

Annals of the Fleeting Years

The Weetock River

By TUCKER R. LITTLETON

Where is the Weetock River? One could perhaps ask that question of many people without ever getting the correct answer, for it has been about two hundred years since every vestige of the name dropped out of popular usage. There was a time, however, when white settlers knew of a Weetock River, and gradually changed its pronunciation to Wittock and Whittock.

As the spelling Whittock may have suggested to the reader, the Weetock was the Indian name for what is now known as the White Oak River, boundary line between Carteret and Onslow. A tribe of Indians was the first to give the river its name, and the meaning of the Indian word "Weetock" is by no means clear.

In fact, the derivation or origin of the word is not certain. The

Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institute thinks that the word stands a good chance of being of Algonkian origin; but, as the archeologist from the Smithsonian said, to make a dogmatic statement about the origin of the word would be risky. It just seems likely since so many Algonkian words end in "ock."

Since it was the Indians, then, who gave the river its first recorded name, there is no way of knowing how early the name was applied. The first encounter with the name Weetock River, for my part, came with the search for old maps. John Lawson, early writer about North Carolina and her Indians, published in England a map of North Carolina, drawn in the year 1709.

On Lawson's map of 1709 there are shown the various rivers, inlets, and natural features of the land. The map shows Bogue Inlet and calls it by that name, but the river emptying into Bogue Inlet is the Weetock.

Later the writings of Baron de Graffenried, recorded in the Colonial Records, describe his experience in the Tuscarora War of 1711. He tells of Indians being on what he called the Weetock River and later the Weetock. This mention of the river by its Indian name was written shortly after the in-

dian war in 1711. Lawson and Graffenried were more closely connected with the Indians than perhaps any of the subsequent sources to be quoted, and therefore they alone have preserved the Indian name uncorrupted.

It may be that the white settlers gave the river the name White Oak, independent of its earlier Indian name, since the name White Oak seems to have been a favorite with Englishmen in North Carolina. However, since the Englishmen usually left the "h" sounds out of words that were supposed to have them and inserted them where they weren't supposed to be, it is reasonable that the English pronunciation of White Oak as "Wite Oak" would have sounded close to Weetock.

Nevertheless, subsequent records have recorded what looks like the evolution of the name White Oak River from the name Weetock River. It seems plausible, then, that White Oak may be a corruption of the earlier Indian name, just as the Tar River is a corruption of the Indian name Tau, and Pamlico is a corruption of Pamtego.

If the name White Oak is derived from Weetock, it seems logical that the next spelling might be similar; and so in a letter from Isaac Guion to Gov. Richard Caswell, dated as late as the 16th of June, 1777, we find the name given as Wittock. This indicates that there were earlier such spellings

and pronunciations which are vestiges of the original name.

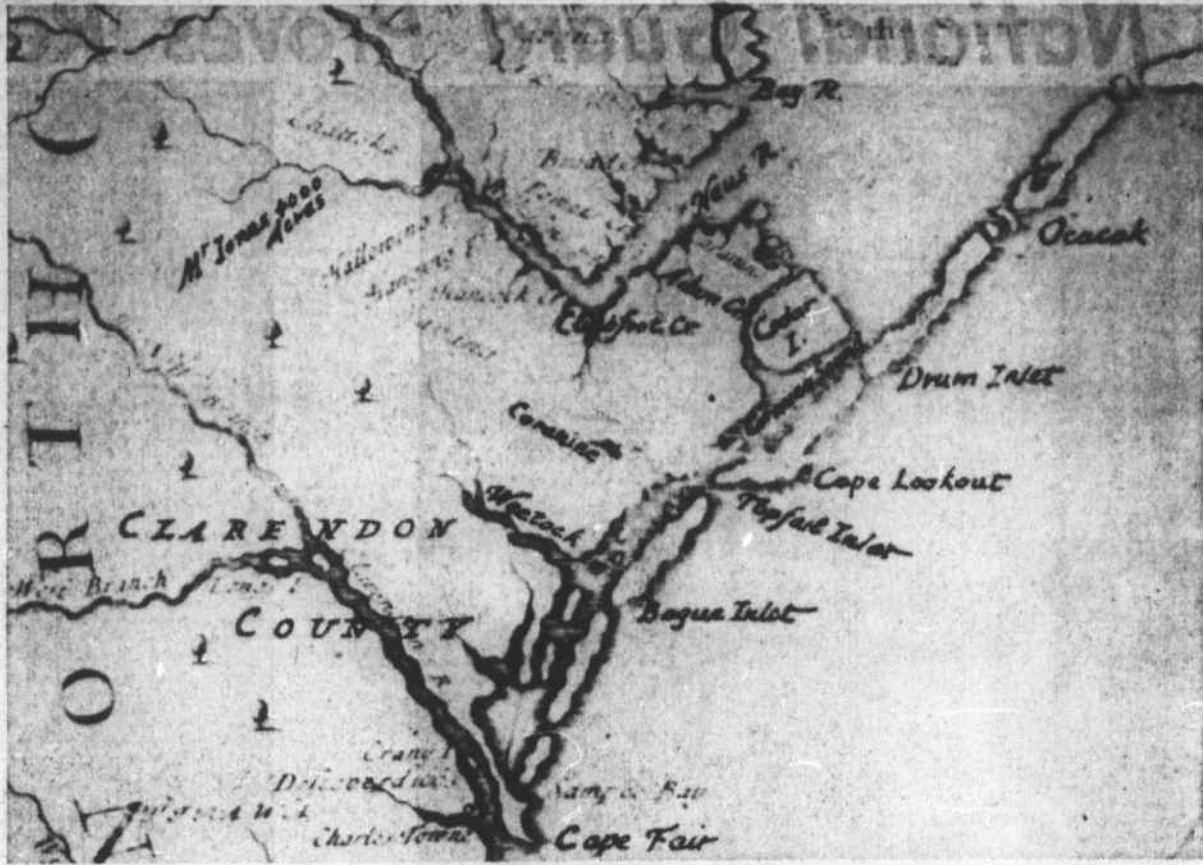
It is remarkable that the name Wittock should have existed alongside the name White Oak until 1777, for the river's name had been called White Oak as early as 1713, apparently by white settlers who misunderstood the Indian name.

In the Carteret county courthouse there is a deed from Eleazer Lillington to Abraham Mitchell dated Sept. 25, 1728. The deed is for land now in Onslow County and described as being on the southwest side of the Whittock River. This records one of the earliest instances of the intrusion of the "h" sound into the name of the river.

A few years later the Laws of North Carolina—1735, gives the spelling as Whittock, almost the same as that in Mitchell's deed. Ross Bell had a plantation on the Carteret county side of the White Oak River, and at his plantation the "people of Whittock" were to pay their annual quit rents.

From this reference it appears that the settlements along both sides of the river and from its mouth to its headwaters were referred to collectively as Whittock. Still other records spell the name Whiteoak.

From the early names of the river it looks as if the name evolved from Weetock to Wittock, and then to Whittock, later to be called the Whiteoak or White Oak. But who knows for sure? Should I say that Swansboro is on the White Oak or the Weetock River?



This is a map of the Carteret County coast, drawn by John Lawson in 1709. The Weetock River, now known as the White Oak River, is shown. The photostat is from the map collection of the State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.



Feb. 24—Mr. and Mrs. Gus Robinson and children spent Sunday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Stallings.

Mr. and Mrs. Wrenn Lawrence of Newport visited here Sunday.

The Rev. J. E. Smith filled his regular appointment here on Sunday morning. He was accompanied by Mrs. Smith and baby.

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Pittman of Morehead City visited her parents Sunday.

The Rev. J. E. Smith met with the official board of the church Thursday night. Several topics were brought up and discussed. Mr. Smith also showed slides of the Lord's Acre. This project was adopted and Mr. Allen Carraway was appointed chairman.

Mr. Johnnie Finkler of Pamlico, S. C. was the weekend guest of Miss Jean Pittman.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Carraway of Beaufort RFD recently visited Miss Nita Carraway, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Adams and Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Carraway.

Mrs. Oscar Pittman and Mrs. Duffie Carraway were in New Bern last Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Goodwin and children, Joan and David, visited Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Carraway Sunday afternoon.

Chamber Opens Doors To All Doing Business

To be contacted for membership in the Greater Morehead City chamber of commerce during the current membership drive are the following (this is a continuation of a list which first appeared last Friday):

Wholesalers: Woodruff Distributors, Roberson Beverages, Honeycutt, Henderson Cigar, Tar Heel Hardware.

Julian Willes, Gay Distributors, Wilmington Linen Supply, Carolina Overall Co., State Distributors, Killo Exterminators, Seaboard Coffee.

Penguin Frozen Foods, New Bern Supply, Frozen Food Co., Jimmy's Produce, West Coast Lumber Co.

General Wholesale Supply, Brame Specialty, Quigley Supply, Swift & Company, Frosty Morn, Luter's.

Accountants: T. E. Kelly, H. M. Eure, Rudolph Mason.

Pulp Wood: Blaine Baugus, Robert G. Carr.

Beauty Parlors: Bernice's Beauty Shop, Erma's Beauty Shop, Frances' Beauty Shop, Helen's Beauty Shop, Hilma's Beauty Shop, Lillian's Beauty Shop, Lucile's Beauty Shop, Morehead Beauty Salon, Nan's Beauty Shop.

Others: John R. Valentine, Vickery's Pottery Shop, Fred's Barbecue, Jones' Barbecue, Lewis Hinson Moving.

Acme Movers, Stanley Wainwright, E. J. Willis Bicycle Shop, W. Marks, Busy Bee, Sam Adler, Beasley's TV, Mallory Sales, Meadows Sea Food Co., Gordon C. Willis, Hinnant Cafe, Walter Freeman, Lighthouse Restaurant, Abott Morris, Bunch Fishing Camp.

Licenses Can be Suspended on Basis Other Than Accumulation of Points

Some motorists think that because the new "point system" has gone into effect their licenses cannot be suspended until they have accumulated the fatal 12 points. That is not true.

Highway patrolmen warn that licenses can be suspended for the same reasons they were suspended prior to the adoption of the point system.

One night a highway patrolman arrested a driver who was driving 70 miles an hour. This was the second time in less than a year that the motorist had been caught speeding at a high rate.

The driver said, "I sure am glad that point system is in effect. Otherwise, I would have lost my license."

Surprise, mister. He lost his license anyway. Two convictions of speeding at a rate like 70 in less than a year do not mean that the driver has merely accumulated 3 points for each time he was caught. It means that his license will definitely be suspended or revoked.

The point system was put into effect to help get off the road the continual, petty violators of motor vehicle laws. The "big violators," so to speak, are still being dealt with in firm, unyielding ways.

This is the number of points vio-

Convictions	Points
Passing stopped school bus	5
Reckless Driving	4
Hit and run, property damage only	4
Speeding in excess of 55 miles per hour	3
Illegal passing	3
Failing to yield right of way	3
Running through red light	3
No operators license or license expired more than one year	3
Failure to stop for red light or siren	3
Driving through safety zone	3
Driving on wrong side of road	3
No liability insurance	3
Failure to report accident where such report is required	3
All other moving violations	2

If you accumulate 12 points in two years, your license can be suspended.

If you have gotten your license back, after suspension or revocation and accumulate eight points in the two-year period after getting it back, it can be suspended again.

You may have accumulated no points at all, but your license can be suspended under any of the following conditions:

1. Have, within a period of 12 months, been convicted of two or more charges of speeding in excess of fifty-five (55) and not more than seventy-five (75) miles per hour, or of one or more charges of reckless driving and one or more charges of speeding in excess of fifty-five (55) and not more than seventy-five (75) miles per hour.
2. Have been convicted of operating a motor vehicle at a speed in excess of seventy-five (75) miles per hour.
3. Driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a narcotic drug.
4. Conviction, or forfeiture of bail not vacated, upon two charges of reckless driving committed within a period of twelve months.
5. Have been convicted of illegal transportation of intoxicating liquors.
6. Have committed an offense in another state, which if committed in this state would be grounds for suspension or revocation.
7. Have made or permitted an unlawful or fraudulent use of such license.
8. Are incompetent to drive a motor vehicle.
9. Manslaughter (or negligent homicide) resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle.
10. Failure to stop and render aid as required under the laws of this state in the event of a motor vehicle accident.

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