



NEWSLETTER

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

VOLUME LIX

AUGUST 2020

NUMBER 3

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, 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:
Treasurer: Bob Armour
Directors: Sally Robinson
Jim Marlowe
Dave Lewis

Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis



ATTENTION

THE AUGUST MEETING OF THE BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS BEEN CANCELED DUE TO THE ONGOING COVID-19 VIRUS.

Our next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2020.

The February 2020 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* began the 59th Volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to May 2020 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 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 November meeting. Use the membership application found on page 7 for contact changes. Make checks payable to the **Brunswick County Historical Society**.

Leaving Brunswick County Oral History Lesson

During the last three hundred years or so many families have moved into Brunswick County. Most stayed, but some have moved on to other parts of North Carolina and beyond. Below is an oral history report given by Howard Hewett of Jones Creek, Texas to the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society.

Howard is the grandson of Albert Walker Hewett, Sr. and Addie Jane Lewis. Albert and William Edward Lewis of Brunswick County moved their families to the Federal Point area of New Hanover County about 1902. William drowned with the wreck of the Clarence H on December 9, 1903, and Albert later married Addie Jane Lewis, the daughter of William Lewis and Georgia Anne Andrews on January 26, 1911 in New Hanover County.

Fishing off Fort Fisher in a Small Boat-in the 1940's and 50's, by Howard Hewett. Submitted August 22, 2014 to the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society.

Fairly close to Fort Fisher, there are some rocks (coquina) that jut out into the Atlantic. I never asked Dad if he knew how long they had been exposed, but they were one of my favorite places to surf fish for trout and bluefish in the fall.

There were times when I giggered flounder with Uncle Crawford Lewis in the same location.

About half a mile to a mile out to sea from these rocks, there were a number of the blockade-runner wrecks that sank, leading up to the final siege of Fort Fisher in early 1865. The powder vessel is also in this area.

One of Dad's favorite activities was taking summer guests (men only) out to fish over these wrecks. Now, this was not for the faint of heart, although it was truly an adventure. You see, Dad's choice of boats for these trips was about 12 foot in length, really no more than a small rowboat.

I was allowed to sit in the bow and the one guest would sit in the stern. Dad would sit in the middle

and do the rowing. Now, the trick would be to row across the bar and wait for the breakers to come to a lull, and then Dad would head to sea before the next wave broke on the bar.

Then he would row out to the wreck and we would fish. Dad's GPS system for locating these spots was pretty basic. He would line up the Fort Fisher Monument and the Kure Beach water tank.

On one of the wrecks farther out he would line up the Monument and the Breakers Hotel at Wilmington Beach (currently the Golden Sands Hotel in Carolina Beach).

Fishing in a small boat in the open Atlantic was sometimes more than our quest's stomach could manage. It was not unusual for our guest to lose his breakfast. Uncle Bubba Roebuck, (Lt JG "Buck Roebuck), liked to join us on these adventures, but I think he always got sick.

Our fishing tackle was low-tech. We used a drop line with only a couple of hooks and a sinker. No fancy tackle! Our boat anchor was also not high-tech.

Dad would put some bricks in a burlap sack. After we had caught enough fish for dinner, we would prepare to head toward shore. He would remove the bricks from the sack, put the fish in the sack, tie a cork to the rope and then tie the rope to the boat. All this just in case we turned over crossing the breakers.

The return from one of these fishing adventures was also quite a trick. Dad would sit just outside the breakers until he decided which wave to follow into shore.

Catching the wave was something like the technique used in surfboarding. The only difference being that you rode the crest on the backside of the wave and maintained your position by rowing forward to stay up or place your oars deep in the water to create drag so you do not go over the crest of the wave.

I can tell you that when the waves are big, doing this will get your heart rate up, a real adrenaline

rush! The men in the Hewett-Lewis family were skilled boatmen dating back to their whaling days.

Footnote on our boat: I am sure there were boats that I do not remember, but the boat I remember well was built somewhere around 1948-1950. I watched Dad build it in the garage. It was made of cypress and was a lapstreak with a “V” bow.

The gunnels probably were not more than 2 feet high. I remember Dad laying the keel and the stem. The stem was shaped with a draw knife. (Dad’s draw knife is in my tool cabinet today and I have used it many times in my duck carving.)

After the stem, Keel, ribs and stern boards were in place, the sides were installed. The bottom and bench were the last to be put in place. The boat had a great shape and was easy to get into the water. In the early 1950’s, I was allowed to take it by myself and go out beyond the breakers to fish. At that time I learned the technique of crossing the bar and riding a wave on the return trip.



Photo is the Hewett’s home, one block north of the Fort Fisher Gate, and the boat in the foreground was the one used in most of our fishing trips.

Editors Note: *This Hewett and Lewis family came from the Shell Point area of Brunswick County. Howard Curtis Hewett, Jr., Born: December 21, 1939, New Hanover County. Died: October 9, 2017, Vermont.*

Life Full of Hard Work and Good Cooking

An Interview with Ellouise Russ

The Brunswick Beacon, Thursday, June 23, 1983

By: Elaine Wilson

There’s very little that Ellouise Russ can’t do.

She can shoot a bear.

Pluck 75 chickens in one day.

Plow a mule.

Dress a hog.

Skin a snake.

And with an iron skillet and a strip or two of fat-back, she can make the best catfish stew to be found anywhere in Brunswick County.

Friday at dinnertime, Ellouise’s children and grandchildren not only fill their plates with catfish stew, but with helpings and second helpings of fried venison, mustard greens and fried cornbread.

“Why that ain’t nothing,” said Ellouise’s daughter, Vicki. “We eat like that all the time.” You should have seen Mama when she only worked at home.

“In the summertime, she’d get up at 4:30 and you’d have a full breakfast. Then she would go out and take a barn of tobacco out. Then she’s come back and fix dinner. Go back to the field and work as soon as it would start getting dark, she’d come back inside the house and fix supper. After supper was eaten, she’d give Woody and me our baths.

“I don’t think I ever saw her sit down,” said Vicki.

Ellouise, 51, who currently works as housekeeping supervisor at the Brunswick County Complex in Bolivia, said she could hardly ever remember a time when she wasn’t cooking or working in the fields.

“I told my husband before he married me that I wasn’t going to work in the cotton field.

“Oh Lord, how I hated doing that.

“I can’t even remember when I started working in the cotton fields. I must have been about four or five years old. I was so little I couldn’t even see over the top of the cotton. My hair was so blonde—just like the color of cotton—that my mama said she used to lose me in the cotton field,” reminisced

Ellouise, who grew up in the Okefenokee Swamp in Southern Georgia.

“I’ve always lived in swamps. When I was 15, I met Woodrow and he took me from one swamp to another, from the Okefenokee to the Green Swamp, right here in Brunswick County.”

Her 37 years of marriage to Woodrow is a testimony to true and lasting love, said Ellouise.

“Things just clicked. I met him March 21 in 1946, at a square dance in Jacksonville, Florida, and five weeks later we were married.”

Twelve days after marrying, she was pregnant with her first child.

And four months later, she was helping her husband in his 50-acre farm on the banks of Juniper Creek in Exum.

She was also teaching herself how to cook.

“I’m a self-made cook,” said Ellouise. “Lord, at 15 and a wife a mother how could I be anyways?”

“I remember the first time I made biscuits. It was the funniest thing. It took me all day long and 20 pounds of flour to do it. But I made them,” she said.

Ellouise’s attitude toward baking biscuits carries over in her philosophy toward life. She and her family have been through more than a few hard times, but they never gave up.

In 1966 Woodrow seriously injured his back while working on a dredge boat. He has been disabled ever since.

Ellouise took over the role of the breadwinner. She and her four children kept the farm in operation.

“We’ve been through some bad times,” said Ellouise, “for about three years, we weren’t making enough to cuss a cat over. My husband wasn’t even getting workman’s compensation.”

To help the family out of their financial crisis, Ellouise began to working in 1968 at Freeland Manufacturing Co. in Columbus County. For the ten following years, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., she worked as a cloth cutter. And when she came home, she went out to work in the fields until dusk.

One afternoon in 1977 she came home and found the family’s trailer on fire. They lost everything but the clothes on their backs.

She, Woodrow and the two youngest children, moved to a two-room shed where they lived for five months.

“Life goes on,” said Ellouise. “There are things in that trailer that’ll never be replaced—like baby pictures, my marriage license, my husband’s guns—but you just have to make do.”

In 1978, Ellouise said she finally “ran out of steam.” No longer able to work two jobs, she and Woodrow decided to lease the farm.

Ellouise today enjoys tending to her eight grandchildren, who frequently visit for months at a time, and working as housekeeping supervisor at the complex.

“This is the best job I’ve ever had,” she said. “I love people. There’s not a one out here I don’t know.”

Sometimes, however, she said gets to know the county officials better than she would like to know them.

“I get kind of hot under the collar when they start bickering over petty things like ‘did you see what this one did yesterday?’ There’s a lot of backbiting and a lot of gossip—but it goes in one ear and out the other,” she said.

County officials are at their worse during budget season, said Ellouise.

“I dread to see budget time. I go from one department to another and oh, Lord, everyone’s belly-aching about wanting more money.

“I get sick of all the politics.”

But on Saturday Ellouise will cast the lone vote of the Brunswick County Democratic Women when the party’s executive committee nominates a successor for former Sheriff Herman Strong, who was convicted recently on drug smuggling charges.

When Ellouise isn’t working at the complex, she can be found catching catfish, jackfish, blackfish, pikes or flyers in the family’s cypress log boat in Juniper Creek or in the Green Swamp, shooting deer to make buckburgers or tending the two dozen turkeys and 150 or more chickens that roost behind their mobile home.

But around noon every day, Ellouise reigns in the kitchen, with three or four grandchildren hanging onto her skirt and grease popping in the black iron skillet.

Ellouise said she couldn’t be any happier than to be “filling people up.”

I think one of these days, I just might open a restaurant.”

Editor’s Note: Ellouise Christine Aspinwall was born July 29, 1930 in Ware County, Georgia and died July 13, 1996 in Brunswick County, NC. She is buried in the New Life Baptist Church Cemetery, Exum, NC. Beside her is her husband, Woodrow Wilson Russ. He was born March 5, 1922 in Brunswick County, NC and died January 1, 1985 in Brunswick County, NC.

In Memory

Grover Holden, a long time BCHS member, passed away July 1, 2020. Grover was known throughout Brunswick County for his roses, genealogy research, and knowledge of local history.

Mr. Grover Henderson Holden, 83, of Supply went to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Wednesday July 1st, 2020 at his residence. Mr. Holden was born in Brunswick County on February 26, 1937 and was the son of the late Grover Talmadge Holden and Minnie Cross Lewis Holden. He was also preceded in death by a daughter, Con-

nie Holden and five siblings. He was a U.S. Army Veteran where he served with the military police. He retired from BEMC after thirty three plus years of service where he started as a lineman and at the time of his retirement he was a Sub-Station supervisor. Following his retirement he enjoyed genealogy and was a active member of the Brunswick County Historical Society. He was an avid vegetable and flower gardener especially his roses and he enjoyed sharing his vegetables and flowers with others.

He is survived by his wife Mildred "Mickey" Holden; three sons, Thomas H. Holden of Ca., Talmage A. Holden of Supply, Marion E. Holden of Supply; three step-children, DeVane W. Mooney and husband Paul of Coats, NC, Timothy White and wife Andrea of Varnamtown, Keith White and wife Krista of Wilmington; fourteen grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Funeral services will be private due to health concerns with Covid-19. Burial will follow in the Gurganus Cemetery in the Shallotte Point community.

Services will be broadcast live at White Funeral and Cremation Service, Supply Chapel Facebook page on Saturday, July 4 at 11:00 a.m. Pallbearers will be Harvard Holden, Phil Cheers, David Fearnside, Kendall Hewett, Dane Stanley, David Lewis.

The family will receive friends Friday evening July 3, 2020 from six o'clock until eight o'clock at White Funeral and Cremation Service, 603 Ocean Highway, Bolivia during which time social distancing will take place and mask must be worn.

In lieu of flowers the family ask that memorials be directed to Liberty Hospice, 1120 Ocean Highway West, Supply, NC 28462.

You may offer online condolences at www.whitefuneralserviceupply.com

Family Trees Hold Memories of Those Who Came Before

As the landscape changes around it, a homestead oak preserves those who lived beneath its boughs, so many years ago. When a genealogist adds to his

or her tree, the picture of the past becomes even clearer. While adding names and families to your tree it continues to grow a bit larger in circumference, searching for other clues to whoever once rested in the shade of these homestead oaks.

Take a step back from your family tree and look up into it's tall crown, interlaced with the branches of younger interlopers. In this modern era, we've lost a kind of arboreal vision. We struggle to understand what a truly old tree can be. A middle-aged tree might be 150 years old and trees of that vintage are no doubt impressive. But before saws and plows and gristmills, trees can be centuries old. Standing alone and silhouetted against the sky they are a first glimpse of home.

While working on your homestead oak you may want to hear your relatives' stories, but not sure where to start. One of the best tactics for family history interviews is to ask open-ended questions, rather than ones with a simple yes or no answer. Focus on their memories and experiences and talk about the stories and emotions behind the events.

Here are 20 questions you may use as a springboard for planning an interview.

What's your first memory?
Who's the oldest relative you remember and what do you remember about him or her?
How did your parents meet?
Tell me about your childhood home.
How did your family celebrate holidays when you were a child?
How did you meet your spouse?
Tell me about your wedding day.
Tell me about the day your first child was born.
What were your favorite school subjects?
Tell me about your favorite teacher.
Tell me about some of your friends.
Describe your first job.
What did you do with your first paycheck?
What was your favorite job and why?
Who are some of your heroes?
Where were you when you heard ____? (Add an important historical event)
What was your experience with or opinion of ____? (Add a modern convenience, telephone, television, etc.)

Tell me about some of your favorite songs, books or movies.

Tell me about some of the places where you've been happiest.

What haven't we talked about that you'd like to discuss in the time we have left?

Unfortunately many of us wait to long and never get to talk to our ancestors about their life. Just think how wonderful and how much information we could have gathered from their answers.

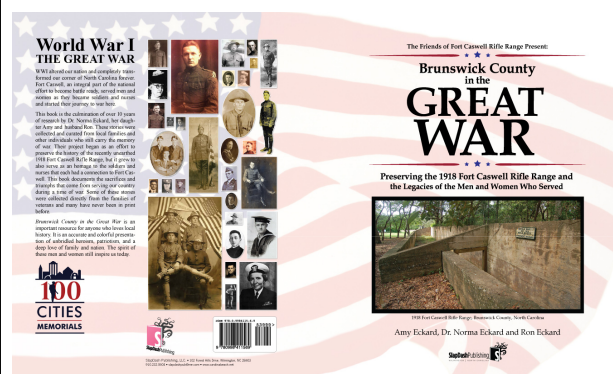
Source: Inspired by an article written by T. Edward Nickens, editor-at-large of Field & Stream Magazine and Family Tree Editors, online.

Update, Fort Caswell Rifle Range

A new book written by Norma, Amy, and Ron Eckard and with help from more than a dozen volunteers will soon be published.

Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men and Women Who Served

The book features over 580 pages and covers the history and preservation of the rifle range, and includes profiles and snapshots of all of the courageous men and women from Brunswick County who served in WWI. Also includes all 718 Brunswick County WWI Veterans with their assignments, and with the "Honored By" names. The authors have uncovered much more than names. In depth stories, letters home from the soldiers, sidebars speaking about their daily life, and much more making this a true local history lesson from our ancestors.



Anyone interested in ordering a copy should contact ***Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range*** at the following email address. Price will be somewhere between \$40 and \$50 dollars, \$5.00 shipping.
fortcaswellriflerange@gmail.com

Brunswick County in the Great War is in the final editing stage and is expected to be available in late September.

All of the members of Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range are volunteers and receive no compensation. After publishing and printing cost, all remaining funds will be used to continue the mission to preserve the Fort Caswell Rifle Range.

Schooner Addie May and the Amuzu

Written by Bobby Williamson, July, 2001

I am not certain of the exact year of our story, but, I am fairly sure that it was sometime in the early to mid 1920's. My grandfather, Horton Milliken, was a skipper on the dead-rise schooner ***Addie Mae***. She was a sailing vessel that made the route from Shallotte to Wilmington via the Cape Fear River, through Southport, of course.

The ***Addie May*** was originally a pilot boat for the Southport river pilots and through a series of ownership changes eventually became one of the Shallotte freight hauling boats. She was one of many "vessels" as they were called, that were competing

for the exportation of naval stores and importation of manufactured goods, to off-beaten coastal locales like Shallotte.

One afternoon, the ***Addie May***, fully loaded with cargo, eased from the docks on the Wilmington waterfront headed for Shallotte. Horton Milliken was the skipper and another local, Irving Hewett, was crew. The two man crew on the freight boats was an economic reality and the crewmen could expect to be paid \$5.00 for a week's work. That's about how long it took to make the round trip from Shallotte to Wilmington, barring any unforeseen events.

Maybe it was good luck or perhaps they had the whole thing planned in advance; at any rate, the ***Addie May*** reached Southport just about dusk. Captain Milliken announced that since it was about dark, and Southport had a PICTURE SHOW, they might as well anchor for the night and go see the show, at the Amuzu. They could continue their voyage first thing in the morning. The two quickly found a suitable anchorage on the waterfront and climbed in the yawl boat for the short row to shore. Whatever show Milliken and Hewett saw that night paled in comparison to the show that they observed upon returning to the docks for the row back to the ***Addie May***.

It has to be remembered that street lights were not as common as they are now, and Capt. Milliken recalled that upon reaching the waterfront, to their utter amazement and horror, there was no ***Addie May***. *Continued on page 8*

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail _____

New: _____ 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 10, 2020

May 11, 2020

August 10, 2020

November 09, 2020

It was a moonless night and everything was pitch black, and the fully loaded boat was GONE. After what seemed like an eternity, the two anxious sailors thought they saw a faint light across the river on the eastern edge of Battery Island. Maybe, just maybe, they surely prayed, it was the kerosene lantern that they had left in the cabin.

Milliken and Hewett jumped in the yawl boat and fairly flew across the river, the tender's bottoms occasionally touching the water's surface. To their great relief, it was the *Addie May*, completely intact except for the anchor chain. Apparently, the chain had broken right on top of tide, and for those familiar with the currents in the Cape Fear at Southport, that was a huge stroke of good fortune. Instead of drifting either up or down stream the *Addie May* drifted straight across the channel quietly lodging herself in the shoals around Battery Island. The *Addie May* did have a "one lung" gasoline motor and they quickly started it and backed her off the shoals and proceeded to Shallotte that very night, without further incident. And nobody ever knew anything had happened, all in the pursuit of seeing a show at the Amuzu.

Editors Note: First printed September 2001 in The Whittler's Bench, Southport Historical Society

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 874
SHALLOTTE, NC 28459



PRICE WILL BE