

Strange Race, These Eolians

By JONATHAN PHILLIPS

Special Correspondent

I chose my professional specialty with great care. The choice was made in order to minimize boredom and personal discomfort and to maximize enjoyment and pleasure. The choice, as it turned out, was environmental science applied to coastal areas. I could imagine working on boats out in calm seas, working on sunny beaches dotted with bikini-clad beauties, working in the shade of tall cypress and on the banks of wide rivers. I could imagine combining professional activities with the occasional toss of a cast net and photographing of a sunset over the bay. I saw swimming during lunch breaks and cold beverages consumed by the dunes at the end of a work day.

Mud-covered boots thick with marsh muck carried a weary body back to the car from the latest day's work; muddy boots that were, in a way, testament to the hardly-new idea that what the mind's eye sees is not always what the body gets.

The vision is, for example, blurred by 30-knot winds driving sand into the eyes, not to mention into every crevice of clothing, so that changing at the end of the day leaves a conical pile of sediment on the bathroom floor.

Paul Gares, who for some reason is actually fascinated by wind-blown sand, seemed not to notice the sting of tiny quartz and feldspar particles against the retinas.

"Man, would you just look at that eolian transport," he marvelled. Eolian transport is what people who are fascinated by windblown sand call the process of wind blowing sand. I am not sure where the term comes from, but I think it is from the Greek word for pain.

I would look, I told him, if the eolian transport were not transporting directly against my eyeballs.

Strange race, these Eolians.

I really got interested in coastal processes as I lounged in inner tubes or on bare sand in the warm waters of the Pamlico and Neuse Rivers, and roamed

the shores, picking up driftwood. I had to wonder if that interest could have been cultivated if time were reversed and I had started, rather than ended up, with leaky waders in the surf zone as six-foot waves powered by an offshore Northeaster pounded into the rubble of what used to be a seawall.

I held a survey rod and wondered if I'd get out alive, which, by the way, I did.

We were there because the storm had destroyed the road on a barrier beach, and coastal scientists are inordinantly fascinated with the erosive power of the sea.

Some are more inordinantly fascinated than others.

"Devastation and destruction! Devastation and destruction!" one worthy researcher shouted with glee as he viewed the rubble of the seawall and four feet of sand over where the road used to be. "I love it!"

I guess I love it, too, though not in the same way I thought I would.

When imagining the good life, bloodthirsty mosquitos of Pamlico Sound, Neuse River jellyfish, frigid November winds of Strathmere Island and head-to-toe coating of Jersey marsh muck rarely figure into the fantasies.

And one tends to forget that information gathered even under the best of conditions, where days end relaxed in the glow of a waterside sunset, must be dealt with indoors later, tensed in the glow of a computer terminal.

There's fine Delaware Bay oysters on the half shell (they'll do when you can't get N.C. oysters) and fried clams at Allen's Clam Bar at the end of a long day, and the promise that the cold wind and stinging spray of winter will give way to the gentle weather of spring.

And the promise that after a few years of sandy eyes in Jersey, you can make like an Eolian, and blow the heck out of here.

From Rev. Bill Wells, England

(This is the third report from Bill Wells, a minister on Sabbatical Leave this year from the North Carolina Methodist Conference, serving in the British Methodist Church.)

In Northampton the second morning I was awakened by the doorbell at 6:40 a.m. It was the postman with an envelope too big to go through the door-slot mail box. That is the normal time for the first post delivery. The Queen had sent me some marriage certificates. Here I shall be able to celebrate weddings in one of the church buildings, but nowhere else. Only certain places are set aside as suitable for weddings.

We were not quite prepared for the mixture of the ancient and the modern in Northampton. Coming off the M1 (i.e., Motorway #1, similar to our Interstate Highways, but with three lanes going in each direction, plus a paved shoulder as wide as a car lane in each direction, divided by a median as are ours), we were greeted on the edge of town by the Queen Eleanor Cross.

The Cross was erected by King Edward I in memory of his beloved Queen. It is one of 14 crosses, of which only three now remain, which marked the route of Queen Eleanor's funeral procession from Harby in Lincolnshire where she died, to Westminster Abbey. The famous Charring Cross station in London was one of them.

A cross was built at each place that the funeral procession spent a night. (I hope she was embalmed, for there were 14 crosses!) I think she died in 1291

A.D. and that the crosses were constructed the following year.

In the center of Northampton, beside one of the largest open-air markets in the land, is Grosvenor Centre for shopping. You may drive your car into the car-parking garage, pay 30p for 3 hours, take a lift down to the level of the shops, and do your shopping on 2 levels similar to Crabtree Valley, with escalators at both ends, as well as steps.

This shopping centre is right in the middle of this town which is designed to reach nearly 200,000 population by 1990. Since it's in town, you can also enter the mall from several different streets or through big stores which front on the street and back on the mall.

Until the 12th Century, the open-air market was a Royal market, owned by the King. But King Richard I (the Lion-Hearted), in an effort to raise money for the Crusades, offered it for cash. It was bought by the town in 1188 A.D.

This market information was shared with me by Northampton Councilor David A. Walmsley — and I listened as if E.F. Hutton had been speaking! Mr. Walmsley himself a few years ago was the 567th Mayor of Northampton. He is a Local (lay) Preacher in the Methodist Church.

In the next report I want to tell you about the Welcoming Service for new ministers and about 13-year-old Dixie's school. Please write to us at 14 Holyrood Road, Northampton, NN5.7AH, England. —Bill Wells

Signs of the Times



Beating The High Cost Of Energy--A quarter of a million families in North Carolina are expected to receive financial help to pay their heating bills this winter through the federal low-income energy assistance program. County social services departments will accept applications November 1 through December 10. A one-time assistance payment will be made in early February to those people who are eligible. For more information contact Jim Burns at The Department of Human Resources' Public Affairs Office, 919-733-4471.

Finding Out What We Don't Know--That's one of the aims of the archaeology and publications services of America's 400th Anniversary, the group charged with planning the quadricentennial of the Roanoke Voyages of 1584-87. Archaeological digs are already underway on and around Roanoke Island, where efforts are concentrating on finding the site of the original "Cittie of Raleigh" and locations of several Indian villages. Publications are in the works, too. Already available is *The First Colonists*, an important new edition of source documents relating to the Roanoke Voyages. For details, call America's 400th Anniversary Committee in Raleigh at 919-733-4788.

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