

The Iron Steamer Pier

Continued from page 9

Freeman set about making sure people knew that fishing wasn't the only attraction at the new Iron Steamer Pier. Photos of the model of the Prevensey, usually in the hands of a comely young lady, popped up in newspapers all over Eastern North Carolina. And Freeman never missed a chance to hold forth on the history of the iron steamer for which his fishing pier was named.

He also struck up a friendship with a popular television weatherman of the day, and it was rare that the morning telecast did not include a report on weather conditions on Bogue Banks and how the fish were biting off the Iron Steamer Pier. Freeman also regularly handed out accolades and recognition for those who caught the largest and greatest number of fish in a day, and pictures of those fortunate fishermen just as regularly graced the pages of East Carolina newspapers.

Fueled by Freeman's enthusiastic and tireless promotional efforts, the Iron Steamer Pier got off to a rousing start. But all of his efforts threatened to come to naught six months after the pier opened when Hurricane Donna roared up the east coast in September, 1960. By the time Donna departed, a lot of property had departed with her, including 440 feet of the Iron Steamer Pier.

Freeman approached the devastation with typical zeal. He pointed out to suppliers to whom he owed money that while insurance would cover the damage, they weren't going to be paid anytime soon if he couldn't get back into business. With their help, the pier was up and running in record time, charging visitors \$1 to spend a day engaging in their favorite sport.

In 1963 Freeman built an extension off the east side of the pier to give visitors a better view of the outlines of the Prevensey

lying below, and for eight more years he continued his efforts to attract fishermen to the site. By 1971 the daily grind of promotion and keeping things running was wearing him down. He describes himself as the "fill-in" person for the pier, putting in 16-hour days to do all the things no one else had time to do.

The sale of the pier in 1971 gave him the opportunity to strike out in new directions, something he had done most of his life.

Born in Bertie County, he grew up on a



The late Grady Edward Love holds a whopper of a king mackerel caught off the Iron Steamer Pier in the early 60's. When the photo first appeared in The Shoreline in June we were not aware of the identity of the fisherman. But Mr. Love's sister in New Bern saw the photo and sent a copy to Mr. Love's son Edward in Clayton, who contacted us. It's a pleasure to properly identify Mr. Love, who had a beach house in PKS and often fished from the pier. The house is still in the family..



The photo is faded but the smiles were bright as Shelby Freeman and an attractive visitor held a model of the sidewheeler Prevensey at the opening of the Iron Steamer Pier.

tobacco farm and later became a tobacco inspector for the N.C. Department of Agriculture. When World War II came, Freeman found himself based in England, flying 25 missions over Europe at the controls of a B24 Liberator.

Back in the states after the war, he bought a small motel and restaurant on Route 1 in Norlina, running that for a couple of years

before deciding to move to the coast. He arrived in Morehead City in 1949 to manage the Frontier Motel in Atlantic Beach, later buying the property and then selling it in 1957 to pave the way for building the Iron Steamer Pier. He was one of the early residents of Pine Knoll Shores, building a *House and Garden* plan house on Knollwood Drive. The house is still there.

After selling the pier, Freeman didn't get too far away from the ocean. He acquired a bait and tackle shop on the Atlantic Beach Causeway and operated that until 1987. But another of his passions was exerting its influence on him, and in 1991 he launched an antique car museum.

To the best of his recollection, Freeman first became interested in vintage cars back in the 60's when an antique auto enthusiast suggested he buy one. His first old or "older" car, again to the best of his recollection, was a Cadillac convertible. But his first "significant" older car acquisition was a 1947 Lincoln Continental cabriolet. It must have been significant because Shelby's Collector Car Shop at 13th and Arendell Streets in Morehead City has a preponderance of vintage Continentals on the premises.

Freeman no longer operates a museum as such, but he buys and sells and stores vintage cars on his premises. You can find him there most days, prepared to talk about his present four-wheeled possessions. Now 85, Freeman lives in Morehead City but has fond recollections of his days in Pine Knoll Shores.

The news late last year that the Iron Steamer Pier would be torn down to make way for a

10-unit subdivision of single family homes brought him back across the bridge to take a last look at the pier and visit with the folks at Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall. The pier is gone now, but Freeman's happy recollections of fine fishing days above an historic wreck off the Pine Knoll Shores beach have not grown dim.

Hurricane Safety Tips

1. Enter each hurricane season prepared. Check your supply of boards, tools, batteries, non-perishable foods, and other equipment you may need.

2. When you hear the first tropical cyclone advisory, listen for future messages. This will alert you well in advance.

3. When your area is covered by a hurricane watch, continue normal activities, but stay tuned to The Weather Channel for further advisories. Be sure to keep a battery powered radio around at all times. Remember: a hurricane *watch* means possible danger; if the danger materializes, a hurricane *warning* will be issued.

4. When your area receives a hurricane warning: Leave low-lying areas • Moor your boat securely or evacuate it • Protect your windows with boards, shutters or tape • Secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors • Fuel your car • Save several days' water supply • Stay at home if it is sturdy and on high ground • Leave mobile homes for more substantial shelter • Stay indoors during the hurricane • When called to evacuate, do so immediately

5. Avoid the eye of the hurricane. If the calm storm center passes directly overhead there will be a lull in the wind lasting from a few minutes to half an hour or more. But remember, at the other side of the eye, the winds rise very rapidly to hurricane force, coming from the opposite direction.

6. Be aware of flooding. Hurricanes moving inland can cause severe flooding. Stay away from river banks and streams. A hurricane causes sea levels to rise above normal tide heights, with giant wind-driven waves and strong, unpredictable currents. These are the storm's worst killers.

Munden Funeral Home 726-8066
Phillip Munden, Jr. 2112 Arendell St.
Taylor Munden Morehead City

McLaughlin
Chiropractic Center
5039 Executive Drive
Morehead City
(In the Sound Bank Building
near the corner of Hwys 24 & 70)
808-2888
Patrick McLaughlin, D.C.
Fill Out New Patient Paperwork At: www.mclaughlinchiropractic.com

Tony's
SURF SHOP
Surf Board Rentals • Surfwear For The Entire Family
Espresso, Cappuccino, Fruit Smoothies & Ice Cream
PINE KNOLL SHORES
T-Shirts, Hats & Stickers
(across from the Sheraton)
ATLANTIC BEACH, NC 252-240-1008