

Alice the Queen Part 3

By Barbara Milhaven

Editor's Note: This is the third in a series about Alice Hoffman, one of the earliest settlers of Pine Knoll Shores.

With the German army approaching during World War I, it was necessary for Mrs. Hoffman to leave her home in France. She was living with her family in New York in 1916 when she saw an advertisement for a "Paradise Home" for sale in Beaufort, North Carolina. Making a trip to Carteret County to see this property turned out to be disappointing in that the home was too large and the property it was on was too small.

The homeowner told Alice about land on the outer banks called "the Isle of the Pines." The only means for getting to this property was by boat, and when she arrived to view the area, she found a small frame house on top of a knoll overlooking Bogue Sound. This house was completely surrounded by forest consisting of holly, pine, dogwood and live oak trees. Being a nature lover and early environmentalist, Alice loved it.

While many folks in the area thought she was odd, if not eccentric, for eventually purchasing this vast property and living here with a French companion and hired help, it might really only have been the avid love of nature in its most primitive state that appealed to her, snakes and all. An example of her concern for saving trees when building her home or extending the original home is building AROUND a holly tree instead of having it cut down.

At the time of Alice's visit to the "Isle of the Pines," also referred to in articles as the "Isle of Pines," the land was owned by a gentleman from New England John Royal, who visited with his family from time to time and was not interested in selling. A colony of fishermen squatted on a portion of this land with Mr. Royal's permission. Mr. Royal's land extended from Atlantic Beach to one mile west of Salter Path. It was completely pristine except for the fisherman's homes and a few buildings. Mrs. Hoffman visited several times as Mr. Royal's guest before convincing him to sell the property to her for \$49,000.

According to the article written

for *The News Times* by Jan Rider, the actual purchase took place in 1918 and included the small frame house sitting on top of a knoll on the sound. The Joyner papers indicate additional land was purchased at this time from the Johnson Estate. It was Alice Hoffman who named her land Bogue Banks after the name of the sound on the maritime map.

The road to her house on the sound



was called Alice Hoffman Road and from maps and vague descriptions, it started at Salter Path Road (which at the time probably was a path) between what is now Juniper and Cedar Street, wound around and over swampy land to the driveway somewhere between Yucca Court and Hawthorne Drive.

Snakes were abundant but didn't seem to faze Alice. They did, according to accounts, become some concern to her companion, Gabrielle. Alice simply told Gabrielle to ignore them and they wouldn't bother her. Alice also left orders that no snakes or animals were to be killed on her property. Perhaps this was the reason a wooden ramp was built around the perimeter of house.

The house was added onto in stages and under each section a cellar was built. There were seven cellars in all, mostly

used for storage. One cellar was used as a shelter from electrical storms and hurricanes. There was a staircase in this cellar that led to Alice's bathroom. Alice had a great fear of electrical storms and reverence for hurricanes and the possible damage they could do to her home, property and safety.

Just think how trapped she must have felt here during a hurricane. Communication must have been

Rider reports that Gabrielle Bard told her that the water was up to the stairs and she, Ira Guthrie, Alice's second and last superintendent, and Salter Path residents took refuge in the house. A scary time to be sure!

The house has been described as a rambling house with a fenced porch running along the back and a wood ramp running around the exterior. It had eighteen rooms, six bathrooms and, of course, the seven cellars. The photo shows the back of the house. Having been reproduced many times it evidently does not do it justice because Ernie Guthrie remembers the house being impressive. Ira Guthrie and his family had a house nearby which most likely was the house previously described that Sam Duplet and his family had lived in. There was also a boat house with rooms for guests.

So where is Alice Hoffman's house today? A portion of the house was moved to serve as a town hall in 1972 when the property was purchased by Ken and Newell Haller. The Haller's built a new home on the site and carefully preserved some of the foundation, cement stairs and bricks. They are still visible today.

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