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OUTER BANKS OBSERVANCE OF "OLD CHRISTMAS" OFFERS A PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Wednesday Night's Party Proves Largest Held at Rodanthe in Recent Years, and Demonstrates Interest in Unusual Annual Festival.

CONTRACT FOR ADDITION TO COURTHOUSE

Dare Board of Commissioners Plans to Let Same on January 25th

Advertisement is being made this week that the Dare County Board of Commissioners will open bids on January 25th for construction of a two-story addition to the Dare County Courthouse, which structure will house enlarged offices for several departments and hold a new jail. It is estimated the costs will be \$50,000, but from general appearances it looks as if \$75,000 will be required, if the old dilapidated courthouse is to be made safe.

The \$50,000 cash which the county now has to be spent on this project came from the sale of a tract of land, which was donated to Dare County by the late David Lindquist of Hartsdale, New York, who was owner of Bodie Island Club at the time of his death, and who was chief engineer of Otis Elevator Company.

Mr. Lindquist was a great booster of Dare County, and had quietly aided other things in the county. He died in 1945.

DRINKWATER'S OLD YEAR PARTY THE GREATEST EVER

A great annual event in Manteo is the watch party given each December 31 at the home of Alpheus W. Drinkwater. This year's was one of the largest ever held. Hors d'oeuvres and punch were served throughout the evening. A large number of Manteo residents and out-of-town people were present at the affair, which was climaxed at midnight with appropriate songs by everyone with Dick Jordan at the piano and Gordon Kellogg doing an obligato with a large bell to ring in the New Year. The house was decorated in keeping with the holiday season, the large Christmas tree being the center of attraction and silvered magnolia leaves adding a note of contrast. Mr. Drinkwater was assisted in entertaining by his daughters, Miss Dorothy Drinkwater and Mrs. John Booth and Mr. Booth; and his grandson, Billy Cox, and Mrs. Cox.

ANDERSON MIDGETT SUCCEEDS C. P. GRAY AS LODGE MASTER

Cape Hatteras Lodge No. 698, A.F. & A.M., at a regular meeting held December 27, 1954: Charles P. Gray, master; turned the gavel over to Anderson Midgett who was installed as master for the year 1955. Other officers installed were: Isaac C. Jennette, Senior Warden; Asa H. Gray, Jr., junior warden; Clarence P. Brady, treasurer; W. Lloyd Scarborough, secretary; D. Raymond Bassett, senior deacon; T. Stockton Midgett, Jr., junior deacon; Richard A. Job and Edgar O. Hooper, stewards; Unaka B. Jennette, tyler, and Asa H. Gray, Sr., chaplain. Charles P. Gray who is now the first past master of this lodge performed the ceremony.

The Lodge at Cape Hatteras, which was chartered last year, meets on the second and fourth Monday nights in each month.

A site at Buxton has been purchased and approved by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for the erection of a Masonic hall which is anticipated in the near future.

B. LENNON CRITICALLY INJURED IN GAS EXPLOSION

H. Bruce Lennon of Manteo was rushed to the hospital in Elizabeth City critically injured by shock and severe burns sustained when a terrific explosion took place in his trailer home near Manteo, when he lighted a gas stove at 8:30 Thursday morning. His limbs were badly burned and late advices feared the worst.

The explosion happened when he went to light a stove, just about the time his father, R. B. Lennon, had gotten in sight of the trailer. The elder Lennon had gone to get the younger to work for him Thursday.

A WOMAN BEATS THE DRUM AT OLD CHRISTMAS PARTY



MISS ELVARI PAYNE of Wanchese, the first woman to be official drum beater at the Old Christmas celebration at Rodanthe, a duty that has been discharged by members of her family for nearly 200 years. Brad Payne, her brother who died last year, for 50 years beat this old drum, which was made from a gum log 100 years ago. Previous to his term, his father Ben, and grandfather William served as drum beaters. —Aycock Brown Photo

A Great Christmas For A Small Boy In Manteo Nearly Sixty Years Ago

Col. John D. Langston of Goldsboro Tells of Christmas in 1896 When He Lived in the Methodist Parsonage

An old sailor was sitting on a wharf, on the New York water front, looking out across the water through a beautiful old telescope covered with silver filigrees. A fashionably dressed elderly woman strolling upon the wharf spied him and exclaimed "My dear man where did you get that perfectly gorgeous telescope." "Why sure mum" replied the old sailor "Lord Nelson gave that to me." "Why, my dear man you must be mistaken, Lord Nelson has been dead more than 150 years," "Lor, how time do fly!" said the sailor.

Yes, time flies. It seems such a short time since I spent my last Christmas in the old Methodist parsonage in Manteo, Dec. 25, 1896. How Papa and Mama ever managed to play Santa Claus to the parsonage family in those days of scarcity is a mystery to me today. There were Ophelia, Sophronia, Bud (Will), Jennie, Rosa and Johnnie—that's me; each of us hoping that some miracle would take place and we would get our heart's desire. In anticipation every one hung up a stocking.

I wish I could recollect what Santa Claus brought each member of the preacher's family. But I was so concerned about what he brought me that all other events passed out of my mind.

We woke up early in those days on Christmas morning. I think Jennie woke up first. She always had more curiosity than the other children. The rest of us were not much behind, as she reached the parlor where our stockings hung and gave a joyous shriek. Then Papa and Mama came in and Papa made us all be quiet while he prayed. It seemed like the prayer was longer than usual and I had a lot of trouble keeping my eyes shut, with all those stockings hanging full and small packages lying all around the foot of the Christmas tree near the front windows. Finally Papa said "Amen", and I made a dive for my stocking. Never since that day has there been such a wonderful Christmas for me. Some friend of Papa's had given him an old double barreled shot gun and there it was leaning up against the mantel with my name on it. Then wonder of wonders, down in my stocking below the two oranges, two apples, nuts and raisins, were a pound of shot, a quarter pound of powder and a box of caps.

I think I took off across the Etheridge field back of the parsonage before eating breakfast, with my little dog Bruno to see if I could find a rabbit. I remember I was so excited that when I loaded the old muzzle loader I evidently put in too much powder and shot, because when I could not find a rabbit I shot at a robin, and the gun nearly kicked me sideways. I missed the robin.

How wonderful it is to get back to Roanoke Island this 1954 Christmas and let my memory roll back the years and bring to light even some small events of those other days that are really important to those who can say with Browning:

"Grow old along with me
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first
was made"

John D. Langston

CHURCH SERVICE AT WANCHESE FOR MASONS

Members of Wanchese Lodge, pursuant to a general trend in Masonic lodges in North Carolina, will go to church at least one day in the year. A special section of Bethany Methodist Church at Wanchese will be set aside Sunday evening, Jan. 9, at 7:30 p.m., and Rev. C. W. Guthrie, the pastor, will preach a special sermon. The members of Wanchese lodge invite Masons of all other lodges to worship with them.

A similar service for the members of Manteo Lodge was held at the Manteo church during the month of December.

FLOUNDER FISHING FLEET BUSY AT OREGON INLET

Twenty Boats Operating From This Point; Losses Can Wipe Out Profits

Some 20 or more fishing craft are based at Oregon Inlet now, and fishing at sea for flounders has been pretty good. Some of these boats are from Hatteras and Carteret County waters, along with the usual fleet of Dare County boats. The catch is sold right at the docks of Oregon Inlet, to several local buyers including Malcolm Daniels of Wanchese, Willie Etheridge, Frazier Peele and Willie Newsom of Hatteras.

Fred Basnight of Manteo had a good day Friday and sold his catch for about \$275. On Saturday however, he lost his entire net and attached equipment when it hung on some old wreckage on the bottom. The rig lost was valued at about \$300.

When fishing is good, it is costly business at times and few fishermen ever make a fortune.

DEEPER WATER IS IMPORTANT FOR OREGON INLET

Dare Board This Week Names Committee For Project

By AYCOCK BROWN

Nags Head.—About 75 ocean trawlers, temporarily weather-bound at Oregon Inlet Fishing Center early this week had been making phenomenal catches of fish, mostly flounders, in waters off the Dare coast until sea conditions became unfavorable for operations. Capt. Toby Tillett who has the National Seashore fishing center under lease stated that some of the largest flounders he had ever seen, had been caught by the trawl fishermen. Many of these boats are from Hyde, Pamlico, and other nearby counties.

A member of the crew of one of the trawlers from down Core Sound way stated that the gigantic flounders resembled young halibut, a flatfish taken off the New England coast that reach enormous sizes.

Docking facilities at the government owned fishing center were taxed to capacity by the weather-bound fleet, and this gave some speculation to the prospects that the National Seashore officials may soon have plans to enlarge the dockage area and also the little harbor.

This week the Dare County Board of Commissioners named Melvin Daniels and Lawrence Swain a committee to follow through with government officials a movement to revive the Oregon Inlet improvement project.

Reports from Ocracoke where the former naval base docks are now owned by the National Park Service were also crowded to near capacity during the stormy weather offshore this week. While most of the vessels at Oregon Inlet hail from North Carolina ports, and especially the Core Sound region, many of those laying at Ocracoke came from Virginia and New Jersey ports, it was stated.

Trawlers likewise were laying in at Hatteras during the week, but not the large numbers reported at Oregon Inlet and Ocracoke.

Fact that more commercial fishing vessels than have ever been known to be operating off Oregon Inlet has given impetus to a long time movement to have the shoaly waterway between the sea and sound at that point deepened. Several years ago under the leadership of the late Alvah H. Ward considerable activity towards initiating Oregon Inlet deepening was initiated. Just at the time when it seemed that the government was all set to go to work on the project, it was impossible to get funds allocated for the work. This was probably due to the emergency that had been brought about by the Korean War.

Now, with national emergency abated, and Oregon Inlet having become a vital area in the development of Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area, renewed efforts are in order to get it dredged to a depth that would make a safe passage for commercial and sportsfishing vessels operating in this section. Dare County's commissioners, the Tourist Bureau, and many agencies and individuals are backing the proposal to have Oregon Inlet deepened, it was stated here this week.

FIRECRACKERS GOT BOYS IN TROUBLE IN MANN'S HARBOR

Willard Ambrose of East Lake, Latham Midgett Jr. and Murray Mann 16, both of Mann's Harbor were found guilty and fined \$5 and costs Tuesday in Dare Recorders court for possession and use of fireworks. Willard Ambrose was found not guilty of reckless driving. Willis Creef, charged with reckless driving was found not guilty.

Charlie Vincent (Honey) McCleave charged with operating a car without using glasses, as specified in his driving permit, plead guilty and was fined \$10 and costs.

Seward Simmons, for failing to yield the right of way, was fined \$5 and costs of court.

MRS. EVANS SPEAKER FOR WANCHESE PTA

Mrs. D. E. Evans, superintendent of Dare County Schools, was guest speaker Monday evening, Jan. 3, when the Wanchese PTA held its meeting in the school auditorium. 50 members were present. The fourth grade won the parent attendance prize.

THREE DAY SPRING FESTIVAL PLANNED FOR DARE COAST TO LAUNCH 1955 TOURIST SEASON

All County Civic Clubs Will Be Invited To Participate In County-Wide Three-Day Affair.

RISKY LST SHIPS LOSING RIGHT TO SAIL THE SEAS

Coast Guard Finding Old Navy Vessels Not Seaworthy for Commerce

Reports indicate that LST ships which have had so much trouble, will be banned from the seas. These old steel vessels, sold by the Navy, have been widely put into merchant service on the ocean and coastwise routes. The letters LST means "Landing Ship Tanks." Two of these vessels, about 300 feet long, were driven ashore in a gale near Rodanthe while being towed to a shipyard for reconditioning, shortly after the war. They are now ideal fishing places and big catches are currently caught there by rod and reel fishermen.

A few weeks ago, one of these ships, the Southern Districts sailed from Port Sulphur, La. for Maine with a cargo of sulphur. This ship has been given up for lost, and with her was a young Hyde County Man, her Chief Engineer. He was Walter Jennette, 29-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Jennette of Sladesville.

This week debris from the ship was picked up off the Florida Keys. At the same time an investigation is going on in New Orleans concerning the lack of seaworthiness of the ship. Former seaman who quit her called her a big bucket of rust. She was described as leaky and patched up, and completely unfit for sea service.

Coast Guard headquarters in Washington has ordered cancellation of sailing certificates for all converted LST vessels. The men have been instructed to board all such vessels and take away the certificates.

In 1951 another of these ships, the Southern Isles, went to pieces off Hatteras. The captain of this ship had a Hyde County name. He was Capt. George F. Sadler.

SCHOOL CENSUS BEING TAKEN IN DARE COUNTY

Beginning this week, a census of Dare County boys and girls between the ages of six years and twenty-one years is underway. In most communities, this census will be taken by members of the local Parent Teachers Association.

In the early part of December, Mrs. Mary L. Evans, Superintendent of Dare County Schools, appealed to the various Parent Teachers Associations in the county for aid in taking the census which is required by law. Mrs. Evans stated this week that indications are that all Parent Teachers Associations in the county, with the possible exception of one, would undertake this project for their schools. In any school district where the Parent Teachers Association cannot take the census, the superintendent advises that census takers will have to be hired, thus causing an expenditure of county school funds which are greatly needed for other school purposes, or teachers in the district will be assigned the task which will necessarily affect the teaching efficiency of the teachers. Mrs. Evans expressed appreciation to the P. T. A. organizations which had already indicated their willingness to cooperate.

IRA THOMAS STOWE DIES IN RICHMOND HOSPITAL

Ira Thomas Stowe, 62, of Wanchese, died Wednesday morning in McGuire Veterans Hospital, Richmond, Va., following an illness of six weeks.

A native of Hatteras, Mr. Stowe was the son of the late Walter Berry Stowe and Mary Ella Willis Stowe. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Margie Tillett Stowe; three daughters, Mrs. Edwin Midgett of Manteo; Mrs. Roscoe Gallop of Wanchese; and Mrs. Royce Daniels of Virginia Beach, Va.; one sister, Mrs. Pete Pitcherella of Silver Spring, Md.; one half-sister, Mrs. Leland Tillett of Norfolk, Va.; and two uncles, A. J. Willis of Manteo and J. I. Stowe of Hatteras; also two grandchildren. He was a veteran of World War I and a member of the Wanchese Assembly of God church.

Representatives of several civic clubs and organizations in this area are formulating plans now for a gigantic county-wide three day Spring Festival on the Dare Coast to launch the 1955 vacation season officially and to attract more tourists to the region. The scheduled events will not be held in many localities from the Kitty Hawk-Kill Devil Hills section southward through Nags Head and in each of the communities of long-famous, but only recently easy accessible, Hatteras Island, it was stated here this week by members of Dare County Tourist Bureau's executive committee headed by Mrs. Lucille S. Purser.

The proposed festival would be through Sunday, May 1, and in on Friday, April 29 and nowhere else in any one coastal region has such a varied program of events ever been planned. To make the first annual Spring Festival successful the cooperation of all citizens would be solicited. Tentative plans include the following: Friday, April 29, on Hatteras Island with anglers competing for prizes, three would be a Mid-Spring Surf Fishing contest, or as a matter of fact three contests, with each area trying to outfish the other sections. Representative citizens would be asked to serve on committees to supervise contests in the Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo waters, the Avon and Buxton communities and the Frisco to Hatteras Inlet surf line. These contests would be held for only two hours during the morning, ending at noon for prize awards. Then to top off the Hatteras Island event, it would be a fish fry, the world's largest fish fry to be held at Cape Hatteras, because of its central location.

Events of Saturday, April 30, to take place north of Oregon Inlet would include model plane flying competition at Kill Devil Hills, followed by a nag race across the sands of Jockey's Ridge. (It may be the first time that anyone has done any horse racing on those dunes since the days the wreckers are said to have tied lanterns around the necks of nags to lure ships ashore.) Following the nag race, and over the same sands; it is planned to have hot-rod, beach buggy or jeep races. A finale to the Saturday program, if plans carry, would be a treasure hunt followed by a Pirate's Ball at Nags Head. An event of the latter would be the selection of a See FESTIVAL, Page Five

37,000 DUCKS AND GESE AT PEA ISLAND REFUGE

Included in Total Are 7,000 Greater Snows and 20 Blues

A total of 37,000 ducks and geese of various species were wintering in the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Area at a year-end count made this week by L. B. Turner, manager of the refuge.

Included in the latest count were 7,000 greater snow geese or about half of the world's population of this species. Twenty blue geese, another rare member of the waterfowl family along the Atlantic Flyway were also counted with the Greater Snows, Turner stated.

"There are approximately 11,000 Canada Geese and about 17,000 ducks of all kinds," said Turner. So far this year no Ross' Geese have been sighted at the refuge.

"This does not mean there is a general shortage of snow geese," Turner said. "Many which migrated southward are now diverting their feeding grounds from Pea Island to Mattamuskeet Wildlife Refuge, upper Currituck Sound and in the Back Bay region. The greatest concentration at any one place though each winter for the past several years has always been at Pea Island. It is a tradition among upper Hatteras Island residents that the snow geese usually begin their northward flights on January 5, the date that Old Christmas is celebrated at Rodanthe and Waves. As a matter of fact, and most every year that is the approximate date the rare and protected geese start northward. "There has been a shortage of swan using the Pea Island Refuge this year," according to Turner whose official midwinter count at the refuge is scheduled for January 11.