat for about three to four days from the smell of that dead body,” Joe says.

He also recalls a time when they caught a “depth charge”, which is an underwater bomb used to destroy submarines. Their excitement quickly turned into fright when the U.S. Coast Guard confirmed that bomb was still alive and active. The U.S. Coast Guard escorted Joe’s crew and captain off their boat and



put a demolition team onboard Joe's boat to safeguard the bomb. "They closed down the whole Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to take the depth charge to a military facility in Hampton, Virginia," Joe recalls.

Another particular phenomenon that occurred during Joe's journeys happened when the crew pulled up a round piece of pipe. The pipe didn't appear to be unusual, but when it hit the deck, it ignited and glowed to a brilliant red color. It burned a hole through the top deck, through the ice pack hold where they pack the fish, right down through the bottom of the boat, and into the ocean it fell.

The U.S. Coast Guard once again had to come out to rescue and haul their boat. According to Joe, the U.S. Navy and a Coast Guard and their engineering survey team performed an investigation. After analyzing, graphing, and scoping the bottom of the boat, the holes and the burns, they concluded that neither the Navy nor Coastguard had anything that had so much heat that could penetrate through a steel boat. "Nobody knew what it was and couldn't give an explanation. They never found out what that pipe was, even until this day."

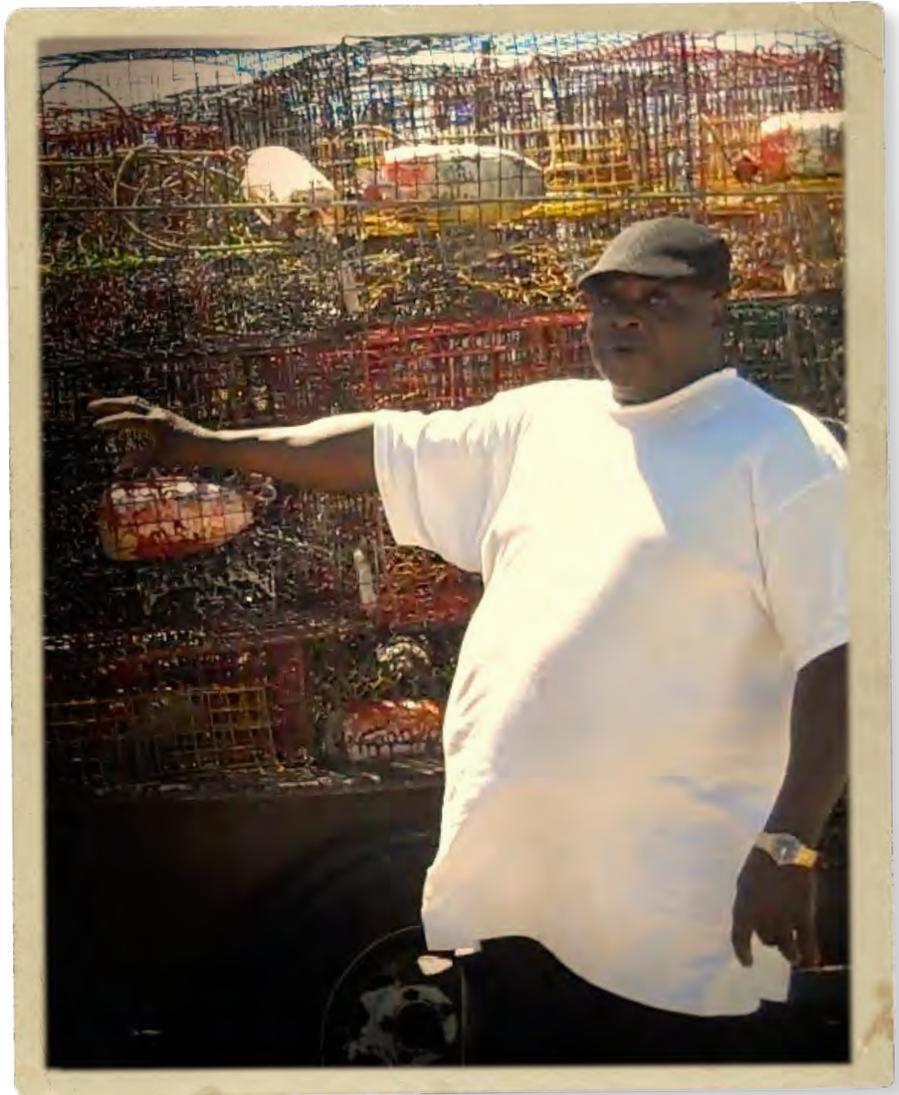
Although being a commercial fishermen was exciting, satisfying and very lucrative, Joe's body begged to differ. After suffering four congested heart failures and two total knee replacements, Joe had to give up his life out in the Pamlico in 2002. Glancing up in the air with a satisfying solemn smile on his face, he de-

clares, "35 years---yes, my body took a beating, but it was well worth it."

No longer dragging nets in the deep, Joe continues to enjoy the Pamlico Sound near his home. "I still sport fish every chance I get," he says. The Cox's family profession of fishing still lives on in Joe's son Elijah and also in Joe's younger brother Brady, who works out of Beaufort, N.C.

While Brady and Elijah are still hard at work, keeping the family's profession at sea, Joe keeps busy with his eight children and six grandchildren. He is currently an ordained deacon and works with the food

bank at Mt. Gilead Church in Belhaven, transporting and delivering food and other commodities to families in need. The same passion and dedication that Joe had being a commercial fisherman is represented in the work that he does for his community and church. "Since 2002, I became a born-again Christian and a new kind of fisherman. I have become a spiritual fisherman for Christ Jesus and his kingdom. Instead of fishing shrimp, scallops, lobsters, and flounders--I am now a fisherman for souls!"



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

WILLIAM ALLIGOOD

FUN ON THE WATER

Kyle Pontieri

William Alligood, a Washington native, happened upon a sailboat on Craigslist two years ago with his brother, and they decided to buy it. These two not-so-veteran sailors had a little prior experience with boats from their experiences in Boy Scouts, having learned the basics of sailing for a merit badge. They had to relearn on the fly. “You just get out in the middle of the river where you won’t hit anything, and it’s a little trial and error until you figure it out,” William explained. This trial and error way of learning could be called fate by nobler men, or simply dumb luck; either way, it led them to running right into a race.

Not realizing it, William and his cohorts found themselves in the middle of a Club Race. Suddenly, the group found that they were being contacted over the radio by the race moderator of the Pamlico Sailing Club. This random happenstance of fate introduced them to racing as they were invited to a race the Club was holding two weeks later. Seeking a new challenge, William and his brother returned. “We had the

sailboat and it sounded fun... it was something I could do with my brother.”

Racing was exactly the new challenge he wanted. Comparing his own little 23-foot sailboat to the other boats he would race against, he clearly did not stand a chance. Beyond that, he lacked personal experience; after all, he had just bought the boat and learned how to sail it two weeks before.

Racing was not beyond William and his brother because in racing there is a handicap system in place. Due to the different capabilities of separate sailboats, the handicap system is based on different classes. William uses cars to explain the class system. “If you were comparing my sailboat to the other sailboats in the fleet, my boat is a mini-van or camper while some of the guys have Ferraris.” His small and leisurely boat com-

petes against large and speed-based mustangs of the sea, so the handicap allows William to win races even with this heavy disadvantage.

Once he won an entire series because there were no competitors in his class. Ever humble, William also tells of multiple accounts where he raced against boats in his class but would lose as the competition was just a bit faster.

The size of William’s boat has kept it out of multiple races as it just cannot stand up to Mother Nature quite as well. However, one of William’s favorite stories about racing comes from a day they probably should not have shown up to race.

The wind blew in heavy gales and the choppy river threw large waves into the side of their boat. As the race continued and the crew of his boat pushed onward, the wind kept blowing harder. The stronger

“THEY GOT WETTER AND COLDER THAN THEY PLANNED ON GETTING THAT DAY.”



the wind, the larger the waves became, threatening the sailboat as it raced through the water.

In order to keep the boat balanced, the crew was separated to the two sides of the boat, port and starboard, as the wind and high waves left the boat susceptible to capsizing. Coming toward the turn-about, William's boat, described as a "weekend-day sailor", was hit with a large gust of wind and a large wave simultaneously on the bow. This forced the boat to start tacking (changing its course by turning the boat's head into and through the wind) unexpectedly. The sudden change of course tilt-

ed the boat into the water, forcing the crew members on that side of the boat to be splashed into the river. "They didn't fall off the boat and they were wearing their appropriate safety equipment, but they got wetter and colder than they planned on getting that day," William said, adding that they all had a good laugh about it afterward as nobody was injured.

It could be said sailing is in William's blood as he and his brother were not the first in their family to be sailors. Their father was a sailor for more than 20 years on a sailboat. He knows many ins and outs of sailing. Unfortunately, he has never touched

the sailboat his sons bought because his leg hurts too much. However, William, a new father, has plans to bring his own son, though hesitantly, onto the boat when he turns five, making it a family affair. Sadly, this is only if William keeps the boat. As a new father, he does not have nearly as much time as he wants to go on the sailboat. "It would be shame for it to sit there and rot," he says. From his tone, it seems William is leaning toward selling the sailboat, but he knows he can always join the crew of another sailboat by joining the Pamlico Sailing Club as a crew member.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN

FERRY CREW

Zach Paramore

Transportation is important in whatever form that it entails. In Eastern North Carolina, there is no element more important to our lifestyle than that of water. Every year, millions of people travel to North Carolina to visit our beaches and revel in our marine culture. Many of these places require a ferry system to reach. Most notably among these are the Swan Quarter and the Ocracoke Island ferries. Justin Sullivan, a crew member on the Aurora-Bayview ferry in Beaufort County, believes that the ferry system as a whole “is very helpful” in part because it allows people to “get back and forth to work.”

The North Carolina ferry system is the nation’s second largest, transporting more than 2.5 million passengers each year. The Aurora-Bayview ferry, a year-round ferry located on the Pamlico River in Beaufort County, connects the north side of the river (Bayview) to the south side of the river (Aurora). This ferry route began in 1966 to provide the workers at PCS Phosphate (formerly Texasgulf) a way to go directly to their homes on the north side of the river.



According to Justin Sullivan, a crew member on the ferry, the busiest time is the morning and afternoon when PCS workers are getting off. “Over 150-200 people use the ferry every day.” He added that “about 80-90 percent of them,” are from PCS. This ferry not only provides transportation for tourists, it also provides a very valuable service to the people who depend upon it to get to work. As of January 1, 2015, the Aurora-Bayview ferry departed from each location seven times every day.

The crossing of the Pamlico River via the ferry takes roughly 30 minutes but requires no fare.

Sullivan is currently 27 years old and was born on July 25, 1987. When he was young, Sullivan enjoyed riding on the Aurora-Bayview ferry. “I liked it. I always wanted to ride it when we went to this side of river—to the Aurora side.” Did this enjoyment of riding on the ferry when he was young influence Sullivan to work on the ferry when he was older? “No, I never thought I would ever be here.

"DURING THE SUMMERTIME A STORM WILL COME UP. WE'VE SEEN WATERSPOUTS."

It never crossed my mind about ever working on the ferry. I always wanted to be a contractor." Sullivan accredits his supervisor Jeff Cradle for helping him get his job working on the ferry. Because of this, he has currently been working on the ferry for six and a half years.

According to Sullivan, the ferry can carry about 36 passenger vehicles. That is not every run of course, but 36-37 is the most that the ferry can carry. While working, Sullivan helps with maintenance and with the loading and unloading process. This River Class ferry type is not the largest in the North Carolina Ferry System. The ferry located here is designed for heavy use, and it is double-ended, meaning that it does not have to turn around at the docks. With that being said, Sullivan doesn't

feel that there is anything that could make the ride any better for the passengers. While riding up there, it is a very comfortable atmosphere with resources readily available such as a place to hang out and access to snacks and beverages.

While on the ferry, Sullivan is often surprised at how fast the weather can change. This is why working on the ferry requires certain qualities. "You have to know the water and know that the weather could change. As far as the wind, it can change the way the ferry reacts to the water." There have been times when Sullivan has been working, and it has been rough while on the ferry. "Most of the time it's a cold front coming through; during the summertime, a storm will come up. We've seen waterspouts." Luckily, while the mission

of the North Carolina Ferry System is to provide safe, cost efficient, and dependable service for the traveling public, this safety also includes those who work on the ferry. In the event of a bad tropical storm or hurricane, particularly one with high winds and large waves, the ferry service is suspended until the conditions are once again considered safe. Rainy weather is not a problem, however; the ferries continue to run their courses rain or shine.

The working hours on the ferry are 13 and a half hours a day, 7 days on, 7 days off, so the ferry system no longer goes by shift work. "We don't do that here anymore," he said. Sullivan gets up at 4:45 a.m. during his week to work. His shift is from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. and he returns home around 7 p.m.

On January 14, 2012, Justin married the love of his life, Kimberly Harris. They currently have two daughters, Ava and Trinity, who love riding on the ferry with their Dada. They live in Pinetown, North Carolina.

On this ferry, he's found the reason why he is made for this job, "[I] just loving being outside." According to Sullivan, there is never a typical day on the ferry as far as the weather is concerned. "You never know, the weather, it's unpredictable. There's always something new happening. It's not the same thing every day."



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

BRANDON HARDISON

FISHING THE PAMLICO

Steven Curtis

Brandon Hardison first started fishing when he was about three years old. His grandfather James would take him out whenever he got the chance and passed on his own love of fishing to his grandson. Brandon can still remember standing up on the seat of the boat in order to have a good view of the water.

As time went on, Brandon's love for fishing got even stronger. As a matter of fact, when he was in high school, he met one of his current fishing buddies, David Curtis. At the time, David was a resource officer at Washington High School. Despite a few disagreements, Brandon and David grew close.

Years later after getting a job with a TV news station, Brandon realized his true passion: he wanted to be a boat captain. In order to do this, he went to school to get his captain's license, and when he finished, he started helping other local fisherman.

He now helps captains either as a first mate or by captaining their boat when they are unavailable. He also gets work filming fish events such as the Big Rock Blue Marlin



Tournament. He said his fishing experience was helpful in getting the right shot for times such as those.

For now, he continues to help his fellow captains with their businesses. When he's not doing that, he fishes with people like his grandfather James, and his friends Hunter, David, and myself.

When asked if he had any interesting stories about fishing on the Pamlico one immediately came to mind:

Brandon and his friend Johnny were fishing near Cee Bee Mari-

na in Belhaven, and Johnny got his bait caught in the bushes. Brandon pulled his boat up to the bushes so Johnny could get out and retrieve his bait. What they didn't know was they had pulled up next to an Emu farm. That's right, an Emu farm. When Johnny got back in the boat, an Emu stuck its head out, right over Johnny's shoulder. When he noticed, he freaked out.

Another story that wasn't mentioned in the video is one from when I first met Brandon:



WHEN JOHNNY GOT BACK IN THE BOAT, AN EMU STUCK ITS HEAD OUT, RIGHT OVER JOHNNY'S SHOULDER.

My Dad and I were going to Lake Mattamuskeet to catch some crabs for dinner. Since Brandon and his grandfather weren't busy, they decided to come with us. When we got there, Brandon and I walked down to the next culvert to catch some extra bait. We thought the interesting event of the day was when we caught two crabs while we were trying to catch bait. What we did not know is that while we were away, my dad David put a crab that he had

already caught in Brandon's truck. Ironically enough, Brandon is scared of crabs. I found this out when Brandon got in his truck to make a phone call, and David told him to watch out for the crab. Brandon spent the next day looking for the crab and finally found it under the back seat.

It's times like these that Brandon enjoys the most about fishing. He loves being able to spend time with his friends and family. He also wishes more people would go out-

doors and fish. He says that getting started is simple. All you really need is a rod, bait, and patience. There is no need to spend thousands of dollars on a boat and a high-end rod. For now, Brandon continues to film for a TV news station and fish in his spare time. He hopes that, one day, he can start his own charter company and bring the joy of fishing to others.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

THERESA RAY

WOMAN ON BOARD

Jasmin Flores

A crowd of men with rubber boots and beards is what you expect to see on a commercial fishing boat. Throwing out nets that are 100 to 200 yards long sure does sound like a man's job. "You get a lot of stares; this is definitely a male dominated profession. But who cares? As long as I enjoy doing it, and I do my job to the best of my ability every day, it doesn't matter what you do," Theresa Ray points out about being one of the few females to take on commercial fishing.

Theresa, better known as "Tree," is originally from Greenville, N.C., but moved to Ocracoke Island in 1996 after her father married an Ocracoke native. After trying to make a living off of her training in massage therapy, she soon realized she had to take a different route. Her interest in commercial fishing started about eight years ago, and her journey started with Captain Hardy Plyler. She was familiar with Plyler because her ex-husband used to work at the Ocracoke Seafood Company. When her ex-husband left, help was needed, and she quickly signed up. Although she never imagined herself aboard a commercial fishing boat,



Tree didn't really want to go back to school and took the opportunity to be able to enjoy the outdoors. "I may be a woman, but treat me like anyone else on your boat," was what she said to Plyler. Today, Ray is a 1st mate on his boat and says she is honored to have her job.

Tree explains how fishing usually starts around mid-March—although weather can sometimes delay the start—and finishes around the beginning of December. If winds are over 35 miles per hour, the boats don't go out, and this can at times slow the start of the fishing season. An important aspect of fishing is the

water temperature. The water temperature should be between 55 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit in order to fish. At these temperatures, blue fish and trout are usually spotted. From May to August, Spanish mackerel is fished, and September through December flounder is fished. Through winter season following into February is when preparations are made for the next season. Painting the bottoms of the boats, wiring deck lights, and hanging gill nets are just some of the preparations Tree is in charge of.

A typical day for Tree usually starts at five in the morning. She starts her day at the fish house, get-

ting ice ready and the coolers. In order to get to the boat dock, she drives only about 15 minutes. From 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., the crew is on the water, and on days that the wind isn't blowing too hard and the temperature in the water is right, the time usually stretches to noon. Back at the fish house, the fish are cleaned and packaged in order to be ready for sale. After taking a one to two hour break, the nets are reset, and, at times, more nets are put out.

Tree explains that she works with pound nets and gill nets. Pound nets are stationary, and you just pull them up, pick out what you want, and then put them back in the water. On the other hand, gill nets are picked up every day and are usually around 200 yards long. After the fishing has died down, Tree usually switches over to scallops when there are some available. What are found around Ocracoke are bay scallops, which are smaller than the sea scal-

lops. The weather has to also be perfect, just like for fishing. In order to find scallops in the area, there has to be a southwest wind to push the water to the other side of the sound to create a low tide. They are usually found where there are muddy grassy bottoms, Tree said.

Although she loves her job, there are risks to it. When pulling out pound nets, you go through the phase of pulling out what you don't want and throwing it back in the water, and almost every time a sting ray is in the bunch. Tree recalled an instance when a sting ray was pulled on board by accident, and the barb from the sting ray went into her foot about an inch and a half. "It was choppy that day with water breaking over the bow," Tree recalled. The barb broke off inside of her foot under her big toe joint. After arriving to the medical center, the doctor had to "fillet" the side of her foot open and remove the barb. Like any other labor intense

"I MAY BE A WOMAN, BUT TREAT ME LIKE ANYONE ELSE ON YOUR BOAT."

job, it has its risk factors and is always important to be aware of your surroundings. "Be prepared, stay focused, keep your eyes open and your mouth shut, and listen to what your captain has to say because he's the one in control," are suggestions Tree conveys about being aboard a boat.

Growing up, Tree recalls how she always thought of herself as a tomboy because she loved to be outside hunting, hiking and just finding something to do so she could be outdoors. She enjoys physical labor and uses it as a supplement for excusing. One of the things she enjoys about being on the water is being able to see all of the marine life and seeing nature at its best and its worst. When the fishing season dies down, Tree enjoys walking around the marsh along the back of the island and taking hikes around the sand dunes with Layla, her dog.

Being a female in a male-dominated profession has its obstacles, but Tree stresses how, at times, you have to depend on yourself for happiness and support. Her plans are to stick to fishing as long as she can, and as long as the regulations don't make it harder for commercial fishing to continue.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

CURTIS WILKINS

AT THE CRAB RANCH

Karlee Squires

In an area like Eastern North Carolina, working on the water comes as second nature to most locals. Because most inhabitants of Eastern North Carolina are located near the water, outdoor activities like crabbing have been passed down from generation to generation. However, crabbing is not just sitting on the edge of a pier with a chicken leg on a string. Crabbing also means laying crab pots and harvesting and peeling crabs. Some people make a living from crabbing. For others, it's a way of life. According to local commercial fisherman, Curtis Wilkins, "There's two types of people who are commercial fisherman. There's ones who do it as a job, and there's ones like me, where it's like a heritage."

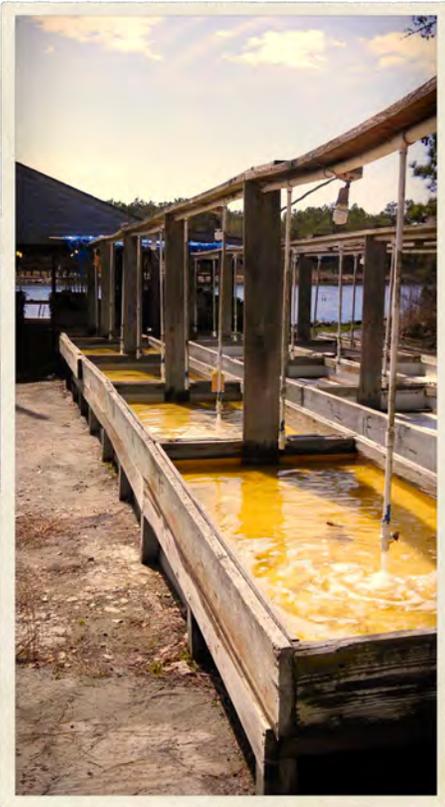
Curtis Wilkins was first introduced to the life of working on the water when he was twelve years old. Everything he knows about crabbing and working on the water, he learned from his grandfather. Curtis's love for the water grew over time. When Curtis met his wife, Debbie, they began "Debra's Soft Crabs Inc." (the Crab Ranch).



The Crab Ranch, located off of Kelly Road in Bath, was incorporated in 1997. The location of the Crab Ranch was once just an empty, overgrown lot. People in the area referred to this lot as "the Ranch" because the neighborhood kids used the land as a hangout spot. Though it seemed worthless to many, the Wilkinses saw potential in this unused piece of land. Because crabbing was something that interested both Debbie and Curtis, and it was some-

thing they could use to make a difference in the community, they decided that is what they wanted to do. The land was cleared, and the Crab Ranch was built.

The Crab Ranch sells crabs and oysters locally, but around 80 percent of its crabs are shipped up North to be used in restaurants. According to Curtis, the restaurants that receive these crabs refer to them as "Chesapeake Bay Crabs." He says, "If you go up North and go to a restaurant



EVERYTHING HE KNOWS ABOUT CRABBING AND WORKING ON THE WATER, HE LEARNED FROM HIS GRANDFATHER.

and eat you a good 'ole soft crab, you think that crab came from the Chesapeake Bay, but it really came right out of your backyard." Though the Crab Ranch specializes in soft crabs, it also harvests hard crabs. The employees of the Crab Ranch lay two kinds of pots: crab pots, which are used for the catching of hard crabs, and peeler pots, which are used for the catching of soft crabs. To catch hard crabs, dead fish are sometimes used for bait. However, to catch female peelers, a male crab is placed in the pot as bait because the female peelers are ready to mate.

After the soft shell crabs are caught, they have to be shed of their shells. At the Crab Ranch, there is a mechanism called a "shredder" which is used for peeling the outer shell off of the soft crabs. To tell the

difference between a male and female crab, one can simply look at the markings on the shell. Male crabs, referred to as "Jimmy's", typically have blue-tipped claws. Females, or "Sooks", on the other hand, have red-tipped claws. You can often tell the difference in the sex of the crab by looking at the shape of its apron, or abdomen. Curtis says that he and Debbie have about 1,100 crab pots strung from the Crab Ranch to Washington, a total area of about 20 miles.

The crabbing season lasts from the first of April to sometime in October. The first two runs, or months, of crab season are when the most male crabs are caught. Curtis said, "Some years are good; some years are bad." Often, a lot of snow the winter before calls for a bad season of crabbing.

Crabbing is an around-the-clock operation, according to Curtis. Once the crabs are caught, they are cleaned, packaged, and either sold locally or shipped on a truck up North. In the summertime, which





is the busiest time of the year for crabbers, the Crab Ranch is bustling with business. Though the Wilkinses could probably handle the work by themselves, they do employ a few other people seasonally. Because summer is a time when a lot of crabs are being caught, there is plenty of work to be done. There is someone at the Ranch at all times, assuring that operations go smoothly. If not closely monitored, a change in oxygen, salinity, ammonia, nitrate, or nitrite levels could jeopardize the lives of many crabs. This would be a great loss of inventory to the Crab Ranch.

The Crab Ranch is a well-known place in Eastern North Carolina. If you have never been to the Crab Ranch to buy crabs or oysters, you have surely seen its logo on the

backs of local vehicles. Not only is the Crab Ranch easily recognized by locals, but it is also renowned in the North because of its quality of crab meat. The Crab Ranch has previously been featured in a publication called *Cornbread Nation*, a magazine called *Washington, The Magazine*, and a DVD called *Peelers, Busters, & Soft Shell Crabs*.

The Crab Ranch is a home-grown business and is very community-centered. The employees and operators of the Ranch are like a family. They all have to do their part to keep the business up and running. Their focus is to supply the community and other areas with top-notch crab meat. They say hard crabs are best used for crab cakes. However, if you're interested in steamed crab,

it's best you go with the soft crab meat.

As a business, Curtis and Debbie also make it a point to get their crabbers the best price. A lot of sweat and hard work goes into the crabbing business. Most of all, Curtis and Debbie Wilkins enjoy being able to produce something that is useful and meaningful to the communities of Eastern North Carolina. As for the future of the Crab Ranch, Curtis Wilkins says they will be "peelin' and chillin'."

The Crab Ranch is located at 110 Garrett Avenue, Bath, NC 27808, and is open for business all summer long.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

LARRY WILLIAMS

SEA TOW CAPTAIN

Elizabeth Boyd

When Captain Larry Williams walked into a local restaurant in Bath, N.C. it quickly became obvious that he is excited about his career. Dressed in a SeaTow hat and matching t-shirt paired with shorts and boat shoes, Williams is a walking advertisement for a job that he says is “a lifestyle.”

Entering the restaurant with a huge grin, and a warm welcome is a skill that proves helpful in his job as a SeaTow captain and owner. Williams said he got involved with SeaTow after meeting the franchise director and just happened to be in the “right place at right time.”

For Williams, working with SeaTow was a natural fit from the beginning. He illustrated his love affair with SeaTow by saying “We dated and we talked and eventually we kissed and got married and that was it.”

However, Williams’s success on the water was not easy. He worked hard to become a captain as well as to get all licenses and credentials from the U.S Coast Guard. He was interested in this career because he was able to be on the water and in-



teract with people on the water, and he could build his business. He found this job appealing because “you start from scratch, and if it works, then you’re successful because you got up every morning and worked for it.” Williams knew he didn’t want to work for someone else and his passion for helping people made this a perfect job for him.

According to their website, “Although commonly referred to as such, a Sea Tow membership is not insurance. It’s assurance. We’ll come to your aid when things go wrong—

towing you home, delivering fuel, or pulling you off a sandbar so you can get back on your way. It’s our job to help ensure your safety and we take that seriously.”

As Williams puts it, “SeaTow is big. It’s become an international company.” Staying busy is a part of the job that Williams enjoys. Being responsible for the Pamlico and the Albemarle and surrounding areas makes him responsible for one of the largest areas, and he says that he responds to around 120 calls per year. He is busiest from “late April,



"YOU START FROM SCRATCH, AND IF IT WORKS, THEN YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE YOU GOT UP EVERY MORNING AND WORKED FOR IT."

May is a big month, until the first of June" because many big boats have to be past the Pamlico before the start of hurricane season. Many of these huge boats depend on him in case there is a problem. He is always ready to jump in his truck and help a vessel in distress. According to Williams, "It consumes your whole life. It's a lifestyle, not a job".

After 10 years of being a SeaTow captain and owner, it is evident that Williams lives that lifestyle 24/7. Answering calls and going to tow people or bring assistance, selling memberships at boat shows or festivals, and making repairs requires a person to be passionate about helping people on the water, and it is evident that Williams is very pas-

sionate. There is no such thing as a "typical day" for Williams as every-day is different. Currently, Williams has 4 employees, including a captain to handle the Albemarle area, four boats, and plans to add on.

As for the little bit of free time that Williams gets, he still prefers the water; he says he "likes to fish as much as anything."

T.T. POWELL

THE LEGEND CONTINUES

Dylan Powell

My grandfather was once a professor at Beaufort County Community College, and he has been a fisherman all his life. In his interview, Tom Powell expressed his feelings about several aspects of his life on the waters of the Pamlico. Born near the Shenandoah Valley in West Virginia, he is a fisherman at heart. He moved from West Virginia to North Carolina around the age of six, growing up in Goldsboro. Also, he reflected upon his fishing experiences while at Beaufort. He said that the abundant waters enticed him to stay around Beaufort County. Mr. Powell says that the Pamlico Sound is the reason he decided to stay in this area after graduating from ECU.

“How would you say you are related to the waters of the Pamlico?”

“I’ve fished on it and hunted in it for I guess 35 or 40 years now.”

This response describes his relation in a simplistic fashion; however, his passion for this area is profound. “I just can’t stay away from it!” he says.

There are many types of fish that Mr. Powell prefers to catch, including ENC favorites such as speckled trout, flounder, croak-



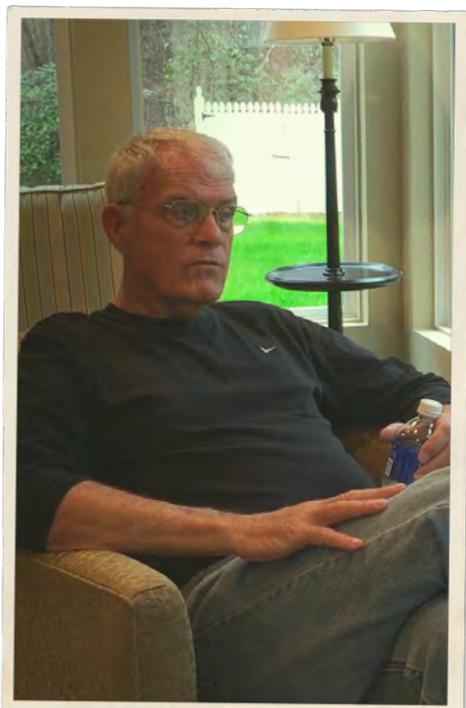
er, puppy drum, and gray trout. He goes fishing every summer, basically every weekend until September. In light of recent reports of a decline in fish population, he had this to say: “...Fishing populations vary from year to year. Weather, fishing pressure, that sort of thing.” He also mentioned that he has been unable to catch gray trout for the last two

or three years; he attributes this to over-fishing by sport fisherman and trawling alike. As fishermen, many people are perturbed by trawling and netting in the Pamlico Sound. His expression growing somber and thoughtful, Mr. Powell stated that he loves saltwater fishing and also loves to catch crabs off the pier. He maintains that there are certainly people

"I'VE FISHED ON IT AND HUNTED IN IT FOR I GUESS 35 OR 40 YEARS NOW."

in the area who need to make a living by trawling and netting, but he also believes that there is an excessive amount of it in the sound. His theory is that because North Carolina laws are lax on where trawlers can go, many out-of-state boats come in to trawl much closer to shore than they would be able to in other states. However, he can vividly remember catching fish by the cooler full. In fact he still catches many fish, simply not as many as he used to.

As a professor at Beaufort County Community College, Mr. Powell thoroughly enjoyed teaching.



As an anatomy and physiology professor, Mr. Powell saw students from every program at the college. Also he taught for thirty-five years, in which time he was considered by several students to be the best teacher they ever had. "It was never like work," he stated. He also explained that he used to park his boat on the service road which parallels Hwy 264, and when his day of teaching was done he would head straight to the water and go fishing. More important to him, however, were the people, whom he valued the most. As an aside, when Mr. Powell started his job at Beaufort County Community College, the campus only had two buildings. He describes the people in the area around the Pamlico as honest, hard working individuals with a southern friendliness about them.

Mr. Powell truly loves Goose Creek State Park. This park is possibly his favorite place to go in the summer time. He even told me that he used to take his students out to the park, to show them different plants and animals in a natural habitat. The first time he took students to the park, they had no idea that the ticks would be bad, and as each student emerged from the woods they were seemingly covered in ticks! He then said "Always remember to cake on the bug spray!" This was also another favorite fishing spot of Mr. Powell's.



VIDEO AVAILABLE
youtube.com/lifeonthepamlico

INTERVIEW

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Sometimes, we find the most interesting things in archives. An old family photo album in the attic of Grandma's house, a love letter in an old shoe box, a recorded memory – these finds remind us that history and interesting stories can be found if we just look for them.

Recently, while sorting files from our archives, we found an interview from 2001 that had never been published. We decided to share our find with our readers because not only is it an interesting piece of local family history, it is also a piece of the history of our publication.

This interview is printed here in its original interview form. We invite you to visit more of our written interviews in the *Life on the Pamlico* archives.

A lot of work went into bringing this story to print. Only a printed copy of the interview was available, so students Miranda Hollis and Jamin Flores spent many hours retyping the interview (that printed, was 19 pages in length). Miranda found the writer of this article, and he and his family provided photographs for the document. In addition, student Kelsey Powell edited the piece before layout.

A special thanks goes to Larry Kenneth White III and his family for their assistance in the long-delayed publishing of Kenneth's interview with his grandfather. The students and I have greatly enjoyed working to prepare this piece for publication.

EDITOR

LARRY KENNETH WHITE

A LIFE IN THE NAVY

Larry Kenneth White III

Life: Grandpa, what brought you into the Navy? Why did you join the Navy, or was there a draft back then?

Mr. White: At the time, there were no jobs. You couldn't get but about \$10.00 a week, about all you could get, and you had to pay room and board out of that. So I joined the Navy at \$17.00 a week.

Life: And how old were you when you first joined?

Mr. White: Well, I was born on January 30, 1920.

Life: Okay, so 1938. Tell us a little bit about the Depression around here before we got into the Navy.

Mr. White: I lived on a farm, and there were nine of us children, and I was the baby. At the time, my two brothers were home on the farm. There wasn't enough land for all of us to make a living on, so I told Daddy and Mother that I'd get out and I'd work. So, I got out, and I plowed tobacco for a dollar a day and my dinner. And the only reason they give me dinner was because it was cheaper to feed me than to carry me home and come back to get me. So, that's how tight it was. After that, after the summer was over, the tobacco season, there wasn't any jobs. So, I looked everywhere, and like I say, \$10.00 a week was the most I could get, and I couldn't live on it. So, I joined the Navy because that was big money for me then.

Life: And where did you go to enlist?

Mr. White: Norfolk, spent three months in Norfolk, and I came back home on boat leave and went back, and it went



to \$36.00. And out of that, I sent my mother and daddy \$30.00. And, I lived on \$6.00. See, I didn't need that much.

Life: \$36.00 was a pretty good chunk of change.

Mr. White: It was at that time. I stayed in there, I reckon it was six more months before I had to take a test, and it went to \$54.00. It was maybe a year or so that I made another rating for \$60.00. So buddy, I got in high cotton. That was where I was in December 7th, when they bombed Pearl Harbor. I got up that morning, put on my

dress whites, and had shore leave. I was playing a game of Chinese checkers, me and my friends, when General Quarters sounded. Well, you know what that meant, it's all mad. All us dressed up ready to go on shore, and when it hit top side, I looked over there and saw the bomb hit the *Arizona*. When it hit the hull, I said "Uh-oh," because it won't no drill. I dived in that gun turret, and we were in there. We didn't have no time to call a pilot, so our captain cut the fire lines, all our bow lines off the fire axis. He gunned that thing ahead full speed and then right back full speed stern, to turn that thing around, 708 foot cruiser. He turned it around in near about that length of space in that bay.

Life: You were on a cruiser?

Mr. White: Yeah, light cruiser, *St. Louis*. He carried that thing out of there. I reckon it was about a day and a half, two days later we came back in, after it was safe. But during the time he was doing all this, the whole thing was afire. Pure fire, you couldn't see no water no where.

Life: So, were the bombs still coming down while you left the harbor?

Mr. White: Oh, yes sir! A ship on each side of us got hit. And like I said, the *Arizona*, she went right straight down. The *Oklahoma*, she turned bottoms up. After we got out, the *West Virginia* tried to get out. They bombed her. They wanted to block the channel, and the skip. He pulled her right up on the side of it and dry docked her up on the side. It didn't bother the channel. So, we come back in then. All we had to do was pick up all the pieces of bodies and all like that. Stink. Nothing but burnt flesh. You couldn't smell nothing.

Life: I imagine spirits were pretty low about then.

Mr. White: Well, you just didn't think you were going to come back. You know, pick up bodies, you couldn't tell who was what. What you thought to be the equivalent to a body that was put in a box. And, the only thing I could eat was raw cereal to stay on my stomach. Everything else I tried would come back.

Life: How long had you been in Pearl before the attack?

Mr. White: Well, I went in 38, and that was 41. So, that was about three, a little over three years.

Life: Okay, so that's where your first assignment was?

Mr. White: Where? There? No, my first assignment in the Navy, I went on a ROTC cruise abroad the old *Wyoming*. Went to St. Louis on a ROTC cruise.

Life: What? Up the Mississippi?

Mr. White: Yes, sir.

Life: What was that like?

Mr. White: Oh, that, now that was fun. That was party time.

Life: I bet that was quite a trip.

Mr. White: Yes, then when I got off the ROTC cruise, I was transferred to the *USS Tuscaloosa*. I went on the Presidential Cruise. Roosevelt come on there, and you'd never seen a man who looked just like an old farmer. Old felt hat, no band on it, pulled down on his face. You have thought he's an old farmer out there, and he out there fishing.

Life: He was and old Navy man himself, wasn't he?

Mr. White: Oh, yes. Buddy, he just had him a ball. We fared good on it, too, now. Now, we had the best movies, best damn music...

Life: Good food?

Mr. White: Best eating, Buddy. We fared, we fared good on that one. Then I got transferred to the *St. Louis*, and sent south to the west coast on that one.

Life: Did you go cross country on train?

Mr. White: Through a canal.

Life: Through a canal?

Mr. White: Buddy, she was. That was a good place too. Went west through there. But, the west coast, though, it was a kind of tough one until you got used to it.

Life: Were you usually in San Diego?

Mr. White: Well, we went from Balboa to San Diego, all the way up and down the coast. San Francisco and all of them.

Life: Bet that was something to see back then?

Mr. White: Oh yes, old farm boy hadn't never seen anything, hadn't been over twenty miles away from home.

Life: Were you married to Grandma at the time?

Mr. White: No, I got married after I come back out of service.

Life: What was it like leaving your family behind going to uncharted territory for you?

Mr. White: Well, you were scared, you know, you always been used to a big family, didn't know no body, you were just thrown, turned out to the rest of the world. That's all it was, but it didn't take long. Then, somebody always had to work and all. It didn't take long to get to make friends.

Life: On the ship, I guess you kind of had to make friends, I would think.

Mr. White: Well, you kind of have to get along. It was such close quarters.

Life: What were your duties while you were on the ship?

Mr. White: Well, I was boatswain. My duty was to keep everything kind of smooth running the boats and the cranes and stuff on the ship. Some of them, they had winches. Some of them have beams, I've been on some of all of them. After Pearl Harbor, I got a transfer back to Newport, California, to put a tug in commission. So, we came back there and outfitted the tug there at a little old base in Newport. And we got that fixed and then we went up the coast to San Francisco, put it in the dry dock, and

towed it back to Hawaii. And I was tug boating in there. I reckon, I'd been there a year or so. They had a little place out there, what they call West Lock. And they had some LST's out there they had rigged to go overseas, and they had gas, fifty-five gallon drums of gas on the rails all the way around it. And that place caught fire. They sent us out there on those tugs to fight fire. I was pushing right against one seven speed and I heard a roar, like a thunder go off. I reached up, and I snatched it full speed astern. And that thing exploded in that cabin. It come right down on top of us. I was the only one, and I fell right down off of the gift box. And the two boys sitting on the seat behind me, concussion killed them. Weren't a mark on them except a drop of blood coming out of each ear. I picked that tug thing up, I tasted salt water, and I picked that tug thing up, carried them out and run out from under it. And then went back, and got the boys out. That's how scared I was and how strong I was at that time. And I swam to the other tug over there, and we all come back and got on.

Life: Ever figure out what caused it to explode, just fumes or something probably?

Mr. White: Well, you know, things like that, don't just happen. I came back out soon as I got over that, and they put me on another tug. And I couldn't pull up beside a ship. I just couldn't bring it up there. So they, they put me on the garbage scow in the bay out there. That was the best duty I ever had. You'd think it was a nasty job. We went under every ship in the bay. We'd pull up side of it just tighten the line side up, dump the garbage. And we'd go all the way to a mole, just five miles out to sea. It was stainless steel, open with a big gate on top of it. I turned one way and all that would run out. Go a little ways and turn the other way and wash it out and had the rest of the day off.

Life: I bet that brought some fish up when you did that.

Mr. White: Yes, sir. I sat up there and shot sharks while they would wash them down. Then, when I got hardheaded, I found out my rating was being transferred back to the states. Then, I raised so much devil they let me come back. Then, we got transferred to troop transport. It was the USS *Pasedio*. Boy, I messed up there.

Life: Troop transport. What year was that?

Mr. White: I was in there when the war ended. So, it must have been 1945.

Life: Where did you have to transport them?

Mr. White: Well, we were lucky. We never did have to do it, but we were ready. That crew was going to Japan when they surrendered. You should have seen the fleet of ships that was out there this time. There were ships everywhere. But I was a tickled man when I heard this.

Life: Oh, I bet. Kamikaze and stuff by then, wasn't it?

Mr. White: I got my time in. My time was over, and we come back to the states. And, I had enough points and all to get out. But they had made a provision where if your commander thought you were essential, he could keep you. I found out my man was going to keep me. So, I went to the chapter, and the chapter got me off. They had to put me off after they got ready to get underway. But I got out of that.

Life: Well, you had done your time.

Mr. White: Yes, six years and six days. I can tell you the minute—or near about the minute.

Life: What was Hawaii like before Pearl Harbor?

Mr. White: It was good to you. It was still good to you, but you just had so many guards and restrictions, you know. That was the only thing about that. It's just unimaginable that December 7 though, the way these battle ships went out and these planes over there on Hickman's Field. But what's so bad about it, I heard rumors and mess that over there at Hickman's Field, the man that had the key to the magazine was on liberty. The guy had to break the lock to get the ammunition.

Life: You read these things now that say that you should have seen it coming. But it was a big surprise at the time, wasn't it?

Mr. White: It was because nobody weren't listening. Our ship, we were in there for overhauling. Our guns went down, but we still go the six planes by hand. We got six by hand, or we were credited with that many anyway.

Life: Were you the first boat out of the Harbor?

Mr. White: Yes.

Life: Not too many got out, did they?

Mr. White: No, they sure didn't. If the Japanese had known what we know right now, they could have come right on in there if they wanted to. But they had us whooped, buddy, I tell you that.

Life: I know in the big scheme of things, it was a mistake on their part, but right then, it couldn't have looked like that.

Mr. White: Well, I'm going to tell you it was good and bad, too. It brought the country back together. I know you're not old enough to remember, but when Roosevelt went in there, this country was a mess, I tell you. People were hungry, and he started this WPA. He did, he put some money in the community where the farmers would have something to do and a lot of it looked like it was foolish, but it put them to work. It paid them. So, it really helped the country.

Life: People with nothing to do. That works bad on your mind.

Mr. White: You can't imagine. The man's got a family. He lays down at night, and there's not enough food to feed that family the next day. And he don't know where no food is coming from. You know it's hard then.

Life: I know that farming was a big industry around here. I imagine there might have been a saw mill or two.

Mr. White: Well, there was some of all of it, but like I said, nobody had no money to buy it. So, what you going to do?

Life: There was not enough of it, right?

Mr. White: I plowed them mules for thirty-five cents a day. I borrowed it from the man to plow it for thirty-five cents a day, and that was from sun up to sun down. I didn't stop for dinner, and I plowed so much I came back. He told me, he said, "Son," he said, "you plowed so much I'm going to give you fifty cents." And that's what I made that day. I thought I was in high cotton with that fifty cents.

Life: What all could you have bought for fifty cents right then?

Mr. White: Oh, you could buy a handful, a bunch of stuff. I had been to Minnesott on a church bus. It was the back of a farm truck, to tell you the truth. Sunday school class, I wanted to go, and my daddy told me, he said, "Son," he said, "I got five acres of cotton that got to be plowed." That was on a Friday morning before Saturday. I said, "Daddy, if that cotton's plowed, can I go?" I plowed that five acres of cotton Friday, and he let me go. And he give me \$5.00. First time I ever had \$5.00 in my life, and I was about seventeen years old. And I went down to Minnesott, and I spent everywhere that I could spend. Had a big time, bought my friends stuff and all. Come back the next day. "Son, did you spend all that \$5.00?" I said, "No, Daddy. I supposed to give you back the change?" He said, "No, that's yours." You folks don't know nothing about tight times. I've lived them.

Life: How did you get down there, driving wagon or what?

Mr. White: Farm truck. A man in the neighborhood had a farm truck.

Life: A bunch of you piled on there and...

Mr. White: All of us piled on the back of it, little bit of hay in there. There we went.

Life: How much was gas a gallon then?

Mr. White: Ten cents.

Life: How about a Pepsi Cola? Did they have Pepsi Cola back then?



Mr. White: Five cents. Well, I remember when there won't no soft drinks. Well, when there won't no soft drinks there was a guy in the neighborhood who run a store there, had a old big 55 gallon oak barrel. He'd make it full of lemonade on Saturdays. Cup about that big three cents and a cracker-barrel, where you could get a handful of crackers for nothing.

Life: Was he doing pretty good business?

Mr. White: Yes, well it was the only one in the neighborhood. If you had any money, you spent it there.

Life: I imagine as long as you were in the Navy, you went through some pretty good storms out there at sea.

Mr. White: Oh yes, if it got clear, it looked like a liquor glass. You best tie everything down because a storm was coming.

Life: Wasn't there a big typhoon that kind of scattered the whole fleet out there?

Mr. White: That was the last one I was on.

Life: How long was that ship?

Mr. White: I can't remember. I believe it was about 800 feet long, I think.

Life: That's something, isn't it? A boat that big, and that's small compared to the carriers.

Mr. White: Oh, for some of them, yes. See, they had got to where they didn't want to carry too many troops on one boat, you know, on one ship. So, they got to where they made them a little smaller, so if they lost one, they wouldn't lose so many.

Life: Yes, because I guess the Japs were monitoring. They'd see a bunch of ships in a row. They knew what was up, didn't they?

Mr. White: Yes, sir.

Life: I know that old movie *From Here to Eternity*, about Pearl Harbor back then. Did you ever see that?

Mr. White: I lived through enough of it. I don't want to see that kind of movie.

Life: I was just kind of curious. You know, I'm sure it wasn't anything like what it really was.

Mr. White: Well, you know they're bound to white wash some of it. See, my daughter tried to get me and my wife to go back out to Honolulu. I told her no. They had two chances at me, they weren't going to get the third one.

Life: What's your fondest memory while you were in the Navy? First thing that comes to your mind.

Mr. White: Getting out!

Life: So, you came back, and I guess just started farming?

Mr. White: Yes, farmed for a while there. I reckon about 50 years.

Life: I heard things were still kind of tough economically right after the war.

Mr. White: Oh, yes.

Life: Especially a lot of you Navy men and soldiers and stuff, coming back there weren't many jobs.

Mr. White: Well, I can tell you now. We had a school fee you could go to after you came out, you know. You got a hundred dollars a month to go to school. And I had just got married. I lived on \$40.00 a month. That's what we lived on. So you know about how it was.

Life: What were you growing most of right then? Tobacco?

Mr. White: Tobacco, corn, beans, cotton. Anything you thought you'd make a dollar off of.

Life: So, when you got a crop up, where would you take it?

Mr. White: Well, your tobacco, you could go to about any market, Kinston, Greenville, Wilson, Tarboro, and all around. Cotton, wherever you could find a gin. Beans and corn wherever you could find a corn mill. Most of the time, they had a corn mill locally, so you wouldn't have to go far.

Life: What did you do for fun? I know you worked all the time.

Mr. White: That's just about it. Didn't have no time. It took all the time to work to make a living.

Life: Six days a week? Did you work six days a week?

Mr. White: Yes, siree. Got to church on Sunday. Maybe once and a while, set off and go fishing or hunting.

Life: You used to get a lot better runs didn't you? Fish runs in the river then?

Mr. White: Oh, yes, during the herring and shad season. I reckon on the first year, two or three years I was married, we lived on wildlife and things. I hunted and fished. I killed ducks, squirrel, rabbit, raccoons. Whatever I killed, we eat.

Life: Didn't there used to be an albino deer across the road that would show up every now and then?

Mr. White: Yes, sir. There used to be an albino deer that had a rack of horns that wide on him.

Life: Well, I'll be. I wonder what ever happened to it.

Mr. White: Well, I think it died of old age. I ain't never heard tell of anybody killed it. If anybody killed it, they'd have been bragging.

Life: I would think so.

Mr. White: So, he eventually died of old age.

Life: When you were out at sea and a big storm came up, would you just turn the ship into the storm and ride it out?

Mr. White: That's all you could do. You had nowhere else to go. You headed into it.

Life: How big would the waves get?

Mr. White: I've seen them when the ship rolled enough where the water, waves on the side of it would dip the water. So, judge for yourself. You better be holding on.

Life: I guess logic would tell you that the boat could stand it, but I imagine I would be getting pretty nervous seeing it do that.

Mr. White: Well, with every big ship, right midship has got plates that slide by each other. It's not solid or it would break in two.

Life: So it can flex?

Mr. White: Yes.

Mr. White: You better find you a statue or something to hold on to. The best seat in the rough sea is a hammock. A hammock stays still. The ship rolls all around there.

Life: You just lock all the doors down and ride it out?

Mr. White: That's all. Batten down the hatches. You may think, I'm telling you something fancy, but we saw a torpedo coming one time, and all of us run, and do you believe that torpedo come up on the stern of that ship and didn't hardly dent it, and it didn't explode?

Life: Well, I'll be danged. Hit it and didn't go off.

Mr. White: But, I was in a battle down in Wantanama Bay. I done forgot the name of the bay, but anyway there was three cruisers sailing in, one got by, torpedo sunk one there, and we were right behind them. And that ship sunk fast enough that we sailed right over where it was.

Life: Well, I'll be.

Mr. White: We couldn't stop to pick up no folks. The destroyers and smaller ships, you know, picked them up.

Life: What boat were you on then?

Mr. White: St. Louis. It was in Guadalcanal. At that time, they said that the Japanese was on each side of us, and we sailed down right between them, firing each way.

Life: What fleet were you in then, was that Halsey?

Mr. White: Halsey.

Life: Did you ever see him?

Mr. White: Oh, yes. He was just a plain old shooter. Most of the highrankers was. It was these lieutenants and JG's that gives you the headache. They come out of college there, and they got the grade, you see. They didn't know nothing. Come around and ask you how to do something today and then come around tomorrow and tell you how to do it.

Life: So, Halsey was pretty well-liked then, I guess.

Mr. White: Yes, sir. We had a man one time was in battle, this was a commander now, and one day come to checking up, wanted to know where he was in battle. Nobody could tell him. The next time we hit port, he was the first man who hit shore. He didn't come back. He didn't take



no foolishness now. I got two boys come aboard ship under my division out of Oregon, lumberjacks. I let them go to shore together. They got drunk, stole a fire ax, and was out there cutting on a light pole. One of them backed off. They hollered, "Timber!" I had to split them up.

Life: They were having too much fun, weren't they?

Mr. White: Yes, and one of them, we were sweeping, washing down dirt, and sweeping up there, drizzling rain. I standing there by a big blower coming out where it would keep me dry. He came up and asked me, he said, "Boat, give me a cigarette." I give him a cigarette. He took about two or three draws off it. He went and stepped right there on the pit on top along there, right over the side. I reported him to the captain. He took me down there, and he told me, he said, "Son, before you say anything," he said, "if that man had a good mind when he jumped over that side, his insurance weren't paid off." He said, "What do you think about it?" I says "Captain, you know there ain't no sane man step up there and jump off," I said, "Want me

go and tell the folks he had good sense? Take the money away from his family. No, sir."

Life: It was just an accident though, right?

Mr. White: No, it weren't. He had planned it.

Life: He planned it?

Mr. White: Yes, but who am I to judge.

Life: I guess there was probably more of that than we heard about, I would think.

Mr. White: Yes, sir. There was a whole lot of it that happened. You just don't know. People that were snotty, treated guys bad when they went aboard ship. A lot of them didn't come back, and it weren't no accident.

Life: I guess you had to worry a lot about submarines while you were out there.

Mr. White: Well, we knew they were there, but we didn't really worry about them.

Life: What about the Kamikazes?

Mr. White: That, you worry for. Well, you know, they also had that little two man sub.

Life: They actually found one in Pearl Harbor, didn't they?

Mr. White: It got under an ammunition ship in Pearl Harbor. I towed the ship away from over the top of it!

Life: Did you know it was right there, right then?

Mr. White: Yes.

Life: I guess you got where you could identify those planes in the air, about like you can ducks back here?

Mr. White: Yes, just a glimpse, and you knew what it was.

Life: And even maybe by the whine of the engine, I'd bet, when you couldn't see them.

Mr. White: Yes. I was on this light cruiser. They had two sea planes on it and had a catapult on each side of the fantail. And I was in charge of picking them up. Well, when you put your lip out there for them to catch on, the plane had an automatic tightener on it. And, it wouldn't pick the plane up. Soon as it hit the net, you had to take automatic off and take it to manual. I had a lieutenant come down there telling me to use the automatic, and I went on picked the crane up. I wouldn't do it like he said to do, and he put me on court martial, carried me up before the captain. I said, "Captain, would you come back here and let me show you what he's talking about?" He said, "I certainly will." I walked back there, and I showed him. When a plane came at me, the automatic wouldn't pick him up. He said, "What do you do now?" "I push that button and pick him up." He said, "Lieutenant, I'd like to see you in my office." I didn't hear no more about it. He got transferred.

Life: I guess there was a lot of that though, people in charge, not necessarily knowing what's going on.

Mr. White: Do you remember when we gave those destroyers to England back there during the war?

Life: The lend-lease thing, sure.

Mr. White: Well, I was in the troop that convoyed them down the Newfoundland and turned them over. That was rough water down there, too.

Life: Was there a lot of ice up there?

Mr. White: I'd never seen no ice up there. There's a lot of ice up in Alaska when I was up there.

Life: When were you in Alaska?

Mr. White: We put some marines off in Midway and took off for Alaska, so it was just before the Battle of Midway.

Life: What ship were you on then?

Mr. White: The Missouri. We went up on a convoy for laying plats for a landing field. It was tough up there sometimes. You go up there—that's pretty country up there. In spring, you got green down here, brown there, and snow up there on the mountains.

Life: Did you see a lot of whales?

Mr. White: Yeah, we saw them now and then. Whales, dolphins, you name it.

Life: Did you ever see anything at sea that you couldn't explain? Something amazing out in the middle of nowhere in the ocean?

Mr. White: You could be up there at night, particularly on a moonlight night, you could see it look like pure gold down there as the ship was slicing through the water.

Life: What was the prettiest place you ever saw?

Mr. White: Now you got me, I went a lot of pretty places. I reckon as far as scenery was concerned Alaska was the prettiest. Of course, Hawaii has got some pretty places.

Life: Alaska was untouched, wasn't it?

Mr. White: Well now, there was a stream, as far as from here to my wall yonder. You could see salmon that long in there, and you could have hit them with a stick if you wanted to.

Life: Did you get some shore time while you were up there?

Mr. White: Oh, yes, they'd let us go to shore. You couldn't drink the beer aboard ship, so they would give you a case with 2 or 3 others and let you go to shore and put it in that cold water up there and have a party.

Life: That was about like the Wild West, wasn't it?

Mr. White: Well, I tell you what. There was a saloon up there, as long as, my whole house. No bar stools, just an old copper rail like you see in the old westerns to prop your foot up on you know, spittoons, and barrels over there to throw your beer bottles and stuff in, and up there on the wall there was a big Kodiak bear skin, about cover up that wall.

Life: I would hate to run into him walking in the woods.

Mr. White: Me neither. Don't want to see him in the woods much less on the wall. That was in Kodiak, Alaska.

Life: I think they grow up to 12 ft tall if I'm not mistaken.

Mr. White: That one was taller than that, and I've seen a bear, oh stand taller than we do, an old black bear.

Life: When you were out at sea, could you listen to radio any, any outside communication?

Mr. White: Depends on where you were. You have black outs and sound outs and all that kind of mess. On the boat, you had a sound system and if you had your ear-phones, you could plug them in and hear stuff.

Life: Is there anything you want to talk about we're not getting to?

Mr. White: I don't reckon. I about got to where it doesn't bother me too much to talk about it. There was a long time I couldn't do too much talking about it.

Life: I could understand that. We like to hear it. There aren't too many of you left around to tell what it was like.

Mr. White: That's right, we're few and far between, living on borrowed time now. Like I told the doc, told me don't eat this and don't eat that. I told him, "Wait a minute. I'm 80 years old I've had a good life, and I'm going to eat some of anything I want." He kind of laughed and said, "I don't much blame you."

Life: Well, he probably feels like he should say it.

Mr. White: I know what I'm not supposed to pig out on, but as far as me eating a little of anything I want, I'm going to do it.

Life: When the shells start going off, I've always heard it's almost impossible to imagine the noise and concussion.

Mr. White: If you didn't have your fingers to get up on your ears, it would have busted your brains out. I've seen a man with a pair of new dungarees on behind a 3 inch 6 gun turret where the concussion split his britches up to his waist. So what would that have done if he hadn't had on ear protection?

Life: That's a chore, keeping a ship like that stocked and feeding everybody.

Mr. White: Well, it took everybody having to do his own job. That's what it took. Everybody depending on everybody else.

Life: What did you eat out there mostly?

Mr. White: Oh, we eat good.

Life: You had plenty of fresh vegetables and all?

Mr. White: Oh, no, we'd run out of fresh vegetables a lot of times. We went out to Pago Pago, and we had them folks down there. They were starving to death. We gave them

everything we had but beans. We eat beans for about four days—breakfast, dinner, and supper. We didn't care. We were glad to give them folks something to eat.

Life: You were glad to help them out, weren't you?

Mr. White: Oh, yes. I was in charge of all the booms and cranes when you come in and take on fresh vegetables and fruits and stuff. When I took the first pallet of fruit or something else, I went in and took out a box of each – apples, oranges, whatever. Tear the top right off and I'd tell them, "Don't open no other one." I'd say, "Eat out of here." I had one boy there one time in charge of all the stuff there. He said, "You can't do that." I'd say, "All right." So when the stuff come up, I tore the crane down so they couldn't pick it up. They had to tote it up the gangplank, and he lost about four crates. Come to me and said, "Boats, you open what you want to from now on." So that's the way we got along. I tried to help him, but I wanted some help, too.

Life: Well, everybody's got to look out for each other when doing like that, don't they?

Mr. White: That's right. Just like you always had to have a CHIT to get anything down there to work on stuff, you know. And it's supposed to be signed and all this kind of mess. I'd go down there and tell the boy I'd got to have so and so. He'd say something about a CHIT, and I'd say all right. I'd say, "And when your stuff comes on, you'll tote it up the gang plank too." He'd fill out the CHIT and he'd get the part I wanted.

Life: What were the sleeping arrangements like on the boat?

Mr. White: Well, most of them was bunks right up on the side of the ship. And there be another pole and another row, and they'd be five bunks high. You had about that much room to get in.

Life: Right, right. The new bunks are coffin bunks where you can put your stuff inside of them and sleep on top of them.

Mr. White: To press your pants and jumpers, you put them out under your mattress. And there'd be a canvas on the thing. You put them on the canvas and then put your mattress on top. You slept on them to press them. But you had a locker to put your clothes in – a separate place. On that bunk, you only had about that much room to get in.

Life: I bet it got hot on those ships.

Mr. White: Oh, yes. They were on chains, and when everybody was out, there were some straps to keep your mattress from falling. You hook them up, and then there'd be open space.

Life: What did you do for entertainment – play cards and stuff?

Mr. White: Oh, we done some of that too. Acey Deucey.

Life: I bet there were some pretty good card players on those boats, weren't there?

Mr. White: Yes. But some you didn't even have a laundry on, and you had to do your own washing and stuff. You didn't have a lot of time to mess around getting clothes cleaned.

Life: A lot of scraping and painting, I guess?

Mr. White: Oh, yes. Sewing canvas on lifelines, insulating lifelines, pipes. A man would come in there with white gloves on, and he'd run his hand over that overhead pipe. He'd better not get no dust on his hand.

Life: What size were the guns on your ship?

Mr. White: Well, the battle ships was 12 inch, the heavy cruisers were 8 inch, the life cruisers were 6 inch, and all destroyers were 4 inch. Then, they come down to what they said was a pom pom was two inch. Then, you had your sixes, your fifty caliber machine guns. Right on down.

Life: What was your favorite port? Or did you have a favorite?

Mr. White: Well, I reckon New Orleans. I was about my favorite port as I remember.

Life: Were you down there much as you cruised up the Mississippi?

Mr. White: Down there about a week.

Life: How was that cruise up the Mississippi? I want to hear a little more about that.

Mr. White: Well, you just go right on. You didn't have no stops just one in St. Louis.

Life: How big a boat were you on?

Mr. White: A battleship!

Life: So you went all the way up the Mississippi? I knew the Mississippi was big but I didn't think it would be deep enough.

Mr. White: Oh yes, they'd carry a lot of cargo down the Mississippi.

Life: New Orleans is a pretty wild place now.

Mr. White: It was pure open back there then.

Life: You went down the quarter and everything?

Mr. White: Oh, yes. Go anywhere you wanted to. And sailors, oh they treated them so good.

Life: I bet they did.

Mr. White: You could hardly spend any money down there. People buy for you. Your food and your drinking—they would pay for it all.

Life: I have been to New Orleans, and it's still a pretty friendly town.

Mr. White: I would kind of like to go back down there to the Mardi Gras, but then again, I don't want to be around that many folks! But I know it would be nice.

Life: Do you want to talk about farming when you got back? Or growing up here?

Mr. White: Well, it's always been tough farming.

Life: If you could give young people any advice, what would it be?

Mr. White: The best thing to do is take some advice from their parents, and if their parents are living right, to listen to them. Don't listen to some outsider that trying to put on a show for them. All of them need to be in church and trust in the Lord because that's the only thing that you can really trust in this world.

Life: When did you get your first tractor? I'm sure you plowed for years with a mule, but when did you get your first tractor?

Mr. White: 1952

Life: Did you miss messing with the mules?

Mr. White: No, because I kept a mule. I kept her until she died about 20 years after I got the tractor. People would try to buy her from me but I would say, "No, she don't owe nobody nothing out there in that pasture and that's where she's going to stay."

Mr. White: I tended 150 acres with a 2-row tractor by myself.

Life: Was there anything you like growing the most or was it all about the same to you?

Mr. White: All of it's pretty growing to me, and long as you got some good help housing tobacco, you got no problems. When my children got up big enough where they could work, they'd get their friends, and I had a tobacco harvester. They would be out there on that harvester, and you could hear them for a half a mile laughing, joking, and mess. I wouldn't do nothing but put a truck at the end of the row, put some drinks in a cooler, some nabs and cakes there, and I stayed out the way. They'd get my barn of tobacco a day. Some folks would say they aren't do-

ing nothing I'd say, "They're filling my barn with tobacco. That's what I want."

Life: Some folks can't stand to have fun while they're working.

Mr. White: No, they didn't think they were doing nothing when they were.

Life: What do you think about all this talk about tobacco farming now?

Mr. White: I think they're getting the shaft. They're taken it away from the ones here farming now, importing it and then you see blending it with other and claiming it's our tobacco. These people in foreign countries can raise it for nothing. They can get their fertilizer for about a fourth of what we can buy it, so what you going to do? They can sell it cheaper, you know. It's just like this gas business. Heating gas for my house here now is 4 times what it was last year, and you know there ain't that kind of shortage. They're just shafting us. And there ain't no way in the world that the farmer can stay in business with the price of gas, nitrogen, and fertilizer nowadays. They're going to go bust. If you can't make any money, you can't stay in it no matter what you're doing.

Life: You're right about that.

Mr. White: Well, the thing about it is in this part of the country the environmental people is got to where they don't want you to drill for no oil, nowhere on a wild life range, no where on the outer coast, what are they going to do? It's going to run out sometime. I think a lot of the wildlife and stuff too, but I think a lot more of humans than I do the wildlife.

Life: Well, when the price gets high enough, that's going to take care of itself. As long as people can buy it cheap from the Middle East, they're not going to be for drilling around here, but if it gets high enough around here, they'll say well....

Mr. White: I hate to see a country that we send our boys over there to free them up, so they can take the country



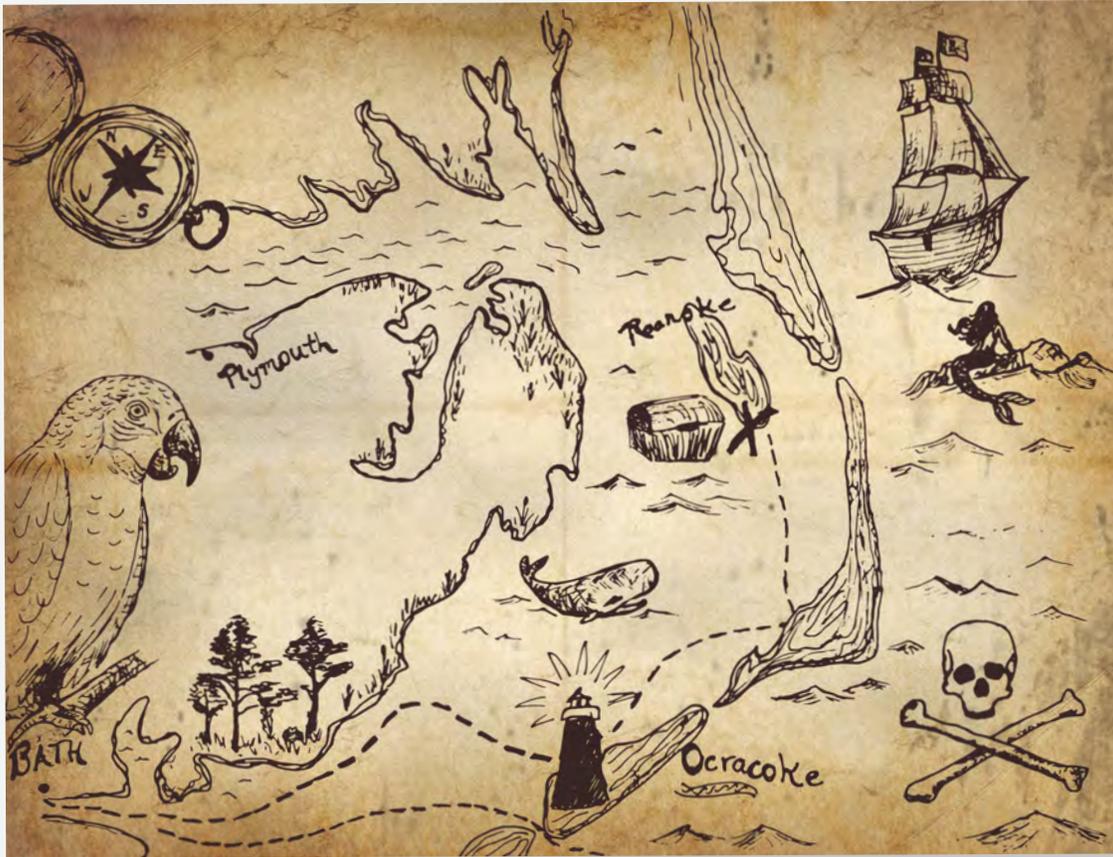
back. They set the oil wells afire, we put them out, and now they're in the cartel telling us what we have to pay. I don't go for that kind of stuff. Just like Japan, fight them to whop them, then rebuild them. Now they're telling us what we can do. I don't go for it.

Conclusion

There seems to be few things in life that man can't take from you. Your memory is one of them. While interviewing Mr. White, we found this to be true. The walk we took with him enlightened us to a different era when men joined the service for adventure, patriotism, and the honor of becoming a man. Most of us can only imagine what it would be like to live when the mule, horse, and buggy were the rule and not the exception. Battleships, "Cracker Jack" uniforms, shore leave, and sea stories all fill one's mind with a sense of adventure. To Mr. White, however, those memories of Pearl Harbor will always be tarnished. It was quite a pleasure to hear of the sacrifice of all those men and everything they sacrificed for our freedom. My sincere thanks to all those veterans out there.

Thanks, Grandpa.

HERE THERE BE PIRATES



Eastern NC Pirate Map
by Kelsey Powell

Ahoy! As you know, working on the water can be tough work, especially in the days before motors and Global Positioning Systems. Piracy and exploration is a part of our legacy on the water, and as such, we dug into the history of some pirates and sailors to share with our readers another piece of our water heritage.

In these articles, you will read about pirates who visited the Carolinas. We have chosen some lesser-known stories about pirates and sailors to share. Some stopped in to party with the notorious North Carolina pirate, Blackbeard, while others used our shores as an escape from those hunting

them along the Spanish Main. Perhaps the most fascinating of our pirates are the women, who legend says were vicious but smart enough not to have their careers end at the gallows. However, not every early sailor of our coast was a pirate. While pirates plundered for riches, there were plenty other sailors that used their skills to help found colonies in what is now the United States. These stories continue to be a part of who we are and how we live our lives near the waters of the Pamlico.

EDITOR

MARY READ

FEARLESS FEMALE PIRATE

Miranda Hollis, Doris Moss-Sadler, and Sidney Marslender

Growing up in this area, you become accustomed to hearing about pirates and being immersed in pirate culture, but how often do you hear about female pirates? Not often enough, that's for sure. While their male counterparts may be the ones that are well-known, female pirates are nothing to be scoffed at. Mary Read is a perfect example of an underappreciated pirate. Despite only being a pirate for about two years, she was a fierce and courageous member of her crew.

Mary's mother was married to a man who had left her while she was pregnant and sailed off on a long voyage. The woman never heard from him again. She gave birth to a sick boy who died shortly after the birth of his half-sister, Mary Read. Mary was an illegitimate child born sometime around 1690 in Plymouth, England. Though her mother waited for many years, her husband never returned home, and she soon began to run out of money. The woman immediately began dressing Mary as a boy in order to receive money from her mother-in-law who pitied the troubled family. During her time as



a man, Mary went by the name of “Mark Read”.

As a child, Mary was hired as a footboy for a French Lady. When she was about 13, she served as a “powder monkey” during the War of the Grand Alliance. Sometime later, she joined the Army of Flanders. During her time serving in the infantry and the cavalry, no one discovered that she was a woman. That is until she fell in love with her bunkmate. It was then Mary informed her entire regiment of her secret, quit the army, and married the soldier. Her wedding dress was the first item of women’s clothing that she ever purchased. Afterward, she and her husband became innkeepers and opened up a tavern called the Three Horseshoes near the castle of Breda in Holland. However, shortly before the turn of the 18th century, her husband died. Due to financial troubles and the more convenient lifestyle, Mary resumed her life as a man and sailed for the West Indies on a Dutch ship. While in the Caribbean, her ship was attacked by pirates. Believed to be a fellow Englishman, the pirates encouraged Mary to join their crew. John Rackham, famously known as “Calico Jack”, was the quartermaster of her new crew aboard the ship *Revenge*.

Had it not been for Anne Bonny, Mary’s secret may have never been discovered. Anne tried to seduce Mary after she joined, making Rackham jealous. It wasn’t until he burst into her cabin with the intent to slit her throat that Mary shared her true gender. Mary and Anne remained close after the skirmish, fighting

side by side in battles. They wore billowing jackets, long trousers, and handkerchiefs around their heads to disguise themselves. With a machete in one hand and a pistol in the other, they charged into battle. The two women were nicknamed the “fierce hell cats” because of their quick tem-

“IF THERE’S A
MAN AMONG YE,
YE’LL COME UP
AND FIGHT LIKE
THE MAN YE ARE
TO BE!”

pers and violent fights. Mary was described by her victims as being “very active on board” and “willing to do anything.” Mary Read was quite the character. She swore like a drunken sailor and was always ready for a raid. In addition to this, she was aggressive and ruthless. While part of Rackham’s crew, she robbed privateers and used the inlets of the Outer Banks to make sneaky escapes.

Mary was not afraid to do what she had to in order to get her way. Someone that she was interested in irritated a cutthroat in the crew who challenged him to a duel. Fearing the troublemaker would kill her love interest, she challenged him to a duel just hours before the original duel was to take place. Mary swiftly killed the man in order to save the object of her affection.

On October 22, 1720, a governor’s vessel captured their ship while it was anchored off Point Ne-

gril, Jamaica. Rackham surrendered, but Mary and Anne refused to do so. They were the only ones to fight for their freedom. According to legend, Mary was so disgusted by the behavior of her crewmates that she halted her assault long enough to peer over the entrance of the hold and yell, “If there’s a man among ye, ye’ll come up and fight like the man ye are to be!” When no one responded, she shot and killed one of the men in the hold. It wasn’t long before Mary and Anne were overpowered, and the crew was taken prisoner. Mary stood trial at the Admiralty Court in St. Jago del Velga, Jamaica. She was found guilty and sentenced to hang, but her execution was put on hold because she declared herself pregnant. The British aversion to killing unborn children gave her a little more time to live, at least until her child was born. However, Mary died of a fever while in the Spanish Town prison. On April 18, 1721, her body was buried in the parish of St. Catherine in Jamaica. Mary Read, the fearless female pirate, was finally put to rest.



ANNE BONNY

FIERCE & COURAGEOUS

Karla Romero-Rochin and Tasha Spencer

Often, the famous and infamous come from humble beginnings. For Anne Bonny, this is especially true. She was born Anne Cormac in Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland in 1697. Her father, William Cormac, was a prestigious lawyer. Her mother's name was Mary Brennan, and she was a servant woman/house maid. It was Mr. Cormac adultery with the house maid that resulted in the Anne's illegitimate birth. Soon, Mr. Cormac's wife made his adultery public, refuting his trustworthy reputation as an attorney. As a result, he got re-married to Mary, and he, his new wife, and young Anne left Ireland to start again in the New World. They settled in Charleston, South Carolina, where they led their lives as farmers.

Anne's life was hard at first because her birth mother died of typhoid fever when Anne was 13 years old. This tragedy caused young Anne to be a hardy girl with a "fierce and courageous temper." Without a mother to guide her in the ways of love and compassion, she grew up headstrong and out of control, for her father did not discipline her. Her malicious tendencies grew worse



until during one of her fits of rage, she stabbed a serving girl. Also, she nearly killed a young man for trying to come on to her, and in another incident, she stabbed the cook over an argument about a chicken dinner. The cook was so badly injured that she was confined to her bed for several weeks. Her father shrugged the stabbing off, saying that the cook “was in her time a pretty good cook; however, she was a bit opinionated and my daughter is to be excused for losing her temper with her.”

In 1718, Anne married a penniless sailor named James Bonny. He courted Anne for her inheritance as much as her beauty. Mr. Cormac warned Anne that he would disinherit her if she married Bonny; however, she paid him no mind, and they eloped. This situation made her father so upset that he felt he had no choice but to throw her out of the house. Anne and her new husband went to the island of New Providence in the Bahamas. There, they hoped to find employment. James decided that spying on his ex-comrades was an easy way to make a profit. He began informing to Governor Woods Rodgers, who had been assigned to deal with the tyranny of pirates in the Spanish Main, in exchange for a pardon of his petty pirate crimes. Quickly, Anne realized that she married a petty, jealous man, and when she found out that his livelihood came from turning in men who had once been his comrades, her contempt for James Bonny grew.

In 1719, she met Captain John Rackham, also known as “Calico

ANNE REVEALED HERSELF AS A WOMAN IN HOPES OF SEDUCING READ.

Jack”, who was famous for his looks and his bravery. It was no surprise that his colorful manner and clothing sparked her passion for him or that her fiery red hair and temper attracted Rackham. Anne asked her husband for a divorce, for which he refused. Jack even offered James money to let him have Anne as his wife. Instead of accepting the money, James appealed to the governor to have Anne flogged for adultery.

The night before she was to be flogged, she escaped with Jack Rackham, stealing a small ship with a crew of eight. James asked the governor’s soldiers to catch Anne and bring her back with the warning that should she run away again, she’d get a public whipping. Jack began plotting with Anne to steal a sloop and put it to the sea. When the governor’s threat reached Anne and Jack, they took a chance on their plan.

The next morning Jack was sailing his new, ill-gotten ship with his new crew member, Anne. It is said during this time Anne became pregnant. While she was pregnant, she had Jack set her ashore in Cuba, presumably so she wouldn’t get in the way. Two months later, she left the baby on shore with a nurse to return to the *Vanity*.

In leaving Cuba, she snuck out to meet Rackham and eight of his men at the waterfront. Anne dressed in a pair of Calico Jack’s striped sea-

men’s trousers with a cutlass by her side and two pistols in her belt. Jack and his crew gave her a brand new name, Tom Bonny, since she dressed as a man. Then, they rowed out to a sloop, the *Vanity*. Legend says this boat was the fastest boat in the islands. Jack, Anne, and their men overpowered the anchor watch and chained them. Jack cut the cables and off they sailed after setting the anchor watch ashore. With Jack as the captain, they began their pirate career. The entire crew knew that Tom Bonney was a woman and Rackham’s common-law wife, but she was treated no differently than any other man aboard the ship.

Anne met Mary Read in Nassau as they were preparing to ship out with Captain Jack Rackham. According to legend, Bonny felt a strong attraction to Read, who also dressed as a man to disguise her identity. Anne revealed herself as a woman in hopes of seducing Read. After Anne revealed herself, Mary confessed to Anne that she was a woman, too. These two ladies became very close; some speculate they may have been lovers. They did sometimes wear women’s clothes on board the ship, but they usually changed into men’s clothes when it looked like there would be some fighting soon. Despite their gender, Mary and Anne both made fierce pirates, and as many of their shipmates’ claimed,



were “resolute and ready to board or undertake anything that was hazardous” in the time of action.

In October 1720, Governor Woodes Rogers authorized privateers to hunt and capture Calico Jack and other pirates for bounties. Captain Barnet, an ex-pirate who had risen to be a commander of the British Navy, attacked Rackham’s anchored ship *Revenge*. Almost every person in Jack’s crew was drunk because they celebrated all night after capturing a Spanish commercial ship. Anne and Mary were the only ones who fought against Barnet’s men. The fight didn’t last that long because Anne and Mary were overpowered. At the end, Captain Rackham, Anne, Mary and the rest of the crew were taken to a Spanish town jail for trial.

The trial of Jack, Anne, and Mary caused a sensation. Jack and the male crew members were found guilty and sentenced to death. Anne was permitted to see Jack on the day of his execution where she told him that if he had fought like a man, he wouldn’t have to hang like a dog. The day after the death sentence was passed, the men were hanged at Gallow’s Point.

Bonny and Read were tried on November 28. They were accused of piratically and feloniously attacking and plundering seven fishing boats at Harbor Island, of shooting at and taking two merchant ships off Hispaniola, and of attacking the sloops of Thomas Spenlow and Thomas Dillon and assaulting their crews. When the charges were read, the ladies were asked whether they were guilty or not guilty, they both said

“not guilty.” Since Anne and Mary had no witnesses in their defense or questions to ask, the verdict was inevitable. Though they were found guilty and sentenced to death, their recently announced pregnancies won them stays of execution.

Anne’s father, William, persuaded the Jamaican authorities to release Anne from jail. Once she was released, her father took Anne back to Charleston, South Carolina, where she married a responsible local man named, James Burleigh. Together, Anne Bonny and James Burleigh had eight children. William was also able to locate Anne’s first son she had with Jack Rackham in Cuba. The boy was brought back to Charleston, adopted by Anne, and named John in memory of his pirate father. Anne died in 1782 at the age of 84.

CALICO JACK

18TH CENTURY WOMANIZER

Zach Paramore

Calico Jack was not recognized for being a great pirate; rather, he is better remembered for having two female pirates serve under his command. John “Calico Jack” Rackham was an English pirate captain who was active in the waters around the Bahamas during the end of the period branded as the “Golden Age of Piracy.” Very little is known about Rackham’s youth. The only certain fact is that he was born by English parents in Jamaica around the year 1682. Rackham earned the nickname “Calico Jack” because of his taste for clothes made of brightly-colored Indian Calico cloth.

Rackham’s pirating career began as quartermaster on notorious pirate Charles Vane’s ship. In 1718, while sailing around the waters of New York, Vane’s crew came upon large French military ships. Vane decided that the best course of action was to run. This decision caused many members of the crew to become restless. Rackham, being the quartermaster, began to demand for change of action. Despite this overwhelming dissatisfaction from the majority of the crew, Vane



continued on his course. Toward the end of November of the same year, Rackham and the crew came to a decision to remove the “spine-

less” captain from his post. Charles Vane, along with 15 of his supporters, left on a well-stocked ship, and

Calico Jack became captain for the first time.

Rackham captured the merchant ship *Kingston* as one of his first maneuvers. This ship had a rich load and promised to be a big score for Rackham and his crew. Unfortunately for Rackham, the ship had been taken in sight of the port, and bounty hunters were sent to go after him.

In February of 1719, these hunters caught up to Rackham and his crew. Soon after that, their ship was taken away. Rackham reached Nassau in the Bahamas shortly after where he tried to obtain the King's pardon. His request was granted, making him a free man clean of all his past crimes. It was during this time that Rackham was introduced to Anne Bonny, and an affair resulted.

Anne was the wife of known pirate spy, James Bonny. After learning of the affair, James had her jailed and sentenced to whipping. Rackham, hearing this, managed to set her free and smuggle her to his ship, consequently voiding his newly acquired pardon.

In the following months, Bonny became pregnant and went to Cuba to have the child. She returned shortly after. However, there is speculation as to whether or not Bonny was actually pregnant because there are no records of the child's birth or life. It was also during this time that Bonny met Mary Read, an Englishwoman who spent almost her entire life dressed like a man.



In August of 1720, Rackham, Bonny, Read, and the rest of the crew stole the *William* out of Nassau's harbor. Rackham proceeded to hoist the skull and cutlass flag and attack several small vessels on a cruise from the Bahamas to Jamaica over the next couple of months.

The governor of New Providence, Captain Woodes Rogers, became furious with the actions of Rackham and his crew. A proclamation was issued against them, declaring them pirates. John Rackham's pirate career came to an end when Rogers sent out Captain Jonathan Barnet to capture Rackham and his crew.

He managed to do so in October of 1720 off the coast of Jamaica. After a short battle, the entire crew was captured and shipped to Jamaica for trial. Legend has it that during the capture of Rackham and his ship, the men hid below deck while Bonny and Read stayed above and fought.

Rackham and his men were tried and found guilty; they were hanged on November 18, 1720. Rackham's body was tarred and hanged in a cage as a warning to the would-be pirates near the entrance of the city Port Royal. Interestingly enough, Bonny and Read were spared the noose because they both claimed to be pregnant.

John "Calico Jack" Rackham was not a great pirate. He was mediocre at best. His brief tenures as captain were marked more by daring and bravery than pirating skill. His biggest prize, the *Kingston*, was only in his power for a few days. He never had the impact on the Caribbean that others like Blackbeard, Edward Low, "Black Bart" Roberts or even his one-time mentor Charles Vane did. Today, he is primarily remembered for his association with Mary Read and Anne Bonny.

STEDE BONNET

THE GENTLEMAN PIRATE

Kelsey Powell, Elizabeth Boyd, Olivia Van Essendelft, & JaNeisha Rodgers

A hoy, mateys, and avast ye to know the story of the “Gentleman Pirate.”

In 1717, Stede Bonnet, a handsome, retired man of wealth, just up and decided to become a pirate. Bonnet had a family in Barbados when he decided to pursue his dream of being a pirate. Some people speculated that his dream of piracy was a result of a nagging wife while others simply thought that he was going insane. Whatever his reasons, trading the life of a gentleman for the risky life of a pirate seemed to be the last thing any reasonable person would do.

Bonnet began his career as a pirate by doing something a little different than typical pirates. Pirates usually used a ship that they hijacked and did not hire their crew, but rather would split the booty with them. Bonnet, on the other hand, purchased a ship, which he named the *Revenge* and after hiring a 70-man crew, he set sail northeast for the American colonies.

Bonnet’s first victories were in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina. On the Chesapeake Bay, he plundered three English ships as well as one ship from



Barbados. Perhaps in order to keep news from reaching his homeland, Bonnet burned the Barbados ship even though he let the other ships go. Then, he turned the *Revenge* toward Charleston where he robbed two more ships. Bonnet’s pirating

career seemed to be going well until he met a Spanish war ship on his way to the Bahamas. The fight left him wounded, and half his men had been killed. All the Gentleman Pirate could do was steer his ship to New

Providence in the Bahamas and hope for the best.

Now me mateys, this is where the story gets interesting. At this point, Bonnet's life suddenly collided with the infamous pirate, Blackbeard. As Bonnet struggled to recover from his losses at sea, he allowed Blackbeard to command his ship. During this time, everything seemed to be improving for Bonnet. He doubled his crew, added two guns to his ship, and began looting more ships with the help of Blackbeard. It was during this time that Blackbeard hijacked the now famous ship that he named the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Soon after, Bonnet decided that he was healed enough from his battle wounds to set out on his own once again.

However, the Gentleman Pirate did not fare well alone for long. His crew did not respect him because they saw his weakness at commanding the ship. Bonnet remained well-groomed and well-dressed, and he was often seen reading books on deck. His crew members were not the only ones who saw his vulnerability. Bonnet felt that it was a stroke of fortune when he happened upon Blackbeard's ship in Belize, but Blackbeard quickly caught on to Bonnet's weaknesses and decided to use it to his advantage. In this, Blackbeard was

able to persuade Bonnet to room on the *Queen Anne's Revenge* instead of his own ship. Then, he deviously put one of his own trusted men in charge of Bonnet's ship.

Bonnet lived without authority over his own ship for quite a few months as Blackbeard maneuvered up the coast of America. While Blackbeard continued to make victories, Bonnet sank into a state of shamefulness; he knew that his efforts as a pirate were failing. As a result, he decided to ask for pardon for his crimes. Bonnet was able to separate from Blackbeard in early June, and he immediately went to Bath, North Carolina, to seek pardon from Governor Charles Eden. Bonnet told Eden that he planned to become a legal privateer instead of a pirate, and with the pardon that Eden gave him, Bonnet left for the Virgin Islands in order to fulfill this promise.

However, Bonnet's plans quickly changed. When he returned to the *Revenge*, he discovered that Blackbeard had recruited many of his men. Bonnet was outraged and vowed revenge on Blackbeard. Bonnet contended to become a better pirate and create a new reputation for himself. But, no matter how in earnest Bonnet had been about becoming a privateer or how desperate he had been

to find Blackbeard, neither of these ambitions lasted long. During his search for Blackbeard, Bonnet began to loot ships again. He must have still hoped to become a privateer because he went into disguise. He changed his ship's name to the *Royal James* and interchangeably used "Captain Thomas" and "Captain Edwards" as his name.

The beginning of the end of Bonnet's second pirating attempt came after he looted a Charleston ship while resting at Cape Fear. Although most of that ship's crew was taken prisoner, the captain, John Dalton, was able to escape and alert the town of Charleston. The town decided that it was time to send out a search for several pirates who were roaming the region, including Bonnet. William Rhett, the leader of the search, spotted the *Revenge* at Cape Fear on September 29. Within a day, Bonnet's crew was defeated.

Bonnet evoked the pity of the ladies in the town of Charleston by assuming the role of a gentleman, and many did not want him to be punished. While in prison, awaiting his trial, Bonnet wrote a letter to the governor asking for forgiveness, but his effort was in vain. His many crimes still convicted him. On December 10, 1718, Stede Bonnet was hanged. His efforts to be either a good pirate or a good gentleman were ended once and for all, and without the customary trip down to Davy Jones' locker. And that ends the story of ye Gentleman Pirate, who fer all his worth, wasn't a very good pirate 't all.

BONNET REMAINED WELL-GROOMED AND WELL-DRESSED, AND HE WAS OFTEN SEEN READING BOOKS ON DECK

CHARLES VANE

DEVIL'S OWN LUCK

Jasmin Flores and Kyle Pontieri

Born circa 1680, Charles Vane was an English-born pirate. Though near nothing about his childhood is known, it is known that he began as a pirate aboard one of Lord Archibald Hamilton's ships. In 1715 aboard the ship of Henry Jennings, he began his pirate adventures, stricken with cold craft and horrid luck.

In July 1715, a Spanish treasure fleet capsized off the coast of Florida during a hurricane, with tons of gold and silver for the taking. Luckily, Jennings' crew, was the first on site, and after gathering all of the goods, they proceeded to raid the camp of the survivors and also stole the gold they had gathered from the ship. After acquiring all of the booty, the crew returned to the Bahamas where its headquarters was located.

In 1718, the King of England sent Captain Woodes Rogers with a blanket pardon for pirates who wanted to receive a pardon and stop pirating. The pardon had a catch: all pirates who abided by it had to turn themselves in by September with all of their treasure. Rogers soon encountered Jennings, who took the pardon. Vane, on the other hand, decided not to take the pardon and

started a new crew with those who did not want to give up the pirate life.

Vane and his crew came to be known as cruel and merciless, killing and torturing sailors and soldiers alike. In February of that year, an incident occurred where Vane was caught by Vincent Pearse, captain of the HMS *Phoenix*, who was also sent by the King to enforce the blanket pardon. To escape the situation, Vane claimed to be looking for Pearse in order to surrender and receive the King's pardon. Vane, pardoned on the spot, lost all the booty he had on board. However, once he was free from Pearse, Vane returned to his buccaneer ways.

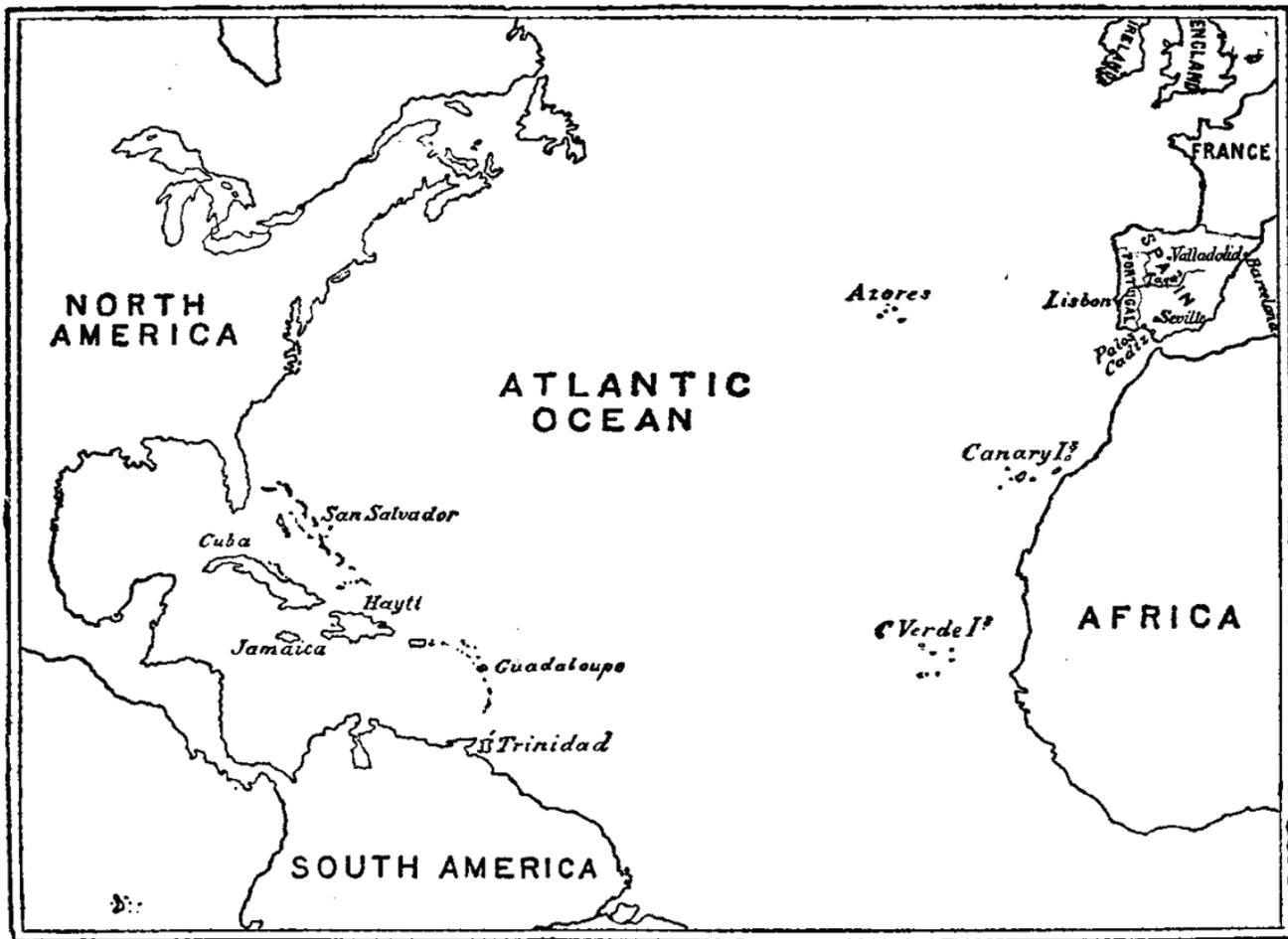
Soon, Rogers would take his fleet to Nassau, Vane's base, in order to end pirating in the Bahamas. While attempting to escape, Vane and his crew loaded a prize French ship they had recently commandeered and filled it with explosives. They set it on fire and set it out toward Captain Rogers' ship in hopes of catching it by surprise.

While Rogers was able to avoid the explosion, Vane and his crew were able to escape. Vane then sailed to the North Carolina Outer



Banks in October of 1718 and visited Ocracoke. Vane was there to visit Blackbeard, indulging in a week-long party full of rum and women. Eventually, Vane asked Blackbeard if he would join him in attacking Nassau to regain control of their old Pirate Republic. To his surprise, Blackbeard turned him down.

Having been rejected by Blackbeard, Vane turned to the North. Plundering the shores of Long Island, he and his crew eventually ran into a French frigate. Realizing he was outgunned and outmatched, Vane ordered a retreat. "Calico" Jack



Rackham, the quartermaster of the ship, was displeased with Vane's retreat and led a mutiny against Vane. Vane and what was left of his crew were sent adrift on a sloop.

Undiscouraged, Vane rebuilt his fleet and once again became a terror in the Bahamas. However, luck was never with Vane. Eventually, a hurricane hit his fleet, sinking his ship. Vane washed ashore on an uninhabited island in the Bay of Honduras. He wasn't alone for long.

Soon a ship arrived captained by a former acquaintance of Vane's, Holford. But it was just Vane's luck that Captain Holford knew of Vane's reputation and refused to rescue him as Vane was known to torture captured crews and to cheat his crew out of a fair share of the booty. Holford left Vane there and said if he was to see him there again he would take him captive to Jamaica were he would be hanged.

Fortunately for Vane, another ship came through, and the captain of the ship did not know who he was and took him onboard his ship. Along the way, the ship Vane was on stopped to invite a friend of the captain for dinner. Little did Vane know that the friend of the captain was Holford. Captain Holford saw Vane aboard the ship and warned his friend about who Vane was. As a result, the captain turned Vane over to Holford.

Vane was taken back to Jamaica where he was hanged on March 29, 1721. His body was hanged at the mouth of the harbor at Port Royal as warning against piracy.

VANE WAS THERE TO VISIT
BLACKBEARD, INDULGING IN A
WEEK-LONG PARTY FULL OF
RUM AND WOMEN

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

THE UNKNOWN HISTORY

Charles "Cam" Martin

In a world of dirty, grimy, mischievous sailors, there was one sailor who stood out above the others. He was not a sailor that would rob you for your goods and kill you dead like Blackbeard. Pirates like him are thieves and killers. As we know, pirates live on the water for most of their lives, and if you are on the water, to them you are considered fair game. Captain John Smith was not a pirate. However, his skills on the water rivaled any pirate on the seas.

Smith was born in England in January 1580. His parents were George and Alice Smith. George was a farmer who owned his own land, but he was wealthy enough to rent land as well. John Smith was a sailor that became a legacy as one of the first English explorers in North America. When Smith was young, he attended grammar school. It is said he wanted to learn because he did not want to become a farmer. Smith wanted to be a sailor, and he set his sights on becoming one.

After the death of his father at the age of sixteen, Smith sailed to France. There, he joined the English soldiers in the fight against Spain. The war ended, and Smith returned



home to England with nothing but his land. He soon hit rock bottom. Smith secluded himself in a woody pasture in a shelter he built himself.

A few years later, the *Susan Constant*, the *Discovery* and the *Godspeed* departed from London, England heading for the New World. No one really knows what brought him out of seclusion, but he chose to join the crew of the *Susan Constant*, which is the largest of the three pirate ships. All three of the ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Discovery* and the *Godspeed* were all pirate ships. However, on the *Constant*, there was a man that detested Smith and wanted him hanged. Fate helped Captain Smith, so the man's plan to kill him was thwarted. Also during this trip, Smith was accused of mutiny, which

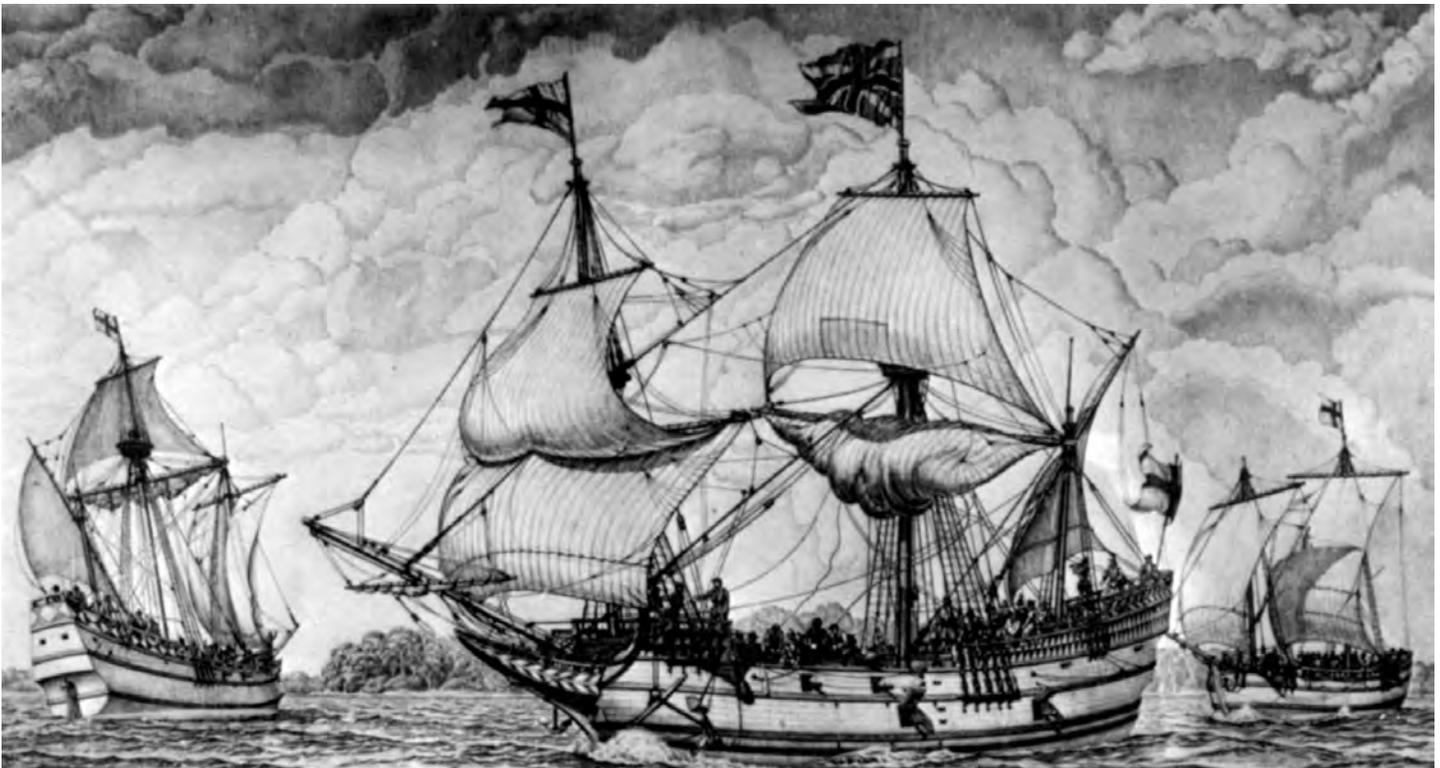
was a criminal conspiracy among a group of people such as the military or a crew of any ship. Smith almost got hanged because of this situation.

In custody, Smith arrived at the Chesapeake Bay. When he was released from custody weeks after, he overturned the leadership of the colony. Smith was able to do this because he was not afraid to criticize the leaders of the colony.

When he took to the ocean again, Smith didn't need a huge ship. He sailed in a shallop that was 30 feet long and 8 feet wide. A shallop is a smaller, lightweight sailboat that is mainly used for coastal fishing or as a tender. Often, shallops were equipped with guns. The shallop that Smith sailed was made in Europe and was meant for shallow

waters. His shallop could go places that big ships could not go. Smith's shallop was able to be taken apart in portions and easily put back together. With a small shallop and his crew, Captain John Smith formed the first colony in North America known today as Jamestown, Virginia. Smith established the colony on May 24, 1607.

Captain John Smith was an author, a soldier, an explorer, and an adventurer. He spent the majority of his life on a boat. There is still some speculation about whether or not Smith was a pirate. Some considered him a pirate while others considered him a sailor. Unlike other sailors of the time, Captain John Smith was a sailor who could do a lot with just a little.



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