



Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

P.O. Box 623, Carolina Beach, North Carolina 28428

Phone: 910-458-0502 e-mail: info@Federal-Point-History.org

Newsletter

Volume 21, No. 9

September, 2014

Darlene Bright, editor

History Center Hours: Tues, Fri, Sat 10-4

Rebecca Taylor, production

New Web Site! Federal-Point-History.org



September Meeting Monday, September 15, 2014 7:30 PM

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its monthly meeting on **Monday, September 15, 7:30 pm at the Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to Carolina Beach Town Hall.

This month's speaker will be Norm Melton. A retired teacher, Norm grew up in his mother, Marie Melton's gift shop, which was operated on the Boardwalk from 1946-1971. Norm was in elementary school when they arrived and graduated with the Carolina Beach Elementary School class of 1964. He went on to graduate from New Hanover High and UNCW as well as getting a Master's Degree from East Carolina. Norm taught marketing over a long career that concluded with retirement from North Brunswick High.

Mr. Melton will present a variety of topics taken from his own experiences in the 1950's and 1960's and hopes to encourage discussion and additional memories among our "old timers" in attendance. It will be sort of "homecoming" with history and we'll have the video recorder running to capture it all.



President's Message: From Elaine Henson



Norm Melton is speaking to us this month about growing up on the Carolina Beach boardwalk so in that vein we have another card showcasing the boardwalk, this one at night. It is postmarked from Carolina Beach on July 3, 1938 and is from a lady named Janie who mailed it to Axton, Virginia and who also had a very trying vacation.

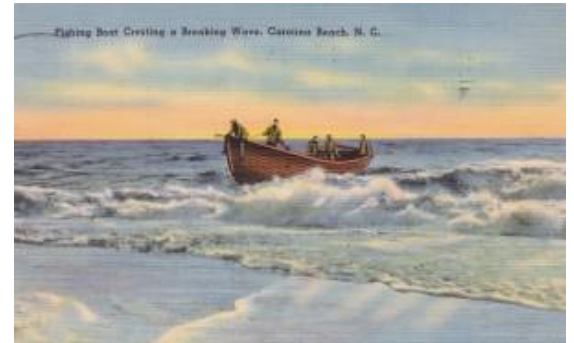




She writes: “Well we are here. I am not enjoying it so well though. I have had a sick headache all day. Ferrell and Ruby had to cook today, I am better now. We have a nice little new five room house. We liked to have not found a place to stay at all. Seems like everyone is here for the 4th. Rent and all much higher than any other time. We are going to Raleigh Fri. Sure do miss Melvin and Callie. Man was drowned here yesterday, glad I didn’t see him. Hope all of You are well. Love Janie”

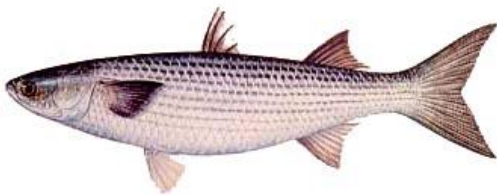
Oral History
The October-November “Pop-eyed” Mullet Run
Submitted by: Howard Hewett, Jones Creek, TX
August 20, 2014

In late October, early November, the fall Atlantic mullet run was a major food supply for the Hewett-Lewis family as far back as the establishment of the clan on Bone’s Neck in Brunswick County in the late 1700’s. After moving to Federal Point, Uncle Crawford Lewis, my grandfather, and my Dad maintained the family tradition of fishing.



Striped mullet are active schooling fish frequently seen jumping and clearing the water by more than three times their body length. Some fish may be 24 inches in length. Their jumping habits have earned them the nickname “jumping mullet.” Because of their thick, fleshy eyelids, they are also called “pop-eyed” mullet. This was the most common name used when referring to them by our family.

Striped “pop-eyed” mullet are native to North Carolina. In October-November when it’s time to spawn, they move out of the bays and inlets, traveling along the shore on their way to off shore waters. The spawning process normally occurs at night. The female mullet can release from two to four million eggs per season. A mature mullet can average one to three pounds. The roe mullets in North Carolina may weigh as much as seven pounds. And, of course, the roe is a fall delicacy. Roe and grits are to die for!

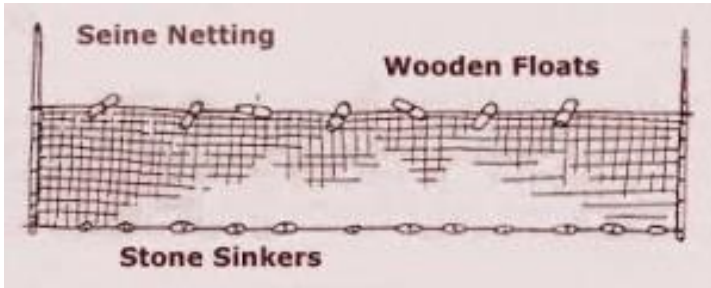


During the mullet run, a family who could get a gill net around a school of mullet would be able to feed the family salted down mullet through the winter. This fact made it imperative that when the opportunity arrived, the family needed to avail itself of a school of fish.

The story I want to relate took place before my tenth birthday (I think) just shortly after World War II. I had often referred to the story as Dad’s “Can a Sunday mullet run be considered an “Ox in the Ditch”? On the way home from church this November Sunday afternoon, Dad spotted a large school of mullet just outside the surf. By the time we got home you could actually see this school up the beach from our front porch. For a family to claim rights to a school fish, it was imperative that a spotter be placed along the shore opposite the fish. So Dad sent me to claim ownership and to follow the school of mullet down the beach toward the house.

As I left the house, Mother and Dad were discussing the religious aspects of violating another family tradition by following what we practiced. The observance of the Sabbath as stated in Isaiah 58: 13-14. “If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own way, serving your own interests, or

pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord. And I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”



As Dad and Mother continued the discussion about this strong Christian principle and maybe grandmother, Addie Jane, was consulted as well, Dad made preparations with Uncle Crawford to get the boat in position on the beach. Now this did not take long because at this time of year, the boat and net was always ready. As the story goes, Dad and Crawford decided that in this particular situation, there was a

need to provide winter food for the family, so they decided that the New Testament passage in Luke 14:5 would be the guiding principle for that day. As Jesus said, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on the Sabbath.” The school of fish that I was following was massive and the water was black with fish. When the wave would break, all you could see was large roe mullet. It was one of those magnificent schools of mullet.

Other fishermen only approached me one time, but I was recognized as Curtis’ boy. The only thing they said was “tell your Dad to holler if he and Crawford needed any help.” I’ve often thought about how easy it was to project possession of a school of fish by having an 8 to 9 year-old represent ownership in the late 40’s. There was respect for the rights of possession and there were no questions or challenges. I wonder in today’s world if people in the same situation would allow someone so young to represent family ownership and show respect for an unwritten entitlement.

When I was within 100 yards, Dad waved to me to come and get in the boat. The family boat was approximately 16-18 feet lapstreak with a high bow, high gunnels and a deck in the stern where the net was located. The stern sloped from the gunnels to the rail with a more rounded shape. It was a modified wine glass shape that was common to surf boats in the mid 1940-1950’s. There were two seats for two oarsmen.



Seine Netting

My job was to be sure the net fed out as we went around the school of mullet. These nets were called gill nets or seine nets. The net had a cork line on the top and a lead line on the bottom. It was approximately 8-10 feet in height. Dad and Crawford’s net were approximately 100 yards long. On this particular day, we had a 25-yard slue running along the beach with a bar that was about 50 yards across with the breakers pounding on the edge of the bar.

To get a boat across the slue, traverse the bar and cross the breaker required a great deal of skill and timing not only to get the boat outside the wave action but to arrive just in time along with the fish. The action was never for the faint of heart. When Uncle Crawford said “Let’s take her to sea, Curtis,” there was an adrenaline rush. I can tell you that Dad and Crawford were bulls when it came to their oaring skills. When the oars hit the water and they made their first pull, your head would pop back and for every pull thereafter.

Pulling Fishing Nets on the Beach Near Winner Pier

The staff on the beach end of the net was normally manned by another member of the family and beach goers who would work for a mess of fish. As we crossed the bar, I would continue to maintain the net as it feed out over the stern and would be sure it did not get hung up on anything in the boat. Once across the bar and seaward

to the breaker creating a slight hook shape in the positioning of the net, we would pause to allow the fish to come to us.

Popeyed Mullet on Incoming Tide

On this occasion, Dad and Crawford discussed their concerns about the size of this school of mullet and the danger of damaging the net with all the pressure of thousands of pounds of fish. The decision was made to cut through the middle of the school allowing some to escape seaward. So we came back across the breakers with mullet jumping in the boat as well as across the boat. This process also created an adrenaline rush. Once ashore, we started pulling the staff back through the slue to the beach. By this time, we may have had 25-30 volunteers, which enhanced our ability to get the net ashore. The catch that day was several thousand pounds. Volunteers got all the fish they wanted. A large portion of the catch was sold to a fish house outside of Wilmington.



Grandmother was in charge of the family portion and preparing the mullet for salting. Our saltbox was in one of the bedrooms at grandmother's house. It was two feet deep by three feet wide and about 6 feet long. After that day's catch, all the family had their saltboxes filled to the top with filleted mullet and roe.

Lesson learned that November day: Only take what you need and do not waste resources.

***Federal Point Historic Preservation Society
Events Calendar Summer/Fall 2014***



Sunday October 19, 2014: History Cruise fundraiser. 4:00pm-6:00pm. \$35.00 per person. Join us for an informative and fun cruise along the Cape Fear River aboard the *Wilmington*. Leaving from the Wilmington Water Tours dock in downtown Wilmington, the trip will be narrated by Doug Springer with help from historian Beverly Tetterton who will have her new book *Maritime Wilmington* for purchase and signing. Call 910-458-0502 to reserve tickets.

Monday October 20, 2014: Membership Meeting. 7:30-9:00 pm. Local historian and author, **Elaine Henson**, will present an illustrated talk on the history of the "Cape Fear Beaches."

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday November 1, 2014: The Society has been invited to sell refreshments at a benefit concert benefitting the Friends of Fort Fisher. From the North Carolina Mountains, the acoustic group, **Balsam Range**, presents a unique blend of bluegrass, gospel, folk and jazz. We will be selling refreshments at the Odell Williamson Auditorium in Bolivia from 5:30 pm – 10:30 pm. Tickets are \$30-35\$ but our volunteers get in free.

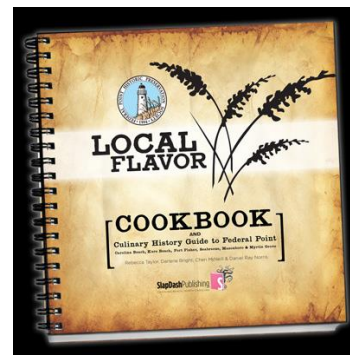


Monday November 17, 2014: Membership Meeting. 7:30-9:00 pm. **LeRae Umfleet**, of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources will return to us with her program on "Women in World War One."

Monday December 15, 2014: Holiday Potluck 6:30-9:00 pm.

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. They are held at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd. (Just south of the Carolina Beach Town Hall.) Visit the History Center, open Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10-4. For more information call: 910-458-0502.

Christmas is coming!
Have you bought your cookbooks yet?
\$21.95



Society Notes

Darlene Bright, History Center Director

- ❖ We've looked at next year's budget and postage continues to take up a large chunk of change. If you have e-mail, please consider getting your Newsletter electronically. It's much prettier, more timely, and in color that way. If you aren't quite in the 21st century technologically we'll still mail to you – But one of our members who wants to save paper copies has come up with a great idea. He gets his via e-mail and then picks up a paper copy when he comes to the meeting. (That way we save postage.) Remember: the most current Newsletter is always posted on our web site: **Federal-Point-History.org**
- ❖ The History Center recorded 62 visitors in August. We had 35 in attendance at the August meeting. The gift shop took in a healthy \$269.22; NOT counting all the cookbooks sold. The History Center was also used by Got-'em-on Live Bait Fishing Club. **PLEASE NOTE: We have a couple of long sleeve T-shirts and some FPHPS sweatshirts on sale. T-Shirts - \$5.00. Sweatshirts - \$12.00. Great for yard work or other grungy projects.**
- ❖ Please welcome new lifetime member **Lloyd Saunders** of McKinney Texas, and new Business members **Island Tackle and Hardware** of Carolina Beach and **Big Daddy's** of Kure Beach.
- ❖ Thanks to **Demetria Sapienza**, and **Lois Taylor** for helping get the Newsletter in the mail this month. Also thanks to **Sylvia, Juanita, Ron, and Lois** for keeping the History Center open while Rebecca was away.
- ❖ Thanks AGAIN to **Andre' Blouin** for all the time he's put into the new website. The website is up and it's chock full of all kinds of great information. Please take time to visit: **www.federal-point-history.org**. **Tony Phillips** is keeping things growing on our Facebook page. If you are on Facebook please take time to "like" us and share our posts.
- ❖ **And don't forget!** If you take a trip with **Wilmington Water Tours** please tell them you are a member of FPHPS! If you do we get a portion of your ticket price. Call us 458-0502, or them 338-3134. **www.wilmingtonwatertours.net**

GET YOUR RAFFEL TICKETS NOW!



We have had two wonderful prints of Carolina Beach scenes donated by Ronald Williams via. Norm Melton. Tickets are \$1.00 apiece, 12 for \$10.00, or 25 for \$20.00. We'll hold the drawing at the Christmas Party. You don't have to be present to win.



Officers

President – Elaine Henson
Vice-President – Tony Phillips
Secretary – Juanita Winner
Treasurer – Demetria Sapienza

Directors

John Gordon	Jean Stewart	John Moseley
Andre Blouin	Leslie Bright	Byron Moore
Skippy Winner	Jim Dugan	Barry Nelder

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society**P. O. Box 623****Carolina Beach, NC 28428**

Please Support Our Business Members!

Atlantic Towers**Ned Barnes, Attorney****Big Daddy's****Britt's Donut Shop****Carolina Marine Terminal****Charles Henson Painting****Coastal K-9 Bakery, Inc.****First Bank****Frank's Pizza****Got-Em-On-Live Bait Club****Hanover Iron Works****Historical Society of Topsail Island*****Island Gazette*****Island Tackle and Hardware****Kure Beach Fishing Pier****Bob McKoy- Network Real Estate****Olde Salty's****Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce****Pleasure Island Foundation for a Sustainable
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