

### WRIGHT BROS. NOT ONLY ONES WHO HELPED MAKE EAST CAROLINA FAMOUS

Three Centuries Before Advent of the Airplane, Kill Devil Hills Witnessed the Passage of Walter Raleigh's Colonists; Bent on Establishing Empire in the New World; and Probably Saw Enacted Tragic Drama of the Lost Colony

#### ISOLATION IS YIELDING TO "PROGRAM OF PROGRESS"

Ralph Pool in News and Observer.

Elizabeth City, N. C.—Nowhere, perhaps, on the Atlantic seaboard is there a region richer in historic and romantic associations than that about Kitty Hawk, midway between Cape Henry and Cape Hatteras, where an internationally distinguished assemblage gathered Monday to celebrate the silver anniversary of the Wrights' first flight.

Not alone did Kill Devil Hills, great twin dunes at Kitty Hawk, stand sponsor at the birth of aviation 28 years ago. More than three centuries before that event, they saw the passage of the Walter Raleigh colonists, bent upon founding a great English empire in the New World; and perhaps, too, they witnessed the enactment of that last tragic drama of the Lost Colony, whose fate is unrecorded on the pages of history.

But a little way to the south of Kitty Hawk—possibly not more than half a mile—there lay an inlet, bordered by a deep cove, when Sir Walter Raleigh's colonists came to America in 1585-87. It was through this inlet that Captain John White, Raleigh's colonial governor, called with the Lost Colony, to land on the shore of Roanoke Island, some four miles away. The inlet and cove are shown on the John White maps, the cove being christened Trinity Harbor, and it is recorded that the colonists stopped in Trinity Harbor for a while, to refit their ships and to take aboard fresh water.

Many years ago old Trinity Harbor and the inlet were swallowed up by the shifting sands, though there is a current belief in the coast country that they have survived, in part, in the Fresh Ponds, some 20 small fresh water lakes lying immediately to the south of Kill Devil Hills. These lakes have neither inlet nor outlet, unless far in the depths of the earth, and the water is fresh and sweet, despite the fact that to the east lies the salt Atlantic and to the west is the almost equally saline Roanoke Sound.

The Fresh Ponds are peopled with black bass, several varieties of perch and other fresh water fish, and annually they are visited by hundreds of anglers for the excellent sport they afford.

Old Fort Raleigh, on Roanoke Island, whence the Lost Colony vanished after Captain John White left in the late summer of 1587, to return to England for added supplies, was situated on the east shore of the island, some half a dozen miles from Kitty Hawk. A star-shaped mound is all that remains of the fort today.

Since the Raleigh attempt at colonization, though unsuccessful, paved the way for the more happily assured Jamestown colony 20 years later, it may be said that, beside witnessing the dawn of aviation, to-wit: Kill Devil Hills saw, in fact, the beginnings of that great British domain in America, which Raleigh envisioned and therefore the birth of the United States.

Defly hand wrought silver and bronze shoe buckles picked up by summer visitors in the vicinity of old Trinity Harbor, recently a relic thought likely to attest to the short stay of the Lost Colony there. Numerous Indian arrow heads have been found there also.

Records of the early permanent settlers of the Albemarle Colony, in northeastern North Carolina, reveal that the end of the old Indian trail extending from the mountains to the seaboard lay at the tip of the Currituck peninsula, at what is now Point Harbor, three miles across Currituck Sound from Kitty Hawk. Traditions of the region relate that the Indian from the uplands made annual pilgrimages to Point Harbor, to exchange furs, grain and other commodities for fish and other products of the coast country, especially for quantities of yupon leaves.

The yupon is a bush indigenous to the sandy beach strip on which Kitty Hawk is situated. Its dried leaves, when steeped, make an excellent substitute for tea—a substitute that was used by all classes during the dire days of the Civil War, and that still is popular. Yupon tea is credited also with medicinal properties, and legend records that the Indians visiting Point Harbor many years ago, drank huge quantities of it to cleanse themselves of fevers and other ills.

The name of the brilliant and ill-starred Aaron Burr, who almost won the presidency of the United States, later killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel, and finally sank into utter discredit when his scheme for founding a great new empire in the southwest collapsed, is linked inseparably with the legendry of the Kitty Hawk coast land. Burr's daughter, the beautiful Theodosia, married Governor Alston, of South Carolina; and in 1813, accompanied by her small son, she embarked from Charleston for New York aboard the small sloop Patriot, to visit her

father. The Patriot never reached New York, and the fate of Theodosia Burr Alston and the others aboard is a mystery to this day. In the year that followed, a small summer colony came into being at Nags Head, three miles south of Kill Devil Hills, patronized chiefly by the families of planters living in the Albemarle county in North Carolina. Fifty years after the disappearance of the Patriot, Dr. William G. Pool of Elizabeth City, while spending the summer at Nags Head with his family, was summoned to the bedside of a very old woman, a native of the coast country.

On the wall of the humble cabin, and utterly out of keeping with its surroundings, Dr. Pool was amazed to observe a painting of a beautiful young woman. Asked whence it had come, the woman told him that it was in the cabin of a richly furnished sloop that had come ashore at Nags Head many years before, with not a soul aboard. The picture, she said, had been part of her husband's share of the ship's cargo, which also had included disks of surpassing richness, beautiful silverware and other articles indicating that persons of wealth and culture had been passengers on the vessel.

Lacking money to pay for her treatment, the old woman offered Dr. Pool the picture in recompense for his services; and he eagerly accepted it, meanwhile speculating intently upon its origin. Some years later, in the course of his reading, he ran across an account of the disappearance of Theodosia Burr Alston, and being struck with the possibility of a connection between it and the old woman's story, he immediately took steps to get in touch with descendants of the Burr and Alston families.

Relatives of the beautiful Theodosia later viewed the picture, and declared it undoubtedly a portrait of her. The painting now hangs in a gallery in New York City.

The very name of the resort, Nags Head, suggests tragic possibilities as to the vanishing of Theodosia Burr Alston. The region was populated, in the main, by castaways from ships wrecked on that stormy coast, and these were dependent largely upon the bounty of the sea that had dropped them there. They regarded the cargoes of wrecked ships as rightly theirs and, according to a legend that has persisted for nearly a century, occasionally they helped Old Ocean lavish her gifts upon them by spurring the fates that hover over ships destined for doom.

The legend relates that on stormy nights, the bankers, as the folk of the region were called, hung a ship's lantern to the head of a horse, or bull, and slowly patrolled the beach with the animal, to give the impression to passing skippers that a vessel was riding in easy harbor close ashore. Those who foolishly ventured in, it is told, swiftly struck treacherous shoals, and their ships were pounded to pieces, or grounded so deeply that they and their cargoes were at the mercy of the land pirates.

Some such fate, it is declared, may have befallen the lovely Theodosia, who, with her companions, may have been compelled to walk the plank so that no trace might be left of the crime. Or, on the other hand, persons familiar with the coast country explain, those aboard the Patriot may have abandoned the ship in a storm, in a vain attempt to reach shore safely in their small boats.

Coast guards now regularly patrol the length of the North Carolina Banks, with modern equipment for salvaging lives, and the dire toll of Diamond Shoals, off Cape Hatteras, and the rest of the perilous coast has been reduced greatly in recent years; but the mighty Atlantic, her angry moods even yet occasionally shows her contempt for man and his puny works, as occurred scarcely a year ago, when two steamers went ashore, scarcely 60 miles apart, in a tragic gale.

Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills are little changed today from the community that Wilbur and Orville Wright chose for their experiments in aeronautics a quarter of a century ago. The community of Kitty Hawk lies in a woodland on the landward side, near the convergence of Currituck and Albemarle Sounds. The visitor finds a maze of winding sandy roadways, scarce wide enough for two automobiles to pass abreast with here and there a neat cottage.

Some three or four miles of driving along the roadway leading to the southward brings one abruptly to a great clearing—an immense level, sandy plain, sparsely carpeted with tough sand grasses. At the southerly border of the tract loom Kill Devil Hills, the taller of which is 92 feet high. It was at the foot of this dune, with the level, unobstructed sand plain before them, that Orville and Wilbur Wright launched successfully a tiny, unstable airship on December 17, 1903, and thereby ushered in a new era in man's conquest of the forces of nature.

The isolation which was one of the attractive features of Kitty Hawk when the Wrights carried on their work there, soon will have become utterly a thing of the past. North Carolina's remarkable highway system, developed in the last decade, is stretching out an arm toward Kill Devil Hills, and a concrete road al-

ready is under construction from Currituck courthouse, present north-eastermost terminus of the hard-surfacing, down to Point Harbor, nearest mainland point to Kitty Hawk.

Private interests have obtained a franchise for a highway bridge to stretch three miles from Point Harbor to Kitty Hawk. Approval of the war department has been procured for the project, and bids are being considered this month for construction of the bridge, which is to be of steel, concrete and cross-timber. Barring eventualities it should be possible within another year for a motorist to drive in comfort and security to the scene of the first air flight, and the other points on the coast land that hold hallowed place in the history and legendry of America.

#### As It Goes

First Law: What are we going to have this morning?

Second Law (wearily): Roll call mostly, it seemeth, old chap.



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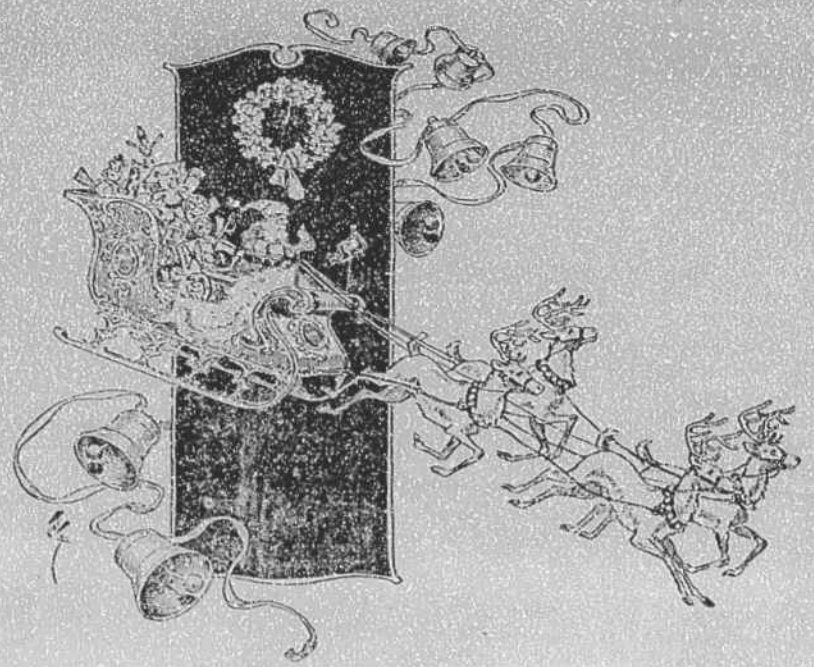
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### WATAUGA COUNTY BANK

# Merry Christmas

We take this means of thanking our friends and customers for their varied contributions to our material welfare during the year which is rapidly drawing to a close. Through the fine co-operation of our friends we have enjoyed a splendid patronage, and better than this, the general good will of Watauga people. We have tried to render the kind of service that will merit the further patronage of one and all and that we are succeeding in this is evidenced by the rapid growth of our long list of patrons. We will be open evenings until Christmas and will render an invaluable service to the last minute shoppers. In the meantime, we wish for all

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

## WILL C. WALKER, Jeweler