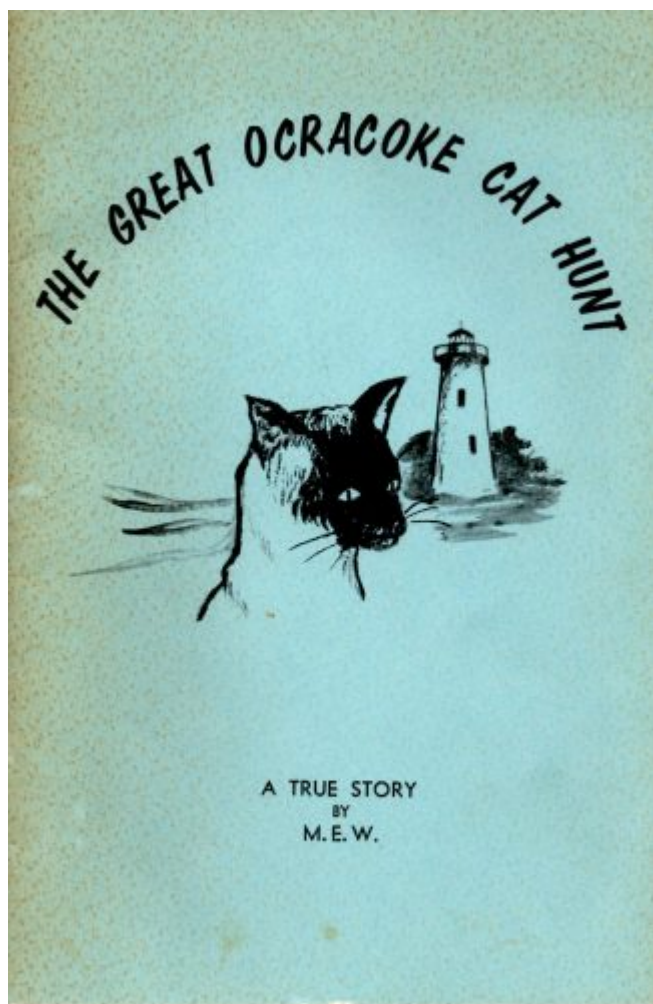


This small book was written and published by former Ocracoke School teacher Mary E. Williams in 1961. It provides a glimpse into island life more than a half century ago. People mentioned in the book include Miss Williams and her partner/colleague Miss Evans, school children, Linda Gaskill and Christine O'Neal, and island merchant Mr. Walter O'Neal. Pictured are the schoolhouse, water cisterns, Jack Willis' Store (now the Working Watermen's Exhibit) and Howard Street.

Scroll down to read the entire 26 page booklet.





This is the cat that was lost.
Her worth far exceeds her cost.
At a penny a purr, and a nickel a nip
A dollar for fur from her head to her tip,
A hundred sighs for her kittens six
(Though she'd been careless and they were a mixture.)
You can plainly see that
She's a valuable cat.



These are the teachers she left.
Comfortable, fat,
Good for a cat.
They often served fish
(Her favorite dish.)



But they went away
For two nights and a day
And enlisted Christine and Linda to feed her.

She roamed the empty house
In search of a mouse.
And found her own company bleak.



In her lonely contemplation
She pictured a vacation
On the sand dunes overlooking the creek.



When the girls arrived
At half past five
She hid quietly behind the door.
While the screen stood ajar
She streaked for the yard.



Cried Christine, "That cat's gone out of that door!"

Echoed Linda, "Out of that door!"

Search they did.
And from where she was hid
She sniggered and didn't go home.



Oh, sad was the night
And sad was the sight
Of two fat ladies bereft
(They'd arrived after Kitty left.)



These are the children who hunted the cat
That was lost
Strayed, stolen — or (whisper it) worse.
(For nobody knew where she went.)



Little girls cried, and called,
And ran from spiders,
And made noise.



Some long-legged boys
Peered into cars, and cisterns,
And under roots and houses
And made noise.

Until the island rang
With the plaintive twang
Of "Here Kitty, here Kitty, here Kit."



The poor cat jumped
(She was sunning by the pump)
And ran deep into the yaupon wood.
She'd been dreaming of fish
(Her favorite dish)
And thinking she could
Go home.

She was not used to noise
And girls and boys
Crying, "Kitty, here kitty, here kit!"
So afraid to come out
She (who'd been quite stout)
Hid for two days in the woods
And got thinner



and thinner



AND THIN.



Everyone knew, all were alert
Neighbors, storekeepers, and dogs.
They were all kind
And wanted to find her.
Even dogs on Ocracoke like cats.



All were forlorn
When the fourth high tide
Rose after she had gone
Calling voices died
And the poor ladies cried
For the purrs and the fur and the nip.

Next day came
The question the same
"Have you found her?"
"No . . . not yet."



But deep in the woods
Miss Willow dreamed of food.
She had to have fish
Or any edible dish
And crept into Mr. O'Neal's yard.
He knew her, too,
After such a to-do.



And brushing mosquitoes away
Forged to their door, with the news he bore,

"THAT CAT'S OVER THERE.
DO YOU WANT HER?"



They flew to her side
(She didn't try to hide)
And homeward in glory they bore her.

After four filets of fish
Her VERY favorite dish



She carefully washed her face.
They watched her with pride,
Then dashed outside
To spread the word to dear friends around