

Annals of the Fleeting Years

BY TUCKER R. LITTLETON

It is my intention to present to the readers of this paper, weekly under this heading, articles telling the history of the Town of Swansboro. I do not think it illogical that such historical articles should appear in the Carteret County paper, for I have always felt that

there was a strong tie between the County of Carteret and the little village of Swansboro that sits just across the White Oak River and gazes all day at the other bank as if yon Carteret were the Promised Land.

And there is just reason why the Town of Swansboro should feel a

kinship to Carteret folk, for about the time of the Civil War several Down East families migrated to Swansboro and made up almost half of its native population until the coming of the Marine Bases. These families were the Davis, Willis, Heady, Bloodgood, Parkin, Piner, Hill, and Moore families;

and their descendants still proudly claim their Carteret origins.

About a year ago Mr. John S. Jones of Cedar Point asked me to write a history of the Cedar Point Fishery, and I think there is no better place to begin this series of historical sketches. Cedar Point is somewhat of a common ground between the two counties of Carteret and Onslow, symbolizing the close relations between the two.

The Cedar Point folk get their mail addressed Swansboro and their children go to school in Swansboro; so it is only right that Cedar Point feels that it is a part of Onslow, and Swansboro feels a part of Carteret. And so, a brief history of the fishery . . .

Carteret County is probably the only county that has the distinction of having two Cedar Points. The map of the county published by the US Department of Agriculture shows a Cedar Point in the eastern extreme of the county situated on the Neuse River between Adams Creek and South River. The other Cedar Point, the one this article will be about, is located in the opposite end of the county near the conflux of Bogue Sound and the White Oak River.

The name of Cedar Point is well established in the history of Swansboro and Carteret County, for the settlement there is very old, a land grant having been issued to Thomas Lee as early as 1713/14. We know that the name of Cedar Point was commonly applied to that area in early years, for the Colonial Records of North Carolina mention Cedar Point as early as 1764.

No one can say exactly when the fishery was first established at Cedar Point, but there is every reason to believe that it was in continuous use for at least a century. Because the name Cedar Point takes in a large territory today, it is hard for one to visualize where the approximate location would have been.

However, a map drawn by a famous surveyor, Claborn Ivey, and dated October 2, 1824, shows Hickory Point as what is now called Cedar Lane; and Cedar Point was just that—a small point just past Hickory Point and not far from Swansboro. There on that little point was a fishery that figured very importantly in the income of people from both counties.

Now, that fishery fools a lot of people by its name, but local folk know that a fishery is simply a fisherman's shack where he can keep out of the weather while waiting to make a haul and where a

good eye can keep watch from the lookout pole. The shore made up just right for hauling in the mullets, and many a fish lost his life right there.

Though the fishery was operated only a small part of the year, it was important to the financial welfare of a good segment of the county and of Swansboro folk. During the spring and summer months there were farms and regular jobs to be tended to; but when the fall came, more money could be made fishing, and so men turned out to work at the nets at Cedar Point.

The Cedar Point Fishery came into being early in the 1800's and was at first manned by fishermen

from Down East in Carteret. How long the Down East fishermen ran the fishery is not known, but it was apparently a number of years before the fishery came into the hands of men from west Carteret and Swansboro.

The earliest boss at the fishery, still remembered by living persons, was a Mr. Beg Lewis from the region of the Straits. Mr. Lewis had a crew from Down East who fished the waters of Bogue Sound at Cedar Point until most of that crew died out, and new hands took over.

Mr. Edward Franklin Littleton, now in his 86th year, remembers his maternal grandfather, Mr. Burns B. Smith, as having told

him that Beg Lewis was the first man who ever had charge of the fishery, and that was long before Mr. Burns Smith himself had charge of it.

To get some idea of the dates of the operation of the fishery, one must start with the date of closing and work backwards, since no date of beginning is known. Mr. Edward F. Littleton was in charge of the fishery when it closed in 1930.

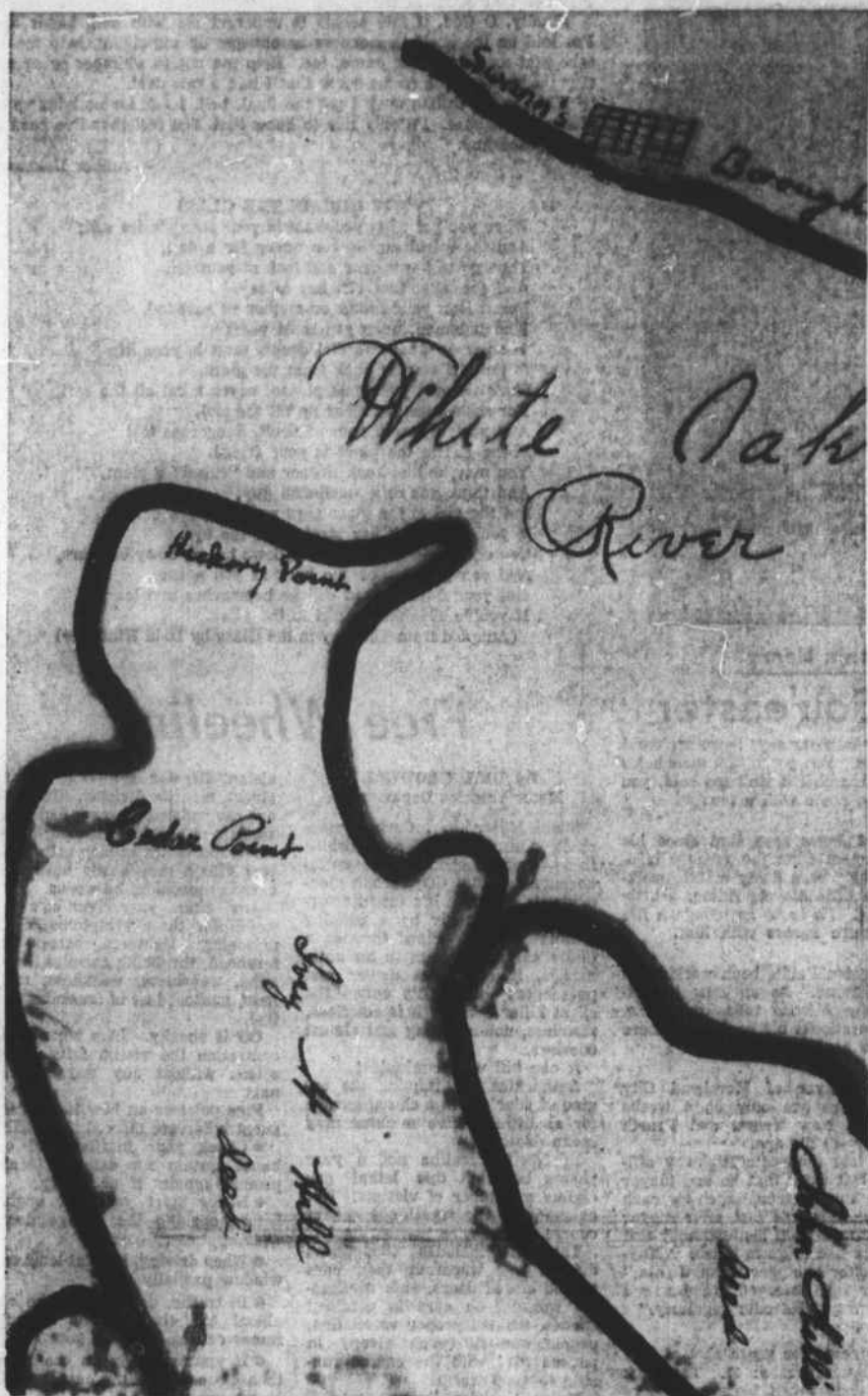
The deepening of the sound when the Inland Waterway was dredged by Cedar Point in 1930 ruined the fishing grounds, and the fishery ceased operations that year. Edward Littleton, however, had fished at the fishery for twenty-seven

years prior to the closing of it, and his father George Littleton had fished there ahead of him for more years than that.

Before George Littleton took over the fishery, his father-in-law, Burns Smith, had been head man there since the middle of the century. And before that, Beg Lewis had his crew. All that means that for roughly a century Cedar Point Fishery had been one of the best fishing grounds in Carteret County and vicinity.

Of course, the Cedar Point land has been in the family of Mr. John S. Jones since the days of his forebears, the Hills. Fishing privileges

See FISHERY, Page 3, Section 2



This is the reproduction of a portion of "Ivey's Map of Cedar Point," dated 1824. Hickory Point at the center of the map is now known as Cedar Lane. (Photo by S. F. Milsted).

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