

Action Off Ocracoke

(Continued from Page Ten)
 known to himself, he held his tongue. I, Jonathan Banks, a citizen of prestige and substance, owner of ships, and plantations, and who has forthrightly conducted himself in his commercial dealings with circumspect and integrity, am really he, Edward Teach, ignominiously called Blackbeard, the bloody pirate.

I was not killed by Lieutenant Maynard in the action off Ocracoke. It was poor, drink-besot, half-crazed Jackson who was run through by Maynard and had his head stuck to the masthead—he, who so much resembled Blackbeard, unwittingly became the author of my fantastic masquerade. It came about in this wise:

When Ben Wiggs, deep in his cups in the tavern on Ocracoke, made the remark that Maynard did not know Blackbeard and would not recognize him from Jackson, the idea was born, full-blown, in my brain. It was fantastic, incredible, and a little mad, but I believed I could outwit Maynard if I dared carry it through.

I dragged the drunken Jackson from the Tavern and rowed him back to the Revenge. Placing him, still unconscious, in my cabin, I changed clothes with Jackson. Then, with the help of Anne Bonney, who naturally was to share this adventure with me, I shaved off my beard and trimmed down my hair. The face that looked back at me from the broken mirror was definitely not the visage of Blackbeard. Instantly I had become someone else, and in that moment I decided on a name for my new personality. I would call myself Jonathan Banks, after a shipmate who was killed years ago in the Caribbean.

Then Anne Bonney and I made our plans. We served more rum to the crew so they would be roaring drunk the next day, and unable to detect any change in Blackbeard. We knew from past experiences that Jackson would be bleary-eyed and nervous, with a monstrous hangover. He would have just enough wit to fall in with any plan suggested to him.

So the next morning when Jackson had sobered enough to understand what was said to him, I, Blackbeard, broached to Jackson my plan. He, Jackson, dressed as Blackbeard, was to assist in a plan to confound and outwit Maynard when he attacked the

Revenge. That tickled the drunken vanity of Jackson, and he readily fell in with my plans and agreed. Being Blackbeard, if even for a day, was a distinction he could not forego.

When Maynard approached, Jackson stood at the rail and acted the role of Blackbeard. Anne Bonney stood beside him, armed and alert, ready for quick action if Jackson suddenly sobered and threatened our plan. I, the real Blackbeard, but unrecognizable to my drunken crew, stood also armed and watchful, close by.

Our plan was as easy and simple in its execution as it was in its conception. After the first and only broadside fired by the Revenge, and when the confusion and noise had reached its peak, Anne Bonney and I, unnoticed by anyone, quietly made our way to the stern and dropped overside into the water. Swimming as noiselessly as possible, and partly concealed by the gathering smoke of the gunfire, we made our way to the faroff beach, gleaming in the distance. Swim presented to insurmountable difficulty.

Once ashore, assisted by friendly coastal natives, we made our way slowly and gradually to Edenton. There I made known my identity to the Governor, who, though reluctantly, agreed to further my plan and aid us.

With the sponsorship of the Governor, I was slowly insinuated into the life and commerce of the little town on the Albemarle Sound. I prospered. Anne and I were married, and lived quietly and serenely in the sleepy little community. The one great tragedy in our otherwise un-

troubled lives was the death of our only son who died, ironically enough, in a shipwreck off Ocracoke Inlet.

Now I am alone in the world. Anne, my wife, lies buried in a little country churchyard, not far from Bathtown. God rest her soul. Soon I will go to join her.

It grows colder and colder in the room, and my emaciated hand that once so hardily wielded a cutlass can scarcely hold my pen. These legs that so firmly strode the quarterdeck are becoming numb. The candle gutters in the draughty air, as though it too may soon flicker its last and go out. I must hurry before the light is no more and the room is left to me—and the mystery of the darkness that is crowding into my brain.

I, Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard, and who later called himself Jonathan Banks, in this year 1765, now write my final word and bring this diary to a close. May God have mercy on my soul and forgive me that which I can't forgive myself—the bloody deeds and crimes I committed as Blackbeard, the pirate.

The End

Nine Miles Paving Finished In Bertie

Nine additional miles of new paving have been finished in Bertie County during November under the Highway Commissions' secondary road program. Projects completed are as follows:

From Wading Place Creek at Ellis' Store to county road intersection 1.8

miles north of Sans Souci, 5.6 miles; from end of pavement 0.1 mile northeast of Trap toward Harrellsville to Bertie-Hertford County line, 3.2.

By the end of 1950 the Commission estimates that from 45 to 50 per cent of the 12,000-mile bond issue program will be finished. Unless war conditions intervene, the remainder of the

paving and stabilization program should be completed within the next two years.

As of November 1, the Highway Commission had spent \$57,998,374 of the \$200,000,000 bond issue fund. An additional \$64,000,000 is either allocated to specific road projects or will be allocated shortly.

**NOTICE!
 To Chowan County
 TAXPAYERS**

The Tax Books for the year 1950 are now in my hands for the collection of taxes. We urge you to pay your taxes now and thus avoid the penalty which will begin on February 1.

A PENALTY OF 1% WILL BE ADDED ON 1950 TAXES NOT PAID BEFORE FEBRUARY 2. ANOTHER 1% WILL BE ADDED MARCH 2 AND AN ADDITIONAL 1/2 OF 1% WILL BE ADDED FOR EACH ADDITIONAL MONTH TAXES ARE UNPAID.

J. A. BUNCH

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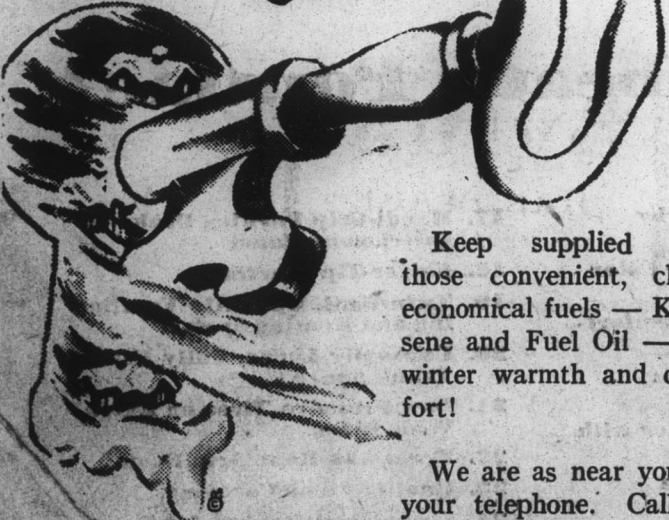
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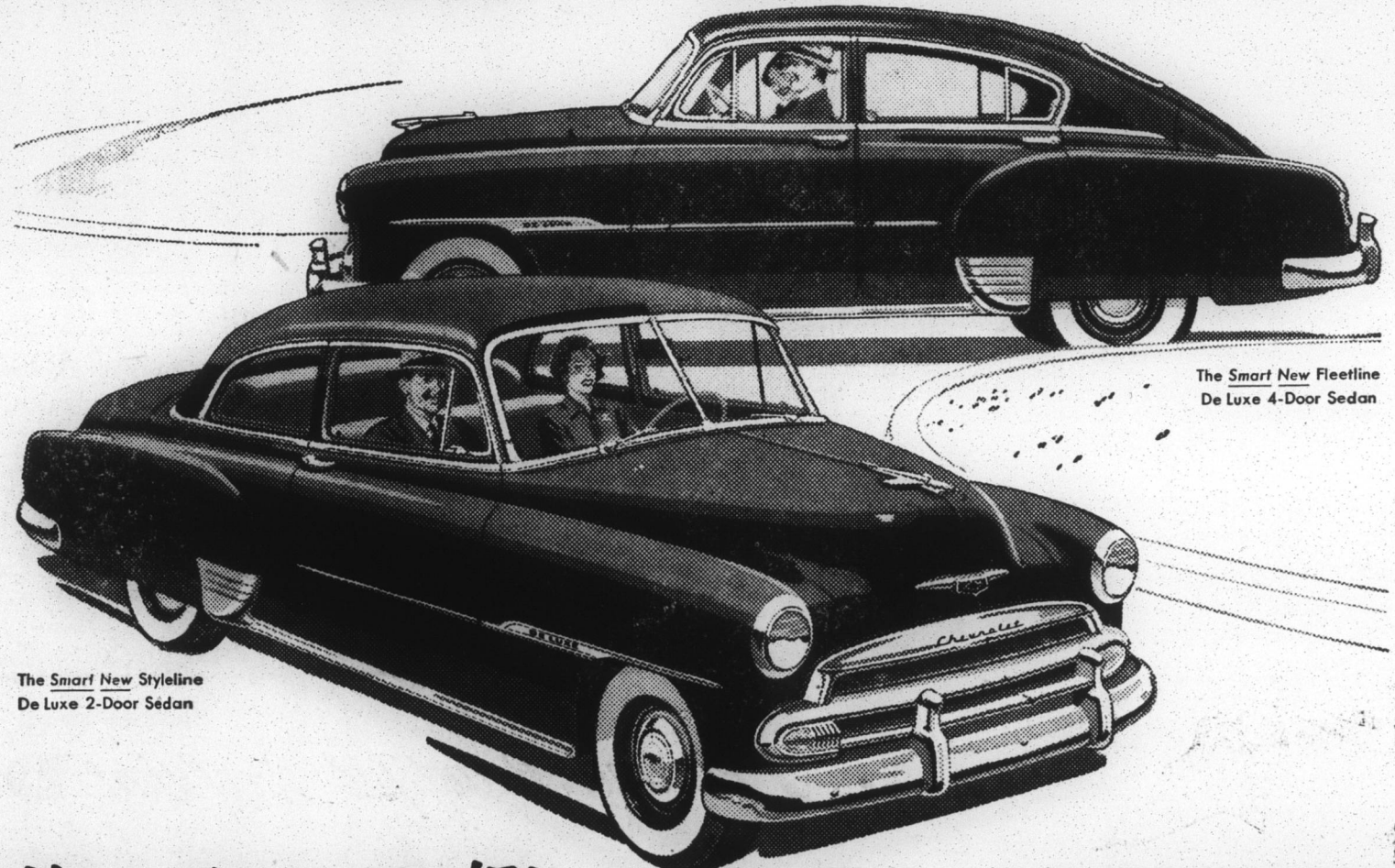
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