

## Cape Hatteras Seashore Recreation Area Preserves Charm Of Outer Banks

Establishment of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area along the rugged coast of North Carolina adds another "first" to the colorful history of the Outer Banks as the scene of events which have had far-reaching effect on development of the Western Hemisphere. For this remote, picturesque region now becomes the home of America's first National Seashore.

"Cape Hatteras has perhaps one of the most interesting heroic sea histories in the entire United States, if not in the world," said Conrad Wirth, director of the National Park Service, during a 1952 visit to the Banks.

Plans for the development of the area call for setting up a museum to "tell the story of the sea." The development of the Park, which started with an Act of Congress in 1937 but was interrupted by World War II, will mean new prosperity and increased public attention for the Outer Banks.

Paving has been completed on the highway from Nags Head to Hatteras by way of the free State ferry across Oregon Inlet, but this Outer Banks highway is no boulevard yet, as it takes several years for roads of this type to be stabilized, and visitors should be prepared to make detours along the way and to anticipate de-

lays at Oregon Inlet because the capacity of the ferry will not accommodate unusually heavy traffic.

Actual development of the Park must await acquisition of additional acreage, but the highway has already opened up the area to visitors and private enterprise has constructed year-round accommodations on the Banks.

### Rich In History

On the shores of the Outer Banks the first English flag was flown in the New World when a little band of adventurers led by Sir Walter Raleigh landed at Roanoke Island in 1584. In 1585 the first English colony was established on this spot, lasting scarcely a year. The subsequent "Lost Colony" of English settlers who vanished from the place remains famous as the first great mystery in American history, and as the birthplace of the first child born in America of English parentage.

From the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk in 1903 two Ohio brothers named Wilbur and Orville Wright successfully launched the first flight of a power-driven airplane—and again the course of destiny for new world and old was sharply altered, just as British colonization of the region altered the destiny of the English-speaking people.

A symphonic drama on Roanoke Island, entitled "The Lost Colony" and written by North Carolina playwright Paul Green, has since 1937 dramatized the story of the English settlers and has been seen by more than 550,000 people since it was originally presented to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the birth of Virginia Dare. On the site of the Wright Brothers' history-making venture into the air, a 60-foot granite monument is visited by thousands of tourists every year.

For the past few centuries legend and history have grown side by side in the Banks area, and the Bankers themselves, closely identified with maritime activity and the men who go down to the sea in ships, have retained speech and customs handed down to them from the 16th century. Mariners have long known and feared the storms and reefs of the region; pirates in bygone days favored its inaccessibility. Fishing and warning sailors against nautical hazards, or rescuing them from the teeth of reefs and hurricanes—these have been the Bankers' chief interests for years. More recently, they have turned to guiding, feeding and housing the visitors who have discovered the region from the mainland as ferry service, bridges and improved roads gradually made it accessible as a recreational area.

### To Preserve Quaint Charm

Acquisition of lands and designation of Park boundaries will not destroy the picturesque villages or molest the homes and fishing craft of the Bankers. The first legislation toward setting up the Park provided that villages and other areas under development within the area should be excluded. Because of extensive commercial development on the upper Banks, the original overall plans for the Park have been altered; they would have included the entire territory north of Bodie Island to the Virginia line, but now extend from State Highway 158 near Roanoke Island Sound bridge causeway to Ocracoke Inlet.

Excluding all villages on the Banks, the Park area embraces approximately 52 square miles and 38,000 acres. Of this, more than 8,000 acres is already owned by State and Federal governments, having been acquired through the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Commission established by an act of the North Carolina Legislature in 1939.

Since the Recreation Area lands will be public property, both village residents and outsiders will have free access to the ocean, although it will be necessary for the Park Service to adopt safety regulations as to surf-fishing and bathing and parking areas.

Fishing and hunting rights in Pamlico Sound waters were reserved to the people. State and Federal hunting and fishing regulations will apply to waters both inside and outside the Recreational Area boundary rights.

The Federal legislation authorizing the recreational area also stated that hunting will be permitted on Ocracoke Island, on the waters of the sound, and on not more than 2,000 additional acres of the recreational area outside the Pea Island refuge and its waters (a game preserve). The Park Service has mapped plans for the formation of a committee to select the 2,000-acre hunting site as soon as lands for the Recreation Area are acquired.

### Difficulties Surmounted

The history of the National Seashore project has been almost as storm-shaken as the seas and sands of the area itself. The idea of preserving the unique region as a coastal playground for the nation was formed 17 years ago, but war and a potential oil boom interrupted. One of the first men to recognize the possibilities for the Park was Lindsay Warren, then First District Congressman from North Carolina and now Comptroller General of the United States. It was largely due to his efforts that the Federal Government, in early 1934, launched a program of reforestation in the proposed Park area. This was followed by the salvaging of the famous Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, an impressive structure which had been abandoned in the early 1950's because of encroaching seas. Sand fences and the planting of hardy beach grasses helped rebuild the Cape for more than a mile. The lighthouse was saved and last year it was completely overhauled and put into operation again.

In 1937 Congressman Warren, with

the approval of Outer Banks residents, succeeded in getting Congress to pass legislation providing for the establishment of the "Cape Hatteras National Seashore." This legislation, in addition to excluding much developed area from the Park, also provides that legal residents of the villages be permitted to earn a living by fishing within the boundaries of the National Seashore, subject to such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may deem necessary to protect the area for recreational use. A 1940 amendment included hunting in the same manner. The legislation provided that all lands included in the project would have to be donated to the Federal Government.

### State Commission Formed

In 1939 the State Legislature of North Carolina passed a bill, introduced by the late Senator D. B. Fearon of Manteo, which set up a Cape Hatteras National Seashore Commission with nine members from the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, and five members to be appointed by the Governor.

### Funds Allocated

A gift of \$618,000 for the purchase of land for the park area was donated by two charitable foundations created by children of the late Andrew W. Mellon, Herbert Hoover's Secretary of the Treasury. The foundations are the Old Dominion Foundation and the Avalon Foundation. Under the agreement between the State and Federal governments, the State of North Carolina will put up \$618,000 to match the money offered by the two foundations. Of this, \$500,000 has been allocated from the Contingency and Emergency Fund, while \$118,000 is available in Park funds held by the Department of Conservation and Development. The National Park Service opened an office at Manteo in July, 1952, and land acquisition got underway immediately thereafter.

### Basketball Team Sees College Game

Members of the Perquimans High School basketball team attended the

State College-William and Mary basketball game played Tuesday night at Norfolk. The local players saw the game as guests of J. H. Towe, J. Edgar Morris and T. B. Sumner. State's Wolfpack, ninth ranked basketball team of the nation, broke a three-year jinx, beating William and Mary by a score of 62 to 58.

### MARY LONG CIRCLE MEETS

The Mary Long Circle of the Bethel Church held its meeting at the Community House on Monday night, January 12, with Mrs. Wallace Hobbs and Mrs. C. R. Ward as hostesses.

"Send the Light," was the opening song, after which Mrs. Irvin Long was in charge of an interesting program with several taking part.

"All Hail the Power" was the closing hymn, and Mrs. Joe White dismissed the group.

Mrs. Ward conducted a contest with Mrs. John Corpore and Miss Eunice

Long winning prizes. Delicious refreshments were served. Others present: Mesdames Stanley Blanchard, Wade Jordan, Edgar Long, Robert Evans, Joseph Proctor, Freeman Long, Elliott Laydn, Julian Long, Emmett Long and Miss Ruth Mansfield.

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