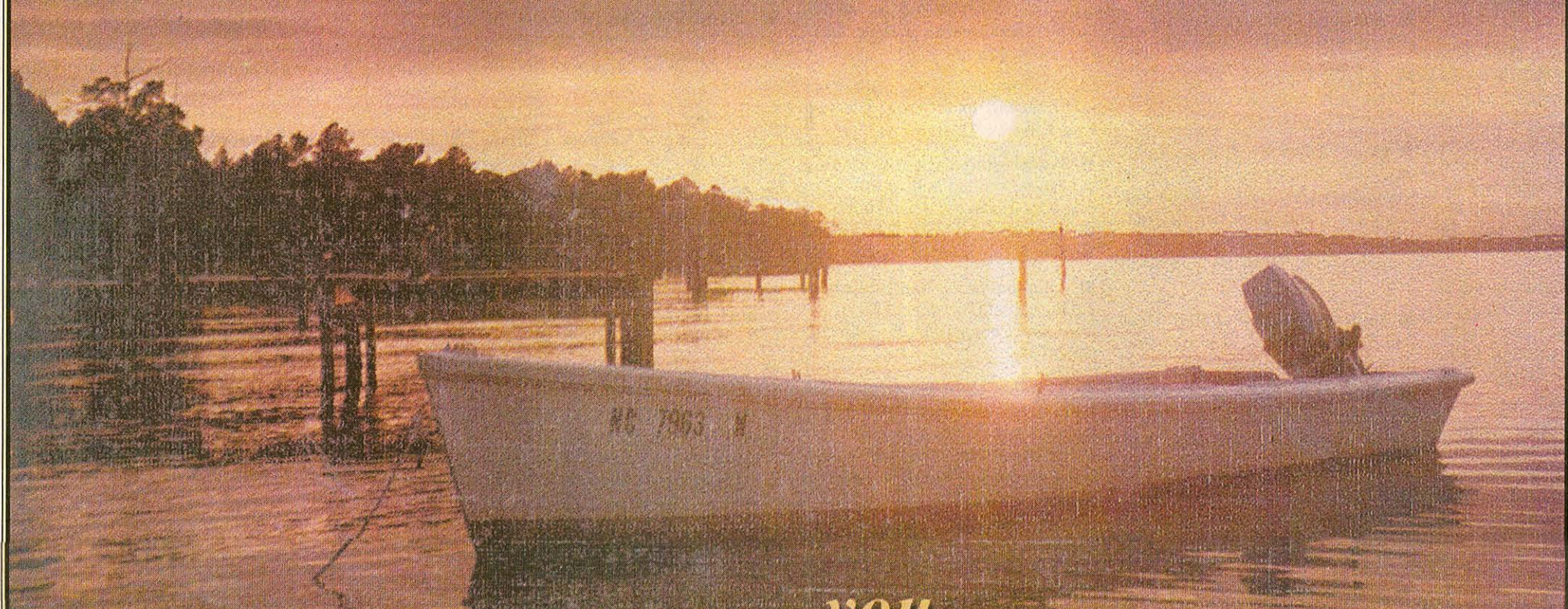


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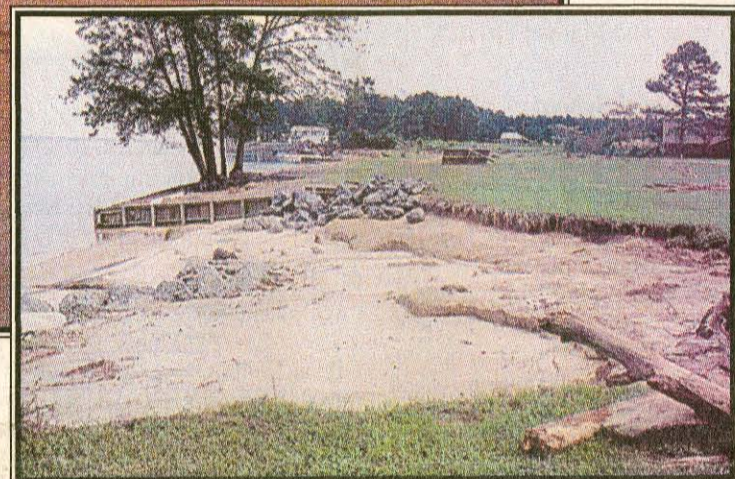
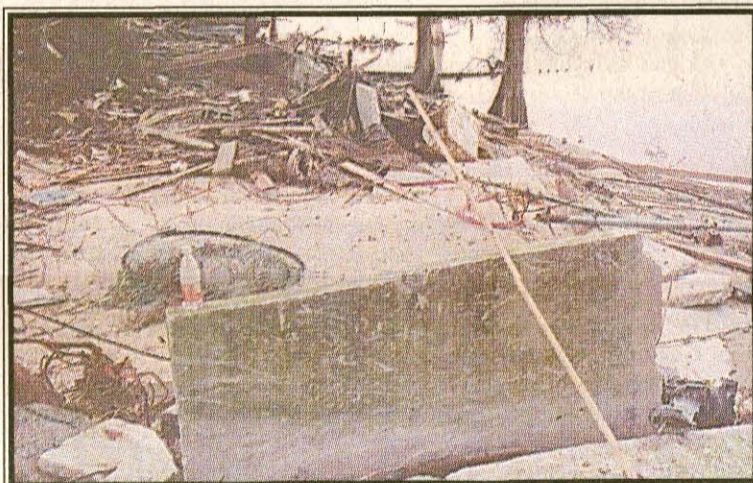
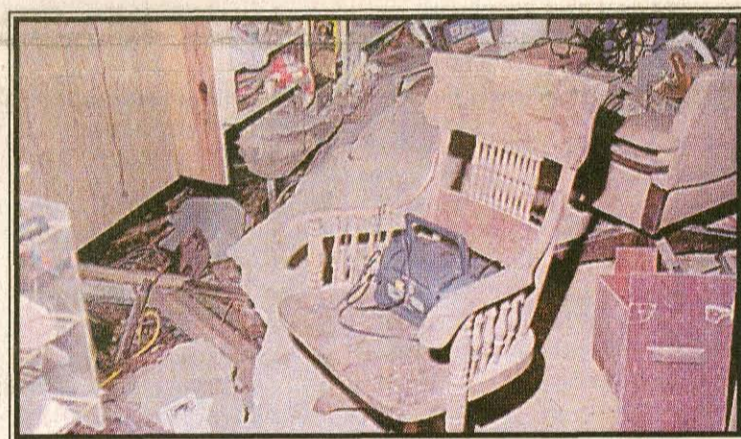
Core Point at Sunset



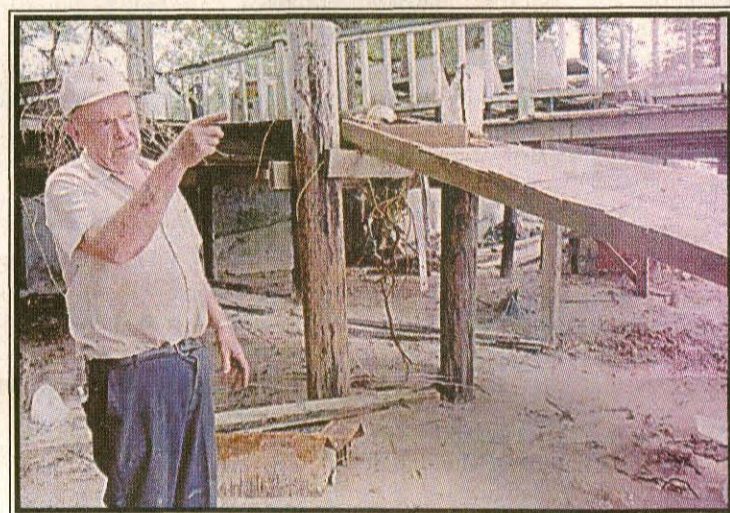
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Georgia and Joseph Paul, Vera Pipkin and Mamie Mixon stand in front of pecan tree toppled by Dennis.



Top: Erosion of Smithwick family shoreline. Below: Jack Hunnings points out storm damage to his pier. Left top: Dennis cracked the concrete foundation of Hunnings' waterfront store shifting contents. Left bottom: part of Hunnings' seawall broke off under repeated blows from Dennis.



Core Point oldtimers take storms in stride

By Alison Paul

Staff Writer

Photos by Elmo Carawan except
sunset shot by George Whitehurst

Like the strong, deep roots of a century old Oak tree, are the families which inhabit a local fishing and farming village within Richland Township.

Core Point is a small riverside community located on the southside of the Pamlico River with approximately 150 residents.

At its height, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Core Point housed five general stores, a Dance Hall/Community Center nicknamed "The Martin Box" and four fish houses, all owned and operated by area residents.

Since then the fast pace has slowed, leaving behind remnants of what once was and the families that have been its backbone.

What is also left are fiery sunsets, the daily flight of blue herons from the sandy shore, old, as well as new cottages and homes and canopies of deciduous trees along the main road.

These are the constants in Core Pointer's lives...but like most water front communities across Eastern N.C., hurricanes and storms are frequent visitors to these shores.

Squalls upset, dishevel, and erode all that would otherwise lie calm and tranquil.

Many storms have crossed the banks and bulkheads of Core Point, throwing heavy surf and pounding rain against homes, businesses and fields, yet the people triumph. With faith in family, friends and Christianity, they have managed to hold their home together.

"I remember 1960's Hurricane Donna," said 68-year resident Vera Pipkin. "Mrs. Bell Paul came to stay with my husband and myself that evening. My husband, Robert, went to bed, leaving the two of us up, talking. While he slept, rains picked up and broke an upstairs window. I placed an old mattress in front of it to soak up

water. It became sopping wet and leaked on the floor boards. My husband woke, walked out, opened the front door and asked 'Wind roaring?' he had slept through the whole thing!"

Pipkin admitted that she had never mopped as much water in her home as what Donna left on their floor.

Older residents recall stories handed down by their families of the 1913 hurricane, one of the worst known to Beaufort County, and the cyclone which followed.

Joseph B. Paul, 75-year old native of Core Point, remembers stories of when the cyclone hit the home of his grandparents, Benjamin F. and Sara L. Paul.

Their house was picked up by the wind and deposited upside down. Paul's grandmother was inside on the downstairs floor at the time and then found herself in the upstairs. Ida Edwards' watch was hanging from a nail in the kitchen. When the house was tossed the watch revolved around the nail and was found in place, hanging toward the ceiling. The community gathered and with mules, turned the home right-side up. Only the roof needed repair.

During the same storm, a Core Point dog was found on the northside of the river. Everyone figured it had been picked up and

dropped on the other side of the Pamlico.

"I remember old Dave Dunn [of Core Point] built a 'wind house' during the early 1920s," said Mamie Mixon, resident of Core Point since 1931. "It was an underground bunker with logs for a roof and grass grown over them. He would sit out the storms inside."

In the mid 1950s to the late 1960s, fish from Core Point fish houses were shipped to Fulton's Fish Market in New York City to be sold.

Clinton Martin owned one of the fish houses on Core Point. Georgia C. Paul, wife of Joseph B. Paul, reminisced of their first home located on what was then known as Upshore Road, beside Martin's fish house.

"Our home sat on piling," said Paul, "and during hurricane Hazel some of the ice boxes from Martin's fish house were lifted and blown into our piling...barreling them over, leaving our home on the shore."

1972's hurricane Agnes destroyed a 300 foot pier and a gas pump, which was used to sell gas from a water front store, owned by Jack Hunnings, a commercial fisherman who has lived on Core Point since 1950 and is the husband of life-long resident Doris S. Hunnings.

"Dennis has been the worst

storm I've seen," said Hunnings. "In 1972, I built a concrete sea wall reinforced with steel which stood as high as the tides in Hazel and Dennis broke it completely."

He also lost 2,000 yards of brand new fishing nets and part of the concrete floor of his old store, which was left exposing the sand from the beach that lies below.

The consensus of Core Pointers is that Dennis was one of the worst. Tide was measured at 10 to 11 feet by some residents and it rose four feet between 7 and 11 p.m. on the night of the storm.

Members of the community also speculate that they received wind gusts up to 75 mph.

"It is devastating to witness the damage that can happen so fast during a storm such as Dennis," said Georgia C. Paul.

Bryan Sr. and Estalee Smithwick, natives, witnessed high tides top their bulkhead, flow over their vacant river front lot, spread across Down Shore Road and spill onto their front yard. Logs and wreckage from the storm floated past their home.

The night of the storm, when word reached inland neighbors, some suited up in rain gear and waded through the waters to ensure the well-being of their flooded friends, making sure they were safe and not trapped inside of their homes.

One Core Pointer said that an old sea gull landed in the front yard of their house around 7 p.m. on Friday of the storm and sat vigil for 12 hours, staring out onto the churning waters guarding and directing the younger birds from the oncoming storm.

Some new homeowners are less tolerant of damage created by the storms. They view the annual cleanup and stress as an undesired hassle in their lives. Most take it in stride, brush it off, clean the mess and go on enjoying their river life. Their pride and appreciation for what they have will keep them there.

