



NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BRUNSWICK TOWN, P.O. BOX 356, SOUTHPORT, N.C.

Vol. XVIII, No. 3

August 1978

REPORT OF THE PATRIOT COMMANDER

Col. Richard Caswell to the revolutionary Provincial Congress of North Carolina Camp at Long Creek, February 29, 1776

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that we had an engagement with the Tories at Widow Moore's Creek Bridge, on the 27th current. Our army was about one thousand strong, consisting of the Newbern battalion of minutemen, the militia from Craven, Johnston, Dobbs, and Wake, and a detachment of minutemen, which we found encamped at Moore's Creek the night before the battle, under the command of Colonel Lillington.

The number killed and mortally wounded, from the best accounts I was able to collect, was about thirty: most of them were shot on passing the bridge. Several had fallen into the water, some of whom, I am pretty certain, had not risen yesterday evening when I left the camp.

The Tories were totally put to rout, and will certainly disperse. Colonel Moore arrived at our camp a few hours after the engagement was over. His troops came up that evening, and are now encamped on the ground where the battle was fought: and Colonel Martin is at or near Cross Creek, with a large body of men. Those, I presume, will be sufficient effectually to put a stop to any attempt to embody again. ...Our officers and men behaved with the spirit and intrepidity becoming freemen contending for their dearest privileges.

-From Henry B. Dawson, "Battles of the United States by Sea and Land."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The speaker at the next meeting on August 14 at the Shallotte Presbyterian Church will be Bill Reades of the Fort Fisher Preservation Laboratory who will speak on the subject contained in his book "Southport, Smithville and Its Environs" Volume I (1520-1887). Copies of his book will be available.
2. The twenty-five regular members of the Society and new comers are reminded that the 1978 dues are due. They should be paid to Mrs. Elaine Harmon, Secretary-Treasurer.
3. Suggestions for nomination for the Society's officers for next year will be welcomed by Mrs. Marie Rourk, Nominating Committee Chairman. Please tell her about them soon.

A FEW FACTS PERTAINING TO SHALLOTTE

Shallotte received its name from the wild onions (known as shalotes) which grew in fields along, and a short distance from, the present Shallotte River, which is the western boundary of Shallotte.

The first merchant to carry on business was a Mr. McKenzie. The first man to look after Shallote people was Dr. Tulson.

A group of people by the name of Slate came to Shallotte in its early days and found it to be a good place for their headquarters for a while. They were interested in getting shingles out of Juniper Creek without much transportation over land. They attempted (using their slaves) to dig a canal that they might turn the waters of Juniper Creek into the Shallotte River thereby gaining access to ocean going vessels. The attempt was fatal since the waters never seemed to run just as far as it was necessary from them to transport shingles to a wharf at Shallotte on the Shallotte River.

The first school was a small frame building about one mile west of Shallotte. This building is now being used by Mr. W. A. Rourk for a barn. When the town of Shallotte began to make progress along the business lines, a larger wooden frame building was erected in the town and later the school was moved again to a still larger building west of the river.

Spiritually Shallotte has been influenced by several denominations but the only church building in this little town has always been known as the Camp Ground Methodist Church. Through the ages there have only been two buildings. The first building had two front doors, ladies entered the right hand door and were seated while the men entered the left hand door and did likewise. The present building is of wood, painted white with a red roof. Recently there has been some renovations in the interior and a small addition to the exterior.

Shallotte has grown from a one man store to a town with ten stores; a drug store, meat market, large warehouse (used exclusively by one man) two cafes, a church, post office and pool room and beauty palor, since the R.E.A lines have been established in 1940.

This town up until the recent years was supplied with products brought from Wilmington on boats. The boating business was a success for a number of years, but when the Highway U. S. 17 was completed, trucks replaced the boats causing a heavy downfall to the boatmen.

Shallotte High School which was erected in 1927, when county schools were consolidated, is situated west of the river and is the largest school in the county. The campus is almosy covered with buildings; two brick buildings (one under construction now, an Ag building) also two other wooden buidings and all excpet the one under construction is filled to their capacity.

Dr. Hayes has his office in the Shallotte Drug Store. Dr. Rosenbaum has an office in his home just west of the river. The 10 stores now standing consist of the following - 3 grocery and clothing stores - 1 furniture store and 6 filling station and grocery stores. Shallote also boasts of 3 barber shops (one located beside Dr. Rose nbaum's office) a shower bath and R.E.A office and 3 garages and 2 oil terminals.

-written by a W. P. A. Library Worker from Shallotte High School
circa. 1945

GAUSE LANDING FAMOUS IN EARLY HISTORY OF COUNTY

Although it has never received much notice of its historical antecedents, Gause Landing, on the coast some eight or ten miles below Shallotte, was memorable in past days.

When Old Town on the Cape Fear River above Southport was just becoming a settlement, the forefathers of Charles E. Gause of Southport and of John D. Bellamy of Wilmington left England. They first went to the Barbadoes and then came on to Cape Fear country.

Because of the prevalence of yellow fever at Old Town, brought there in ships from Nassau, the Gauses and Bellamys soon left Old Town and went down the coast some 40 miles to the place that became known as Gause Landing.

There they settled and around them grew a thriving community.

Of the things that existed during the days of this settlement little now remains except the same wonderful fishing, oystering and fine hunting. The one most enduring thing is the old Gause cemetery with its vault built of brick that was brought from England. This vault is a counterpart of the famous "King" Roger Moore vault at Orton.

The diary of President George Washington shows that he visited Gause Landing and was a guest of the great-great-great grandfather of Chas. E. Gause of Southport. This pre-revolutionary war Gause is understood to be sleeping with several other bodies in the Gause vault, or tomb, at the landing.

Some eight or ten other graves surround the tomb. As tombstones were then unknown and as there were no rocks in lower Brunswick, history says that a small cedar tree was planted as the marker of each grave. Some of these trees still remain.

"King" Roger Moore is credited with having settled at Orton, attracted by the natural beauty. The same thing may be supposed to have inspired the Gauses and Bellamys in the founding of Gause Landing.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY SOLDIERS PLAYED PART IN CIVIL WAR

(By Norwood O. Brooks)

When Beauregard fired that fateful bombshell which burst over Fort Sumpter in the early hours of April 12, 1861, it was only a few days afterwards that Brunswick County's first company of Confederates was organized in the interest of the lost cause.

The company of the 58 rebels, known as the Brunswick Guards, was raised by John S. Brooks and he was elected captain. Other officers elected were: 1st lieutenant Llewellyn Leonard; 2nd lieutenant, Oliver E. Mercer; 3rd lieutenant, George W. Walker; 1st sergeant, W. J. White; 2nd sergeant, Nathan Holden; 3rd sergeant, J. M. Stellberry; 4th sergeant, Ellis Russ; 5th sergeant, T. W. Swain; 1st corporal D. C. Drew; 2nd corporal, Armillan Hewett; 3rd corporal, H. L. Robinson; 4th corporal, George S. Reaves.

Finding quarters on Franklin Square in Smithville, now Southport, the guards were provided for at the county's expense until May 25 - over a month after they were organized - when the officers received their commission and the guards became Company G in the 20th North Carolina Regiment.

The guard remained on duty in Smithville until June 1862, when they were called to Richmond. Arriving there a few days before the Battle of the Seven Pines, they were placed in Garland's Brigade and soon were initiated into the realities of a soldier's life.

Famous battles, other than Seven Pines in which the guards defended the South's rights were Gaines Mill, Cold Harbor, South Mountain, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and Spottsylvania Court House.

Because of death, wounds, imprisonment and other attributions of war, not one member of the original Brunswick guards reached Appomattox to take part in the battle which ceased hostilities on April 9, 1865.

The young man who raised the company, Lieutenant-Colonel John S. "Jack" Brooks, was born at Greenville in Pitt County in 1840. His parents, John H. and Caroline Williams Brooks removed to Shallotte township in Brunswick County when Jack was seven years old. Elected captain by the guards, he was promoted to the rank of major during the third year of the war, and on November 3, 1863, he was exalted to the position he held at the time of his death.

On May 10, 1864, he was signally honored by General Lee for his bravery in capturing a Union flag at Spottsylvania Court House, Va. At Brooks' request the flag was presented to the governor of North Carolina, W. B. Vance. Two days later on the 12th of May, Colonel Brooks was killed when he leaped into the air trying to save an advancing regiment's color-bearer from Kankee shots.

In 1901 after he had become state superintendent of public instruction, General Toon, in writing reminiscences of the war, praised Brooks thusly: "Loved by all who knew him; honored in death, his dirge was sadly, sweetly chanted by his comrades in arms, Brunswick's county bard, Rev. D. K. Bennett."

Another officer of the initial Brunswick companies who deserves recognition is Lieutenant Oliver E. Mercer who was killed at Gettysburg July 1, 1863. The handsome young soldier, who came from Bolivia vicinity, is among those whom General Toon lauded for bravery.

Records show that Reaves, Benson, Michael Gore and Daniel Leonard also gave their lives for the lost cause. Five other members of the guards who died during the war, but not while engaged in combat with Yankees were Caison, Edward Gore, A. J. Pounds and Armillen and Dillon Hewett.

If a list were made of those who were wounded or placed in prison during the War between the States, it would cover practically every soldier's name that was enlisted with the Brunswick guards.

Truly these Confederate soldiers of Brunswick county who made up the county's first company, who were initiated at Seven Pines, who sacrificed at Gettysburg, were among the soldiers of the South who made the history of Southern valor.

WHO WAS THE MYSTERIOUS RIDER OF BATTLE ROYAL?

Nobody seems to know who the mysterious rider was for sure, but since he rode a black charger and frequented the Battle Royal section about three miles south-east of Maco in Brunswick County, it but seems plausible, from other skits of Revolutionary history, that he was none other than the man called Manly in the skirmish of Hook creek bridge in the north-west section of Brunswick.

After searching diligently through four or five North Carolina histories without finding any mention of "Battle Royal" (frequently called "Battarile") we have had to glean bits of legend here and there in order to piece this story together, and in passing we want to thank Jethro Benton, Herbert Scull, and others for bits of information handed down to them which they passed on to us.

Since descriptions and historical incidents seem to point a finger toward Manly as the daring rider of the huge and very swift black horse, we will at least call the mysterious rider "Manly" until we become better informed, though we have no desire to take the military glory of one man and give it to another.

But this fellow Manly had a habit of riding off from the Whig encampments to act as a lure to Tories scattered about or congregated at sundry places. Frequently he went about looking like a "sitting duck" - like an easy target for any Tory firing-piece. If he felt his age, though, he never showed it in a crisis. Many a Tory eye espied him and mistook him for just an old bearded and ragged-looking man who happened to be riding a mighty fine-looking horse. The horse looked much more important than the man on his back. It might be well to dart out of hiding and take the man? Who could tell? Maybe the old man knew where some Whigs might be encamped. If he was friendly to the Tories he wouldn't mind telling, and if he acted hostile it wouldn't be any harm to take that nice-looking horse from him.

And so the lure was working. Almost daily a band of Tories would dart from hiding, sometimes firing a warning shot to make the old man stop. Manly would stop and look around as if hard of hearing, as if unable to locate the direction of the shot. Sometimes this made the Tories laugh as they darted from the cover of green foliage, for Manly could act as well as ride. When he saw the Tories coming and they got close enough that he was sure they were Tories, he would start rocking back and forth and pulling at the reins with sporadic jerks like an old man frightened and trying to get his horse started. He did this as something of a safe-guard against drawing fire from the pursuing enemy, and to help keep down detection. If he got off to a slow start Tories to a man would decide to ride him down.

However, this huge black steed which Manly rode was one of the swiftest chargers that ever ran in the sunny south. She seemed to sense Manly's purpose and at the right moment, when he set spurs to her flanks, she darted forward so swiftly that on many occasions Manly would have to slow her down; otherwise the enemy might get suspicious and start firing to kill, or reluctantly give up the chase, seeing that they were left hopelessly behind.

Manly didn't want them to get discouraged once he had them after him, for somewhere down the winding old cart road there was ever a band of sharp-shooting Whigs strung out to slaughter whoever offered chase after Manly and his black charger. It thrilled them to see Manly coming, his big horse in a gallop with a cloud of dust stirred up by enemy riders behind him. The hidden Whigs would let Manly ride by, and then suddenly open fire on the enemy horsemen who followed.

This bit of strategy was working right along and news wasn't spreading much about it due to the fact that no pursuer escaped to bear the facts back to others of their fellows. But the fact that small bands kept riding away and not coming back aroused suspicion. And so the legend goes that a large band of red coats and Tories strung out to see what was what, and with orders to shoot to kill anyone who came along unrecognized.

But on this specific day Manly and his black horse were living a very charmed life. The very first man that he came abreast of sent a musket ball whining dangerously close to Manly's head. He knew that was not intended for a simple warning shot; the man behind the gun was firing with intent to kill. Manly set spurs to his charger immediately, and the huge black horse lunged forward just as several muskets fired. The balls swished just back of Manly and he believed his horse's sudden lunge had jerked him out of the path of certain death. He was deeply attached to his horse and feared for his safety as much as he feared for his own. He hoped that all had taken a pot shot at him. If so, he could get out of reach before the muskets could be re-loaded.

With his steed in full flight, he dared to look back. Men were running from the woods to the road behind him. Some came on horses.

These would undoubtedly chase him. He was beginning to half hope that they would when suddenly he saw enemy horsemen emerge from a thicket ahead to cut off his escape. He saw that his forward advance was blocked. He stopped. He looked back. A cloud of dust. Those behind were riding hard to get him. Muskets began firing from either side of the road. Manly couldn't sit still to make up his mind what to do. He began trotting his steed around in circles. Since he knew every deer path in that section he might save his own life by dismounting and running for it into the woods. But he didn't want to lose his horse. A decision, though, had to be reached, for horsemen were advancing toward him from east and west, all getting close; so close that firing had ceased because of the danger of one group shooting friends in the other group.

Manly took advantage of this. He stopped his steed from running around and sat for a few seconds stoically in his saddle. It must have looked to the enemy as if Manly was ready to surrender, but with fearless dignity. Some of them, however, had drawn their swords and looked determined to run him through as soon as they came within reach of him. He saw that both bands of horsemen would reach him at about the same time.

By this time Manly had his mind made up. As the riders began checking their horses and were coming to jolts, Manly set spurs to his steed and the big horse lunged forward toward the woods and toward four or five footmen who were emerging from the green. Some of the footmen pointed their muskets at Manly, but didn't fire. Either they had emptied their guns in vain shots earlier, or were afraid of shooting those on horseback immediately behind Manly.

Manly led those on horses a merry chase into a thicket of small pines. Then he stopped abruptly and turned his horse. He skirted through the edge of a bay and then cut right back through the pine thicket to the road. The fleetfooted steed Manly was on ran like a racehorse even though the woods, leaving the enemy horsemen gasping in surprise and milling around in the sapling thicket wondering what had become of Manly.

Musket firing brought them out of the thicket back into the old cart-road. Then they lit out after Manly who was in full flight toward his comrades who were in hiding to do slaughter as soon as the enemy came in sight. But this time there was an overwhelming number of the enemy. And the enemy, suspecting a trap after riding into the first volley of shots dismounted.

Then it was truly a "battle royal": every man for himself.

There is a branch in the Battle Royal (or Battarile) section which is commonly called "Jump an' Run" branch. So named because men scattered into the green bushes like partridges, and ever so often somebody, being sorely oppressed, would jump and run. We are unable to tell how this battle came out, but according to legend the mysterious horseman and his horse escaped injury and both lived to deceive and harass the Tories and Red coats until the British sailed away from American shores.

- The Featurette, February 1935