

# CARTERET COUNTY NEWS-TIMES

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PAGES 1 TO 4  
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## A Mountaineer Fell in Love with the Coast ...

### He Helped Fight a War, Then Became Famous Free-Lancer

By Ruth Peeling  
This is the second and last installment of a two-part story on the life of Aycock Brown. The first part appeared in the issue of THE NEWS-TIMES published Tuesday, Oct. 19.

"Everywhere we went people told me how wonderful the story was, and I figured that at Ocracoke they would be so pleased they would probably erect a monument to me," smiled the writer. "But when I got there, I got the biggest shock of my life. They were as mad as could be."

"What do you mean," one of the women of the island asked, "saying we don't have any clocks here. I have one."

Aycock replied, "Yes, but it doesn't run." He went on to explain that in the story he was simply trying to point out that Ocracokers mainly reckoned time by the tide.

But the week's cruise ended happily. Billy Brown, the expected baby who is now 7 years old, wasn't born until after the Hatteras returned its passengers to Beaufort.

After Dec. 7, 1941, United States was at war. In the files of the sixth Naval district, Charleston, Aycock Brown was listed as "contact man." Soon this section of the coast was made a part of the fifth Naval district, and Aycock was given the title of civilian agent for the Navy, becoming one of the few civilian agents in the country.

"I couldn't even give Bill Hattell two weeks' notice that I was leaving. The Navy wanted me on the job right away, so Amy Muse helped Bill out and I went from Camp Davis north to the Virginia line, establishing contacts along the coast," the columnist relates.

He had served as editor of The Beaufort News seven years ... he had become a newspaperman.

But next to the fishermen themselves, Naval intelligence knew that they could get no one who knew the coast better than Aycock Brown, and so he gave up his newspaper work — momentarily, to work for Uncle Sam.

This involved supplying information on the depths of water in various coves and inlets along the coast ("I thought the Navy would have known that, but they didn't," Aycock remarked), identifying bodies that were washed up on the beach, investigating suspicious characters, or lights burning along the coast when they should have been blacked out.

Soon he was assigned operational intelligence work also and was based at Ocracoke. He knew the location of every ship and suspected submarines in the area and kept patrol boat captains informed of convoy and air movements.

He lived through a few dangerous moments during the war. One time, on report that there was to be an attempted landing between

Cape Lookout and Cape Hatteras, he and a group of other intelligence men were riding along the beach at night. Coast Guard patrolmen had been given orders to shoot anyone on the beach.

The driver of the jeep was going along in the dark, and finally said that he couldn't see to go ahead another inch without lights, as he flicked the white beams on. Between Cape Hatteras and Hatteras village suddenly came a shout out of the dark, "Cut those lights off!"

As Aycock climbed out of the jeep someone shoved a gun against his chest and commanded, "Identify yourself."

"There were a lot of new fellows in the Coast Guard and I knew they wouldn't know who Aycock Brown was, so I reached into

my pocket for identification cards," relates the former intelligence officer. "With that, the patrolman said, 'Keep your hands up or I'll drill a hole through you.'"

"This all happened in a matter of seconds," Aycock continued, "and I wasn't scared at the time, but when I thought of it later, I realized how close I had been to getting shot."

At another time all the civilian vessels from shore 25 miles out to sea between Cape Hatteras and Virginia beach were to be warned that craft within that area were going to be sunk. Aycock was given orders to get the warning to the fishermen so he took off in a plane from Cherry Point, planning to fly over the area, land beside the fish boats, and tell them to go beyond the 25-mile line or else make port.

As the plane was going over Ocracoke, he noticed some travelers in the harbor which could help spread the warning so the plane landed. Both Aycock

### Going for a Ride



"Aren't you coming with us, Daddy?" seems to be the question in Stormy Gale's eyes as she stands beside her mother in the new family car. Brantley's at the wheel. Stormy Gale seldom sees her daddy. He's usually at Manteo, Morehead City, Beaufort, Mattamuskeet—heaven knows where!

(Guess Who Took This One!)

fish ever taken off the Carteret coast back in the days when sail-fish were never dreamed of here as a likely catch for sports fishermen. Aycock sent the story off to the state papers. That was the beginning of reams of publicity which has been written about Tony).

"I knew Aycock wanted a good camera, one like his friend, Loomis Deane, a Life photographer, has," Tony relates. "So I asked him how much a camera like that cost. He told me \$350."

Aycock finishes the story. "Not long after that conversation, Tony walked in and handed me three one hundred dollar bills and a

fifty. I decided then that here was my chance to do free-lancing, writing and photography."

The beautiful shots of the Carolina coast with that well-known credit line, Photo by Aycock Brown, is evidence enough that Tony made a good investment, that Aycock proved he had the stuff men are made of plus the ability to take photos that are works of art. To top it off, he turns at the kinds of stories readers like to see in their newspapers.

Some of the tales he tells are branded by critics as lies and gross inaccuracies, others are kinder and say our columnist is inclined to exaggerate at times. If it is inaccuracy or over-exaggeration, it's never intentional, it has never hurt anyone, and 99 per cent of the time it has helped. Call it what you will, he turns out what we in the newspaper business call "good copy."

Aycock considers his best publicity job the one on Dean Israel Noe. Noe was dean of an Episcopalian cathedral in Memphis, Tenn., and in the late thirties tried to prove that "a human being could take on the Godhead bodily." Aycock says. The dean fasted for 30 days, eating only cashew nuts and drinking orange juice. Finally to regain his health he had to be sent to Johns Hopkins hospital in Baltimore, and in the meantime his communicants at Memphis, having become outraged at his actions, demanded his resignation.

Dean Noe then came to the Carteret coast and preached to various congregations. In the summer of 1939, because the Episcopalian had become so popular here, Aycock

### On the Job



Here on Bogue Banks, Aycock queries Randolph Smith, Salter Path fisherman, left, on the recent catches of spot.

(Photo by Robert G. Lowe)

tried to sell the idea to Atlantic Beach interests to sponsor a Sunday afternoon sermon by Dean Noe at the beach, turning the dance hall into a "Cathedral by the Sea."

Nobody liked the idea but Aycock got \$15 to finance what was undoubtedly thought a crack pot scheme. Publicity on the service in the "Cathedral by the Sea" went

out all over the state and beyond and the afternoon Dean Noe preached the beach was jammed. The upshot of it all was the calling back of the dean by his congregation in Memphis where he is preaching today to nearly a thousand communicants.

Perhaps the thing that put Aycock Brown's name before more people than anything else was the See MOUNTAINEER Page 3



The work of a master — one of Aycock's most well-known shots.

### Buddies



At Tony's Sanitary Fish Market, Aycock has the cup of coffee that precedes all his meals, and talks things over with Tony himself. (Photo by Theodore Baxter)

and the pilot left the plane to talk to the men on the fishing boats. When they returned to take off, the plane had sunk.

A section in the bottom part of it had been fitted without a rubber gasket. "Maybe it was sabotage—maybe it was simply negligence," comments the columnist, "anyhow if we would have landed at sea, we never would have come home the same way we left."

Photographic equipment was at a premium as soon as the war got underway. The Navy had none in this area, so Aycock used what he had until movie cameras and all other types of equipment were sent here. "Then I had so much stuff I couldn't begin to use it all," he remarked.

He made pictures of the Russian tanker Ashkabad as it was sinking after being torpedoed by an enemy submarine and made numerous other flights to take pictures of the coastal area for war purposes. At his suggestion commercial fishermen were made confidential observers for the Navy and their boats equipped with radio.

A few months before the war was over, Aycock was transferred to Norfolk where he started writing "Covering the Waterfront" again. After his contract with the Navy expired on Dec. 31, 1945, he came to Morehead City and operated a photographer's studio for Roy Eubanks for about three or four months but the confining four walls made him long more and more for salt wind, sun, and water. It was in the early months of

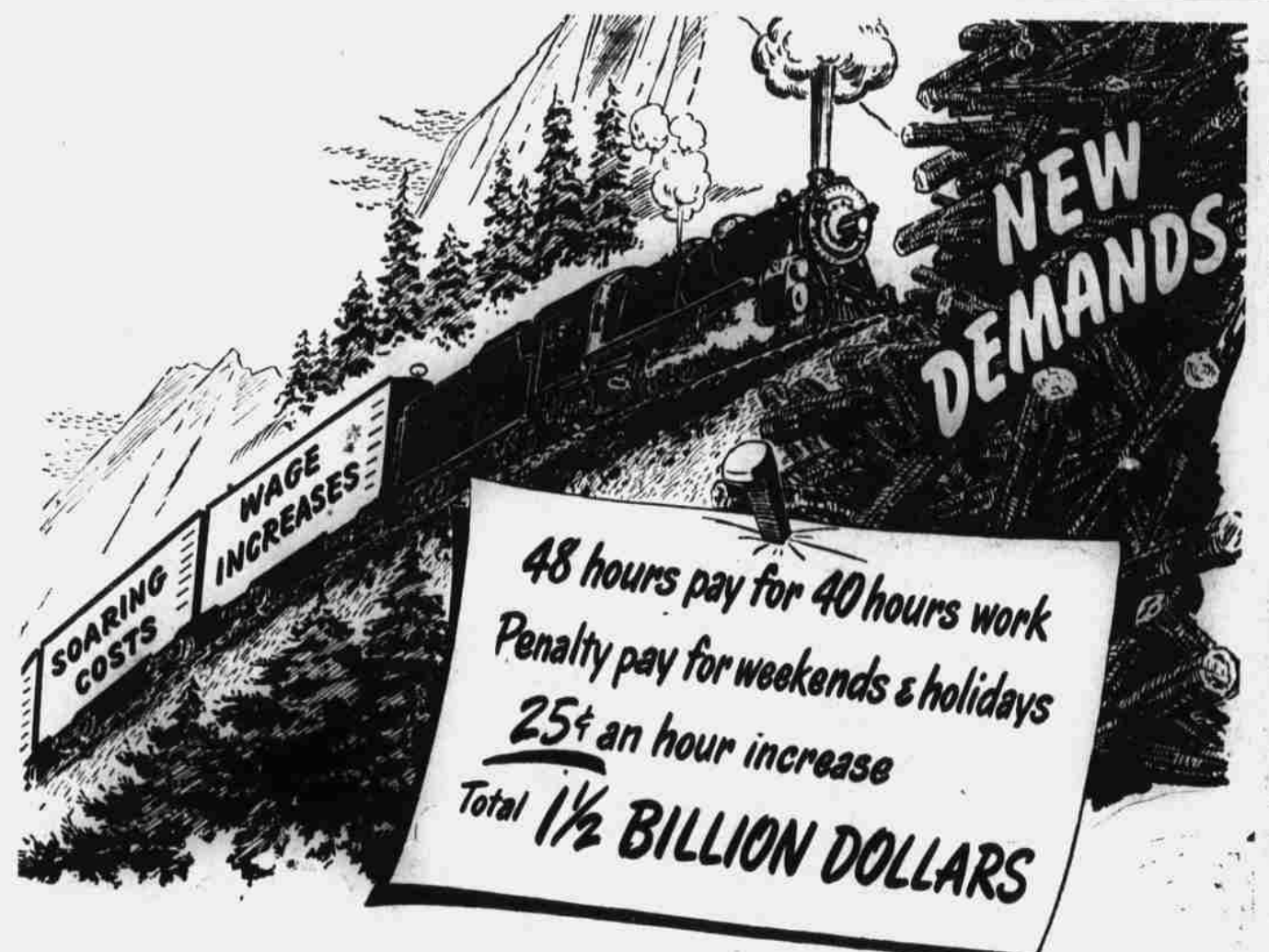
1946 that Tony Seamon, Morehead City's famous restaurateur, in an expression of gratitude to Aycock, set North Carolina's well-known columnist on the road that has led him today to fame—and sobriety. It's a story few people know. One day Tony walked in to see



Billy

Aycock who was still of the opinion that the best way to relax was with a bottle.

Tony told him that he would like to do him a favor, for it was Aycock who first put his name in print. (The owner of the Sanitary Fish Market caught the first sail-



## 1 1/2 Billion Dollar Road Block!

RAILROADS MUST OPERATE around the clock every day and night of the year.

Although they know this, leaders of 16 railroad unions are demanding a five-day, Monday through Friday, week for one million railroad employees.

They want 48 hours pay for 40 hours work—in itself a 20% wage increase.

They also demand a minimum of 12 hours pay for any work performed on Saturdays, and 16 hours pay for any work performed on Sundays and holidays.

On top of all this they want an additional increase of 25¢ an hour for every employee!

### You'd Pay the Bill!

Summing up these demands, they mean that these union leaders seek to force the railroads to give one million employees an annual raise which would average \$1500 per employee!

The total cost of this would be no less than 1 1/2 billion dollars per year, which is more than twice the expected net income of the railroads this year.

You'd pay the bill, because if these increased costs are forced on the railroads,

they must have still further rate and fare increases.

### Demands Unreasonable

These employees have had substantial raises during and since the war. Their average weekly earnings are higher than the average weekly earnings of workers in manufacturing industries. They have more job security than the average worker in American industry. They also enjoy paid vacations, a retirement system and other advantages more generous than the average worker receives.

In contrast with the demands of these 16 unions, which add up to the equivalent of 48¢ an hour, the Conductors and Trainmen recently settled their wage request for an increase of 10¢ an hour.

### Railroads Run for Everybody—Not Employees Alone

The railroad industry must serve not one but many groups—producers, businessmen, shippers, passengers and the general public—night and day, every day of the year. These unions are proceeding in utter disregard of this important difference between railroads and other industries. Industrial plants can be shut down over weekends and holidays, but freight, mail, express and passengers must continue to move. Everybody who enters railroad employment knows this.

### Strike Threat

On September 18, 1948, the leaders of these 16 unions began taking a strike vote. But the threat of a strike will not alter the opposition of the railroads to such unreasonable demands!

**SOUTHEASTERN RAILROADS**

We are publishing this and other advertisements to talk with you at first hand about matters which are important to everybody.