



NEWSLETTER

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

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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 For the 2011 - 2012 Term

President: 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

MAY MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE BCCC IN BOLIVIA, NC MAY 13, 2013 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on May 13th at the Brunswick County Community College Teaching Auditorium, located in Building A. The meeting begins at 7:30 P.M. We always meet the 2nd Monday in February, May, August and November.

The May, 2013 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* begins the 50th Volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to November 2009 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).

Brunswick County Historical/Architectural Manuscript

A meeting between MdM Historical Consultants and the Manuscript steering committee was held on February 28th in the David R. Sandifer County Administration Building in Bolivia. Several members of the BCHS were in attendance.

MdM discussed the rough draft of individual township properties with photos. Additions and corrections were noted for the Waccamaw, Northwest, Town Creek, Lockwoods Folly, Smithville, and Shallotte Townships.

A final meeting will be held to discuss the draft manuscript and MdM will deliver the final publication-ready manuscript to the County in July 2013.

Pictures and Documents

BCHS's project to scan, record and preserve old historical pictures and documents will continue at



the next BCCHS's meeting to be held on Monday night November 12, 2012. You may bring any old pictures and or documents to be scanned between 5:30 and 7:30. Your information will not leave your sight and you will be able to take them home with you.

This project also will include pictures of the people of Brunswick County. You may begin by bringing pictures of yourself for scanning. Either young and or present day photos.

In preparation for this project, make a list of the people or objects in the photos with dates and or information to be included with the scanned object. Please help us to preserve Brunswick County's history.

Clarendon Plantation

Approximately 0.2 mile south of Belville, N.C.133 offers a view of the Brunswick River. Through the trees, the dark, shimmering waters yield no clue that they once floated the great mothball fleet of Liberty ships. On the shoulder of the road opposite the river, a long row of eight historical markers erected by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History commemorates many of the significant events and persons in the long history of the Cape Fear.

The road makes its way past several modern subdivisions, then winds through forest and swampy lowlands. Nearly a half-dozen large antebellum plantations once graced the banks of the river in this area.

Some of the old plantations vanished when they were consumed by larger plantations. For example, Lilliput, once held by Royal Governor William Tryon, and Kendall, the home of Major General Robert Howe—the highest-ranking American gen-

eral of the Revolutionary War born south of Virginia—were absorbed by Orton Plantation. Nevertheless, sizable portions of four of the most historic of the river plantations are still intact.

Located 6.2 miles south of Belville, Clarendon remains one of the finest colonial rich plantations in the state. The plantation is situated on the eastern side of N.C. 133 but is not visible from the highway.

Established in 1730 on the site of the old Charles Towne settlement of the seventeenth century, the Clarendon grounds hold a wealth of historically significant artifacts. A powder magazine built in 1666 by early Cape Fear settlers is believed to be one of the oldest buildings in the state. Two canals on the property are of extreme importance. One, running a distance of several hundred yards through the ancient rice fields, is the only survivor of the numerous river canals once found on the plantations. The other canal, a fifty-foot-wide waterway along the river, was dug by Indians as a time-telling device. It is so perfectly oriented that the sunrise at the summer solstice still ascends dead center in the canal. Some historians and scientists contend that this canal represents the first calendar ever used in the Cape Fear region.

Clarendon was acquired after the Revolutionary War by Governor Benjamin Smith. In 1834, the Watters family came into ownership of the plantation and erected a magnificent two-story plantation house, which still stands on a high bank at the end of a magnificent lane of yaupon and silver maples. It was in this house that renowned author Inglis Fletcher penned her famous historical novel "Lusty Wind for Carolina".

Unfortunately, Clarendon is not open to the public.

Source: "*Touring the Backroads of North Carolina's Lower Coast*". By: Daniel W. Barefoot

Architecture in the Lower Cape Fear

Over a period of two-and-a-half centuries, the architecture of the Lower Cape Fear has reflected the economic and cultural development of the region. From the earliest years, people and ideas flowed

into the area from Europe and other regions along the eastern seaboard. Merchants, shipbuilders, attorneys, physicians, and planters came into port to settle or to continue upriver to inland communities. The Lower Cape Fear matured and prospered, and men of wealth expressed their self-esteem and community pride through architecture. The stylistic era, the owner's taste, his willingness and ability to pay for the latest style, the capabilities of his carpenter-builder, the tools and materials available for construction, and the conditions of climate, environment, and location all influenced the end result. Prior to the Civil War, free blacks and slave laborers generally erected the buildings; trained craftsmen, masons and architects from northern cities often performed the specialized tasks of design and construction. In some instances, the owner or a member of his family had a hand in designing or decoration the premises. The period from mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was especially productive architecturally in the Lower Cape Fear, where building kept pace with national styles, technology and quality of design, and those who had the means engaged nationally recognized architects to build their homes, churches and public buildings.

Among the earliest observations upon the architecture and the people of the Lower Cape Fear region of North Carolina is the diary of Janet Schaw, a Scotswoman who traveled through West Indies and the Carolinas during the years 1774 to 1776. Upon arriving in North Carolina in February 1775, she wrote, "The place is called Brunswick, and tho' the best sea port in the province, the town is very poor—a few scattered houses on the edge of the woods, without street or regularity. These are inhabited by merchants, of whom Mr. Quince our host is the first in consequence." She remained there until mid-March, when she left to visit several plantations along the river and "Wilmington." There she found that "The people in town live decently, and tho' their houses are not spacious, they are in general very commodious and well furnished."

Merchants, shipbuilders and planters settled the region along the Black, the Cape Fear and the Northeast Cape Fear rivers where they generated and extensive trade in naval stores (tar, pitch, rosin

and turpentine), lumber, cotton, rice and tobacco from the ports of Brunswick and Wilmington. Ships transported the valuable cargoes to towns along the Atlantic seaboard, to the Caribbean Islands, and to Europe. The burgeoning trade engendered an economic prosperity and brought about a high level of interest in social graces and the cultural arts, an interest that found an outlet in the design and construction of private and civic architecture throughout the next two-and-a-half centuries.

The influence of the earliest representative building style, the Georgian, ranged from 1740 to 1810, and depended on English traditions for its architectural character and appeal. It was an era in which the builder was the architect, and he depended on published works or builders' manuals that contained mathematical computations for all aspects of construction according to established formulas and the economical use of materials.

The era from 1820 to 1860 produced a renewed attention to the architecture of antiquity, especially that of Greece, which resulted in the appearance of Greek-revival style in America. The Greek civil war during the first quarter of the nineteenth century fired the imaginations of Americans who had so recently thrown over a colonial government in a democratic victory that fitted their image of ancient Greek city-states. Wealthy travelers journeyed abroad to see classical architecture at first hand, and scholars and artists published archaeologically exact drawings of Greece's golden-age buildings.

Features of the Greek-revival style include more rigidly prescribed proportions and a squarer form that was accentuated by paneled boards or pilasters at the corners, long windows framed by symmetrical moldings and corner blocks, and doors surrounded by multi-pane sidelights beneath wide, rectangular transoms. The entrances were often enframed by square pilasters supporting wide classical cornices. The roofs were generally hipped, but sometimes had low-pitched end gables or pedimented porticoes. The quintessential example of the latter is the temple-form Orton Plantation house. Roger Moore, one of the first settlers in the region, and a planter with extensive land holdings, built the original portion of the structure in 1735. As originally erected, it was a modest, one-story,

brick dwelling. In 1840 Dr. Frederick J. Hill, a man of wealth and position, purchased the property and began enlarging and embellishing the house in the Greek-revival fashion—the first known example in the Lower Cape Fear. Four tall, fluted columns support a classical entablature and pediment. The tripartite entrance, with Ionic pilasters, is flanked by triple windows, both uncommon features in the region, and is surmounted by a bracketed balcony at the second level.

Two-and-a-half centuries of history have provided the Lower Cape Fear with a showcase of architectural styles that displays the pride of place of its inhabitants and their urge to add beauty to their lives. Economic growth, as well as the ravages of fires, floods and war, caused a continual renewal of the architectural fabric of the Lower Cape Fear region. Individuals and communities expressed their self-esteem, test and ability to afford the latest architectural styles in each successive historical period. Indeed, the architectural history of the Cape Fear region became a microcosm of national and international trends in the art and technology of building. In the words of Andrew Jackson Downing, written in 1850, “To desire to surround ourselves with such sources of enjoyment, rather than to be content with mere utility, is only to acknowledge the existence of a sentiment which ... is the purest and noblest part of our nature.”

Source: “*Time, Talent, Tradition, Five Essays on the Cultural History of the Lower Cape Fear Region, North Carolina*”. Janet K. Seapker, Editor

Brunswick River and Cape Fear River Ferries

Prior to the completion of the twin bridges over the Cape Fear river in 1929 all traffic to the western part of the state and to South Carolina began by crossing the river by means of a ferry.

Many years ago, that section just to the west of Wilmington known as Eagle’s Island was a huge swamp known as Great Indian Bay and extending to the present site of the Brunswick river. All square rigged sailing vessels calling at the port of Wilmington had to remove their ballast and was

dumped on the swampy land on the other side of the river.

Passage across this morass was impossible and vehicles were ferried from Wilmington to a point south of the island, from where they had a tedious task to get to roads connecting with inland North Carolina and upper South Carolina. The result was that in the year 1764 plans were made for the construction of a causeway across the island, so that by means of a ferry from the dock at the foot of Market Street vehicular traffic could reach Brunswick County much quicker and much easier. (Refer to “*The Eagles Island Causeway*” in the August 2011 Newsletter.)

The idea of using ballast for the roadway was conceived by Colonel William Dry. The work was necessarily slow and the causeway was finally completed by General Benjamin Smith. Since the ships arriving in Wilmington were calling from many parts of the world and dumping their ballast, soil from many countries was included and even today specimens of flora foreign to this section of the world are to be found growing there.

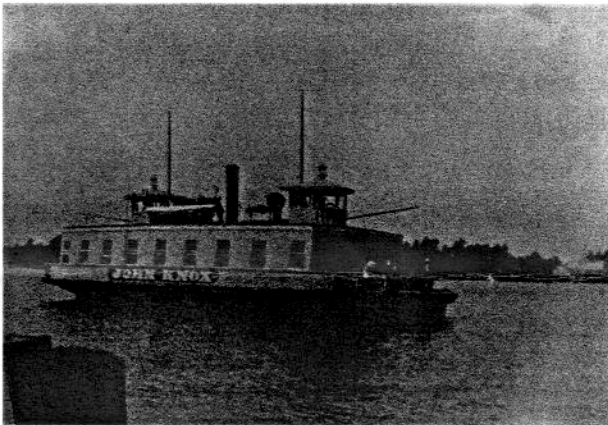
The ferries in the early days consisted of flat boats towed by rowboats and this method of propulsion was continued up into the early part of the present century, when a gasoline motor powered boat was purchased to replace the man propelled flats.

A gentleman of Wilmington wishing to go to one of the plantations along the Brunswick River would drive his carriage, or be driven if he were affluent enough to have a liveryman, to the ferry landing at the foot of Market Street. He would then drive down the incline out onto the flat boat; a bar would be raised at the front of the craft to prevent his horse from going into the river and likewise another bar would be raised on the stern to keep the vehicle from rolling backwards; the negro boatman would take his place in his rowboat and the journey across the swiftly flowing river was underway. It is thought that only one negro was needed to haul the ferries of those days across the river.

Arriving at the far shore he would then proceed across the muddy causeway to the Brunswick River where he had to take another ferry, this time one of

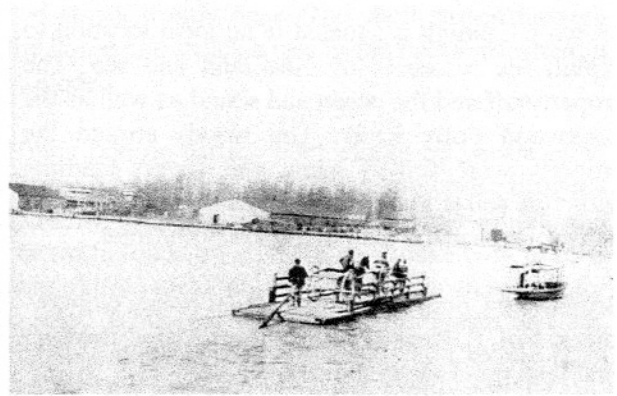
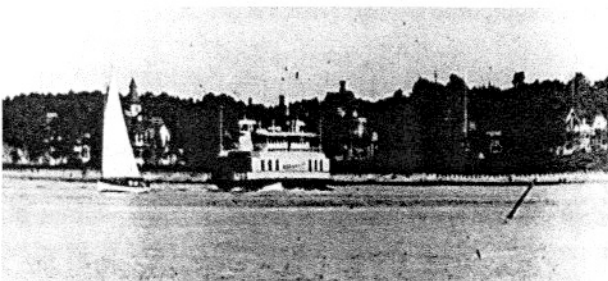
the cable variety. For the privilege of crossing the two rivers and causeway he was charged the sum of one dollar and twenty five cents.

For many years the ferry was operated by private companies, about which little is known prior to 1860. About the time of the beginning of the War Between the States the ferry was owned by John A. Taylor, grandfather of J.A. Taylor and Col. Walker Taylor, two Wilmington Business men. About 1885 D.L. Gore and others bought out the line and operated it until it was sold to the ferry commission. Mr. Gore owned three-quarters of the stock in the company, which was known as the Brunswick Bridge and Ferry Company and later Mr. O.A. Durant became owner of the larger part of the remaining interest.



John Knox

The last company sold its rights to the two-county ferry commission in 1919 and immediately thereafter modern ferry slips were dredged at the eastern and western terminals. On June 07, 1920 the first modern day ferry, the *John Knox*, was placed into service by the New Hanover-Brunswick Ferry Commission. Some years later the *Menantic*, a much larger craft, pictured below, was purchased and placed into service. Mr. Durant was the commission superintendent, retiring in 1935.



Ferry, March 1, 1912



Eagles Island Ferry Landing

Article source: "*Notes on the Brunswick River and Its Environ*". Compiled by Bill Reaves, 1988. *The Sunday Star-News, Wilmington, NC*, February 10, 1935.

Picture source: *Internet, public domain.*

Brown's Landing

In October 1850, a man from Denmark with a thick Danish accent, Alfred Brown, purchased what is today known as Brown's Landing for three hundred dollars. The area at the end of Stone Chimney Road was named after his family.

Alfred Brown first settled in Columbus County in the late 1830's where he met an married Patience Hewett, a lady from Brunswick County. By the time he moved his family from Columbus County to Brunswick County in 1850, Alfred and Patience had five children.

Brown's Landing is situated in an ideal location to exploit the resources of the land and sea. The property offered the ocean and sound as well as the Lockwood Folly River. The woods around the property were full of game, the waters teeming with fish and a good place to set up a business to service ships using the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Brunswick County Records of Real Estate Conveyances, Vol. P, Page 287-289 shows Alfred Brown's first land purchase in the county.

"Indenture made October 22, 1850 between S.B. Price of Brunswick County and Alfred Brown of Brunswick County in consideration of one hundred dollars conveys to Alfred Brown a certain tract or parcel of land situated and lying and being in Brunswick County, North Carolina. Beginning at the Northwest corner of Cornelius Galloway's Stone Chimney Land, running South 16 East, to the Stone Chimney Landing, thence along the sound creek to a pine the original corner of said land. South 15 West sixty chains to a pine the original corner of said land from there to the first mentioned station. Registered March term 1851."

"October 22, 1850, S.B. Price to Alfred Brown for two hundred dollars. West side of the Lockwood Folly River, beginning at a stake on the East side of Cornelius Galloway's Stone Chimney Land and running along the sound creek to the mouth of Spring Branch, thence across the marsh to a pine in the fork of Spring Branch and Indigo Natural Branch to Cornelius Galloway's line then along Galloway's line to the Northeast corner of Galloway's Stone Chimney Land then down the Galloway's line to the creek first mentioned station containing three hundred acres more or less. Deed registered March term 1851."

The property fronted the Lockwood Folly Inlet and Alfred had a good view of the Atlantic Ocean. Something he would later regret. The Spring Branch mentioned in the deed is now Spring Creek. The Sound Creek mentioned must have run on the sound side of Long Beach.

The 1850 Federal Census of Brunswick County list Alfred and his family and he claims his occupation as a farmer.

A Brown family story states the Alfred being in a bind for quick housing he saw and opportunity in an old jail. Alfred purchased the old log jail the county no longer used, tore it into pieces and floated it down the Lockwood Folly River to Brown's Landing. He rebuilt the structure and this became the family's home until the structure was wiped out in the storm of 1899, that would drive him inland for the rest of his life. The chimney was built of ballast stones tossed overboard by ships using the inlet.

In February 1851 Alfred purchased more land as witnessed in the Register of Deeds office of Brunswick County.

"Vol. Q, page 148, February 10, 1851. Mathis and Elizabeth Hewett to Alfred Brown for seventy-five dollars. A tract of land called the Old Dam Tract being on both sides of Old Dam Swamp known as part of the land of John Morgan, deceased.

Vol. P, page 451, March 4, 1851. Issac Morgan to Alfred Brown for the sum of \$250.00. A parcel of negroes containing three; one man by the name of Charles, about 18 years old, one girl named Eliza, about 14 years of age and one by the name of Milla, about 12 years of age. Registered March term 1852.

Vol. T, page 788. Indentured August 7, 1850. Issac Morgan to Alfred Brown for \$600.00. A tract of land lying between Boons Channel and the Shallotte River. Morgan's share of undivided land of Estate of John Morgan, deceased. Registered September 24, 1869.

Vol. P, page 417, November 18, 1851. Daniel B. Baker of the Town of Wilmington to Alfred Brown and John Robinson. \$400 paid by Brown and Robinson for a 900 acre tract, more or less, on the east side of the Shallotte River on a swamp called Oxpen. Registered March term 1852.

The public records found at the Register of Deeds Office in Bolivia shows by the end of the 1850's, Alfred Brown had become a man of wealth. He had accumulated hundreds of acres of land, part ownership of the schooner J.C. Manson, and shares of many other items called property in those days.

The first map reference to a point in the Lockwood Folly area that uses the name Brown or Brown's Landing appears on an United States Coast Survey map dated 1853. It is marked as Brown. Chart makers used landmarks that could be seen for great distances to triangulate the survey. Apparently the chimney of Alfred Brown's residence was used as one of these landmark points.

The 1860 Federal Census for Brunswick County shows Alfred and Patience still living in the Lockwood Folly District with nine children. One child had died in the 1850's. Also listed is a laborer Michael McNobe, an immigrant from Ireland and the 1860 Slave schedules shows Alfred Brown as a slave owner with two slaves on his farm. Family interviews shows that Alfred did not believe in slavery or even believe in the concept of slavery but was a slave owner and viewed slave labor as necessary to run a farm and to progress.

By the 1860's, Alfred's farm was a booming operation and he had changed his occupation from farmer to captain of a vessel. Probably the vessel was the schooner J.C. Manson which he had taken part ownership of in July of 1859.

There are several Brown family stories that occurred during the Civil War years. On one Sunday afternoon the Union Navy decided to shell the Brown home. Alfred had sent the children away during the shelling but remained at the home. The Union Navy fired seventy-two shots at the house

and struck it only once. The shell passed through the house and struck a tree in the backyard where it exploded.

Union raiding parties went ashore on occasions to forage for supplies. A raiding party chose Brown's Landing as a place to loot and came ashore and started to round up all the hogs to take back to their ship. Alfred and Patience asked the men to stay for supper. While the men sat in the house and ate, Patience went out the back door and let the hogs out into the woods. The Brown family and the Union Navy made peace. They didn't shell the house or steal and the Brown's fed them when they came to visit Brown's Landing. Alfred and Patience had lost their oldest son in the war.

By the 1890's, Patience had died and the Brown farm had began to decrease in size. On October 30-31, 1899 a terrific storm struck the coast of North Carolina. The Southport newspaper reported it to be the worst storm ever and that boats all along the coast were washed ashore.

Alfred Brown and his family had lost everything. Irish potatoes washed from the fields and into the woods. Nothing was left, not a hog, a yearling, everything was gone. The 1900 Federal Census shows Alfred Brown, age 89, living with his son John.

Source: "*Brown of Brunswick*", researched and written by Lonnie E. McDowell, Jr.

***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