

RALEIGH, N.C. — With a love of landmark anniversaries that matches their passion for pirates, travelers have marked [North Carolina](#) with an “X” for the 300th anniversary of Blackbeard’s death at Ocracoke and Stede Bonnet’s surrender at Southport. To close the tricentennial observance, three high-energy events unfold in the spots where the pirates left their mark: [Blackbeard 300](#) (Oct. 19-20 in Bath), [Blackbeard’s Pirate Jamboree](#) (Oct. 25-28 at Ocracoke) and the [Stede Bonnet Regatta](#) (Nov. 3 in Southport).

“Even Shakespeare would have been challenged to write a more compelling climax to the actual history of Blackbeard and Bonnet,” said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina. “The host destinations rise to the occasion with these stellar events, which are a tribute to their resilience in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. We pirate fans can only be grateful.”

Blackbeard and Bonnet arrived at Beaufort Inlet in June 1718. In what some might see as an omen, the mighty 40-gun flagship, the Queen Anne’s Revenge, ran aground in the shoals. Here’s a look at the broad strokes of history and the resulting commemorations.

Bath

What happened here: Bonnet and Blackbeard traveled separately to the colony’s nominal capital to obtain pardons from Gov. Charles Eden. Bonnet departed while Blackbeard and his closest mates assumed a peculiar place in the society; the ill-famed captain even took a local girl to wife. Yet hearing the call of the sea, they sailed to Ocracoke on the Spanish sloop Adventure. October 1718 found them encamped and hosting pirate pals who arrived with rum and women.

[Blackbeard 300](#): Pirate aficionados who want a deeper look at what happened can enlarge their view on Oct. 18. At 2 p.m., Superior Court Judge J. Carlton Cole will preside over a [mock hearing](#) to reconsider the pirates’ guilt, and the evening’s lively presentations will reveal details about the man known as Blackbeard. On Oct. 19, the walkable village of Bath will host festivities that include an epic sea battle, a pirate encampment, demonstrations of pirate skills, a costume contest, and an attempt to set a world record for the largest gathering of Blackbeards. The event will make history of its own with a presentation of descendants of pirates, Colonial officials, Royal Navy officers and other participants in Blackbeard’s story.

Ocracoke

What happened here: This remote Outer Banks island made a convenient place for Blackbeard and his trusted crew to drop anchor. After reports of renewed plundering reached him in Williamsburg, Lt. Gov Alexander Spotswood dispatched Lt. Robert Maynard to put the pirate out of action. The morning of Nov. 22, 1718, Maynard and Blackbeard engaged in a battle of seamanship and firepower. Thinking he’d won, Blackbeard boarded Maynard’s vessel, and to his surprise, Navy crewmen swarmed from below deck. In the close fighting that followed, Blackbeard was repeatedly slashed and shot five times (by Maynard’s count) before dying. His head was severed and mounted on the bowsprit for the victors’ return to Virginia.

[Blackbeard’s Pirate Jamboree](#): From the Oct. 25 warmup with music and rum to the Oct. 28 memorial service for those killed in the Battle of Ocracoke, travelers have continuous chances to party, parlay and learn. Highlights include a re-enactment of the final battle, performances of the musical “A Tale of Blackbeard,” an encampment (which itself will be invaded), drills and demonstrations, music and magic shows. Travelers can raise a toast to history with beer from the resident [1718 Brewing](#) and a special edition Kill Devil Rum from [Outer Banks Distilling](#) (see more

ways to [drink like a pirate](#) at www.visitnc.com.

Southport

What happened here: Stede Bonnet, a novice known as the “Gentleman Pirate,” joined up with the wiser and wilier Blackbeard in 1717. In spring 1718, their three-ship flotilla headed north from the Florida coast, held passengers for ransom in a blockade of Charleston, S.C., then made their way to North Carolina. When the Queen Anne’s Revenge ran aground, Bonnet left for Bath on his own sloop while Blackbeard plundered the QAR. Wiser and seaworthier, Bonnet earned a reputation as a pirate to be feared. By August his ship needed extensive repairs, and he took sanctuary on a Cape Fear River estuary near modern-day Southport. That’s where Col. William Rhett, dispatched by South Carolina Gov. Robert Johnson found Bonnet, whose crew insisted on surrender after a bloody battle. Taken to Charleston for trial, Bonnet escaped but was quickly recaptured and convicted. He was hanged on Dec. 10.

Stede Bonnet Regatta: Hurricane Florence forced cancellation of Southport’s 300th anniversary event in September, but the 25th annual running of the Stede Bonnet Regatta and post-event festivities are set to go on as planned. The race comes with rules, but the only one that matters to spectators is the one that requires captain and crew to sail in costume. The American Fish Company pier marks the starting and finish line for the race in the Southport-Bald Head Island vicinity. The after-party begins at 5 p.m. at the [Provision Company](#).

Find more events from the coast and across North Carolina at VisitNC.com.

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