

Dreaming of a Cottage by the Sea?

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HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

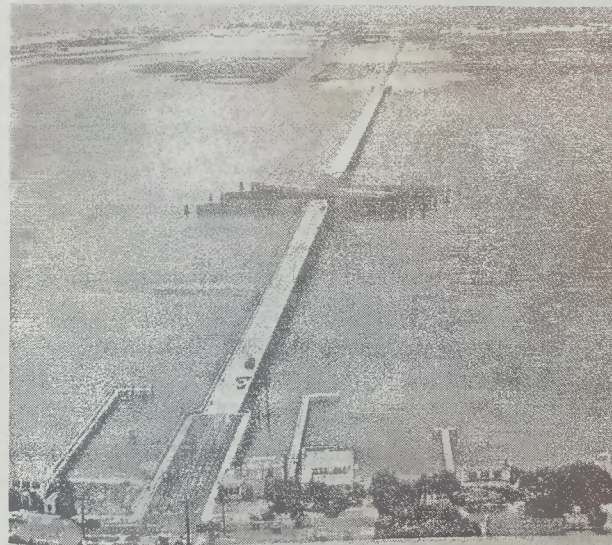
Hey, wanna buy some land . . . on a barrier island?

That's probably not the way it happened, but did you ever wonder how the first lots in Pine Knoll Shores were marketed? Beginning in the 1950s, the "Roosevelt Property" was subdivided, and the first residential lots became available for buyers. Popular advertising in those pre-internet days was confined to newspapers, magazines and, in many cases, word of mouth.

Even before the first bridge across the sound opened in 1928, Morehead City and Atlantic Beach were already popular vacation destinations. Morehead City was home to several luxury hotels, including the Atlantic Hotel, known as North Carolina's "summer capital by the sea." From 1880 until it was destroyed by fire in 1933, the Atlantic Hotel was the favorite destination for prominent visitors from the central coastal states. Fashionable and well-connected vacationers flocked there to enjoy the salt air and the social scene, and special round-trip railway tickets encouraged guests to stay for the whole summer. During its heyday, the hotel could accommodate up to 500 guests and provided all the amenities that genteel visitors expected, including a doctor and dentist on call and separate facilities for maids and nannies traveling with their employer families. The added convenience of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad terminus at the Atlantic Hotel's front door was a definite advantage.

Surf bathing was becoming popular, and in 1887 the first bathing pavilion on Bogue Banks was built to provide changing rooms and light refreshments for beach goers. Hotel guests who wanted to experience the ocean surf would be conveyed by ferry or sailboat to the sound side of Bogue Banks, where they discovered they still had to hike across the island to get to the ocean. During this time, the rustic island retreats of the Aibonita families, John Royall, and Alice Hoffman, whose lands became the foundation property for Pine Knoll Shores, would have presented a striking contrast to the convivial scenes going on in Atlantic Beach and across the sound at the Atlantic Hotel.

In 1928, a toll bridge was constructed between Morehead City and Bogue Banks. It revolutionized access to the island and made a day at the beach more possible for visitors. In 1953, a swing bridge replaced it. Some of you long-time residents and visitors may remember that swing-bridge—and the traffic snarls it created.



The swing bridge from Morehead City to Bogue Banks that opened in 1953.

By 1957 the first lots in the original Pine Knoll Shores were being sold on Salter Path Road, Oakleaf on the sound side, Pinewood and Knollwood on the ocean side, and on new streets running north and south: Cedar, Holly, Willow, Yaupon and Juniper. Fred Clarkson of Morehead City was the local real estate representative of the Roosevelt Trust, and his name appears frequently as the contact

on early ads. Another Morehead City realtor, Shelby Freeman, also sold land for the Roosevelts. Most notably, one of his buyers was A.C. Hall, who purchased 300 feet of oceanfront property in 1959 and built the Atlantis Lodge, the town's first motel. Shelby Freeman also purchased oceanfront property in 1959 and built the Iron Steamer Resort, hosting a fishing pier, motel and restaurant. It was sold in 2004 and demolished for the existing residential development.

For advertising purposes, the Roosevelt Property needed a more picturesque name. Pete Remppe, who worked for Stone and Webster, the Roosevelt's management consulting firm, claimed he attended an early planning meeting where he had suggested the name Pine Knoll Shores—but it took a while for the name to stick. A short article appearing in the 1958 Hill's Morehead City-Beaufort Directory incorrectly refers to "Pine Bluff Knolls . . . a new beach development just west of Atlantic Beach where about nine miles of the Hoffman Property (Theo. Roosevelt Estate) is to be offered as an exclusive resort area." As you can see, even the tourist map here shows a Pinewood Knoll between Emerald Isle and Morehead City.

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