



NEWSLETTER

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

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NUMBER 1

Organized June 21, 1956

MISSION STATEMENT

To collect, preserve, study, evaluate and publicize the history of Brunswick County, NC. To devote meetings to presentation of materials about Brunswick County and the Lower Cape Fear through lectures, slices, and discussion. To publish a newsletter which contains news of the Society's activities, research papers and articles that pertain to genealogy.

Society Officers

President: ~~Unoccupied~~ ^{Gwen Causey}
Vice-President: James Green
Secretary: Roberta Brady
Treasurer: Sandra Ward
Directors: Don Hickman
Jim Marlowe
Dave Lewis
Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis

BCHS Website

www.bchs1764.org
Webmaster: Jimmy Green

FEBRUARY MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC FEB. 14, 2010 7:30 P.M.

Happy Valentine's Day

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on Monday, February 14th at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation Building, 795 Ocean Highway West, Supply, NC. The meeting begins at 7:30 P.M. We always meet the 2nd Monday in February, May, August and November.

The February 2011 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* begins the 51st volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to February 2011 can be found in the Wilson Library at UNC-Chapel Hill, NC and at the New Hanover County Public Library North Carolina Room in Wilmington, NC. There were no publications of Volume 17, #3 & 4 (1977) and Volume 18, #1 (1978).

DUES, DUES, DUES, are now due unless you are a Life Member. The annual dues are \$15.00 for an active member or \$150.00 to become a Life Member. Checks may be mailed to the **BCHS** in care of Sandra Ward or bring check or cash to the February meeting.

Speaker for the February meeting will be Mr. Christopher Gibbons from the Brunswick County Planning Department. He will discuss the next level of surveying for the Brunswick County historical project, publishing the information and image survey. This will be a very important meeting with a great deal of information concerning this project. Make your plans to attend.

Don't forget the annual dues are now payable.

Military hero of the Lower Cape Fear

Ben Steelman
StarNews

Robert Howe (1732-1786), the highest ranking North Carolinian in the Revolutionary War and a Cape Fear Patriot leader, was born in what is now Brunswick County, the son of a prominent planter. Educated in England, he was appointed captain of the Bladen County militia in 1754 and represented Bladen County in the colonial assembly from 1760 to 1775. As a young man, he owned Howe's Point plantation, on the west bank of the Cape Fear River (on land now occupied by the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal) and also Clarendon plantation in Bladen County.

Howe became a friend of the colonial governor, William Tryon, who gave him several choice court appointments. During the 1760s, Howe commanded Fort Johnston at Smithville (modern-day Southport). In Tryon's 1768 and 1771 campaigns against the rebellious "Regulators" in the North Carolina Piedmont, Howe served as colonel of the artillery.

Howe would quarrel, however, with Tryon's successor, Josiah Martin, who removed him from his court posts and relieved him at Fort Johnston in 1773. In the early 1770s, Howe became closely associated with the Sons of Liberty. He soon became known as one of the most fervent Patriot leaders; in 1775, when Gen. Sir Henry Clinton offered amnesty to all Patriots in the colony, his decree excepted only Howe and Cornelius Harnett.

Elected to the provincial congress in 1775, Howe accepted command of the 2nd North Carolina Regiment of the Line, raised for the Continental Army. On Dec. 9, 1775, with Col. William Wofford, he commanded Patriot forces at the Battle of Great Bridge near Norfolk, defeating the British governor, Lord Dunmore. Soon afterward, in recognition of his service, he was promoted to brigadier general in the Continental Army.

In the spring of 1777, Howe assumed command of the Southern Department, putting him in charge of defense of the Southern colonies. On Oct. 20,

1777, his promotion to major general was confirmed. Howe's record in command was mixed. His attempts to invade British-held Florida and to seize St. Augustine, in 1777 and again in 1778, failed, at least in part because he had no authority over the fractious militia forces from South Carolina and Georgia. On Aug. 30, 1778, he fought a duel with Christopher Gadsden of Charleston over remarks about Howe's performance in the field. He was relieved of command in September 1778 — according to Joseph Hewes over "a little ridiculous matter he has been concerned with in South Carolina, with regard to a female." While waiting to turn his force over to Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, in December 1778 he was forced to withdraw from Savannah by British invaders. A court-martial cleared Howe of wrongdoing in these military disasters.

Howe headed north and fought in the siege of Verplanck's Point with Gen. Israel Putnam in June 1779. For a time, he commanded the American fortifications at West Point and served on the court-martial that condemned the British spy Maj. John Andre. George Washington trusted him and on two occasions dispatched him to quell mutinies in militia units.

Howe returned to North Carolina in 1783, heavily indebted. On May 12, 1776, British forces in the Cape Fear had burned his substantial house at Howe's Point in reprisal for his victory at Great Bridge. In the 1780s, the Continental Congress assigned him to negotiate the purchase of land in Ohio from the Indians, but he returned to North Carolina again, stood for the General Assembly, was elected and headed to New Bern for the session. He died of a fever (sources disagree about the precise date). Often accused of womanizing, Howe seemed to have a propensity for quarreling with associates and subordinates which may have kept him from achieving his full potential.

The Brunswick County, Cape May, NJ Connection

Dave Lewis, February 2011

Much has been talked about and published on the small group of fishermen who arrived in the Lockwood Folly area, what was then New Hanover County, abt. 1756; but little has been written on their life before Brunswick County and why they decided to relocate here; until now. This group consisted of Joseph Hewett, Benjamin Holden, Henry Leonard and there families along with the Ludlam, Swain, Bass and Willett families.

Randall Hewett, Joseph Holden, Henry Leonard, Ebenezer Swain and Joseph Ludlam were part of the original thirty-five Whaler Yeoman families who purchased land and settled in Cape May County, New Jersey. The term "Whaler Yeoman" being coined by historian Jeffrey Dorwart in his book, "Cape May County, New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community" to describe these whalers. These families became owners of modest plantations, most between 200 and 500 acres, where they raised small herds of cattle and planted fields of corn and wheat. The first landowners embodied the English concept of a yeoman as an owner of a small landed estate who cultivated his own land and held a respectable standing in the community below the rank of gentleman. They referred to themselves in wills and other documents as yeomen. These whaler yeoman families established control over Cape May County's political and economic development which lasted for many decades.

By the 1680's these whalers had completed a three-legged odyssey, beginning in England, they sailed to New England, moved to Long Island and finally relocated on the Jersey Cape in West Jersey. There were many reasons for the relocation of the whalers to Cape May. In some cases, they were fleeing from religious persecution. Many had been severely persecuted or tried in court, and some had been acquitted of witchcraft. They had fled for refuge, as their forefathers had from England in 1620, seeking peace from the persecution of the church and the ability to enjoy religious freedom. There

was intense competition among the whaling companies in Long Island and there were strict laws regulating whaling in Long Island. However, the biggest reason for this move was the great economic opportunities that it afforded: there was money to be made in whale oil and whales were plentiful in the Delaware Bay.

As these families prospered, through the sale of whale oil, blubber and baleen to Philadelphia and beyond, they succeeded in producing a vibrant, diverse economy. Not only did the whaler yeomen flourish, many were able to increase their land holdings, establish plantations, purchase slaves and endow their families with great wealth. Most importantly, the people of Cape May participated fully in the colonial economy, trading with merchants not only in Philadelphia, but throughout the mid-Atlantic and southern colonies, New England, the West Indies and Europe.

Kinship, intermarriage and what can be seen as an extended whaler yeoman family system became the essential characteristic of eighteenth-century Cape May County society. Sixty-four percent of Cape May county marriages between 1700 and 1799 remained inside the thirty-five whaler yeoman family network. Intermarriage became a conscious effort to preserve and promote whaler yeoman domination and to prevent dispersion of wealth and property to anyone outside of the original whaler yeoman clan.

In the early 1700's these whaler yeomen families sustained terrible losses that disease and abandonment of the area afforded them. The influenzalike epidemic of 1714 killed more than forty people in a four-month period, which was 10 percent of the entire community. Joseph Hewett and Rueben Swain were among those who died. It also decimated the Holden family along with others. This left the rest of the community to care for the orphaned children or families impoverished by the lost of the head of the household. Esther Hewett, widow of Joseph Hewett, Sr. explained that the sudden death of her husband in the epidemic left her in charge of a plantation and five young children without resources to settle affairs. She had just given birth to Joseph Hewett, Jr.

The Cape May County families formed churches around their scattered clusters of plantations. Three distinct religious communities emerged. Quaker families settled in the northern part of the county and down the mainland on the seashore side as far as the middle of the Cape. The Willets were included in these families. The Baptist settled in a line on the mainland, seaside below the Quakers. These included the Holden, Hewett and Swain families. Presbyterians were founded on the lower end of the county and Cape Island area. There were eighteen whaler yeoman families that became charter members of this church.

Whaler yeomen were hardy men who braved the frigid temperatures, rough winds and the risky business of hunting and catching whales. As whaling was a part-time endeavor, usually during the winter and early spring, they busied themselves with other activities in the off-season. They worked as farmers, cattlemen, lumbermen and coopers. Farming and landownership remained the county's economic foundation throughout the eighteenth century and determined wealth, social standing and political power. Cape May County's economy did not support many skilled craftsmen and therefore whaler yeoman families journeyed to Philadelphia for services, shopping and their mail. There they purchased nearly everything including slaves who were treated as a part of the family.

These Cape whalers did not go to sea in large sailing ships for extended periods of time, but instead were shore whalers hunting in small boats. Lookouts were posted in towers along the shore to warn the men when whales arrived. When the whales were sighted, the men would scurry off in their tiny vessels to capture them. Should they succeed, they would then tow it ashore and began the work of processing the oil. Historian Edward M. Post wrote of the heroism of whalers: "To put out from the strand in a frail craft propelled by oars with only harpoon lance and rope for a weapon, to push the bow of this craft against the side of a monster that towered far above them, to pierce a vital spot with plunge of harpoon, to follow the fleeing whale attached like a bobbing cork to line and be present at its death struggle, demanded heroism, brawn, seamanship and quick thinking. It was a

game in which, if you guessed wrong, you were down and out. It sieved the material down to the survival of the fittest."

The whales, when fully grown, were about 250 tons and would produce enough oil to fill 50 to 60 puncheons (about 74 gallons each). The oil and whalebone harvested from a whale was worth approximately \$3,500 to \$4,000, which was a considerable amount of money at that time.

Whaling began to decline during the mid 1700's in the Delaware Bay and these families were left with the option of either selling their land or moving to other parts of the country or pursue other avenues of making a living.

So why did this particular group of whaler yeomen decide to leave New Jersey for North Carolina? North Carolina was the only state south of New Jersey known to have had a long and well established shore whaling industry.

The whaling season was most successful between February and May. Although some whaling occurred as far north as Cape Hatteras and as far south as Little River, SC, it centered on the outer coast of Core, Shackleford and Bogue banks, particularly near Cape Lookout.

In November 1753, the sloop "Susannah" sailed out of Cape May, New Jersey for the North Carolina coast and was to return the following March. In addition to her mercantile mission, the sloop was engaged to carry 12 whalers and their "appurtenances," including two whaleboats. The Susannah reached Cape Lookout on 10 December where she was joined by three whaling sloops from Nantucket. Two of these Nantucket sloops and the Susannah left Capt Lookout, "bound for Cape Fear in order to try another berth for whaling at the south." After ascending the Cape Fear River on 17 December to Wilmington to deliver cargo and passengers, the Susannah proceeded back downriver and over the bar of Cape Fear and sailed onto Lockwood Folly. There the whalers took their gear ashore and established camps on the west side of the inlet. Captain Ashley Bowen of the Susannah summarized his winter on the North Carolina Coast: "I tarried in Cape Fear

River all winter. The Whalemens at Lockwood's Folly got nothing." Sailing for Cape May in March 1754 he complained that they "did not get a drop of oil."

Were any or the entire seven whaler yeomen bound for New Hanover (Brunswick) County included on the sloop Susannah or did they hear about the area from those aboard? Although whaling never was a major economic player in southeastern North Carolina, port records in the decade immediately preceding the Revolutionary War indicated local trade actions involving whale products. In July 1764, a vessel with spermaceti candles cleared Port Brunswick for London, and in 1767 another ship bound from Port Brunswick to the Bay of Honduras included oil in its cargo. There are no other records of vessels leaving Port Brunswick with whale products until January 13, 1787 and through December 1, 1789, when five ships departed.

Were the Brunswick County yeomen from Cape May involved in this trade? Probably, as Luke Swain is listed as the master of the schooner, "Wilmington Packet" which departed Port Brunswick on June 30, 1787 bound for Charleston with a cargo of oil.

What is certain, this group of whaler yeomen from Cape May who decided to settle in the Lockwood Folly area were Religious, hard working, family men that brought with them their moral values and work ethics. As their families grew they became involved in the foundation of Brunswick County economic and political structures as their forefathers had in New Jersey.

Do we know for certain that these men were indeed fisherman from Cape May? Yes, as written by The Rev. John MacDowell, Rector of the Parish of St. Phillips in New Hanover County, in a letter dated June 15, 1762: "...We have in all about 200 families; and are about to have our Parish made into a County. We have no dissenters of any sort, excepting a few Poor families of Fishermen, who came in from Cape May at the mouth of the River Delewar and are settled by the Sea side, between the mouths of the Rivers Lockwood's folly and Shallot, they call themselves new light Anabaptist; but we hope this frolic will soon dwindle away and disappear

among them..."

Sources:
Colonial Records of NC, Vol. 6

Cape May County New Jersey, The Making of an American Resort Community, Jeffery M. Dorwart.

History of Whaling In and Near North Carolina, Randall R. Reeves and Edward Mitchell.

Whaling on the North Carolina Coast, Marcus B. Simpson, Jr. and Sallie W. Simpson.

America's First Whaling Industry and the Whaler Yeomen of Cape May 1630-1830, Richard M. Romm, A thesis submitted to the Graduate School-Camden, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Proclamation concerning the Whale-fishing Company

14 February 1678-9. Charter for a Whalefishing Company consisting of Joseph HUET, Thomas INGRAM, Richard DAVIS, Isaac BENNET, RANDALL HUET, Thomas HUET, Henry LEONARD, Samuel LEONARD, John WHITLOCK, John CRAFFORD, Thomas APPLGATE and Charles Dennis.

14 February 1678-9. Proclamation concerning the Whalefishing Company.

REFERENCE: Patents and Deeds and Other Early Records of New Jersey, 1664-1703. East Jersey Deeds, Etc., Liber No. 3, Page 152.

Camp United Methodist Church 1791-2003

The Campground Methodist Church grew out of the preaching and work of the early Methodist circuit riders who traveled the old Georgetown Road, living out of their saddle bags and preaching to the people wherever they found them. The site now occupied by the present church facility was a favorite meeting place in those early days because it was here the two avenues of transportation crossed: the north-south highway and the Shallotte River. One such meeting occurred here on February 7, 1791, when Bishop Francis Asbury "preached at the Charlotte River to not less than one hundred people".

The exact date of the origin of the church is not known, but the first building was completed by February 1799 in the vicinity of the present one. This was a small structure without means of heating.

Since the church was located on the banks of the Shallotte River, it was named for the river and was first called the "Shallotte Meeting House". Bishop Asbury called it the "Charlotte Meeting House" and lamented that it was "vulgarly and improperly called Shallotte". Sometime prior to 1856 the church changed its name to "Campground"; the church grounds had become the scene for the rousing camp meetings of the era.

The property on which the present sanctuary stands belonged to Samuel W. Sleight, a northern explorer who had come South. Sleight, realizing the significance of the Shallotte meeting, gave the property so that it could always be used for religious services. The execution of the deed was made February 25, 1878, for the sum of "one dollar".

Sometime after the Civil war, the forefathers, sensing a need for the Spirit of Christ in their lives and the presence of God in their homes, built the second building on the old camping grounds. This new building was a large, wooden structure with two entrances that opened into one room, with two aisles and three rows of seats.

In 1896, the third building, a large wooden structure, was completed. The double wooden doors opened into an aisle that led to the front of the sanctuary. The high ceiling was considered a masterpiece of woodworking art.

In 1951, the North Carolina Conference met at Grace Methodist Church in Wilmington and authorized the formation of a station appointment to be known as Shallotte Camp Methodist Church, denoting its origin from the old camp ground.

In 1957, a new brick building was completed consisting of a sanctuary, seven classrooms, a fellowship hall and kitchen. In 1983, extensive renovations and additions were made, including a new fellowship hall and kitchen, nursery and four additional classrooms.

In 1996, the church purchased the adjacent Goodyear Store building, renaming it Asbury Hall and it was renovated into a multipurpose building with commercial kitchen, a hall that could be divided, and restrooms. In 1999-2000 members renovated Wesley House, a donated beach cottage, into additional meeting and classroom space. Our basement classroom area is now used for high school diploma equivalency classes and a multi-church food pantry.

From rough tents of the 1700s to our patchwork of facilities of 2003 the people continue to come to this place by the river to worship God. Today Camp UMC has nearly 700 members.

Reprinted with permission: The Rev. Richard C. Vaughn, Sr. Pastor, Camp UMC

Area Events

During November and December 2010 the Brunswick County GIS Department held county wide meetings concerning the county's Cemetery Preservation Project. The November 17th meeting was held at the Shallotte Middle School, conducted by John Hobgood and Steve Randone. In attendance were several BCHS members. Highlighted were the reasons for the project such as the Agriculture and Timber Industries whose practices have encroached on some cemeteries and led to their disappearance. Also included were growth and development and the State Statues that give the County Commissioners authority to maintain and or take control of abandon and public cemeteries. The GIS department has located known Cemeteries with GPS coordinates and created a county wide map. This map can now be used by the Planning Department, Environmental Health, developers and geologist. A link to this map is thru the counties web site, www.brunswickcountync.gov.

January 26, 2011. Gwen Causey and Dave Lewis met with County Commissioner Marty Cooke concerning the destroyed David Isaiah Fulford Cemetery. We are requesting that the cemetery be relocated and to properly mark the boundary lines to preserve this site from future encroachments. Meetings are scheduled and we hope to have updates for the BCHS February meeting.

February 19-20, 2011. Fort Anderson is the location of a Civil War Living History commemoration the 146th Anniversary of the fall of Ft. Anderson and the Battle of Town Creek. Staff and Civil War reenactors in period clothing interpret the 1861 activities of soldiers and recruits in the Cape Fear region. Guest speakers will include Dr. Chris Fonvielle and Dr. Max Williams. The program runs from 10 AM to 4 PM each day. A Saturday night lantern tour from 6:30 to 8 PM will commemorate the 245 anniversary of the Stamp Act Resistance. Admission is free.

February 26-27, 2011, Currie, NC. The 235th Anniversary of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge programs and Commemorative Ceremony at Moore's Creek National Battlefield.

Membership Application ... Invite a Friend to Join Brunswick County Historical Society

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail _____

New: _____ or Renewal _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Mail this form with your check to: P.O. Box 874, Shallotte, NC 28459

Annual Dues: Individual \$15 Life Membership \$150