

## Ferry View Is Described

(Continued from preceding page)

access to the old fort area is extremely limited.

Barely visible during the crossing are the last remains of the Cape Fear Quarantine Station built by the Marine Hospital Service in the 1890s about one and one-eighth miles northeast of Southport in the river. Here crew clothing could be disinfected properly, the sick cared for and suspect cases detained. The station stood on a pier 600 feet long, with gangways, docks and ballast cribs. All that remains intact are the foundations of several water tanks.

Throughout the crossing, which usually takes 45 to 60 minutes, riders can see the nesting sites where the once-endangered brown pelican are making a strong comeback. Here also are nests for other birds seen along the shore, such as the least tern.

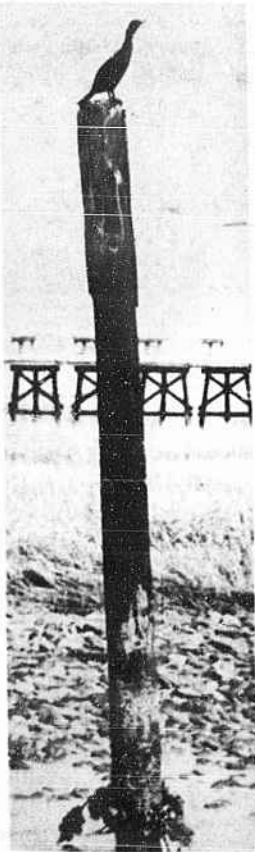
Small fishing boats usually mark the location of intake canal screens leading to the Carolina Power & Light nuclear plant along the river. As the ferry nears the Fort Fisher moorings the tall yellow cranes of loading facilities at the Military

Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point can be seen to the left and to the right, "The Rocks" are visible.

When New Inlet opened, it threatened to silt shut the Cape Fear River and its deep water port. In 1875, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the time-consuming project of closing the entire New Inlet in order to save the port. A line of mattresses composed of logs and brushwood loaded with stone was sunk and laid entirely across the inlet. The work was continued from year to year by piling stone rip-rap on and over this foundation, building it up to high water. Finally it was covered with heavy granite stones on its tip and slopes to low water.

In addition to protecting the river, "The Rocks" provide excellent fishing for man and bird either from the barricade itself or by boat. A state boat ramp allows free water access.

During the summer season only, for the second consecutive year, tour guides will be available to describe sites along the route and to answer questions.



AN INQUISITIVE BIRD checks out the ferry from a safe perch near the Pfizer Chemicals dock.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL MCGOWAN

PRICE'S CREEK LIGHTHOUSE offers a glimpse of coastal Brunswick's past as the ferry glides from its Southport moorings.

### Ferry Operates Year-Round

The Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry departs from Brunswick County just north of Southport year-round, though the schedule slows during the winter months.

Through May 15, the ferry departs Southport four times daily, at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Departures from Fort Fisher are at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Extra runs are added for major holidays such as Easter and Memorial Day weekends.

From May 16 through Sept. 15, the ferry leaves Southport every other hour on the odd hour, with the first trip at 7 a.m., the last at 5 p.m. It departs Fort Fisher on the even hour, every other hour, with the first trip at 8 a.m. and the last departing at 6 p.m.

One-way fares are 50¢ for pedestrians, \$1 for bicycle and rider; \$3 for motorcycles and for single vehicle or combination 20 feet or less in length; and \$6 for vehicles 20 feet to 25 feet in length. Reservations are not allowed.

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