



# NEWSLETTER

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BELVILLE.  
(BELLVILLE)

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In a biography of Daniel Lindsay Russell, a former governor of North Carolina, the following was included: "Having sold "Winnabow," the plantation on which he was born, in 1881, Russell kept his house in Wilmington and his plantation at Bellville, a few miles west of Wilmington and across the Cape Fear River. There he tried unsuccessfully to grow rice around the turn of the century, and there he died on May 14, 1908, a few months before his sixty-third birthday." (MAVERICK REPUBLICAN IN THE OLD NORTH STATE - A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF DANIEL L. RUSSELL, by Crow & Durden, 1977.)

Wilmington newspapers provided some information regarding Bellville plantation. The first article is dated July 15, 1897, and read as follows: "Mr. W. R. Boyd, the clever superintendent of Governor Russell's plantation in Brunswick county, three miles from Wilmington, mentioned yesterday that the army worms have attacked the rice fields on Eagles Island, leased by Governor Russell to a number of colored farmers and who are known as "the syndicate." The worms have completely stripped a whole section of the rice field. The worms have also done considerable damage to the Butters-Russell rice fields lower down the island. They got into Governor Russell's rice fields on the Brunswick side of the river, but Supt. Boyd drowned them out." WILMINGTON MESSENGER, 7-15-1897.)

In 1900, Governor Russell constructed a new residence at Bellville for his retirement home, when his term as governor of North Carolina ended. On September 30, 1900, the WILMINGTON MESSENGER reported that "Governor D.L. Russell will return to his country home in Brunswick after his term as governor expires next January. He is having built a handsome new residence at his Brunswick estate, which will be ready for occupancy when his term expires." On September 29, 1900, the MESSENGER also reported that "Governor D.L. Russell arrived home to look after the preliminary arrangements for building the handsome residence at

which he is erecting on the road, a half mile beyond Brunswick River bridge." A month later, contractor C.D. Morrill was looking for laborers "to work on the dwelling he is to erect on Governor Russell's place across the river and is meeting with discouraging success. The house will be a nice one, with interior of hard wood finish." (WILMINGTON NEWS-DISPATCH, 10-16-1900.)

Laborers must have been found as by November 11, 1900, the WILMINGTON DISPATCH reported on November 11, 1900: "Governor Russell's new dwelling at his farm across the river, 3 miles from Wilmington, is rapidly nearing completion. Painters and tanners are at work on it this week. The dwelling will be completed in three weeks in all its appointments, heated by furnaces and equipped with a full set of water works. The rooms are to be furnished in hard wood, a different variety to each room. The total cost is between \$6,000 and \$8,000. Mr. C.D.Morrill is the contractor." The WILMINGTON MESSENGER, December 5, 1900 advised local readers that "Gov. D.L.Russell, who has been over to his plantation in Brunswick county since Monday looking after completion of his new residence, returned last night to Raleigh."

After Governor Russell's term came to end, the MESSENGER, dated January 19, 1901, commented that "Ex-Governor D.L. Russell, who now occupies his handsome new country home in Brunswick county, two miles from the city across the two rivers was in Wilmington yesterday. He and John H. Gore, Esq., will practice law in copartnership under the firm name of Russell & Gore. Governor Russell will drive in a buggy from his country home to look after his law practice."

From the following two newspaper articles it appears that Russell moved into a house not yet completed. The WILMINGTON DISPATCH, January 21, 1901, reported: "Judge Russell's new residence at Bellville is rapidly nearing completion. The upper story is practically finished now. The carpenters say that it will be ready for occupancy by February 1." and on March 9, 1901 in the same newspaper, "Contractor Morrill says that Judge Russell's new dwelling has been finished with the exception of putting in some screen doors which he will do next week. Judge Russell has been occupying the house for over a month "

As mentioned earlier, Governor Russell died in 1908 at his plantation. He suffered for many years from cancer and from the following the reader can see the length of illness. On April 21, 1904, the WILMINGTON NEWS-DISPATCH reported: "The recovery of ex-Gov. Daniel L. Russell is almost a miracle. For days and even weeks his life was despaired of. Today comes the news from Baltimore that he is discharged from Johns Hopkins hospital a well man. He leaves for Wilmington tomorrow. He returned to Wilmington on April 24, 1904 from Baltimore where he had been under treatment since early February. "He went directly to his home in Brunswick county, 2 miles from the city. He was accompanied by his wife and Dr. Frank H. Russell. His recovery is almost miraculous. One whole kidney was removed in an operation and for many days the doctor expected him to die at any moment." (WILMINGTON NEWS-DISPATCH, 4-24-1904) "The condition of ex-Governor Russell is so improved that he expects to come over to his office this week." (WILMINGTON NEWS-DISPATCH, 5-19-1904.)

From Bill Reaves' The Brunswick River & Its Environs.