

Do You Live in Aibonita?

By Martha Edwards



HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

Before Pine Knoll Shores, before the Roosevelt family, before Alice Green Hoffman and during the time when John A. Royall owned three-quarters of Bogue Banks, there was Aibonita, Carteret County, NC. It was 82 acres of real estate developed by Oscar Kissam of Huntington, New York. Known on many early deeds and maps as Aibonito, it came to be variously spelled, Aibonita, Aibonito, Abonito, Abonita or as known verbally by my family, the Youngs, Aibonita. The source of the name Aibonita, as well as its assorted spellings, all of which appear in various documents, has a historical link to Puerto Rico and the Spanish-American War. Kissam had a relative who was part of the Puerto Rican Campaign during the war and participated in the Battle of Abonito Pass on August 9, 1898. In 1908, to commemorate his relative's war service, he named his real estate development Abonito.

While Kissam was working on his 82-acre development, John Royall, of Boothbay, Maine, was acquiring three-quarters of Bogue Banks. He bought land from Atlantic Beach (where the DoubleTree is today) west to the end of the island, totaling approximately 6,000 acres. Although the sizes of their holdings were vastly different, Kissam's 82 acres, in some ways, had a greater impact on the development of Pine Knoll Shores than did Royall's 6,000 acres. The Kissam acreage was in the center of the early developed portion of Pine Knoll Shores, which is shown on a map on the History Committee's blog at pineknollhistory.blogspot.com under Aibonita, Aibonito.

The Aibonita property, when overlaid on the current map of Pine Knoll Shores, extended from the corner of Sycamore and Oakleaf, west to Mimosa Boulevard, due south to about the canal, east to Hall Haven and straight north to the Sycamore/Oakleaf corner. The land Kissam and his wife, Lucy Simpson, decided to buy was owned by acquaintances Burton James Coleburn and his wife, Mary Ellen Eaton, of Carteret County. The Kissams purchased two tracts of land, approximately 40 acres each, from the Coleburns in December 1908.

Clearly intending to create a settlement on Bogue Banks, Kissam plotted the land into two streets: 1st Street, along what is now approximately Oakleaf Drive, and 2nd Street, which is approximately Hawthorne Drive. Two 40-foot-wide paths from sound to ocean gave everyone access to both. All these were registered in the Carteret County Registry of Deeds. When individuals purchased their lots, none of these street amenities were developed.

Kissam did have early success selling lots to his New York friends and acquaintances, who were mostly seamen. They wanted a spot in the south when they pulled their boats out in the cold north waters before they froze. Some owners came, cleared land and built hunting and fishing camps. Included among the buyers were:

- Lot #1, Section I, was deeded to Fredrick H. Eaton on January 11, 1911.
- Lot # 2, Section I, was purchased by Mrs. Martha K. Smith of Lynbrook, NY, on February 2, 1911.
- Lot #3, Section I, was purchased by three friends, W.G. Young, T. Cotrell Sammis and Herbert A. Rosell, all from Long Island, NY, on March 14, 1910. Each of these paid \$60 for a third of a 180-foot by 300-foot lot on the sound, virgin land. Rosell's son Herby lived in Pine Knoll Shores for a number of years in the 1980s and '90s.
- Lot # 3, Section II, was sold to Joseph Irwin on March 14, 1910, and was the first lot recorded. These sound-front lots sold for \$1 a foot of sound frontage and were all located on 1st Street.
- Lot #12, Section II, on the north side of 2nd Street, and the large lot on the southeast corner of 2nd Street (now Hawthorne Drive) were purchased by Captain William G. Young. Capt. Young was the author's grandfather, though she never knew him as he died of the Spanish Flu in 1918. She and her sister, Beth Atz, are permanent residents of Pine Knoll Shores today.



Pictured in front of Camp Magellan are, left to right, a ship's hand, Harriet K. Young (the writer's great grandmother) holding Woodhull B. Young (the writer's father) and Carrie C. Young (the writer's grandmother).—*Photo courtesy of Martha Edwards*

In 1915, Oscar Kissam sold the remaining lots in the Aibonita development to John A. Royall. This transaction is recorded in Book 19, Page 73. Part of the description is as follows: "Beginning at a cement post, which is located on the shore, on the east side of the sage Path on Bogue Sound, said post being 26 chains (1716 ft) west of the Royall-Coleburn northwest corner." This description, though seeming vague, provides some information to help confirm the location of the Aibonita property. One can find one of these concrete monuments on the sound side at the corner of Sycamore and Oakleaf drives. Recently one of these monuments was found on a lot on Aspen Court that is about to be developed, and another property owner on Mimosa Boulevard has told the author of another in their backyard. This is the next mystery to solve about the coordinates of Aibonita and where it really would have been in Pine Knoll Shores.

There was a byline error in "1864: What Happened on Our Shores?" on page 22 in the April issue of *The Shoreline*. The byline should have read "By Barbara Milhaven and Susan Phillips." We regret any confusion caused by this error.