

# No man is an island — or has one to himself

Sally & Les Moore

MOREHEAD CITY (AP) — He doesn't say it, but you somehow get the feeling that Les Moore feels hemmed-in.

His shady, spacious yard and modest home are plenty big enough for him and his pet hound dog, Gypsy, but as he shows you around, pacing back and forth, you get the feeling that he needs more space.

Perhaps that's because he and his wife, Sally, who died in 1985, once had a whole island to themselves.

For 18 years, they were the only permanent residents on Cape Lookout, a 22-mile stretch of barrier island in North Carolina's string of Outer Banks.

A sparsely forested wilderness area, Cape Lookout is wedged in between Shackleford Banks and Portsmouth Island.

The island can be hot, insect infested, and at times, almost uninhabitable. It can also be beautiful.

"When we first went over, there were no dunes, nothing on the beach. It was just flat," recalled Moore. "While we were there, we planted trees and sea oats to help build up the dunes."

Moore was not born a seafaring man. Originally from Idaho, he met Sally in 1942 while he was in the army and stationed in Morehead City. He and Sally decided to build a motel at Atlantic Beach.

As Atlantic Beach began to grow, it got too crowded for the Moores. They sold their motel and bought six acres on the bight at Cape Lookout. They started a store, officially named Cape Lookout Sports Center.

The store catered to the fishermen and campers who came to the island. It eventually became a museum, of sorts, with shells, bottles and other treasures the Moores found washed up on the beach.

The Moores had to leave Cape Lookout in 1978, when the National Park Service designated it a national park.

They moved into Sally's old home place off U.S. 70 in Morehead City.

Moore is 72 now. He returns to the Cape to fish occasionally.

"The Cape was such a beautiful place," said Moore. "You couldn't get any closer to God Almighty. If anything can make you humble, it's the study of nature, how the animals and plants intermingle in the environment. Very few people have the chance to live like that."