



—THIGPEN PHOTOGRAPHY



Jubilee!



WHEN it will happen nobody knows . . . why it happens even the experts aren't sure. Only this is certain: The cry of "Jubilee!" up and down the beach on the Eastern shore of Mobile Bay means, thrilling excitement, fun—and seafood for all.

Grand Hotel

POINT CLEAR, ALABAMA

AMONG its other distinctions Point Clear may be called "the Jubilee Center of the World" because the phenomenon occurs within six or eight miles up and down the beach from here—and nowhere else as far as we know.

Our guests ask more questions about jubilees than any other single subject, so we've prepared this to explain, as best we can.

In a jubilee, thousands of fish and/or crabs and/or shrimp come right up on shore.

The folks who quickly gather after first cry of "Jubilee! Jubilee!" have no trouble at all filling buckets, sacks and even wash tubs with the high-priced delicacies of the deep.

Despite the inconvenient hour—jubilees happen at night, often between midnight and dawn—it takes no time at all for a crowd to gather. The shoreline rings with shouts and laughter and squeals of excitement, and informality is the rule.

On some occasions it's primarily flounders that congregate and at other times it's a "shrimp jubilee" or "crab jubilee" but generally all three species plus a few other fish and eels, are involved.

Jubilees have not been positively explained by science but two theories exist, both based upon changing bay water. Since Mobile Bay is fed by rivers, some believe

the fish and shellfish may be dazed by a sudden merging of fresh and salt water. Others believe it's caused by changing temperature of the water, following heavy rains.

But no participant of a Jubilee ever stopped to ponder the question, which is just as well. It wouldn't be nearly so much fun if all the mystery were explained away!

The accompanying photographs may not be pretty—but at least they prove jubilees are not imaginary. They were made by a magazine photographer who came up with the first pictorial record of this very rare and unpredictable event. Until this happened no authentic pictures were available and, as a matter of fact, very little had been written on the subject. It's difficult to remain sufficiently detached and aloof to operate a camera while a jubilee is going on—and this may account for the fact that they went unphotographed for so long!

In the Summer, 1952, a magazine photographer had arranged with a friend residing on the Eastern Shore to call him next time he heard of a jubilee. When the call came (about 1 a.m.) he hurried from Mobile with a station wagon-load of lights, cameras, etc.

No one knows when or at what area on the beach the next jubilee will occur. Most Summers there are several but you can't even be sure of that!

