

**Yeoman, David: When the Booze Yacht Ran Ashore** <sup>[1]</sup>

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**David Yeomans: When the Booze Yacht Ran Ashore**

by David Cecelski. "[Listening to History](#) <sup>[2]</sup>," *News & Observer*. Published 7/14/2002. Copyrighted. Reprinted with permission.

I visited David Yeomans at his fishing camp at Cape Lookout, on the far southern end of the Outer Banks. A native of Harkers Island, on the other side of the sound from the Cape, he is one of the last seasonal residents of a historic fishing community that once flourished in the shadow of the Cape Lookout lighthouse. Today he is the keeper of the island's old ways and old stories.

While we sat in the shade of weeping willows in his front yard, Yeomans told me a story about a whiskey boat named Adventure that ran aground there in the middle of the Prohibition era. Before I left, he also crooned an inspired rendition of a popular local song that recalls that providential day. "The Booze Yacht" was written at Yeomans' home by two local musicians in the 1920s. I've heard it called Carteret County's "national anthem."



David Yeoman. Photo by Chris Seward, 2002. To request permission to ~~reprint~~ <sup>with the goal to step up</sup> purchase a print, please contact the *News & Observer*.

Oh, it was a bad, terrible night. It was September of 1920 and it was a tempest it was blowing so hard. A mullet blow, we call it. The Adventure came on down the beach and ran ashore right there. There was no inlet here then, just a place where the boats would come in. Well, it was illegal and the captain didn't want to alert this Coast Guard station up here, so he decided the best thing to do was put some of that whiskey overboard. He figured the boat would lighten up and they could get off and leave. Finally that particular night the fishermen met at Mr. Cleveland Davis' store over on Harkers Island. Cleveland Davis' store was where everybody met and told all the stories -- the beehive, they called it. That's where everything went on, good and bad. So they said all right, that's what we'll do. So they came on and rowed there to the Drain. Well, the tide started coming up and got high. They helped each other pull the boats across the Drain. They'd get one out pretty good, then go back and get another. They stopped there, and said what in the world is that? There was that whiskey right in front of them! One fellow reached down and got a burlap bag. He lifted it up and he heard the glass jangle. So he took his knife and cut it open. Pints and glasses were passed around. He said, boys, it's the best you have ever tasted! I don't know where it come from, but I've never drunk anything this good! Oh, it put the fishing on the bum, just like the song says. They threw the boats down and grabbed up the whiskey and went home. 'Course, there was plenty of families that lived out here back then. They called it Cape Lookout village. So the villagers said, what in the world are them boys doing? Well, when the fishermen went back down one time, they said, let's go see. A rounder -- that's a person that knew everything going on and was in everything -- he came to Mr. Cleveland Davis' store and told them that a booze yacht had come ashore on the Cape. Every fellow that could went out there! They said they'd go get it. And like the song says, "Things have changed since those times, and some folks are up in G's" --that means they've got some money, you know -- "while others, they are down and out. But they all feel just like me: some would part with all the

**The Booze Yacht**

(sung to the tune of "The Sidewalks of New York")

*Down around the bee hive  
Harkers Island retreat  
Every night and morning,  
That's where the fishermen would meet  
One day there came a rounder,  
A rushing by the door,  
He said, boys, let's go to Cape Lookout  
There's a booze yacht run ashore!*

*(chorus)  
This way, that way, to the Cape they run  
Now the coming of the Adventure  
put the fishing on the bum.  
Some folks lost their religion  
They back-slid by the score,  
The king lock stopper still stood ace high  
When the booze yacht run ashore.*

*That's when lots of rounders, for miles  
And miles around, kept their gas boats  
busy, cruising thru Core Sound.  
And some of them were happy, and some  
of them were sore, But King Lock  
Stopper stood ace high, when the  
Booze Yacht run ashore.*

*Things have changed since those times.  
Some are up in G's, while others  
They are down and out, but they  
all feel just like me,  
Some would part with all they got  
And some a little bit more  
To see another time like that  
When the booze yacht run ashore.*

-- by Ivey Scott and Ralph Sanders

**Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina :**  
David Yeomans lived from February 12, 1921 - March 1, 2006.

**Subjects:**  
[Biographies](#) <sup>[3]</sup>  
[Personal and oral histories](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

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