

Cedar Island Township Holds Distinction of Being Unique

By F. C. SALISBURY

With less than one-fifth arable land within its boundaries, and the fewest inhabitants to the square mile, the physical characteristics of the township of Cedar Island are of the most unusual in Carter county.

Such arable land that the island contains is a strip some five miles in length on the north side of the island where it borders on Hog Island Bay. The width of this tract does not exceed much over a mile.

From the bridge over Thorofare (government spelling) Bay, which body of water forms the southern boundary of the island, the highway runs through five miles of tidal swamp before reaching solid ground. Other sections of the island are bordered by tidal swamp except the north shore along Hog Island Bay.

Across this body of water are a group of small islands, of which the largest bears the name of the Bay, while to the eastward some three miles lies Harbor Island. During early days of the growth of the county, these various islands played an interesting part in its history.

Cedar Island township is next to the last of the townships to be established in the county, that of Harlowe being the last. By action of the Board of County Commissioners, July 1914, the township was set off from that of Ports-

mouth and the following boundaries established:

Beginning at a point on the Atlantic Ocean on Core Banks opposite Thorofare Bay, running northwest across said banks, then in same direction to the middle of Thorofare Bay, and the various courses of said Bay through to the middle part of Pamlico Sound and thence down Pamlico Sound to Whale Bone Inlet and thence various courses of the Atlantic Ocean on Core Banks to the beginning.

This new township was within that vast domain of the Indian's hunting ground, which through the years has been known as the Hunting Quarter. To this section of the county came the Indians of Eastern Carolina from their inland villages to hunt the game of the Quarter, as well as to hold their annual pow-wows along the shore of the sounds.

As evidence of these annual visits, huge shell piles at various points along Core Sound and Neuse River mark their camping grounds from which in later years many artifacts of Indian origin have come.

Hunters, fishermen and adventurers who were the first white people to build camps along the shore of Cedar and Hog Islands, selected their camp sites on or near those of the Indians. It was at Hog Island Point on the eastern end of Hog Island and Robinsons Point on the eastern end of Cedar Island, marked by large shell piles,

that these early camps were established; later becoming small settlements known as Lupton on Hog Island and Lola on the main land.

It was not until after the Indian massacre of 1711 and the driving out of the surviving tribes, that the section along the sounds and river began to attract settlers from the Albemarle district and Virginia. Chief among these early hardy settlers were Huguenots, Germans and Scotch-Irish.

Those settling along the sounds and rivers turned their attention to fishing which became the major occupation and has been the leading one throughout the years. Securing of pelts from forest and water animals added to their income. Deer hides found a ready market in England. During one season the shipping of deer hides out of the Port of Portsmouth amounted to 15,000.

The hunting of waterfowl became a leading occupation throughout the sounds shortly after the Civil War and continued until 1918 when the sale of migratory waterfowl became illegal.

During the administration of the colony under the ownership of the Lords Proprietors—that ceased in 1729—a grant of 5,000 acres was given to Lewis Conner in the Carteret Precinct of that tract known as Cedar Island. Later Conner sold the property, covered by this grant to Samuel Smith.

At the meeting of the Council held in New Bern on April 13, 1749,

the matter of the boundaries of this grant came before the governing body then in session. It was ordered that a resurvey be made of the grant and a report to be given at the next session of the Council.

This grant covered more than the present acreage of Cedar Island township and must have embraced much of the land in the northeast section of the precinct. It is doubtful if Smith profited much from his large holding, for after the close of the Revolutionary War his property with others in the colony may have reverted to the state, for county records show that many grants were made by the state of Smith's holding.

One of those early grants was to Christopher Lupton under date of July 16, 1795, for 23 acres on Cedar Island at a price of 30 shillings for every 100 acres. Other purchasers among early settlers in the Cedar Island district were Styrons, Irelands, Days, Goodwins, Emorys, Daniels, Robinsons and Fulchers.

Embraced within the original grant to Conner were a group of islands northeast of the mainland. One of the largest islands bordering on Pamlico Sound had been given the name of Hog Island. Later this name was applied to the entire group.

As early as 1798 Hog Island figured in land transfers. That year Samuel Styron sold to Richard Styron one-third of Hog Island for

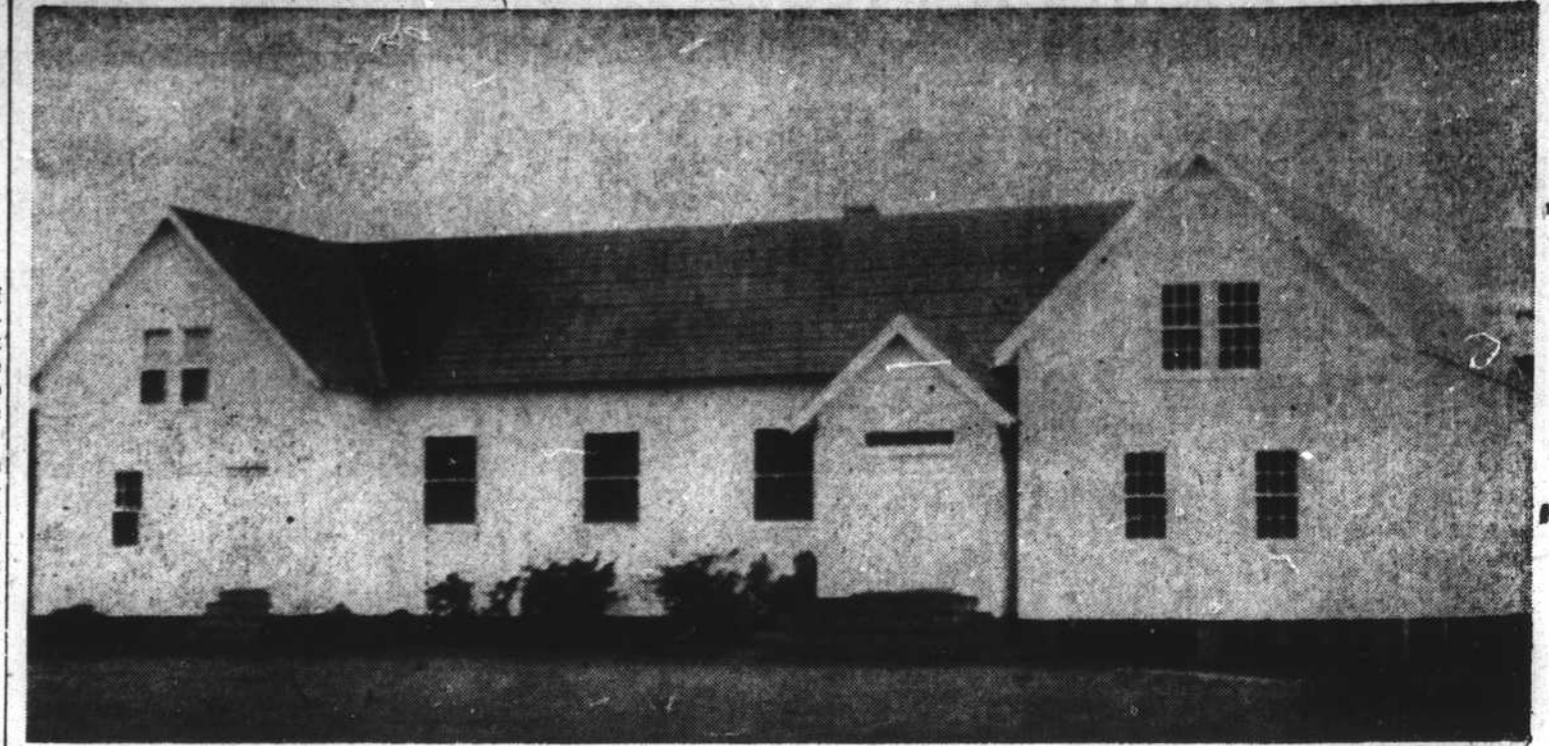


Photo by F. C. Salisbury

Cedar Island Methodist church originated with a small Sunday school started in 1935.

\$100. The Styron family were early owners of Hog Island for in 1805 Wallis Styron sold to Daniel Ireland 100 acres of Whale Camp Point to include the Hammock. Later Silas Lupton became the owner of part of the Point land and he in turn sold 100 acres to Thomas Day, "Starting from a stake where the house stands on the Hammock, through the Hammock to Back Bay."

Whaling—along with fishing—was one of the occupations of those early settlers on Cedar and Hog Islands. Naming of their settlement, Whale Camp Point, located on a high point of land on the north shore of Hog Island where

it juts into Pamlico Sound, would bear out the fact.

Also a large try kettle on exhibition in front of the Museum of the Sea in Beaufort, once used at Whale Point Camp and on Cedar Island, is further evidence that whale oil processing was carried on in that section of the county.

During the period of the whaling industry along the Carolina coast little mention, if any, is made of the whaling crews out of the northern part of the county. They made use of Whale Bone Inlet through which to bring their catches of fish and whale. The Neuse River gave them access to the market at New Bern. Across Pamlico Sound the

port of Portsmouth gave them a market for foreign shipments of salted fish, whale oil and whale-bone.

On an adjoining island separating Back Bay from Hog Island Bay, a settlement was started at the southern end near the site of an old Indian camp ground which later became known as Hog Island Point. This was the village of Lupton, said to have been named for Christopher Lupton, one of the first purchasers of land on Cedar Island. He is credited with being the progenitor of the majority of Luptons on the island today.

Separated as it was from the mainland, Lupton, with its small

settlement and scattered homes became an unit unto itself. At the height of its growth the inhabitants numbered twenty-three families, which meant a "nose count" of one hundred or more. The count did not include the family of Uncle Isaac, a slave owned by William Gaskill.

As the demand arose for school advantages, the county school system built and maintained a one-room school for as long as there was a need. The building served as a place for religious worship as well as a community center. A general store supplied some of the family needs between shop-

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