



Tributaries

A Publication
of the North
Carolina Maritime
History Council

October 1999
Number 9

A Brief History of Prohibition in Northeastern North Carolina

Pioneer Outer Banks Charter Boat Captains

It's Sanitary! A Photographic Overview of Sportsfishing

Book Reviews



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Chair
Lawrence E. Babits

Publication Chair
Peter Sandbeck

Editors
Paul E. Fontenoy
Jeannie W. Kraus

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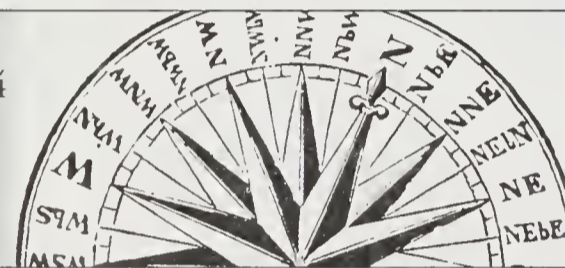
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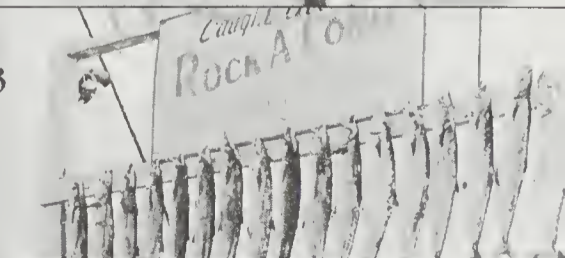


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Members

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Lawrence E. Babits
Associate Professor
Program in Maritime Studies
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27850-4353
252-328-6788 fax 252-328-6754
BabitsL@mail.ecu.edu

Rodney D. Barfield
Virginia Museum Consultants
3159 Pleasant View Drive
Stuart, Virginia 24171

Lindley S. Butler
Professor Emeritus of History
628 Cedar Lane
Reidsville, NC 27320
336-349-5727
butlerl@vnet.net

Kim Crawford
Ocean Policy Specialist
NC Division of Coastal Management
P.O. Box 27687
Raleigh, NC 27611-7687
919-733-2293 fax 919-733-1495
kim_crawford@mail.enr.state.nc.us

Paul Fontenoy
Curator of Maritime Research
North Carolina Maritime Museum
315 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516
252-728-7317 fax 252-728-2108
direct line 252-504-2264
maritime@ncsl.dcr.state.nc.us

Bill Harris
P.O. Box 2587
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949
252-473-2111, ext. 124
home 252-261-6159
kittyhawker@coastalnet.com

Richard W. Lawrence
Head
Underwater Archaeology Unit
P.O. Box 58
Kure Beach, NC 28449
910-458-9042 fax 910-458-4093
rlawrence@ncsl.dcr.state.nc.us

Peter Sandbeck
Researcher
Tryon Palace
610 Pollock Street
New Bern, NC 28563
252-514-4934 fax 252-514-4876
tryon_palace@coastalnet.com

George Ward Shannon, Jr., PhD
Director
North Carolina Maritime Museum
315 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516
252-728-7317 fax 252-728-2108
gshannon@ncsl.dcr.state.nc.us

Barbara Snowden
Currituck County Whalehead Preservation
Trust & Currituck Historical Society
P.O. Box 134
Currituck, NC 27929
252-453-0014 fax 252-453-0016
BSnowden50@Hotmail.com

Bob Warren
NC Historic Preservation Foundation
125 South Fifth Avenue
Wilmington, NC 28401
910-763-5029
bobwar@juno.com

Harry Warren
Assistant Director
Cape Fear Museum
814 Market Street
Wilmington, NC 28401
910-341-4350 fax 910-341-4037



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About

the Maritime History Council

The North Carolina Maritime History Council came together in 1988 when a group of individuals professionally involved in maritime history programs began meeting informally to share information and to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Aware that the sheer size of the state's coastal area, increasingly rapid development, and the variety of coastal waters have tended to fragment efforts to preserve the state's maritime history, the group began to explore ways to pool the resources of disparate state and federal agencies.

The North Carolina Maritime History Council was incorporated in 1990 with the mission to identify and encourage historical and educational projects that have as their purpose the enhancement and preservation of the state's maritime history and culture, and that create public awareness of that heritage.

The council views this heritage in broad perspective, noting that its influence extends to the heads of navigation of the state's rivers.

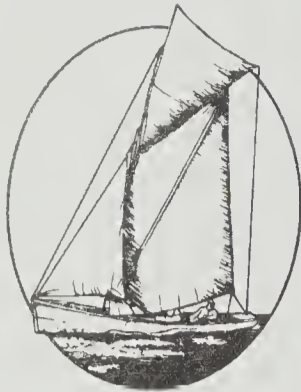
An example of its accomplishments is the purchase of the Edwin Champney drawings, a collection of fifty-nine sketches of coastal scenes from the Civil War period that were obtained by the council in 1990 using funds donated by the Frank Stick Trust and other nonprofit groups. They are now part of the permanent collections

of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History and are administered by the Outer Banks History Center.

The council advises the North Carolina Maritime Museum on the newly instituted N.C. Historic Vessel Register. This journal has been published every October by the group since 1991.

Council membership is offered to nonprofit organizations and institutions involved in the study and teaching of the state's maritime culture and to individuals interested in maritime history.

Lawrence E. Babits
Chair



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History Council



LEGEND

HARD SURFACE	—————
TOPSOIL SAND-CLAY & GRAVEL	- - - - -
GRADED ROADS	====
UNIMPROVED ROADS

A Brief History of Prohibition in Northeastern North Carolina

by Brian Edwards



A skidder crew on the Dare County mainland, c. 1900. Skidders were steam-powered cabletows used to pull logs to a narrow gauge railway system that ran throughout the forest.

Outer Banks History Center

At left: 1924 road map of the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds showing regional road system.

Outer Banks History Center

The private production of distilled alcohol has been regulated within North Carolina's borders since 1715.¹ This fact, however, has had limited effect on its popularity among the state's residents. Although references to other alcoholic beverages date to the Roanoke voyages,² corn or grain liquor, generically termed whiskey, was the drink of choice in early North Carolina. Much of this was due to the quick results of distillation and the ease of turning crops into fast cash, but production for home use was also common. By the time of statehood, a still was considered a part of every well-supplied estate. While native wines had made some inroads, public tastes did not alter much in the ensuing decades. Moreover, distillation was not an especially mysterious craft since it used the same basic technology as the turpentine industry so prevalent in the eastern part of the state.³ A certain amount of distilling

was legal until the late nineteenth century; the rest was moonshine.

With the passage of the Watts Law (1903), Ward Law (1905), and further legislation in 1908,⁴ prohibition in the state became complete. Consequently, when national prohibition took effect on 1 January 1920, residents of the northeast took it in stride. Although one Roanoke Island observer insisted "it is so dry...that we have to pin our postage stamps on our letters,"⁵ a scan of contemporary newspapers, court papers, or the accounts of old timers suggests something quite different. Booze was ubiquitous at parties and meeting halls, on boats and in cabs, filling stations and drinkhouses (commonly called blind tigers or blind pigs), in post offices and county jails, and even in church. Moreover, the region enjoyed a national reputation for clean, good-

tasting liquor. A portion of the moonshine produced was kept for local consumption; the rest was exported, usually through Elizabeth City, the region's commercial and transportation hub. From there the whiskey could be shipped throughout the nation. The mainland of Dare County, frequently called East Lake, was especially infamous—it even earned a glowing mention in the 1939 WPA guide to the state⁶—but production was far from being so localized. Currituck County, for instance, was also called “notorious.” “Bootleggers” threatened a mile in either direction from Chantilly Beach in Camden County as late as 1942.⁸ Elizabeth City vice deserves its own history. Even Hatteras, which remained legally dry until the 1970s, and Roanoke Island could be singled out for special treatment. Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, and Currituck counties were each close in quantity and quality of output, but ultimately they lacked the cachet of East Lake Dew. As a result, it is the easiest to trace through the intricate web of suppliers, distillers, carriers, sellers, and trade routes that formed soon after the amendment's passage. Since the mainland's reputation as a moonshiner's haven is not in doubt, a careful examination of what created such a situation, its relationship to the rest of the Albemarle, and what steps were taken to eradicate the illicit trade provides many clues to why relatively peaceful and tightly-knit areas like East Lake would turn to crime.⁹ Moonshining was, and remains, a commercial enterprise. Accordingly, economics provides the basis for any subsequent discussion.

Shingling, fishing, subsistence farming, and the West Indies trade sustained the Dare County mainland's isolated population until shortly after Reconstruction, when several large lumber firms began to take interest in its vast pine and juniper forests.¹⁰ Company towns and camps, most notably Daresville and Buffalo City, sprang up around the logging operations on Milltail Creek, attracting some of the native population and providing a base for numerous transients and perhaps foreign immigrants. After generations of self-employment, mainlanders suddenly had an industry. At its height, several hundred were employed in the woods and at the mills, both in Buffalo City and in Elizabeth City. The latter was an integral part of this operation because lumber could be barged to the Pasquotank facility, worked, and then easily shipped elsewhere either by rail or through the region's canals. Moreover, several other timber firms and an experienced work force were located in the area. By the late 1910s, the firm most active on the mainland, Dare Lumber Company, was crippled by fraud and fire. Widespread unemployment soon followed. Although efforts were made to

revive the logging industry, production was sporadic for the next several decades.

The collapse of Dare Lumber and the scaling down of subsequent logging operations had a pronounced and unexpected effect on the mainland. Because logging limited the time available for other pursuits like farming and fishing, it created for the first time a definite dependency on wages. Frequently these were paid in tokens redeemable only at the company store. With the primary employer gone, a hard life became exceedingly harder. Another legacy of the logging industry, according to some, was an open disdain of the law among the East Lakers. This was partially fueled by the area's isolation, but more by the firm's tendency to harvest not only its own lands, but also the surrounding acreage.¹¹ Moreover, it effectively used the courts to outmaneuver natives who protested its unscrupulous actions. Consequently, many residents saw no reason to respect such a biased system. Timing, though, was also important.

By the 1920s, life throughout the entire county had reached a new low. Stock raising was a minor concern; passage of the Migratory Bird Act in 1918 effectively ended market hunting; the bounty of the sea diminished as improved navigation made shipwrecks a rarity; and fishing stocks were becoming depleted.¹² What's more, the temperance movement had hurt even eel fishing; northern saloons had previously used the fish as a snack.¹³ Little remained except to look for work elsewhere or hope for some kind of deliverance. Many residents left, but the surrounding counties were not much better off. Many of those who stayed found a solution to their problems in the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and the onset of Prohibition.

The origin of mass liquor production in East Lake is clouded in legend and innuendo, but production was rampant by 1921.¹⁴ Charles Whedbee makes the interesting suggestion in one of his stories that northern sportsmen who frequented the numerous hunt clubs of the Outer Banks were partially responsible for this new-found vocation.¹⁵ Another probable influence was the thriving summer colony of Nags Head, with its hotels, boarding houses, and multitude of private cottages. Nor was it the only vacation spot on the beach. Kitty Hawk had its own resort facilities by the 1930s and various other establishments and lodgings dotted the coast. A surviving hotel flyer (although dated late in the era) coyly suggests that their guests can make up their own minds about drinking, the implication being that liquor was readily available.¹⁶ Similar comments are found in reprinted sermons.¹⁷

Whatever its impetus, East Lake's production was, in the words of Ben Dixon MacNeill, "the beginnings of an empire."¹⁸

Much about the Dare County mainland lent itself to this new industry. Foremost was its isolation, moated on three sides and virtually impenetrable on the fourth, yet close to the transportation hubs and markets of Elizabeth City and Hampton Roads. East Laker's experience both with distillation and the operation of steam engines was also a boon. Logging and moonshining were not only frequent companions, presumably because of the thirst of the workers, but the technologies were certainly compatible. In some cases, such as a still captured in nearby Kitty Hawk, the components were even the same.¹⁹ The dearth of steady-paying work, coupled with poor harvests and catches for several years, made even illegal enterprises seem appealing.²⁰ Consequently, many viewed moonshining as a means of survival instead of a crime. Josie Ferebee echoed this sentiment in a 1973 interview. "The Dare Lumber Company moved away and left only bootlegging as a business in East Lake....They were all lovely folks—bootlegging was just their way of life. They did it to eat."²¹ In many respects, W. O. Saunders' editorial remarks in the Elizabeth City *Independent* also prove insightful: "industry had invaded our agricultural districts and was making life for the farmer and his sons less and less secure. Moonshining and Bootlegging offered the prospect of a more lucrative and more adventurous vocation than farming"²² or, perhaps, logging.

Moonshining was not very difficult or expensive. It did, however, require planning, patience, and above all, secrecy. Most operations were family affairs with maybe a close friend or two included. The number directly involved typically did not exceed four or so, because the fewer who knew about an operation, the better. Stills could be placed almost anywhere as long as they were reasonably accessible, but hidden from prying eyes. Concealment was not always a concern for some. The Elizabeth City *Daily Advance* reported in 1922 that a recently raided still just north of Tulls Creek in Currituck County was close enough to the highway that smoke showed when it was running.²³ Some were found a few hundred yards from dwellings, while others were perhaps 50 to 100 yards off the waterway used to transport supplies and the finished product. As enforcement tightened, however, such a cavalier approach vanished, prompting agents to gripe that they were finding more stills, "erected in the midst of almost impenetrable swamps, and in out of the way places on the meandering watercourses that penetrate uninhabited morasses and

forest."²⁴ Not only did this make outfits harder for officers to locate, but it also presented a possible obstacle for the operators themselves in obtaining the needed ingredients for the distillation process.

As evidenced by later raids, East Lake's isolation was not a hindrance to successful moonshining; the sugar, meal, plumbing, and other items needed simply followed the long-established trade routes and utilized the traditional outlets. The Dare Forest Store in Buffalo City, for instance, was a primary source of supplies, as were merchants and restaurants in other parts of the county. Moreover, supply boats, such as the company-owned *N. E. Wright*, could legitimately carry the necessities to the woods; the proprietors could hardly be held responsible for use after the items had left their premises. Grocers presented a major problem to enforcement agents throughout the era for just such reasons. No record of suspicious purchases was normally kept, even though few could claim ignorance of their purpose, and payment for groceries was easily obtained on credit. When the liquor sold, the moonshiner paid off his debt. In effect, the grocers, many of whom were upstanding men in their churches and communities, bankrolled these illicit ventures by fronting the needed resources. Direct complicity, on the other hand, is harder to prove.²⁵ Sometimes, this process was simplified by the bootleggers bringing their own supplies to East Lake for processing and carrying back the finished product.

Other materials were already at hand. Although smokeless coke was available and used, the wood of the "baytree," most likely the southern wax myrtle, produced similar results and was free for the cutting. A consistent water supply was also needed. In East Lake, this was frequently "juniper water," a local name for water from the tannic creeks running throughout the swamps. In fact, this was the preferred source for many makers at least as early as 1881 and probably before.²⁶ It was not only accessible, but imparted a unique and desirable gin-like quality to the product. In all, one maker estimated in 1922, moonshine costs "considerably under 50 cents" per gallon to make, although some fluctuation could occur in the price of sugar and corn. By 1928, this had fallen as low as 30 cents a gallon.²⁷

A still (or rig) consisted, at minimum, of a furnace box, a cooker, a removable cap, a cap arm, a worm (or condensing coil) and cooling barrel. Operators' inclinations and the size of the operation produced endless variety. Stills could be elaborate contraptions or simple plumbed gasoline drums. Some reports even suggest the use of



The Three Boys, a typical mailboat, at a fishing camp off Durants Island in Dare County.

Ambrose collection, Outer Banks History Center

an ice cream freezer to remove water and impurities instead of traditional distillation.²⁸ The better stills, however, were made of copper.²⁹ The size of the still, which denoted the amount of fermented meal (or mash) the cooker held, controlled the size of the final run. Two-hundred-gallon rigs and larger were captured with some regularity on the north shore of the Albemarle, and it was thought that because of isolation, East Lakers used even larger stills with more modern equipment.³⁰ Many were rumored to be immense operations, complete with patriotic flags and whistles to call the shift workers from break.³¹ Such anecdotes were a constant companion to moonshining. Norfolk newspapers, for instance, reported in 1926 that a moonshiner's paradise lay hidden in the southside swamps. Twenty or so stills, fed by buried electric and water systems, produced enough liquor to warrant moving the barrels and jugs by flume (over a distance of five miles) to waiting boats.³² Its existence was never proven. To some extent, the notion of a swampy Eden rings true, at least in the ability to produce a well-made drink relatively unmolested and a *laissez faire* attitude towards certain criminal activities, but evidence for widespread organization and collusion among the area's moonshiners is scarce.

East Lake, sometimes according to family recipes.³³ Rye was preferred because it was more popular in the upper Chesapeake Bay region and the northeastern states and commanded a better price.³⁴ Like most entrepreneurs, East Lakers made what would sell. A contemporary article estimated that approximately 1.5 million quart bottles "found their way to hotel room and night club table in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York." At least one "fashionable New York hotel" reportedly even advertised East Lake Cocktails on its menu.³⁵ Specific orders were also taken from trusted customers; however, this usually meant quantity and not actual product. The liquor was seldom aged before selling, although one maker reportedly set some aside for over a year. This, though, amounted to more of an experiment based on the need to avoid notice than normal practice.³⁶ Some flavoring did occur through the use of charred kegs, usually juniper or cedar wood, in which the liquor was shipped, but not much. Taste depended more on the ingredients and the manufacturers' commitment to quality. A United Press correspondent noted in 1931 that local liquor was sold in two grades, white, known locally as "chained lightning," and tinted or "charred." Although the latter was considered the better and commanded a higher price, in reality it differed only in color. Marketing, however,

Both rye and corn whiskey were produced in

helped sales: "When someone drives up and asks for a pint, they say 'good or bad.'"³⁷

Cost for the finished product varied as well, ranging between \$8.00 and \$24.00 a gallon or demijohn in 1922 alone. In 1928 Pasquotank whiskey sold for \$1.50 a pint or \$5.00 a gallon. The same year, East Lake Corn brought \$15.00 per five-gallon carboy or \$25.00 for the same amount kegged. Nor was moonshining immune to the effects of the Depression. A gallon in 1931 dropped from \$8.00 to \$2.00–3.00 depending on quality; a five-gallon jug, which used to command at least \$35.00, went for \$10.00, reflecting the market glut. In 1933 the loosening of restrictions on medicinal liquor reduced the price even further. First-order rye whiskey, "double copper distilled and aged in wood," could be obtained directly from the distiller for \$3.00 a gallon or 75 cents a quart. Low grade "plain white mule," on the other hand, cost as little as \$1.00 a gallon. In such a competitive setting, the key to a successful operation was not only quality, but, more importantly, availability.

Distribution paralleled manufacturing in precautions, elaborateness, and risks. MacNeill asserts that East Lake was a distillery only and that all investment, *matériel*, and transportation was handled by outsiders.³⁸ The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. Makers did take their own products to market and even sold directly to the consumer, but this practice offered limited return for the risk involved. Consequently, some preferred to pay a shipment fee, reportedly as high as \$1.50 per carboy,³⁹ for someone else to run the liquor to Elizabeth City, Norfolk, or elsewhere. Others sold the whiskey to bootleggers outright, letting them take their own chances. A principal reason for wanting cash in hand stems from the fact that at least some East Lake production was speculative in nature. As noted earlier, distilling operations could be set up with very little initial capital outlay; most supplies and materials could be obtained on credit. The same seems to apply, in some cases, to the final distribution as well. The moonshiners themselves only received compensation when the shipment sold. Accordingly, the more conservative preferred a sure thing to ethereal, if somewhat larger, profits later.

Boats were obviously of great importance in moving the liquor across the sounds and through the canals, ditches, and backwaters of the northeast. A frequently used craft was the "mailboat."⁴⁰ Slung low with modified sharpie hulls, rounded sterns, decking, enclosed cabins, and powerful engines, they had previously plied the sounds as small freighters and passenger boats, but their design was also perfect for trafficking whiskey.

They could haul large quantities, were a common sight, and could navigate the narrow, shallow rivers and creeks of the northeast with relative ease. However, mailboats were far from the only craft used. In fact, it seems that almost any vessel that would float was used at one time or another. Fishing boats, powered skiffs, luxury yachts, and possibly even a floating hunting lodge which tied up in Milltail Creek,⁴¹ all boasted ties to the trade. Gasoline engines were generally favored over sail, but schooners, traditional shadboats, and the like, also occur regularly in the records.⁴² The slow-and-steady approach worked for many runners using less elaborate craft, but speed was not neglected either. Surplus airplane engines proved especially useful to the more technologically minded, though they did require some modification to the craft to compensate for the additional power.⁴³ Moreover, many area moonshiners were themselves experienced boat-builders. With this strong tradition, there is high probability that other watercraft forms, now lost, were also created and utilized.

Running liquor in the open sounds was always a dangerous task that required nerve, cleverness, and a fair amount of luck. Consequently, some runners, particularly early in Prohibition, carried large loads in hopes of a bigger return. Methods of concealing liquor varied from hiding it under a load of wood or fish, to shipping it in specially constructed tanks, such as found in one Currituck speedboat. Frequently the liquor was simply hidden among other cargo, covered with tarpaulins, or in the case of the *Annie Vansciver*, mislabeled fish boxes.⁴⁴ As certain vessels gained notoriety with the public and police, bootleggers adopted new tactics. Some began tying the jugs of liquor to a rope and trailing them behind the boat. If boarding was imminent, the line could be severed, disposing of the evidence. A float or other mark was sometimes used as well to indicate the dumpsite.⁴⁵ More bootleggers also began to drop off shipments at certain sites for later retrieval either by other boats or land-based crews.

The advantage gained was twofold. Primarily, it provided a greater number of concealed locations from which to distribute the moonshine, thus increasing the coverage for the product and ease of secondary transportation. Considering the geography of the northeast, with its canals, backroads, and small communities dotting the land from the Albemarle Sound to Chesapeake Bay, such an arrangement makes sense. Trucks or cars could load the whiskey from the hidden supply, then carry it to a nearby distribution hub from which it could be further circulated.⁴⁶ Typically, carboys were placed in empty sugar bags, left over from making the mash, then tied on a rope about



twenty-five feet apart and dropping in a remote creek or canal with a guideline hidden just underwater.⁴⁷ An early problem was the tendency of the bottle stoppers to pop after being underwater too long. To overcome this, East Lakers began to wrap the stopper in copper wire and fasten with sealing wax (sometimes even including specific coins), creating, in effect, a maker's mark.⁴⁸ Such proof of authenticity became essential by the late 1920s after other areas began misrepresenting their own products as from East Lake, exploiting its reputation for good, clean whiskey. As competition increased, some of the mainland's early advantages, like its idyllic isolation, were nullified. In fact, East Lake's remoteness began to work against it since the days when the industry could easily absorb \$10,000.00 losses were quickly slipping away. Safe shipment became increasingly paramount. Periodic stashing, either on land or underwater, limited the amount of contraband on board a vessel at any one time, and thus the chances of losing the entire stock if caught in a raid or to thieves. Likewise, having a number of dropoffs reduced the likelihood of arrest by scattering the location of incriminating evidence and making surveillance more difficult. In the Albemarle, as elsewhere, criminal necessity proved the mother of invention.

The relationship between manufacturer and distributor was not without tension. Primarily, this originated in the business' illicit nature and concomitant dangers, as well as the immense profits. One maker in the early 1920s complained that bootleggers had ruined the trade with their greed.⁴⁹ By paying only half the retail price of \$7.00–\$10.00 a quart, they caused more makers to sell directly to the public. This not only increased competition (by attracting more to the moonshining), but also cut into the makers profits. Watering the liquor, which bootleggers were known to do, only increased the profit margin. The moonshiners themselves, however, were not above suspicion either, especially in matters of sanitation.⁵⁰ Trust in such a situation was a vital, but sometimes scarce, commodity.

Stills and their accouterments quickly became a common feature in mainland and Albemarle life. In fact, a certain amount of civic pride developed in East Lake about moonshining, presumably related to the influx of cash, although some communities did not appreciate the dividends of the liquor trade. As United States Deputy Attorney General Mabel Willebrant realized, community sentiment, more than agents, controlled the presence of stills and illegal behavior.⁵¹ As late as

A captured still. Notice the similarities between this apparatus and logging equipment pictured on page 7.

Estelle Meekins Collection,
Outer Banks History Center

1930, a note by Hatteras Justice of the Peace Dr. H. W. Kenfield testifies to “very bad conditions here with the amount of bootlegging that goes on and decent people are about disgusted. I rather think that outsiders think that we are wild and woolly and [will] stand for most anything but let them try it.”⁵² Given the context of this report (a drunken sailor from the Hatteras Radio Station had broken into a store and threatened the owner and family), one wonders who needed more protection.

This is not to say that East Lake did not have its own code of conduct. One distiller freely admitted that he was the owner of a captured still in order to protect his elderly uncle and refused to bring his wife and children to court in a bid for the jury's pity.⁵³ Furthermore, newspaper articles frequently mention the mainland's friendly and generally law-abiding nature, such as one would expect from a close-knit and religious area. Perhaps this is one reason why community pressure proved such a potent force. One story, for example, tells of a revival where the spirit of the Lord took hold of a well-known maker, who stood up and loudly proclaimed that he saw Jesus.⁵⁴ A colleague quickly suggested that while he had a personal audience with the Lord, he should ask what happened to the twenty-five jugs suspiciously missing from the other man's stash. Thieves and others who broke the area's harmony, such as informers, were not tolerated, but ostracism and public ridicule proved an effective and appealing alternative to violence.⁵⁵

The growth of moonshining had other undesirable effects. Hikes in the local woods could quickly turn frightening simply by walking into the wrong clearing, even in the supposed Sahara of Roanoke Island.⁵⁶ A mainland informant stated matter-of-factly that his grandfather kept all his livestock, particularly his horse and milk cow, penned lest they drink from or even fall into a mash box, get drunk, seriously injure themselves, and bring financial ruin.⁵⁷ Many of the area's children were likewise exposed to dangerous conditions. Some were used as camouflage on bootlegging runs; others remember living in houses with fumes so strong—and explosive—that they took their breath away.⁵⁸ Residents who succumbed to alcoholism and violence were not uncommon either. The granddaughter of one hunt-club caretaker remarked that her grandmother frisked returning hunters for bottles and flasks before letting them into the club to prevent possible trouble later in the evening.⁵⁹ Tyrrell County moonshiners went so far as to dynamite a schoolhouse during their quarrel with the school's teacher.⁶⁰ On the lighter side, one of Roanoke Island's more popular crimes was creat-

ing a public disturbance, usually by yelling obscenities at passing cars until hauled down to the county jail.⁶¹ But most crimes were less entertaining. Assault, assault with a deadly weapon, murder, drunk driving, prostitution, operating blind tigers, corruption of youth—crimes directly or indirectly related to alcohol and its abuse—riddle regional dockets. Moonshining was far from a victimless crime.

A relationship seems to have existed between the rise of violence and the economic fortunes of the area, especially with the coming of the Great Depression. More reports are found of shootings between those involved with trafficking, theft (which was usually a precursor to violence), informing on rivals, and new areas starting the trade as Prohibition wore on. Homicides, in particular, increased during the early 1930s due to what may be best described as gang warfare.⁶² Newspaper coverage also lost much of its humor and playful innuendo. Falling prices, dwindling cash and resources, and the ongoing tedium of what many thought was an unenforceable and ludicrous law took their toll. The sentiment of many was summed up in an editorial aside in the *Independent* which bluntly stated that Prohibition was responsible not for cultural and moral advancement, but for a “gigantic moonshine industry, thousands of bootleggers and a new and disturbing era of lawlessness.”⁶³ As early as 1922, some Elizabeth City residents had had enough and formed a shadowy vigilante troop called “The Shifters.” In a published letter, they announced that they had “banded together with the purpose of helping put a check on vice and crime” and “were keeping an eye on most evildoers in this city.”⁶⁴ While this may have been an attempt to scare straight the less hardened of the criminals (nothing further is heard of this group), the idea of community pressure remains important. Moonshining obviously supplied something beyond simple entertainment to East Lake. Otherwise, it would not have been tolerated or considered a legitimate vocation. Making liquor provided the quick cash flow needed to survive crisis and offered a fast and lucrative return on the initial investment. Moreover, it was something almost anyone could do. Although not everyone's motives were as noble as feeding children, moonshining certainly came in handy.

Prohibition, then, enjoyed a fair amount of popularity in northeastern North Carolina. Whiskey provided something to do, and most important, money; unfortunately, it was illegal. As mentioned above, North Carolina was actually dry some two decades before national prohibition took effect. Dare County's first taste of drought came with 1887 legislation that left the county

dry except incorporated towns (which would have had their own laws had there been any) and, interestingly, “Nags Head in season.”⁶⁵ The same year, another act permitted the sale of liquor at any Nags Head hotel with at least a fifty-guest capacity.⁶⁶ Even then, Nags Head nightlife had its proponents. At the turn of the century, North Carolina led the South in both prohibition laws and dry localities. Despite the state’s long history of temperance, however, it fared little better in complying with the National Prohibition Act (commonly called the Volstead Act) than did the metropolitan areas of the North.⁶⁷

Perhaps the greatest problem facing enforcement was simple division of labor. Even with its long history of state prohibition, North Carolina did not have a statewide agency to catch liquor-law violations. Instead, enforcement depended on local sheriffs, who received a bounty for each still, bootlegger, blind tiger operator, and the like captured in the course of their normal duties. The federal government did create a special agency (the Bureau of Prohibition within the Treasury Department) to combat violations nationwide, but flaws quickly became apparent. The more problematic obstacles were political patronage and lack of manpower. Agents were often not the most qualified, just the best connected, and there were too few of them. In 1922 only fifty agents, who generally had to work in pairs or larger groups, were assigned to the entire state.⁶⁸ By 1929, the Eighth District, encompassing Virginia and North and South Carolina, had eight administrative positions, forty-nine permanent agents and thirty-six temporary agents.⁶⁹ The presence of law enforcement agencies in the Albemarle, then, was far from overwhelming.

Local sheriffs, too, rarely had the men to fight either the manufacturing or the trafficking of illicit liquor. The Dare County Grand Jury, for instance, recommended as late as Spring term 1935 that a deputy be hired to help in all law enforcement duties.⁷⁰ As it stood, only one officer, the sheriff, served the entire county. Moreover, the idea of arresting neighbors made many uneasy. In a newspaper interview, E. R. Jackson, a federal officer stationed in Elizabeth City, reported that 95 percent of county officers were hostile to the enforcement of liquor laws, and sometimes went as far as warning moonshiners of impending raids.⁷¹ Other sources claimed that some county and local officers took payments not to destroy stills during raids.⁷² Jackson blamed many of these problems on politics and the need to be re-elected; scarce resources and other community demands were probably just as culpable if not more so. Later evidence does support some of Jackson’s charges. A newspaper arti-

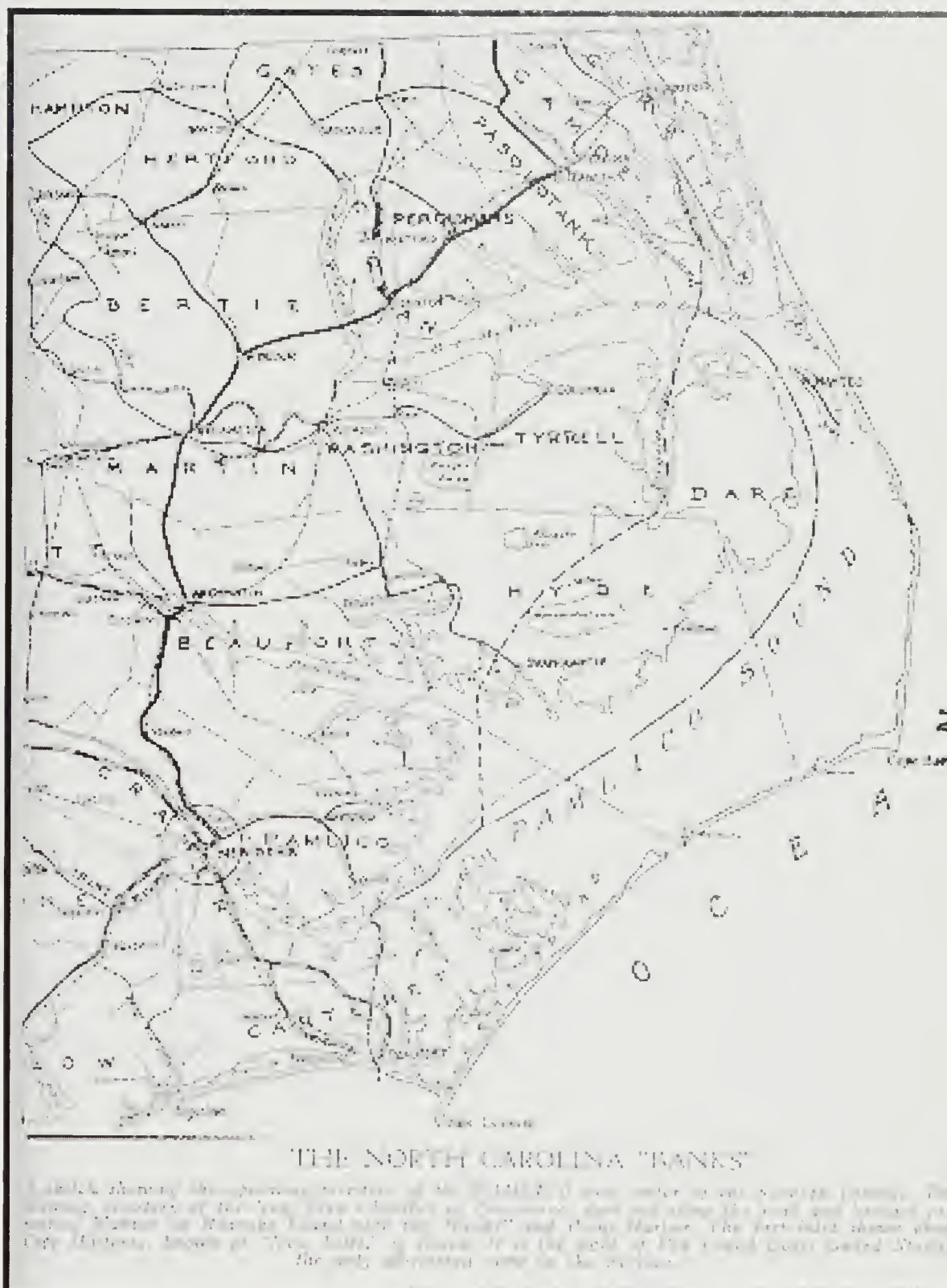
cle, for instance, refers to “common talk around Moyock, Northwest, and Great Bridge [saying] that the senior member of [a] Virginia outfit boasts that he pays certain officers for protection and carries a gun for others who might interfere with him.”⁷³ The North Carolina Anti-Saloon League singled out the Pasquotank sheriff for not raiding any stills in years even though the county was full of them. In fact, one candidate ran for county sheriff in 1924 promising to enforce Prohibition. Later the same year, an Elizabeth City police officer was suspended for implying that bootleggers enjoyed considerable protection, prompting a full investigation by the city manager.⁷⁵ Nor were federal agents or servicemen above temptation. Improvements were made though; by 1929, J. P. Thompson, Clerk of United States District Court in Elizabeth City, put the percentage of officials for sale only around 75 percent.⁷⁶ Enforcement was a difficult enough task without such internal problems.

The topography of the region did not help matters, either. Not only did the Albemarle, and the Dare mainland in particular, have vast spaces, few roads, dense swamps, remote communities, clannish locals, and few conveniences, it also had mile upon mile of water and shoreline to protect and patrol. This duty fell more or less upon the recently unified Coast Guard through its affiliation with the Treasury Department. Although under a new name, this organization had a long and storied presence on the Outer Banks, originating with the Life-Saving Service, and was the county’s largest employer. More practically, the federal agents did not have the equipment or expertise to enforce compliance effectively. This turn of events created a paradox. How could such an elaborate trade develop, especially one so dependent on water traffic, in an area so saturated with what were, in essence, federal law enforcement officials specializing in maritime matters? The quickest answer is that, in many cases, Volstead Act enforcement was simply not their job, but other forces were at work as well. Although some land-based duties, such as putting out fires, rescuing cows, and later pulling cars from the sand, were occasionally performed,⁷⁷ the Coast Guard’s emphasis was seaward, protecting life and maritime property. Police duties were not only odious, especially when those arrested were neighbors, but interfered with the service’s primary function.

Likewise, the recent merger of the Life-Saving and Revenue Cutter services into the Coast Guard brought its own traumas. Many surfmen felt that this only added more work and unnecessary military trappings to an already hard profession. Low pay, year-round duty, dangerous work,

Period map of Albemarle and Pamlico sounds showing the regional road system and normal route of USCG *Pamlico* from New Bern north.

New Bern Chamber of Commerce



and little chance of advancement only aggravated the discontent.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the Seventh District suffered a reduction in staff due to the lack of funding, leaving four stations (Penneys Hill, Poyners Hill, Kitty Hawk, and Durants) with only a caretaker. Additionally, alcohol enforcement would have taken crewmen too far from their duty stations and, thus, became none of their concern. Other regional stations and agencies were thought more expendable. The 1924 Congressional appropriations bill would have increased Coast Guard presence in the area, but little actually found its way to the northeast; most of the money was spent on reconditioning antiquated Navy destroyers and building new craft for offshore work. In fact, the possibility arose in late 1927 that some North Carolina guardsmen would be transferred to Florida to assist with Volstead enforcement,⁸⁰ leaving an even weaker federal presence in the Albemarle;

but this does not seem to have happened. The Seventh District was not so lucky in 1933. Boats and their crews were removed from both Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet stations, as well as some district headquarters' staff, as part of a service-wide reduction in personnel.⁸¹ This late in the game, however, it had little impact on the efficiency of enforcement.

A Coast Guard vessel, the *Dave*, was stationed in Manteo possibly as early as January 1922,⁸² perhaps in response to the problems on the mainland, but no record has been found of her orders. She was a small vessel, forty feet in length, ten at the beam, and drawing only two feet, certainly capable of navigating mainland waterways if needed. Her time, however, was short: she was renamed the *AB-4* on 17 March of the same year and sold a little over a year later in Baltimore. About the same time, an unsuccessful bid was

made by local politicians to move district headquarters to, and (more important) permanently station the district's supply boat *1949* in Manteo.⁸³ Instead the *Gadwell*, originally built by George Washington Creef for the Pine Island Hunt Club in 1913, was sent to replace the *Dare*. Renamed the *AB-23*, she was primarily used as a cable boat between Manteo and Southport. Accordingly, it is unlikely that she participated in any blockade activities during her tenure.

With little local desire or manpower to fight the growing liquor industry, enforcement devolved upon Seventh District headquarters in Elizabeth City. Normally the inland duties of this office were nominal, mainly consisting of supplying the field stations, transporting inspectors, assisting with navigational aids, and less frequently, performing rescues. The New Bern-based cutter *Pamlico* did patrol the sounds, but it does not seem to have had an active intercept policy.⁸⁴ Because most alcohol interdiction occurred offshore and elsewhere,⁸⁵ most inland stations rarely had access to newer vessels. The Albemarle region was no different. March 1927, for instance, saw three sleek new 75-foot patrol boats bypass East Lake on their way down the Intracoastal Waterway to the Florida coast—the irony of such protectionistic policy towards domestic products was not lost on contemporaries.⁸⁶ The vessel used most by local officials was the *AB-21*, the former supply boat *1949*, out of Elizabeth City.⁸⁷ Typically, this meant transporting federal agents to suspected areas, patrolling the shoreline in search of incriminating signs such as dying foliage on the shore or a secluded boat landing, and putting off armed raiding parties. Occasionally, suspicious vessels were stopped, and if necessary, arrests made. Similarly, raids were made on known bootlegger rendezvous, such as one observed on Jean Guite Creek in Kitty Hawk.⁸⁸ Forays could last upwards of a week, particularly if the hunting was good. Discovered stills were destroyed by hand or sometimes by dynamite, the mash poured out, vats smashed, and the liquor confiscated for later disposal. Frequently the still's condensing worm was brought back as a trophy of the expedition. The amounts and items captured varied with each excursion. A Christmas 1929 raid netted nine stills and 20,000 gallons of mash worth some \$15,000.⁸⁹ Seven stills were confiscated the same year over three days by Norfolk agents along with 45,000 gallons of mash and 135 gallons of whiskey. Another raid in 1927 found twelve stills said to be worth \$35,000, though, some thought this estimate was extremely high. Nine “practically new” stills were destroyed on a 1928 raid as well as 50 gallons of liquor, 28,000 gallons of mash and 140 sacks of whiskey-soaked

sugar. Moreover, this was said to be the first time the East Lakers had been caught unaware. A run several years later brought four stills, 19,000 gallons of mash, and 135 gallons of whiskey totaling \$13,150. This is only a representative sampling of seizures from East Lake. A trip to Currituck County's Indian Town Creek yielded two stills, 168 gallons of whiskey, 28,500 gallons of mash, and a motor boat.⁹⁰ Other counties offered similar results. The capture of liquor-laden vessels and bootleggers' hoards were said to be an even greater loss than the stills, for they composed the actual stock in trade.⁹¹ By mid-decade, the production and transportation of liquor had truly become an industry.

The state's offshore waters were relatively calm during Prohibition when compared to those farther north. In particular, no rum row developed off the coast, but this had more to do with the lack of coastal metropolitan markets than any government strategy. Nonetheless, Federal Prohibition Commissioner Roy A. Haynes issued a statement in July 1921 that his agency was preparing a “dragnet...off the North Carolina coast” and increasing activity in the area by both the Coast Guard and the Navy.⁹² Public anxiety, as well as fascination, ran high throughout the era, but never higher than in its early days. The *Daily Advance* periodically reported mystery ships seen off Hatteras, immediately proclaiming them rumrunners.⁹³ By the late spring of 1922, a rumor was circulating that many of the recently retired World War I Navy sub-chasers had been converted by bootleggers into disguised marauders, complete with crews in naval uniforms, to shake down liquor-laden vessels on their way north. The threat was felt so real that one vessel, *Navy 217*, was even towed to Lookout Bight by the Coast Guard. Although no liquor was found aboard, enough evidence was discovered to hold her on possible violation of navigation laws.

Certainly one of the strangest incidences involved the *Messenger of Peace* at Ocracoke Inlet.⁹⁴ Early in the morning of 13 August 1921, the station's crew spotted a vessel in the inlet needing assistance. Accompanied by crewmen from Portsmouth, they approached and found her to be the two-masted British schooner *Messenger of Peace*, on an apparently routine trip from Nassau to Jacksonville, Florida, which had run aground while coming into Ocracoke for water. Comments by the ship's crew suggested that she was possibly involved with smuggling, but no evidence was found. There being nothing else to do, the stations notified the district superintendent of their suspicions and let the vessel proceed on its way. The question of why a trip from the Bahamas to Florida would involve the

Outer Banks remained unanswered, but not for long. She reappeared off Ocracoke 30 December ostensibly on her way from Nassau to St. Pierre, Nova Scotia. This time she was also leaking badly and had run out of food, water, and fuel. The crew lacked even warm clothing for the freezing December weather. While these necessities were supplied by the Portsmouth guardsmen, their previous experience with her raised many eyebrows. Strict search of the vessel revealed a cargo of what the official *Report of Assistance Rendered* wryly lists as assorted liquor. The vessel's "master" and one crewman were seized, and a guard posted aboard. Although the state's federal prohibition director, R. A. Kohloss, did personally investigate the situation, his agency did not take over the seizure. Instead, the *Messenger of Peace* was surrendered on 6 January 1922 to the Coast Guard Cutter *Seminole*, which then towed it to Wilmington. The trials of the ship, however, did not end. Newspaper reports later that month related that she was still very much in danger of sinking. Moreover, two men were caught breaking into the customhouse where the confiscated liquor was stored. Eventually the vessel was released because of her foreign registry, and the incident faded from the news; but offshore events still occasionally affected the Outer Banks. "Black ships" were certainly active off the coast, but it is doubtful much foreign liquor was brought ashore. A later author refers to an incident in which shore stations received a message that an unnamed lightship was in trouble only to discover it was a ruse. While the Coast Guard vessels were occupied, runners landed their cargo. No independent verification of this, however, has been found.⁹⁵ A similar case did occur on Core Banks in 1932 when the British ship *Zebediah*, along with a Ford sedan, a Chevrolet truck, and 680 cases of assorted liquor, was confiscated, but evidence of offshore activities for the northern banks is limited more to the occasional bundles that washed-up on the Nags Head shore.⁹⁶

Dare County's remoteness and its jungle-like mainland gave moonshiners an early advantage over federal and local law officers. Not only did the latter have to travel a considerable distance to enforce Prohibition, but they also had to be inconspicuous. East Lakers and other regional manufacturers depended heavily on an elaborate network of spies within both enforcement agencies and the community and active surveillance around the operations. Some operators even kept pet squirrels at the stills to warn of the approach of strangers. The lumber operation was said to further augment security through its control of traffic on Milltail Creek.⁹⁷ Informers, though, were a greater threat than raids. Some disclosed the location of stills and their owners in hopes of

lessening their own punishment; others were prompted by territorial transgressions and similar rivalries; sometimes the informant was simply a wife upset with her husband's newfound occupation and friends. In all, comparable complaints and public information contributed to more arrests than did detective work.

Airplanes offered an easier method of locating remote rigs, but they were apparently not used in the Albemarle until the mid-1930s. Aerial mapping of the Alligator River region occurred as early as 1920,⁹⁸ the same year the Coast Guard opened an experimental aviation base in Morehead City, but it does not seem that early goals included law enforcement. By 1927, however, this had changed. The *Independent* reported that official frustration had reached such a level that some were openly campaigning to bomb suspected sites with tear gas, both to stop operation and to physically mark moonshiners for later arrest. Originally, dynamite was suggested for this chore, but ultimately decided against as too violent.⁹⁹ Elizabeth City boosters began calling for an air station in the area as early as 1921, perhaps as a consequence of liquor trafficking; but nothing came of this idea until 1937.¹⁰⁰ Later (after East Lake's heyday), lighter-than-air blimps were added. These craft were even more adept at missions needing stealth, and were used into the early war years. In fact, some blimp pilots preferred chasing U-boats to spotting stills, for the submariners rarely fired shots.¹⁰¹ Moonshiners on the ground had little defense against this new aerial campaign besides moving to different locations. Interestingly, such tactics also prompted a greater fear than that of simply being raided, the fear that their pictures were being taken for later identification and arrest. When planes were heard, one moonshiner said, they automatically looked down or faced the nearest tree.¹⁰² Perhaps this type of operation reflected a further, and less painful, refinement of the government's earlier ideas.

Although many involved with the trade were caught at one time or another, and many spent time either working on the roads or in a federal penitentiary,¹⁰³ arrest and punishment did not always serve as a deterrent. Some quit for good, but many returned, primarily for the money. Distilling was certainly one case where crime paid well. Many on the mainland made small fortunes off liquor during the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, it was in cash, although this presented its own difficulty—what to do with it. While very handy to have around, large amounts of cash proved cumbersome. Dare County had few consumer goods, and theft, fraud, or other loss was a constant threat. Liquor profits could be sat on (in some cases literally¹⁰⁴) for protection, but

that was not a long-term solution. Although Manteo had a bank as early as 1903, moonshiners could hardly advertise their illicit income through large or frequent deposits. Investment was another matter.

The economic impact of this underground industry was enormous. *Dare County Times* owner, editorialist, and county sheriff, D. Victor Meekins published an exchange in a 1938 column between his re-occurring characters, the Old Sea Captain and the Drummer, which illustrates the unexpected results.¹⁰⁵ According to the Drummer, merchants in Beaufort County were complaining that the repeal of Prohibition and the establishment of ABC stores were bankrupting them. Cash was no longer readily available in the local economy, especially since what liquor money there was went either into state coffers or to out-of-state distilleries. Many longed, ironically, for Prohibition's return. Liquor, it seems, fed more than just moonshiners. Through investment in real estate, expensive consumer goods, and construction, money could legally, and quietly, enter the economy. Moreover, such ventures could be passed off in many cases as civic pride.

The Dare County mainland experienced an exodus in the early-to-mid 1930s as many of the *nouveau riche* left the woods, opting for the prestige of Manteo, the county seat. Some viewed this as distancing themselves from the evil influences prevalent on the mainland for the sake of their children (regardless of their own families' involvement), but the town's location, recent connection with the Outer Banks via a new bridge, and new development occurring on the beach, presented attractive business opportunities to those with cash in hand. Furthermore, investors from the Northeast and Elizabeth City region were beginning to take special interest in the area. It has been recently argued that Dare County's response to its failing economy in the 1920s was to promote tourism, first by building bridges, then by attracting vacationers not just with scenery, but also with history.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps this theory should be refined to being a primary, if informal, strategy, and that much of the funding for the infrastructure to support this influx on the northern beaches (*i.e.*, the hotels, boarding houses, car dealerships, restaurants, stores, dance halls, and bowling alleys) actually originated in laundered money. In other words, liquor helped lay the foundation for the modern Outer Banks.

Manteo's Hotel Fort Raleigh is an excellent example of this legitimization process. The construction of the Roanoke and Currituck Sound bridges and the connecting beach road brought about a rapid increase in the number of tourists.

Dare County could not adequately provide accommodations for them, especially on Roanoke Island. Recognizing this deficiency, in May 1931, the county commissioners offered a refund of the first year's taxes to anyone who would build a new, modern hotel in the county seat. Precedent, however, did not bode well; Elizabeth City had recently financed the Virginia Dare Hotel with public bonds only to suffer a number of problems with management and profits. Several similar ventures for Manteo were mentioned in newspaper reports, but all had fallen through in the planning stages. Two recent *émigrés*, Claude C. Duvall and Carson Creef, took up the challenge. Unlike the Virginia Dare, this hotel would be financed privately by the owners. Original estimates placed the investment at \$35,000 for construction and startup costs, but final expenditures were closer to \$50,000, an extremely large sum for the time and location. Work was completed by August 1931, in time for a successful Dare County homecoming, but misfortune soon struck. In mid-September, Creef was arrested on Volstead Act charges along with several others caught in an undercover sting. Control of the hotel, and eventually sole ownership, fell by default to Creef's partner, Duvall, after the prisoner's younger brother and business agent was also caught on liquor charges. The Fort Raleigh went on to serve Manteo many years as a hotel, a boarding house, and most recently as the Dare County administrative offices, but its origins seem to owe as much to the availability of capital as the need for local lodgings.

In October 1936, *The State* magazine printed an article entitled "East Lake: The Capital of a Fallen Empire." Prohibition had ended early in Franklin Roosevelt's first term, limiting the national demand for illicit alcohol. North Carolina, by popular vote, however, remained dry. The drought was broken in 1935 when the General Assembly exempted Pasquotank County, appropriately enough, established government-run liquor stores there, and extended the option elsewhere.¹⁰⁷ Dare County did not vote wet until 1937, a momentous year in the county's history, in a vote that affected only unincorporated areas; towns and cities were allowed to conduct their own referenda.¹⁰⁸ The article proved somewhat premature, for production continued for some time on the Dare County mainland and in other areas of the Albemarle. But this second phase was mainly limited to intransigents who produced nowhere near their former quantity nor, probably, quality of alcohol. Moonshining returned, for the most part, to its historic place as a tax dodge, supplying drinkhouses and providing temporary employment to those foolhardy enough to try it. Most moved on to the next venture.

In the end, law enforcement probably contributed less to the decline of illicit distilling than did the creation of other jobs, both locally and elsewhere. New Deal programs provided a great boost to the regional economy. *The State*, for instance, reported in September 1933 that the Elizabeth City lumber industries were operating under National Recovery Act code with an eight-hour day, forty-hour week, and a minimum wage of 24 cents per hour.¹⁰⁹ The wages were low compared to making or trafficking liquor, but they were clean. Other opportunities slowly emerged as well. The Norfolk shipyards beckoned over the next decade, as did the WPA, CCC, and other government programs and projects elsewhere in the area. Dare County's own construction boom provided additional jobs for those so inclined. In the end, the lure of a less dangerous vocation with steady wages enticed many to find a new life for their families outside the woods.

In a way, liquor had served its purpose, much as logging, shingling, fishing, and farming had earlier. All were ways to survive in the isolated swamps of the mainland. In retrospect, the East Lakers made the best use of what they knew and made their surroundings work for them. Many were caught and learned from it; some never did. But success in reformation cannot always be easily measured by statistics. A locally famous maker went on to have a long and reasonably prosperous career as a plumber. The skills learned were not always wasted, and sometimes even provided a more acceptable livelihood. This is surely no different than what others were trying to do throughout the entire region during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Endnotes

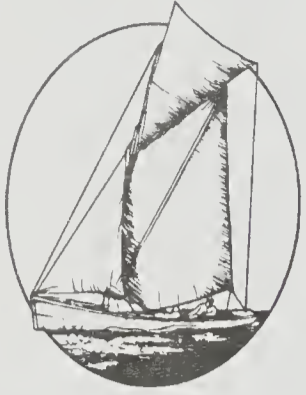
1. Walter Clark, ed. *The State Records of North Carolina* (Goldsboro, North Carolina: Nash Brothers, 1904), 23: 79–80. See Daniel Jay Whitener, *Prohibition in North Carolina 1715–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946) for in-depth discussion of the legal efforts to control the production and consumption of alcohol within the state.
2. David Beers Quinn, ed. *The Roanoke Voyages 1584–1590, A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land in Virginia*, by Thomas Hariot (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), 1: 330, 338. Clarence Gohdes, *Scuppernong: North Carolina's Grapes and its Wines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1982), 13–36; Whitener 5ff. and Heriot Clarkson's scrap books on prohibition, housed in the North Carolina State Archives (Raleigh, North Carolina), help place the topic in its historical context statewide. Esther Keller, *Moonshine: Its History and Folklore* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); Thomas Coffey, *The Long Thirst: Prohibition in America, 1920–1933* (New York: Norton, 1975); Edward Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years that Changed America* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996) do the same nationally.
3. Compare Jimmy Council, "Production of Turpentine at Hallsboro" *Kinlin* 1 (Fall 1975), 6–9 with "Moonshining as a Fine Art," in Eliot Wigginton, ed. *The Foxfire Book* (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday, 1972), 301–345. The North Carolina State Fair has even offered prizes for the best still, "with worm attached." Gohdes, 54.
4. North Carolina, *Public Laws* (1903), ch. 233; (1905), ch. 339; (Special Session, 1908), ch. 71. Discussion is in Whitener, 133–197; Clarkson, *passim*.
5. *The Independent* (Elizabeth City, North Carolina), 12 November 1920.
6. Federal Writers' Project, *North Carolina, A Guide to the Old North State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 493; *News and Observer* (Raleigh), 3 July 1960; Nell Wise Wechter, *Some Whisper of Our Name* (Manteo: Times Printing, 1975), 9–10; David Stick, *The Outer Banks of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 243.
7. Francis Renfrow Doak, *Why North Carolina Voted Dry* (Raleigh: Capital Printing, 1934). Archaeology seems to support this. Rick Jones, "Historical and Archaeological Investigation of the MacKnight Shipyard Wreck (0001NCR)" (Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 1995), 26–27.
8. Mrs. W. E. Cox to Robert Johnson, 29 January 1942, Chairman's Office, Board of Alcohol Control, State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

9. A definition should be given up front for the terms moonshining and bootlegging since they are frequently, but incorrectly, used interchangeably. Moonshining, strictly speaking, refers only to the making of untaxed liquor, usually a form of whiskey, for profit. Bootlegging is the transportation of the same to market, but usually encompasses its subsequent selling as well. While one person may do both, they are distinct operations.
10. This section is condensed principally from Brian Edwards, "The Dare County Mainland," (unpublished manuscript, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo). Other sources include Calvert Duvall, interviewed by author, 13 August, 22 October, 30 October 1996, Nags Head, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; Randall Holmes, interviewed by author, 8 August 1996, Manteo, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; Hubert Ambrose, interviewed by author, 25 October 1996, Manns Harbor, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; D. A. Brown and Robert Atkinson, *Remote Sensing Interpretation of Twenty-five Years of Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides* [L.] B. S. P.) Clearcutting in the Five Gators Study Area at Dare County Bombing Range, North Carolina* (Goldsboro, North Carolina: United States Air Force, 1998); Wechter, 3–46; W. W. Colonna, *Colonna Houseboat* (privately published, 1986); F. K. Kramer, *Kramers: 90 Years in the Lumber Business in Elizabeth City*, (typed manuscript, 1967); David Cecelski, "In the Great Alligator Swamp" *Coastwatch* (May/June 1997), 19–21.
11. *Independent*, 18 March 1927, 30 September 1932.
12. Stick, 242; Jennifer Broder, "Shifting Sands: The Creation of Place on the Outer Banks of North Carolina," (Honors thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 62; Gary S. Dunbar, *Historical Geography of the North Carolina Outer Banks* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 64–104. Compare the Dare County Superior Court Grand Jury's report for the Fall term 1917.
13. *Independent*, 23 December 1921.
14. A cursory glance through the Dare County Superior Court criminal records show charges as early as 1916. In all likelihood, however, problems occurred before this date as well. See also *Independent*, 18 March 1927.
15. Charles Whedbee, "East Lake Accommodation" in *Blackbeard's Cup*, (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1989), 140–149. Whedbee's stories, however, are not documented and should perhaps be classified, at best, as folklore.
16. Advertisement for Nags Head Hotel, 1932. Also W. O. Saunders, "Human Habits have Whiskers" in Keith Saunders, "*W. O.: Prodder and Prophet, Crusader and Critic*" (unpublished manuscript, OBHC), 104; *Independent*, 18 April 1924, 7 October 1927, 17 April 1931. See Catherine Bisher, "The 'Unpainted Aristocracy': The Beach Cottages of Old Nags Head" *North Carolina Historical Review* 54 (1977), 367–392 for more on this historic resort.
17. E.g. Rev. L. M. Chaffin's comments on Manteo's "lax care of its sons and daughters." *Independent*, 19 May 1922. See further Walter L. Cahoon's pointed Sunday School lesson as discussed in both the *Daily Advance* and the *Independent*, 31 October and 4 November 1921 respectively. The moral climate of the region is also discussed in *Independent*, 25 March 27, 1 April 1927; James Baker, "The Battle of Elizabeth City: Christ and Antichrist in North Carolina" *North Carolina Historical Review* 54 (1977), 393–408; Saunders, "*W. O.*" and *idem.*, *The Independent Man* (Washington, D. C.: Saunders Press, 1962).
18. Quoted in Billy Arthur, "Moonshine Mecca" *The State* (April 1993), 10.
19. *Independent*, 7 October 1931. Cf. Ben Dixon MacNeill, "A Ghost That Makes Booze" *New York Herald Tribune* (New York), 2 August 1931, quoted in full in the *Independent*, 7 August 1931; Sheila Turnage, "The Moonshine King" *The State* (July 1993), 33; Arthur, 10.
20. The case of C.H. Creef is an excellent example of moonshining as a last resort. *Independent*, 16 September 1927.
21. *The Coastland Times* (Manteo, North Carolina), 19 April 1973.
22. Saunders, *Independent Man*, 144.
23. *Daily Advance* (Elizabeth City, North Carolina), 13 June 1922.
24. *Independent*, 23 July 1920. Reports also exist of a still built on a raft so it could be floated quickly to different locations. Whedbee, 146.
25. *Independent*, 7 October 1932, 3 February 1933.
26. See MacNeill, "Ghost that Makes Booze;" *Daily Advance*, 17 April 1921; *Independent*, 11 October 1929; Turnage, 33; Sam Smith, interviewed by Fred Fearing, 30 March 1989, Elizabeth City, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; Nelson Sawyer, interviewed by author, 11 September 1996, Manteo, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; and the *North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1912), 3: 398 for more on this intriguing aspect of distillation.
27. *Daily Advance*, 30 May 1922; *Independent*, 7 December 1928.
28. Oregon Inlet surfmen reported that local moonshiners had developed an entirely new way of making liquor. They prepared the mash as usual, strained it, then poured the liquid into an ice cream freezer. The water and impurities would freeze out leaving just the alcohol. *U.S. Coast Guard* 5 (January 1932), 38.

29. *Independent*, 18 November 1921, 7 December 1928; *Daily Advance*, 11 November 1921. It was used to make the cooker, cap and cap arm as well as the worm. Many considered the worm to be the most valuable part of the entire setup. If it could be salvaged after a raid, then starting again went much faster. *Daily Advance*, 11 November 1921. The process is described in detail in Wigginton, "Moonshining as a Fine Art" and the oral histories of Smith and Sawyer.
30. G. E. Dean, "East Lake: The Capital of a Fallen Empire" *The State* (17 October 1936), 18.
31. Alec Wilkinson, *Moonshine: A Life in Pursuit of White Liquor* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985), 24; Smith interview; Holmes interview.
32. Thomas Paramore, Peter Stewart, and Tommy Bogger, *Norfolk: The First Four Centuries* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1994), 307; *Independent*, 18 March 1927.
33. MacNeill, "Ghost That Makes Booze"; Turnage, 33.
34. Charlie Ralph, interviewed by Aylene Goddard, 14 November 1990, East Lake, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; Gohdes, 60; Robert Carse, *Rum Row* (London: Jarrolds, 1961), 157.
35. MacNeill, "Ghost That Makes Booze"; Dean, 3; Arthur, 10.
36. Holmes interview.
37. *Independent*, 30 January 1931.
38. MacNeill, "Ghost That Makes Booze."
39. *Independent*, 18 February 1927, 1 April 1933.
40. The *Aleta*, a longtime supply boat to Ocracoke and Portsmouth islands, and John Saunders Creef's *Three Boys* are excellent examples of this boat type. Mailboats have been popularly classified as hybridized shadboat, but upon closer inspection, many exhibit more Core Sound influence. It is a topic deserving further investigation. See Mike Alford, *Traditional Workboats of North Carolina* (Beaufort: North Carolina Maritime Museum, 1990), 21-22. Also Mark Taylor, "Traditional Boats of North Carolina" *Wildlife in North Carolina* 48 (July 1984), 26; undated clipping from the *News and Observer* in the possession of the Ocracoke Preservation Society; Karen Willis Amspacher, "Mailboat Brides," *The Mailboat* 1 (Spring 1990), 2, 27. *The Mailboat* has numerous photographic examples, particularly, Summer 1991.
41. Colonna, *Houseboat*, 5.
42. E.g. *Daily Advance*, 30 August 1920; *Independent*, 24 December 1920, 5 May 1922, 13 October 1922.
43. Wynne T. Dough also remembered helping to modify engines and hulls to increase speed, but never had evidence that they were used in the trade, only the suspicion. Wynne T. Dough, interviewed by author, 18 February 1997, Manteo, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo.
44. *Independent*, 25 February 1927.
45. *Ibid.*, 25 October 1929; Colonna, *Houseboat*, 10; Charles Herdon, "Once Thriving Buffalo City has Disappeared in Forest" *The Coast* 3 (10 July 1988), 43; Smith interview; Holmes interview.
46. *Independent*, 5 February 1932. Also see the contemporary US Geodetic Survey charts 1226-1228 for a topographical depiction of the area.
47. *Ibid.*, 25 January 1929.
48. *Ibid.*, 12 February 1932.
49. *Daily Advance*, 31 May 1922.
50. *Ibid.*; *Independent*, 22 October 1920.
51. Mabel W. Willebrandt, *The Inside of Prohibition* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929), 92. Compare W.O Saunders, "The Penalties of Getting Caught" in Saunders, "W. O.", 123.
52. H. W. Kenfield to Clerk of Court, 2 September 1930, Dare County Miscellaneous Records, State Archives, Raleigh.
53. *Independent*, 16 September 1927.
54. Holmes interview.
55. Claude Duvall offered a reward of \$100.00 for anyone offering proof that he or his wife were informers due to the effect such accusations was having on his business. *Independent*, 16 December 1927.
56. E.g. *Independent*, 14 January 1921; Further contradiction is found in Cora May Basnight's remembrances, Suzanne Tate, *Memories of Manteo and Roanoke Island, NC as told by Cora May Basnight* (Nags Head: Nags Head Art, 1988), 10.
57. Holmes interview.
58. *Ibid.*; Herdon, 43; Tate, 10.
59. Marybruce Dowd, Personal communication concerning Lone Cedar Hunt Club, 1998.
60. *Independent*, 4 March 1927.
61. Dare County Criminal Records, May 1921, May 1922, State Archives, Raleigh.
62. *Independent*, 1932-1933, passim.
63. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1928.
64. *Ibid.*, 7 April 1922.
65. North Carolina, *Public Laws* (1887), ch. 371. The county did not have any incorporated areas at the time this act was passed. Manteo was not formed until 1899 and remained the only town until the 1950s.
66. *Ibid.*, ch. 313. Seven area hotels had liquor licenses as early as 1877. Dare County Records, Liquor Licenses, State Archives, Raleigh.

67. Worse, a standardized code of enforcement for the state did not exist until 1923, when the Turlington Act conformed state law with the federal Volstead Act and even this had problems. Possession of liquor, for example, was *prima facie* evidence of sale, yet personal consumption was allowed. In other words, the "procuring of liquor [was] illegal, but once in the home for private use, it was lawful." Whitener, 182. See Elizabeth Dell Oliver, "The Turlington Act: 1923 North Carolina Conformity Act" (Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 1977); Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *The Bureau of Prohibition: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institute, 1929), 50f., 73; Gohdes, 53–60.
68. *Independent*, 14 July 1922. Lemuel Basnight gives the East Lakers' point of view in the same paper's 20 October 1922 issue.
69. Schmeckebier, 61, 193–194. For contemporary discussion and examples of the problems faced, see Willebrandt, *passim*; W. C. Durant, ed. *Law Observance: Shall the People of the United States Uphold the Constitution* (New York: W. C. Durant, 1929) as well as throughout the Elizabeth City papers.
70. Dare County Superior Court Grand Jury Report, Spring term 1935, 520. Cf. Spring term 1931, 263.
71. *Independent*, 14 July 1922. R. A. Kohless, federal director of prohibition enforcement in North Carolina, responded quickly to Jackson's charges, noting that Jackson was a recent appointee and his statements were much too broad for the entire state. *Ibid.*, 21 July 1922.
72. Turnage, 33. For similar claims, see Jackson's interview referred to above and *Independent*, 22 January 1932, 26 August 1932.
73. *Independent*, 5 February 1932.
74. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1924–5 September 1924.
75. Examples abound. See, for instance, *Independent*, 1 April 1927, 30 Sept 1927, 25 March 1932.
76. Durant, 496–497.
77. The chief of Kill Devil Hills complained, for instance, that he ran a first aid station rather than a life-saving station. *Independent*, 3 April 1931.
78. *Daily Advance*, 21 May 1922; *Independent*, 14 July 1922, 14 November 1922. Cf. *U.S. Coast Guard* 12 (December 1938), 25–26.
79. *Independent*, 9 August 1921.
80. *Independent*, 23 December 1927.
81. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1933.
82. This date is open to some question since contemporary articles and the official records do not jibe. Information on this and other vessels can be found in Donald L. Canney, *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790–1935* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 73, 84; *U.S. Coast Guard, Record of Movements, Vessels of the United States Coast Guard, 1790–31 December 1933* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Coast Guard, 1989), 12, 17, 18 and the pertinent volumes of the *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers and Cadets, and Ships and Stations of the United States Coast Guard*.
83. *Independent*, 22 December 1922, 29 December 1922.
84. Frank L. Toon, "The Romance of the Pamlico" *U.S. Coast Guard* 5 (March 1932), 14, 52–53; *Record of Movements*, 396–397. Canney, *Cutters*, 64–65 provides a technical description of the *Pamlico*.
85. Darrell Smith and Fred Powell, *The Coast Guard: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1929); Donald L. Canney, *Rum War: The U.S. Coast Guard and Prohibition* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast Guard, 1990); Malcolm Willoughby, *Rum War At Sea* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964); Robert Erwin Johnson, *Guardians of the Sea: History of the United States Coast Guard, 1915 to the Present* (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1987) provides a good introduction to this topic, but contains little on the inshore activities of the service, especially in the Southeast.
86. *Independent*, 11 March 1927.
87. Fred Fearing, interviewed by author, 13 August 1996, Manteo, tape recording, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo; Holmes interview; Sawyer interview. She was christened the *M. B. Chadwick*. Canney, *Cutters*, 84.
88. *Independent*, 25 October 1929.
89. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1927, 25 March 1927, 23 December 1927, 24 August 1928, 25 October 1929.
90. *U.S. Coast Guard* 3 (June 1930), 19.
91. *Independent*, 18 February 1927.
92. *Daily Advance*, 25 July 1921.
93. E.g. *Daily Advance*, 9 August 21.
94. Information on the *Messenger of Peace* is contained in the US Coast Guard Assistance Rendered Reports, 1921, housed at the Outer Banks History Center (Manteo, North Carolina).
95. Gene Gurney, *The United States Coast Guard: A Pictorial History* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973), 85. Although out of this paper's geographic range, Carteret County's booze yacht, the *Adventure*, certainly has its place in coastal Prohibition lore. See Connie Mason, *Sounds like Home: Songs of Coastal North Carolina*, 1993, liner notes; "Booze Yacht" *Sea Chest* 1 (1973), 34.

96. *Independent*, 23 December 1932. Rumors still circulate on Hatteras Island that some pilots found employment taking whiskey out the inlet to waiting ships, but absolute proof is elusive.
97. Holmes interview; *Independent*, 23 July 1920. A railway drawbridge that had to be opened for boats to go farther upstream crossed the waterway at Mill Landing. The keeper, according to sources, was sometimes deliberately slow in raising the span for the law, allowing time for flight.
98. *Independent*, 23 July 1920; Arthur Percy, *A History of U.S. Coast Guard Aviation* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 3; *Idem.*, *U.S. Coast Guard Aircraft Since 1916* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 9, 64, 96, 148f., 152–154; *Record of Movements*, 665; Canney, *Rum War*, 7.
99. *Independent*, 25 March 1927.
100. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1922; *U.S. Coast Guard* 12 (December 1938), 10, 25; *U.S. Coast Guard*, 10 (July 1937), 6. The *Independent* reports (20 October 1933) that while planes had proven effective farther north in combating smuggling, such activities were virtually non-existent in the Seventh District. Therefore, any seaplanes stationed in the area would be used primarily for rescue.
101. Steve Chalker, Personal Communication, 1997.
102. Sawyer interview. Compare John Kearins, *Yankee Revenooer* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1969), 202.
103. Area dockets and newspapers hold ample proof of alcohol's impact on the legal system. See Jesse F. Steiner and Roy Brown, *The North Carolina Chain Gang: A Study of County Convict Road Work* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1927) for a fascinating contemporary portrait of criminal punishment and its social effect. An interesting, and perhaps unexpected, result of courts' policy of "feeding the roads" was that the more prisoners sent to do road work (most of whom represented alcohol offenses), the better transportation became in the rural sections of the state, something which helped not only farmers, but bootleggers as well. In fact, by 1929 wrecks caused by speeding traffickers became a leading factor in the establishment of the state highway patrol. Violations, punishment, and the network of roads expanded together. Ironically, Prohibition provided the infrastructure that made running liquor easier.
104. Holmes interview.
105. "Carolina's Cash Crop," reprinted in D. Victor Meekins, *The Old Sea Captain and the Drummer* (Manteo: Coastland Times, 1950), 56–57.
106. Broder, 78.
107. Whitener, 211f. Interestingly, this was during the J.C.B. Ehringhaus administration. The governor was not only an Elizabeth City native and longtime First Judicial District solicitor, but also a staunch dry advocate.
108. Manteo, for instance, has repeatedly voted down liquor by the drink.
109. *The State*, 2 Sept. 1933, 6; *Independent*, 25 August 1933; Smith interview; John Bell, *Hard Times: Beginnings of the Great Depression in North Carolina 1929–1933* (Raleigh: Archives and History, 1982), 46.



Tributaries

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Pioneer Outer Banks Charter Boat Captains

by David Stick N.C. Maritime History Conference—October 23, 1998 at The Sanderling



Manteo in the 1930s
Woody Fearing Collection,
Outer Banks History Center

At left: "Hold Him!" A
photograph believed to be
of Charles Cahn.
Horace Dough Collection

I'm not a fisherman—but Outer Banks sportsfishing changed my life! Were it not for the annual appearance off our coast of tremendous gatherings of gamefish especially channel bass and blues, I would probably have been brought up in my native state of New Jersey; I would not have spent fifty years of my life researching and writing about the history of the North Carolina Outer Banks; and I certainly wouldn't be speaking to you here tonight. Above all else I know I wouldn't be talking to you about fish and fishing, because through the years I have developed a strong dislike for just about anything connected with fish, whether on the dinner plate or on the hook.

If I don't like fishing and I don't like fish, then I'd better explain how sportsfishing changed my life. My father, Frank Stick, was already a nationally known illustrator by the time I was born. His outdoor paintings, especially the hunting and fishing scenes, appeared regularly on the cover of magazines such as *Field and Stream*, and on calendars gracing the walls of country stores all over the country. Born in what was then known as Dakota Territory, he was guiding hunting and fishing parties in the lake country of Wisconsin while still in his teens. Later, as his interests turned more and more to things piscatorial his fishing stories—always accompanied by Frank Stick illustrations—began to appear in magazines,



Getting the gaff ready.
Horace Dough is standing
in the background.
Horace Dough Collection

the first in *Sports Afield* in 1904. They had titles like "Fishing Resorts Near Chicago"; "A Few Remarks About Tackle"; "The Virtues of Pork Rind"; and "Surf Fishing." He even had one in *Outdoor America* in 1924 titled "How to Write A Fishing Story." And years later, when I was a reporter in Raleigh and was given the added job of writing a fishing column, I went to the library to check out appropriate books on the subject. The only one I could find on surf fishing was "The Call of The Surf" by Van Campen Heilner and Frank Stick, illustrated with paintings by Frank Stick.

I suppose it was inevitable that my Dad would discover the Outer Banks. In the early 1920s he had fished for bonefish on the Florida Keys with his good friend Zane Gray, and had checked out just about every slew on the Jersey shore in his search for stripers and their allies. But it was his fellow author and fishing buddy Van Heilner who brought him to the isolated North Carolina barrier islands in the mid 1920s and exposed him to the best surf fishing he had ever experienced. Dad was hooked—so much so, in fact, that in 1928 he brought the family down to spend the summer on the Outer Banks, and in 1929 we moved here for good.

By then, other avid fishermen had begun to discover the Banks, and a handful of enterprising natives had taken advantage of this new source of income. A good example were the Perry brothers, Herbert and Charley, of Kitty Hawk. Herbert was Kitty Hawk's only fish buyer, an occupation that provided an inconsistent source of income at best. So he and Charley filled in the monetary shortfall with long-net fishing and market hunting. It wasn't long, however, before they made a dramatic change from market hunters to hunting guides as more and more wealthy northerners discovered the wonderful hunting in the Currituck Sound and Kitty Hawk area. During hunting season Herbert and his wife converted into guest rooms for the hunting parties three bedrooms in their large house on the end of what is now known as Herbert Perry Road in Kitty Hawk Village, temporarily moving the kids to a crowded outbuilding. Herbert would pick up the hunters in his boat at Point Harbor while his wife prepared special Kitty Hawk-style meals for the visitors. When taking one such group of hunters to a blind at the north end of Croatan Sound they spotted large numbers of gulls in a feeding frenzy where rockfish were making mincemeat of smaller fish. The hunters, having never before seen such a concentration of gamefish, wanted to take a crack at trying to catch some. It was not long before they returned with fishing gear and soon caught all they could han-

dle. Having previously abandoned market gunning to become hunting guides, Herbert and Charley Perry soon put aside their long-net rigs to become fishing guides as well.

At about that same time it appears that Horace Dough and Harry Green from the north end of Roanoke Island, Sam Tillett of Wanchese, and other Roanoke Island watermen had come up with the same idea. It's impossible, three quarters of a century later, to know which of these pioneer Outer Banks sportsfishing guides was first. In talking with members of their families, however, the same names keep turning up, an indication that it was about as close to being a dead heat as anything this side of a horse race. All available sources seem to agree, however, that Horace Dough was a step ahead of the others when it came to the matter of booking parties of fishermen, and he did it with a combination of advertising, his competence as a guide, and considerable free publicity.

At right: A battle with a Channel Bass. Horace Dough is bending out of the frame.

Horace Dough Collection





An early example of the free publicity appeared in the June 1928 issue of the *Baltimore Sun*, taking up most of the space in a column titled "Fishing Fun" by Peter C. Chambliss. The columnist reprinted a letter from a Baltimore fishing enthusiast named Charles Cahn, who had just returned from a highly successful fishing trip to Oregon inlet. He and his two companions had begun their trip with an overnight passage from Baltimore to Norfolk on what Captain Horace Dough had described in his promotional brochure as one of the "three magnificent new steamers" of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, more generally known as the Old Bay Line. In my opinion Horace was not exaggerating with the additional statement in his brochure that the steamers contained "every modern convenience for the safety, comfort and pleasure of the traveler" for as a boy, at about that time, I made that same exciting trip down Chesapeake

Bay with my Dad. Cahn said he and his fellow anglers "left Baltimore Sunday evening, May 20, at 6:30 o'clock, put our machine aboard the steamer, arriving in Norfolk at 7:30 AM. Monday." I don't know what they had for dinner in the elaborate dining room of the steamer that night, but one of the lasting memories of my boyhood were the lamb chops, with the bone ends covered by fancy paper sleeves so that the diner, even one seven or eight years old, would not get grease on his fingers. And if by chance he did, come to think of it, the last thing the waiter provided before leaving the table was a warm, wet wash cloth to be applied delicately to ones lips. It can be assumed that members of the Cahn party, after a leisurely meal, also lounged for a while on deck before retiring for the night in their private staterooms.

Cahn picked up his account: "We proceeded to

Fearmac owned by Tom Fearing and Joe Mackie. First twin-engine party boat operating out of Manteo.

Woody Fearing Collection,
Outer Banks History Center

Point Harbor, N.C., on the brink of the Croatan Sound, about an eighty-mile drive—fifty miles of good concrete road, remainder fairly good dirt and stone road.” Though he made no mention of it, the last fourteen miles of the trip down the Currituck peninsula was crafted from the only thing the area had to offer for road construction, oyster shells. At Point Harbor the Baltimoreans caught the five PM ferry, which, he said, “Took us, with auto aboard, across to Manteo, where we engaged our guide, Capt. Dough.” On their arrival in Manteo they checked in at Mrs. Nathaniel Gould’s Tranquil House, advertised in Captain Dough’s brochure as “All The Name Implies,” and located “just a stone’s throw from the wharf.” The Tranquil House was also credited by Captain Dough as having a “Homelike atmosphere with Large Rooms (and) a good Table.” What more could a fisherman hope for—except possibly some fish? And that’s where things got off to a lousy start! Wednesday, Cahn said, the wind blew northeast, and the seas were rough. Thursday was even worse and after three days of fishing they had caught only fifty-four bluefish and rock, averaging two to two and a half pounds each. Conditions were better Friday and they left the dock early. Let Cahn pick up his enthusiastic account:

“The trip was yet to start! The seas calmed down even more than ever and we proceeded under full power to Oregon Inlet. When we got within sight of the breakers we saw many gulls, but we were unable to get under them because of the shoal water. We trolled leisurely about fifty yards from them. Gradually the gulls worked seaward. We began then to pick up a few blues, The gulls came closer and we took a more daring range and then the battle started. Among the blues that were being caught, I caught my first channel bass trolling. . . . The guide hollered out immediately because he thought that we would never land him. My outfit consisted only of the ordinary rock trolling equipment and I set my drag a bit tighter, then tighter still, but he took as much line as he pleased. I played the fish as I would a large rock and finally, after 20 minutes or more, winding and tossing about in the boat, brought him alongside, where the skipper gaffed him aboard.”

Before the day was over they had caught 117 blues and 12 channel bass, the latter averaging about 25 pounds each, with the largest weighing in at 45 pounds. “In my fondest dreams,” Cahn said, “I had never experienced such a day of fishing.”

Cahn’s letter to the fishing columnist of the *Baltimore Sun* in the early summer of 1928 appears to be the earliest first-hand account of a charter fishing trip with one of the pioneer Outer

Banks guides. Before long Horace Dough had turned in his captain’s hat and title to become the first superintendent; they called him the caretaker if I remember correctly—of the first National Park Service facility on the Outer Banks, what is now known as the Wright Brothers National Memorial. But the other pioneering guides continued making it possible for fishing enthusiasts to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the variety and quantity of game fish at what some journalist, probably either Aycock Brown or Bill Sharpe, later named Gamefish Junction. In order to eliminate the long trip from their Kitty Hawk base to Oregon Inlet, Herbert and Charles Perry soon made arrangements to keep their boats during fishing season at the docks behind the Bodie Island Club, just a short distance above the inlet. Herbert’s son, Pernell Perry, says his father started taking him on the Oregon Inlet trips when he was a small boy, and he can remember crowding in with the fishermen and their gear in an old station wagon his Dad had rigged up for the trip from the end of the paved highway at Whalebone Junction to Bodie Island. Pinned down among the fishermen and their gear, about the only specific things he can remember are the hordes of mosquitoes that engulfed the station wagon on the trip through the Bodie Island marshes in mid summer.

Later, when a man named Dykstra built a little store catering to fishermen alongside the canal near the Roanoke Sound Bridge, they moved their boats from Bodie Island to Dykstra’s makeshift marina, got rid of the old station wagon, and picked up most of their clients in the 1930s at hotels that had been built along the route of the new state highway down the beach, the Virginia Dare Trail. The First Colony Inn at Nags Head, operated by Captain and “Miss Daisy” Midgett, along with Mr. and Mrs. L. S., Parkerson’s Beach Hotel and Skipper and Bernie Griggs’ Croatan Inn in Kill Devil Hills, was where their regular clients usually stayed. The Manteo fishing guides also kept their boats at Dykstra’s, which made the run to the inlet closer than from Manteo, though it still took about an hour. Meanwhile, the Wanchese guides were able to keep their boats near their homes because of the proximity to the inlet.

Initially, all of these early guides used their traditional Outer Banks commercial fishing boats, sometimes adding such things as canvas sun shields for the convenience of the fishing parties, which often included non-fishing women and children. Perneil Perry says his father was the first in the Kitty Hawk area to have a boat specifically designed for sports fishing. Built by Blaine Toler in Kitty Hawk, the 38-foot boat, named the

Mildred I, drew only about two feet of water, and had a top speed of ten miles an hour. For a while, at least, Blaine Toler was kept busy, building a boat of similar size and power for Charley Perry, who named it the *Maggie*. Though they still occasionally fished for rock in the Croatan Sound area, before long almost every fishing party they booked wanted to take a crack at the Oregon Inlet offerings.

By the mid 1930s the daily charter rate for a normal party of four had gone up to fifteen dollars a day, which meant most of the time two would be fishing while the other two rested. Most of the time they would bottom fish inside the inlet, the primary catches being flounder, croaker, and spot. On good days they went offshore through the ever-changing channel of the inlet, but never beyond sight of land. Trolling for bluefish, as Horace Dough had done in 1928, was the way they usually started the day, though occasionally somebody would land an albacore, or even a dolphin though it was not considered an edible fish at that time. If nothing else worked out, Pernell said his Dad would run the bow of the *Mildred I* ashore on one of the sand shoals inside the inlet and they would turn to clamming. "There were always plenty of clams," Pernell says.

As the popularity of Oregon Inlet fishing grew, more and more local watermen turned to guiding, and as new boats were built the experienced guides incorporated new features to make the boats more seaworthy and better suited to the needs and desires of the fishing parties. Shortly before World War II an entirely different type of charter boat appeared on the scene. This was a Florida-built craft, bought and rebuilt by Tommy Fearing, a Manteo native, and another young man named Joe Mackie. It looked more like what you would expect a charter boat to look like, as compared with the commercial fishing boats converted to sports fishermen which were still being used by many of the other Oregon Inlet guides. Tommy Fearing was a close personal friend, and a frequent companion in the only kind of fishing that ever appealed to me—goggle fishing. When word of this activity got around some of the old timers got a special charge out of asking me how many goggle fish I had taken that day, and Tommy and I had difficulty convincing them that the sport was so named because we wore hand-made wooden goggles especially designed for the Japanese pearl divers, and that we did our fishing with handmade spears, underwater, around sunken ships where sheephead and similar varieties of fish congregated. In the 11 August 1940 issue of *Outdoor Life Magazine* there is a picture of Tommy and me, each of us holding a spear in one hand and a large

sheepshead in the other, with which I had won first prize and Tommy second prize in a goggle fishing contest at Kill Devil Hills. Conveniently the fact that Tommy and I were the only entrants who had ever speared a fish before, is not mentioned in the caption. I think that was the last time Tommy and I ever goggle fished together—for Tommy Fearing was killed in combat in the very early days of World War II.

When charter-boat fishing was revived at the end of the war, new boats, new captains, and new methods were in evidence at Oregon Inlet, but one of the pioneers still active was Sam Tillett of Wanchese, who, with his son Omie, came up with an idea for his own booking service. Sam and Omie's was the name they gave to the little restaurant just north of the Whalebone intersection which opened early in the morning before most other people in the restaurant business had even gotten out from under the covers, and made a specialty of serving early breakfast to fishermen. For those of you who weren't around here in those days it should be mentioned that Whalebone, or Whalebone Junction, was the place where the fishermen headed down the Banks had to stop and let most of the air out of his tires in order to navigate the sand trail track from there to Oregon Inlet, ludicrously known as "The Main Road." The owner of the filling station there, Captain Midgett—fishermen seem to call everybody captain—had enlisted the aid of his three sons in mounting next to his station the bones of a whale which had washed up on the Bodie Island beach years earlier thus accounting for the Whalebone Junction name. Anybody with a road map of the United States could tell exactly where Whalebone Junction was located for it was the eastern terminus for three federal highways—U.S. 158 coming in from the northwest through Elizabeth City and Currituck, and U.S. 64 and U.S. 264 from the west, the latter all the way from California.

Then came the first trips offshore, the pioneers this time being experienced watermen like the Tilletts, Ken Ward, and Willie Etheridge operating out of Oregon Inlet, and Emal Foster and Edgar Styron at Hatteras. Boats equipped with ship-to-shore radio were finally able to go out beyond sight of land and fish for marlin and other exotic fish in the warmer Gulf Stream waters. By 1950 there were more than a dozen of the modern sports fishermen operating out of Oregon and Hatteras inlets. Ten years later the number was estimated at sixty, and ever since the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center was built more than a quarter of a century ago, it has become something of an evening ritual to gather there and watch the return of the charter fleet.

Horace Dough could have had no possible idea of what he was starting back in 1928 when, in that first printed brochure, he described this as: "Truly the fisherman's Paradise."



L. FOLCHIE
Mr. Gulf S



Tributaries

A Publication
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Carolina Maritime
History Council



It's Sanitary!

A Photographic Look at Sportsfishing from the Archives



Captain Tony Seamon came to Morehead City in 1924, and after buying the *Monnie M*, became one of the first charter-boat captains to fish the Gulf Stream and reportedly, one of the first to catch a sailfish. Captain Tony's charters were popular for his exceptional service, including the cooling of the catch at the end of the day; the genesis of his restaurant career.

Photograph by Aycock Brown, Sanitary Restaurant Collection

Burl "Big Daddy" Ives squints beneath a well-worn cap next to Bob Simpson ca. 1958. Mr. Ives was an avid angler.

Photographer unknown



At left: Tony Seamon, Jr. beams with pride alongside his marlin catch, 12 June, 1958.

Photograph by Reginald Lewis, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



The yacht, *Monnie M.*, was one of the first charter boats to fish the Gulf Stream in the 1930s. She was captained by J. L. "Tony" Seamon, founder of the Sanitary Restaurant. This catch of king mackerel and other large sportfish was landed on 25 September, 1935. Holding the right end of the display is Captain Tony; at the opposite end is brother, Robert Seamon. Photograph by Roy Eubanks, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



A truck-bed full of marlin at the entrance to Ottis' Fish Market. Note Frank Swanson in the truck's cab, Captain Ottis Purifoy in his legendary white captain's hat leaning on the truck, and the old fishing photographs pinned to the fish house doors. Photographer unknown, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



"Little" George Bedsworth (standing) and Bobby Ballou pose with their day's catch of sailfish and mackerel.

Photograph by Bob Simpson, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



Two unidentified men on the Morehead City waterfront present a sailfish for the camera.

Photograph by Jerry Schumacher, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



At left: A 227 lb. marlin caught on the charter boat, *Rock-a-Long*, 29 May, 1964. Captain Rock Hardison, on the left, poses with First Mate David Day.

Photograph by Bob Simpson, Sanitary Restaurant Collection



Below: Three sailfish and their admirers. Caught by one of Captain Ottis's Lucky 7 Fishing Fleet, 13 September, 1958.
 Photograph by Reginald Lewis, Sanitary Restaurant Collection

Two unidentified but happy anglers with their catches.
 Photographer unknown Sanitary Restaurant Collection





A large catch of dolphin and other fish landed by parties aboard Captain Ottis's Lucky 7 Fishing Fleet, 25 May, 1957.
 Photograph by Reginald Lewis,
 Sanitary Restaurant Collection

At right: Unidentified anglers show off their catch on the Morehead City waterfront in May of 1964. *Blue Marlin* was captured by Ray Coats.
 Photographer unknown
 Sanitary Restaurant Collection





Captain Hubert Fulcher, waving towards the camera and standing in his whites, watches *Bluewater* tie-up to unload a marlin. Behind the dockside crowd is the Albert Lee Icehouse, owned by the Charles S. Wallace family.
 Photographer unknown
 Sanitary Restaurant Collection



At left: Captain Jim Talton, center, of the *Lou-Lou* seems to be doing most of the heavy lifting of this sailfish.
 Photographer unknown
 Sanitary Restaurant Collection



The two photos stacked at left are reverse angle views of the same marlin landed by the head boat *Danco*. Johnny Rose takes the marlin's bill into his hands to prevent damage as the fish is hoisted.

Photographer unknown
Sanitary Restaurant Collection



A night landing of a 264-pound "D-Day" marlin by an unidentified angler. *Bunny* was captained by Arthur Lewis.

Photographer unknown
Sanitary Restaurant Collection



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Books

Reviews of Select Titles

Charles Dana Gibson with E. Kay Gibson, *Assault and Logistics: Union Army Coastal and River Operations, 1861–1866* (Camden, ME: Ensign Press, 1995). 680 pages, illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, indices. \$45.00.

Charles Dana Gibson and E. Kay Gibson, *Dictionary of Transports and Combatant Vessels, Steam and Sail, Employed by the Union Army, 1861–1868* (Camden, ME: Ensign Press, 1996). 416 pages, illustrations, appendices. \$43.00.

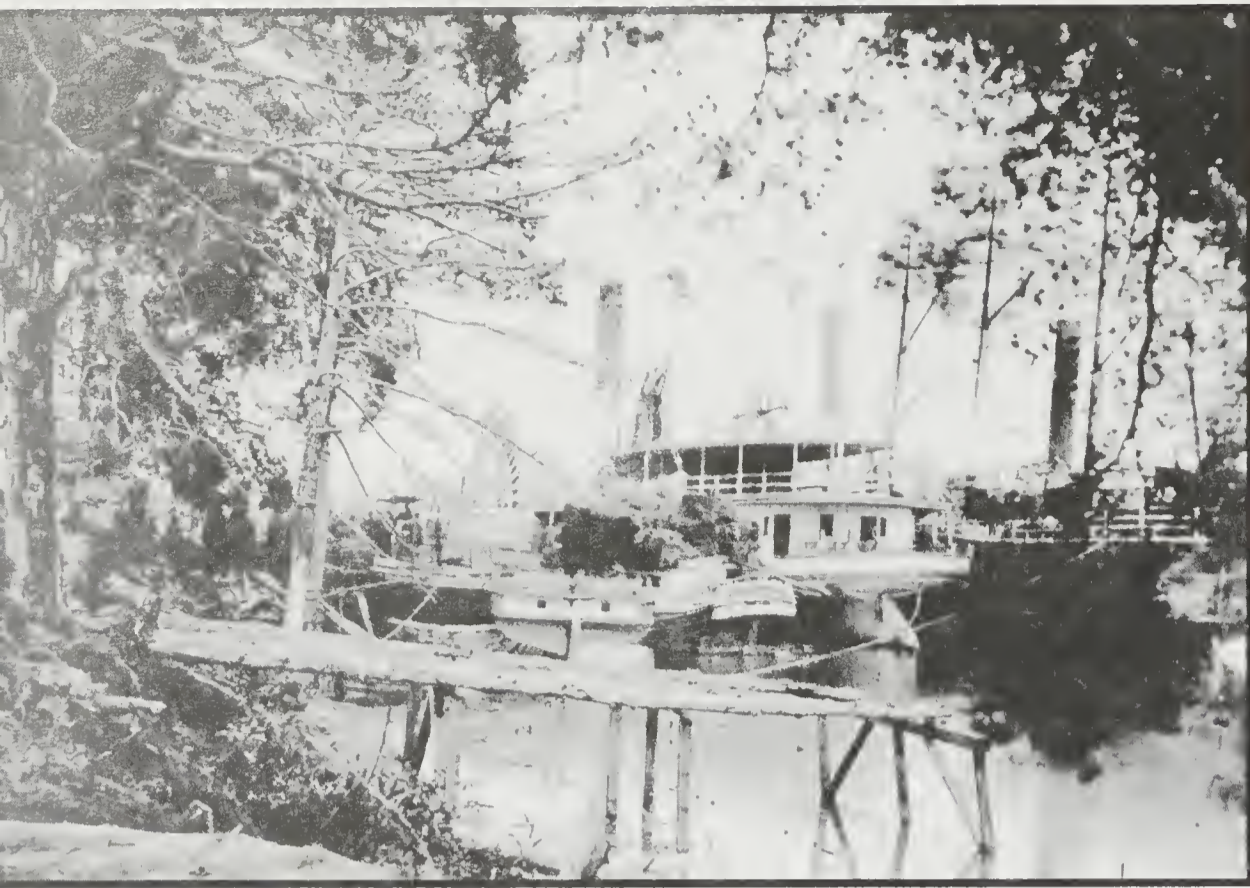
One of the most important single decisions about the North's conduct of the war against the Confederacy was to impose a blockade. This recognized that the South potentially could be isolated from outside support, permitting the Union to bring the full force of its material and numerical superiority to bear against the Confederate States. Military commanders quickly realized that blockade operations would require vast numbers of vessels, both for oceanic interception and service in coastal and riverine waters, and there followed a scramble for even vaguely suitable shipping by both the navy and the army.

The conflict, for the Confederacy, was almost entirely a land war, whereas the North's naval preponderance offered it the flexibility of fully exploiting the South's waterways in its quest for

victory. The general paucity of railroads in the South, which so crimped its campaigns against the North, also served as a severe hindrance to Union operations. As had been the case ever since Europeans first arrived in North America the country's waterways became the principal vital arteries along which troops, equipment, and supplies moved, and many of the conflict's campaigns centered around operations to seize strategic points on the South's rivers and coasts. This was noticeably the case in the Carolinas, whose sounds, rivers, and creeks served the Union as highways for assault forces largely to isolate the coast from the outside (save only for Wilmington) and as avenues for the invasion of the interior.

The sheer size of the army's fleet during the conflict is not widely appreciated by either general readers or specialist historians. Over 3,500 vessels served the army during the war, almost entirely on rivers and in coastal waters, as troop or supply transports, gunboats, assault ships, and couriers. These two volumes by the Gibsons make plain the full story of this largely forgotten armada and its contribution to the North's victory.

The *Dictionary* provides comprehensive details, both technical and operational, of all the individual vessels known to have been operated by the Army during the Civil War. The vast majority of these served as transports or supply vessels, but the *Dictionary* also includes full details of the



Scene on the Pamunkey River, Virginia in 1862. Chartered steamers are *Winonah* and *New Jersey*. Barges are waiting alongside to discharge their cargo of hay bales.
National Archives Collection

specialized combatant vessels used on the western rivers (later all transferred to the navy) and the other amphibious strike forces of Burnside's Coast Division and Graham's Naval Brigade whose operations were closer to home for Carolinians. There is no doubt that this work will become an indispensable reference tool for researchers and historians of the conflict between the states.

Assault and Logistics is the essential companion to the *Dictionary*. It contains a comprehensive operational study of all the army's amphibious operations throughout the conflict. Two areas receive special attention because of their overall importance: the campaigns on the western rivers and operations in the Carolinas. The latter are widely separated chronologically into the initial Northern efforts to enforce a total blockade of the coast which soon left only Wilmington in Confederate hands, and operations late in the war in support of Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas, including the assaults on Fort Fisher. All these campaigns receive thorough coverage, which benefits greatly from the authors' paying due attention to the significant role of maritime operations in their outcome.

Only one aspect of these works is open to slight criticism—the authors' style is both ponderous and dry. These are not exciting books to read, but they tell an important and forgotten story, and recount it comprehensively, too. Both are essential studies for all future writers on this conflict.

Paul Fontenoy
North Carolina Maritime Museum

Nell Wise Wechter, *Teach's Light: A Tale of Blackbeard the Pirate*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999. 146 pages, illustrations. \$9.95

Teach's Light: A Tale of Blackbeard the Pirate is a delightful work of juvenile fiction that brings Blackbeard's story vividly to life. Two Outer Banks teenagers, Corky Calhoun and Toby Davis, are determined to find the source of the unexplainable phosphorescent light located near their home at Stumpy Point village in Dare County, North Carolina. Local legend holds that the mysterious swamp light has loomed in all its glorious splendor over Blackbeard's buried treasure for nearly three centuries. The locals say that on some evenings the alluring light appears to do a Devil's Dance by both land and sea.

Drawn by the mystery of Teach's Light the two teenagers set out on a quest to discover its origin. Their search results in an amazing time-travel adventure as they approach the swamp light and suddenly find themselves transported back in time by its explosive, mysterious powers. Like a couple of ghostly spirits Corky and Toby transcend the bonds of time and space to hover safely above seventeenth-century England. There they observe the life and times of Blackbeard unfolding below them. The year is 1681. They watch in awe as the notorious pirate gets his sea legs as a nine-year-old orphaned stowaway aboard a privateer departing from Bristol. Blackbeard continues to mature and hone his abilities as a lawless privateer over the next two decades, racking up a score of treacherous deeds and terrible raids.

Corky and Toby witness the corsair's exploits as he refines his craft and masters the evil art of piracy. Blackbeard's reputation as a marauding, merciless, arrogant, rum swilling, blood-and-thunder pirate grew, until finally, he was beheaded at Ocracoke Inlet in a fierce battle with Robert Maynard, first lieutenant of His Majesty's ship *Pearl*.

Teach's Light: A Tale of Blackbeard the Pirate is an entertaining book about the exploits of two Outer Banks teenagers in search of adventure and the infamous pirate Edward Teach's treasure. The life and times of Blackbeard is presented in the book as an inventive blend of history and science fiction. The result is an interesting though somewhat fanciful tale of the seafaring activities of Blackbeard and his cutthroats set against the backdrop of the Golden Age of Piracy. I highly recommend this work to anyone young or old with a curiosity about piracy on the high seas and its influence upon coastal North Carolina's maritime lore.

George Ward Shannon, Jr., Ph.D.
Director, North Carolina Maritime Museum

Howard Mansfield, *The Life, Lies, and Inventions of Harry Atwood*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999. 229 pages, bibliography, no index.

Harry Atwood is chiefly recalled as a pioneer of rag-and-stick airplanes. Trained by the Wright brothers in the summer of 1911, he immediately became America's premier flyer. In his first month out of training, he was first to fly from Boston to New York, first to fly over New York's skyscrapers, and he established the American long-distance record. Within a few weeks more he made the first landing on the White House lawn and set more distance records, earning a new car and \$50,000 prize money.

But that was virtually the end of his daredevil career. Atwood soon proposed to fly across the continent, cross South America for \$100,000, and across the Atlantic in a pontooned plane, refuelling from a navy ship en route. All his projects fell through. His grasp never quite encompassed his dream.

Within his first year or so of flying, Atwood had become a budding inventor and a master con-man. He knew how to come into a community and with the exciting new field of aviation as his gimmick, work people into a frenzy of invest-

ment in splendid-sounding projects. In Sandusky, Ohio he meant to manufacture flying-boats of his own design. At Williamsport, Pa. he would produce revolutionary new airplane engines that European powers then at war were frantic to buy. On paper, his designs seemed wonderful, but there was always some snag that couldn't be overcome.

In February 1917 Atwood reached Raleigh with a plan to build a remarkable new type of seaplane for the navy. Leading citizens—future governor J. Melville Broughton and others—pledged the money, and Atwood, after building a prototype at Raleigh, set up plants at Smithfield and Goldsboro to make more. But his plane didn't perform as advertised, and the war ended after he'd built just four, none of which were accepted by the navy.

At Monson, Mass., he would manufacture a product called Rubwood, made of wood but flexible enough for car wheels, shoe heels, unbreakable toilet seats, and so on. Lindbergh was scarcely down at Paris before Atwood had blueprints for multi-engine transatlantic rubwood flying wing, with cabins, berths, dining and recreation rooms, and promenade decks. Then came Nashua, N. H. and his Airmobile, a flivver plane descended from his navy seaplane. It would be cheap to build, safe to fly, at \$800 the Model T of the air.

There were other such projects but something always went wrong and investors ended up looted. Atwood's amazing inventions were rarely thought out in full or adequately tested, though some might have been successful in other hands. In 1943 Harry hooked up with a major ship-builder to produce a ten-engine plywood cargo plane roughly the size of Howard Hughes's Spruce Goose. It didn't work out.

Harry Atwood settled at length at Hanging Dog, N.C., in Cherokee County, where he beguiled the citizenry with tales of how he taught Hap Arnold to fly and advised Amelia Earhart against going on her fatal last flight. He died there in 1967.

The career of Harry Atwood has eerie parallels with that of Dr. William W. Christmas, the Warrenton, N.C. native who claimed to have built and flown the first airplane after the Wright brothers and fathered an astonishing series of inventions. They included a flying wing, a plywood cargo plane, a World War I-era pursuit plane, and many others, none of which ever quite panned out and many of which left a trail strewn with bankruptcies and crushed dreams. Mansfield has researched his story well and tells

it with verve. He tracked down Atwood's living children, scanned the newspapers of towns where Harry promoted his inventions, talked to elderly folks who had known him. He weaves his tale smoothly into the fabric of modern history and the development of aviation. Atwood's eccentric private and family lives are nicely reconstructed. You don't have to be an aviation buff to enjoy this one.

Tom Parramore

Anthony Bailey, *The Outer Banks*. Originally published: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc. 1989. Reprinted by The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1999. 276 pages, 2 maps. \$16.95

The Outer Banks of North Carolina are about connections; rivers connecting sounds, sounds connecting ocean, swamps connecting hummocks. These are the natural and obvious physical connections. What drew or connected author Anthony Bailey to them were their spiritual or metaphysical powers. Their name, Outer Banks, implied a mystery of isolation and uniqueness that this Englishman had to investigate for himself.

Bailey did his homework, and his first-person narrative is peppered with accounts from such authorities as Thomas Hariot, David Stick, William Byrd, Catherine V. Bishir, Wilbur Wright, Orin Pilkey, Edmund Ruffin, and Amadas and Barlowe.

A self-proclaimed conservationist, Bailey's knowledge of natural history and his observations of natural phenomena were accurate and vivid, but for my money the longevity and contribution of this work comes from his pedantic detailed descriptions and observations of the people, places, and customs of eastern North Carolina.

When cultural historians in the year 3000 want to know how man survived above ground at the ocean's turbulent edge, Bailey's book will be a gold mine. He records the price of cottage rentals, restaurants, family names, and the taste of "chili sauce" on hot dogs.

His unusual English gourmet tastes were startled by some of our southern staples, and he honestly admits his dislike of "...hush puppies, grits, and biscuits..." and is disturbed by prepackaged "...half and half and tartar sauce in little tubs; sugar in paper envelopes that often haven't stopped it

from setting up like concrete in the damp sea air;..." Welcome to our world, Mr. Bailey.

Midway through the manuscript, his journey is interrupted by the threat of a category four hurricane, Gloria, and it overshadows the text by the middle of the book. How familiar this interruption is to us who are still experiencing hurricane Floyd's impact on our lives in eastern North Carolina. He documents hurricane preparations and the subsequent graffiti, and lore such as... "old-timers knew a storm was coming when they saw a pig with a straw in its mouth" and advice such as "You can walk in a ninety-mile-an-hour wind but you have to be careful it doesn't slip your feet out from under you..."

I find his quotes of natives true-to-life and just as relevant today as they were in 1989.

"Fishing is just about the only thing ... that keeps this area going in the non-tourist season. ...Some people think food grows in supermarkets. They look down on men who work with their hands. Well, I say an American has the right to try to earn a living doing what his father did, in the place where his father lived."

His evaluation of our emotional ties to the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is insightful:

"...a structure and symbol that is for the Banks what the Eiffel Tower, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Empire State Building are for their cities."

His discernment of the hopelessness of an Ocracoke resident in the face of outside development is succinct:

"It was roads and telephones and then money—when money moves in, you can't do a damn thing about it [development]."

His humor about Portsmouth Island mosquitoes, is typically English:

"...Deep Woods Off seems to be a favored aperitif...if you wait for the sensation of landing, you're too late. You've been bitten."

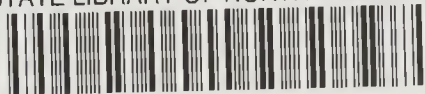
And I agree wholehearted with his assessment of Core Banks:

"This is a good place to be."

This is a good book to read. See if you don't agree.

Connie Mason
North Carolina Maritime Museum

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