

# The Picturesque Lumbee



THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOUR MILES THE DISTANCE OF THIS MARVELOUS WILDERNESS JOURNEY

How many of those who love to boat on a "little river" know that the starting point for one of the most unique and picturesque canoeing trips in the whole country is to be found six miles from Pinehurst. Rising in the high Sand Hills of North Carolina, forty-four miles above Pinehurst, the Lumbee (Lumber in geographies), Croatan Indian name for beautiful water, spreads Southward into the Little Pee Dee, which in turn flows into the Great Pee Dee twenty-nine miles above Georgetown, South Carolina, where the Great Pee Dee greets its ocean mother. The actual distance between these two points is three hundred and sixty-four miles.

The Lumbee and Little Pee Dee are from three to ten feet deep with a current from two to four miles an hour. On some of the bends, or "cow faces," the tide water is going faster than this. These rivers carry open water to the sea and for streams so wild and little used, are remarkably free from serious obstructions. There are snags which might bother a motor boat when the stream is low; rarely a jam; a wind fall now and then; a tree that some hunter has felled in order to get his coon—African pork they call it—but that is about all. A man with an axe makes quick work of them. The Lumbee and Little Pee Dee are said to be the only clear water rivers flowing through the Atlantic Coast plain. They are fed entirely by springs that rise in the Sand Hills and by creeks that have been given the same kind of start.

For the first part the river winds through a timber growth which has never seen an axe. Cypress twenty feet in circumference and a hundred feet high stand on the river brink, with pines that sum up ninety feet to the first limb and would do as masts for ships that sail

the world round. There are no bank bushes to obstruct the view, and the river thirty or forty feet wide and bold right up to the banks, flowing rapidly for many miles through such stately timber, affords an impressive picture. In one cypress brake not far below Blue's bridge, where the start is made, a colony of blue heron nest. The parent birds stand nearly five feet high. At the sound of voices all these great birds disturbed by the unaccustomed sight of canoes and their occupants, begin circling about; for a modern canoe never passed over this course until five years ago. Wild turkeys, hogs, deer, and other game are found in their chosen localities along the river.

Going toward Lumberton the trip on the river averages three miles by water to one by land, though there are some "reaches" by water; long straight paths. Sometimes the river makes a bend or two miles and you could hand a kiss to the other fellow's girl across the narrow neck of ribbon of land that divides the stream. Occasionally one comes to huge cypress trees standing in mid-stream. These trees are called dram trees, for it is said when raftsmen come to one of these they are entitled to a drink of whiskey. On the other hand these trees seem as though on guard and under orders not to let any pass except those who are worthy. As one approaches Lumberton he leaves behind the holly and the mistletoe, shot with waxen balls, and finds swaying gracefully the first sprays of grey Spanish moss. This moss makes the approach to the land of flowers and ease, as contrasted, let us say, with our Northern land of ice and industry, of our Northern tier of states. Lumberton is the only considerable town directly on the river. From this point to the sea the government has freed the course of snags and it is safe for the use of motor boats

and launches. Here the river is about one hundred feet wide. There is a bluff thirty feet high, five miles below Lumberton, where sea shells of great variety are to be found, which goes to show that the sandhills, now one hundred miles back from the sea, were once the ocean shore. Bluffs like this front on the river every five or ten miles throughout the course. They make fine camping grounds. Quail are plenty on the uplands back of these bluffs. Bathing facilities are afforded on sandy points opposite the bluffs where the water is always deepest. There is no mud in this region and there are none of the insect pests to contend with that one encounters in the Northern wilderness. Princess Ann bluff, a few miles above the town of Fairbluff, is seventy-five feet high and rises in a truly queenly manner above the surface of the river. With its natural spring and beautiful groves of pines, it affords an ideal spot for the camper. Fairbluff, where one can easily get supplies, is a pretty, restful hamlet of a few people. Six miles below this point one crosses into South Carolina, and twenty miles further on, the Little Pee Dee empties into the Lumbee and steals away its name, a thing which it never should have been allowed to do, if length and size count for anything in the "right of way" of rivers. Not far below the joining of these Driftwood Island raises its high crest, from which there is a view up and down stream. Its slopes are as clean as drifted sand upon the sea shore. It is a beautiful spot.

Entering the Great Pee Dee one is borne rapidly along on its yellow low waters toward Georgetown, twenty-nine miles away. The power of this mighty river is instantly felt. There

is no mistaking the force of its eddying swirl. Soon the rice islands in the delta of the river divide the waters, and taking either channel one rows along past plantations on these rich islands, which once upheld the wealth and chivalry of the Southland. The islands are now the winter home for ducks that fly in from the sea at nightfall to rest on sheltered waters. With the abolition of slavery and the discovery later that rice could be grown successfully on the uplands of Texas, these vast estates have fallen into disuse, and some of them have been abandoned by their once proud owners. Only the magnitude of the estate and the beauty of the surroundings created about the colonial homs remain to point the story of the past. Great avenues of live oak or lowland pine trees flank the river front or mark the approach to halls now silent. These mighty live oaks hung with Spanish moss look like so many mastodons at attention. Some of them have a spread of one hundred feet and may be twice that number of years old. Everything is interesting and beautiful. Everything points to an age that is gone never to be reproduced in this country. The temperature of this sand hill river region permits of boating and camping during much of the time, even in its "six weeks of winter," the air has a soft, rare quality. The Sand Hills average two hundred and thirty days of sunshine during the year. Here one has the chance to boat, hunt, camp and fish in winter along one of the most beautiful waterways in this country in the least changed and oldest sections of the South.

Why not be one of many to live again summer days?—John Warren Achorn,