



NEWSLETTER

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

VOLUME XXXV, NUMBER VI

MAY, 1995

The President's Page

The President says,

Happy Springtime to You!

Mother nature is in full bloom. It is good to be alive and enjoy Gods beautiful and wonderful world. The history that surrounds us is so interesting and so breath taking. We will enjoy our next meeting on May 8, 1995. A dinner meeting at "Thomas Seafood Restaurant in Calabash will begin at 6:30 pm and the meeting will be at 7:30. Mr. C.B. Berry will be speaking on various places and people of Brunswick County especially the Southern part.

On August 14, 1995, at 7:30 pm, our meeting will be at Southport Maritime Museum, Southport N.C. Mrs Susie Carson will be speaking on Maritime History of Brunswick County and Southport. Mark your Calendars.

Don't forget the maps Frank Galloway will have for us to purchase at our next meeting. See you in Calabash, May 8th, at 6:30 pm.

Lottie Ludlum, President.

For directions to Calabash, please see page 6 of your newsletter. There you will find a map of the Southern part of our county and the big star is Thomas's

President:	Lottie Ludlum
V.President:	Frank Galloway
Sec./Treas:	David Bennett
Newsletter:	David Bennett
Directors:	Johnsie Holden
	Lucielle Blake
	Gwen Causey
	Helen Taylor

North Carolina Folk Heritage Awards Ceremony Invitation

The public is invited to the 1995 North Carolina Folk Heritage Ceremony on Tuesday, June 6, 1995 from 7:30 pm-9:00 pm. An open reception follows the ceremony for the public to meet and mingle with the seven 1995 recipients. The ceremony, featuring live performances, crafts displays and slide presentations, will be held in the Stewart Theatre, University Student Center, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Parking and the event are free to the public.

THIS MONTH IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

A Post-Civil War Constitution

The turbulent election of April 1868 was one of the most important and controversial in our state's history. At stake was not only the gubernatorial race, but also the ratification of a new state constitution that would abolish slavery, eliminate all property and religious qualifications for holding elected office, order popular election of all state and county officials and provide for universal suffrage. Republican and Conservative party members were joined by the Ku Klux Klan in stirring up the electorate. It is said that the first-ever appearance of a Klan poster here was exhibited just prior to the balloting. After plenty of mudslinging on all sides, the Republicans, led by Governor-Elect William W. Holden, were victorious and the revised state constitution was adopted at a cost of \$100,000 to Tar Heel taxpayers.

— Alan Hodge

HICKORY HALL

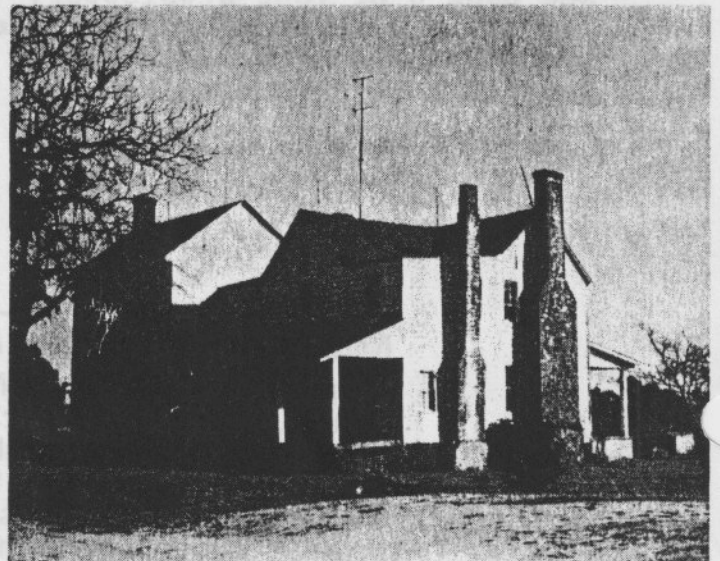
Bobbie Lou Berry

This will attempt to cover the architectural background of the oldest residence in a unique little village, Calabash. Calabash is located just north of the state line in Brunswick County, N. C. Calabash, also known as Peanut Landing, is a village of perhaps less than two hundred souls that booms into a teeming city at dinner hour. Hundreds of persons arrive to patronize more than a dozen large seafood restaurants located in the village.

The residence which we are describing is known as "Hickory Hall" and is located near several of these restaurants in Calabash. The present owners who reside in the structure are Mr. and Mrs. Vinson W. Simmons who operate one of the restaurants. Mrs. Simmons was nee Lella Mae Thomas, a daughter of Samuel Hemingway Thomas, who once owned several hundred acres that encompassed the village of Calabash and who was early appointed as a postmaster of the Calabash post office which ceased to exist several decades ago.

Family tradition indicates that some of the brick within the chimneys of Hickory Hall had the date 1812 imprinted therein which would seem to indicate that the house was built prior to that time.

The foundations for at least two chimneys that form a part of the original house were made of ship's ballast stones. Hickory Hall overlooks the Calabash River. Calabash River was formerly known as the northeast branch of Little River that enters the sea at the boundary between the Carolinas. Little River was an artery for commerce during the colonial period. It was from the ships that plied this river that such ship's ballast stones were available.



The mortar for these foundations was made from oyster shells in the area. These oyster shells were burned into lime-like substance, since the oyster shell is basically ninety percent lime.

Hickory Hall appears to have been built by Samuel Frink (September 1, 1786 - November 2, 1862), whose great-grandfather Nicholas Frink was the first settler of the name in the area. Nicholas Frink sailed from Stonington, Connecticut about 1734 along with his uncle John Frentice who was a ship's captain engaged in commerce between New England and the Southern colonies. The present day Little River Neck area, the northern extremity of North Myrtle Beach, was formerly known as "Frink's Neck" for this Nicholas Frink.

Samuel Frink operated a large plantation in what is now the village of Calabash. His produce consisted principally of indigo, rice and naval stores. He was the owner of a number of slaves, some of whom were once imprisoned in a portion of the second floor of Hickory Hall, for misconduct.

It was the use of slave labor primarily with which Hickory Hall was built. The abundant pines on the Frink Plantation were cut into timbers with whip saws operated by the slaves. These old sills and timbers are still in evidence in the foundation of the house. Only the heart portion of the long leaf pine was retained for these timbers; the sapwood being discarded since it would not endure as would the heart portion of the tree.

A unique feature of the house was the fact that it was built over a huge hickory stump that was used for a table for many decades. This stump, however, decayed due to its connection in the earth and was removed long ago and evidence of it has disappeared in the replacement of the floor in that portion of the house. It was from this stump that the house acquired the name Hickory Hall by which it is still known.

The ceilings in the house are ten feet on each of its two floors, and the large chimneys afford at least five fireplaces which, of course, was the original heating and cooking facilities. The doors were hand-carved by slave carpenters, some of whom became quite proficient in such work. The original interior wall finish was planking cut from local timber and hand-hewn to a smooth finish. Other portions of the walls and ceilings consisted of beaded paneling, possibly imported from England. The exterior wall finish on portions of the original house was also imported; beaded clapboard was not unlike that used in Washington's home, Mount Vernon.

On July 16, 1807, Samuel Frink married Elizabeth Bellune (April 14, 1790-September 20, 1843) and they became the parents of twelve children, while making their home in Hickory Hall. Outstanding among these children was Lorenzo Frink (April 30, 1812 - October 14, 1889), who later became a prominent physician of Southport and Wilmington, North Carolina. Dr. Lorenzo Frink inherited Hickory Hall from his father, and is believed to have lived there as an adult, before moving to Southport. He and his wife, Jessie Windgate (April 11, 1828 - May 9, 1874), are buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington.

In the swamps around Calabash large cypress trees grow. The slave lumbermen were taught how to cut a chunk of cypress from a tree to determine if it would split properly. When the specimen was favorable, the tree was felled, cut into blocks and split into shingles with a broad axe. The shingles were further shaped to a beveled edge by hand with drawing knives. It was with such shingles that the original roof of Hickory Hall was made. These have long since disappeared under layers of asphalt shingles.

Dr. Lorenzo Frink and his wife were the parents of a son and daughter at Hickory Hall, who were Samuel Robert Frink (December 31, 1850 - November 1899) and Elizabeth Bartlett Frink (February 19, 1849 - February 17, 1879). Dr. Frink bequeathed his Hickory Hall Plantation along with other property,

to the son and his wife, and his house and lot in Smithville, now Southport, to his daughter who married John Whitaker Cotten.

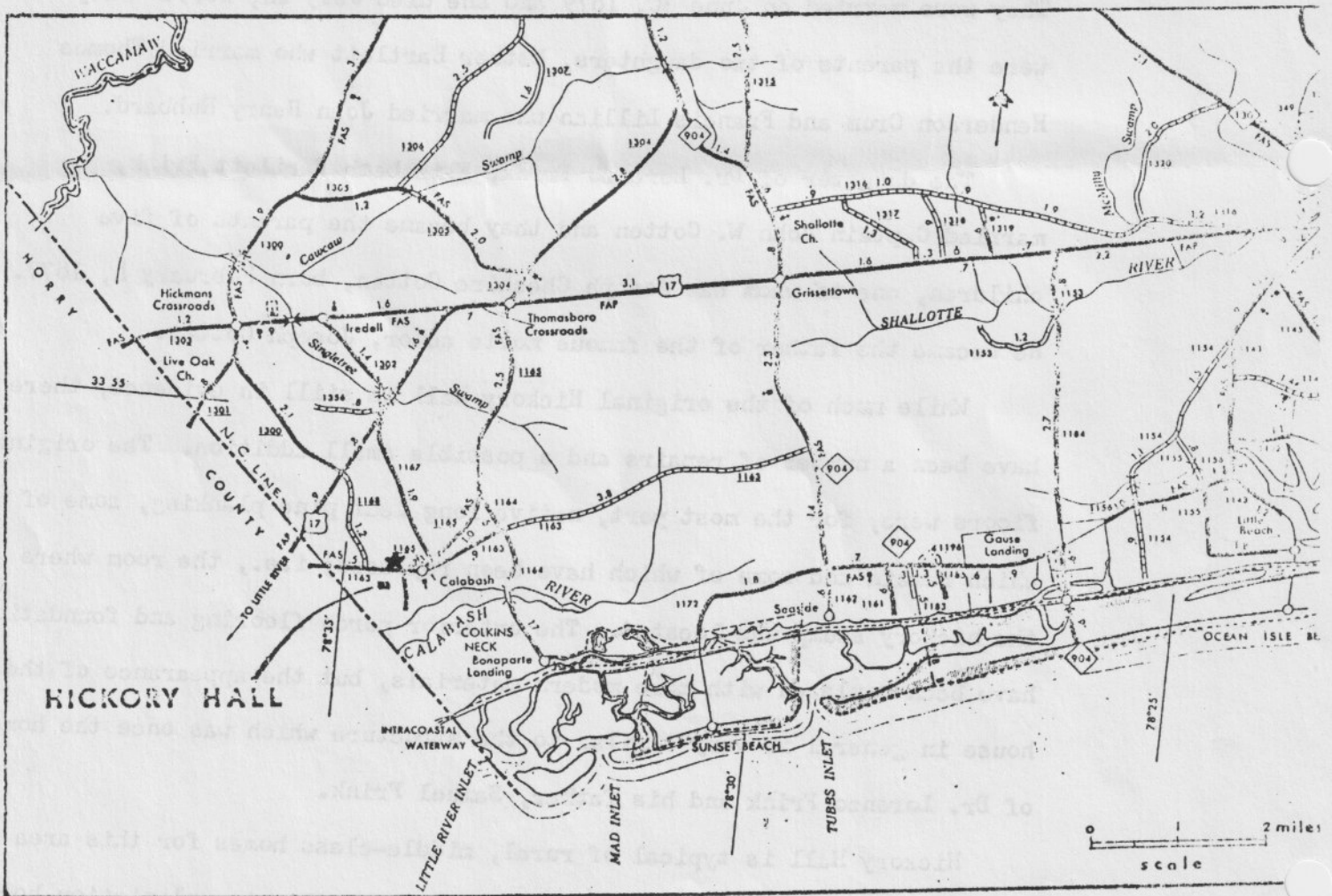
To Dr. Frink's son, Samuel Robert Frink, who first married Mary Katherine Landis of Oxford, North Carolina, was born a child in 1871, that died in infancy. He married his second wife, Mary Francis White (at Meriweather, Georgia) in 1877, and of this union, one son was born. He had a third marriage to Martha Katherine White, twin sister of his second wife. It is said that when Mary Francis was on her death bed, she requested Samuel to marry her twin sister and rear her baby boy. They were married on June 30, 1879 and she died July 24, 1899. They were the parents of two daughters, Esther Bartlett who married Thomas Henderson Cram and Francis Lillian who married John Henry Hubbard.

The daughter of Dr. Lorenzo Frink, Elizabeth Bartlett Frink, married Captain John W. Cotten and they became the parents of five children, one of whom was Joseph Cheshire Cotten, born February 4, 1877. He became the father of the famous movie actor, Joseph Cotten.

While much of the original Hickory Hall is still in evidence, there have been a number of repairs and a possible small addition. The original floors were, for the most part, native long leaf pine planking, some of which remain and some of which have been replaced; i.e., the room where the hickory stump was located. The exterior porch flooring and foundation have been replaced with more modern materials, but the appearance of the house in general is very similar to the structure which was once the home of Dr. Lorenzo Frink and his father, Samuel Frink.

Hickory Hall is typical of rural, middle-class homes for this area in the post-colonial ere. It is not unlike many of the rice plantation homes which were built on the Waccamaw River in the antebellum period. Most

of the homes of this type have disappeared, especially in this immediate area from age, fire, and action of the elements. Unless steps are taken within a reasonable length of time, this, like the Tripp House at Shallotte Point, may also pass from the scene in years to come.



This map shows approximate location of Hickory Hall.