

Coastal Tours Begin In Calabash Country

BY TERRY POPE

Perhaps coastal tourists are just pressed for time. Or maybe they find the ocean waves too relaxing for further travel.

Determined to prove that there's more to do at the coast than just soak up the sun, Nancy Rhyne serves as tour guide and local historian in charting trips for the curious and adventuresome in her new book published this March by John F. Blair of Winston-Salem.

The first of 13 tours outlined in Ms. Rhyne's book, *Touring the Coastal South Carolina Backroads*, begins not in South Carolina but at Calabash in Brunswick County.

After all, the quaint "Seafood Capital of the World" is often the first stop for many who visit both coastal states in search of restaurants with fresh seafood served "Calabash style."

It is her eleventh book, but one gets the impression that the writer had fun gathering material this time. She proves there is more to the coast than just surf and sand; there are barrier islands, marshland, forests, rivers and farmland that should be explored, and all within a short drive.

A longtime low country resident and well-known storyteller, Ms. Rhyne has visited libraries and traveled country roads for nearly 30 years to gather information for her books.

Her attempt is to give readers a taste of the variety of people, places and lifestyles of the coast. Aside from South Carolina's Grand Strand attractions, the two states have very similar environments.

Much of the low country's past revolved around the old plantations

BOOK REVIEW *Touring the Coastal South Carolina Backroads* BY NANCY RHYNE

that had their golden days about 150 years ago. For architectural buffs, historians and folklore enthusiasts, the tours on Ms. Rhyne's agenda hold a bit of interest for all ages.

"Indeed, every backroad in the low country seems to have a plantation gate, an old church, an eerie graveyard or an interesting house, each with a story to tell," she states.

Tours range from 25 blocks of the old historic homes in Charleston, S.C., to 140 rural miles. She had to pick and choose where her paths would lead, but began the trail on N.C. 179 in Calabash.

Calabash Onward

The 56-mile "Calabash to Bucksport Tour" starts on N.C. 179 and River Road in the restaurant village "considered the gateway to South Carolina's Grand Strand," she notes. It then heads to Marsh Harbour Golf Links at Calabash, to Little River, S.C., and then inland to Conway and Bucksport.

Locals and visitors will want to read Ms. Rhyne's interesting account of how Calabash got its name and of the still-unsolved mystery surrounding the late comedian Jimmy Durante's famous closing line, "Goodnight, Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are."

The book also explores why the town has become a mecca for seafood lovers and the history of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway,

including how it brought improved drainage to land now used for farming, residential development and golf courses.

There are photographs of the shrimp trawlers docked along the Calabash River and of golfers in action at Marsh Harbour Golf Links, hailed by its pro upon opening as the most scenic of the 100-plus courses along the Grand Strand.

"He was probably right," Ms. Rhyne notes. "When they least expect it, Marsh Harbour golfers may see the mast of a sailing yacht moving into their fairway from among the giant oak trees shrouded in moss. The effect is startling."

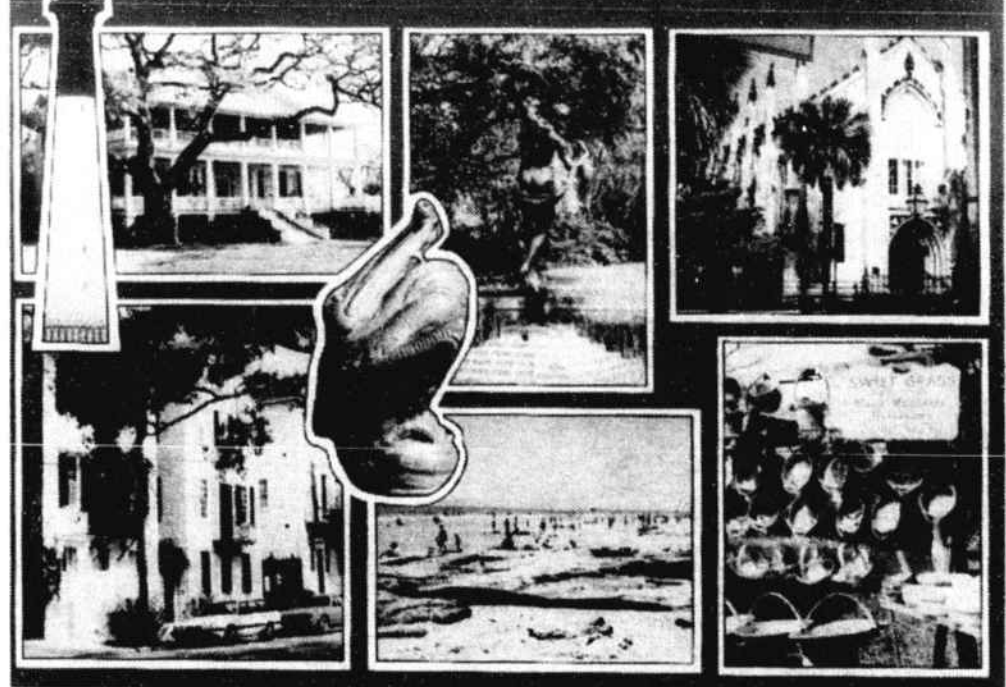
Marsh Harbour lies squarely on the North-South Carolina border, prompting golfers to note that on the 10th hole a good drive may pass the ball from North Carolina, into South Carolina and then back to North Carolina. Another reason for visiting the course, the writer notes, is for a history lesson or two.

The golf course lies on some of the area's most historic land. A 600-pound granite monument near the clubhouse marks the spot where the historic Boundary House once stood.

It straddled the North-South Carolina line and is recorded as the oldest home in Horry County, S.C. Isaac Marion, older brother of Francis Marion, the legendary Swamp Fox of the Revolutionary War, was dining in the home when he heard of the Battle of Lexington. The house was also noted as a spot for duels. Benjamin Smith, who had served as governor of North Carolina, was wounded by a bullet there.

Such stories are typical of the

Touring the Coastal South Carolina Backroads



NANCY RHYNE'S string of coastal adventures in *Touring the Coastal South Carolina Backroads* actually begins in Calabash in southern Brunswick County.

history and folklore Ms. Rhyne mixes with the sights for her tours. It next visits the Vereen Memorial Historical Gardens and its nature trail where N.C. 179 and U.S. 17 merge.

From there, it wanders to Little River, S.C., a small fishing village at the end of Mineola Avenue that was once a thriving port. The waterfront section of Little River is about a block long, but it "boasts a lively collection of seafood restaurants and ticket shacks for the fishing and sightseeing excursions that depart the docks," the writer states.

Ms. Rhyne carries the traveler through Horry County to Conway, noting the historic buildings there before turning south to Bucksport, a small village on the Waccamaw River, which also flows through Brunswick County.

Brunswick County visitors may also want to note Ms. Rhyne's northern Grand Strand tour, a 15-mile route that begins at Cherry Grove and travels Ocean Drive Beach, Crescent Beach, Atlantic Beach and Windy Hill Beach to view the spot that made beach music famous. It ends at Singleton

Swash, where perhaps a Confederate gunpowder factory once operated.

The chapters contain enough local history and folklore to encourage persons to give up a day in the sun to tour the historic south. Ms. Rhyne's curiosity for the low country is contagious. Her chapters are not too heavy on detail, as other tour books tend to be.

Other tours for the curious include: a 10-mile Myrtle Beach tour; a 43-mile southern Grand Strand tour that includes Brookgreen Gardens and Pawley's Island; an 11-mile Georgetown tour; a 25-mile Santee plantations tour; a 56-mile Swamp Fox tour that includes Fort Moultrie; a nine-mile Charleston driving tour; a 25-block Charleston walking tour; a 140-mile Charleston plantations tour; a 76-mile witch doctor tour of Parris Island, Fripp Island and St. Helena Island; a 36-block historic Beaufort tour; and a 27-mile Hilton Head tour.

Also included is a handy list of addresses for federal and state agencies and parks where tourist information is available.

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