



NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 874, SHALLOTTE, NC 28459

VOLUME XLVIII

AUGUST, 2008

NUMBER 3

Organized June 21, 1956

AUGUST MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC AUGUST 11, 2008 7:30 P. M.

The next meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society will be held on August 11th at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation Building, 795 Ocean Highway West, Supply, NC. The meeting begins at 7:30P. M. Refreshments will be served prior to the meeting. **We always meet the 2nd Monday in February, May, August and November.**

The speaker will be Christy Judah, Chief of the Brunswick Search and Rescue Team. She was recognized in 2007 by the Brunswick Beacon as one of the Ten Most Interesting People in Brunswick County. Recently Christy has been involved with helping families reestablish the boundaries of old and forgotten cemeteries.

She is the author of several books. Titles include: Legends of Brunswick County: Ghosts, Pirates, Indians and Colonial North Carolina, Building a Basic Foundation of Search and Rescue Dog Training and An Ancient History of Dogs: Spaniels through the Ages.

About this Newsletter.....In the past several months there has been a renewed interest in having a historical survey completed for Brunswick County. The editor has included some articles from the Historic Sites in Brunswick County that was prepared by the Brunswick County Planning Board in 1976.

Look on page 13.....there you'll find a book list of books available from the Southport Historical Society. Several of you have asked for this to be published for information.

BCHS Website.....Have you visited our website??? Go to www.bchs1764.org and check it out!!

The Treasurer reports a bank balance of \$2,256.87. This bank balance is as of July 30, 2008. Total membership stands at 65. This includes 25 Life Members. Newsletters are sent to 5 libraries, 1 historical society and 1 state historic site. For \$150 one can become a life member and never have to worry about dues again. Today, this is truly a bargain. Talk with your friends and invite them to the next meeting. Don't assume they know about the society. We are receiving good publicity about the meeting since notices are placed in area newspapers.

Society Officers 2007-2009

President: Glenn Kye
Vice- President: James Green
Secretary: Annette Phelps
Treasurer: Gwen Causey
Directors: Sheldon Pigott, Tammy Sellers, Dave Lewis

Belvedere Plantation

This Plantation site is situated nearly opposite the City of Wilmington on the banks of the Brunswick River and near the junction of 17-74-76 and River Road. It became the home site of two North Carolina Governors, Benjamin Smith and Daniel Russell.

"Colonel William Dry was perhaps one of the first owners of the piece of property. In later years his son-in-law, Benjamin Smith owned it and established it as his main residence. In April of 1796 President George Washington had breakfast at Belvedere with his old friend, who served under him during the war years. Smith was quite young when he served as aide-de-camp to General Washington in the dangerous but masterly retreat from Long Island after the defeat of the American Army in August 1776" (Hall 1971).

"In 1783 Mr. Smith first appeared in the General Assembly of North Carolina, representing Brunswick County in the Senate. Smith was elected Governor of the State of North Carolina in 1810, and among his other accomplishments he served as Grand Master of the Order of Masons of North Carolina. It seems to be mere coincidence that Daniel Russell later owned the Belvedere Plantation and also became Governor of the State of North Carolina in 1898 (Asbury 1966).

The Plantation contained approximately 200 acres of tidal swamp and under the ownership of Mr. Smith, 160 acres was banked, ditched, and under rice cultivation. Also there was some 900 acres of pine land which became utilized for the production of tar and pitch for naval stores.

At one time the premises contained a manor house, a large two story building with a cellar structure, which was connected by a

breezeway to a building one and a half stories, containing a kitchen, wash house, and carriage house, all of brick. Also on the site was a smoke house, two story barn 110 feet long and 40 feet wide, containing a threshing machine, an overseer house and slave quarters with necessary out buildings.

Today if one visits the area, all that remains is the ruins of a ballast stone building and some enormous oak trees which lend shade and soft breezes to the site and are over 200 years in age. The plantation site has been divided into lots and a road has been cut through where most of the building once stood. (Asbury 1966)

Battery Lamb and The Confederate Saltworks

Battery Lamb was a Confederate Fort work on Reeves Point on the edge of the Cape Fear River. It was used during the Civil War as protection for the Wilmington Seaport.

Just below this area on Walden's Creek was established, in war times, a large Confederate Salt Works for the supply of salt to the soldiers. Salt-water was carried in tanks from New Inlet to the creeks and evaporated by artificial heat, producing a fine white salt at a small expense. It was probably demolished by the Federal blockades who fired at all signs of smoke.

Also bricks which were used in the original construction of Fort Caswell were made on the banks of Walden Creek (Sprunt 1896).

CLARENDON PLANTATION

Clarendon Plantation is located five miles south of Belville along Rt. 133 and is one of the few fine old Cape Fear plantations which has retained its identity. Clarendon, a 1,000 acre cotton and tobacco plantation, was named after Clarendon County which originally extended from Albemarle on the north to Saint Augustine, Florida, on the south.

The powder magazine that is still standing on Clarendon Plantation is said to be the oldest building in the Carolinas, having been erected in 1666 by the colonists two years after they had settled in a community that they named "Charles-Towne" a settlement they abandoned in 1667. These same settlers came back to the "new world" two years later and established another Charles-Towne, now known as Charleston, South Carolina. This old powder house is a square building of distinctive brick work believed to be late 17th century because the brick corner bonds and the pantile roof are the same architectural styles used at both Williamsburg, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina.

Since there had been no settlers in the Cape Fear area until after 1700, when Pantile was no longer used for roofing, then the appearance of Pantile on Clarendon must mean that a colonial town was once situated there a full sixty-one years before the plantation was granted to John Grange in 1728 (Hayden 1961).

During the aftermath of the American Revolution, the first Governor of North Carolina, Benjamin Smith, came into possession of Clarendon Plantation. Later in 1834 the site was purchased by the Watters family who built a two-story, antebellum house which has been moved but is still in good repairs. It is here that the famous author, Inglis Fletcher wrote

"Lusty Wind for Carolina" (Archives and History 1975).

Bordering the plantation along the Cape Fear River can be found one of the most interesting and intriguing time telling devices in America. It is a 50 foot wide canal said to be dug by the Indians and oriented so perfectly that the Summer Solstice sunrise ascends dead center in the canal, thus telling the Indians that the sun would then start moving southward and providing them with the first calendar that was ever set up in these parts. There is also an unidentified avenue of ruins and live oaks which leads to an old Indian field where many different pieces of Indian pottery have been found.

Presently Clarendon is closed to the public.

DRY, WILLIAM, JR.

Source: N. C. Wills and Inventories, Grimes, p. 170

Codicil of the Last will & Testament of Rich'd Eagles.

'Tis my will and Desire that Mr. Wm. Dry, has a Title for a Certaine piece of Land Bo't of my Father, Rich'd Eagles & never yet confirm'd lying and being on the Island near the sd. Wm Dry's Brick house, he making my Heirs a Title for one Square acre out of the same, on the Side next Wilmington.

RICH'D EAGLES.

Sign'd Seal'd, Publish'd & Declar'd
in the Presence of us, this 23d
March, 1769.

Mary Walker,
John Walker.
Jno. Fergus.

→ proved by John Fergus

(Will proved on 31 March 1769)

OLD TOWN PLANTATION

Old Town Plantation is located on the north bank of Town Creek where it meets the Cape Fear River and is one of the oldest, if not the first, plantation in the Lower Cape Fear Region. In 1725 Royal Governor George Burrington issued about twenty (20) patents, ten (10) of these amounting to 9,000 acres, were granted to the powerful Moore family. The head of the family was Colonel Maurice Moore, who received 7,000 of these acres including a 1,000 acre grant at the mouth of Town Creek.

This grant covered a strategic tract at the junction of Town Creek and the river where silt from the creek formed shoals at it's mouth, which prevented large craft, requiring more than ten (10) feet of draft, from venturing further up river. Thus the creek provided a safe and convenient means for transportation to haul out naval store products and crops from the plantation's well-drained farmlands and swamps, which were suitable for rice production. Around 1740 half a dozen other plantations had been situated near Town Creek because of it's fertile lands and protected transportation route (Lee 1965).

Within a few years of the 1725 grant, a large residence was constructed. When, or for whom it was built, is not known, but it remained in the possession of the Moore family and is recorded in a 1761 deed as the "Old Town" plantation. The discovery of the eighteenth century plantation house site was a result of long standing interest in the location of the seventeenth century settlement of "Old Charles Town".

The "Old Town" is named in honor of the reigning monarch

by a group of colonists from Barbados in 1644. It is generally believed that the early colony was located between this site and Clarendon Plantation. Examination of an artifact collection on an old field site seem to substiate this idea. The materials collected on a field site exhibited fragments of seventeenth century Rhenish stoneware jugs and kaolin pipe fragments with marked seventeenth century bowls. Also a coin was recovered appearing to be a rose farthing ($\frac{1}{2}$ penny) of the reign of King Charles I, and when the logistics were completed a mean occupation date of 1663 was calculated for the field site, thus substantiating the belief that "Old Charles-Town" was near this vicinity. (Stone, 1970).

Artifacts collected by a UNC-W archaeological group around the old house site included a Hibernia half penny dated 1723, colonial red clay pipes and white salt-glazed stoneware of the eighteenth century. Evidence on the mansion house site reveals that it was a central chimney, four room structure with a fire place in the corner of each room, which is very similiar to the early eighteenth century Virginia buildings. Logistic analysis of the house site places the mean occupation date about 1723 (Hume 1970). This site is not open to the general public.

PLEASANT OAKS PLANTATION

The entrance to this beautiful plantation is located at the junction of Rt. 133 and state road 1518 and extends back to the Cape Fear River. The grant for the property was made in 1725 to John Moore, a half-brother of Maurice Moore and "King Roger" Moore, (the latter the owner of Orton Plantation). The Moores came to the Lower Cape Fear area from Charleston, South Carolina.

In 1728 the present 4,000 acre estate was granted to the widow of John Moore from whom it is believed the "Widow Moore's Creek" took its name. Also the "Battle of Moore's Creek, which historians told was the turning point in the American Colonists' fight for freedom, was so named because a creek along which it was fought, meandered through lands owned by the widow of John Moore. (Ross 1965).

"The Oaks" as the plantation was originally named for many years was particularly distinguished for a grand grove of Oaks that extended from the antebellum house (which is situated on the junction between the river and Town Creek) for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to a large artificial lake. This body of water was known as the "Mill Pond" which supplied motive power for the saw mill and the grist and rice mills. More fame came to Pleasant Oaks when the plantation attained the reputation world wide of producing the finest rice in America, having the largest grains. This occurred eight years before the outbreak of the civil war when the owner purchased large cargo ships to transport his rice

to the world markets. A canal was even dug to bring his cargo vessels closer in shore for easier loading and unloading.

Pleasant Oaks Plantation had one of the most beautiful Camellia Gardens in the nation and at the present time acres of azaleas and camellias are cultivated on the plantation. Even though, the present owners do not open the grounds to general visitation, one person familiar with the plantation described it as follows: (Hayden 1961)

"After entering the beautiful old wrought iron gates, which are flanked by white brick facades, the visitor will drive through a mile of woodland before reaching the avenue of stately live oaks, which extend some two miles to the gardens.

This avenue of oaks is considered one of the most beautiful in the south. It is set parallel on either side by white rail fences, enclosing lush green pastures on which Pole Herefords graze.

Many of the finest camellias in the country are to be found in the gardens, along with thousands of beautiful azaleas, all intermingled with countless holly and dogwood trees; and all this beauty is enhanced by the stately old oaks and the mirrored Mill Pond, bordered with colorful azaleas and studded with moss-draped cypress."

Winnabow Plantation

Winnabow Plantation is located on the Southwest side of State Road 1521 along the edge of Rices Creek. It was built approximately in the 1730's and was said to be one of the prettiest plantations in the early settlement days of the Lower Cape Fear Region. This plantation site originally gained prominence when it was owned by Nathaniel Rice and latter became incorporated into Governor Russell's Plantation a few hundred feet further South of S.R. 1521.

Nathaniel Rice was one of the most prominent men who ever settled within the Town Creek area in colonial days. He came to the Town Creek section along with John Baptista Ashe and a number of other men who became prominent in the colonial life of the lower Cape Fear area when they came from Bathe, England about 1727.

Information found in the Colonial Records indicated that Nathaniel Rice was appointed Secretary of the Province in 1729. In 1734 he became justice of the peace for the New Hanover Precinct and a justice for the Kings Court. A few years later he became a member of Governor Burrington's Council of which he became president. Also Rice served by appointment as a vestryman in St. Philip's Parrish and he was appointed by the Assembly of North Carolina in 1745 to erect a fort which was named Fort Johnston in Southport.

Rice was involved in a controversy with Royal Governor Burrington over the sale of lands in the colony. Other conflicts with the early governor developed when Rice and a few other compiled a list of complaints against Burrington and sent them to the Duke of Newcastle, one of the King's Secretaries of State. The list was quite lengthy and the accusations against the governor and crown were strong. He was branded a revolutionary when he tried to get more rights and justice

for the New Hanover Precincts.

"At the death of Governor Burrington in 1734, Nathaniel Rice, who was Secretary of the Council, became Governor and took his oath of office at Edenton on the 17th of April, 1734, which office he held until Gabriel Johnston was sworn in as Governor at the town of Brunswick in November of 1734. On the death of Governor Johnston, July 17, 1752, Rice became acting Governor of North Carolina, since he was ranking Councillor, and he held this office until his death in January 1753" (Taylor 1962).

Also occupying this plantation site was Governor D.L. Russell who used a great deal of the Rice house into the building of his mansion a few hundred yards away. He also incorporated all of Nathaniel Rice's land holding on the fork of Town Creek into his plantation site about 1840.

The Governor Russell Mansion can still be seen at this location which is in fine repair, illustrating some of the colonial features of that era.

1948 & 1949

December 17, 1948...Five tug boats freed the 3,500-ton freighter *Arkansan* from aground on Frying Pan Shoals at the mouth of the Cape Fear River after two and one-half days of efforts.

April 28, 1949...Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. will add 700 rural electric customers in Brunswick and Columbus counties as a result of a \$225,000 Rural Electric Administration allocation. The corporation now numbers 3,850 customers.

May 18, 1949...Shallotte High School students are protesting the firing of Henry Stone, principal for 14 years. School board and student representatives are slated to meet today to go over the problem.

July 20, 1949...The North Carolina Baptist Convention yesterday bought the historic, 300-acre Fort Caswell from the War Assets Administration for \$86,000. The Baptist plan to use the site for summer recreation and will establish a summer school for ministers and lay workers where refresher courses will be taught. The operation will be an enlargement of the program now as Seaside Assembly, Fort Fisher.

The Boundary House

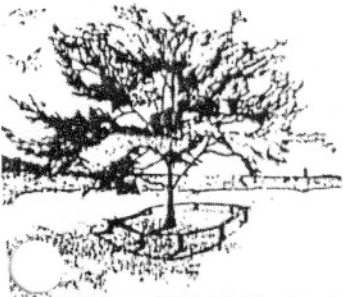
The Boundary House which is located south along a dirt road .4 mile off of U.S. 17 stood astride the state line prior to 1750. Only the chimney remained during the civil war and it always marked the dividing line between the two early Carolina Provinces. In fact it was a documented truth that the early boundary line, established in the spring of 1735, ran right through the center of the Boundary House (Lee 1965). The location of the building had to be determined to properly survey the state line when it was last surveyed in 1928. At that time, the surveyors erected a 600 pound granite post inscribed "Boundary House" to mark the site of Horry County's oldest known building.

If the name was properly given to the Boundary House it would probably have been the Boundary "Meeting House" since it is known to have been a place of worship in colonial times. In 1965, Reverend John Bennett came from England to preach in the Old St. Phillips Church at Brunswick Town and other "remote congregations". In a letter to his conference dated August 22, 1967 he wrote: ... "Nine times in the year I preach at the Boundary House situated on the line between the Carolinas. Here a large congregation meets ..." (Berry 1974)

It is also known that the house served as a private residence for Isacc Marion, a brother of General Francis Marion known as the "Swamp Fox". Isacc resided here in colonial times where he served the community as a Justice of the Peace. It was at this building that South Carolina first received the message about the Battle of Lexington which was the start of the Revolutionary War. Marion received the note from an express horseback rider from Wilmington on May 9, 1775 and then rushed

it from there to the Committee of Safety at Little River.

A later incident at the Boundary House included a duel between Captain Maurice Moore and his cousin General Benjamin Smith. Maurice Moore was a son of Alfred Moore, Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court and Benjamin Smith later served as governor of North Carolina. Both lived through the ordeal to become famous men.



Southport Historical Society

Spring 2008

Book News . . .

We are very pleased to announce that we have just contracted for the fourth printing our **CLASSIC SOUTHPORT COOKING**. 3000 copies have been sold since the book was introduced in 2005 and now we will be selling another 1000 cookbooks. Thank you, **Lewis Hardee**,

for this wonderful book and piece of Southport heritage that you have given to the society and the whole community. Most of the society's books are available at our meetings, in local shops, or may be ordered by calling **Chris Suiter** at 457-6629. You may also order by e-mail at shs@ec.rr.com or by writing to the society at P. O. Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461. For mail orders please add \$2.50 per book for shipping and handling.

*There have been some price reductions since our last newsletter.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Retail Price</u>	<u>Member's Price</u>
Architecture of Southport	\$ 7.00	\$ 6.00
Bald Head	\$17.00	\$14.25
Cap'n Charlie & Lights	\$10.75	\$ 9.00
Cemeteries of Southport	\$ 8.00	\$ 7.00
Classic Southport Cooking	\$22.00	\$18.50
Ft. Caswell	\$18.25	\$15.25
Ft. Johnston	\$ 6.00	\$ 5.00
Guns for Cotton	\$10.75	\$ 9.00
History of Long Beach	\$19.25	\$16.25
Joshua's Dream	\$10.00 *	\$10.00 *
Joshua's Legacy	\$10.00 *	\$10.00 *
Leila Jane: A Very Gentle Lady	\$14.00	\$12.00
Masters of the Shoals	\$18.00	\$14.00
Reminiscences of Wilmington/Southport	\$ 9.00	\$ 7.00
Southport Secrets	\$ 8.00	\$ 6.00
Southport Chronology Vol.1	Sold Out	
Southport Chronology Vol.2	\$ 5.00 *	\$ 5.00 *
Southport Chronology Vol.3	\$ 5.00 *	\$ 5.00 *
Southport Chronology Vol.4	\$ 5.00 *	\$ 5.00 *
Three Southern Families	\$37.50	\$31.50

The Cape Fear Quarantine Station

The Cape Fear River was the only marine gateway of importance by which epidemics could gain an entrance into North Carolina. During the 1800's medical facilities were at a minimum and if a contagious disease escaped notice in the river, possible the whole state and country could have been affected.

Prior to building the Cape Fear Quarantine Station, all disinfection of vessels took place at the mouth of the Cape Fear by burning large quantities of sulphur and the disinfection of crew clothing was never done properly. There was also no facilities to care for the sick or detention areas for suspects; thus arose the need for a new station.

Finally in 1893 Congress granted the Marine Hospital Service the funding of \$25,000 to build and equip a Quarantine Station. This new station was located in the river about 1-1/8 miles northeast of Southport. The Station was built on a pier 600 feet long, with gangways, docks, and ballast cribs.

The station has a disinfecting house with a sulfur furnace used to provide 10% per volume sulfur dioxide gas. This was sprayed over all parts of the vessel by means of a hose. There was also an apparatus used to disinfect by live stream mixed with disinfecting solutions. A small hospital area existed with surgeon's and attendants quarters and Quarantine rooms or barracks used to detain persons during disease incubation periods.

Presently only the foundation for the water tanks is left intact and can be seen when crossing the Cape Fear River on the Ferry.

BENJAMIN SMITH

Brunswick Co. Court Minutes

(p. 14) 15 Sept. 1783

Benjamin Smith brought Last Will & Testament of William Dry, deceased. Will had been proved in Wilmington Court. Smith qualified as Executor of Will.

(p. 15)

The Court ordered all the hands of Benj. Smith be exempted from working on any roads from the 18 November next running for two years. To compensate for the repairing of the Causeway on Eagle Island, opposite Wilmington.

(p. 11) 22 June 1784

Benjamin Smith, Guardian to Mary Rowan and Susannah Rowan, daus. of jno. Rowan resigned his guardianship

What \$7.50 would buy...

The Southport housewife came to one of the local stores to buy groceries in June, 1890, and she had planned to spend no more than \$7.50. By the time she had completed her shopping list it took two boys to help her take the goods home.

According to retail prices published in *The Southport Leader* issue dated June 26, 1890, the local buyer would be able to purchase the following for less than \$7.50:

A half-bushel of sweet potatoes, 38 cents; a peck of Irish potatoes, 85 cents; one-third bushel corn meal, 20 cents; a bushel of peas, \$1.10; three dozen eggs, 42 cents; five pounds bacon and pork, 42 cents; five pounds beef, 50 cents;

Along with, three chickens, \$1.05; six flounder, 50 cents, eight sheephead, 50 cents; 32 mullet, \$1; eight blackfish, 25 cents; and three dozen small crabs, 30 cents.

This list totals \$7.45 so there would have been five cents change coming to the shopper.