

# Park Patriarchs: Old Pine Knoll Shores

By Jean Macheca

## HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

*Posts authored by Phyllis Makuck and Walt Zaenker (with additional graphics) appear on the Pine Knoll Shores History Committee blog at pineknollhistory.blogspot.com.*

The names Hammer, Garner, McNeill, Hall and Brock are familiar. We associate them with our beautifully maintained parks and marinas, the places we gather for community events and family outings. They are our private beaches and marinas, the popular staging areas for Kayak for the Warriors, meeting places for the Fourth of July parade, the Halloween party and the Turkey Trot.

But it wasn't always that way. Dial back 100 years. The future Pine Knoll Shores was swampy and alligator infested, and Alice Green Hoffman was the sole proprietor. Her "island paradise" consisted of 2,900 forested acres stretching roughly from Atlantic Beach to Salter Path. Sadly, financial misadventures over the years caused Alice to lose control of her affairs, and her family stepped in to save her property from foreclosure. Her dwindling estate was conveyed in trust to her sister's children, who fortunately happened to be the grandchildren of President Theodore Roosevelt. They established the Roosevelt Trust to administer Alice's holdings with the understanding that she could remain in her home until she died. After her death, the Roosevelts hired property management consultants and real estate developers to subdivide and market portions of the land. It took the creative vision and roll-up-your-sleeves efforts of countless people to produce the Pine Knoll Shores we enjoy today. Our Pine Knoll Shores park patriarchs were those people.

The first lots in the newly subdivided Roosevelt property were sold in 1957 by Fred Clarkson of Morehead City, the local real estate representative for the Roosevelt Trust, and by Shelby Freeman, also of Morehead City. Much of the original early mapping on Bogue Banks was done by Rivers and Associates Consulting Engineers of Greenville, NC. An advertising brochure from 1957 shows a Rivers and Associates map depicting specific lots on a rough grid of named streets. The east- and west-running streets are Oakleaf, Cypress, and Salter Path Road. Between them, Cedar, Holly, Willow, Yaupon, and Juniper run north and south. South of Salter Path Road, lots are offered on Knollwood and Pinewood, with more than half of those being oceanfront. Also shown are three strategically placed plots identified only as "park area," two on the sound and one on the ocean. These are the future sites of Garner, McNeill and Hammer parks. This eastern section was sometimes casually referred to as "Old Pine Knoll Shores."

Pine Knoll Shores resident Ches Garner recalls that when he was a college student in the late '60s his mother and father, Willard and Eva Garner, moved from Atlantic Beach to Oakleaf Drive. At the time, word was spreading that land was for sale on Bogue Banks. The Garners purchased the northeastern-most available lot on the

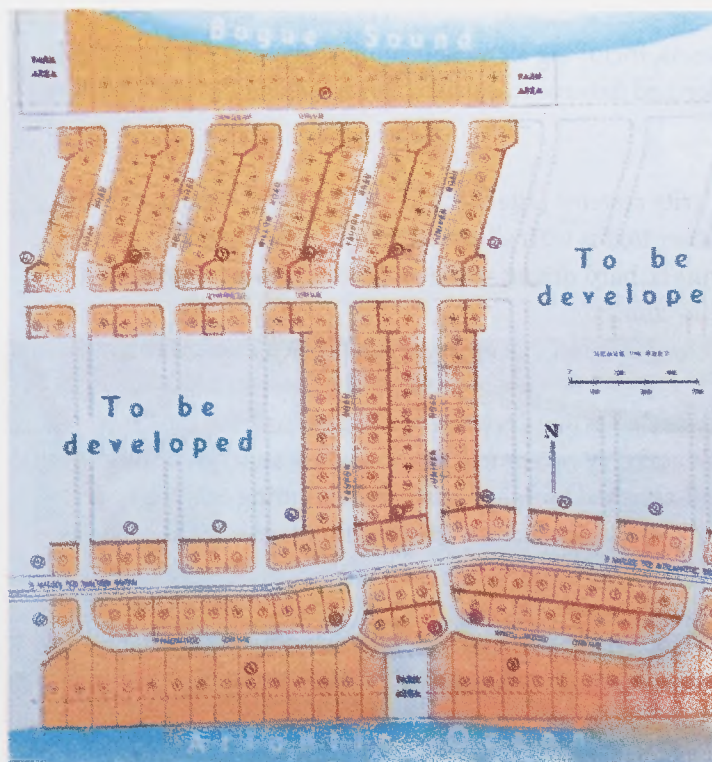
sound. Next to their property was a large overgrown area officially designated as "park area" that bordered on a larger "To be developed" section that would eventually become the Bogue Banks Country Club. Ches recalls that his father owned a tractor passed down from his grandfather, who owned a farm in Newport. Mr. Garner purchased a bush hog and used the tractor/bush hog rig to clear his land as well as the lot next door. He soon befriended Don Brock, who was conducting land assessments of the Roosevelt tract for Van Oesen Associates of Wilmington, NC. Consequently, he became involved in community improvement and activities, including clearing land where needed. Ches fondly remembers the monthly clam chowder get-togethers when neighbors and close friends gathered to socialize next door to the Garners, at what was then called North East Sound Park. In 1976, it was renamed Garner Park to commemorate Mr. Garner's years of outstanding service to the fledgling community. And, as the saying goes, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. When Ches served on the PIKSCO Board of Directors from 2012 to 2016, he could often be seen operating a walk-behind bush hog-type machine, pitching in with several other board members to trim park underbrush at PIKSCO parks, including Garner. His father certainly would have approved.

Eighteen lots west of Garner Park, another "park area" appeared on the advertising brochure. Today, McNeill Park's location at the intersection of Bogue Sound and McNeill Inlet makes it popular for picnicking, shrimping and viewing the town's Christmas Flotilla.

The Roosevelts named the park in honor of George H. McNeill, a Morehead City attorney and municipal judge who represented the Roosevelt Trust from the early 1950s to the '70s. Judge McNeill, or Captain, as he liked to be called, was an invaluable liaison between the Roosevelt Trust and Old Pine Knoll Shores. He drew up the original covenants and did the legal work for Pine Knoll Association (PKA) and PIKSCO homeowners associations and, in keeping with the Roosevelts' wishes, ensured that development would be as environmentally sensitive as possible.

Interestingly, early Pine Knoll Shores documents include variations of the McNeill spelling—as McNeil or McNeal. Sometimes two different spellings appear within the

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Rivers and Associates Engineering Consultants map from a real estate brochure, circa 1950s