

Manteo Native:

Josephus Berry, A Veteran Fisherman, Captains Cruiser Named For Daughter

By Wm. J. BARRER

MANTEO—Josephus Berry, better known around Dare County, Roanoke Island and the Oregon Inlet deep sea fishing center area as Capt. Joe Berry, is 35 years old, having been born in Manteo, October 14, 1921. Well built, he stands five feet eleven and weighs one hundred eighty six pounds—slim and muscular, well equipped for his daily battle with the denizens of the deep.

A first met Joe Berry on board the cruiser Phyllis Mae, Captain Berry is the owner of the cruiser, based at the Oregon Inlet Center, and is generally found aboard that craft out in the middle of the Gulf Stream carrying a fishing party out on the hunt for the blue marlin, the white marlin and the coblin.

His life itself reads like a saga of the sea. He and all his family are lovers of the sea and grew up with it. His grandfather, according to him, was a full-blooded Christian Indian, "and so" says the captain, "you can see where my love for fishing and for the sea comes from." This same grandfather was a pioneer preacher on the island (as Roanoke Island and Manteo is known locally) and was one of the founders of the Haven Creek Church, reportedly the oldest Negro Baptist Church in the area. This, in itself, is another story. All of the Berrys belong to the Haven Creek Church.

Captain Berry's brother and his father were both Coast Guardsmen stationed at the now deactivated Pea Island Coast Guard station. Before its deactivation, Pea Island, on the Outer Banks, was the only all Negro manned Coast Guard station in the United States.

The brother was in command and the father was second in command. The captain and his wife Martha (nee Tillet), also a native islander, have been married since 1928. It is the first marriage for both. They have three sons and one daughter. The

sons, Joseph McKinley (eldest), is married to Cora Lee Golden, a member of another native island family. The other two, Wheeler C. and Bradford E., married two sisters from Elizabeth City. Ethel and Dorothy Mullins.

All three sons have followed the island tradition and are now career men in the Coast Guard. The Berry daughter, Phyllis Mae, is 12-year-old, and it is from her that the cruiser Phyllis Mae gets its name.

Joe Berry has never followed any occupation not connected with the sea. When he was about 15-years-old, he began fishing in the Croatan and Roanoke Sounds off Manteo and Roanoke Island. He took his first paying fishing parties out sound fishing between Manteo and Nags Head (on the Roanoke Sound) before World War I. This was when both Nags Head and Roanoke Island were accessible by water, and when there were only five or six boats on the now fabulous Nags Head beach.

The only way one could reach Manteo in those days (depending on whether he were nearest Currituck or Elizabeth City) was by the steamers Anne L. Van Sorenborough, Currituck, and Trenton (Elizabeth City). To reach Nags Head one then had to hire a boat such as one then owned by Capt. Berry. In those days, he had a 27 foot shad boat. The sports fisherman of that day was a hardy soul.

During World War I, Joe Berry, a young stalwart, shipped on the battleship tender U. S. S. Pequot more as a civilian able seaman in the Naval Auxiliary Service (now the Naval Reserve).

After the war he returned to his shad boat and again began carrying fishing parties out into the sound.

Not long afterwards a group of these seafarers around in the area began to venture out. They had always fished (for themselves) on the outer shores of the Outer Banks and as anyone in the area knows, this is dangerous, for

an underwater sand shelf forms the treacherous Diamond Shoals off Cape Hatteras. Combine this with tricky wind and tide and one realizes why this most dangerous area of the Atlantic has sent hundreds of ships to the bottom, more than any other area in the seafaring world, making its nickname "Graveyard of the Atlantic" most appropriate.

According to Berry, he was one of those who about 30 years ago, first began carrying parties of "outside" sports fishermen (i.e., paying fishing parties composed of people from elsewhere) on the "outside" of the Outer Banks through Oregon Inlet.

This was corroborated by another "old salt," Capt. Lee Dough (white) who said "My oldest brother, Horace Dough, was the first man to carry a paying fishing party outside the Inlet. This was about 30 years ago and they fished for channel bass." "After this, my brother and I and one other began taking parties out through the Inlet into the Atlantic Ocean. Joe Berry also carried paying parties out and was right along there with the first of us 29 years ago."

Capt. Berry also chalked up another first. He says he was one of the first two to venture into the Gulf Stream, the famous playground of the blue marlin, with paying guests. The other one was Capt. Fred Basnight.

About 12 years ago, near the same time his baby daughter was born, Capt. Berry felt the need for a newer craft. He found one in his present cruiser which he purchased at Edenport, and named the Phyllis Mae in honor of his baby daughter. It is a 34 foot, 8 ton craft, well equipped with a 200 horsepower Gray marine motor, marlin cutters, two ray radio, and all the modern fishing equipment needed by the deep sea fishing sportsman; but the best equipment that Joe Berry has on board is his vast experience and his long acquaintance with the sea. The sea is his home.



CAPT. JOE BERRY, right and his mate, Billy Brown, of Manteo display a large amberjack taken aboard his cruiser Phyllis Mae in the Gulf Stream off Oregon Inlet.

Randolph lauded the leadership of Roy Wilkins, Thurmond Marshall, the late Walter White and W. E. B. Dubois, along with that of the late J. Finley Wilson and Dr. Robert H. Johnson, present grand exalted ruler of IBPOEW for their part in bringing about this "new era" of thinking regarding human rights and equality for all people.

Mr. Randolph also praised the Bikes for not only furnishing benevolence benefits for their members, but for going further and working in the broad field of

at this hour, a great battle is now in progress in Congress in the interest of a civil rights bill. Efforts are being made to emasculate the measure by all sorts of crippling amendments, such as the jury trial. Both political parties are more concerned about political capital out of the fight for the civil rights bill than the securing of a sound, bona-fide civil rights law.

"Out of the struggle, some basic benefits will emerge, even if no civil rights bill is enacted," the AFL-CIO vice presy said. Randolph said that "the rivalry between the two political parties to secure credit for efforts in behalf of civil rights is an evidence of the recognition of the political power of the Negro, (and) politicians, regardless of which party they are in, are not unaware of the fact that 450 thousand Negro votes in New York, 350 thousand in Illinois and 385 thousand in Pennsylvania, to say nothing about the growing political strength of Negroes in strategic states, such as Ohio, Michigan, California, New Jersey, and Missouri, can be decisive in any presidential campaign."

"Thus," Randolph reasoned,



"while it cannot be said that this is it, it is quite evident that the Republican and Democratic political parties have changed their minds. Negro is changing their minds," in regards to the Negro civil he concluded.

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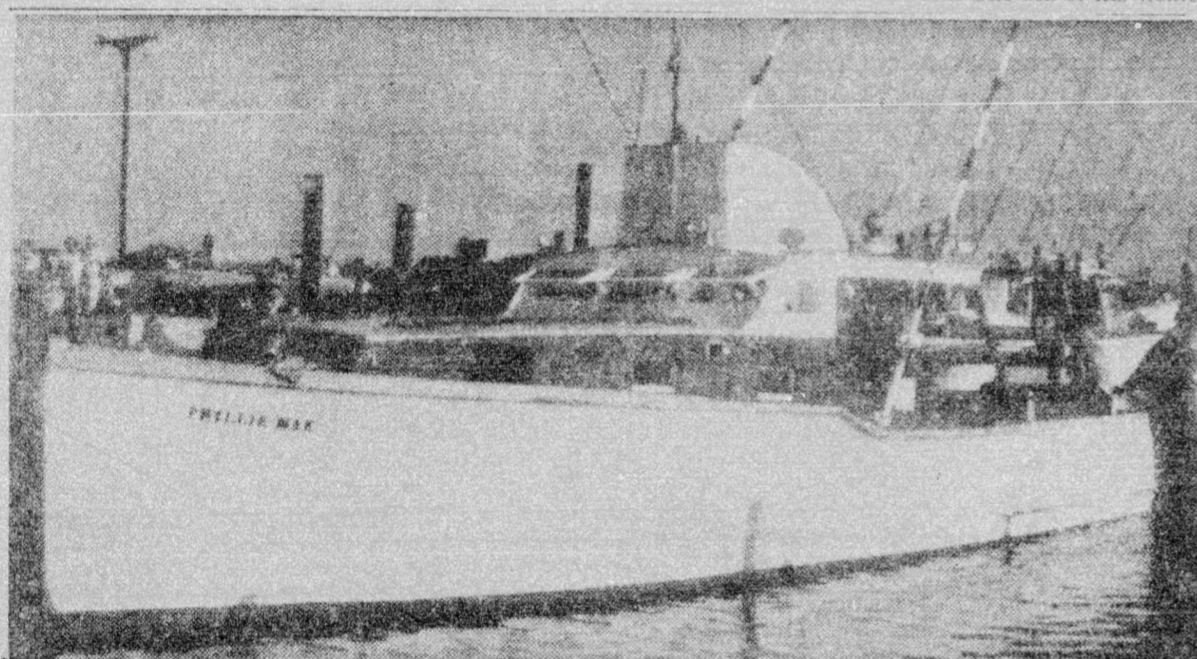
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CRUISER PHYLLIS MAE, owned and skippered by Capt. Joe Berry of Manteo, only Negro-owner and operator of a charter boat in the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center fleet, is one of the most popular craft in the large fishing fleet at the Cape Hatteras fishing facility.

A. Phillip Randolph Awarded Elks' Coveted Lovejoy Medal

By J. B. HARREN

PHILADELPHIA—An overflow audience of 1,700 jammed the South Philadelphia High School auditorium last week for the annual civil liberties program of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW).

Judge Hobson R. Reynolds of Philadelphia, grand director of the Elks' department of civil liberties, presided over the program. The principal speaker was A. Phillip Randolph, vice president of the AFL-CIO, and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Randolph was awarded the Lovejoy Medal, which is presented each year by the IBPOEW, for outstanding achievements in human relations.

Other participants on the civil liberties program were: Judge Thomas Eagan, Councilman Raymond Pace Alexander, Dr. Robert H. Johnson, of Philadelphia, grand exalted ruler of IBPOEW; Rev. C. M. Smith, minister of New England Baptist Church; William Hamilton, City Councilman; Foster Dunlap, city controller; Charles King, Liberian delegate to the United Nations.

Mayor Richardson Dilworth, told the civil liberties audience that the situation at Levittown was an embarrassing one.

"This situation, I am sure, causes horse laughs by the southern segregationists in the deep south, but this does not represent the true brotherhood in this city of brotherly love," the mayor asserted.

Randolph, who addressed the assemblage after receiving the Lovejoy Medal, declaring that the Negro had played a significant part in the development of America since his first ancestors first landed here as slaves.

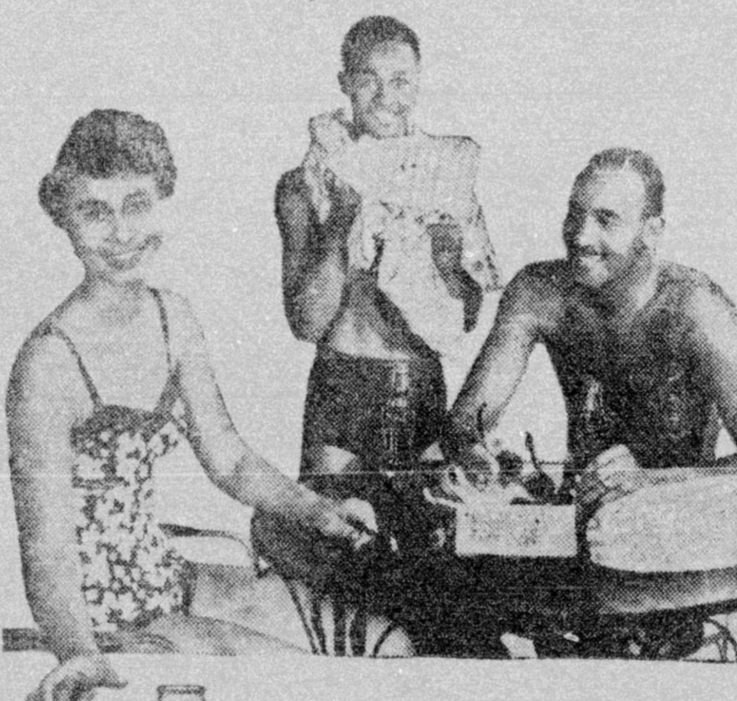
"But stirred by the great struggles, traditions and ideals of the Abolitionists, the Negro masses are on the march toward complete equality."

Randolph gave much credit to the Supreme Court decision which he said was a "monumental achievement of the NAACP."

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