

# Brunswick County Historical Society

Post office Box 874

Shallotte N.C. 28459

The mission of the Brunswick County Historical Society is simple: we want to learn and share the rich history of our area. We are a non-profit organization. Membership dues and private donations cover the cost of this newsletter. We welcome your interest in our beautiful, and bountiful Brunswick County. An area which is rich in history and steeped in local traditions.

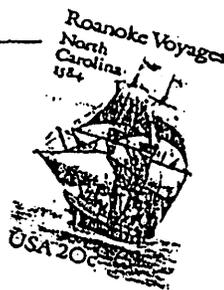
The Brunswick County Historical Society meets quarterly. If you are interesting in becoming a member; send \$10.00 for yearly membership or \$100.00 to become a lifetime member to: Brunswick County Historical Society, Attn: Gwen Causey, Treasurer Post Office Box 874 Shallotte N.C. 28459

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## We've Got Mail

The Continental Congress created the United States Postal Service 225 years ago. Two years ago on July 1, 1997, the General Assembly established the North Carolina Postal History Commission for the purpose of giving advice on the "collection, preservation, cataloging, publication and exhibition of North Carolina postal history." Last year the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Postal History Commission combined efforts to produce a traveling exhibit titled *North Carolina Postal History*, which looks at the evolution of the state's postal system over the past two hundred years. The exhibit opens February 12 at the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex and continues through April 16.



## Ancestry Jest

The children of a prominent family chose to give the patriarch a book of their family's history. The biographer they hired was warned of one problem. Uncle Willie, the "Black Sheep" in the family, had gone to Sing Sing's electric chair for murder. The writer promised to carefully handle the situation, and did so in the following way: "Uncle Willie occupied a chair of applied electronics at one of our nation's leading institutions. He was attached to his position by the strongest ties. His death came as a true shock."

## MEETING

Feb. 14, 2000

7:30 P.M.

World War II Memories  
Mounted Beach Patrol, Long Beach, North Carolina

I would like to share with you some of my brother, Jack Hubbard's memories of his duty in the U.S. Coast Guard at Long Beach, North Carolina. Jack grew up on a farm in Cumberland County. He developed at an early age a love of horses and hunting. He became interested in entering the U.S. Coast Guard when he read an article on the formation of the Mounted Beach Patrols. Since he liked horses so much, it seemed like the perfect branch of service for him to enlist into.

Why was there a need for Mounted Beach Patrols? Packs of German submarines in the early part of World War II operated off the North Carolina coast. During the first six months of 1942 German subs sank seventy vessels. The presence of enemy submarines so close to our shores caused wide spread fear and rumors that Nazi agents and demolition experts would be put ashore on our isolated beaches. This concern prompted the Coast Guard to establish the horse patrols.

The men received their training at Hilton Head, South Carolina. Hilton Head in the early 1940's was wild, definitely not a resort community. Some of the men were expecting the horse patrol to be a picnic. Jack said, "Many had never ridden anything but a hobby-horse. During training there were men so saddle sore they stood to eat their meals. Those horses from the U.S. Calvary knew every trick in the book."

Jack was very excited to receive his assignment to Long Beach, North Carolina, so near his home in Fayetteville.

When the 16 Coast Guard men arrived at Long Beach in February 1943 they saw high rolling sand dunes, a run-down barrack and barn once used by the Conservation Corps. The men got busy and built stables and corrals for the horses. With some help they built an observation tower on the big hill at the west end of the beach. Wood also had to be cut to fire up the wood stove. In his greeting to the new patrol, the officer in command said, "Boys on these barrier islands you'll have to survive on your own. We will get supplies to you when we can." Supplies when they did come arrived by boat. Once a month coal for the cook stove, hay, oats and bran mash were delivered for the horses along with a few food items for the men. Sometimes the men felt the horses received the most attention.

The horses were cared for very well by the men. Jack recalled the fellows being very angry with one young man who after being warned not to ride his horse so fast and for so long continued to mistreat the horse. When it died a burial was held for the horse. The letters U.S.C.G. and the horse's name were spelled out in sea shells on the grave.

At first no one was assigned to cook so each man was required to take a turn. It became evident after several terrible meals that

most of the men couldn't cook a lick. A young fellow from Wisconsin named Van Lynn soon surfaced as the best cook. The men noticed when it was Van Lynn's turn the food tasted much better. His pan cakes were so good they named him patty cake. Jack and the others offered to take his patrol if he would do the cooking. Van Lynn had been assigned an ill tempered horse named Moon Eye. Jack said the horse was named Moon Eye because his moods changed with the moon. Late one night a message came on the field phone, "Alert, saboteurs coming ashore on the east end of the island. Report immediately!" The men hurriedly dressed and rushed out to saddle their horses. When they returned from the false training alarm they found Van Lynn still trying to saddle old Moon Eye. The horse was so mean Van Lynn was grateful to make the swap in duties. I guess you could say Moon Eye was finally "court marshaled". He had to be put down after nearly blinding someone.

Conditions at the station were poor. There was no electricity or refrigeration. Fresh water came from a pitcher pump. Other problems were mosquitoes. Window screens were painted with kerosene to keep the mosquitoes out of the barrack. Sand was forever blowing through the cracks making it necessary to shake out your mattress each night before getting into bed. There was no pavement once you crossed the drawbridge to Long Beach making travel in the thick sand difficult.

Anyone visiting the beaches before the days of air-conditioning can recall how hot it could get in July and August. On hot days when the sand flies were biting the men would take the horses for a swim in the ocean. Orders were given for one man to be with each horse. Horses could become disoriented and afraid to swim back through the breakers. They never lost a horse and the men and horses enjoyed the ocean swims.

The duty hours for beach patrol was six hours each day. One man on horse patrol rode the twelve miles of lonely beach during the day and two rode at night. Mile post with telephone jacks were set up so the men on patrol could call the station from each post. At night no lights could be visible from the thirteen cottages at the east end of Long Beach.

The most dreaded patrols were on cold stormy nights from midnight to 6 AM. Jack remembered one less than routine June night beach patrol. He and a buddy, Erhart noticed in the distance two suspicious shapes slowly crawling ashore. Jack felt cold chills go up his spine. Maybe they were German spies. They approached cautiously on horse back with their weapons ready. Jack shouted, "Halt, who goes there?" The command and question brought no response. Erhart nervous and a little trigger happy fired his carbine in the air. Not a minute too soon the moon came from under a cloud exposing two giant Logger Head sea turtles making their way to the dunes to lay their eggs.

Some men may have disliked the duty on this remote island but not my brother. He enjoyed getting to know some of the small number of people that lived near their Coast Guard station. In the fall

when the mullet were running local fishermen put out nets just beyond the breakers to catch the tasty fish. Lightning, a Coast Guard work horse would pull the nets full of mullet onto the beach. The dressed fish were immediately put into kegs of salt brine to preserve. The men at the station always received fresh fish in return for their help.

Jack recalled meeting Mr. Swain an interesting old fellow who lived by himself. "Sometimes I would see him outside his old timey house dressing out a wild boar." Mr. Swain also raised a few domestic hogs. One of his sows swam across Davis Creek. Not knowing the pig's owner the Coast Guard men put her in a pen, where upon she soon delivered six pigs. When he found his sow, being a generous fellow, he told the men to keep half of the young pigs. Their military rations soon included pork barbecue. Mr Swain liked to help the boys. He loaned them a skiff to travel across Davis Creek and up and down the waterway. The men pooled their money to buy a 5 horsepower outboard motor.

Life improved when Jack became friends with Irie. Irie had once been a merchant seaman and had traveled all over the world. He gave that up to become a back woodsman. Irie made his living trapping, selling hides, fish and wood. He liked to brag about a large liquor still he once operated. "The still had so many men working we blew a whistle at 12 O'clock", joked Irie. He brought them fresh dressed fish. Irie, a bachelor, kept a tame red fox for company.

Irie liked to hunt and so did Jack. Jack kept three coon hounds. When he was off duty Jack, a couple of his Coast Guard buddies and Irie would go deer or coon hunting. Soon there were coon, deer and fox hides tacked to the side of the barn at the Coast Guard Station. The men received word that the Big Brass were coming for an inspection. Some of the boys thought Jack was going to get in trouble for the hides tacked on the barn. They advised him not to take any chances. Jack did nothing with the hides. Everyone was nervous the day the officers arrived. One officer said, "I see you boys have been doing some hunting. That's good. While you are hunting you might just spot something we need to know about. I do a little hunting myself."

The war years brought hard times and plenty of stress but there were funny moments too. Our family remembers a particular twenty-four hour liberty pass. Jack arrived home late one night with his friend Don Tornow. They were driving Jack's two-door Model A Ford. Mama had painted large horse heads on both doors making the bright blue car very distinctive. Everyone was asleep in the house when he brought Rusty, a pet coon into the kitchen. Before going to bed he tied Rusty to the kitchen table. Mama was in for a surprise when she walked into the kitchen to cook breakfast. We heard her scream but as always she was a good sport. Some girls at the Southport USO had made Rusty a little plaid jacket.

By the summer of 1944 the Coast Guard decided a Mounted Beach Patrol was no longer needed. The men had taken their job of

protecting our coast very seriously.

The many hours Jack spent hunting proved beneficial to him when he was transferred to a more dangerous assignment in the Pacific. An officer asked if he had ever done any duck or bird hunting. Jack answered, "Yes sir, I've hunted most of my life." He was assigned to be one of the 40 millimeter anti-aircraft gunners on LST 204 and was soon taking aim at swarming Kamikazes.

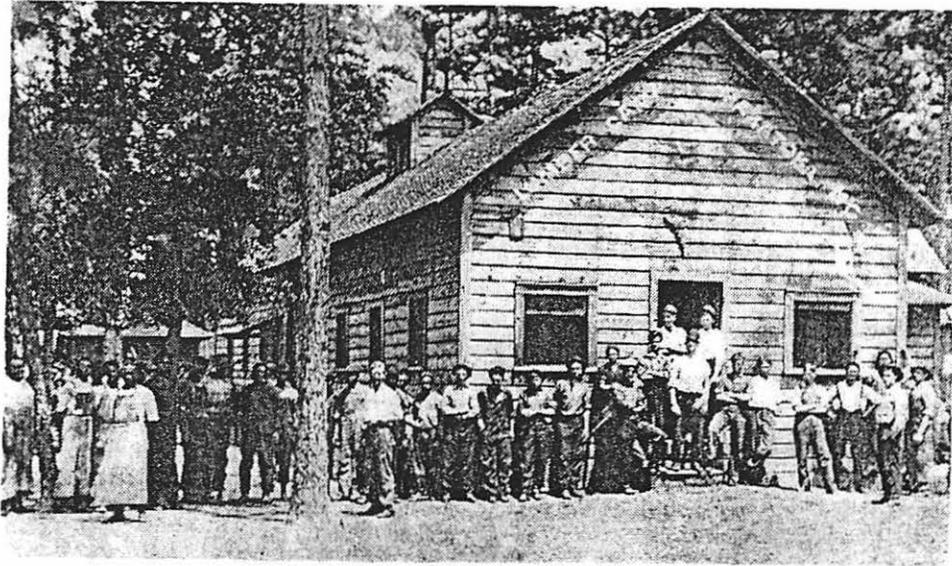
My brother remembered the months spent at Long Beach, North Carolina to be the best months of his war experience.

Barbara Hubbard Wilson



FOUR PHELPS BROTHERS  
OF SUPPLY, NC IN SERVICE  
Left to right, top: S2/c  
Coolidge Phelps in the  
Pacific; Sgt. Bonnie  
Phelps, 164th Genl. Hosp.  
in Europe; Cpl. Audie  
Phelps, 48th Armored in  
Europe; SK2/c Albert  
Phelps, on USS Elokomin  
in the Atlantic Area.

## Makatoka: The Logging Camp



Scene From Makatoka about 1913

Note the wording on the building, "Lumber Camp, Makatoka, N.C." The men at the left are wearing aprons. They were probably the cooks for the camp.

### As Mr. McKoy Described It

Makatoka was our last logging camp. The camps had houses for the whole families. The "projects" were what they called the houses. Waccamaw Lumber Company owned everything in sight. Our superintendent was Old Man George Levinson. The cabins had beds and a wood stove to keep warm. That was all.

They didn't have any bathrooms. They had a big creek right there. Juniper Creek was right there by it. After they'd eat breakfast, that place would be foggy! Them scoundrels would swim in there near about all day on Sunday.

The picture showed where they ate. They'd be standing around waiting for them to call them in to eat. Men did the cooking. No women in there doing the cooking. We didn't want them at the camp.

Once the superintendent decided he was going to teach the men some manners and he stood in the doorway to get the men to walk in with manners. Well, he got knocked down when the men rushed in as they always did.

### A Tough Camp

Oh me, that used to be a rough camp, a tough camp! Drinking! My Savior in the morning! That was the major part of it.

There was a group in Brunswick County below the camp and they'd go down there and get the whiskey. They'd go down there after they knocked off and bring it back by the kegs of it. I didn't bother with it. They'd drink all the time. Oh me, that's right!

Old man Levinson, he had to have his drink too. I remember one Sunday night he and his oldest son fought there about two hours. Both of them was high. I remember one Sunday our superintendent — he was a tough man! One Sunday there was a family — when the people went there visiting, you didn't know what it was going to turn out to be. Once it got so bad that old man Levinson — what he did — he had two engineers to fire up the trains and backed them up to them little camps and turned them head over. That was his way of whipping (punishing) them. There were three of the cabins he turned over.

### Sally, A Tough Woman

The woman he was around with was a tough woman. He and she were surrounded with black and white. All in the camp would go down there to see what was going to happen. She and him got to cussing one another. He cussed her and she cussed him back. They went together. She threw him down and you know a woman. When she hits, she hits fast. She was giving him a fit. He didn't have any time to tell her to quit! He couldn't think of her name. Her name was Sally. Sally was poking it to him and won't give him no time to do nothing. Someone said, "Sally, get off of him!"

And he said, "By Jesus, Sally, get off me!" Sally wonned that fight. She was used to all that stuff, going from camp to camp. Her husband was right there looking down at her just like the rest of us. They had some of everything there. It was just a big time place for people.

### Shootings And Killings

More people had been shot there than a little. There was a young man. He was shot down close to my camp near an oak tree. There was another young lady that was shot and killed. She didn't die when she was shot; she died about two days after she was shot.

There were two young men. They were partners. One was a first-class cook in the cook camp. Every evening after supper them two would march around our camp playing the guitar. They looked happy together. You don't know how people are. As time went on, there was one colored girl in the camp. Her name was Bessie. She was keeping one of them's money. The other was spending it. When he found out, he shot the man, supposed to be his friend. Then he shot Bessie. He left. We never saw him again.

### Foreigners And Wrecks

They had a lot of foreigners working there. Them foreigners camped to themselves. The Italians, Polarks, Swedes, Hungarians, right on. Them Italians built all the railroads. Some of them could speak English.

We had a wreck one morning just as we were leaving the camp. The evening before, the man who was building the railroads, he stood on the train and had them to unload the ties. He didn't get down there to see how close the ties were left to the track. The ties were too close to the track and that upset the trestle.

**Makatoka, As Mr. Baker  
Described It**

The next morning, leaving out, we wrecked. Didn't kill but five. I was setting beside two that got killed. I beat them jumping off the train is how come they didn't get me. When we got straight, then we picked them up piece by piece. Their flesh was jumping like a chicken. We didn't know one from the other.

I've been through it!

There were a good many wrecks there. There was a Russian and he was riding the train when backing up. He hadn't done that before. George Shaw always rode it when backing up. When you take up railroad, you leave a square in it. Children out in the woods playing on a Sunday turned the switch. That caused the wreck.

It killed the Russian. He didn't say nothing to nobody. When we stopped, we had a pile of cars just about as high as that door. Men down there blood shooting out of their nose as far as the other side of the house. "Man, ain't you going to help me?" We were doing all we could. Some of them were just praying. They couldn't say anything but "Mercy! Mercy!"

There was one man down there; his head was between four wheels and one of them wheels was on his arm. He was in trouble, wasn't he? That wasn't the end of him. The scoundrel is still living, the last I knew. They had to move the cars off until we could get to those under the wreck. It took time to move the pieces of cars off.

**When The Skidder Cable  
Injured Mr. McKay**

The main rig broke. The main rig of the skidder was a cable, a steel cable used to pull logs with. The cable broke, and in breaking, it slinged itself out a certain distance and knocked me on the trail where it was pulling. Before I knew it, it came and got me. I was lying down in the trench where they were pulling logs. I was standing about twelve feet from it, but it hit my head. It cracked my skull here, broke this arm, broke three ribs, knocked this hip out of place, and broke my leg. I ain't got no hip on the left.

No hospital. Dr. Slade Smith was our doctor. He patched me up. They brought me out of the woods about twenty miles from the camp and brought me to my camp. My camp was crowded — came to see me after they brought me out. Some of them standing over me were saying, "He's a dead man. He's dead and gone. That's a dead man!"

It didn't make me feel too good, but I had to take it because I was lying there. Old Man Breeden said, "He's a dead man."

A man don't die everytime we think, because God ain't ready for him.

Dr. Smith was the only hospital I had. Every day he would visit me. I was laid up about nine weeks. After nine weeks, it was a good while before I went to work. I walked around.

The Waccamaw Lumber Company had a small town across Juniper Creek in Brunswick by the name of Makatoka. They had a small store down there. There were twenty-five or thirty families living there at one time. They operated on Waccamaw's Lumber Company's property, cutting timber, getting timber out, cutting ties, and doing railroad repair work. Back in those days, Makatoka was known as a rough spot. They sometimes would put on a shindig, drink about all night, and shoot people. Play music and whoop it up. I know because at one time I was in town there.

I have been told by older people that one time sixteen head were killed on the railroad track in an accident. They were Italians who come over here to do the railroad work, making the railroad bed to put the track on.

**Makatoka, As Mr. Bland  
Described It**

That was a rough place. People gambling. They'd kill you down there. White and colored. Some fellows would go down there, and it would be two weeks before they come back into town. When they did come back, you'd hear, "The logging crew done come out! You'd better look out!" They'd shoot in your house and do anything. Kill your dogs! You couldn't keep any dogs around 'cause they'd kill them. People would shoot them. It was the wrong thing to let them have any guns down there because they'd shoot so.

People would get down and crawl through the ditches to get away from them. If you'd go by them, they'd shoot you. I'd get in a ditch and lay down. Drinking was the main problem. Drinking and having a big time! They didn't care. They'd just as soon kill you as not. They'd kill a man and set right on him and gamble all night long.

**Makatoka, As Arthur Little  
Described It**

The commissary was on the other side at the end of the Y at Makatoka. Right down behind trees is where the people of the logging crews used to live. They had houses there. It used to be the roughest place in the South. It bore the reputation of being the roughest places in the South. Men moved their families in. They had something going on there all the time. The single men stayed in the shanties, about eight by ten feet. The family houses had two or three rooms.

Yes sir, when I was a kid, I seen so many fights that I got so I didn't pay no attention to it. Starting off with me and my cousin, Burris Russ, used to carry eggs, grapes and stuff to Makatoka there on weekends and on pay day. Two-thirds of the people there would be drunk. We were just lucky.

They didn't never bother us. They were a-fighting and a-messing all the time. Made their own liquor right down there in the swamp. Officers were the ones selling it. The constable and sheriff were the ones doing the selling.

That stuff at Makatoka went on record as being the meanest lumber camp in North Carolina. But all told, they were rough and if one got mad with you, he would kill you. But there was one feature about that bunch of people that ain't about a lot of people today. You know if one of them told you something, his word was his own. He could be just as mean as he could be, but if he told you something, you could depend on it.

I mean, when I was a little boy, they'd tell me if they didn't have money, they'd pay me next Saturday. Next Saturday, they'd look me up to pay me. That was one feature that you don't find in society today. That's true.

I used to sell eggs, grapes, fruits of all kinds. I used to drive a mule and cart down there and sell them as fast as they could come buy them. My daddy and uncle had big farms. We'd grow that stuff, and me and my cousin Burris found out we could sell that stuff. We growed everything from mushmelons to watermelons; pick every grape we had, and everything else.

It was an amazing thing. You could go out and set and hear that bunch of men, and you'd think they'd all be killed by night. They were rugged talking folk. They didn't care. And they did have some fighting and killing.

There was a post office at Makatoka. It was the only jimcrow post office in the United States. My grandfather, Christopher Little, was postmaster. He was the postmaster until he died in 1921. Ace Benton was postmaster the rest of the period until the post office was suspended in 1934.

**Makatoka, As Barnes Little  
Described It**

Mr. Little recalled, "They had some nice houses at Makatoka. They had a post office there, and that was the only place in the United States where they had a jim-crow post office. Black people went to their part, and white people went to their part."

At Makatoka they had a boarding house and a commissary.

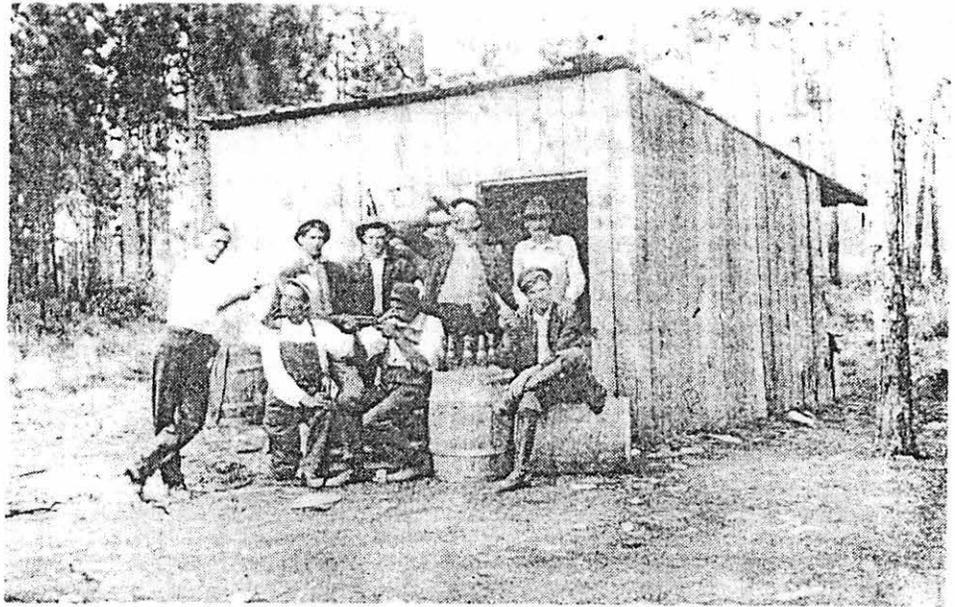
Barnes Little:  
An Italian City  
In The Green Swamp

They had an Italian City down there at Honey Island Swamp. They was a lot of them. They even had their own brick kilns where they baked their bread. Me and my daddy has been down there and bought light bread from them. They had their own bakery, and they had a "shelf" they'd put the loaf of bread on and push it in. A paddle with a long handle on it.

I was a small boy and can't tell you how many there were. There was more than ten families. They had a regular little camp there. The Italians were imported over here. Some others too about the same time. Old Steve Russian (Rossin) came about that time.

Those that didn't get killed eventually left here. The only two that were left were Frank Severino and Charlie Soares. They married girls from Columbus County. They stayed here to be with their families.

One engineer ran over some Italians and killed them in the Honey Island Swamp. At that time it wasn't filled in — nothing but a trestle all the way through the swamp. The Italians were on a lever car trying to get to the other side of the trestle so that they could get the lever car off the track. The engineer might have seen them or he might not. If he had twenty to thirty of those log cars, chances are that he was sitting back, not paying any attention. They always pushed the cars in there (instead of pulling them) to keep from going to Makatoka and turning around. They had a Y at Makatoka for turning around, but they always pushed the cars into Honey Island.



Acting for the Camera Man at Makatoka

One man has a pistol and another a gun pointed at the same victim, who does not seem at all worried. Two have bottles in hand, while five more bottles appear to be empty already. Barrels serve as chairs and tables.

Historic Post Card

Mrs. Martin has in her possession a picture post card addressed to Makatoka and postmarked October 1, 1913. It is proof of the existence of postal service at Makatoka at that time. The message on the card is also interesting: "hello Ela how are you this fine day. This (Seven words are not legible.) today hope you all well tell A.W. I am going down in a few days. See what you all doing Say hows the water down in the creeks high or lo I want to go fishing when I go. I will go next week if I can get some to stay in my shop J.J.O."

Editor's note: This article appeared in KIN'LIN', Volume III Number 2, 1982-83. KIN'LIN' was a local heritage publication of Hallsboro High School, Hallsboro, NC. Faculty sponsors were Mary W. Mintz and Ruby Campbell.

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BRUNSWICK CITIZEN DIES

Many friends in the city (Wilmington) were sincerely grieved on Sunday (02 February) to learn of the death of Mr. George H. Cannon, which occurred at his home near Town Creek in Brunswick County on Sunday morning, shortly before 2 o'clock. Mr. Cannon had been ill for several weeks with grip and during the past few days there had been a change for the worse. Mr. Cannon was a prominent farmer of Brunswick and he had been closely identified with the progress of that county. At one time he was state senator from Brunswick on the Republican ticket. The deceased was 61 years old and he is survived by his wife, four daughters and two sons, these being as follows: Misses Susie, Jennie, Mabel and Lizzie Cannon and Messrs. George H. and Henry Cannon. Funeral services were held yesterday morning (03 February) at 11 o'clock from Mt. Zion church and the interment was made in the cemetery at that place. (Item from THE WILMINGTON MESSENGER, issued 04 February 1908.)



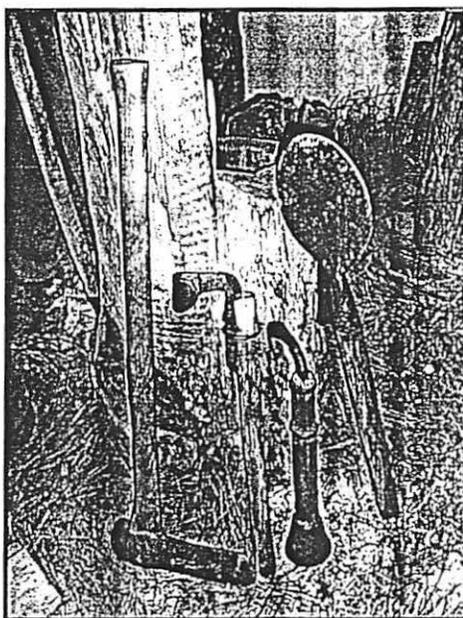
## NAVAL STORES

This article was written by William E. Surface, Registrar at the Museum of the Cape Fear in Fayetteville, NC. Their newsletter, THE LONGLEAF, is published four times per year by the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex, 801 Arsenal Avenue, Fayetteville, North Carolina 28305.

Eastern North Carolina had become the center of the naval stores industry by the mid-1800s. The term naval stores originally referred to a variety of items, including tar, pitch, turpentine, masts, spars, and hemp, used in maintaining ships and boats. The term eventually came to refer to products of the longleaf and slash pines: turpentine, tar, and their distilled derivatives.

The tools and equipment used to work the trees were simple and easily made. Workers needed axes, hacks, scrapers, dippers, and buckets. If a tool was not readily available, workers adapted other commonly found implements. Workers used an ax to cut a deep notch, or "box," near the bottom of the tree. This notch served as a pocket for collecting sap. To bleed trees, workers removed bark above the box and used hacks to cut herringbone-shaped grooves in the exposed wood face, thus channeling the flowing sap. They then used scrapers to collect crystallized sap from the face and dippers to transfer

sap from the box to buckets. This way of obtaining pinesap caused the trees to die after several years. When sap no longer ran, workers felled the trees, cut them into firewood-size pieces, piled the wood, set it afire, and covered it with dirt, creating a tar kiln. The fire melted the wood's remaining sap and created a thick, black substance known as tar.



*Basic tools in the naval stores industry included (left to right) a boxing ax, hacks, and a dipper. One reason the industry revived quickly after the Civil War was its low capital start-up costs.*

The Civil War interrupted the naval stores industry. The Union blockade reduced exports, and the Confederate government seized turpentine stills in order to use the stills' copper for percussion caps necessary for rifles and pistols. This eastern North Carolina industry received a further blow when Confederate general Braxton Bragg, facing Union advances in early 1865, ordered the

removal or destruction of naval stores products. Union general Joseph Hawley revived the industry when he issued leases for turpentine and tar privileges to anyone who could prove their ability to collect the products. The industry thrived in southern North Carolina for another decade until the last great stands of longleaf and slash pines were exhausted.