



## OUTER BANKS: FIRST IN FREEDOM ITINERARY

### A DAY IN DARE COUNTY

**T**he Outer Banks Visitors Bureau is proud to welcome you into our community for a day of sharing and discovery of the islands' rich African American heritage that's been adding to the collective OBX culture for generations. Whether you live on an island or just enjoy visiting, there's always a journey about getting there to tell, and today's itinerary begins on Roanoke Island and includes a trip to Hatteras, where two early pathways to freedom for Blacks in America set the diverse Outer Banks community of today in motion.

#### MORNING

**Breakfast:** If you want a coffee house style wake-up, check out Front Porch Cafe in Manteo. For a classic cooked breakfast, head to TL's Country Kitchen or Darrell's Restaurant.

#### **Hatteras Island**

► Hotel De Afrique  
Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum\*

The first Union military victory of the Civil War concluded August 29, 1861 with a naval bombardment and amphibious assault of Confederate forces at Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark, the former being near the location of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum today. Fugitive slaves began arriving daily in the new Union foothold, hoping for a taste of freedom. Union soldiers had to quickly assemble a

shelter to accommodate the influx of refugees forever known to the public as the Hotel De Afrique following a New York Times article on January 29, 1862. It was the first such haven for fugitive slaves in North Carolina. Visitors to the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum will notice a large black memorial near the main parking area describing the Civil War epic battle and ensuing freedom camp. The Hotel d' Afrique operated from 1861-1865 and is part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

#### **Roanoke Island**

► Richard Etheridge Homestead  
Island Farm

Explore Island Farm, a living history site interpreting daily life on Roanoke Island in the mid-1800s. The Etheridge's



INSPIRING EXPLORATION AND APPRECIATION FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE...

The **African American Experience of NENC (AAENENC)** celebrates the contributions of African American and encourages a deeper understanding of the significance of the region's cultural heritage in order to build more inclusive communities.

This project is a collaborative project between six NC counties that include:

- Camden
- Chowan
- Currituck
- Dare
- Pasquotank
- Perquimans

**Learn more online at:**  
**[NCBlackHeritageTour.com](http://NCBlackHeritageTour.com)**

were a slave owning family, and one former resident who would make his mark in history was Richard Etheridge. He was born a slave, the illegitimate son of John B. Etheridge, a white man of influence and father of the Adam Dough Etheridge who built the Island Farm mansion house. Richard was literate as a young man when even many Outer Banks whites could not read and write. Life on the farm demanded he became an expert waterman familiar with the shoal waters around Roanoke Island, skills which would serve him well later in life as America's first Captain of an all-African American US Lifesaving Station, a precursor to today's US Coast Guard. All ages will enjoy a morning at this pre-Civil War farm with heritage animals, demonstrations in cooking and blacksmithing and even two Wild Spanish Mustangs from the Outer Banks.

#### ► The Freedmen's Colony

1862-1867

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site \*

On the heels of the Union's first military victory of the Civil War at Fort Hatteras in August 1861, Northern forces took Roanoke Island in 1862 in another of the earliest Union military victories over the Confederates. Escaped slaves seeking the army's protection began pouring onto the island. In response, the army seized local property to use for the establishment of a Freedmen's Colony on the north end of the island across the street from where the NC Aquarium is today. At its peak population, there were nearly 4,000 former slaves from across the east who had made their way to Freedman's Colony. While the Freedman's Colony no longer exists today, you can experience its spirit and learn all about it at nearby Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

## LUNCH

There are many great choices in Manteo, depending on what your family or group likes. If you're a fan of sandwiches, check out Poor Richard's or The Hungry Pelican. Ortega's has great Southwestern fare. The Lost Colony Cafe and Brewery has a great mix of local beer and bistro eats.

## AFTERNOON

#### ► Lifesaving Station History

The Pea Island Cookhouse Museum

The Outer Banks has the distinction of being home to one of the most highly awarded rescue crews in the history of the U.S. Coast Guard, the all-Black surfmen of Pea Island Lifesaving Station who earned Gold Lifesaving Medals posthumously for valiance protecting mariners in peril along our coast. From 1880 until his death in 1900, former slave and Civil War veteran Richard Etheridge of Buffalo Soldier fame led a segregated team to guard a several-mile stretch of beach near where the new Captain Richard Etheridge Memorial Bridge is today at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. The original main station is long lost, but the detached cookhouse was rescued from the ravages of time and rehabilitated into a museum in the heart of Manteo on Roanoke Island where most of the Pea Island lifesavers called home. From here, we'll head to the NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island where everything we've seen so far today comes into greater perspective.

#### ► The Freedmen's Colony

1862-1867

NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island

Richard Etheridge (1842-1900) and his family were buried on property that he purchased in the vicinity of the former Freedman's Colony, and today you can visit his gravesite

and public memorial outside the Aquarium. Inside the Aquarium, you can enjoy a gallery of original portraits painted by local artist James Melvin in tribute to their legacy as part of your experience. Of the 609 documented rescues at sea by the Pea Island Lifesaving Station crew during its operational history from 1880 to decommissioning in 1947, the most famous was the rescue of the crew of the E.S. Newman during an October 1896 hurricane. Richard Etheridge was the first African American to hold the rank of Keeper of a life-saving station which is synonymous with the US Coast Guard today. You can see where the Freedman's Colony once thrived, allowing free black families to start new roots for the first time in the South, growing with and helping shape the inviting town of Manteo that welcomes so many across America to the Outer Banks.

## DINNER

The Outer Banks community prides itself on offering restaurants that you can only find on the islands. For classic local seafood, chicken and steaks, try Sugar Creek, Basnight's Lone Cedar or the 1587 Lounge. Blue Water Grill or Sam and Omie's is also nearby, as is Owen's Restaurant, one of the oldest family restaurants in North Carolina. Bring your appetite!

## ACCOMMODATIONS

The Outer Banks has everything under the sun to meet your party's needs. For longer stays, we recommend one of our famous vacation rental homes. If you're just in town for the night, we have a couple dozen hotels and motels that are a mix of points and family owned properties. For all your overnight needs, check out the full selection online at:

[outerbanks.org/places-to-stay](http://outerbanks.org/places-to-stay)

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\* National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom