



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 2019 & 2020 Term

President: James Green
Vice-President: Gwen Causey
Secretary: Roberta Brady
Treasurer: Bob Armour
Directors: James Robinson
Jim Marlowe
Dave Lewis

Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis



MAY MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC MAY 13, 2019 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on Monday, May 13th 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 2019 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* begins the 58th Volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to November 2018 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).

Program

Our speaker for the May meeting will be Susan Usher Eggert. She rescheduled from the February meeting. Her topic will be "Bishop Asbury and His Travels Through Brunswick County."

Susan has maternal and paternal lines dating back three centuries in Brunswick County. She is a graduate of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and was a print journalist for 22 years. While serving as director of lay ministries at Camp United Methodist Church and attending Asbury Theological Seminary part-time, Susan developed a keen interest in the history of the denomination and began researching Methodists who had made a positive impact on the growth of the early church in Brunswick County.

Susan will at least partially answer these questions: Who was Bishop Francis Asbury? When did he visit Brunswick County, where did he visit and why? What difference did his presence here make?

Dues

DUES are now past 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 Bob Armour or bring check or cash to the February meeting. Please use the membership application found on page 7 for contact changes. Make checks payable to the **Brunswick County Historical Society**.

Diary of James W. Albright

Continued from the February 2019 "Newsletter".

Albright was a Confederate Soldier from Greensboro, NC. His diary is part of the Southern Historical Collection #1008, Chapel Hill. Taken from *"Bent Gras, News from the Benton Family Tree"* publication, *provided by David and Judy Holden*.

James Albright was stationed at Fort Clifton, near Petersburg, Va. when he received orders to march to Wilmington on January 6, 1864. His diary tells us about the daily life and adventures of a Confederate Soldier who spent considerable time in the Brunswick and New Hanover County areas. It provides us with a rare glimpse into the area and how our ancestors lived during this time in history.

Transcribed as written, including spelling and punctuation.

Lockwood's Folly

Jan. 23 – We are again on the march to the head of Lockwood's Folly inlet – 10 miles south of Smithville. All the staff and Young's battery went with us – except the surgeon who remained in Smithville. The country is sandy, poor, and sparsely settled – not a respectable dwelling on the roadside the whole distance traveled. This is to be headquarters – with all the coast from the mouth of the Cape Fear to the South Carolina Line to operate in. It is 6 miles from the ocean and most desolate looking country I was ever in. The people generally are extremely poor and ignorant – believe in "witches"

and "spells," and original character we saw on the roadside cleaning fish – gave us a very amusing account of how a "fellow" put a "spell" on her sister; but she was confident it was to go off in two more night, when the "moon would be full and pass over the southeast corner of the hours." We are only 3 miles from Greene Swamp – the famous retreat of deserters and runaway Negroes. I hope to visit it soon.

Jan. 24 – Gregory and myself went off on an exploring expedition towards the coast. We passed a church called Mt. Pisgah, where a few people were assembled and I asked if there was going to be preaching (it was Sunday) – a man said "no, but there would a meeting." I did not want to see what was meant after he told me it was a Baptist church. The churches are very creditable when contrasted with the residences. On reaching the inlet we found all the boats on the beach, so we amused ourselves by eating oysters, and talking with the natives – who were very clever and communicative. A few hands are here making salt for the State – which sells for \$10 per bushel. Being curious to know the traditions on the inlet which is formed by a creek, I asked a gentleman – whence its name. He said: A great many years ago, when shipping was not so much a science as now, a man named Lockwood, living on the river, concluded to build a boat and turn merchantman. So he built a large vessel for that day and launched it in the river and started for the ocean – when he found there was not enough water on the bar for his vessel to go out to sea. Thus his labor was lost and he saw his folly and to ridicule his skill and perpetuate his name the neighbors called the river and inlet Lockwood's Folly. The oysters are very fine and in great abundance – the whole inlet being lined with large rocks or beds of them. This place is noted for the number of wrecks of vessels driven in here in times of gales – three now in sight, which were blockade runners. The Elizabeth – a wooden side wheel steamer, is nearest the inlet and has been partly burned by the Yanks. The fragments of the Yankee gunboat which was blown up a short time since – and which was heard and felt in Wilmington, is also nearly opposite. She was beached while trying to get off the blockade runner – Bendigo – and finding it impossible to get her off – was abandoned and fired – when the fire reached the maga-

zine it exploded and burst her asunder and now her two halves are some 100 yds. apart. The Bendigo is an iron vessel – but too much injured to be of service again. Her cargo was very valuable and but little was saved – mostly coffee and merchandise. The Ranger, another C.S. blockader, lies close by and is worthless – as she has gone to pieces. Chiefly government stores – 7,000 fine Belgian rifles are now on shore awaiting transportation to Wilmington. There are also 2 guns – a 30 lb. rifle and a 12 lb. boat howitzer on the beach – which were saved from the Yankee gunboat. This inlet makes into the ocean at the southern end of Oaks Island, on which forts Caswell and Campbell are situated, and the freight saved from the wrecks is placed on flats or small boats and carried to the Cape Fear through the water between the island and main land. There is a small company of infantry on the beach – which acts as a coast guard and has frequently prevented the Yanks from landing to molest the wrecks. Our visit was pleasant and very interesting. Two Yankee blockade steamers are in sight, and while we were eating oysters on passed in about a mile of us, but we were too busy to pay any attention to it. I love the seashore – there is always something new to see – and strange shells to gather. Here I met “The Wrecker’s Daughter,” an ungainly red-haired lass with a toothbrush in her mouth – dipping snuff, but then, her mother gave us genuine coffee and good oysters until I felt like the girl did not look half as bad as at first sight. Didn’t get home till night. Must tell a *Mule Story*.

I was walking along, when I saw a gentleman riding a singular looking animal about the size of a banker pony – but it had ears like a jack – with beautiful yellow flowing mane to it’s knee joints and tail nearly touching the ground. I hailed the man and he let look at this strange saddle animal. Said I: “Mr. what is this thing called?” He said: “It’s nothing but a mule – with a banker mare for it’s mother. Where are you from anyway, Sergeant?” I replied, “I am from Greensboro – where they grow mules and I’m 28 years old, and our mules have no flowing manes and no hair on their tails – except a little bunch at the end.” You ought to have heard that man laugh! He called up some of his friends to see a man – from where mules were made – who didn’t know that mules manes and tails were sheared – but thought they grewed that

way. I felt sold one time – I never saw a mule with flowing mane and tail before or since.

Jan. 25 – Lots of land, sand, water, and ignorance. The Green Swamp foxes bark in the day time, and it is said the people here continued to vote for General Jackson until the state seceded – and only quit then because they said he is in favor of the “Eonscript law.” (sic. conscript law) an enrolling officer – they would still vote for Andy Jackson for president. I did not vouch for this.

Jan. 29 – Dr. Thompson and all the rest of the staff have arrived. Young’s battery ordered to Shallotte – 8 miles below here. We are out of forage and feeding the horses on unshelled rice – just as cut – like oats – but it is not good for them – the rice is to hard to digest. Ticks have arrived in food force.

Jan. 30 – Went to coast and got a wagon load of oysters. Yankees tried to reach us with shell from their boat, but could not do so. Got a fine specimen of Sea wire – a species of vegetable – which was washed upon the beach. Had an oyster roast at night. Jess Wharton and myself each ate about 80 oysters – but they were small and we were hungry.

Feb. 1 – Went to Wilmington after forage. Got a blanket and a pair of shoes from Qr. Dept.

Feb. 2 – Saw first wild violet of the season. Another Mule Story and a very singular scene to me, which illustrates animal affection. A small colt, only a few days old was discovered by our mules, and it was such a strange sight to them, that all but one of the dozen took after it and I believe would have killed it, but for the one who refused to join in running it down. This mule took sides with the colt, and by great exertion and free use of its heels – kept the other from getting near enough to hurt it. We all tried to rescue the colt, and it was with difficulty we could do so, the mule friend keeping such a strict guard over it – kicking at all who came near it.

Feb. 5 – Heard with regret that a “Union” meeting was held in Greensboro – but glad to know that it broke up in a row, and that one prominent citizen got a board split over his hard head.

Feb. 6 – Heard Gen. Pickett was after the Yankees near Newbern – that Col. Griffin was operating on the Chowan and that force was after them near Smithfield, In Isle of Wight, Va., and that Sturdivant’s battery took part in the latter affair. Saw first snake of the season – a moccasin.

Feb. 8 – The corn mills in this country deserve some notice. There are not flour mills – as no wheat is raised. The mills are about the size of a hen-coop – say 10 by 15 ft. and are generally on very high upright timbers, which gives them a singular appearance. But there are plenty of them.

Feb. 15 – Went to the Post Office (Supply) kept at the home of Mr. Mercer – saw a house full of young ladies. This is by far the most intelligent family I have seen in this county – outside of Smithfield. Had a nice library and loaned me “Vicar of Wakefield.”

Feb. 18 – Went to Wilmington and found the Advance was in and had about 1/3 of our goods. Telegraphed firm and agreed to meet them here next Saturday. Saw first shad \$22 a pair – didn’t buy. Slept out under ambulance and it snowed during the night – covering us fully 3 inches. It was very cold.

Feb. 19 – Met Julius A. Gray from Greensboro. Went back to camp. Found letter from Bob – telling of death of Ed Crowson, who died of wounds. All sick at home.

Feb. 21 – Went to Wilmington again in hopes of meeting Mr. Campbell – but failed to do so – so spent a restless night at hotel and arose early and went through the market – which was a sad looking place for a hungry man – didn’t see how they live here. Paid \$16 for supper, lodging, and breakfast. Met Mr. Campbell. Spent day with him. Saw Engineer Ed Dick on an iron-clad nearly ready for action – went over it, but think I had rather fight on land. Was quite sick with Flu. Transacted my business with Mr. Campbell and went back to camp.

Feb. 23 – Capt. Young’s battery was under orders to march – to be relieved by Capt. Adam’s battery. Headquarters to remain here.

Feb. 24 – The woods are on fire in several directions and great clouds of smoke hang around the horizon. I have seen the mountains on fire – have read of parraries on fire – but a fire in an old turpentine orchard, overgrown with rank grass and weeds – every tree coated with rosin for ten or 20 feet from the ground – presents an awful and sublime sight. I never knew what a power – uncontrolled fire was before. The roar of the flames could be heard a great distance – as the fire leaped from tree to tree – 20 feet or more above the ground – like living bodies all aflame. Never read of anything more grand or terrific. Still quite unwell.

To Be Continued.

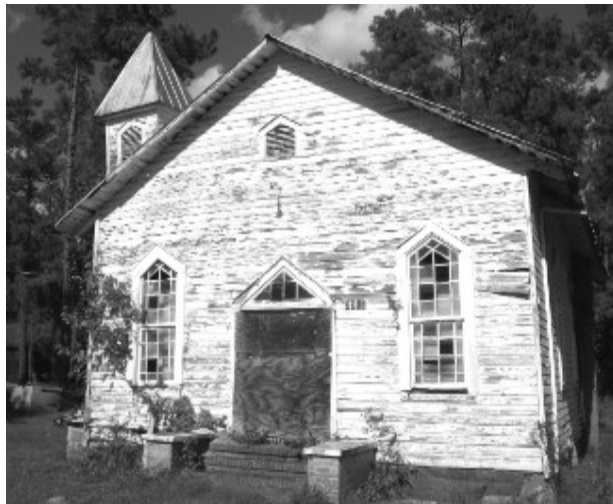
Reaves Chapel A.M.E. Church

Believed to be built between 1880 and 1900, the structure now known as Reaves Chapel is the oldest AME church in the area and was established by descendants of former slaves. Built along the bluffs of the Cape Fear River near Navassa, the church was part of the Cape Fear Mission, a circuit composed of several small churches on area plantations used by Methodist ministers. Originally located on the grounds of the former Cedar Hill Plantation on Indian Creek, Reaves Chapel was built by and a place of worship for many local former slaves after the Civil War.

Cedar Hill Plantation and the town of Navassa are located in northern Brunswick County across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington and part of the northern reaches of the Gullah-Geechee corridor. Around 1911 the church was moved inland to its current location on Cedar Hill Road about three miles north of Leland. The church building was pulled by teams of oxen and rolled along by oak logs to a small plot of land that was given to the church by a formerly enslaved man, Edward Reaves, the church’s namesake.

Historic Reaves Chapel A.M.E. Church is one of the Cape Fear region’s most culturally and historically significant African-American structures. The Chapel is a simple, classical wood frame church with colored glass windows and is considered one of the oldest African-American buildings in southeastern North Carolina.

Until the late 1990's Reaves Chapel was the center



140 year old Reaves Chapel in Navassa

Photo: Denice Patterson

Source: African Roots in Brunswick County.

for the local community. The building is now abandoned after the last members of the congregation died. An old slave cemetery, Cedar Hill Cemetery, is all that remains at the church's original location. Mayor Eulis Willis of Navassa and others organized the forerunner of the Cedar Hill-West Bank Heritage Foundation that is helping to preserve the old structure. In 2015 the Historic Wilmington Foundation placed Reaves Chapel on its list of "Most Threatened Historic Places" in the region.

Many of Navassa residents' ancestors were Gullah-Geechee people of coastal Africa who were forcibly brought to the coastal United States because of their experience in rice cultivation. Rice plantations once lined the western banks of the Cape Fear River, and despite the many contributions of the Gullah-Geechee people to this region of the state there are surprisingly few surviving structures from the Civil War and post-Civil War period that preserve their vital cultural heritage. Reaves Chapel is one of the last remaining buildings from that era still standing.

Reaves Chapel and its small cemetery served an African Methodist Episcopal congregation until the late 1990's. Although the small Chapel has suffered the prolonged effects of weather damage and is not currently inhabitable, it is still cherished by the community. The Chapel was purchased by the

Coastal Land Trust in March of 2019 with funding provided by The Moore Charitable Foundation founded by Louis Bacon. In partnership with the Cedar Hill-West Bank Heritage Foundation, the building will be restored and once again be a community gathering place for celebration, community service, faith and history.

Sources: African Root in Brunswick County; Reporter Makenzie Holland of the Wilmington Star News; Reporter Ben Steelman of the Wilmington Star News; Coastallandtrust.org.

North Carolina Colonial Coroners' Inquests 1738 – 1775 Brunswick County

Compiled by Haywood Roebuck and published in the Clarendon Courier, December 1990

The following abstracts have been prepared from files of original and contemporary copies of coroners' inquests in the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh. Every North Carolina County had a coroner or "crown" who was, as the name suggests, an official of the crown. As a crown official, the expenses of his office were met from the public taxes. To collect his expenses, the coroner submitted a copy of the results of each inquest to the General Assembly. The Assembly's Committee of Claims, in turn voted by report the necessary reimbursement to the coroners when the committee approved colonial expenditures at each session of the Assembly.

The original records from which the abstracts have been made are arranged in the Archives by date and are a part of the Secretary of State's record group: Secretary of State – Committee of Claims-Coroners' Inquests, 1738-1775. When the signature is by mark, the abstract shows only "(X)", whether the mark used was a "X" whether a distinctive mark was used. Occasionally part of a juror's name has been torn away from another record (such as deeds, tax list, etc.), and the missing part of the name supplied in brackets. Uncertain readings are indicated by a question mark.

Brunswick County: (Editors note: Transcribed as written)

Hooper, John. Drowned by accident on 5 Apr 1766. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 5 Apr 1766. Thomas Dick, coroner. Jury: David Smeeth, Richard Ogdon, Willm. Gatcomb. John Carter, Willm. Gallaway, Alexr. Gibson, Joseph Harrison, Waltr. Gunkison, John Gallaway, Jeremiah Dun, James Bell, John Callihorn.

Wair, George, mariner of H.M. sloop of war Martin, Capt. Hayward, commander. Drowned; accessory to his own death by deliberately jumping overboard. Inquest held aboard the vessel in Brunswick Co. on 3 Jul 1768. Thomas Dick, coroner. Jury: David Smeeth, James McElheaney, James Creven, Willm. Gibson, John Carter, James Carter, John Bowman, John Anderson, John Teatom, Joseph Harrison, Walter Gunkinson, Alex. Gibson.

Steel, Brice, of the sloop Patience. Drowned by accidentally falling into the seas. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 3 Aug 1769. Isaiah Parvisol, (corner?). Jury: Darby (x) Egan (failed to make his mark, however), Richd. Wilson, Wm. Cupples, Philip Jones, John Burgen, John Romain, Thomas Willson, John (x) Olive, John Barns, Thos. Carter, James (x) Carter, Dennis Shaw.

Unknown man. Drowned by accidentally falling into river near Maurice Moore's. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 30 Mar 1770. (Coroner not named) Jury: Wm. Davis, John Vains, Edmund Fogertie, Hadnell Huffham, William Godfrey, Alexr. Inglis.

Melton, Richard. Drowned by accidentally falling into the river at Brunswick. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 1 Apr 1770. (Coroner not named) Jury: David Smeeth, James Thompson, John Brown, Waler Junkson (i.e., Walter Junkison), Thomas (x) Graem, John (x) Olive, Josue Gabourel, John Cheese, Richd. Wilson, Arthur MacKay, Philip Jones, Thomas (x) Carter, George (x) McFarlin, Joseph Earl, Money found in Melton's pocket (14 pounds/16/0 proc.), 1 pr. silver shoe buckles, and some papers in the hands of Mr. Jas. Swan.

Punger, James, a soldier from Fort Johnston. Accidentally killed by being shot while on his way through the woods to the fort. Inquest held in

Brunswick Co. on 28 Apr 1770. (Coroner not named). Jury: Arthur MacKay, Wm. Gibson, James White, Philip Jones. Josue Gabourel, John (x) Olive, John Barress (?), Wm. Cheyne, Wm. Faulkner, Thomas (x) Greeam, James (x) Carter, Thomas (x) Field, Willm. Cains.

Gault, William, mariner. Died by accidentally falling from vessel into Cape Fear River near Brunswick. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 30 Dec 1770. (Coroner not named). Jury: Wm. Faulkner, Richard Cains, Blan (x) Bevin, Joseph Harris, Walter Junkison, John Guerard, Albert Barry, Philip Jones, Edward (x) Welch, Elias Calkins, James Corner, William Barrett, Daniel (x) Owins, Jacob Lewis, James McKanna, David Smeeth, John Cheese, Josue Gabourel.

Edwards, John. Died accidentally by falling into Cape Fear River at Brunswick. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. 12 Apr 1771. (Coroner not named). Jury: David Smeeth, Thomas (x) Grayham (see above spelling of Graem), George Campion, John McIlheny, Jacob Lewis, Joseph Earle, William Barret, John (x) Anderson, Benjamin (x) Basset, Philip Jones, John Cheese, John Rogers, John Wilkinson, Thomas Bridges.

Unknown mariner from H.M.S. Thomas. Died by accidentally falling into Cape Fear River at Brunswick and drowning. Inquest held in Brunswick Co. on 19 Aug 1772. (Coroner not named). Jury: John Cheese, James White, Richard Russell, John Romain, Joseph (x) Harrison, Elias Calkins, Francis Savage, John McIlhenny, John Kennedy, George Soutes (?), Wm. Faulkner, Elijah Crandes (?) Richd. Cains.

WWI Veterans

Approximately 75 people, including several BCHS members, attended the Commemoration of the US entry into WWI on April 6, 2019 at the Fort Caswell Rifle Range located on Caswell Beach.

A continuation of the Roll Call honoring Brunswick County WWI veterans was held. 153 names were called bring a total of 439 names that have been honored to date.

Future events include a fund raiser for the Rifle Range on May 4, 2019. A dinner, derby and dance will be held at the Caswell Beach Town Fire Station, 4:00-9:00. Tickets are \$15.00 a person. A Veterans Day program will be held November 11, 2019 at the Rifle Range. Will include the continued Roll Calling of WWI veterans in a joint commemoration with Brunswick Town DAR and Friends of Ft. Caswell.



Birthplace of Memorial Day

The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries.

By the late 1860's, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

It is unclear where exactly this tradition originated; numerous different communities may have inde-

pendently initiated the memorial gatherings. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day.

Waterloo, which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866, was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags. Two years later on May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. Thus, Decoration Day originated on the 30th of May, 1868.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

For decades, Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, continued to be observed on May 30, but in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees and the change went into effect in 1971 and this same law declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.

Source: The History Channel, history.com

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail _____

New: _____ or Renewal _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Receive *Newsletter* by email: Y N

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

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

Please submit any articles or information for future newsletters to Dave Lewis.

Email: davelewis@atmc.net

CALENDER OF EVENTS

BCHS Meetings: February 14, 2019

May 13, 2019

August 12, 2019

November 11, 2019

Enjoy your Memorial Day and Honor a Veteran

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 874
SHALLOTTE, NC 28459

