The MariTimes

The Magazine of the North Carolina Maritime Museums

Beaufort • Hatteras • Southport

Summer/Fall 2020

Bryde's whale exhumation team, October 23, 2019.
Photo by Dylan Ray.

www.ncmaritimemuseums.com

NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS
BEAUFORT HATTERAS SOUTHPORT

Attention:

NORTH CAROLINA
MARITIME
MUSEUMS
BEAUFORT HATTERAS SOUTHPORT

Due to current conditions, which include the suspension of public operations at all three sites in the N.C. Maritime Museum system, the listed events, locations and times are subject to change. Please check with the respective site before making plans to attend.

Please see contact information for each site on last page.

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One historic coast.
Three unique museums.

N.C. Maritime Museums Offer Virtual Programs

By Cyndi Brown

The three museums in the North Carolina Maritime Museums have always had a robust social media presence. But with public operations paused at each site, staff has been working on enhancing its virtual outreach.

The goal is to continue our mission of preserving, protecting and presenting North Carolina's coastal history while engaging our communities.

First, we invite you to connect with us online. Our parent site includes links to each of our three locations: North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport, the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, and the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras. From there, you can find links to each museum's presence on the social media channels Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. But more importantly, you will also be able to access some of our new, virtual offerings.

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras has added a new "Education" section to the website. There you will find content provided for homeschoolers, which includes lessons and activities, as well as outside resources and educational videos.

Its social media posts on Facebook and Instagram remain focused on positivity, providing both entertaining and engaging posts alongside its regular educational posts about shipwrecks, maritime history, and culture. In the works for its Youtube channel, which currently houses a variety of videos about the Outer Banks, is a digital children's book in video form, as well as a virtual gallery based on Daniel Pullen's "Endangered Community: The Independent Watermen Project" photography. Facebook Live broadcasting of educational material from the museum's digital archive is also planned, so keep an eye out for scheduled showtimes posted in its Facebook events section.

N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort has also been working on ways to engage an online audience while the physical sites are closed. In addition to its regular posts on Facebook and Instagram, the education department has been recording its canceled Brown Bag Gams and Whale Symposium programs, three of which are currently uploaded to both its YouTube channel and its website under the new "Museum at Home" navigation tab. There is also a video demonstration of a "cookie archaeology" activity that families can do; downloadable, maritime-themed children's activities; and some branded maritime-themed backgrounds that are compatible with a widely used video conferencing software for folks who want to have a little fun during their meetings (or at least hide a messy home office).

Other videos in production include a "tour" of our exhibits and artiFACTS, which showcases a couple of specific items in our collection.

N.C. Maritime Museum at Southport has set a weekly schedule on their social media channels: Tuesday is live learning on Facebook where educators and staff share tours and lectures. Wednesdays and Saturdays on YouTube are "Story Time with Captain Meanie." Thursdays offer fun for adults and children with maritime trivia and craft time, both on Facebook. And the week concludes with Sunday Stretch on Instagram where staff members demonstrate maritime yoga poses for children like crab, whale, and dolphin. Interspersed are interactive games, interviews, and school-oriented activities like spirit week.

Educational bundles that combine grade level content, activities, and themed items from the gift shop are available for purchase to enhance families' educational activities. Among the topics are Pirates, Hurricanes, Blockaders & Blockade Running, the U.S. Coast Guard and more. Each bundle is $15 for the entire package, which includes tax and shipping. As the public libraries are closed, the museum is also developing used maritime book bundles to mail to adults for a small fee. ■

From The Friends

SOUTHPORT:
Greetings from the Mouth of the Cape Fear River!

The N.C. Maritime Museum at Southport collects, preserves, and interprets the maritime history and culture of the Lower Cape Fear for all people and relies heavily on donations to fund programming, outreach, and exhibits at the museum. Whether visitor or Friend, your support is invaluable. We realize that our members desire to learn, and we have answered the call by creating members-only educational programming and events as an added member benefit.

Increased membership allows the museum to expand. We do not want to rest on our successes but desire to continue creating dynamic exhibits that reflect the maritime history of the Lower Cape Fear region. As we settle in with our latest two exhibits—*The Sea Shall Not Have Them* and *The Deadly Dozen*—we are preparing to move things around as we look to our newest exhibit.

Kudos to our museum staff, which worked to stop one-use plastics in our facility. They share these values with the Friends and visitors, encouraging maritime stewardship through reusable giftshop items and purchasing seafood locally instead of elsewhere. If you are interested in learning more about these efforts, please contact us!

Be sure to pick up our 2020 Program Calendar to stay up to date on events. Whether it is a day camp, a homeschool class, children's summer program, or a day trip, there's something of interest for everyone!

Come and see us in Southport!

Tom Hale
Chairman
Friends of the N.C. Maritime Museum at Southport ■

HATTERAS:
Shipwrecking and Salvaging

Dramatic accounts of shipwrecks read like suspense-filled, nail-biting action stories in the logbook of Hatteras Banks' Wreck Commissioner Joshua H. Dailey (1807-1865,) U.S. Lifesaving Service annual reports, and the journal of John W. Rollinson (1827-1906,) all of which are found in the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum's Collection Storage or the Museum Library. The business of shipwrecking and salvaging operations was an economic boon in the 19th and early 20th centuries, bringing out entire communities and off-island opportunists seeking to improve their short-term financial positions.

One of the more compelling stories of shipwreck salvaging is found in accounts of the wreck commissioner's inventory of the wreck of the *Carroll A. Deering*, the famous ghost ship of the Outer Banks. The contents were auctioned off on the beaches of Hatteras Banks in 1921. Everything of even the minutest value was sold to the highest bidder to ease the losses of shipowners and insurers. These items included nails, silverware, sailcloth, unclaimed personal effects, and even the ship's hull, burned to the ground by the purchaser to salvage the metals contained therein—a valuable commodity in itself, bearing testimony to the old island maxim of "Waste not, want not."

The staff and volunteers of the museum look forward to the fast-approaching day when the museum's permanent exhibits come alive to an adventure-hungry public, eagerly awaiting the stories of "The Graveyard of the Atlantic."

Daniel C. Couch
President of the Board
Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum ■

BEAUFORT:
More Sailing Opportunities, Site Development, and Fundraising

Details of activities, events, and fundraisers are available on our new mobile friendly website, www.maritimefriends.org. The N.C. Maritime Museum's Annual Wooden Boat Show is the longest running boat show in the southeast something that isn't changing despite a change in plans. This year's boat show, originally scheduled for its regular slot on the first Saturday in May, will instead be held Saturday, Oct. 17, and relocated to the Great Lawn at Gallants Channel. More details about the show and its events will be announced as they become available. Updated information will also be posted to the show's website, beaufortwoodenboatshow.com.

Dr. John Lo'Piccolo, a podiatrist in Morehead City, has driven the creation of our new High School Sailing Club, offering a program for youth to learn to race and otherwise enjoy the historically rich activity of sailing. Boats will be shared with the Friends' Junior Sailing Program. The Gallants Channel site is the perfect place for this expanded learn-to-sail activity.

The Maritime Heritage Foundation's Master Site Plan Development Committee will be evaluating proposals in April from land planners to lay out the 31-acre Gallants Channel Site to include a Maritime Education Center, additional dockage, and an expanded Maritime Museum all in a park-like setting. The Friends are eager for the Education Center since it will be the new home of Beaufort's Junior Sailing Program and new offices for the Friends' staff, among other important uses.

The Friends Board in Beaufort is doubling its efforts to expand our new Corporate Partners Program. Corporations that sign on will pledge to make significant annual donations to improve the Friends' ability to serve the museum.

Walt Wood
President
Friends of the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort ■

Cape Hatteras 1870 Lighthouse Celebrates 150th Anniversary

By Mary Ellen Riddle

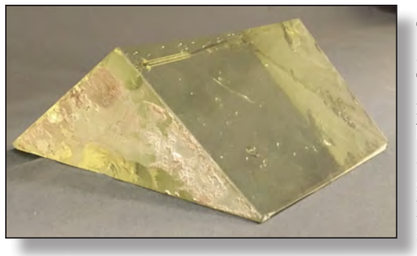
December 16, 2020, marks the 150th anniversary of the lighting of the 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. But the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse story starts long before 1870.

Erecting a sentinel at Cape Hatteras was a lengthy process that was highlighted by technological advances. Though progress moved forward in fits and starts, Congress authorized the building of the first Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in 1794. Adam Gaskins was appointed the first keeper of the rust-colored, octagonal, sandstone structure. The 90-feet-tall beacon was finished in 1803. In time, though, the lighthouse was deemed inadequate for the many mariners that rode the Gulf Stream and extension of the Labrador Current to gain time in their journeys.

The popular shipping lanes are part of what's called the Graveyard of the Atlantic, waters filled with over 2,000 shipwrecks. Shoaling at the capes, war, weather, piracy, and human nature all contributed to this mass of underwater vessels.

To meet the demands of the sailors, the first lighthouse was raised an additional 60 feet in 1854. The lower 70-feet of the tower was whitewashed, and the upper parts were painted red, providing a more visible daymark. A 1st order Fresnel lens, built by Augustin Henry LePaute, was installed, replacing the Argand-style lamps and reflector system designed by Winslow Lewis. The stately 1st order Fresnel lens is the centerpiece of the lobby at the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras Village.

Cape Hatteras' 1854 1st Order Fresnel lens.



Prism from an Augustin-Jean Fresnel lens.

The lens consisted of 45 panels. They were placed in three stacks and arranged in a circle with the upper and lower stacks called catadioptric panels. Like a mirror, they bent light by reflection. The middle section panels, with bulls-eye lenses, are called flash panels. Above and below the flash panels are dioptric prisms that concentrate light like a magnifying glass. A 1st order Fresnel lens generally is 12-feet high and more than six-feet in diameter. It contained over 1,000 prisms.

As the prisms of the 1st order Fresnel lens magnified, refracted, and reflected light, the rays were focused into a single beam rather than scattered about. This allowed the light to be seen farther than the light in the 1803 lighthouse. The new, flashing light could be seen for twenty miles. Light patterns could be created by lenses, and these depended on the revolution speed of the lens and the number of installed flash panels. A lighthouse's unique pattern helped sailors determine their location. The patterns differed over the years with the current light flashing white every 7.5 seconds.

The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was powered by a clockwork mechanism much like a grandfather clock. The mechanism rotated the lens around the lamp to produce a flash. The lens assembly, which rotated on a chariot at one-half rpm, was turned by three 150-pound iron weights. The weights, which were hung from the gears, descended 160-feet through the sentinel into the base of the pedestal where there was a sand pit. The cable wound around a drum in the mechanism. The action was controlled by a clock attached to the inside of the pedestal. The pedestal supported the lens. Each morning, the weights were cranked by hand to the top and then released at dusk, causing the lens to rotate. The gears in the mechanism provided the leverage to turn the assembly. The speed of rotation could be adjusted by a fan governor in the clockwork. A gentle hand push was used to start the rotation. It maintained its rotation until the weight reached the bottom of the tower. The weight was rewound to the top of the tower each morning. The clock ran fifteen to eighteen hours before having to be rewound.

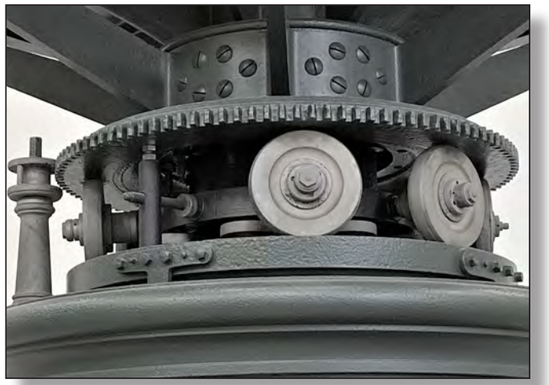
A variety of oils were used to light the Cape Hatteras Lighthouses' lanterns until the light eventually was electrified in 1934. Early on, experiments were done using porpoise oil, but it was deemed unsuitable. Sperm whale oil mostly was burned in the early history, but it eventually was phased out due to over-hunting. Colza oil, made from rapeseed, was considered to light the lamp, but it wasn't seen as a profitable crop. Kerosene was used from 1913 until 1934 when the lens was electrified.

For a period during the Civil War, the lighthouse was darkened, and the lens was hidden by the Confederacy and eventually put in storage before being reunited with the lighthouse. In March of 1867, an appropriation was approved for a new lighthouse at Cape Hatteras. The 1870s lighthouse was built to stand 198-feet-two-and-a-half-inches high from ground level to the top of the pinnacle, employing the original 1854 Fresnel lens. On December 16, 1870, the lens was illuminated. The 1870s lighthouse flashed white every 10 seconds. The following February, the first lighthouse was blasted to the ground. In 1873, the new Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was painted to display her classic black and white, spiral daymark.

The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is the tallest brick lighthouse in America. At the time of its move from the encroaching sea in 1999, the sentinel weighed 4,830 tons. It took twenty-three days to move the lighthouse 2,900 feet. It sits 1,500 feet from the shore, its original distance from the sea. To reach the top, visitors climb 257 steps. There are landings where one can rest every thirty-one steps. Unaka Benjamin Jennette was the final primary keeper and the longest serving in that position. He was a descendant of the Jennett family, which sold four acres of land for $50 to use for the 1803 Cape Hatteras Light Station.

Image of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse captured by Josh Nonnenmocher in December of 2019.

Clockwork mechanisms from the 1854 Fresnel lens.



In honor of the 150th anniversary of lighting the 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum has plans to host lecturer John Havel, a researcher and historian concentrating on the Hatteras beacon. He is a board member of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society, the Outer Banks History Center, and founder and president of Havel Research Associates whose prime focus is research on the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Havel's articles have been published in the *U.S. Lighthouse Society's Keeper's Log*, the *Outer Banks Lighthouse Society newsletter*, *Lighthouse News*, and others. His presentation, *150 Years of Guardianship: Celebrating the 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse*, illustrates numerous forgotten and little-known facts regarding this historic landmark. The presentation includes images from Havel's extensive collection of historical photographs representing the lighthouse's 150-year history. The presentation is still currently on the schedule for June 25, 2020. However, we will announce any changes as the date nears.

Make sure to keep up with the National Park Service – Cape Hatteras Group's 150th anniversary events this December. ■

Rare Bryde's Whale Skeleton Exhumed at Bonehenge

By Helen Aitken, NC Maritime Museum Volunteer

Near Gallants Channel, close to the new high-rise bridge connecting Morehead City to Beaufort, North Carolina, an extraordinary event took place Wednesday October 23, 2019: the unearthing of a rare and endangered whale skeleton nicknamed Gomez.

Gomez is the unofficial name given to the stranded Gulf of Mexico's Bryde's (broo-dus) baleen whale, *Balaenoptera edeni/brydei*, which took the scientific community by storm. So much so that some researchers are postponing retirement until this whale has been determined as a new species or subspecies—an extraordinary occurrence for mammals and specifically for cetaceans, or marine mammals such as dolphins and whales.

Cetaceans face increased manmade pressures from things like pollution, plastics ingestion, fishing line entanglements, hunting, low frequency underwater noise, and vessel strikes. Gulf of Mexico Bryde's whales are more susceptible to the pressures because there are fewer than one hundred individuals, making them one of the most rare and endangered species on earth. Uniquely, Bryde's whales live in only warm and temperate ocean waters." Some migrate, while others are localized; but all have less blubber in comparison to other baleen whales.

Gomez has another distinction: It will have the designation as the holotype for this kind of whale. A holotype is *the* identifying specimen, which is used for research and as a reference for comparison to similar individuals. Holotypes are not put on exhibit but are held in museums for research and curation.

Gomez, an adult male over twenty-five years old and about thirty-eight feet in length, stranded along Sandy Key in the Florida Everglades, January 28, 2019. It was brought to the attention of the Marine Mammal Stranding Network. The cause of death was undetermined; however, he was underweight with a flat two-by-three inch piece of hard plastic in the stomach, which may or may not have contributed to his death.

Maneuvering the whale skull from the flatbed trailer onto the compost, May 8, 2019. (Photo luckily not scratch-n-sniff variety).

NOAA Fisheries/SEFSC 2011

John Ososky, the collection manager of marine mammals of the Smithsonian Institution, was called in to direct the process of bringing the skeleton back to the museum. During the field necropsy, blood and tissue samples were taken, stomach contents identified, and excess blubber was removed. His flippers were individually wrapped in nets with the flippers placed in color coded bags that quickly identified right or left-sided bones. Then Gomez was temporarily buried in sand within Fort De Soto Park in St. Petersburg, Florida, to deter scavengers until a better place was located.

Four months later, the remains were unearthed and placed in a pick-up truck and trailer. Ososky drove the reeking carcass to the Bonehenge Whale Center in Beaufort, where it was carefully and methodically reburied in a horse manure-enriched compost of hay and wood chips. The temperature and moisture were monitored and periodically adjusted so that the natural processes broke down the carcass flesh, exposing most of the skeleton. According to Ososky, this method provided the quickest way to get Gomez to the Smithsonian.

"This is such an important specimen and I'm thrilled to be involved with the preparation of these bones," said Keith Rittmaster, natural science curator of the Maritime Museum in Beaufort and director of the Bonehenge Whale Center.

Rittmaster methodically organized the burial and exhumation. For the exhumation, he sent an e-mail to all the volunteers with background information, job duties, things to bring, and information on baleen whale anatomy. The jobs were designated, and people were assigned to work together until the job was completed or they were needed for another task, like moving heavy bones.

"Whale people are crazy," said Rittmaster—the sentiment meant as a great compliment. Eighteen energized volunteers ages twenty-nine to seventy, having different abilities, interests, knowledge, and experience assembled to participate in exhuming, rough cleaning, and documenting Gomez.

The trumpeting sound from a conch shell signaled for attention, introductions were made, and participants were provided last minute information. Rittmaster brought out a bone bucket to show what specific bones might look like in relative size and shape to those being removed from the compost.

"This is a new experience. I am Ahab of the group, chasing down this whale," Ososky told the group. "This population is unique and …this is a prize specimen. I'm not sure what we're going to find in the pile. I hope it all turns out well with little additional cleaning.

"Bones tend to be spongy," he added, "so be careful with them. There are broken bones especially on the spinal processes. It had a rough treatment getting here, but we're just glad we got the specimen."

Safety and healthcare procedures were highly stressed during the exhumation with the use of gloves, outerwear, and appropriate footwear.

"About five-six cuts and the knife is dull," said Rittmaster.

Even pliers had to be used, and the process took longer than expected.

An orientation map of the whale's bones in the compost pit identified the relative position of bones after decomposition, particularly since some flipper bones tend to look like wood chips and were small enough to fall through the mesh bags. Bones were removed from the perimeter, working toward the center. The soil was carefully removed without breaking or tearing things apart. Fortunately, all the bones were recovered.

The area was divided into stations: the pit; saw horses for the mandibles (jaws); a table for sharpening knives; saw horses covered with an emergency yellow sled for large vertebrae; a table for the flippers; and a table for identification cards, string, scissors, hole punch, a box of long knives, trowels, pronged gardening hand tools, 3-prong long handle cultivator, and lots of buckets. There were two large tarps held down by heavy bricks for the skeleton's placement, and all five-gallon grey buckets were designated for disposal of flesh. There was a port-a-potty, running water from a hose, and buckets filled with hot water, Dawn detergent, and baking soda for scrubbing the bones and reducing the odor.

Only the "clean crew," or those without shoes were allowed inside Bonehenge. They acted as gofers, handled name tags and identification labels, and even carried hot water and soap for cleanup. Other members *continued...*

Rare Bryde's Whale Skeleton Exhumed at Bonehenge *...continued from page 9*

included three photographers, two writers, a cameraman from the local television station WCTI-12, and a reporter with a photographer from the *Carteret County News Times*.

Individual "dirty" team members handled pectoral fins (flippers), mandibles, large vertebrae, smaller vertebrae with chevrons, the scapulae, ribs, and sternum for removal and cleaning. It was common to see people like Dr. Vicky Thayer of NCSU Center for Marine Sciences and Technology in the compost pit, nearly covered in muck but determined to get the task completed, efficiently.

Visiting professionals Asst. Professor Dr. Paul Nader of Veterinary Anatomy and Wildlife Zoo Medicine and Dr. Veronica King, asst. professor of Veterinary Pathology, both at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, with LMU veterinary student doctor, Michell Donohue assisted in bone recovery, preparation, and teaching the crew about baleen whale anatomy.

Dr. King explained that the organs of the gut would decompose fastest because they are naturally bacteria-laden, while other parts like cartilage would take longer. She compared the exhumation to a "super treasure hunt" where "pathologists call it Christmas every day."

Dr. Nader continually reminded everyone that the specimen in this state contained nasty bacteria that would make people very sick, such as clostridia which is normally found in mammal gastrointestinal tracts that helped to decompose the carcass. Everyone wore thick plastic gloves, surgical gloves, or double gloves that were changed often.

The bones were meticulously photographed as exhumed, scraped, and then labeled with an identification tag; accuracy was paramount for anatomical reference. Once the bones were scraped off and cleaned with soap, they were rinsed and placed on the tarp in correct anatomical order starting from the skull; right and left-sided flipper bones were based on the humerus.

The most active worker appeared to be Rittmaster. He coordinated each station and person, answered questions, facilitated the needs of each station, and handled the skull; ultimately, he was probably the cleanest of the group.

About eight hours later, once it was confirmed that the entire skeleton was recovered, the bones were carefully packed into two trucks. Rittmaster drove the truck containing the skull while Ososky drove the rest of the skeleton to the Smithsonian Cetacean Warehouse in Suitland, Maryland, where Gomez received a final cleaning and is currently waiting to receive its official designation.

"Many opinions will be given on this whale," Ososky said. "It will be called a species or subspecies, and then given a description based on its genetics and morphology. This animal has been recognized since 2002 with a skull in Texas, one at LSU, and one at the Smithsonian; but all of them are juveniles.

"Gomez is a fully formed adult skeleton and we wanted a specimen from the locality where it lived."

For the Bonehenge volunteers, Gomez will be remembered as more than a messy, stinky exhumation. Instead, they will remember playing a vital role in gaining a better understanding of this rare whale, perhaps helping with the preservation of its living relatives and learning a little more about life within the ocean. ■

Bryde's whale, Flamingo, Florida, January 30, 2019. *Courtesy Everglades National Park.*

Keith Rittmaster delivers the whale's skull to the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center, October 24, 2019. *Photo by John Ososky.*

You are cordially invited!

2020 THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA
ELEVENTH ANNUAL MURDER MYSTERY DINNER

By Christine Brin

After years of traveling the world's seas, the infamous Captain Nemo has decided that the world is finally ready for the technology that the captain created for the Submersible *Nautilus*. On Friday, September 4, 2020, at 6 p.m. the captain, with friend Julie Verne acting as hostess, will be opening *Nautilus* to a limited audience of fifty guests.

During the evening, guests will have the opportunity to meet with select crew members, learn about the batteries that power the submersible, and enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by Chef Clawson. The captain would like to warn potential guests that should any arrive with deceitful intent, they will be dealt with swiftly and by the ship's law. Regarding the sea monsters that have been reported in the area, it is unlikely that one should attack the submersible. If the submersible is attacked, the captain and his crew have taken significant measures to ensure the safety of the guests with newly installed escape pods.

Dress for the evening's event is recommended to be "dramatic" and favoring a Victorian Era design. The evening will involve a tour of the submersible, so please plan to be on your feet for roughly 20 minutes.

Please RSVP. Tickets for the dinner will go on sale at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort at 9 a.m. on June 1. Tickets are $55 per person ($50 for Friends of the Museum) and have sold out quickly in previous years. Tickets can be purchased in person or by contacting the museum program registrar at 252-504-7758.

We hope you will be able to join us.

46th Annual
WOODEN BOAT SHOW
Rescheduled

Due to the threats related to the COVID-19 virus and the suspension of public operations at the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort and the Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center, we have rescheduled and relocated the 46th Annual Wooden Boat Show. This year's boat show, originally scheduled for May 2 in downtown Beaufort, will instead be held Saturday, Oct. 17, on the Great Lawn at Gallants Channel. More details about the show and its events will be announced as they become available. Updated information will also be posted to the show's website:

www.beaufortwoodenboatshow.com

Mark Your Calendar!

June 12	June Summer Party Fundraiser
June 13	Maritime Day
July 11	Great 4th Race
July 17	14th Annual Crab Cake Cook-off
Aug. 1	Traditional Skiff Rally
Sept. 4	Murder Mystery Dinner
Oct. 17	Fall In-The-Water Meet
Oct. 17	46th Annual Wooden Boat Show
Nov. 6	Friends of the NC Maritime Museum Boatshop Bash
Dec. 5	Crystal Coast Christmas Flotilla

For more details about events and programs, call (252) 728-1638 or visit www.maritimefriends.org.

The Rise of the Menhaden Fishing Industry in the Lower Cape Fear: Bussells, The Fisheries Products Company and What Happened to the Men Who Brought it Down

By Kristan Phillips

Housed in the museum collection is a 70"X30" rendering of the Fisheries Products company facility. Many patrons are unfamiliar with the company's location as it permanently closed in 1925. Most people do not remember the facility because the Fisheries Products Company closed permanently in 1925. This case made national news as the most significant fraud case in the United States at that time. The Brunswick Navigation Docks located off Fish Factory Road served as the central location for most of the menhaden processing plants in the Lower Cape Fear from just after the turn of the twentieth century into the 1970s. The caption on the picture shows "St. Phillip's, NC Plant." The factory was located north of Southport, near Orton Plantation. The company purchased several acres from the Orton estate, a familiar landmark to locals. The facility and its campus were enormous. So was the vast notoriety it brought to the region.

The Rise of Menhaden Factories in The Lower Cape Fear

The period from 1880 to 1920 is known for the expansion of big business and improvements in technology, communication, and transportation, especially in the northern and western United States. However, it also took place in the southern states. During the Progressive Era, companies were known for their corruption and poor treatment of workers. Major changes occurred during this time through increased government regulation. The number of patents awarded during this time for new inventions or improvements on earlier patents is astonishing. Rapid changes in technology had a profound effect on society, but greed and malfeasance are never far behind during any age.

The menhaden fishing industry was not exempt from the influence of big business and corruption. The first factory built in the area in 1901 only processed menhaden. Captain Josephus Franklin

FOUR THE CLEVELAND STAR, SHELBY, N. C. TUESDAY, NOV. 5, 1918

— FARMERS ATTENTION —

DO YOU BUY FERTILIZER

Did You Ever Receive Any Of The Profits In REAL MONEY From The Fertilizer Company Whose Fertilizer You Bought?

Do you know that one fertilizer company last year divided Ten Million dollars between its stockholders; none of them farmers—The farmers paid the dividend to these stockholders, not the company—The Fisheries Products Company are going to distribute the profits earned by the sale of Fish Scrap to the Users of Fish Scrap; the farmers—The Fisheries Products Company of Wilmington, N. C., are the largest makers of Fish Scrap for Fertilizers in the United States---Every farmer who uses Fish Scrap manufactured by the Fisheries Products Company of Wilmington will receive cash dividends every year.

Every farmer who uses Fish Scrap manufactured by The Fisheries Products Company of Wilmington, North Carolina, can purchase his Fish Scrap at wholesale cost.

Whether you use one or a hundred tons of Fish Scrap, you can use it at cost. The same price the fertilizer companies pay for Fish Scrap.

Every farmer who uses Fish Scrap can save from $10.00 to $20.00 a ton on his fertilizer every year and get a share of the profits of the company besides.

Fish Scrap is a cotton grower—Fish Scrap is a corn grower—Fish Scrap makes bumper tobacco crops—Fish Scrap will build your land.

The use of Fish Scrap in farming is as old as creation.

Read what the U. S. Department of Agriculture says about FISH SCRAP.

"It benefits the land at once and enriches the soil for the ears coming year as well."

Fish Scrap in its raw state is wonderfully valuable as a plant food. It contains from nine units of ammoniates, besides its bone and available phosphoric ingredients.

Fertilizer magazines are full of reports on the increasing unsupplied demand for fish scrap fertilizer. Every farmer who tries it wants all he can afford to buy. He cannot get his order filled because enough is not manufactured. (THE FISHERIES PRODUCTS COMPASY are now able to supply the farmers with all they need.

It is an excellent fertilizer for COTTON, TOBACCO, CORN and all kinds of vegetables.

Fish Scrap has no superior as a plant food and will not injure the ground.

If you want the best fertilizer made—to earn dividends upon what you use, paid in cash every year in addition—want to save from ten to twenty dollars per ton on your fertilizer every year.

BUY FISH SCRAP

DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES OF

The FISHERIES PRODUCTS CO.

Of WILMINGTON, N. C.

W. R. McDONALD, C. F. WARE,

WILL BE AT

Central Hotel, Shelby, N. C., Nov. 1st to Dec. 1st.

They will call upon request at your farm and tell you all about FISH SCRAP

Send a postal today, or phone. Appointments made any time---any place

Fisheries Products Company Advertisement to North Carolina Farmers to Invest in Fish Scrap.
Source: *The Cleveland Star*. November 5, 1918.

No. 5144 — 10 — SHARES

The Fisheries Products Company

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

This is to Certify, That Wm. T. Clausen is the holder of Ten Shares of the COMMON CAPITAL STOCK of

THE FISHERIES PRODUCTS COMPANY

of the par value of TEN DOLLARS each, transferable only on the books of the Company by the holder hereof, in person or by duly authorized attorney, upon the surrender of this Certificate, properly endorsed.

This stock is full paid and non-assessable.

Witness, the seal of the Company and the signatures of its President and Treasurer or Secretary, at Wilmington, N. C., this the 20th day of October 1919

Treasurer Secretary — Thomas H. Hayes, President

THE FISHERIES PRODUCTS COMPANY INCORPORATED 1918

SHARES 10 EACH

Fisheries Products Company Common Stock Certificate, signed by Thomas H. Hayes.
Source: NCMM Southport

Bussells opened the Atlantic Fisheries Company on purchased Orton Plantation property north of Southport. He scouted this area for ten years before settling on the sixty acres near Orton.[1] Menhaden processing plants were already operating in North Carolina in areas north of Southport and Wilmington, with a large concentration of factories in Beaufort, Hatteras, and Roanoke Island. Bussells was an engineer from a family of menhaden fishermen and understood that this area was also potentially conducive to menhaden oil processing, as the waters contained plenty of fish.

Before Bussells opened up Atlantic Fisheries, he procured several patents for inventing or improving machinery used to extract oil from menhaden fish and drying the rest for scrap fertilizer.[2] In 1916, three years before Bussells' death, the menhaden fishing industry boomed in Southport. He invented a way to recover a larger percentage of ammonia, potash, and phosphoric acid from the waste. One of his more well-known patents was the "Bussells' Method" of menhaden oil pressing and extraction and subsequent drying of the excess fish. The finished product resembled "snuff," according to an article highlighting Bussells in the *Wilmington Dispatch* on May 13, 1916.

The Fisheries Products Company: Lawsuits and Fraud

The Fisheries Products company incorporated in 1918 under the leadership of President Thomas H. Hayes. At its height, the company had assets of $9,000,000, with $1,000,000 invested in North Carolina. The company had facilities in several East Coast states with the chief office located at the St. Phillips plant. The company had twenty steamers that were shared among the factories. One thousand one hundred people worked for at Southport location, and there were 7,000 stockholders.

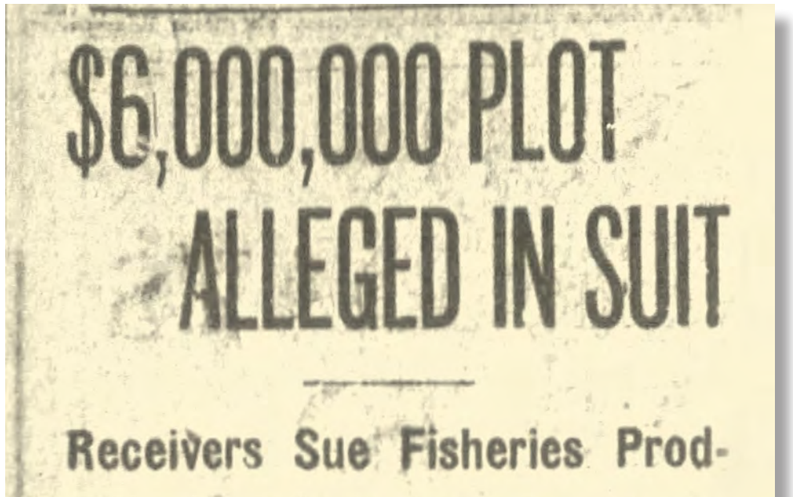
The period of 1870 to 1900 in the Northeast United States saw an increase in the construction of menhaden factories. Thomas Hayes, President of the Fisheries Products Company, and others from the Northeast, started new factories in the south. Menhaden populations in southern waters were plentiful and southerners looking for steady pay provided a ready workforce. Thomas H. Hayes and Raymond Anderton ran multiple companies simultaneously while Hayes kept residence in Manhattan, New York, and Anderton in Providence, Rhode Island.

continued...

The Rise of the Menhaden Fishing Industry *continued...*

Hayes traveled down quarterly to their offices in the Murchison building in Wilmington. A general manager was responsible for the direct oversight of the plant. He determined the division of labor of all workers from captains of vessels to workers in the facility. The Fisheries Products Company, opened in 1918, had its share of lawsuits as early as 1922 with Hayes and Anderton as defendants. One, filed November 25, 1922, named the company for the alleged violation of a North Carolina law that prohibited fishing and manufacturing of fish scraps by any non-resident person or corporation whose stockholders are not all residents of North Carolina. In 1921, an amended clause within the law stated it was illegal for, "any person, firm or corporation, the stockholders, who are non-residents of the state of North Carolina to build any factory or plant within the state for the manufacture of menhaden fish scraps and oil or to catch any menhaden or fatbacks within the waters of the state of North Carolina."[3] The company's attorneys during the suit were Robert C. Ruark of Wilmington and J.W. Ruark of Southport, the father and brother, respectively, of famed author Robert Ruark. If found in violation, the corporation would have to remove its organization from North Carolina and its property would be confiscated, which eventually occurred in 1925.

The judge dismissed the case against Hayes and Anderton temporarily, as another lawsuit, recorded on October 12, 1925, brought indictments against Hayes and Anderson citing $7,000,000 of stock sold under the company in earlier years as fraudulent. The company was subsequently closed and its assets sold at auction.[4] The stockholders received nothing in return for their investments. Anderton and Hayes were extradited from New York to Brunswick County in North Carolina but appealed the case and never had to step foot back in the state.



$6,000,000 PLOT ALLEGED IN SUIT

Receivers Sue Fisheries Products' Officials to Regain Sum Paid for Plants.

The Fisheries Products Company, a $10,000,000 corporation, through its receivers, Walter H. Neal and John S. Weskett, has brought action in the Supreme Court to compel Thomas H. Hayes, president and general manager, and Raymond J. Anderton, vice-president of the corporation, to return to the organization $6,000,000, which, it is alleged, was wrongfully obtained by the defendants.

Source: *Brooklyn Times-Union*. January 17, 1926.

Epilogue: After Fisheries Products Company

After the company closed in 1925, the fish factories still in operation at the Brunswick Navigation docks would be the primary menhaden processing plants in the Lower Cape Fear. The industry pushed on in the region and through the Great Depression. North Carolina farmers entered the 1930s in a worse financial situation than Hayes and Anderton who focused their endeavors back home in the north and remained millionaires. Hayes continued working, managing another menhaden processing factory into the 1950s. He served as vice president of Consolidated Fisheries in Lewes, Delaware, alongside his brother, Richard, president of the company.

Lawsuits and inquiries into Hayes' company, ranging from fish odor violations to an alleged kidnapping involving one of the company's steamers, made front-page news in the following decades. They would remain in the New England headlines into 1956 when the brothers sold the company, reportedly due to Richard Hayes' declining health.[5] Both men were sued in 1958 after four crewmembers sustained injuries on one of Consolidated Fisheries' menhaden vessels in Southport, N.C. The men claimed that on June 6, 1956, they operated the *North Sea*, and contend the gear and rigging crashed into the deck due to faulty repairs and injured the men.[6]

Anderton and his wife, Nina, began making headlines on both the east and west coasts beginning in the early 1930s. Anderton retired as the president of a woolen textile mill in Massachusetts, only one of his businesses that contributed to his multi-million dollar estate and his wife's well-known expensive jewelry collection. The Anderton's arrived in New York, New York, on the *Ile de France*, October 23, 1931, reporting $50,000 in jewelry missing. Mrs. Anderton reported she stowed $24,000 of the jewelry in her twenty-two pairs of shoes packed for the trip.[7] In 1934, Mrs. Anderton reported her sixth gem robbery, claiming that $25,000 in gems were stolen after she was hit with a ginger ale bottle that fractured her skull. Raymond Anderton was in the home during the robbery. Mrs. Anderton reported subsequent robberies including one by Gerard "Raffles" Dennis, an infamous jewel robber of celebrities and socialites, who later served time for his crimes in Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York. Raymond Anderton died at the couple's Bel-Air, California home in 1939 at the age of 58.[8] Ms. Anderton inherited her husband's fortune, acquired from his many years of menhaden, and wool factory ownership. The legacy of the Fisheries Products Company in the Lower Cape Fear lapsed into a distant memory. ■

LINER'S BAGGAGE RANSACKED IN VAIN FOR $50,000 GEMS.

Source: *Daily News*, New York, New York. October 23, 1931.

Raymond Anderton and wife, Nina.

Notes

[1] "The Menhaden Fishery: The Plant at Fort Anderson to Cost Thirty Thousand Dollars." The Semi-Weekly Messenger. Wilmington. February 8, 1901.
[2] Bussells, J.F. "Continuous Screw Press." United States Patent and Trademark Office. December 26, 1905. Retrieved from https://pdfpiw.uspto.gov/.piw?Docid=808193&idkey=NONE&homeurl=http%3A%252F%252Fpatft.uspto.gov%252Fnetahtml%252FPTO%252Fpatimg.htm.
[3] "Fisheries Products Company Enjoins Fish Commission From Confiscating Plant, "The Wilmington Morning Star, November 25, 1922.
[4] "Receivers Sue Two in $6,000,000 Fisheries Deal." The Brooklyn Daily Eagle. January 17, 1926.
[5] "Lewe's Fish Plant is Sold. "Wilmington Morning News, Wilmington, Delaware. December 10, 1954.
[6] "$13,655 is Asked in Fishery Suit. "Wilmington Morning News, Wilmington, Delaware. June 6, 1958.
[7] "Liner's Baggage Ransacked In Vain for $50,000 Gems." Daily News, New York, New York. October 23, 1931.
[8] "Mrs. Anderton Slugged in 6th Gem Robbery. " Daily News, New York, New York. September 7, 1934.

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