

Greetings from Ocracoke Island. It is still winter, of course, but we've had several days of balmy, almost Spring-like weather. Then it turned a bit colder again. Walks on the beach will be even more pleasant as it starts to warm up. Dolphins continue to be plentiful. David Ried, a local boat builder, told me that he was out on the beach several days ago when some fishermen were trying to launch their dory in the surf. Apparently there were so many dolphin circling about, including quite a few juveniles, feeding on a school of trout that it was almost impossible to get the boat into the water. David suggested that the fishermen might want to make a deal with their competitors. If the dolphin would help round up the fish, they would get a cut of the take!

Our dance evening two weeks ago was a big success. About two dozen of us danced to the music of David Tweedy, Michael Hilton, Keven Hardy and Mark, a visiting mandolin player. We learned some new contra dances and had fun remembering the traditional Ocracoke "square dance." We will get together again on the 17th. If you are on the island then come join us!

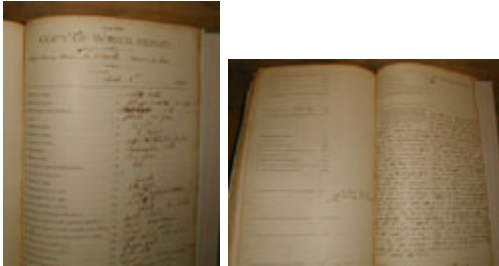
BJ is hosting a Valentine's party and dance at her house tonight. We are looking forward to a fun evening.

In our last posting I shared a few Ocracoke words and expressions. Another very common term used on the island is "some." It takes the place of "very" but comes after the adjective. For example, an O-cocker is much more likely to say "It sure is pretty some today" than to say "It is very pretty today." "Some" can be used with almost any adjective, but common expressions are "hot some," "old some," "windy some," "hard some," etc. One grandmother was heard to remark that her grandson was "oaky some" when he came inside after climbing the trees in the yard.

My great-grandfather, James W. Howard, was keeper of the Life Saving Station at Hatteras Inlet around the turn of the last century. When you cross the inlet on the ferry look over to the north point of Ocracoke. You will see a series of pilings. Sometimes they are surrounded by water; at other times the beach has built out and sand has filled in around them. These are the remnants of that station which washed away in the 1950's after extensive damage from hurricanes and other storms. Photographs of the station can be seen in the book ["The Story of Ocracoke."](#)

Pictured below are some of my great-grandfather's original hand-written shipwreck reports from 1883-1894. These were salvaged decades ago from an abandoned store on the island by Bill March from Virginia. He graciously presented them to me a few years ago. Following the photos is a transcript of one of the reports. (Thanks to Ellen Marie Fulcher

Cloud for transcribing these exactly as written.)



April 8, 1889

NELLY POTTER, 2 masted schooner 99.00 ton out of New Bern, NC 20 years old. Official # 18,328. W. WAHAB Master and friends from Washington to New York - crew of six, cargo of lumber, value of vessel \$3,000, cargo \$2,000 wrecked near Hatteras Wash, 6 miles NNE of station. Sunk - drug ashore about 7 miles from shore, about 1:30AM, severe gale, full tide. Discovered about 5 AM Monday 8th by DAVID WILLIAMS, lookout. Arrived at wreck 10 AM, returned to station 12 PM. Brought 4 men ashore in Supply Boat. One trip that day. 6 lives saved all belonged to Ocracoke, NC.

APRIL 8TH 1889

Lookout spied schooner, seemed to be ashore on reef in Pamlico Sound near Hatteras Swash. distance 6 miles NNE. About the time we were spying the schooner her mainmast fell. Keeper, crew tuck supply boat as she has sails as it wer impossible to row against such terrific gale. Left station 5 AM. We battle hard almost has to give it up several times as the sea was breaking over. Every sea almost sunk the boat with two men bailing with buckets, but after very hard struggle we wer able to get to the wreck schooner which was sunk, both mast gone, sea breaking right over her, every sea. We anchored under lee of schooner to free our boat. About that time Capt. Burrus, keeper of Durant Station come to the rescue in very large sail boat, with 10 men. Capt. Burrus said that he did not think I cold reach the schooner from my station, as I had to beat to the windward. But wee soon got along side, tuck off the wreck crew, 6 men. All they wear wer drench with water as the see smashed ovr thm. I tuck four of the crew ashore at my station. Capt. Burrus tuck 2 men with him. Al that we cold do at presant as storm was dangerous. April 9 keeper, crew left station 6 AM to schooner Nelly Potter to save her material, which we did. Work hard all day all cold do until Capt. of schooner cold hear from owners and if should want us he wold set colors - returned station 4:30 PM.

April 12, 1889 James W. Howard

These historical records, as well as oral traditions, can offer us only a glimpse of what life was like on the island over a century ago. But it is enough to give us respect for the men and women who braved hardship, severe weather and poverty to build full, rich and meaningful lives, and who passed down their culture and traditions so that we can benefit from them today.

Coming soon: Photos of my great-grandparents, other relatives and island scenes from the past.

I also had a request to include rental information here. Click on the “Ocracoke Island” link on the left and look for links to our island realtors. In the future I will be suggesting several other rental homes for those of you who might like an older, basic house with lots of character.

Thank you for visiting with us again. We hope you had a wonderful **Valentine’s Day** and we are looking forward to seeing you when you are next on the island.

Philip and the entire staff of Village Craftsmen