

Wayfarers Cruise to Shackleford Banks *Jim Heffernan W1066, W2458*

The Cruise plan for October 30 began to change an hour after the first boats launched. Three Wayfarers crewed by Uwe Heine/Nancy Collins, Al Schonborn/Gail Walters and Jim/Linda Heffernan got off to a late start from the Beaufort, NC waterfront on what was planned to be an offshore run in calm seas to the Cape Lookout Bight. With



Wayfarers set out for Shackleford.

a perfect wind from the North we could make good speed broad reaching. However there was one snag. The tide was at maximum flood speed and Beaufort Inlet would have some large standing waves with the wind against the current and our progress would be slow for the first hour.

With only seven hours to sunset we rendezvoused for a short gam and decided to stay inside the Banks and try to make a landing somewhere near the eastern end of Shackleford near the site of the abandoned Diamond City.

The Shackleford Banks was first acquired by a Virginia planter named John Shackleford in 1713 who was granted several large tracts of coastal NC land, which included the skinny barrier island. By the late 1800s, the island was home to a small community of permanent residents – a settlement known as “Diamond City” – which, at its largest point, had roughly 500 full-time locals. This island town, however, would not last for long, as an 1899 hurricane persuaded virtually all of the residents to abandon the town, with the last island dwellers leaving by 1902.

Another hurricane, the 1933 Outer Banks Hurricane, opened up an inlet on the eastern edge of the Shackleford Banks, separating it once and for all from the Core Banks and the Cape Lookout Lighthouse.

Sailing downwind in shallow water is a bit tricky since we were looking into the sun and could only see the shallows as we came upon them running with board and rudder partially up. As we approached the remote island, some ponies came into view and quickly were out of sight hidden by the scrub trees and sea grasses. Near the remnants of a pier we lowered sails and drifted toward the sandy shore with anchors ready.

With boats secure the exploration began. A path was found that led to the settlers’ livestock pens and a series of small fields where six ponies were grazing completely uninterested in our curiosity and clicking cameras. Uwe really wanted to do some shelling on the ocean beach and he was rewarded with some unique shells and a disc from a whale spine.

While standing on the high ocean-side dunes looking across the Bight toward the iconic Lookout Lighthouse, we



Apparently accustomed to visitors, these feral horses paid little attention to our presence.

realized that we never would have had the close up experience with feral horses had we tried to make the ocean run. We will get to the lighthouse next year if we leave earlier.



Left: Nancy Collins, Gail Walters and Linda Heffernan are ready to explore eastern end of Shackelford Bank.

Left below, Uwe Heine holding a disc from a whale spine that he found on the beach.

Right below: Gail was in high spirits during the cruise as she took the helm on "Shades" and Uncle Al was free to photograph the excursion.

