

Te Fate of Israel Hands, the Pirate



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At Ocracoke Inlet is a place called "Teach's Hole" and the its location is still charted on maps. At Ocracoke and Portsmouth, Blackbeard could sell his captured cargoes to the merchants much cheaper than they could buy elsewhere and without their having to pay a farthing of British tariff. It was his home base where he careened his ships, repaired battle damage and fit them out more suitably for piracy. As a matter of interest, it was upon Ocracoke that he built a large and comfortable house for himself, two stories high, with many rooms.

It was known as "Blackbeard's Castle." It is where he lived when he came ashore and where he counted his treasure before moving it to a hiding place. The castle stood for many years on the island, before finally being torn down to make room for progress.

Before his death, the locations of treasure were known only to the devil and himself! Apparently, it was a favorite anchoring of Blackbeard, the pirate.

One evening, while Israel Hands, first mate, was seated at a table with Blackbeard slurping upon their third brigand of drinking rum, an unlucky situation came down upon Israel.

They were below deck and a single candle on the table gave a faint light to the scene. In a "test of courage" Blackbeard pulled his loaded pistol from his belt and held it under the table.

Then, vowing to shoot any man who did not run, he blew out the candle and started counting. The crewmen broke and ran, but Israel Hands remained sitting at the table drinkling his rum. Blackbeard pulled the trigger and blasted in the direction of the chair.

The slug hit Israel in the knee. Rum was administered to the knee and leg wile the bullet was cut from his leg. As a result the wound crippled Israel Hands for the remainder of his life.

Source: Legends of the Outer Banks by Charles Harry Whedbee (1966).
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