



STAFF PHOTOS BY SUSAN USHER

**RETIREMENT LIVING** at Holden Beach gives Northern transplant Edna Boehme time to pursue her artistic hobbies and friends to share them with. Here she's surrounded by her handwork.

## Latent Artistic Talent Bloomed When Edna Boehme Retired

BY SUSAN USHER

A tote painting class in New York State led Edna Boehme to Brunswick County and to Holden Beach.

After four years at 127 Lion's Paw Drive, she still doesn't regret the move south.

"We really lucked out when we moved here," she reflected over a cup of coffee recently, her husband Al nodding his agreement from a comfortable seat overlooking the canal. Friends from up north agree when they visit, which is as frequently as possible. And the Boehmes' four children "are practically commuters on Piedmont," Edna said.

"We have the best neighborhood on the beach," agreed Daphne Fournier, a bubbly friend who dropped in to discuss plans for a neighborhood fish fry.

Lion's Paw neighbors get together for street parties, fish fries and covered dish dinners, occasionally blocking off the street in the summertime.

In Heritage Harbor the Boehmes have found friendship; at Holden Beach Edna also has found an abundance of material for her developing painter's eye.

Until several months before the move to Holden Beach she'd never put paint to canvas. But her success

with tote painting prompted her to try other art forms. Now she spends much of her time painting—on wood, on fabric or metal and on canvas, with subjects ranging from whimsical to serious.

"It's really hit and miss," she said of her oils on canvas. "I've never had any lessons. One day I just decided I'd see what happened."

She paints directly on the canvas from an idea or, when details are necessary, from a snapshot.

"I don't know how to sketch," she admitted.

On the wall above the floral print couch hang several of her oils, including a quiet scene of Al walking along the beach. Beside it hangs Edna's third painting, a cool waterfall scene that was done not once, but twice. Not quite satisfied with the results, she stripped the canvasboard and started anew.

Just to the right of the waterfall hangs her latest work, which she said may or may not be completed.

The landscape depicts Betty's Waterfront Restaurant and the shrimp boats docked nearby across the waterway at Old Ferry Road. The piece hasn't been sprayed.

"It may be finished; I'm not sure," said Edna as she eyed the painting. "I pick too much. I don't know when

to stop, when something's finished."

One major work is finished—a commissioned mural of Shallotte Inlet painted directly on a wall of Brunswick Village Nursing Home in Shallotte.

"I had never painted anything so big before," she said.

It was a week-long project, with Edna "working on a ladder with these great big three-inch brushes," she said, stretching her hands apart.

Workmen were still completing the facility, and, said Al, "She almost stopped the job. The people would sit there and watch her work."

It was fun, a job taken on as a new challenge.

"I figured the worst thing that could happen was they could paint the wall," she said.

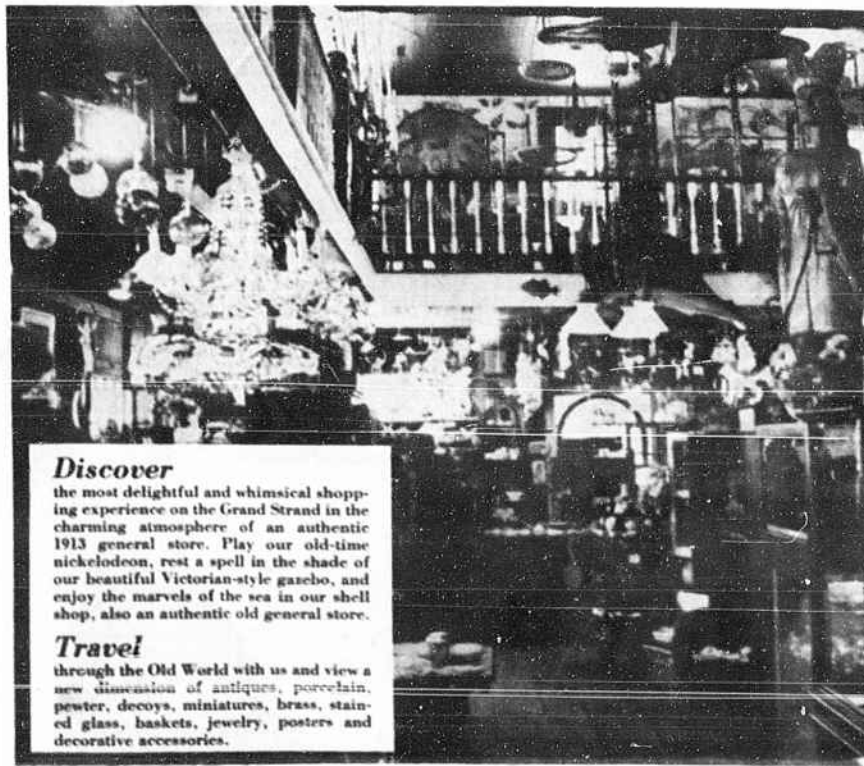
They didn't, of course, and friends regularly drive into Shallotte to look at her biggest painting to date.

### Latent Talent Bloomed

Artistic ability apparently runs in her family—Edna's father was a lace designer and manufacturer and, later in life, a painter. Several other family members also display an artistic bent; their work can be found at Edna's house also.

Edna had no time to paint until after she and her husband retired

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