



NEWS LETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

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BLOCKADE RUNNERS OF THE CAPE FEAR TO BE DISCUSSED BY EVENING SPEAKER

Our speaker for the October 2nd meeting will be Mr. Ray Wyche, pastmaster at Hallshoro, North Carolina. He will discuss "Blockade Runners of the Cape Fear Area." A graduate of Wake Forest College, Mr. Wyche has done extensive research on the blockade runners as a hobby. He is a cousin of Mrs. Harry L. Mintz, Jr.

12,000 VISITORS AT OLD BRUNSWICK TOWN by Stanley South

Work at Brunswick Town State Historic site continues, with the major emphasis this summer on the completion of four large displays on Brunswick Town and Fort Anderson. These displays are housed in a temporary pavilion until a permanent museum is built on the site.

Fort Anderson, one of the largest remaining earthen forts from the War Between the States, has been cleared of undergrowth, and a path along the entire area of the fort allows the visitor to view this huge fortification that was the major defense fort for the port of Wilmington for thirty days after the fall of Fort Fisher.

The Brunswick County Historical Society donated funds to the Brunswick Town project which were used to print a quantity of attractive registration sheets for use by visitors. Mr. R. V. Asbury, Jr., the Brunswick Town guide designed the registration sheet, and has designed two place mats to be distributed to various interested restaurants in the area. These place mats, one on Brunswick Town, and another on the historic sites of Brunswick County, include maps showing the various places of interest as well as representative drawings illustrating various historic events. These maps will be a welcome aid to tourists eating in the restaurants using the mats, since they can be used as a guide to the historic sites in the county as well as an interesting souvenir

of their visit to Brunswick County. These mats are being financed also through the cooperation of the Brunswick County Historical Society.

Over 12,000 visitors have come to Brunswick Town so far this year to enjoy the historic story this double site has to tell. As work continues at the site more visitors from many states will often visit Brunswick Town and Brunswick County to enjoy the many historic attraction this area has to offer.

NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOUR HELP

This newsletter is your letter as a member of the Society. Anyone who has information for photographs concerning our local history which might be used in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to send them to "Newsletter, P.O. Box 47, Winnabow, North Carolina."

A BRIEF SKETCH OF JAMES HASELL

by Alice J. Taylor

During colonial days, there were a number of plantations along Town Creek, but the names and locations of most of them are unknown. "BellGrange" is one of the Town Creek plantations that has kept its identity over the years. James Hasell settled here after coming from Philadelphia in 1735. He received large grants of land in this area, but according to tradition, he bought "Bell-Grange."

Another tradition is that he had a grist mill at the turn of Mill Creek where the name changes to Rice's Creek. The mill dam that he is said to have built has over the years been used as a road bed, and it is still being used as such. It has been handed down that he lived in a large brick house on Town Creek at a site which has been known for years as the "brick house cut" or "field."

Hasell was a very prominent man; he was Justice of the Inferior Court, then Chief Justice of the colony. He was president of the Council and Acting Governor of the Province in 1771. (continued on p. 2)

(continued from last page) James Hasell

Part of his valuable library was found some years ago, and may be seen in the North Carolina Room of the University of North Carolina Library in Chapel Hill.

BRUNSWICK'S ITINERANT COURTHOUSE
by R. V. Asbury, Jr.

In 1696, Bath precinct was organized under the English Crown. This precinct extended from Albemarle County to the Cape Fear and beyond. By an act of Assembly, July, 1729, the southern part of this precinct was erected into the precinct of New Hanover. In 1734, Bladen County was formed from New Hanover.

Brunswick County was formed on March 8, 1764 from New Hanover and Bladen counties. It was named in honor of the House of Brunswick of which the four Georges, Kings of England, belonged. It is in the southern section of the state, and is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Fear River, Columbus, Pender, and New Hanover counties. The present area is 873 square miles, and the population is approximately 22,000.

In the early days in the county, people sought a livelihood by developing naval stores, and farming tobacco, corn, rice, cotton, and indigo.

A portion of the county is made up of a great deal of swampland, namely the lush Green Swamp, which has produced some of the most colorful and interesting tales of romance and adventure found in the folklore of the county's history today.

The Town of Brunswick was formed in 1726, and in the years to come, it flourished, becoming the first permanent town on the Cape Fear River. Established in 1754 as a borough town, it later became the county seat when the county was created in 1764. Years before 1740, court, as well as an occasional General Assembly meeting, was held in Brunswick Town. In 1779, the county seat was authorized to be moved to the plantation of John Bell near Lockwood's Folly Bridge.

In 1784, Walkersburg, named in honor of John Walker on whose land it was situated, was established. Provisions were made in the act for a courthouse and other public buildings to be located there. It is interesting to note that on June 24, 1784, a transaction took place between Schenking Moore and his wife, Mary, and Nathaniel Moore, in which they were selling land to William Evans,

merchant, for the sum of 400 pounds, land containing 420 acres, located on the southwest side of Lockwood's Folly. Accompanying this deed is a map giving the prescribed distance and other interesting data, such as the old Lockwood's Folly Bridge, graveyard, house, and courthouse. This would be, to my knowledge, in the area just north of Supply.

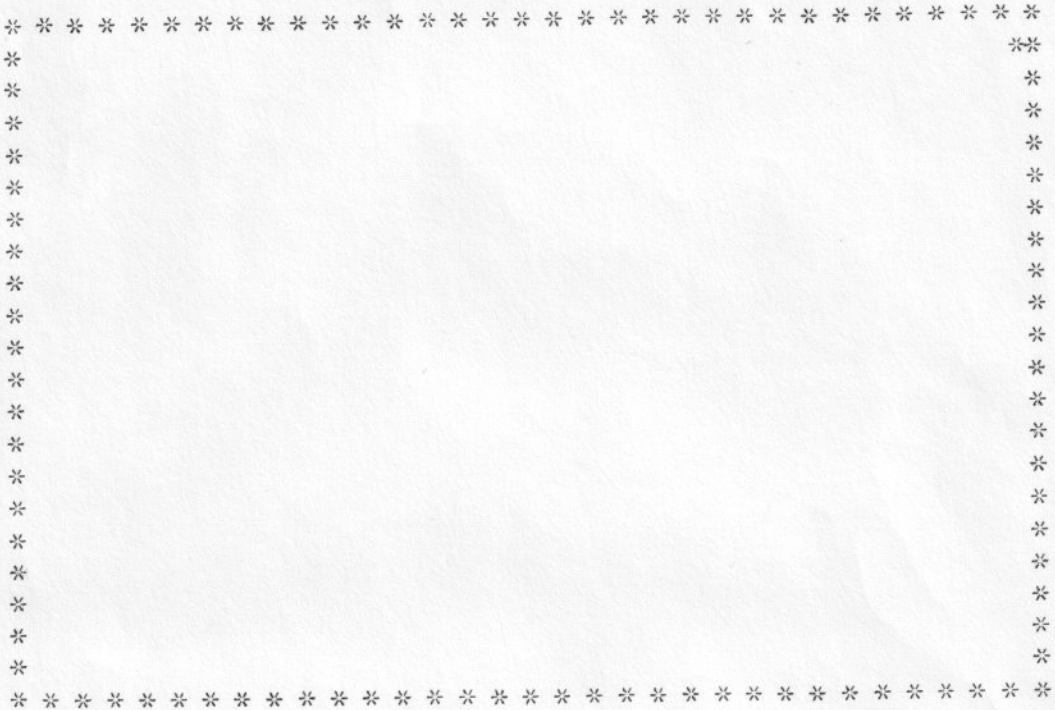
Sometime later the courthouse was moved from Supply to the mouth of Lockwood's Folly River, near the inlet. It stood on the west bank in the area now called Brown's Landing. On a map of the state made by Samuel Lewis in the 1790's, the county courthouse is shown on this same location on the Lockwood's Folly River.

The courthouse was a wooden frame building comprised of several rooms, one being the jail, the others, offices. It also had a large stone chimney made of ballast stone. Some of the senior citizens of the county remember this rustic weather-beaten building overlooking the inlet. Even today, people refer to the road approaching the landing as the Stone Chimney Road.

A temporary courthouse was also located at Deep Water Point, a few miles east of Southport and below Bonnets Creek. The act which established Walkersburg specified that until the courthouse there was completed, courts were to be held at the most convenient place. It is doubtful that the act was put into effect because in 1808, an act was passed authorizing the removal of the courthouse from Lockwood's Folly to Smithville. Court was held at the courthouse from 1805-1810. The records do not indicate where the courthouse was located. From April, 1810, to 1858, court was held at the courthouse in Smithville (now Southport). This town, established in 1792, was named in honor of Benjamin Smith, governor of North Carolina, 1810-1811.

In a North newspaper, name unknown, dated March 18, 1865, there appeared a sketch of the courthouse at Smithville, along with the following critical comments:

"Smithville, one of the oldest and most dilapidated villages in the South, is situated on the Cape Fear River, about two miles from the Atlantic. It has a population of about 600 persons, most of whom are engaged in fishing. The courthouse will give our readers an idea of its general appearance. One of the apartments in the building was used as a shoe store, the rest being devoted to the court offices. When



A northern artist's sketch of the Brunswick County Courthouse at Smithville, 1865

(description of courthouse continued)

HERE AND THERE: NOTES FROM THE STAFF

our artist visited it, piles of public documents were strewn over."

This newsletter was gotten up almost on the spur of the moment, and we ask the indulgence of the society concerning errors, and technical imperfections. This newsletter was a "brain-child" of Mr. R. V. Asbury who had the attractive letterhead for page 1 printed. The mimeographing was done by the secretary of the society. We appreciate the contributions of all those who prepared articles for the paper, and we urge others to prepare material for publication here. One can think of a number of subjects--"How did Lockwood Folly get its name?" "Why was Smithville re-named Southport?" Some members of the society should look into some of these matters as we look forward to future newsletters.

The rest of the article is missing, but perhaps it was no more flattering than the above. In 1789, an effort to move the courthouse failed, much to the regret of a group who felt that this public building should be located in the center of the county. In 1887, Smithville's name was changed to Southport, and it is still the county seat.