

### Dry Dock to Go To Wilmington

WILMINGTON — The U. S. Maritime Commission is preparing to float a \$400,000,000 surplus Navy drydock to Wilmington for establishment and use in conditioning surplus merchant ships in its large reserve fleet storage basin here, according to information received today from officials in Washington.

The Commission has completed its plans and the dock is being prepared for movement from the West Coast through the Panama Canal.

Establishment of the dock here would necessitate the employment of about 75 skilled workmen and provide an annual payroll of about \$200,000, it was said. There are now 426 surplus merchant ships in the lay-up basin.

Thwarted a year ago by the Navy who feared the "grave Russian situation," and by U. S. shipbuilders who contended that if the Maritime Commission uses its dry docks, their business would suffer. The Maritime Commission recently reactivated plans to float the drydocks from the Pacific to the East Coast. Only drawback is a possibility that Congress may not appropriate funds, the official said.

However, the high commission official said that Wilmington's drydock to be used at the Wilmington Reserve Fleet, is now being weighted to turn on its side for floating through the Panama Canal on the first leg of its slow journey to Wilmington. It should reach Wilmington by May 1, he said.

The other three docks have been assigned to Beaumont, Texas; James River, Va., and Mobile, Ala., the official said.

### Leaf Growers Pay For Their Mistake

Many tobacco growers in the State are now paying for a mistake which they made last summer, says Roy B. Bennett, extension tobacco specialist at State College.

Their mistake, he says, was that they failed to have tobacco diseases identified when their fields were attacked during the growing season. These men "think" they had black shank, Granville wilt, or some other disease, but they are not certain exactly what it was. As a result, they don't know what variety of tobacco to plant in 1944 in order to prevent the disease from appearing again.

Many other growers, however, acted more wisely. They knew that a grower having any disease prevalent on his farm should have it identified while the diseased plants were still fresh and showed characteristic symptoms. So they found out positively what disease was prevalent in their fields, and for the coming season they are planting varieties resistant to that disease.

Mr. Bennett points out that North Carolina tobacco growers lose many thousands of dollars annually because of plant diseases. Nearly all of this loss can be prevented, he says, if farmers will obtain positive identification of each disease and then plant resistant varieties.

### Junior Order Mechanics To Meet at Atlantic Beach

It was announced today by Forrest G. Sherrin, State Secretary of the North Carolina Junior Order United American Mechanics that this group has decided to hold their annual State council session in the Morehead City-Atlantic Beach area as a result of an invitation issued earlier by the Morehead City Chamber of Commerce.

Convention bookings have been substantially ahead of the same period last year. The first such gathering for the new year will be staged on the 25th of February at which time the winter meeting of the North Carolina Elks association convenes.

R. G. Lowe, Chamber of Commerce Secretary, states that definite dates have been assigned to groups in each month through September with present bookings heavy for June. Resort facilities and accommodations are expected to begin their seasonal activities shortly after the first of May and are preparing for several groups before the traditional season opener on Memorial Day week-end.

### County Receives \$3,120 in January ABC Money

The county's share of ABC money for the month of January, was \$3,120.47, James Potter, auditor, has reported. Amount to the towns and hospital were as follows: Beaufort \$772.68; Morehead City, \$449.27; hospital, \$449.27; Newport, \$449.25.

Sales totaled \$45,867.55. At each store they were as follows: Beaufort, \$16,889.10; Morehead City, \$19,579.60; Newport, \$9,398.85. Gross profit was \$12,011.87, state sales tax, \$3,898.74. Sales last month were lower than in December.

### Covering the Waterfront

By Aycock Brown  
NAGS HEAD, N. C.—Ocracoke-born Ira T. Wyche who left there shortly after the turn of the Century paid a visit to the island a few days ago. He has two sisters at Ocracoke, Mrs. Elsie Tolson and Mrs. Martha Simpson.

Shortly after he left the island Wyche got an appointment to the U. S. Military Academy and he became a commissioner officer in the U. S. Army. Prior to his retirement recently, he had attained the rank of major general and he was appointed to the post of Inspector General of the Army shortly after World War II.

Stanley Wahab, another Ocracoker who had left, and made a success in business and then returned to the island to spend the afternoon of his life was here at The Carolinian this week. He told me the story of Ira T. Wyche.

Wyche was born on the island, October 11, 1887, or as some Ocracoke old timer might say, "The year following the wreck of the Clyde Line steamer Pioneer."

His father was the Rev. L. O. Wyche who doubled as minister in the Ocracoke Methodist Church and school teacher. His mother was Miss Lorena Howard, before her marriage, the daughter of Capt. James H. Howard who was keeper in charge of the old Life Saving Station at Ocracoke (Hatteras Inlet) since it was first manned.

Mrs. Wyche died at Ayden, N. C. when her pastor husband was in charge of the Methodist Church at that place.

Due to lack of telephones in those days her parents on Ocracoke did not learn of their daughter's death, mother of the man who was to become Inspector General of the Army, until several days after she was buried, whereupon her father had the body exhumed, taken to Ocracoke and re-buried. That was her second burial. Now her remains have been buried again, in the rear of the old Howard graveyard near the old church.

Following Mrs. Wyche's death Captain Howard brought all the children, Elsie, Martha and Ira, to Ocracoke and they made their home near the Life Saving station at Hatteras Inlet.

"While visiting back home General Wyche will no doubt reminisce over his boyhood days spent there," said Wahab. "Often during the 20 years or more that I have known Stanley Wahab he has told me interesting stories about Ocracoke and occasionally they would include Ira Wyche, his boyhood playmate. Wahab's father was also in the life saving service and stationed at what is today known as Hatteras Inlet Life Boat Station.

They together probably remember the great August storm of 1899 which many an islander still recalls as "the worst to ever strike Ocracoke." During the winter that was to follow the great storm another tragedy occurred on the island. This was the wreck of the British tramp steamer Ariosto, bound from Cuba and other parts on this side of the ocean to Liverpool with a general cargo including sugar and lumber.

The wreck of the Ariosto claimed the lives of 27 crew members. The wreck is said to have introduced the first fruitcake (one that had been sent the ship's chief engineer as a Christmas gift) to many of the life savers who rescued the few survivors. The ship had wrecked on a Christmas eve and early in 1900 the wrecking commissioner and insurance adjusters came down to the scene of the wreck to salvage what cargo possible, and sell same at vendue.

Young Ira Wyche and Stanley Wahab were among the salvagers who piled lumber along the beach. The pile they built up was sold and their share of the money received was, Wahab recalls, the first dollars they had ever earned, during their young lives.

Wyche and Wahab both aspired to be military men. Wyche realized his ambition to go to West Point. Wahab did not realize his desire to enter the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. Still Wahab, now in retirement, did not do so badly for himself. In business he made, what in the terms of any coastal resident who knows him, a fortune.

During the first World War, Wyche had attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. Now retired from the Army he makes his home in Pinehurst near the home of his good friend General George C. Marshall.

The Life Saving families who lived with their children at the old Ocracoke (Hatteras Inlet) Station had to have a school for the young ones. After the small building used as a school room was destroyed during the August Hurricane of 1899, permission was granted by the government for the mule stable to be used as a class room. Thus, Ira T. Wyche and Stanley Wahab, both successes in their respective fields of endeavors, can trace their early education back to mule stable. Wahab recalls that a "Sheehy Potter of Pamlico County was their teacher in the mule stable.

Ira Wyche, perhaps finds little change in Ocracoke village. The community today is hardly larger, from a population standpoint, than when he lived here during his youth.

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