

'Helene' Closed Plantation

PLEASANT OAKS — Pleasant Oaks Plantation is expected to be closed to the public for years as a result of damage suffered from Hurricane Helene, owner Hargrove Bellamy reported Wednesday. Helene roared through the plantation like Sherman marched through Georgia.

Left in the wake of the terrible-tempered lady were hundreds of damaged stately moss-covered oaks, holly, cypress and dogwood trees and azalea and camellia bushes.

Even though Helene came from the South, she acted like a vengeful Yankee as she took her spite out against a site which stood as one of the few remaining symbols of the Old South.

The 135-mile an hour winds ripped trees of five and six feet diameter out of the ground and spread them along paths of the scenic gardens.

Bellamy estimated a loss of over 400 trees. Approximately 100 of the oaks, many of which were over 300 years old, were blown down.

"It will take at least four or five years to clean up the damage wrought by the storm and, of course we will never be able to replace trees which were hundreds of years old and the pride of the Cape Fear region," Bellamy said.

Pleasant Oaks lost a large number of trees during Hurricane Hazel but "nothing in comparison with the devastation which we have now," Bellamy added.

The greatest damage occurred

in the section of the plantation where thousands of camellias and azaleas added their beauty to one of the most picturesque sites of the region. The uprooted trees criss-cross the paths which circled the scenic gardens.

Pleasant Oaks is located about

12 miles from Wilmington and has been one of the show places of the lower Cape Fear area from Colonial days.

Not too much is known about the early history of Pleasant Oaks

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'Helene' Closed Up Scenic Plantation

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but it is believed the land was granted to the widow of John Moore around 1725. The original house is believed to have been completed in 1728.

The plantation was in the hands of a Baker family for the first half of the 19th century and was bought by John A. Taylor of Wilmington in 1850 as a gift to his son, John D. Taylor, who adopted the career of a rice planter.

Hargrove Bellamy purchased the plantation from F. B. Adams in 1949 and immediately began developing his long-range plans for making the plantation one of the most beautiful spots in North Carolina.

The planning of the gardens was arranged to give the visitor a drive for nearly a mile through lanes of camellias banked on both sides of the driveway.

Helene Claims Top \$1 Million

WHITEVILLE — Claims of better than a million dollars have been filed as attributed to Hurricane Helene in Columbus County, it was learned for the office of the county commissioners Friday.

The largest claim came from the office of County Farm Agent Charles D. Raper, at the request of the commissioners. His report showed rural areas claimed damages of \$1,154,320 had been suffered. Largest loss was to the corn crop, just at harvest point when damaged, was \$562,500; next was the hay, \$119,085; and farm buildings, \$109,250.

N.C. REGIONS HIT BY 'HELENE'

Major Disaster Area Proclaimed

President Eisenhower Wednesday designated regions of North Carolina hit by Hurricane Helene as a major disaster area eligible for federal aid.

The request for help came from Gov. Luther Hodges and Sen. B. Everett Jordan (D-NC), who have been notified of the president's action.

There was no immediate allocation of relief funds. That will come after completion of a damage survey by federal agencies.

Meanwhile, Gov. Hodges has called on county and municipal officials in 20 counties to submit estimates quickly of hurricane damage to their areas.

In his earlier message to the president, Hodges said specific requests for aid would be forthcoming as soon as surveys of damage can be completed.

Counties asked to prepare hurricane damage estimates are Columbus, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Beaufort, Currituck, Brunswick, Pender, Carteret, Hyde, Dare, Pasquotank, Tryrell, Perquimans, Duplin, Jones, Washington, Camden and Chowan.

Federal funds will be made available for repairs to public facilities. The Small Business Administration will set up emergency offices in the hurricane-hit area to handle applications for loans from people who sustained damage to private property.