OUT IN THE OUTER BANKS
North Carolina Shoreline Tour

March 8-16, 2024
9-day, 8-night tour

Register today at hsmichigan.org
or by calling (800) 692-1828

Tour includes motorcoach transportation; all lodging; all dinners and breakfasts; and all admission fees, taxes, and gratuities. HSM membership required. Price is per person based on double occupancy.
You’ll find some of the most storied places in American history along the North Carolina coast: Ocracoke Island, where Blackbeard the Pirate met his end; Cape Hatteras and the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse; and Kitty Hawk, where the Wright Brothers flew the first airplane. We’ll visit all these places and more on our “Out In the Outer Banks: North Carolina Shoreline Tour.” Our custom-designed tour also includes a cruise on the Cape Fear River, a guided tour of the battleship USS North Carolina, the Mariner’s Museum in Newport News, and the Edgar Allen Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia. We’ll eat, talk, tour, and learn, and return to Michigan with great memories.

We leave Michigan and board in four locations: Grand Rapids, Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Dundee. The Lansing location is at our office building on the city’s west edge; the other three locations are Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Park and Ride lots. You can leave your car all week. As we motor through Ohio and Pennsylvania, you can take a nap or watch a movie on the coach’s DVD system. We’ll make sure you wake up in time to play one of Bob’s Useless Trivia Games.

Dinner on this night is at a great Italian restaurant: Tamarack Marketplace in Beckley, West Virginia. Our Michiganders on the Road® tours include full dinners every evening, with dessert. (No true historian passes up dessert.) Lodging is nearby at the Hampton Inn. All of the hotels on our tours offer a complimentary breakfast so that we’re primed for a full day of touring.

We arrive in North Carolina to tour Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. This National Park Service site interprets the battlefield where the British army of General Charles, Earl Cornwallis clashed with the Continental army under Major General Nathanael Greene on March 15, 1781, in one of the major battles of the Revolutionary War. The 2,100-man British force defeated General Greene’s 4,500 Continentals but lost a quarter of its strength. Greene moved into South Carolina, while Cornwallis marched into Virginia and ended his campaign in a catastrophic surrender at Yorktown.

We’ll learn about North Carolina’s role in the Revolution, explore the battlefield and interpretive center, and then retire to Michelle’s Kitchen & Table for dinner and spend the night at the Springhill Suites in Durham.

Wilmington, North Carolina’s historic district features outstanding architecture, and this afternoon we’ll tour one of the real gems: Bellamy Mansion. Architect James Post designed the house for physician and merchant Dr. John D. Bellamy. Enslaved workers and free black artisans built the 10,000-square-foot, twenty-two room mansion in 1859-1861. Our guided tour includes the house, slave quarters, and the formal gardens.
Wilmington lies on the Fear River, and what better way to learn the area's history than a river tour? Wilmington Water Tours will take us on a two-hour history tour led by Dr. Chris Fonvielle Jr., professor of history (emeritus) at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. The pontoon boat tour, “Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear,” explores the area’s past and present, and describes Wilmington’s history of 18th century pirates, Civil War blockade running, the Union’s military operations to capture the city, and much more.

After dinner and a full day of touring, we’ll check in at the Towneplace Suites in Wilmington for the night.

The World War II battleship USS North Carolina is this morning’s destination. Commissioned in 1941, the North Carolina fought in every naval offensive in the Pacific Theater and earned fifteen battle stars. The Navy decommissioned the battlewagon soon after the war and slated it for scrapping, but a Save Our Ship campaign brought it to Wilmington as a museum instead. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986. We’ll take a special Topside Tour of the North Carolina to learn about the battleship’s history and operations.

We’ll take a break from history in the afternoon to explore nature at Airlie Gardens in Wilmington. Airlie Gardens originated in 1886 as a private garden for the Pembroke Jones family, who named it for their ancestral home in Scotland. German landscape architect Rudolf Topel turned the 67-acre property into a picturesque garden with thousands of azaleas, camellias, magnolias, wisteria, and palms. We’ll take a guided tour of Airlie Gardens with its spring blooms.

We then head up the Atlantic Coast to Morehead City for dinner and lodging.

Our exploration of the Outer Banks – the islands off the North Carolina coast – starts with a short drive to board the ferry to Ocracoke Island. The ferry ride takes about 2 ¼ hours. Our bus will board the ferry, too, while we enjoy passenger seating on the upper deck or relax in the cabin.

Ocracoke is a charming little tourist and fishing village at the southern end of the Outer Banks, and probably most famous as the place where Blackbeard the Pirate met his end. We’ll spend the day there touring the lighthouse, cemetery, Fort Ocracoke Monument, and just relaxing. Lodging tonight is at the Anchorage Inn, situated on Ocracoke’s little harbor.
Today’s activities feature a leisurely drive up the Outer Banks with stops at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Wright Brothers Memorial at Kitty Hawk.

Built in 1870 and standing almost 200 feet high, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is the tallest brick lighthouse in the United States. The tower is painted in black and white stripes like a barbershop pole, and ships could spot the light from its first-order Fresnel lens from 16 miles’ distance.

Beach erosion led the Bureau of Lighthouses to decommission the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in 1935. Two years later it transferred the Light Station to the National Park Service and the lighthouse and keepers’ quarters became part of America’s first National Seashore. The beach continued to erode until it was within 15 feet of the lighthouse, so in 1999 the Park Service moved the lighthouse and support buildings 1,500 feet back from the shore. We’ll tour the lighthouse and light station; tower climbs may be possible in 2024 if anyone wants to ascend the 269-step circular staircase up the lighthouse interior.

Continuing the drive north takes us to the Wright Brothers Memorial at Kitty Hawk. Wilbur and Orville Wright had consulted the U.S. Weather Bureau for advice on finding an area with open ground and steady winds suitable for flying experiments and received a reply suggesting Kitty Hawk. The Wrights traveled to Kitty Hawk for four seasons, 1900-1903, to test gliders and finally a powered airplane. On December 17, 1903, they made the first four successful powered airplane flights.

Today, the site of the Wright’s camp features a 60 foot-high granite monument, erected in 1932; a visitor’s center; a replica of their hangar and living quarters; and small monuments that mark the takeoff and landing points of each of their historic first flights.

At day’s end we’ll leave Kitty Hawk and the Outer Banks behind for Newport News, Virginia, and the evening’s dinner and lodging.

One of the many ships that sank off Cape Hatteras was the Civil War ironclad USS Monitor, famous as the Union vessel that dueled the Casemate ironclad USS Virginia (better known as the alliterative USS Merrimack) in the 1862 battle at Hampton Roads, Virginia. The Monitor’s unique revolving turret marked a revolutionary development in naval warships. After its battle with the Virginia, the Monitor remained on the James River until ordered to sail south to support the blockade of North Carolina ports. It foundered in a storm on New Years Eve while under tow and sank off Cape Hatteras. The wreck was discovered in 1973 and its turret, engine, guns, and other items are on exhibit at our tour’s next stop: the Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

We’ve arranged a special guided tour of the Mariners’ Museum to visit the USS Monitor Center and other exhibits, and then we’ll have free time to
explore on our own. There’s plenty to see. Congress has designated the Mariners’ Museum as America’s National Maritime Museum and it boasts the largest maritime history collection in the Western Hemisphere.

After lunch at the museum, we’ll head to Richmond for a tour of the Edgar Allen Poe Museum to see world’s largest collection of Poe artifacts. Museum curator Chris Sempter is a leading Poe scholar and will give us a special “Poe’s Life and Legacy” presentation to reacquaint us with the author of “The Raven,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” and other eerie stories.

Dinner tonight is at a great Richmond restaurant – Tarrant’s West – with lodging nearby at the Drury Plaza Hotel.

We start our drive back to Michigan today, but will pause in Williamsport, Maryland, to tour the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park. The C & O Canal opened in 1831 and linked Cumberland, Maryland, with Washington, D.C. It operated until 1924, mostly for canal boats hauling coal to Washington. Today the National Park Service operates several historic sites along the canal, including Williamsport at the confluence of the Conococheague Creek and the Potomac River.

Dinner tonight is at DiSalvo’s Station in Greensburg, Pennsylvania and coincides with the transportation theme: it’s a restored 1903 railroad station.

We complete our trip back to Michigan today with time along the way for Bob’s Useless Trivia Games and a movie or two.

Stay tuned for our next adventure at www.hsm.pub/motr
Yes! I (we) want to join Michiganders on the Road® for The North Carolina Shoreline Tour for $2,495* per person.

*Includes motorcoach transportation; all lodging; all dinners and breakfasts; and all admission fees, taxes, and gratuities. Historical Society of Michigan $39.95 membership required. Price is per person based on double occupancy. We encourage the purchase of travel insurance in case unforeseen events force you to cancel at the last minute. Deposits or payments made after the reservation deadline of January 26, 2024, cannot be refunded. NOTE: HSM Staff will be monitoring COVID-19 and will communicate trip policies before departure.

Mail or fax this form to:
Historical Society of Michigan • 7435 Westshire Drive • Lansing, MI 48917 • Fax: (517) 324-4370