



NEWSLETTER

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

VOLUMN XXXV, NUMBER V

February 1995

The President says:

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

and the year is 1995! We have closed 1994 with a sense of accomplishment in our historical society. Our speakers were very interesting as they related events concerning Moore's Creek Battleground; reviewed a host of antiques with the Mercer Girls; Fortieth Birthday celebration of our society and Mr. Bartly at Brunswicktown and an account of "Early visitors along the Cape Fear" by Mrs. Holden. All meetings were well attended and enjoyed very much.

We start the new year, February 13, 1995, 7:30 pm at Leland Town Hall with Mrs. Lucille Blake as she tells us of "Early Plantations along the Cape Fear and Lockwood Folly area." Mark your calendar.

May 15, 1995 will be a dinner meeting at Thomas Seafood Restaurant, Calabash N.C at 6:30 pm, and the meeting will begin at 7:30 pm. Mr. C. B. Berry will be the speaker of the evening on various places and people of Brunswick County, especially the southern part.

May we pledge together to ever make the history of our Brunswick County known.

Thank you for your concern, help, and fellowship.

your President:

Lottie Ludlum

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Our own Mrs. Lucille Blake donated her personal copies of the "Southport Leader, 1890-1906" to the New Hanover County Library, Wilmington N.C.

Tuesday, February 21, 1995 (7:00 pm, 105 Bear Hall, UNCW) Ron Bremer of Salt Lake City, Utah will give one of his very popular mini-genealogy seminars. Mr. Bremer travels about 65,000 miles a year and averages five seminars a week. In his travels he has picked up countless genealogical tips on little known sources from all over the United States and he loves to field questions. Bring a friend- Mr. Bremer is not only knowledgeable, but very entertaining.

Tuesday, March 21, 1995 (7:00 pm, 105 Bear Hall, UNCW) Weynette Haun, author of countless volumes of North Carolina genealogical abstracts, will speak on court minutes. Mrs. Haun's contributions to North Carolina genealogy are immeasurable. She is a former recipient of the North Carolina Genealogical Society's life time contribution award.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY
1860 RICE PLANTATION
ECONOMY

by
John B. Wells, III

In 1860, rice plantations occupied the river banks in the Town Creek, Smithville, and Northwest districts of the county, leaving the interior lands to the turpentiners and smaller planters. These rice plantations were the rich and beautiful places that many Northerners seem to think that all Southerners owned at one time or another, and that most Southerners wish they had owned. But, how lucrative were these Brunswick county rice operations? Were the rice planters actually the comfortably wealthy, or was the plantation a financial burden? An examination of any one plantation would give an incomplete view of the system's overall success or failure. Therefore, nine rice places have been selected at random and an average "Brunswick Rice Plantation" has been formulated from them. This composite plantation gives a fairly concrete answer to the planters' financial question.

On the plantation, the homes, outbuildings, slaves, and stock, constituted a tremendous investment by the planter in his place. Owen D. Holmes paid \$24,560 in 1860 for only one-third of the 73 slaves and 5,560 acres of Kendall Plantation. In 1854, T. C. Miller bought the 8,693 acre Orton Plantation for \$100,000. This was the largest of the rice plantations, but even this price did not include the 144 slaves on the place, which were valued at an additional \$72,000.

The return on this huge investment is somewhat difficult to calculate. The net income from the rice place had many variables to be considered and regrettably, no plantation record books have survived. Certain information is available which can give an idea of just how well the planter fared.

First, the income of the rice plantation must be calculated. The following table presents the nine random plantations, their 1860 rice crops, their value, and the planters investment in the plantations in real estate value:

<u>OWNER</u>	<u>PLANTATION</u>	<u>1860 RICE CROP</u>	<u>RICE VALUE</u>	<u>REAL ESTATE VALUE</u>
James Moore	Belvedere	494,100	\$ 9,765	\$13,000
John G. Hall	Mulberry	297,000	\$ 5,946	\$ 9,462
Michael Bryan	Green Banks	153,000	\$ 3,035	\$ 5,500
H. N. Howard	Dalrymple	143,532	\$ 2,943	\$10,445
W. Watters	Clarendon	434,808	\$ 8,833	\$16,000
T. Cowan	Old Town	270,000	\$ 5,485	\$12,000
T. McIlhenny	Asperne	864,000	\$17,553	\$83,600
T. Miller	Orton	561,000	\$15,704	\$?
T. Meares	The Bluffs	864,000	\$17,958	\$27,000

Five of the plantations listed had other industry on the place in addition to their rice culture. These were sources of additional income:

<u>OWNER</u>	<u>INDUSTRIES</u>	<u>INCOME</u>
M. Bryan	Turpentine (\$750)	\$ 750
H. Howard	Grist Mill (\$562), Turpentine(\$2625)	\$3,187
T. McIlhenny	Grist Mill(\$2250), Saw Mill (\$1004)	\$3,254
T. Miller	Grist Mill(\$2250)	\$2,250
T. Meares	Grist Mill (\$900)	\$ 900

A composite plantation, derived from the average of the nine above, contained 2,718 acres of land, 77 slaves, a rice crop worth \$9,691.33, and a real estate value of \$34,626. The outside industry added another \$1,149 in income. The total income on the composite plantation, from rice and other outside industry was \$10,840.33.

Most planters, however, did not confine themselves to the plantation for income. T. C. Miller of Orton had a law office in Wilmington, and had his overseer working additional land for him. In 1860, Miller had \$38,000 worth of land and slaves under the independent direction of W. Madge, his overseer. F. J. Lord of Beauchoi invested in finance. This is evident from records of his buying and selling shares in the Bank of Cape Fear in 1860 to aid in payment of some personal debts. All the planters had an additional source of income in his slave population. Most of the planters made frequent trips to the market at Fayetteville. The Western states were clammering for additional slaves and the rice planters were only too glad to oblige with their yearly surplus. Book "S" of the Brunswick County Deeds records several sales. A typical transaction would be the sale of "10 slaves of the estate of Nathaniel Galloway sold to Thomas Galloway of Jackson City, Mississippi, by George Swain" Every year on Dec. 31, the "surplus head" of slave children from John Hill's Lilliput Plantation were driven to Fayetteville to be sold on New Year's Day. In November of 1860, a two or three year old slave girl would bring anywhere from \$200 to \$350. A young girl for twenty years would easily sell for \$2,200. These surplus slaves were so important to the planters' livelihood that on some plantations women who were the most 'fertile' were kept away from the fields to concentrate on having children. In 1839, N. Caulkins, who claimed to have worked eleven years as a carpenter on plantations near Wilmington, wrote a testimonial in which he declared that, "a planter offered a white man of my acquaintance twenty dollars for every one of his female slaves, whom he would get in the family way."

There are no exact figures, however, to show specifically how much additional income was made from these outside activities. One slave, bought or sold, could make over \$1,000 difference in a planter's income. For the sake of convenience, we will conclude that the composite plantation we're dealing with had only the income derived from plantation sources.

But, in order that a true picture of the planter's monetary success is presented, the necessary expenses of the plantation must be subtracted from the \$10,840.33 income. Such costs as salaries, medical attention, food, slave clothes, and general farm upkeep must be considered.

Most places employed whites to run the rice threshers and mills which necessitated the outlay of their salaries. The nine representative plantations employed sixty-four whites with a total monthly salary of \$535.

OWNER	PLANTATION	FREE EMPLOYEES		MONTHLY PAYROLL
		MALE	FEMALE	
James Moore	Belvedere	2	2	\$ 36
John Hall	Mulberry	1	1	\$ 28
M. Bryan	Green Banks	3	10	\$ 50
H. Howard	Dalrymple	7	0	\$ 90
W. Waters	Clarendon	1	4	\$ 40
T. Cowan	Old Town	2	0	\$ 25
T. McIlhenny	Asperne	5	5	\$112
T. Miller	Orton	3	2	\$ 99
T. Meares	The Bluffs	3	13	\$ 55

The composite plantation, from the above nine, employed seven free workers with a yearly salary of \$713.28 in 1860.

In addition to this expense must be added the upkeep of the slave population. The composite slave population was seventy-seven, each of whom had to be fed, clothed, and cared for. Although the rice plantation did make some attempt at self sufficiency by raising some food crops, the planters seemed more interested in gaining a profit from the rice than feeding the slaves. "A peck of corn meal and three or four pounds of salt pork or bacon comprised the basic weekly allowance of the great majority of adult slaves. These rations, to which were frequently added a few supplementary items, usually provided a diet of sufficient bulk but improper balance." Thus, using this allowance, the composite plantation's 77 slaves would need 1001 bushels of corn and 12,012 pounds of bacon or salt pork a year. The amount of corn produced on the average of the nine plantations in 1860 was 327.8 bushels. In 1860, there were 44 swine on the average of the plantations amounting to approximately 3400 pounds of pork if all were slaughtered for slave food. This would leave a deficiency on the composite place of 673.2 bushels of corn and 8612 pounds of pork. This deficiency had to be made up out of the profit, which would mean a \$1,128 expenditure in 1860. The clothing for a slave would usually run about \$7 per hand and \$539 for seventy-seven slaves, and medical charges amounted to just over one dollar per slave.

Another major expense to the planter was the all-important overseer's salary. There remains no record of the salaries paid to Brunswick County overseers in 1860, but South Carolina rice plantations paid around \$1,000 a year and Georgia places "paid and annual salary ... from \$100 to \$1,200, in addition to furnishing a house, an allowance of corn and pork, and a slave servant." From these figures a safe estimate of a Brunswick overseer would be around \$1,100 in 1860.

The last necessary deduction was taxes. Both the state and county levied requirements on land and slaves. In 1860, the composite plantation had real estate valued at \$34,626 (see first table) and 47 polls (A) to be taxed. The county taxes were 40 cents for every \$100 of real estate and 80 cents for every poll. The poor tax was 11 cents for every \$100 real property and 30 cents for polls, and the school tax was 6 cents for every \$100 and 11 cents a poll. The state taxes were 20 cents on each \$100 and 80 cents a poll. The total state and Brunswick County taxes for the composite plantation would be \$261.12 in 1860 according to this schedule.

All the expenses of the composite plantation amounted to:

\$ 713.28	-	salaries of white labor
539.00	-	clothes, slaves
385.00	-	house slaves
77.00	-	medical (\$1.00 per slave)
1,128.00	-	feed slaves
1,100.00	-	overseer's salary
261.12	-	taxes
<u>\$4,203.40</u>	-	TOTAL EXPENSES

(A) In 1860 a poll was any free man from 21 to 35 years old and any slaves from 13 to 49 years.

When these expenses are subtracted from the plantation's income the resulting figure is \$6,636.93. This amount does not include such considerations as annual depreciation of the physical facilities of the place nor cost of seed. These expenses are almost impossible to compute since most planters in 1860 failed to include them in their journals. But even without these additions the above figure is a fairly accurate accounting of the Brunswick rice planter's income. How successful the composite plantation was with this income is difficult to determine. In 1860, according to several leading economic historians, a mildly successful rice plantation could expect a return of 6 percent each year on its total investment in land and slaves. The composite plantation, in 1860, was worth \$34,626 in real estate and approximately \$61,600 in slaves, totaling an investment of \$96,226. The 1860 income of \$6,636.93 is roughly 6.9 percent of the total investment making rice plantations only mildly successful on the average.

In 1860, most of the planters seemed to be successful although concrete proof is lacking. In the mid-1850's Dr. Frederick Hill of Orton was able to contribute \$300 toward the building of a new court house at Smithville. In 1860 H. N. Howard of Dalrymple voluntarily equipped the 39th Regiment of the North Carolina for the expected hostilities. A. J. Hill presented Mrs. Owen Holmes of Kendal two slaves worth over \$1,000 in May of 1859 as a gift. John Taylor of the Oaks Plantation gave George Harriss, Owen, 16 years, for him "to keep, hold, and employ ... and to do with him as =he= will."

There were, however, rumblings of financial troubles. Between 1858 and 1860, 1/3 of Kendal Plantation was sold. S. Everitt sold Asperne to T. McIlhenny for \$12,000, Beauchoi was sold, and James Moore sold 837 acres of his Belvedere for \$7,300. F. J. Lord sold his 1860 and 1861 rice crops in 1859, plus some shares in the Bank of Cape Fear and some mules for a promissory note "immediately" for \$5,857.46. Notes of this type were common and are found throughout Brunswick and New Hanover County records.

Although the evidence is rather sketchy and the financial survey at best incomplete, it can be said that the plantations of Brunswick County dealing in the cultivation of rice produced few wealthy men. \$6,636 in 1860 could not support the planter and his family in the manner they sought, with the accompanying luxuries, trips, food, etc. Even if the figure is revised to correspond with today's prices the planter would still be no better off than "upper middle class." Thus we can safely assume that the Brunswick County rice planter, in 1860, could not be dependent on his place to provide him with the money for his "social station" and thus many planters became doctors, lawyers, slave traders, and financiers to supplement their incomes.

Under the Genealogy Tree

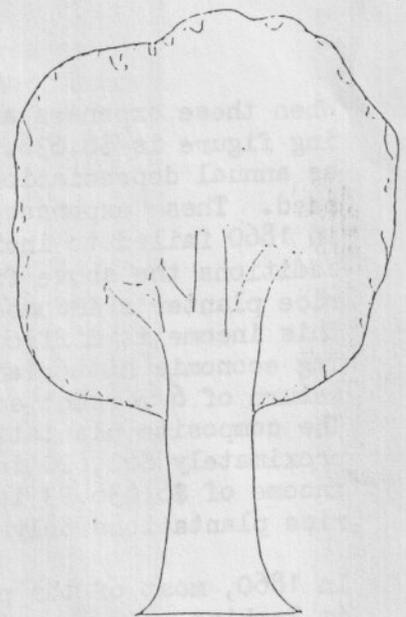
by: Gwen Causey

Four Persons Narrowly Escape Death Near Inlet

SOUTHPORT, May 24.—Four persons narrowly escaped drowning and a fifth suffered from over-exertion when a rowboat carrying six persons and loaded with a quantity of oysters filled with water and sank near Lockwoods Folly Inlet late Monday afternoon. John W. Lancaster, prominent farmer of the Boons Neck community, had gone out with members of his family consisting of his son, John, Jr., and two daughters, Misses Theodosia and Betty Lancaster. Two daughters-in-law, Mrs. Veuna and Mrs. Bonnie Lancaster, were also in the boat when it sprang a leak and sank quickly in deep water.

None of the four young women could swim and as the boat sank completely there was nothing for them to cling to. Mr. Lancaster and his son succeeded in getting all four ashore but were nearly drowned in the attempt. Mr. Lancaster was so overexerted in the effort at rescue that he required medical attention, as did his daughter, Miss Betty.

Wilmington Morning Star
25 May 1939



SAD ACCIDENT.

Supply P. O., Feb., 7, 1892.

Messrs Editors:

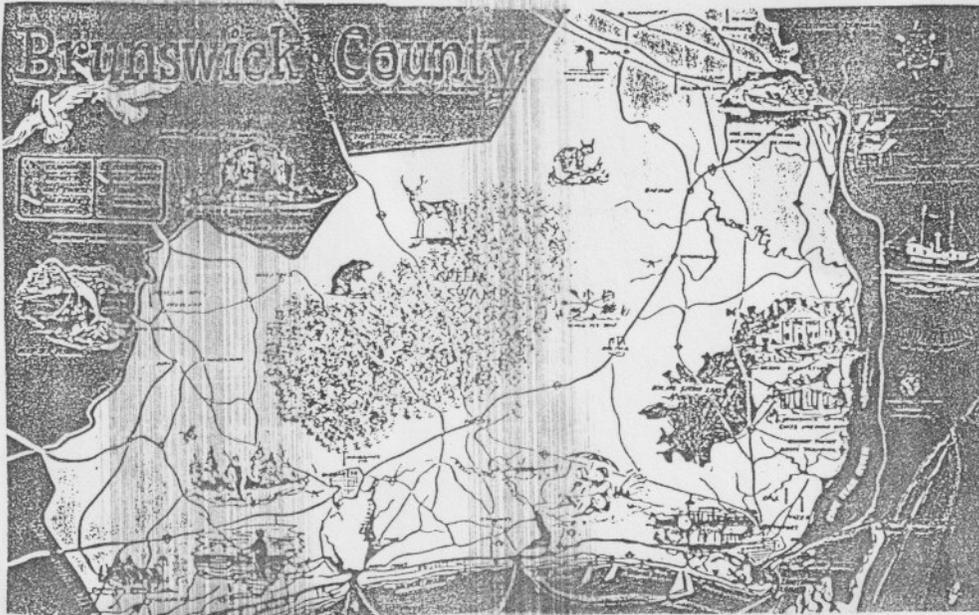
A sad accident occurred on the 3rd instant at this place to Mrs. Rebecca Clemmons, mother of Mr. A. B. Clemmons, Sr. While going about attending to her household duties, Mrs. Clemmons in some way fell and broke her thigh bone, also dislocating her hip. She is now under the care and good treatment of our well-known doctor, D. B. McNeil, and is resting as comfortably as could be expected. Mrs. Clemmons is 88 years of age and has lived in this neighborhood as long as I can remember. She has always been a friend to the needy and occupies a warm spot in the hearts of all who know her.

W. S.

Southport Leader
1892

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues are now payable for the 1995 calendar year. Please fill out the attached form and mail it to the society post office box or bring you payment to the next meeting. If you mail your payment in, please address the envelope 'Attention David Bennett'



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Enclosed is a check for membership in the Brunswick County Historical Society for the calendar year of 19____.

Make Checks payable to Brunswick County Historical Society,
P.O. 874, Shallotte N.C., 28459.

Please send NEWSLETTER to:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please check one: _____ individual-\$10:00, _____^{100⁰⁰} life-\$20:00

UNDER THE GENEALOGY TREE (CONT.)

Don't overlook the fact that newspapers are often a good source of information when you're doing genealogy. Obituaries give clues to death and birth dates as well as parents and siblings. Occasionally the mention of a town or state will give you an idea about a new place to search. The personal column gives information about marriages and births. Human interest stories are entertaining reading as well as informative. All secondary sources should be checked for accuracy. One of the people mentioned in the May 25, 1939 article verified the incident and made corrections. John W. Lancaster was a farmer of the Supply community and only one daughter-in-law, Veuna Lancaster, was with them. Rev. and Mrs. B. R. Page of Southport were visiting in the area of the day after the incident and carried the information back to the newspaper in Southport. The Wilmington Morning Star copied the article.

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