



NEWSLETTER

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

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

The next meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society will be held at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation Building, 795 Ocean Highway West, Supply, NC. The meeting begins at 7:30 P. M. Refreshments will be served at 7:15 P. M. **We always meet the 2nd Monday in February, May, August and November.**

The speaker will be David A. Stallman, researcher and author. Mr. Stallman was born and raised in Holmesville, Ohio. After college and two years in the military he was employed by IBM. His career spanned 33 years which included technical writing.

His love of Topsail Island began in 1986 while visiting a friend. He purchased a cottage and became curious about the island's history. He began collecting people's stories and soon became involved in preserving the island's historic buildings. He discovered that Topsail Island was the site for training antiaircraft troops during WWII and was amazed to learn that Women Airforce Service Pilots—WASP towed aerial targets simulating enemy aircraft for target practice by trainees who were using live ammunition.

His continued research of WASP history took him to Texas Woman's University at Denton, Texas where the WASP archives are kept. His tour ended in Sweetwater, Texas at Avenger Field where the WASP earned their wings. During that visit he attended the inauguration of the National WASP WWII Museum. This then culminated in *WOMEN IN THE WILD BLUE—Target-Towing WASP at Camp Davis*.

David continues to be involved in WASP activities, the Topsail Island's Historical Society and Missiles and More Museum. He and his wife Carol live in Wilmington, NC.

DUES!!! DUES!!! DUES!!! It's time to pay dues for the year 2008. A dues increase will be discussed at the February meeting. Until then annual dues are \$10. Send your check to the address at the top of the page.

The Treasurer reports a bank balance of \$1,555.45. This bank balance is as of January 17, 2008. The editor prints and mails the Newsletter before the February bank statement arrives. Total membership stands at 75. This includes 19 Life Members. Newsletters are sent to 5 libraries, 1 historical society and 1 state historic site. For \$100 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.

HELP NEEDED!!!.....The Society needs someone to coordinate the refreshments and someone to do publicity. The Refreshment Coordinator enlists people to bring refreshments to the meetings. The Publicity Chairman prepares an article for the local newspapers. Please consider helping the Society by serving in one of these positions.

BYLAWS.....Last year the Society President appointed a committee to bring the current bylaws up-to-date. The committee will report at the February meeting.

In January 1976 the Brunswick County Planning Department prepared "Historic Sites in Brunswick County." Following is one of the sites named.

The Williams House

The Williams House in Phoenix is one of the last surviving country homes of its era in Northeast Brunswick County. In October 1874 the tract of land was sold to the Spencer family and it was later conveyed on December 27, 1900 to the Williams family who bought it from Samuel Chinnis.

The design and architectural style of this house lends itself to historical significance since this building form has not been modified since the turn of the century. The brick walk is flanked by cedar trees leading from the road to the front porch. There are seven steps about eight feet long leading to the porch, which stretches across the front of the house. It had board and batten construction that has turned a light gray through the years.

One of the more unique aspects of this house is that the kitchen and dining room are separated from the main house by a porch that extends across the rear of the home and down one side of the dining room and kitchen. The dining room has a 57 inch fireplace with an 86 inch mantle top. Both kitchen and dining room have tongue and groove walls with chair rails. The kitchen has a fireplace and also a flue in one corner.

Another unique style of this home is its front door design. It has four small windows on either side with three above the doorway. As one enters, a 10 foot wide hallway extends the length of the house from which one can enter a living room and five bedrooms, each having its own fireplace. All of the rooms are 11 feet high and 15 by 15 feet in size.

Other unique aspects of the house include its beautiful entrance which has large yaupon and magnolia trees scattered throughout the yard. The house has five large chimneys and a staircase in the rear which leads from the back porch to a storage area in the attic.

Mr. Worth Williams of Wilmington indicated that the Williams family resided in this beautiful house for the past 75 years however, at the present it is unoccupied.

Society Officers 2007-2009

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

"Letters To Mama"



"LETTERS TO MAMA"

This is a collection of 10 letters dated November 10, 1930 through December 10, 1932. They were written to Grandma Berlyn Lancaster from her oldest son, Snode, my daddy.

The only high school in the county at that time was in Southport and since they lived at Supply, he drove the school bus in order to go. After he graduated there was no work and times were hard for everybody. The stock market crashed October 29, 1929 and money was scarce.

He decided to leave home and look for work. He got a job on a dredge boat (The Comstock) and worked from Norfolk, Virginia to Savannah, Georgia. He stayed on the dredge until work ran out. That is when he and a friend, Royal Brown decided to head out west in search of work.

They hitched rides on freight trains stopping along the way where work was available, all the way to Merced, California. They did all kinds of work such as picking fruit & vegetables, mowing hay, feeding hogs, etc.

When work ran out, daddy headed back home but his friend decided to stay out west. He married a girl out there and raised a big family. When daddy got home, he met mama and they were married April 15, 1934.

In 1968, mama and daddy went on a trip to California and decided to look him up. He did not know that they were coming but recognized daddy as soon as he saw him. They had a nice visit recalling old times.

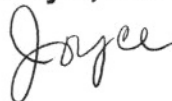
I don't know if these are all the letters he wrote, I doubt it, but these are all I have. Grandma kept them in the cedar chest that he sent her. Apparently there is a stamp collector in the family because all the stamps but one have been cut off. You will notice that the postage was \$.02.

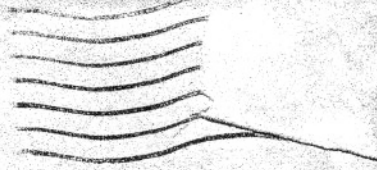
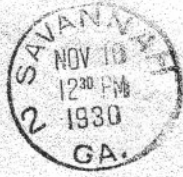
The pictures on the front page are a school picture and a sitting picture which was made in Norfolk, Virginia in March, 1931. He is 20 years old. Grandma is standing at the corner of the house shown on the second page.

I hope you like what I have done with these "Letters To Mama". I enjoyed hearing him tell about when he was a HOBO. Daddy was a remarkable man & I miss him.

Joyce

February 9, 2007





Mrs. J. N. Lancaster
Supply, N. C.

Sunday P.M.

Dear mama,

I am getting along alright and like Savannah fine, we tie up at the dock week ends.

I haven't heard from you yet. I wrote you last Monday when we got here.

Hope you are all having a good time. Tell Davis I want to see her. I don't know any thing to say so I will close

Love to all
Will send you some money when I can get in the post office

Sunday P.M.

Dear mama,

I got your letters last
Thursday. I sure did want to hear from you
too. I got the cards yesterday.

We got nine turkeys
for Thanksgiving. I sure wish that
I could be at home that day.

I am still getting along
fine. Hope you all are too -
answer soon and tell

me lots of things. I dont know anything
to write



Snodde.

Mrs. J. N. Lancaster
Supply

"LETTERS TO MAMA" CONTINUED

Letter # 3...envelope postmarked November 30, 1930

Sunday

Dear Mama,

I got your letter Friday, and I am getting along fine. We sure had a fine Thanksgiving dinner. It was dull around Savannah that day. There was a big football game here Thanksgiving. It seemed to be all of any interest to the public. I did not go to see it though. Didn't go anywhere except the show.

Every Sunday Elton and myself walk about to see what we can find. We can walk as much as we like because Savannah is a large town. The streets are not numbered until you get to 42nd. Chief Lewis lives on 42nd St. and there is plenty town out that way.

Did you all get my cards? I got yours. Tell Doris that hers was cute and hello.

I see Wesley's house every day. We work off against it. I saw him one day on the dock when we passed by but haven't had chance to speak to him yet. I want to go see him if I get chance.

How is all of them getting along in school? Fine I hope.

Have you sold any cotton yet? If you have as much as there is around here you would get tired of selling it. There is a large cotton warehouse here and plenty of cotton.

Nobody knows anything about how long the boat is going to be here nor where it will go when it leaves.

I could get the chance to go home some week for about eleven dollars, but couldn't stay but about from Saturday night midnight until Sunday night. I don't know where to go or not.

Don't know whether or not we will get our check next Saturday. But will send you some money as soon as I get it.

Write and tell me lots of things. I don't have anything interesting to write.

Love to all. Snode

Letter # 4...envelope postmarked December 21, 1930

Sunday a.m.

Dear Mama,

I would like to be home this a.m. Neil left last night to go home for a week.

I think that we will probably go by Southport the first of the year. There is going to be a change someway. Some thinks that we will go back up the James River. Nobody knows as yet. We are liable to go anywhere most. Hope it will be closer home.

Hope you all have a Merry Christmas. I am having you a fountain pen mailed tomorrow to you for Xmas and also a small cedar chest. Hope you will like them. I did not know what you wanted.

We are looking for a check the first of the week. Hope it comes in time so I can send it home for Xmas. Tell the rest of them at home that I could not get them presents to send home but you can get them something when I send the next money. If it isn't there in time for Xmas won't it be just as well.

It has turned cold here now. There is a heavy frost this morning.

What boat is Hamilton on and what is he doing. I wish that he could be here with me, but no one has quit since I have been here.

I wrote you a letter last Monday and sent it up street by a girl that was down here with Elton to mail. I reckon she did. He has a nice good looking girl in Savannah.

You wanted to know one time if I was still getting fat. No! I was about half sick week before last and the one before that, but now last week I felt the best since we have been here.

Don't be uneasy about me Xmas for I will be alright and behave myself.

Guess you won't know what the matter for me writing so much. I have just finished breakfast and got in a notion to write. I am not homesick though I would like to be home for a while you know.

I haven't heard from you since yesterday a week ago, but guess you are alright.

Tell everybody hello and Merry Xmas and a happy New Year.

Love to all, Snode.

P.S. Tell Doris to tell me what Santa Claus is going to bring her.

Letter # 9...postmarked September 27, 1932

Merced, Calif.
September 27, 1932

Dear Mama,

I got your letter this morning and sure was glad to hear from home once more. I am well as usual. I have gained about ten pounds since I have been in this state. I think that it must agree with me, although I don't like it.

Mama I don't know what to do about coming home. It is about time for cold weather here. The nights are plenty cold for two or three quilts. From what I can find out it is colder here than at home. Of course there are some parts that are not quite so cold. I have managed to save ten dollars after paying Grissett. It seems like I can't get ahead for anything. I am not throwing one cent away. I have promise of part time work now for probably another month. I sure wish I could send you some money but I haven't got a piece of clothing yet only one pair of shoes two pair of overalls and two workshirts. I had everything I had stolen right after I got here.

I haven't any news so guess I will close for this time.

Love to all, Snode.

Letter # 10...postmarked December 10, 1932

Saturday, Dec 10, 1932
Merced, Calif.

Dear Mama,

I got your letter yesterday and was some glad to get it too. I am what you might say out of a job now all but working for my board. I have been here on a ranch feeding hogs and helping a man mow about two weeks for 75 cents a day and my board, but now I expect to stay about two weeks for my board alone. There is no work anyplace now but a little bit of cotton picking for forty cents a hundred and that is about gone now. I have never picked any and am trying not to. People say that after Xmas there will be some pruning around and it looks that way to me for fruit trees is nine tenths or more all there is around here.

They would start pruning now but can't borrow any more money before the first. Most everyone around here has lost their homes and are being put out or just working for the banks and irrigation district. The man that I am working for now has lost twenty five thousand cash dollars and sixteen years hard work on one hundred acres of land and now he is broke. Almost everybody else is just as bad. Mr. Chestnutt now is renting a place and has only 200 young chickens. He is the man I am working for. Don't know how he is going to make it either. I am feeding about 70 hogs for him but they are mortgaged or something. \$3.40 per hundred pounds on foot is as much as he is getting for any of them.

Mama I know that times are hard around home now but it is not only there. It is the same way everywhere. I am getting plenty to eat and clothes to keep me warm but that is about all. I have been trying to get enough ahead to send you a few dollars but it seems almost impossible. Don't worry about me though for I am faring as good as I could at home I believe. Of course it is hard not to be able to help you all out some. Times are just as hard other places as they are around there. Guess I have been pretty lucky though to get plenty to eat and clothes to wear. Mama I would start out and go home if I knew that I could do any better there but I know that it would be of no use for I can't do no better there than any place else. If things pick up around there I will get back there most any time but not now I don't think for a while.

You asked me what I do Sundays. I don't do anything much for there is nothing much to do. It is seven miles from here to town and there is no church any closer to go to so I have no way much to go. People out here most of them work on Sunday as any day but I have managed not to work but two or three since I have been here.

I don't know any news so I will close for this time. Answer soon.

Tell everybody hello for me.

Snode

**100 YEARS AGO FROM THE STAR NEWS, WILMINGTON, NC
December 24, 1907**

As a result of swallowing a phial of carbolic acid, taken either by mistake or suicidal intent, Captain Thomas Lake, 31, of Liverpool, England, and master of the British steamer *Hillmere*, died suddenly in his cabin as the vessel was passing Southport. Capt. Lake had suffered much with acute nervousness superinduced by alcoholism. The captain was treated by Dr. E. J. Wood in Wilmington, where the ship had taken on cotton at Messrs. Alexander Sprunt & Sons and was bound to Bremen, Germany. The doctor admonished him to stay in his cabin and take things easy, being assured that the first officer would give the steamer every attention. He came on deck one time and then went back down below; very soon the steward heard heavy breathing from the captain's quarters and it was seen that he had resorted to desperate measures. He was dead in 20 minutes. He was buried at the Old Smithville Burying Grounds in Southport.