

SHORELINES – August 2004
As presented to the Island Review Magazine.

The Tour Continues

Last month, we started a tour of Bogue Banks highlighting the public access and parking facilities available along the island. We also touched upon the philosophy and planning considerations each political subdivision has adopted to facilitate beach visitation and reviewed the beach corridor including Indian Beach/Salter Path, Pine Knoll Shores (PKS), and the very western tip of Atlantic Beach (AB). In this issue of *Shorelines*, we're going to take a more complete look at the Town of AB and introduce Fort Macon State Park. Both Fort Macon and the Town of AB have a rich history that adds a unique aura to the eastern end of Bogue Banks that has translated and evolved into a blueprint for the island, including current day parking and access trends.

Fort Macon is named after North Carolina statesman Nathaniel Macon and was constructed utilizing approximately 15 million bricks from 1826-1834 for a cost of almost \$464,000. As an interesting note for fellow shore protection enthusiasts, erosion spurred by inlet processes and hurricanes claimed earlier fortifications and by the time the Fort was completed, it was determined that shore armoring was required as well. During the 1840s, Robert E. Lee, a recent graduate of West Point designed and supervised the construction of the first jetty and other shore armoring structures. Fort Macon was surrendered to Union forces during the Civil War on April 25, 1862 and served as a prison following its capture. Fort Macon became North Carolina's second State park in 1924 when the U.S. Congress permitted the State to claim officially abandoned Federal facilities for one dollar. The Fort remained in disrepair until the Civilian Conservation Corps restored the Fort in the mid 1930s. The Fort Macon State Park was opened for public use in 1936, and presently holds two large parking areas that can accommodate 594 automobiles and also houses the U.S. Coast Guard – Group Fort Macon.

The two parking areas are commonly referred to as "The Fort" and "The Bathhouse" (see map), and have many amenities available for public use. According to the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation newsletter, *The Steward*, Fort Macon is consistently the most visited State Park in the coastal plain with well over a 1.25 million visitors reported in 2003 alone.

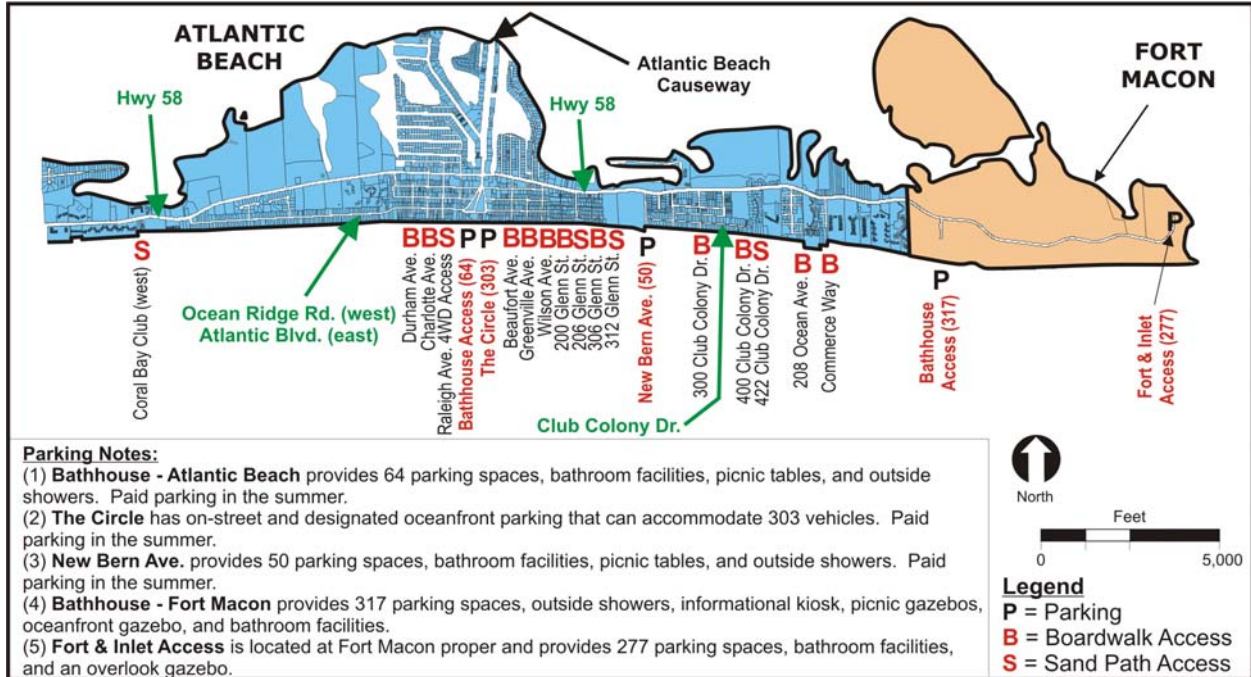
AB is the oldest commercial town on Bogue Banks and was first visualized as a seaside resort in the 1870's by Appleton Oaksmith of mainland Carteret County. Mr. Oaksmith acquired all of AB and a portion of east PKS but never constructed his resort community after he lost his ambition when four of his daughters died in an accident on July 4, 1879. However, Mr. Oaksmith's vision of a seaside resort came to fruition when John J. Royal of Morehead City and Winfield S. Chadwick of Beaufort constructed the first bathing pavilion on Bogue Banks in the location of present day Club Colony in 1887. AB enjoyed a brisk ferry trade and entertainment business and quickly became the center of dancing and band music by the time the original toll bridge opened in 1928. The bridge remained a toll bridge from its opening until it was sold to the State of North Carolina in 1934. Also in 1928, AB went through a revitalization period and the new AB opened for business with a newly established resort situated in an area that became known as the "Circle", which continues to be the town's focal point. The economic boom of the post-World War II era helped AB develop to its modern level and also represents the time period when N.C. Highway 58 was opened to the rest of the island heading west.

Public access is highly focused at the Circle and the adjacent public access located immediately west of the Circle, and a large regional access at New Bern Avenue. There is paid parking during the summer months for \$1.00 an hour, or a season parking pass can be purchased for \$20. The sites are also augmented by a dense network of public walkways located at the ocean terminus of most of the shore perpendicular roads in AB. And of course don't forget the four piers located in AB that offer some great fishing and another method to enjoy the beach. Next month: Emerald Isle part 1.

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BEACH PARKING & ACCESS LOCATION MAP ATLANTIC BEACH & FORT MACON Bogue Banks, Carteret County



Please visit www.protectthebeach.com/parking.html for a complete set of island-wide maps.