



NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. XVIII, No. 2

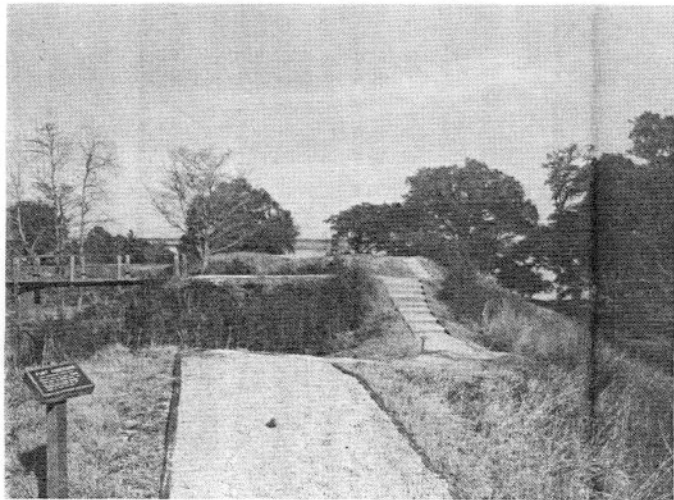
May, 1978

BRUNSWICK TOWN PROJECTS

Wm. G. Faulk, Jr.
Historic Site Manager



St. Phillip's Church - Stabilized.



Marl path along stabilized Fort Anderson.

No article specifically devoted to Brunswick Town State Historic Site has appeared in the *NEWSLETTER* in several issues. Many new projects of general site improvements, visitor-use areas and aids to interpretation have been completed. The following will list some of the most important accomplishments. We invite you to visit Brunswick Town to view and enjoy these site improvements and visitor use areas.

One of the most significant, and probably least noticed, projects is the stabilization of the St. Phillip Church walls. Constructed between 1754-68, and burned by the British during the American Revolution, time and the elements have been no ally to its preservation. In 1862 Fort Anderson was constructed over the Northern portion of the abandoned Colonial town-site and the walls of the church were incorporated inside the fort. Changes in temperature between the heat of summer and the cold of winter, especially a freezing rain, caused the brick to spall or erode and the mortar to become soft. This condition tends to attract a particular breed of persons who help this natural erosive process along by removing loose material, carving names, initials and dates in the brick which caused more erosion — and the process repeats itself.

Restoration Specialists of the Department of Cultural Resources met with private contractors and consulting engineers and it was decided not to place a roof over the existing walls as a measure of protection. It was decided to remove the spalled brick and loose mortar and to replace the brick with a new brick meeting the physical size and color specifications of the original brick. A formula for mortar was determined to assure compatibility of hardness, texture and color and the stabilization project was begun. (The consulting engineers report, substantiated by archaeology, revealed that the existing walls were still structurally sound and would support a roof.) The archaeological investigation revealed that the wall footings were 36" below the original construction level and 42" below the present ground level, denoting a 6" build up in soil during

the 22 year period since the footings were poured and the beginning of the stabilization project. When the archaeological square was opened to determine the depth of the footing, the pungent odor of raw oysters was very evident. Oysters were burned to obtain lime for mortar in the footings and walls.

A waterproof cap was poured atop the 33" thick walls to prevent water from seeping through the top to bottom, freezing and causing more damage to occur from this action of the elements. The stabilization project was completed, and the work was accepted by the State.

The first asphalt area utilized as a visitor parking lot has been removed as it was no longer needed since the construction of the Visitor Center and new parking area. This area was backfilled with fertile topsoil, seeded and fertilized and the reason for no grass in the photograph will be evident later in this article. Plans are to continue or extend the existing brick walkway from the Visitor Center toward the church a distance of approximately sixty feet and outline a clearly defined path to the North doorway of the church.

All of the excavated Colonial foundations have been fenced in to prevent visitor abuse and vandalism of these fragile 250 year old foundations. The materials used for this section of the overall project was salt treated pine lumber which should last much longer than the previously used cypress lumber. The fencing in of the foundations serves two main objectives. The fencing tends to indicate the fact that they are something worth protecting and they do keep vandals out. All excavated foundations were fenced, including the clearing and fencing of the clay pit dug by the Confederates to obtain clay to use as mortar for their temporary barracks chimneys. Repairs were made to existing fencing around previously fenced foundations.

A valuable aid to Visitor interpretation of the site was the clearing of a five acre tract of land between the North end of Battery B, the North end of Battery A and the Cape Fear River. This area completely obstructed the view of the river from Battery A and the visitor had no concept of where he was or why, except that he was on a Confederate Fort Battery or mound in the tree tops and attempting to peer through a dense underbrush to determine why this section of the fort was constructed. The clearing of this area was very significant to interpretation of the site and is one of the most beautiful areas of the entire site, allowing visitors to view the river traffic from a Confederate Fort and also view Governor's Cove in front of Russellborough, home of two Royal Governors of North Carolina, Arthur Dobbs and William Tryon.

A walking trail from the North end of Battery A to Russellborough has long been planned and is now a reality. Prior to the development of this path the only means of reaching Russellborough was by vehicular traffic. However, this is where Governor William Tryon resided while the "palace" in New Bern was being constructed and where the 72 years old Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs resided with his 15 year old bride, Justina Davis Dobbs, who after the death of Dobbs married another Governor of North Carolina, Abner Nash. To facilitate this trail along the Cape Fear River bank required the construction of approximately 450 lineal feet of foot bridges to have access over two marsh areas. These footbridges were constructed with no special equipment and here I must give much credit to the four Title X employees, and the regular and summer staff for their determination, effort, sweat, tears and plain hard work in the construction of the beautiful footbridges. This trail adds a new dimension to the Visitor interpretation of the site in general, and also provides a beautiful closeness to nature of the march, the river, and allows access to another portion of the site hereto unavailable

The most monumental and hardest of the projects was the stabilization of Confederate Fort Anderson. As long as the fort was left undisturbed very little erosion occurred from 1865 and the fall of Fort Anderson on February 19, 1865, until the construction of the first bridges in 1964, allowing visitors to traverse the entire length of both Battery A and B along the mound tops. In 1974, before the great energy crisis there were over 112,000 visitors to the Brunswick Town Site. (In maintenance terms we convert this to over 224,000 feet walking along the mound tops and the rate of erosion caused by visitor use was approximately one inch per year.) To our knowledge no person or group had attempted to "stabilize" a Confederate Fort so no one knew exactly where to begin, except with the environmental Protection Agency. Several factors were known, however, and first of all, the amount of soil that could be reclaimed had to be determined and this was done through trenching to determine the original construction level of the fort itself. The quantity of material that could be recovered and used had to be computed so that the quantity of material needed to build the fort back up to the 1964 level could be computed and ordered. Trenching of the eroded areas was done and at random intervals, computations were made along the entire length of the fort and an accurate figure was determined as to the amount of soil that could be reclaimed. The amount needed to complete the job could then be computed. Then the idea of how to get both the reclaimed material and the new material over 20 feet high was spawned. The Confederates used troop labor, slave labor, and hired some Indians from the Pembroke area of the State to construct the original fort. The number of the combined types of laborers, the total is not known, however Major Thomas Rowland reported in 1862 that within a month, almost a mile of fort had been constructed and was almost completed. This caused much concern to our staff, as we were thinking in terms of money, time and labor, being utilized by hydrolic equipment sufficing for pure manpower and we figured that six months would be the shortest time in which we could repair half of something that the Confederates had built in only one month. After the above was done, it was decided that a clearly marked or defined path should be placed atop the mound so that visitors would know where to walk. This posed a new problem inasmuch as a small section of the very South end of the fort had some years ago an asphalt path that proved to be incompatible with stabilization and had actually aided the fort erosion due to rain water bouncing off the asphalt and doubling the amount of water causing erosion where the asphalt was on the mounds. A material was needed to absorb the same amount of water that the sand fort did, and marl was decided on. This posed another problem inasmuch as some method had to be devised to contain the marl which weighs 3,000 pounds per cubic yard and approximately 2,000 pounds of weight would be utilized for each ten feet of marl placed 4" thick along the re-established mound tops. Salt treated pine lumber was the answer and 8" x 8" pilings were placed at 6" intervals to which were attached 2" x 6" stringers, and X braced with and scabbed with 2" x 4" timbers. The weather interfered with the project and the dragline rented from DOT was sent to near Edenton to help remove ice from the river. However, the terracing was done after the new and old soil was placed on the fort and the marl path reinforced by timbers was laid and the fort stabilized as shown by the photographs.

The waterfront area of the site was the object of the last phase of the Title X project. The accumulation of miscellaneous debris washed into the marsh and deposited on the causeway caused an untidy appearance of the area. Huge

timbers were snaked out of the marsh, along with other smaller debris of all types were removed, loaded and hauled to a disposal area. Tree stumps, large and small, from previous attempts at clearing up this area were removed. The effect was dramatic and added a dimension of reclaimed natural beauty.

This project, utilizing mostly Federal Funds, accomplished several goals. Four Brunswick County citizens were employed for an 18 month period which helped reduce the high unemployment rate. The materials purchased, equipment rental and the employment resulted in round figures about \$92,000 being put into circulation. The project allowed many of the prosed projects in the Brunswick Town Master Plan to be completed much sooner than anticipated and added much to visitor use areas, interpretation and preservation.

You are cordially invited to visit the site and see these site improvements.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO GRAVE YARD HUNTING

Leora "Billie" McEachern

The following are notes taken during a talk given to the Brunswick Historical Society on February 13, 1978 under the above title.

The speaker has been grave yard hunting since 1965.

Since vital statistics were not available in Pender, Sampson, Duplin and Bladen Counties until 1913, and early Bibles were sometimes lost, grave stones provide a permanent records of early settlers.

There are basically four kinds of grave yards: 1) Church 2) commercial 3) government and 4) family. The last is considered to be the most important.

These stones provide more than just dates of birth and death. In addition, the names of deceased parents, the deceased's philosophy, and the names of the deceased's spouse may also be present.

County and geodetic maps, historical society records, word of mouth, newspapers, and undertakers are means of finding grave yards.

The purpose of this study is to preserve records before weather, land change, or vandals destroy these valuable grave yard stones.

In early times not too many churches had grave yards. Since travel was difficult, each family had a special area for burial located near the home. Also this facilitated the care and cleaning of the burial area. Then too there was comfort in having the remains of the beloved near.

Ingredients necessary for this type of study: 1) suitable car (four wheel drive if possible) 2) companion (someone as "stupid" as you are) 3) maps (county). It should be observed that for some unknown reason, there are an unusually large percentage of grave yards located near soybean fields.

While in the field, information can be collected by either writing down the facts or by using a tape recorder. The accompanying companion needs to verify the information as it is recorded. A brush, chalk, a probe, a whistle (in case you get lost), coffee and lunch are necessary to have along.

One must read carefully and take great care with the numbers 0, 6, 3, and 8. Care must also be taken in reading the letter C, G, J and T. All words on the grave stones must be recorded as they appear even if there are errors in spelling.

There are sundry hazards involved: 1) give up a room to store records, 2) likelihood of falling in a grave, 3) hunters, 4) wild-life, 5) stills, and 6) weather. The season to accomplish this task is from January 1 to March. Reason: the hunting season is over in January and the weeds do not start growing until March.

There are numerous rewards for this activity. Not only does one learn the geography of the area and acquire many new friends, but there is excitement in finding a grave and then from family Bibles and various records discovering information concerning the deceased.

Since 1968 the speaker has printed six volumes of grave yard study. This includes records of 532 grave yards. These volumes are indexed and distributed to local schools, libraries, state archives, and may be purchased by interested persons. Mrs. McEachern's latest publication is "Gravestone Records Vol. VI, Sampson and Bladen Counties."

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Officers: President: Frances T. Williams
Vice-Pres. Amarette P. Pierce
Sec.-Treas. Elaine Harman
Board Members: Lucille Blake
Helen Taylor
Program Chair. Lucille Blake
Refreshment Chair. Lottie Ludham
Nomenating Committe Chair. Marie Rourk
Newsletter Editor: Reginald T. Bliss

Meeting Dates:

May 8th - Shallotte Presbyterian Church 8:00 P.M.
Aug. 14th
Nov. 13th

WHEN DOES AN EVENT BECOME HISTORICAL?

There may be an official definition of an historical event. If so, it has not come to my attention. However, some may agree with me that anything that happened about twenty five years ago could be considered historical. For convenience sake, let us take anything that happened before the end of the Second World War, 1945.

On this basis, several questions about Brunswick County can be asked, such as: What happened to the railroad that ended at Bolivia? When did telephone and electric power service begin? Why and how did Shallotte get its name? When and why did Brunswick County farmers change from cotton to tobacco for their cash crop? Who started the Brunswick County public school system? Why Bolivia for the name of that town?

If any member of The Society knows the answer to these questions, or knows someone who knows the answer, it would help the editor in his search for material to be published in the Newsletter for them to write him. His mail address is Rt. 1, Box 310, Ash, N. C. 28420.

The Editor