



NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 874, SHALLOTTE, N.C. 28459

=====
Vol. XXVII No. 1 February 1986
=====

BRUNSWICK'S COLONIAL FERRIES
=====

Very little information is available dealing with early ferries, and that that is available is only sketchy at best. This newsletter is an attempt to consolidate that information and to hopefully provide a basic foundation to build upon. In time, perhaps, something more concrete can be published.

Reference to ferries can be found in colonial court records as the ferriage fee was regulated by the court. However, these references only mention who ran the ferry and what he could charge. No exact location is mentioned. By combining these court listings with early maps, we can obtain a generalized location. Also from maps we can get a feel of the complementary role that early ferries played in the colonial system of roads.

The first mention of a ferry in the lower Cape Fear area is found in Colonial Records in the year 1727: "It being represented to this court that is highly necessary that a ferry should be settled over Cape Fear River and that part of the province not being layd out into precents. Therefore it is by this court order that the ferry be kept for that river by Cornelius Harnett from the place designed for a Towne on the west side of the river a place called the Hanlover and that he receive the sum of five shillings for a man and horse and half a crown for each person and that no person to keep any ferry within ten miles of the sand places."

As evidenced by the Mosely map of 1733, this is undoubtedly the Brunswick Ferry that crossed the Cape Fear to a point on the opposite shore. It is again mentioned in the March 1737 court records. A capt. Scott renewed his petition to resign as ferry keeper and his bond was ordered "delivered up." Interested persons could apply to Cornelius Harnett, Esq. for the job. By the June court of 1738, Thomas Merrick was running the ferry. However, from the September court of 1740, we learn that Co. Merrick was planning to resign within one month. The June 1741 court granted Roger Moore a petition to run the Brunswick Ferry.

The next mention of the Brunswick Ferry is conveyed in an account of William Logan who passed through the Cape Fear area in 1745 on a trip from Penn. to Georgia. This account is very revealing and will be included to some length;

...we waited half an hour for the boat to come over, but in vain we returned again to Willmington and after dinner sett out for the Lower Ferry in hopes the wind would fall and we might get over in the evening to Brunswick, but we were disappointed, for instead of falling it increased much and by night blew almost a hurricane at So. West and after raining hard, then shifted immediately to N West and blew full as hard all night and cleared up. One Jno Malsby (Maultsby) keeps this ferry; he lived formerly at the Middle Ferry on Skuylkill (Phila., Pa) but left and came to this wilderness country in hope of getting an estate, by the purchase of lands, but is much mistaken or I am. We were kindly entertained here but as the house is new, and no glass to be had for their windows, and many air holes and the wind very high at N West, I slept miserably, the air coming on me almost from head to foot but thro' mercy got no cold, tho' I was very apprehensive of it. Here we were detained by the wind continuing to blow so hard that we could not cross the Ferry, which is full three miles wide, till two o'clock. So that we staid here to dine, which we did on a piece of boiled beef and good roast turkey. Got on our Aud and after dinner went over to Brunswick mentioned before, and put at Blenheim's.

From the June 1765 court we learn that "Elizabeth Eagen, in order that gentlemen and others, travelling to and from Brunswick, may be properly accomodated at and speedily transported over the ferry of Brunswick has removed from Brunswick to the ferry-house herfelf." Apparently, the Eagans (Darby and Elizabeth) continued to keep the ferry at Brunswick until October of 1769 at which time he was running the Wilmington Ferry.

The 1769 court entry is the last mention of the Brunswick Ferry. By 1774, it apparently was no longer operating. Hugh Finlay, a postal inspector traveling through the county in that year from South Carolina to Wilmington, did not cross the Brunswick Ferry but rather "passed the first ferry (acriss Brunswick River) on a small leaky flat, the second (over the Cape Fear at Wilmington) in a large one but very wet."

On the Moseley map of 1733, the Brunswick and Cape Fear ferries are not shown. It is assumed that at this time, they were not operating. Sometime before 1738 these ferries began running as shown in the March court of that year in which Francis Veale was allowed to resign as the "ferry keeper at Newton". It is not known whether he was running the Brunswick Ferry at the same time.

From 1738 to 1760 very little can be found of these ferries. In 1760, the court "prescribed for Francis Lynaugh the ferriage" for the Wilmington Ferry:

... man & horse, 8d.; single man, 4d.; single horse, 6d; a carriage and one or two horses or oxen, 2/-; and every ox or horse more, 6d.; for every 20 hogs or sheep, 3/-; and so in proportion. Ordered that the bond of Frans Lynaugh as ferry keeper provide for one good flat and two canoes immediately; another flat by the next Court, and for keeping one of the flats always at each landing ready to take on passengers, etc.

The 1760 court went further to prescribe that all "ferry keepers in the county immediately provide proper pens or pounds to receive cattle to be ferried over or to force them in the water and not less than two boats for each ferry."

A number of other ferries operated in the Wilmington area and will be listed only briefly. In March 1737 James Campbell was appointed ferry keeper between Newton and Gabourell's Bluff both ways. The June 1739 court established a ferry to run from the first Bluff on the creek above the old garden near Gabourell's Bluff to Newton. In 1740, James Campbell notified by the court that unless he gives bond before the next morning "for keeping the ferry between Wilmington and Welshes Creek, the court will treat somebody else." And so it did. John Martindale was appointed ferry keeper between Wilmington and Welshes Bluff. Martindale resigned as ferry keeper at the Bluff in March of 1741.

The February court of 1759 appointed Mrs. Bethelly as ferry keeper from the town (Wilmington) to the point (Negroe Head Point) but by May of the same year, she was replaced by Thomas Newton. It is not known how long Thomas Newton lasted as ferry keeper but in June 1764 Joseph Newton was running this ferry. In December of the same year the court indicted Joseph Newton for bad boats and bad attendance. The court went further to prescribe that the "said ferry between Wilmington and Negroe Head Point shall after the next court be served from the west side by a good horse boat to carry safely 4 horses, a good canoe and two able hands in constant waiting."

The December 1766 court appointed John Walker as the ferry keeper from the point to Wilmington and Joseph Newton as ferry keeper from Wilmington to the Point but in March of the following year, Walker was appointed as ferry keeper both ways. Apparently, Newton was too much of a sore thumb.

Other particular ferries that plied the Cape Fear River include the John Mosely ferry that ran from his plantation to the Point and the John Marshall Ferry (1741) whose location is not known. Similarly the location is not known of Blake's Ferry that was operating in 1761.

Moving farther in to central Brunswick County, the Moseley map of 1733 shows a ferry over Town Creek just above its junction with the Cape Fear. In June 1739, this ferry was "presented as dangerous" due to a bad entrance and an unfit boat. The June 1740 court saw the need for a second ferry over Town Creek near "the place where Soloman Lewis and John Benson live." The court gave Benson the option of running this ferry, but it is not known whether he accepted. In time, these ferries came to be known as the upper and lower ferries. Henry Simons resigned as Town Creek ferry keeper in 1741. This reference does not specify whether upper or lower. Both ferries over Town Creek probably continued operation for some years but were eventually replaced with bridges.

Lockwoods Folly River had a ferry operating by Thomas Bell in 1733, but he was not running it in September 1738. The court at that time rejected a petition for Edward Wingate to run the ferry and granted it to Jonathan Swain. It also prescribed Swain's fee: "2/6 for man & horse; and 1/3 for a single person or horse". It is assumed that the Lockwoods Folly Ferry operated from Howe's Point to Genoe's Point. It is important not to confuss this colonial ferry with one that ran across the inland waterway in the early twentieth century near Browns Landing. The termination date of the colonial ferry is not known.

Shalotte River had a ferry in 1733, ran by John Simmons. Simmons was keeping this ferry in 1737 and 1741. Its location was near the present day bridge over Shalotte River.

The Waccamaw River had at least one ferry over it on the Pireway Section. Local folklore mentions another in the Freeland area. At present, no dates or exact locations are known.

In summary, this newsletter is not all things for all ferries. Its purpose is to provide a foundation to build upon for those in our immediate area. The editor seeks further information and invites comments and ideas. In addition, the Historical Society should consider placing a historical marker at these ferry sites as their exact locations are discovered in the future.

CURRENT CONCERNS

The next meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society will be Monday, February 10, at 7:30 p.m. in Woodburn Presbyterian Church in Leland. Mr. William Reaves, prominent historian and author, will be the speaker. The subject of the program will be the Cape Fear Area, and Mr. Reaves's new book will be available for \$15. Our 1986 dues will be payable (\$10).

Society members interested in genealogy will resume plans for a meeting in the near future.

The Society will be interested to hear from members who are continuing research on early transportation, churches, graveyards, families of the Revolution and Civil War and other subjects pertaining to early Brunswick.

Wrightsboro Methodist Church is sponsoring a program on preservation of early church sites in this area, but the date for the meeting is before our NEWSLETTER can be mailed.

A canoe found in Lumber River has been studied and found to be made from yellow pine and shaped by burning and charring about 900 a.d.

The New Bern Spring Tour of Historic Homes and Gardens will be April 11-12.

Massachusetts Historical Society, the oldest of its kind in the country, met first in 1791.

Benjamin Franklin, in his last will and testament, bequeathed to his friend, General George Washington, his "crabtree walking stick, with gold head curiously wrought in the form of a cap of liberty". After Washington's death, one of his nephews inherited the walking stick. It is now in the Washington Collection at the Smithsonian Institution. The Daughters of the American Revolution encourage the reading of history to bring alive the intimate character of great Americans.

The purpose of our Society is to collect, preserve, study, evaluate and publicize the history of Brunswick County. These purposes are to be kept in mind while we plan programs and activities. NEWSLETTER is our publication of news, research papers, and articles pertaining to the Society's activities and purposes; the Editor welcomes other members' thoughts and contributions.

INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN OUR SOCIETY EARLY IN 1986

Clip this blank for mailing to our secretary

To: Mrs. Lottie Ludlum, Box 874, Shallotte, N. C. 28459

I wish to join Brunswick County Historical Society.
For my 1986 dues I enclose \$10.

Name :

Address :

TUCKER REED LITTLETON

Tucker Reed Littleton, historian and civic leader of Swansboro, North Carolina, died August 14, 1983, at the age of forty-seven. He had been involved in state and local history efforts for over two decades. Mr. Littleton founded the Swansboro Historical Association, chaired the Swansboro's 200th Anniversary Committee, was past president of the Archaeological Society of North Carolina, served as president-elect of the North Carolina Society of County and Local Historians, had been an associate of the North Carolina Humanities Committee since 1981, helped found the North Carolina Genealogical Society in 1981, and chaired the Onslow County Committee for America's 400th Anniversary since 1982. In 1963 Littleton received the Charles Cannon Award from the Historic Preservation Society of North Carolina, and in 1981 received an Award of Merit in the Willie Walker Peace Award competition for his book, A Civilian History of the Camp Lejeune Area from the Earliest Settlement to 1941.

In response to the news of Littleton's death, William S. Price, Jr., Director of the Division of Archives and History, said: "Tucker Littleton will be sorely missed because he was one of the greatest friends of history the state has ever known." The Brunswick County Historical Society is indebted to him for some excellent programs and suggestions for preserving our local historic sites in this area.

The next meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society will be Monday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Courthouse at Shallotte. The program subject will be "America's 400th Anniversary." Membership dues for 1984 are payable to our treasurer at Box 874, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.

Members, please make efforts to sell the remaining note cards before Christmas and report to the treasurer.

Culture Week will be observed in Raleigh November 14-19. Twelve North Carolina historical and cultural organizations will participate. Many awards for historical articles and books will be given. Susie Carson's book By Faith We Serve was nominated for competition.

The total recorded visitations at North Carolina Historic Sites through June, 1983, reached a record high of 306,869 people for a six-month period. The top three sites were Fort Fisher, Reed Gold Mine, and Brunswick Town.

Carolina Comments gave recognition to Mrs. Johnny Gillis by publishing a picture of her working at the potter's wheel in Brunswick Town last April.

The North Carolina Humanities Commission has made available some grants for training teachers of history. Grants to this commission for the advancement of history and to the Tar Heel Junior Historians Association helped produce a series of slide/tape shows on various themes in North Carolina history. Some grants are available for significant local history projects.

The Statue of Liberty and nearby Ellis Island are scheduled to be restored by 1986. A special commission has been established to guide the renovation -- and to raise the \$230 million needed for the project.

The recent publication of The Prehistory of North Carolina: An Archaeological Symposium brings together information on the history of archaeology, cultural chronology and prehistoric settlements of the eastern, piedmont and mountain regions of this state.

GAUSE CEMETERY

LOACTED on the west side of the highway, near Gause's Landing, in Brunswick County, North Carolina.

Family records say that JOHN JULIUS GAUSE was born 1774, died 1836, on his plantation Stock Farm - LAUREL GROVE, in Brunswick County. He was a member of the North Carolina Legislature 1825-1829 (Wheeler's History of North Carolina). He married three times, first to his first cousin, Elizabeth Bacot Gause; second to Mariah Theresa Bruard; and third to Emily R. Miller, a daughter of Frederick Miller of Bladen County, North Carolina, who dated his will 4/4/1834 and named his daughter EMILY GAUSE and his son-in-law J.J.GAUSE.

In the Will of JOHN JULIUS GAUSE he arranged for a vault to be built and that his body be placed in the vault with his two deceased wives and his children whose bodies are to be removed from the plantation of SAMUEL GAUSE, deceased, and placed in the vault with him.

A look at the vault seems to tell us that his wishes were carried out. The vault is large, and shows that it has been repaired, but still bears evidence of damage of storms and vandalism. The cemetery surrounding the vault is covered with an almost impenetrable growth of briars, trees and other woods plants. Several wooden grave markers are slightly readable. Records listed below come from the few markers found.

WOODEN MARKERS-

McN.Gause born March 10, 1863, died Sept. 15, 1863

S.B.B.GAUSE born Aug.19,1877, died Oct.26,1885

MARGARET----died Sept. 20, 18--, age 45 years.

DUNCAN M.GAUSE died ---17,1808, age 10 years

THOMAS FRINK (Gause) -----Aug. 27, 1802

Two marble markers were found on the ground. They read-

ELIZABETH FRIERSON wife of DANIEL P.RUSS, born Charleston, S.C.

July 7, 1799, died Aug. 13, 1829.

ANSON RANDAL----age 4 years

VAULT of JOHN JULIUS GAUSE (and his two wives).