



Barbara Bruce McInnis 1993

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My mother bought a house at Cherry Grove when I was 7 or 8 years old, and we spent at least a month there every summer. I was practically raised by Sonny Nixon at "Sonny's Place". I can't really remember how I learned to dance, maybe by osmosis, but I've danced many a dance at "Sonny's" and at the Cherry Grove Pavilion. Bert Altman ran the pavilion, and it was a big thrill for me when he asked me to dance (which wasn't often) because he was older than I was and such a good dancer.

I wasn't allowed to go to Ocean Drive at night until I was 14 years old. The first night I went was one of the most exciting nights of my life. It took me hours to decide what to wear - which pegged shorts, which angora sweater, which little scarf, and whether to wear ballet shoes or "Elfies". My heart was pounding with nervousness and excitement as I went up those side steps at the pavilion. All I could think about was what cute boy I was going to meet and who I was going to dance with. That excitement never left me all through the "fifties" each time I climbed those stairs. Remember how you could dance for hours and hours and never get tired - sure wish I could still do that.

There are so many wonderful beach memories: racing between O.D. and Cherry Grove in Dennis Beam's yellow convertible with Harry Bolyn (one of my first big crushes); Half Moon Lake; crushes on Homer and Don Bessent; being scared to death of the Tabor City boys and their "Church Keys", the Treadway brothers, and big Hoyt; seeing the movie "Mom and Dad" at the O.D. theater (the first picture showing an actual birth and they had nurses stationed at the theater because so many people fainted); the Polio scare; Larry Blake's moccasins; Franz Johnson's Brogans; Freddie Onley's Cardigan coats; Tom Lilly chug-a-lugging; Dennis Beam dancing to "Bradshaw Boogie"; Harry Driver coming from Myrtle Beach and dancing at Ocean Drive on Sundays; the lifeguards, especially "Doc" Brown with his little dog that loved beer, "Swink" and "Greenback"; and all of the other boys with wonderful nicknames - "Wormy", "Snake", "Possum", "One Lung", "Buck", "Little Red", "Scope" (swinging from the rafters), "Turk", and "Fat the Cat" - to name a few; and walking on the beach with a boy you had just met - you sure couldn't do that in these days and times.

All of the above add up to some wonderful, carefree memories of an extra special time in my life.