



# 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, slides, 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 2014 - 2016 Term

President: David Holden  
Vice-President: James Green  
Secretary: Roberta Brady  
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BCHS Website  
[www.bchs1764.org](http://www.bchs1764.org)  
Webmaster: Jimmy Green

## MAY MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC MAY 12, 2014 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on May 12th 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 2014 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* began the 53rd Volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to May 2014 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).

Jim Mckee, a historic interpreter with the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic site will be our guest speaker at the May meeting. He will be presenting "What's New At Brunswick Town" with detailed information on the excavating project currently taking place.

**Happy Mothers Day**  
**Sunday, May 11, 2014**

## Oral History Program Captain Henry Bennett

Interview conducted by Mary Gornito at Capt. Henry's home in Calabash on September 23, 1976.

*Editor's Note: Edited for some clarity but otherwise transcribed as written:*

HB: When A.J. Drew came back out of service, World War II, he bought a little party boat here and started running parties. I don't know just when that was, must have been before, '46-'47 something like that and got advertising. I got into it the next year. Bobby got to catching some fish and at that time, there were not charter boats this side of Southport. We got to giving charter taxi and the first one in there accidently stopped at Mac's Café out there and got some of them oysters or hush puppies and fried some of that fresh shrimp that he got out of the river down there.

MG: When he first started his business he caught his own seafood?

HB: Right. Prepared and served his own. Rigs Coleman did for it for years. Ella did for years and years. Things like that I know about but I hardly know how to explain it, that's the reason I said it scrambled up mess when I got through it, but still if I can help, I like to do it.

MB: That's the kind of thing we want to know and how it got started.

HB: Well, it definitely got started back yonder in Calabash sometime in 1917.

MB: Do you know what the name Calabash means or where it came from?

HB: It's an Indian name, all I know so they tell me. I heard a lot of my groups, parties I take out naturally I fish along with lawyers, doctors, preachers and anybody else. I fish in highly educated groups indeed. And they get kicks out of me talking, listening that talk and they ask me a lot of questions and I had a lot of them tell me that Calabash and Little River both were and Indian Name.

Nobody knows how far back it dates other than 1764, that piece of property that Captain John got his café over there, it was dated back that far. I know I have the records that far back when I bought it before I sold it to him and at that time that particular crop of land was laying at the end of Pealanding Road.

MG: Pealanding Road?

HB: Pealanding Road runs from where Captain John's Café sits. This is where all peanuts here were shipped out, that's where it got it's name, Pealanding Road because all peanuts from as high up as Columbus and Bladen County's were brought in here with mules and wagons and ox carts and put in the boats and shipped out. Peanuts was the largest crop so I've been told, I don't know. Then it worked into the timber and there was a sawmill one time and cotton gin and turpentine still.

MB: Just the area where the restaurant was?

HB: Restaurants and all this. There was a warehouse down there and sailboats came in here and brought their groceries and fertilizer. When I was a kid I hauled fertilizer right there where Nancy has a Café. There was a warehouse setting there. Sailboats came in and unloaded. They brought chickens and eggs and whatever they had and raised and gathered and picked and what not. Meat put on the boat and shipped to Wilmington and the man in charge of the boat looked after all of it and sold it and brought it to all.

MB: Where were you born?

HB: Three miles back, no, I was born in Southport and brought here when I was 13 months old. I've seen the first piece of hard surface road in this county.

MB: Where was it?

HB: It was on Georgetown Road, in the state line up two miles, oyster shells. My grandpa with my daddy-in-law, my uncle and two or three others working they hauled out with mule and cart. Out dumping them on that road and leveling them down by hand. That was a hard surface road.

MG: What did you father do for a living?

HB: He was a farmer and merchant.

MG: Is that what most of the people in this area were back in those days, farmers?

HB: He was a farmer and merchant. He had a small grocery store out there.

MG: Did the people fish or shrimp or anything like that for their own food back in those days or did many people go for that?

HB: Yes, there was plenty of it. At least at that time oysters, clams, fish, about everybody if he wanted to catch fish he went to the river and got them. There was plenty of all of it.

MG: Did people eat fish?

HB: Yes. We came driving mules and wagons here and or anywhere along near the river where we wanted to and get all we wanted. We had to get what was out there, what we needed and quit, nobody over done it. But, when time moved on they disappeared, I mean the local seafood, oysters and clams. Especially the shellfish was gone.

MG: Where did they have to go to get it?

HB: Well, we got some open grounds in the county here but mighty little came back to Ocean Isle Beach back to Lockwood Folly. I think part of Lockwood Folly is still open, but all this is closed.

MG: Why?

HB: When Myrtle Beach Air Base, Myrtle Beach together with the other beaches ruined us here completely and that's where our fish was coming from.

MG: Where do the restaurants get their fish right now?

HB: A lot of it is prepared before they buy it, ready to serve. Like I said, Coleman Hines, Simmons, them boys got it the oysters out of the river not the ocean.

MG: Miss Coleman still runs that restaurant?

HB: She still owns it. She has an operator in there but she keeps so much off the top. I don't know, leased out or rented, I believe she said.

MG: Who is Ella?

HB: That's Ella Hines. Lawrence Hines wife.

MG: She started that restaurant?

HB: She is the third.

MG: She is still running operators there?

HB: She owns it. He is dead but she still has operators.

MG: Do you remember who had the first motorboat?

HB: The first one that I ever saw here was Lee Nats. There was one of the old sailboats that use to come in here had a little old Palmer motor in it.

MG: Palmer, what is that?

HB: It is a gasoline engine, that's all I know. It helps push the boat to get in and out the inlet. Then they open their sails and sail up the Cape Fear and anywhere else. What so far that I know the best that I can remember, Lee Nats had the first motorboat that I ever saw on the river. Finally Leslie Thomas got him one and they pulled the crew to the beach in the fall of the year when they started fishing on the beach. And, the worst whipping I ever got was on that beach.

MG: Why?

HB: The best fishing there ever been and I was a little fellow and my daddy went over and carried me over there.

MG: Do you remember about how old you were?

HB: No I don't. I was just a little fellow, but anyway I ran up on the beach and hid in a box and went to sleep and they thought I had drowned.

MG: I bet you did!

HB: He would go to the beach every once in a while, you could not sell it at that time.

MG: What was the market for?

HB: Mullet mostly.

MG: Any flounder back then?

HB: Some flounder and they got a lot of clams, oysters and shipped them out of here. My granddaddy came off from Harpers Island, Southport, he says.

MG: How did you family end up here?

HB: That will take it back to the fishing I reckon.

## Will of Richard Eagles

*Editors Note: Transcribed as written.*

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN. I, Richard Eagles, of the County of Brunswick and Province of North Carolina, Gentleman, being weak in body but of sound mind & memory, and Considering the uncertainty of this Life, do make this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form following, that is to say.

Imprimis: It is my will and desire that all my just Debts be paid out of the Profits of my Estate, by my Executors hereafter named.

I Give and Bequeath to my son, Joseph Eagles, son of Margaret Henrietta Eagles, my wife, formerly Call'd Marg't Henrietta Bugnion, his heirs and Assigns forever, the House, Plantation, Saw & Grist mills, where I now Live, together with all the lands I am now possessed of, Except such as is hereafter given to my Daughter, Susannah Eagles, or otherwise; Also I give to my Son Joseph, son to my wife Marg't Henrietta Eagles, formerly Called Marg't Henrietta Bugnion, fifteen Negroes, Big and little, as their families shall be; also, his Choice of four Lotts of Land in the Town of Wilmington, together with two thirds of all the stock I am Possessed of, Cattle, Horses, mares, hogs, sheep, &c.

Item. I Give and Bequeath to my Daughter, Susannah Elizabeth Eagles, Daughter to my late wife, Marg't Henrietta Eagles, formerly Called Marg't Henrietta Bugnion, Six hundred and forty Acres of Land Adjoin'g the Bank'd piece now Intend for a rice field & Bought of Hugh Blenning. Also, one third part of all the Land I now owne on the Island Commonly Call'd Eagles's Island, together with one half the number of Lotts in Wilmington, that I am possessed of Except such as are already given to my Son, Joseph; Also, one third part of all the stock I am possessed of Viz: Cattle, Horses, Mares, Hogs, Sheep, &c.

Item. I Give and Bequeath to my Two Cousins, Jean & Elizabeth Davis, one young Negro each, about their owne Age, to them & their Heirs for ever.

Item. I give and Bequeath to my Sister, Elizabeth Davis, the House she now lives on the no. side of the mill Pond, with the field that is fenced in, as long as she Lives, after her Death, to return to my son, Joseph Eagles.

Item. I Give and Bequeath to Jeanet McFarling, for and in Consideration of her faithfull and Diligent Care & Attendance in Mrs. Eagles's life time as well as since; two Negroes, Viz: a wench Called Caelia, and a Boy Call'd Peter, to her & her heirs forever; And it is my Desire that she, the sd. Jeanet McFarling, be and remaine in the house I now live, to have the Care of the Stock, Poultry, &c., and that my Execut'rs pay her the sum of Thirty five pounds, procl., Yearly until she is married or my son, Joseph, Come to the Years of Eighteen; Afterward as long as he shall think proper & no longer.

Item. I Give and Bequeath to John Eagleson, my Negro boy Jack, also, I do hereby Assign over to him the Mortgage of Price's Land, Commonly Call'd Judy's Branch, & four Mares & Colts.

It is my Desire that my two Molatto Boys, Natt & George, both have their freedom, when they arrive to the Age of thirty five Years. And Also that my Negro fellow, old Larry have his freedom, as soon as my son, Joseph, Comes of age, 'till which time

to be and remaine on the plantation as usual, without being turn'd into the feild or other hard Duty.

Item. It is my will & Desire that all my Negroes, Except those already Bequeathed away, together with all my household Furniture, Plate, Beds, Bedding &cs., be Equally Divided between my Son, Joseph & Susanna Elizabeth Eagles, Son & Daughter of my late wife Marg't Henrietta Eagles, formerly Marg't Henrietta Bugnion, and that the remaining half of the Lotts of Land in Wilmington be the property of my Son, Joseph.

Lastly, I do hereby Nominate & Appoint, John Gibbs, Robt' Shaw, John Ancrum, & Thos. Owen, Executors of this my last will & testament, revoking all other former wills by me made, ratifying & Confirming this, & no other.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand & seal, this Twenty third day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand, seven hundred & Sixty Nine.

RICH'D. EAGLES ( )

Sign'd, Seal'd & Publish'd & Declared to be the last will and Testament of Rich'd Eagles, In Presence of:

(The Date alter'd before Sign'd.)

JOHN, WALKER.

JNO. FERGUS.

MARY WALKER.

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

The within last Will and Testament of Richard Eagles, with the Codicil Annexed was proved before me this thirty first day of March, 1769, by the Oaths of John Walker and John Fergus, two of the subscribing witnesses thereto, who swore they say the Testator sign, seal, publish and declare the same to be and contain His last Will and Testament; and at the time thereof, He was of sound and disposing Mind & Memory. John Gibbs and Robert Shaw two of the Executors therein named took the Oaths appointed for their Qualification. Ordered that Letters of Testamentary issue thereon accordingly.

WM. Tryon

### Capt. William Dry

*Editor's Note: This is William Dry mentioned in the above will for Richard Eagles. First published in the Start News Online, September 3, 2008, written by Hank Phillips.*

Founded in 1726 by English colonists, the town of Brunswick, across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington, was once the most important port in North Carolina and the first seat of the colonial government between 1758 and 1770. Because of its deep water, Brunswick was favored over Wilmington by British ships and became the official commercial port on the Cape Fear River. Abundant long leaf pines produced tar, pitch and turpentine, commonly called "sticky gold," for export to England, Europe and the Caribbean islands. These were important ingredients for the construction of the great wooden sailing ships of the British Navy.

During the period 1740-1748, England was at war with Spain. Two imposing canon batteries overlooked the Cape Fear River-poised to defend Brunswick Town in the event of an attack by Spanish privateers.

On Sept. 3, 1748, three Spanish ships entered the Cape Fear River and attacked the port not only from the river, but with a land force. The townspeople fled their homes and many ships in the port were destroyed.

On Sept. 6, 1748, 80 local militiamen under the command of Capt. William Dry, a local merchant and planter whose family had settled in Brunswick in 1735, returned to their captured town and attacked the Spanish marauders, catching them by surprise. Ten of the enemy were killed and 30 were captured. The remaining Spaniards fled to the *Fortuna*, one of the three ships anchored in the river. As Dry's militiamen watched from the cover of the shore batteries, the *Fortuna* began shelling the town. Suddenly, a fire appeared on board, followed by a huge explosion, destroying the ship and killing 90 of those on board. The two remaining Spanish privateers retreated back down the river to Smith (Bald Head) Island.

Of the 260 Spaniards who sailed up the Cape Fear River on Sept. 3, half were killed and 40 were taken prisoner by Dry and his men, and 130 militiamen from Wilmington who had arrived to join the battle. While there was considerable property damage, thanks to the courageous actions of Capt. Dry and others, no colonists were lost. A few weeks later, the war between England and Spain was over. Salvage retrieved from the captain's cabin of the *Fortuna* included an oil portrait of Christ wearing a crown of thorns titled "Ecce Homo," thought to have been painted by the noted Spanish artist Francisco Pacheco of Seville. In 1751, the N.C. General Assembly presented the painting to St James parish in Wilmington where it is preserved to this day.

William Dry was soon to gain far greater notoriety. In 1754 he became a colonel in the militia and was appointed tax collector for the Port of Brunswick. He also served in the Colonial Council. Having become an outspoken critic of the Crown and the proposed Stamp Act tax on local merchants, early in 1765, Dry, along with a growing number of townspeople began meeting with local citizens and groups including the Sons of Liberty. The purpose of this militant organization, largely made up of shopkeepers, artisans, small traders and printers, with members in every colony, was to undermine the proposed Stamp Act. When the British sloop-of-war *Diligence* came up the river to the Port of Brunswick to deliver stamped paper to be sold to the colonists, demonstrators on shore refused to allow the ship into port. An angry armed mob sur-

rounded the mansion of Gov. Tryon in Brunswick and placed him under house arrest. Word was received that the Stamp Act had been passed by the British Parliament in November 1765.

On Feb. 18, 1766, proclaiming his strong support for liberty and independence, still in his position as Port Collector for Brunswick Town, William Dry made an oath that he would no longer enforce the Stamp Act-one of the very first successful protests of the new tax in all the colonies, and nearly seven years before American colonists in Boston dumped British tea into the bay. The Stamp Act was repealed on March 17, 1766.

The courageous and patriotic actions of Cape Fear colonist William Dry and others provided the impetus for independence from British rule, setting the stage for "the shot heard around the world" and the beginning of the Revolutionary War at Lexington and Concord on April 17, 1775.

## Lehew Cemetery



Lehew Cemetery is located on the northwest side of Highway 17 just northeast of Shallotte and across from Red Bug Rd.

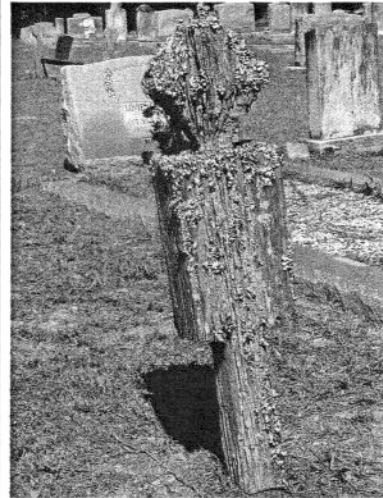
Benjamin W. Lehew established the cemetery on his 100 acre homestead in the late 1800's and now has more than 680 people entombed. Plus many unmarked graves. Benjamin married Julia A. Hewett on October 5, 1854 in Brunswick County. Benjamin died on June 26, 1898, Julia died on October 14, 1908 and both are buried in the cemetery. He was a private in the CSA Army and was captured January 15, 1865 at the battle of Fort Fisher.

Transported to Elmira, NY as a P.O.W. and exchanged on March 2, 1865 for a Union P.O.W. in James River, Virginia. Some records use the spelling of "Lehue" but whether the spelling is Lehew or Lehue they are of the same family.

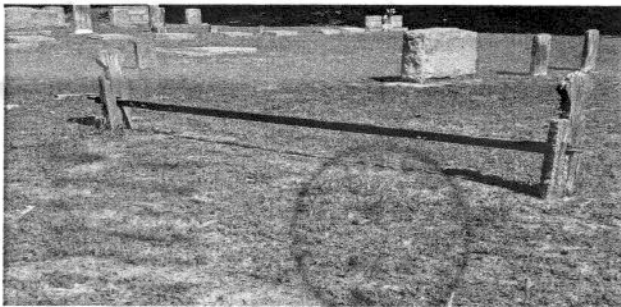
The Lehew family also gave land for the Lettis Grove Holiness Church and for the Red Bug School, the first public school in the community. Both were in the vicinity of the Highest Praise Church, located today at the intersection of Red Bug Road and Highway 17.

Lehew cemetery has many wooden markers with no inscriptions and several tall marble markers. There is also a "leaping board" marker. This unusual type has been traced to southeast England as far back as the 1600's. The two oldest marked graves are J.V. Lehew who died on December 27, 1873 and Nancy L. Lehew with a death date of September 8, 1878. Both were small children of Benjamin and Julia.

The name "Lehew Cemetery" was used until the late 1900's and today it is known as the Lehew/Chapel Hill Cemetery. The cemetery was never associated with the Chapel Hill Baptist Church which is now Shallotte First Baptist as the name indicates but was associated with the Lettis Grove Holiness Church.



Wooden Marker



Leaping Board

**Area Events**

Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington, NC: There will be a Confederate Memorial Day Service on Sunday, May 11, 2014 between 2:00 and 3:00 o'clock. Admission is free.

***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