

THE MARITIMES



THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS

HATTERAS • BEAUFORT • SOUTHPORT

WINTER 2024/SPRING 2025



This photograph from the late 1800s documents part of the process of packing salted fish. Similar barrels would have been used for storing and shipping whale oil during the active years of North Carolina's whaling industry.

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NORTH CAROLINA
**MARITIME
MUSEUMS**
BEAUFORT HATTERAS SOUTHPORT

THE MARITIMES

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NORTH CAROLINA
**MARITIME
MUSEUMS**
BEAUFORT HATTERAS SOUTHPORT

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*One historic coast.
Three unique museums.*



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Waves Uniform Donated to Southport Collection

By Tessa Johnstone

Most people may not equate a military uniform with high-end designer wear. But when women joined the US Navy in 1942, that's exactly what they wore.

After the United States entered World War II at the end of 1941, the four branches of the military each established a women's branch so that more men could be relieved of clerical jobs. The US Navy established its women's branch, "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service" (WAVES), on July 30, 1942. WAVES entered the service as both enlisted members and officers, assigned to many different areas of Naval support, including postal service, hospital corps, aircraft navigation and air traffic control, and code breaking, among other roles. More than 100,000 women became WAVES during World War II, and they did it in designer style.

The WAVES uniform was designed by the American fashion designer Mainbocher. Mainbocher designed the uniforms to be both sturdy and womanly, but still with some similarities to the men's uniforms. The North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport recently received a donation of a WAVES uniform, worn by the donor's mother in the 1940s. The donation included a service dress uniform, which features a blue jacket and skirt set, a blue hat, and white gloves, plus a seersucker version of the jacket. "A famous designer designed them for us, and they fit beautifully," former Navy WAVE Virginia Gilmore said of the uniform. "And you felt so comfortable. It was probably the most expensive thing any of us had ever had."

Even with the success of the WAVES program, the US Navy made it clear that the WAVES were only to be mobilized for the duration of World War II; and the entire organization was discharged in 1946. The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 finally allowed for women to serve in the Armed Forces on a permanent basis, joining in the wake of these WAVES whose uniforms conveyed the authority and confidence that led the way for generations to come. ■

Tessa Johnstone is the collections manager for the North Carolina Maritime Museums.



Seersucker jacket of the WAVES uniform.



Several North Carolina women of the US Naval Reserve, WAVES, at the US Naval Training Center US Naval Reserve in Bronx, New York, March 29, 1943. Pictured left to right are Mildred Weatherly of Hamlet, Kathleen Davis of Marion, Lola Yarcho of Salisbury, Iris Buchanan of Shelby, Zara Misenheimer of Concord, and Hilda Hines of Roanoke Rapids. *North Carolina State Archives.*

From The Friends

SOUTHPORT: Greetings from the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport!

The Friends role is to support the museum, which we continue to do by funding educational programs, helping teach during the school year and participating in special events. Please consider joining or renewing your membership with the Friends of the Museum online at friendsncmmsouthport.com and help support his mission.

Thank you for your continued interest in preserving and sharing our maritime history!

Smooth Seas!

Tom Hale, Chairman

Friends of the NC Maritime Museum at Southport ■

HATTERAS: Looking forward to America's 250th Anniversary

The Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic is joining the local NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the Dare County 250 committees to help celebrate America 250 NC and our nation's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. There are many stories to share that fall within the Commemorative Themes framework and are related to our region's role in paving the pathway for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." These include the Revolutionary War adventures of our Currituck Militia and the Austin brothers, the "Gathering of Voices" that helped forge a "more perfect Union," and the indigenous people's legacy of sacrifice, inclusion, and respect for Mother Earth.

As we look ahead to the country's semi-sesquicentennial, we also look toward our museum's future. As we prepare to say a heart-felt goodbye to longtime board members stepping down this year, we also offer a huge Hatteras welcome to our new board members and Friends.

Keep your eyes steadfast on the horizon as we sail forward during this exciting time of change and of celebration of our nation's inspiring heritage!

Danny Couch, Chairman

Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum ■

BEAUFORT: Preparing for the upcoming year

Thanks to very successful fundraisers this year, we are working with the new museum management team to identify several significant projects to fund with the proceeds. In addition, we have received two significant bequests from past supporters of the Friends. We are very grateful to the families of these individuals and will publish more information in early 2025.

While the museum is closed for needed HVAC construction, we are also closing the Port of Call Museum Store. But that doesn't mean we're stopping sales! We have been working hard to set up our online store. We'll also use the downtime to update the layout and selection of items for sale in the store. More information on these moves will be shared in early 2025.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our 2025 events.

Bob Terwilliger, President

Friends of the Museum in Beaufort ■

Meet The Director

Hello,

I am Maria Vann, the new director of the North Carolina Maritime Museums and wanted to introduce myself. First, I must say, I am thrilled to be working permanently with the staff and the Friends organizations at these three stellar museums. The stories they share through exhibits and programs illuminate the fascinating histories of North Carolina and the globe, utilizing the unique lens of maritime culture. It is an honor to be appointed to this role. I truly look forward to meeting you all as I continue to be steeped in the good work the museums are doing. I am here to provide support to each museum to help them grow and provide more sustained and ambitious efforts for the public.

My love of history has been life-long; and I have a special affinity for maritime collections, having managed two maritime museums in my career. I am a trained museum professional, so I understand the unique and profound work the staff does in service to the public. In addition, I understand the distinctive role of small museums to regional audiences, especially those in tourist driven communities. I am truly excited to do what I can to bolster and move these museums forward and look forward to many successful years ahead!



Maria Vann
Director

Maria Vann, Maritime Museums Director

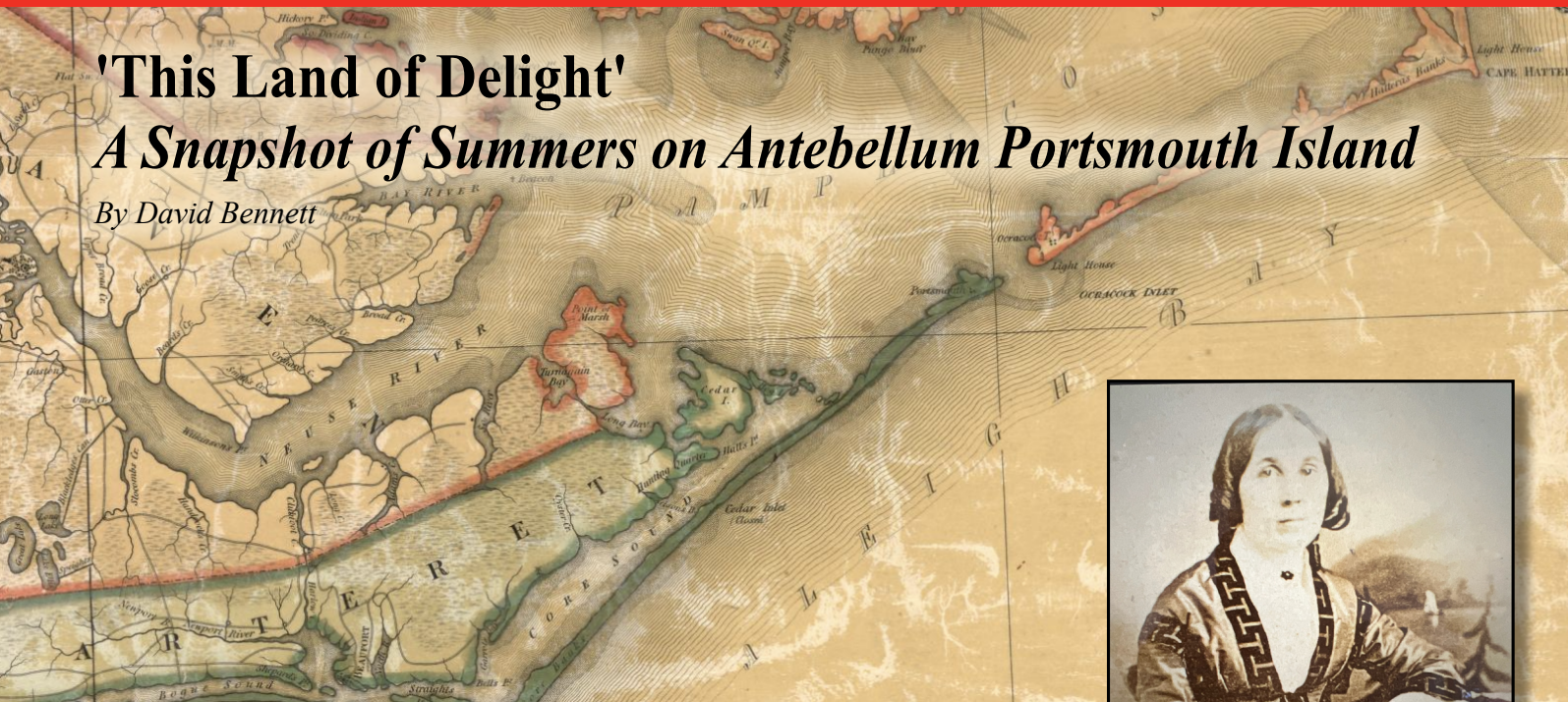
In This Issue

This issue of *The MariTimes* highlights stories of women in our maritime history. We share some of their experiences of traveling to the North Carolina coast and cover contributions that some made to the historic whaling industry and federal service. These lesser known maritime stories are an important part of our shared past.

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum On Hatteras

'This Land of Delight' A Snapshot of Summers on Antebellum Portsmouth Island

By David Bennett



Mary Elizabeth Havens, as early as the 1830s, traveled from Washington, North Carolina, to Portsmouth Island where she resided every year from July to October. She was not seeking to escape the summer heat by vacationing on the coast; rather, she, like many others, sought refuge from diseases that appeared throughout Eastern North Carolina in the summer and early fall.

According to the 1850 and 1860 mortality schedules of the U.S. census, Eastern North Carolina was plagued by a host of diseases, such as "bilious fever," "brain fever," typhoid fever, scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, dysentery, cholera, consumption, and smallpox. Children and the elderly were especially vulnerable. In July 1848, measles ravaged the north shore of the Albemarle Sound claiming the lives of numerous children. Edenton's wealthier families evacuated to Nags Head before the disease reached their community.

Another ailment plaguing North Carolinians, though less fatal, was malaria. Nineteenth century medical professionals were unaware that malaria was transmitted by mosquitoes; rather, they believed that the disease resulted from breathing in malodorous gases, or miasmas. On June 18, 1845, M. B. Smith, of Washington, North Carolina, wrote to his friend E. J. Warren that he had consulted with a local physician about an unnamed sickness (probably malaria) plaguing Beaufort County. The doctor claimed that the illness was "owing to the miasm[as] that rise from the bogs

& marshes & that it is not very fatal except in September & the very first of October."

Mary Elizabeth Havens' husband, Benjamin F. Havens, a wealthy Washington merchant, was unwilling to risk exposing his wife and children to the diseases that seemingly emerged from Beaufort County's swamps every summer. He believed that Portsmouth's salt air would be beneficial for his wife's health. Mary seemed to agree, commenting on how she found the sea-breeze "reviving."

While on the island, the Havens stayed on Washington Row, a section of second homes in Portsmouth Village predominately owned by families from Washington, North Carolina. According to Mary, during the summer, Washington Row was as "thickly settled as our street" back home. The house she stayed in boasted a beautiful view of the sound where she could watch the ships pass by.

Everything that Mary and her children needed to sustain themselves throughout their vacation was shipped to them from the mainland via mailboat. Live cows, goats, and chickens were shipped for milk and eggs. Flour, sugar, molasses, fruits, vegetables, and even steaks all arrived by water. It was not uncommon for Mary's children to wait



Portrait of Mary E. Havens, 1854.
John A. Wilkinson History Room,
George H. & Laura E. Brown Library.

anxiously in the harbor for the mailboat to arrive carrying apples and peaches shipped to them by their father on the mainland. The exception was seafood. Mary and her children seemed to have consumed a large quantity of mullet, flounder, eels, and crabs, which were procured locally.

For Mary's children Portsmouth was a "land of delight." Their days were filled with horseback riding, swimming in the ocean, wading in the sound, fishing, sailing, exploring shipwrecks, watching ships transiting Ocracoke Inlet, and taking the occasional daytrip to Ocracoke. At night they went flounder gigging and singing. In September 1857, Mary wrote to her husband about taking the children on an evening picnic with

other Washingtonians. In her letter she stated it took five horses, three colts, and two carts to carry the party of twenty-five to the beach. As the sun was setting, the adults fixed dinner over an open fire while the children played in the surf. The party dined under the moon, and they did not retire to their houses in Portsmouth Village until well after dark. That same month, a gale blew, and the vessel *Pamlico* went aground on the bar at Ocracoke Inlet. Mary and the children went to view the wreck. They witnessed men trapped in the rigging and no one could help them. Some of the shipwrecked sailors eventually washed ashore and were taken to the home of Capt. D. Ireland. The horrific scenes evoked a sense of helplessness that simultaneously fascinated the viewers.

For Mary, however, Portsmouth Island could be a lonely and isolating place. She was gone from home for months on end, often tending to her children alone. Benjamin Havens preserved his family's health, but he was too busy with work to accompany his family. He seldom traveled to the island to visit them. In August 1843, Mary wrote to her husband begging to come home, claiming that the separation from him was "tor-ture." She was advised to remain on Portsmouth until at least mid-September due to the unhealthy environment in Washington.

Instead of writing words of affirmation to his wife, Benjamin Havens at times scolded her and treated her like a child. When Mary reported on the family's recreation, he accused her of overexerting herself. When Mary left her children with a neighbor from Washington and went with friends on a sailing excursion, Benjamin Havens accused his wife of being a negligent mother. He even criticized his wife for sleeping with the windows open in July, claiming that she would catch a chill. Mary responded to her husband's criticisms asserting

While North Carolinians saw Portsmouth as a refuge from disease, it did not guarantee that its visitors would escape sickness. There were times when Mary found herself in the role of nurse to her children and family.

that she was much stronger and more responsible than he gave her credit for.

On July 12, 1842, Mary Havens demonstrated her strength when Portsmouth was struck by one of the worst hurricanes of the antebellum period. Most of the buildings on the island were flattened, and ships were wrecked all along the Outer Banks. During the storm, Mary gathered her children and comforted them. Her eldest son, Robert, sat quietly while her youngest son, Leroy, alarmed by the storm, covered his mother's face with his hands while he buried his face into her chest. That month, Mary's mother was visiting them. She nervously paced the house as the storm tore across the island. The interior of the house stayed dry for most of

the storm, but when the wind changed direction, water suddenly blew into the house, forcing Mary to move the furniture to dry spots. The house suffered minor damage, but Mary's mother, stricken by a panic attack, returned to the mainland.

While North Carolinians saw Portsmouth as a refuge from disease, it did not guarantee that its visi-

tors would escape sickness. There were times when Mary found herself in the role of nurse to her children and family who came to visit. In late-July 1845, Mary Havens became ill with an unknown sickness. She was bedridden for more than a week. Her back and limbs were too weak for her to walk. "After I got sick it grieved me more than I can tell," she wrote to her husband. "I felt as though we had sacrificed so much to come here; separation, breaking up, and every thing together and then to be sick it was to[o] bad."

Vacationing on the coast in the antebellum period was not a brief weekend getaway. It was a significant investment of time and money that was at times viewed more as a necessity to preserve the health of more vulnerable populations, such as children, than a luxury. Days at the beach could be enjoyable, but they could also come at a cost. By isolating herself from contagion, Mary Elizabeth Havens was isolated from her husband, her extended family, and her friends. She was raising her children alone on a narrow strip of land that could be battered by storms with little warning and did not guarantee the absence of illness. Perhaps, at times, summering on the Outer Banks in the early 19th century, required a certain mental and emotional fortitude. ■

David Bennett is the maritime historian for the North Carolina Maritime Museum system.

What's in a Name?

The stories behind the places that make up OBX

By Molly Trivelpiece

What do Chicamacomico, Nags Head, Kill Devil Hills, and Kitty Hawk have in common? Besides the obvious that they are all towns along the Outer Banks, each of these places bear a name that reflects a blend of indigenous heritage, maritime culture, and the natural environment. Even places with less evocative names like Frisco, Duck, and Corolla have stories behind them that teach about the Outer Banks and offer insights into the region's past and its connection to the sea.

Starting with the Outer Banks nickname, which is also the North Carolina Maritime Museum on Hatteras's namesake, the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" is commonly used to describe the turbulent waters off the Outer Banks coast. Specifically, the graphic nickname is testament to the more than 2,000 ships that have been lost off our shore. Newspaper articles from as early as the 1800s regularly referred to the waters off the Outer Banks as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." The moniker was popularized beyond the Outer Banks by author David Stick when he published his book *Graveyard of the Atlantic* in 1952. Today, the nickname is commonly used in literature, news reports, and fictional shows when referring to the area.

Heading north from the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum along NC 12 will lead travelers into the town of Frisco. Frisco was originally called Trent by European settlers, possibly as a nod to the Trent River in England. However, in 1890 the federal government created the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) to maintain uniform geographic names to assist with making the United States Postal Service more effective. In 1898, the postal service changed the name of the area to Frisco to avoid confusion with similar sounding places on the mainland. Nods to the original name still exist, though, as old "Old Trent Market" attests.

Frisco wasn't the only Outer Banks town to change its identity following the creation of the BGN. About

95 miles north of Frisco is the village of Corolla. The area had previously been known as Jones Hill but was changed in 1895 to Corolla, a term that refers to the part of a flower that consists of the petals and encloses the stamens and pistil. The United States Postal Service or BGN never officially gave a reason behind the name choice, but one theory is that it may have been chosen to make the site seem more attractive. The original name, Jones Hill, is said to have been a reference to an early European settler in the area.

Corolla's neighboring town, the northernmost on the Outer Banks, was officially named "Duck" in the early 1900s. As the name implies, Duck was known early on as a destination for duck hunters and remains a fitting choice: Duck boasts more than 400 species of birds that have or continue to visit the area. Early in its development the area was briefly famous for supplying colorful duck feathers for ladies' hats, fortunately the fashions have changed and regulations on hunting just for feathers have been implemented.

The most noteworthy town name on the Outer Banks arguably belongs to Nags Head. Local lore says that early area residents would tie a lantern to an old horse,

also known as a nag, and walk it along a large sand dune to give passing ships a false sense of safety. The captains of these ships, believing the nag's light belonged to other ships sailing in the area, would then inadvertently run aground, afterwards, the locals would loot the stranded ship for valuable goods. Others believe the town got its name as a nod to British history: In the London Borough of Islington in England there is an area known as Nag's Head, named for the public house that had been in the area since the 1670s.

Back on the Outer Banks and just north of Nags Head but south of Duck is the intriguingly named town of Kill Devil Hills. The initial expectation is that the name has devilish origins, but local lore states it is actually a reference to shipwrecked cargo that washed ashore. The wreckage would include barrels full of rum from the tropics that would

then sit in the dunes for extended periods of time. The barrels were said to contain rum that was strong enough to "kill the devil," hence the name.

The town of Kitty Hawk is probably best known for its connection to aviation history. But its name is connected to Native American history. The original Algonquin speaking groups that lived on the Outer Banks called the area "Chickahawk." Maps as early as the 1700s have the area marked as "Chickenhawk." Eventually, through several versions of the maps and charts, the name was anglicized into "Kitty Hawk." Some sources credit the original name as meaning "a place to hunt geese;" however, the original meaning of the term is not officially known.

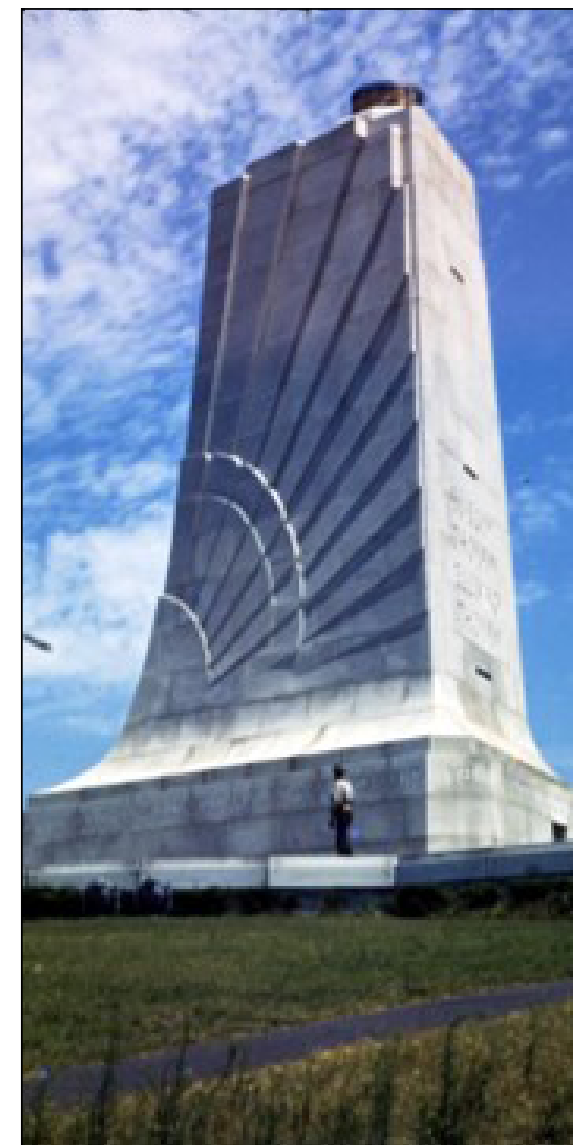
The towns of Rodanthe and Waves are located just south of Oregon Inlet in an area historically known as "Chicamacomico." The Algonquin term is believed to have meant "sinking down sand" and was broadly used to describe most of northern Hatteras Island. Unlike "Chickahawk," the European settlers continued to use the native word until the post office changed it to Rodanthe and Waves in 1847. Some theorize that the name Rodanthe was chosen for the non-native flower from Australia. Waves may be a little more on-the-nose. Visitors and locals remain familiar with the original Chicamacomico name because the local lifesaving station, which opened about the time of the name change, bore the original name and continues to use it today.

About 18 miles south from Rodanthe on NC12 is Avon Village. Avon received its name in 1883, possibly in homage to the river Avon in England from where many of the early settlers would have originated. Prior to 1883, the area was also originally known by the Algonquin term, "Kinnakeet." Kinnakeet's direct translation meant "that which is mixed," which is believed to be in reference to the several different settlements in the same area. Due to its size, Kinnakeet had two US lifesaving stations, both predating the name change to Avon, named Big Kinnakeet and Little Kinnakeet. Little Kinnakeet is one of two historic lifesaving stations maintained by Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Today, the grounds are open to the public, but its buildings are closed to visitors.

And finally, we come to Hatteras. The name Hatteras refers to multiple locations: the town of Hatteras, the entire barrier island, and the inlet at the south end of the island. Often locals will designate the different locations by referring to them as Hatteras Village, Hatteras Island, and Hatteras Inlet though the island and village's official names remain simply "Hatteras." The name Hatteras first appears in a book written by John Lawson when referring to Hatteras Indians, a part of the larger Croatan group that lived in the area until about 1759.

The names of the Outer Banks evoke a sense of place, but they also evoke a sense of history. These names tie the land to the area's culture and environment, paying homage to the early tribes who lived in the area, the British origins of the settlers, and the many different species of birds also attracted to the area. It's a snapshot of a moment in history that reaches into today. ■

Molly Trivelpiece is the curator of education at the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum on Hatteras.



Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk. North Carolina State Archives.



The open air market in Frisco pays homage to the previous name of the community, Trent.



The Welcome to Avon sign includes the community's historical name, Kinnakeet.

North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport

A Lady of Quality's Observations of the Lower Cape Fear

By David Bennett

Janet Schaw, a self-described Scottish “Lady of Quality,” traveled throughout the Atlantic from 1774 to 1776. During her travels she kept a journal, recording the places that she visited and the people who she met. In 1775, she visited North Carolina’s Lower Cape Fear. Her journal provides tremendous insight into life in the Lower Cape Fear at the closing of the colonial period. What she described was a world dominated by water.

Schaw’s first observation upon landing in North Carolina was of the economic lifeblood of the colony: naval stores. She noted that the waterfront at Port Brunswick was lined with rows of barrels of tar and pitch. This would have been typical, as Port Brunswick dominated North Carolina’s export trade in naval stores (tar, pitch, and turpentine). Between 1768 and 1772, approximately fifty percent of all naval stores exported from North Carolina exited the colony via Port Brunswick. Despite Port Brunswick’s preeminence in maritime trade, Schaw noted that “the town is very poor—a few scattered houses on the edge of the woods, without street or regularity.”

Schaw also mentioned the production of naval stores and lumber. While in the Lower Cape Fear she visited

Hunthill Plantation, which belonged to John Rutherford. There she witnessed numerous enslaved people making tar and turpentine using the surrounding woodlands. The production of naval stores required large tracts of land and a large labor force, as many trees were needed to produce large quantities of tar and turpentine. Raw turpentine was shipped to England where it was distilled into “spirits of turpentine,” which was used in a variety of products. The operation at Hunthill that impressed Janet Schaw the most was its large sawmill capable of producing 3,000 to 6,000 boards daily. One scholar, Harry Merren, noted that the bulk of sawn lumber exported from North Carolina transited Port Brunswick due to the proliferation of sawmills near the Cape Fear River. Much of the lumber produced by these mills were bound for the British West Indies.

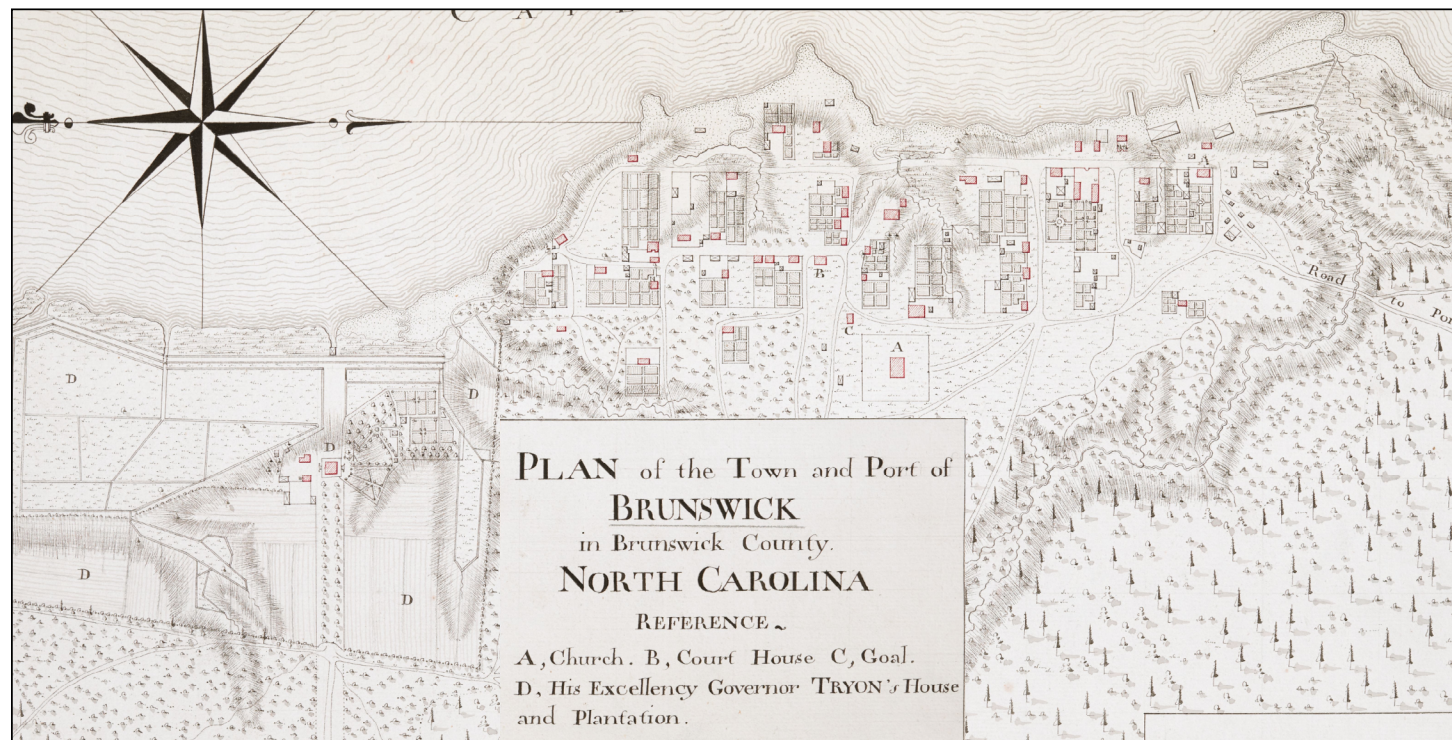
Less important than the production of lumber and naval stores was the production of rice. North Carolina marks the northern limit of rice production in North America. During the colonial period, North Carolina’s rice production took place almost exclusively in the Lower Cape Fear. It was, however, only a minor export, as only a handful of plantations engaged in its production. Alex Schaw, Janet Schaw’s

brother, was one of the few North Carolina planters who cultivated rice. His plantation, Schawfield, was located off the Northwest Branch of the Cape Fear River just a few miles above Wilmington. Schaw noted that her brother had “most of his ground in rice, which renders the air perfectly putrid.” She complained that fever and ague plagued her brother’s plantation. To preserve the health of his family, Alex Schaw owned another property near the coast where his children could live away from the unhealthy environment. Due to “putrid water” of rice plantations, Schaw noted that the “the labour required for it is only fit for slaves, and I think the hardest work I have seen them engaged in.”

The Cape Fear River, which Schaw called, “one of the finest pieces of water in the world,” was the central artery for commerce in the region. “Thro’ the whole country are innumerable creeks that communicate with the main branches of the river and every tide receive a sufficient depth of water for boats of the largest size and even for small Vessels, so that every thing is water-borne at a small charge and with great safety and ease,” she wrote.

The use of waterways facilitated the transportation of naval stores and lumber from plantations, such as Hunthill, to Wilmington and Brunswick. Upon these waterways, Janet Schaw observed that residents loaded large rafts, built from lumber, called “flats,” with products for distant markets. The flats drifted downstream with the flow of the current. A small crew, equipped with long poles, stood in the middle of the flats. Their goal was to prevent the flats from running up on the shoreline or grounding on shoals. According to Schaw, a flat was capable of floating 50,000 sawn boards and 100 to 200 barrels. She further noted that Hunthill loaded a flat once every two weeks.

The Cape Fear River was not only important as a highway for commerce, it facilitated everyday transportation for individuals. On her trip, Janet Schaw attended a funeral at Point Pleasant Plantation. Just before the funeral began, more than 100 men and women arrived in canoes. On another occasion, Schaw traveled to Wilmington with John Rutherford aboard one of his boats. The boat was powered by six enslaved rowers dressed in livery. The rowing, assisted by the flow of the river, made for a short trip. *continued...*



Ruins of the Quince house at Port Brunswick. In her journal, Janet Shaw writes about landing at Richard Quince’s tar covered wharf at Brunswick. The wharf was located just behind this residence. *North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.*

One Woman Against Nature

By Toni Foster Soles

On October 5, 1954, a tropical depression formed in the Caribbean that would become the deadliest and most intense hurricane of the 1954 Atlantic hurricane season. The storm made landfall ten days later, devastating the lower Cape Fear region and surrounding areas. As morning dawned on October 16, amidst the destruction, the hurricane signals used to warn mariners and townspeople of the impending danger still stood, thanks to one woman who refused to leave her post.

Jessie Stevens arrived in Southport at the age of nine after her family relocated to the area to pursue her father's interest in developing a port linked by railroad to the interior. After completing her education, Jessie volunteered as a weather bureau observer as part of the National Weather Service's Cooperative Observer Program. Her job was to record the temperature and precipitation of the area and hoist signal flags to warn sailors, fishermen, and the community of any approaching dangerous weather. It was a position she held for decades, including after her marriage to local newspaper publisher and attorney Ed Taylor. Jessie Stevens Taylor was still working as a weather observer decades later, at the age of 76, when Hurricane Hazel approached.

On the night of October 15, 1954, Jessie Taylor made sure the signal flags and lights were displayed at the top of the tower to warn mariners and townspeople as the storm approached. The official report from the Weather Bureau in Raleigh, North Carolina, detailed "all traces of civilization on the immediate waterfront between the state line and Cape Fear were practically annihilated." But Taylor's signals remained. *The State Port*



Jessie S. Taylor, as captured by Art Newton.

Pilot quoted Weather Bureau officials: "Mrs. Taylor's prompt action in displaying signal flags and lights on the weather tower gave warning of the approaching hurricane to both coastwise shipping and people living in the area and undoubtedly saved hundreds of lives."



The Coastal Warning Display Tower at Southport during hurricane Hazel, 1954.

Taylor became known nationally for her actions during Hurricane Hazel and as the oldest volunteer observer for the US Weather Bureau. In 1955, her service was recognized by the United States Department of Commerce when she received both the 50-year Government Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Award. Proud of her work, Taylor continued to volunteer until her death at age 82 in 1961. To honor her service and her brave determination to not abandon her post, the U.S. Army placed a monument in her memory near her weather tower on the lawn of Fort Johnston. The inscription reads, "She loved her God, Country, and fellow man." ■

Toni Foster Soles is the visitor and volunteer coordinator for the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport.



Monument to Jessie Taylor on the Garrison Lawn at Fort Johnston in Southport.

A Lady of Quality's Observations of the Lower Cape Fear *continued...*

Flats and canoes on the Northeast Branch of the Cape Fear River, would have traveled under Heron's Bridge, a drawbridge that spanned the river. Janet Schaw was clearly impressed by the bridge when she described it as being "a bridge, which tho' built of timber is truly a noble one, broader than that over the Tay at Perth. It opens at the middle to both sides and rises by pullies, so as to suffer Ships to pass under it." The Perth Bridge is a stone bridge in Scotland that is nearly 900 feet in length. A bridge that supposedly rivaled Perth Bridge in length certainly would have been a marvel in colonial America. In 1766 the North Carolina General Assembly authorized landowner Benjamin Heron to construct a toll bridge to replace a ferry at the location. Heron was instructed to build "one wide arch of thirty feet for rafts and pettiaugas to pass through, and six feet high above high water mark, and be made to draw up occasionally for the navigation of vessels of large burthen." The bridge demonstrates that North Carolina colonists could overcome both their terrestrial and riverine environments.

Although Schaw observed an industrious maritime world, all was not well. That same world was moving toward revolution with prominent figures, such as William Dry, the Collector of Customs at Port Brunswick, speaking "treason by the hour." Words turned to action as Patriot militias formed and Loyalists were persecuted. Alex Schaw, a British Loyalist, fled the Lower Cape Fear aboard a British warship. Janet Schaw responded to her brother's flight writing, "I am lost in confusion, this is unexpected indeed—oh heavens!" Tensions peaked in the Lower Cape Fear with the burning of Fort Johnston by North Carolina Patriots. Not long thereafter, Janet Schaw evacuated with other Loyalists aboard HMS *Cruizer*.

Toward the end of her stay in North Carolina, Schaw feared that her writings would be discovered by local Patriots and that her Loyalist sympathies recorded in her journal would condemn her to abuse. Fortunately, she did not destroy her journal. Instead, she escaped with her writings and later published them. This was a fortuitous event as she unintentionally recorded and preserved a valuable part of North Carolina's maritime history. ■

David Bennett is the maritime historian for the North Carolina Maritime Museum system.



Destruction along the Southport waterfront in the wake of Hurricane Hazel.

North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort

Anne Ros's Complaint A Unique Glimpse into Women's Roles in Whaling

By Christine Brin

In the spring of 1694, a dead whale came ashore in Currituck County, North Carolina. While not an uncommon occurrence, this event would have been a source of local excitement over the economic opportunity presented by the whale.

The presence of economic opportunity, however, can sometimes lead to the presence of economic disagreement. Coastal North Carolina's court archives are littered with complaints and lawsuits over the division of profits from harvesting whales. This is no surprise as a barrel of whale oil in 1823 would, when adjusted for inflation, sell for the equivalent of \$200 in today's currency. And a large whale like a sperm whale could produce 25-40 barrels. To put this in perspective, crude oil today goes for \$70-\$80 a barrel.

The 1694 Currituck whale would have been celebrated, but probably not worth noting in the history books if it hadn't resulted in a September 1694 complaint that was heard in the North Carolina Higher Court. The complaint was filed by Timothy Pead and Charles Thomas against Mathias

Towler, who interestingly would have multiple complaints filed against him during his career. What sets this complaint apart from other whale-related complaints is the prominent part that a woman, Anne Ros, plays. It is through Anne Ros's participation that we gain a clearer picture of both the whaling industry in North Carolina and the role coastal women played in that industry.

In contrast to their counterparts around the Atlantic, the whalers of North Carolina never made the transition to pelagic whaling, choosing to focus on shore-based whale hunts. This meant that the men of the area would go on hunts measured in hours as opposed to months or years. These whales would be brought on shore, near the whalers' communities, to be processed and prepared for trade. Though not well-documented, the close proximity and economic importance of these whales has led to historians, not inaccurately, assuming women were involved in at least a supporting role regarding processing and selling the whale products.

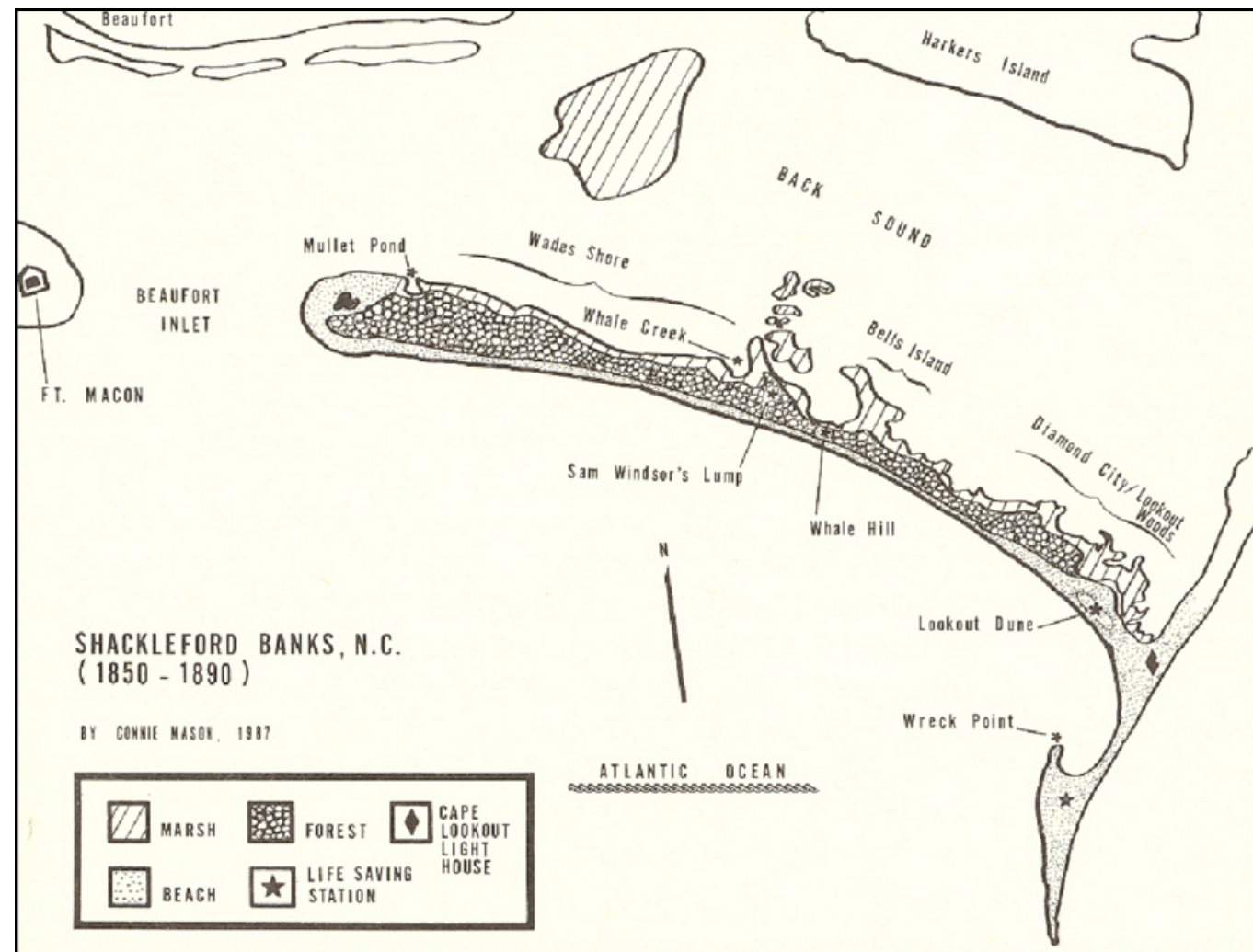
The first mention of Ros in the complaint shows that the

assumption regarding women's involvement in the selling of whale products, specifically whale oil, was correct. In this complaint it is stated that Ros was in possession of eight barrels of whale oil. Ros would then give the barrels to Mathias Towler, whose negligence in payment was part of this complaint. Eight barrels of whale oil had a lot of value, with these barrels potentially equaling almost double the monthly salary of a skilled tradesman in England at the time. Ros's ownership and authority to sell these barrels demonstrates a role that women were playing in the storage and selling of this valuable material in coastal North Carolina.

Ros's name shows up again in the complaint as she gives an oath to prove the claim of Timothy Pead that he worked ten days on the contested whale. Whale oil wasn't the only materials harvested from these creatures. Their bones, teeth/baleen, and possibly meat would also be harvested for use or market. Depending on the size of the whale, it could take



These men are standing by the large try pots used in the process of rendering oil from whale blubber, February 1921, New Zealand. *Museum of New Zealand.*



A hand-drawn map of Shackleford Banks. 'Lookout Dune' and 'Whale Hill' are marked in close proximity to the settlement Diamond City (known prior to the 1870s as The Village or Lookout woods). *National Park Service.*

an extended period of time to harvest these materials. According to the New Bedford Whaling Museum, "the process could take from several hours to several days, depending on the size of the whale, the skill of the crew, and the weather." This measurement comes from the height of pelagic whaling where a crew would divide into two "watches" and rotate shifts processing the whale non-stop until the job was done. As the Currituck whale was likely not processed in as efficient a manner as these whaling crews were doing, it is understandable that it would take the Currituck men, including Timothy Pead, more than ten days to work on this whale. What is telling about Ros's and presumably other women's participation, is that she was able to confirm Pead's presence all ten days. This implies that she was also present for those days. In addition, the courts accepted her oath, implying that a woman's presence in the processing of the whale was not unexpected or noteworthy.

The final mention of Ros in the complaint reveals the most about her and other women's participation in the whaling industry. In North Carolina, locals would

take advantage of whales that naturally came on shore and actively hunted those that came near shore. When hunting the large whales, the crews would commonly camp out on barrier islands, such as Shackleford Banks in Carteret County, and watch for signs of whales before jumping in their boats and pursuing their targets. An engraving from April 1894 of a fishing hut is probably a fair representation of the huts used by the whalers in coastal North Carolina. It is unlikely that women were permitted to take part in the active hunting of the whales, conforming to gender norms within other whaling communities around the Atlantic Ocean.

The species of whale contested in this complaint is never identified. In coastal North Carolina, a variety of large and small whales, including the dolphin, were hunted. The dolphin fishery of North Carolina was more active than the larger whale fishery, mostly due to the greater number of animals available. Both the dolphin fishery and the whale hunts in coastal North Carolina were shore-based operations, they took place in closer proximity to the local communities.

continued...

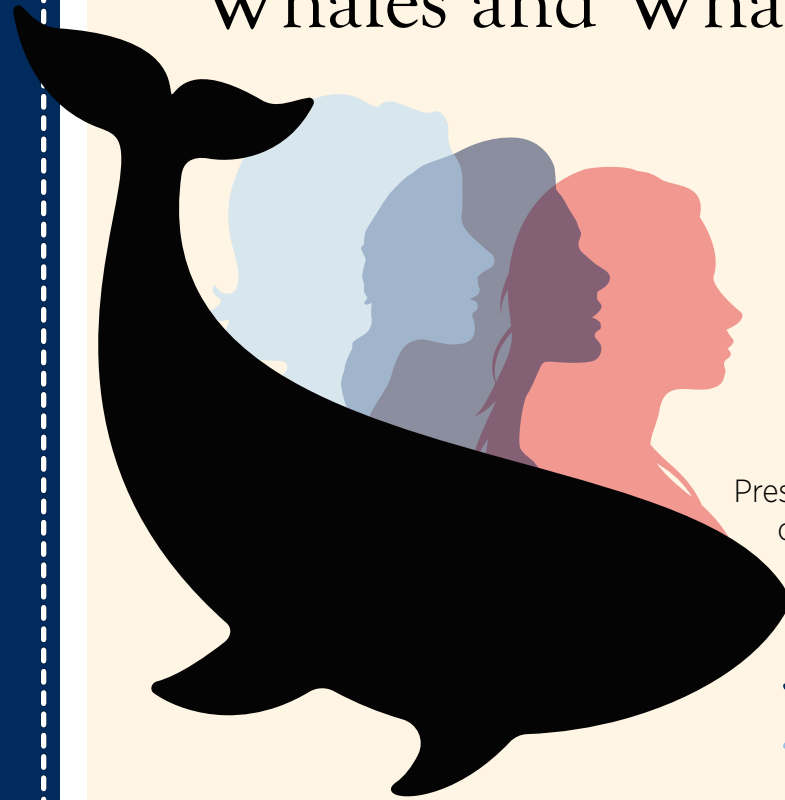
North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort and The Bonehenge Whale Center
Present the 6th Annual

North Carolina Whales and Whaling Symposium

March 21, 2025
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fort Macon Coastal Education Center
2302 E Fort Macon Road,
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512

Presentations by an all-female line-up of experts
on the environment, history, conservation,
and culture related to whales.



Upcoming Program to Showcase Women in the Whaling Industry

Women's association with the "Age of Sail"—from around 1570-1860—has historically not received the same level of attention from academics as their male counterparts have. The study of women's history, overall, is relatively young; the first women's history month was celebrated in America in 1978. Over the past forty years, information on women's maritime contributions has steadily grown as authors and historians re-discover resources such as the journals of wives who joined their husbands as part of the whaling industry. It is a very exciting time to be a women's historian as the stories that researchers are bringing to light give a more complete picture of not only women's history but the larger history as well.

Over the years, North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort Associate Curator of Education Christine Brin has been learning from such resources and has recently unveiled a new presentation, "Trying Women: A History of Women in the Whaling Industry." This presentation is designed to showcase the stories of the women in the whaling industry in America, as well as some of the research being done into women's history today. Through

her presentation Brin uses ongoing research from Iceland, Basque, New England, and, of course, North Carolina to take a closer look at how women were involved in the whaling industry. "Probably my favorite part of this research has been the pictures," Brin said. "Previously, I had studied a period in history that pre-dated photography. It is exciting to look at the photographs of these women and connect with them in a way you can't with a painting or engraving."

Brin's presentation, "Trying Women: History of Women in the Whaling Industry" is scheduled to be part of the museum's annual Whales and Whaling Symposium set for March 21, 2025, at Fort Macon State Parks visitor center near Atlantic Beach.

The lecture will be given in the fall as well for the museum's Maritime Heritage Lecture Series which will be held most Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. at the Fort Macon Visitor Center. This lecture series will feature presentations on the history, culture and environment of maritime North Carolina. Topics will include conservation, light houses, WWII and more. ■

A Unique Glimpse into Women's Roles in Whaling *continued...*

This would give women more of an opportunity to potentially participate than would have been offered during the pelagic whale hunts. The surviving engravings and photographs from the North Carolina dolphin fishery give some insight into the larger whaling practices of coastal North Carolina. The images appear to support the earlier historians' assumptions that despite their proximity, as in other whaling communities, women were not directly involved as there appear to be no women in the images.

One of the most common tasks that oral histories attribute to women regarding processing a whale is working the try pots. A try pot was a large pot used to remove or render the oil from whale blubber. Once a whale was killed and processed, its flesh and fatty blubber layer would be cut into pieces and melted in the try pots to extract the oil. This task could take over three hours depending on the amount of material being processed and would require almost constant stirring to prevent any solids from sticking to the sides and burning in the process. Despite oral history stating that this was a task often given to women, the majority of accounts, and in this case images, of try pots and the processing of whale blubber only mentioned men performing the task. The image from New Zealand clearly associates men with the try pots.

Anne Ros's whale is one of the rare cases where a woman is solidly documented as working the try pots. The Currituck complaint states that Ros, with the assistance of some of her family, "tried up three barrel of oyle out of the whale which Mathias Towler afterwards took from Timothy Pead." As part of the complaint, Ros requested payment for the seven barrels of previously mentioned oil and her labor processing the other three barrels of oil. Assuming these were two different sets of barrels, the value of these eleven barrels would have significantly benefited Towler.

Ultimately, Towler was ordered to pay Anne Ros fifty-one shillings and three pence in reimbursement for the barrels and her labor, plus the allowance of an additional sixteen shillings and eight pence to reimburse her for the attendance to supply evidence. Calculating for inflation and converting to American currency, this works out to Ros receiving about \$512 in reimbursement for the oil and her labor, and roughly an additional \$200 in allowance for her time, totaling just over \$700. This was a substantial amount for a person in colonial North Carolina, but nothing compared to the value of the knowledge we gained over three hundred years later from this complaint. ■

Christine Brin is an associate curator of education at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort.

Registration! Summer Science School & Junior Sailing Program

Summer Science School offers courses for children entering grades one through ten. Each class provides an opportunity to learn about the maritime history, culture and environment of coastal North Carolina through classroom and field trip experiences. The most popular class topics include seashore life, pirates and fishing. Registration begins Tuesday, January 14, 2025. For more information about Summer Science School registration, visit the museum [website](https://www.maritimemuseum.org), or contact the museum registrar at (252) 504-7758.

The Junior Sailing Program offers basic through advanced sailing instruction to youth ages 8 and older. This exciting program teaches the arts of rigging, sailing and seamanship, and introduces students to maritime traditions and history. The program is designed to teach the basic skills of sailing to beginners and to hone the skills of more advanced students, using a combination of time in the classroom and on the water. Registration begins Tuesday, January 14, 2025. For more information about Junior Sailing or registration, contact the Friends office at (252) 728-1638.



Mark Your Calendar!

2025

Jan. 17 Clam Chowder Cook Off

Mar. 30 Membership Appreciation / Drive

May 3 **Wooden Boat Show**

Jun. 9–Aug. 8 Junior Sailing Program

Jun. 13 Boat Shoes & Bow Ties Fundraiser

Jul. 18 Crab Cake Cook Off

Dec. 6 Friends of the Museum Holiday Flotilla

Dec. 7 Annual Membership Meeting

For details call (252) 728-1638 or visit
www.maritimefriends.org



NC DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The North Carolina Maritime Museums in Hatteras, Beaufort and Southport are part of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Reid Wilson, Secretary.



The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

Follow Us!



North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort

315 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516
(252) 504-7740

ncmaritimemuseumbeaufort.com

Hours:

Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sun. 12–5 p.m.

This museum is temporarily closed for construction updates to the HVAC system. A re-opening date has not been finalized.



Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum on Hatteras

59200 Museum Drive
Hatteras, NC 27943
(252) 986-0720

graveyardoftheatlantic.com

Hours:

Mon.–Fri. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.



North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport

204 E. Moore Street
Southport, NC 28461
(910) 477-5150

ncmaritimemuseumssouthport.com

Hours:

Tues.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.