

History Of The Early Albemarle Sound Region Gets Reviewed

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 disappearing with every storm and every fickle change of tide or wind. It was a delicate business, navigating those ever-shifting inlet channels, and numerous vessels and cargoes were lost in the attempt. Both Roanoke Inlet and Currituck Inlet have long since closed, but it is a commentary on the perennial problem of finding access from the sound to the Ocean that their successor, Oregon Inlet, is no more stable now than they were three hundred years ago.

Raleigh's colonists had taken possession of the area in Queen Elizabeth's name in the 1580's, naming it Virginia in honor of their virgin monarch, but it was not until 1663 that Englishmen formalized the takeover from the native American Indians. That was the year in which eight influential associates and confidants of King Charles II were named "The Lords Proprietors of Carolina" and provided with a grant for all of the lands between Virginia and Spanish Florida, extending far westward to the South Seas, or Pacific Ocean. One of the eight Proprietors was George Monck, the Duke of Albemarle; and those of us who pay special attention to words, revelling in the sound of those that roll off our tongues with a melodious rhythm, are thankful that in honoring the Duke his fellow Lords Proprietors chose not to change the designation of The Sea of Raw - nocke to Monck Sound, but named it Albemarle Sound instead.

For a number of years after 1663 there were only two settlements of importance in the Carolina colony, one centered around Charleston and the other here in the vicinity of the Duke of Albemarle's sound. George Monck, with this magnificent body of water already named for him, was further honored when this area was designated Albemarle Country, with Indian names - Currituck, Pasquotank, Perquimans, and Chowan - for its four original precincts. Later, as other counties were added

south of the sound, it became common practice to refer to the Albemarle region as "The Northern Part of Carolina," a term subsequently shortened to "Northern Carolina," and finally to "North Carolina."

Throughout the proprietary period, and for decades thereafter, Albemarle Sound was the hub and the heart of North Carolina. The great bulk of the population of the colony was centered around its perimeter. The leaders of government lived here, and the assembly met here. Edenton, one of the colonial capitals, was the center of trade.

Coasters, small sailing vessels carrying cargo from the other colonies, frequented the area, as did larger sailing craft from the West Indies, many of the latter from Barbados, which became a sort of transshipment point for cargo from and to England. The main entrance from the Atlantic Ocean to the sound was Roanoke Inlet, located in the vicinity of Nags Head. Though it was referred to as Port Roanoke, the collector for Port Roanoke had his office in Edenton, for almost all of the commerce was bound to Albemarle Sound, and much of it to Edenton itself.

Early acts of the colonial assembly took cognizance of the shallow sound and meandering channels running through it, and duties were imposed on vessels and cargo to pay for maintaining beacons and stakes installed as channel markers, in one instance the fee being \$2.00 for each incoming vessel.

The early Albemarle residents relied on the sound not only for export, but for transportation from place to place within the colony, for the overland route from Virginia passed through and around a maze of swamps, including one called The Great Dismal. In time, however, trails were hacked through the forests and swamps. In the low boggy areas the trees were cut up into logs which were then laid and sometimes stacked to form the foundation for a roadway, with smaller logs

and sand filling the spaces in between. These were the so-called "corduroy" roads, making it possible for people and cargo to be transported overland as well as by boat. There remained, however, the problem of how those travelling by wagon or carriage could get across the broad sound, but the solution came when a man identified as "T. Bell" established a toll ferry across the western reaches of Albemarle Sound. Subsequently, in 1735, Bell sold the operation to Colonel William Mackey who operated the ferry for years from Edenton to what is now the community of Mackey's in Washington County.

Virgin stands of timber covered the Albemarle Sound area - juniper, cypress, oak, and pine - all suited for ship and boat construction. The early residents not only built their own small craft, but in time established shipyards in which larger vessels were constructed. In addition the native pine produced valuable naval stores (tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin) which became a primary export product of North Carolina. More and more land around the sound was cleared for agriculture, and plantations were established, some with buildings both elegant and palatial. Meanwhile Albemarle Sound continued to produce valuable harvests of fish, as it had for the Indians.

Thus a pattern was established which persists today in the Albemarle Sound region. Numerous communities and small towns, on and near the water. Large agricultural operations fanning out from the towns. Timber, that largest of renewable crops, providing raw material for local use and export as well. And the sound waters giving up that most edible of harvested commodities, fish - shad, rock, herring; especially, in the heyday of the industry, herring. These herring fisheries, dotting the sound shore, employed hundreds of men to set and haul the nets, some of which were more than a mile long; and women as well as men, mostly black, to clean and process the fish, salting them down for shipment. For Albemarle Sound herring, and herring row, had won widespread fame as culinary delights.

Numerous tracts have been written on the spread of religion throughout the Albemarle, beginning with the dominance of the Quakers; and on the employment and treatment of slaves on the plantations, and the traumatic transition of these black imports from Africa from slaves to free men and women. Other aspects of the history have been detailed as well, covering the gamut of subject matter from architecture, town planning, navigational aids, agricultural advancements and transportation, to life of the farms and in the towns.

Throughout its history, however, Albemarle Sound, for all of the advantages and bounties it provided, has been the source of perplexing problems as well, in almost every instance the result of a lack of planning, or unwise treatment of its resources by those who used it. An integral part of the transportation system when the northern part of Carolina was populated by Indians and the early settlers, it has proved to be inadequate for use by larger modern vessels. Despite innumerable attempts to provide a stable outlet through the Outer Banks to the sea - beginning with the formation of "The Raleigh Canal Company" in 1787 for the express purpose of improving the navigation of the sound and constructing an inlet, to be known as "Raleigh Canal" through the banks at Nags Head, to the current frustrating efforts to stabilize Oregon Inlet - the sound has lacked a deep - water port.

Though the production and processing of soybeans in this country had its beginning near the shore of the sound in Pasquotank, other business conducted by the board included: A final fiscal report on the Phase II construction project; A report on the National Model Dropout Information and Service Project which began at COA in January; and A discussion of plans for the electrical load management study which will be made by COA as one of 24 community colleges in the state participating in a one - year program sponsored by the N.C. Alternative Energy Corporation.

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 at the college should be adequate, from an equipment standpoint, to get the program underway. However, if enrollment exceeds present expectations, the dean said it may be necessary to add more units. The trustees also learned from Student Development Dean G. John Simmons, Jr. that Winter Quarter curriculum enrollment increased 14 per cent above the same period last year. College transfer, technical, vocational, and general education students totaled 1,325, compared with 1,159 last winter.

He said the figures for Spring Quarter, which began Monday, are not complete, but currently stand at 1,127. Simmons said by the time extension enrollment is included, he anticipates a final total in excess of the 1,251 curriculum students who attended COA last spring. Other business conducted by the board included: A final fiscal report on the Phase II construction project; A report on the National Model Dropout Information and Service Project which began at COA in January; and A discussion of plans for the electrical load management study which will be made by COA as one of 24 community colleges in the state participating in a one - year program sponsored by the N.C. Alternative Energy Corporation.

Express Program

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 Ed Warren emphasizes that the telephone express program is designed for individuals who require a certificate of birth, death, marriage or divorce in less than four days. To take advantage of the new telephone express service contact the Vital Records Branch, 225 North McDowell Street, Raleigh, N. C. 27611, 919 - 733 - 3000.

There have been innumerable meetings, seminars and conferences, as well as untold numbers of petitions, investigations and reports on what is wrong with Albemarle Sound, all without meaningful results. Will one more such conference, even one focusing on Trends and Management needs, have any real effect in reversing this decline? Probably not! For those in attendance at such sessions, listening to the evidence of the experts, and their dire predictions, have a tendency to do what the Indians did and what the colonists

did and what residents of the Albemarle have continued to do throughout the ensuing centuries. They listen, and get worried, and ask questions, and vow to do something - and the forget about it until some new crisis is cause for yet another study, or seminar, or conference.

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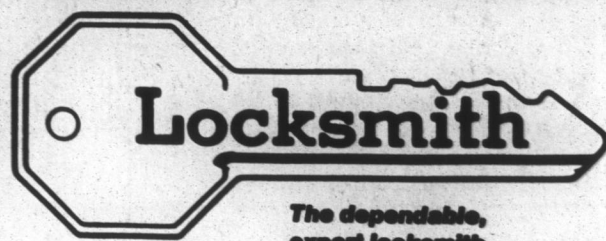
- The Agricultural Extension Service is ready to make you a loan! According to Theresa Ford, Family Resource Management Agent, they have in the office eight cassette type programs on:
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 2. "Saving and Investing"
 3. "Money and Time Management for the Two Paycheck Family"
 4. "Successful Time Management"
 5. "Homemaker and the

6. "Consumer Protection"
7. "Shopping Skills"
8. "Credit Control"

Scholarship

NASHVILLE - An Edenton resident has been awarded a memorial scholarship at David Lipscomb College. Margie Ward, a freshman, psychology major, was awarded the A. M. Burton - Marshall Keeble Scholarship for the 1981-82 academic year. Miss Ward is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William V. Ward, 204 Coke Avenue. David Lipscomb College is a four year liberal arts institution affiliated with the churches of Christ.

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Day and evening class registration for the Spring Quarter will be held on March 29. For a schedule or information call 946-6194 and ask for Student Services.