



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

Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis



MAY MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC

May 09, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on Monday, May 9, 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 2021 issue of the *NEWSLETTER* began the 60th Volume. Volume I, Number 1 was printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletter from September 1961 to February 2021 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 program speaker for the May meeting will be Perry Harlee Sellers. Mr. Sellers is a Brunswick County native and a graduate of West Brunswick High School. His life long career with Pfizer Chemicals (later purchased by the Archer Daniels Midland Company) of Southport began in 1976 and continued until his retirement in June 2019.

Perry will share a brief history of friendship quilts and how he and his wife, Bette Rae Warren, came to be owners of an 80 year old friendship quilt. The quilt contains squares made by members of both his and Betsy's families along with other ladies from the Supply, Bolivia, Ash and Exum communities that include the following families: Milligan, Sellers, Bennett, King, Mintz, Evans, Phelps, Lennon, Fearnside, Ross, Ray, Clemmons and Babson.

Continue next page.

Continued from page 1. Do you have a favorite quilt? Any childhood memories about quilts? Did your grandmother, mother, or aunt attend a quilting bee and help stitch a quilt? Do you have a quilt you would like others to see? Bring it to the meeting for a display.

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. Use the membership application found on page 7 for contact information or changes. Make checks payable to the **Brunswick County Historical Society**.

Early Travel in Brunswick County

The Cape Fear River from the time of its first settlement has been the central theme in the history of Brunswick County. Its presence through the years has touched the lives of the people in one way or another. The mouth of the Cape Fear in early times had gained ill-repute as dangerous, and many mariners had come to dread it. Various reasons may have caused this fear, but whatever the cause the fear was exaggerated. Although difficult according to Governor William Tryon the entrance to the Cape Fear was no more hazardous than that into Charleston harbor.

Prior to the 1820's most vessels which engaged in trade could proceed upstream for a distance of some twenty miles to the mouth of Old Town Creek. At that point a shoal barred the passage of larger vessels. Between Old Town Creek and Wilmington was deep water barred by two more shoal areas. Goods were offloaded onto smaller boats for delivery to Wilmington.

For some years after settlement had begun, the Cape Fear River was without defenses against possible enemy depredations. In July, 1744 Governor Gabriel Johnston called his council together in emergency session. He had received notice that France had joined Spain in war against England, and the purpose of the meeting was to contemplate the defense of North Carolina. It was the general opinion that the Cape Fear River was the most

likely place in the province to be attacked. Consequently, the governor requested the council to choose the most suitable site on the river for defensive installation and to see to the construction of the same as quickly as possible. The council met at Brunswick Town a few days later and after much deliberation in April of the following year, passed an act providing for the construction of "Johnston's Fort," named in honor of the Governor, on the lower part of the river at a place to be agreed upon by the commissioners named in the act. The location selected was on the west bank of the river, within the limits of present-day Southport.

While Fort Johnston was under construction, three sloops appeared off the Cape Fear River bar as night was falling on September 3, 1748. They dropped anchor and awaited the arrival of local pilots to guide them into the river. Only after the pilots boarded the sloops did they learn that two of the vessels were Spanish privateers out of Havana, and the third from South Carolina was being held as a prize. Unable to refuse their services the pilots led the Spaniards into the river, having come to seize the slaves working on the fort. The slaves had been taken upriver to Brunswick Town for a day of rest. The enemy, frustrated and angry, continued upriver towards the unprotected village. Caught by surprise the inhabitants fled from the town leaving it to the invaders. However, the townspeople soon recovered and joined by men of the countryside they staged a counterattack two days later on September 6th and the Spaniards were driven from the town. This attack occurred during a period of truce between England and Spain and the Spanish government later paid compensation for the damages inflicted. In April, 1749 the governor announced that Fort Johnston had been completed, but work continued until 1764 when the General Assembly agreed that the installation was finally completed.

The state hired Hamilton Fulton, an English engineer, to improve navigation on the Cape Fear below Wilmington. By 1823 he had begun his work devising a plan he believed would result in a deeper and more commodious channel for the river. Fulton's plan was to close the channel to the west of Campbell and Clarks islands, forcing the water to flow to the eastward of the islands. He expected nature to do most of the work by the force of the river current. His plan although theoretically cor-

rect was costly and demanding of patience. The old channel had been destroyed, and the new was slow in forming leaving shipping impeded. Little had been accomplished and Fulton's association with the state had come to an end by 1829. The federal government through the Army Engineers assumed control of the work and by 1836 with some modifications, had increased the channel depth to Wilmington to twelve and one-half feet.

In the early days of settlement when roads were scarce or nonexistent, the lesser smaller rivers of the county attracted settlers because of the connection with the outside world. These included Lockwood's Folly and Shallotte rivers flowing out of the interior of the county into the Atlantic ocean. The Waccamaw River flows southward into South Carolina. Also important were the tributaries of the Cape Fear, including Town Creek, Hood, Orton, Allen, and Walden Creek, and the Elizabeth River near the mouth of the Cape Fear River. By law of 1764 the county court was required to keep these streams and rivers clear and was authorized to appoint overseers and workers from among the inhabitants to perform the labor.

As Brunswick County began to grow, settlers made their homes along these navigable streams which served their transportation needs. By the time the American Revolution was approaching there were only two principal roads within the county. One extended across the northern edge of the county beginning in Wilmington, crossed Eagles Island and followed a course on the west side of the Northwest branch to present-day Fayetteville. This gave the Cape Fear region access to the interior of the state. The other road ran from Wilmington and Brunswick Town into Georgetown, South Carolina. Several spurs ran off these two main roads serving settlements and plantations.

Early roads were not roads in today's terms but were little more than wide paths through the woods. The 1764 law required only that they be cleared of trees, stumps, and bushes for a minimum width of twenty feet, and all overhanging limbs be removed. The responsibility for their construction and maintenance was in the court system similar to the rivers and streams. The court was authorized to appoint an overseer for each of the districts into which the county was divided. His duty was to supervise the road work within the districts. The overseer was required to call all males in his dis-

trict between the ages of sixteen and sixty to do the actual work. This work was looked upon as a public service or labor tax. There were exceptions that included providing substitutes, but otherwise those who failed to do their duty were subject to a fine.

As the population of Brunswick County began to grow, there was a need for more public roads, and more were built. During the pre-Civil War period roads reached into almost all populated sections. Perhaps the most important new road was that which connected Smithville and Lockwood Folly, laid out in 1793 along the southern edge of the county. Other roads just as important gave the settlers access to the outside world. Several roads connected the Waccamaw communities with the Georgetown Road and especially the one that continued on to Whiteville.

With the quantity of roads increasing, the quality still remained poor. They were nothing more than unpaved clearings through the forests. Isolated settlers living on private roads some distance from the nearest public road they were required to upkeep began to complain to the courts. In 1858 they requested that the private roads be made public providing them with a more agreeable access to the larger settlements and towns. The request was granted.

Bridges and ferries were also a requirement within the county and were the responsibility of the county court system. If a desired bridge was beyond the capabilities of the overseer and men of the district, the court would enter into a contract for its construction and levy a tax to pay for it. If a proposed bridge because of the width of the stream or some other reason was considered to be too costly for the taxpayers, the court would permit a private individual or company to build the bridge and charge tolls. These toll fees would be subject to the approval of the court. Ferries were usually operated by private individuals but only with the permission of the court which regulated their fees.

Some understanding of the ordeal of travel over these primitive roads is conveyed by the account of Hugh Finlay, who passed through the county on a postal inspection tour. His inspection took place in 1774, but the same conditions continued for many years thereafter. With a companion he approached North Carolina from South Carolina on horseback on the 16th of January. His report reads as written.

“...thro’ heavy sand to a house called the Boundary house, because of the line dividing South from North Carolina runs thro’ the middle of it, on half of the hall is in one Province and the other half in the other.

From this house we continued our journey on a road thro’ a pine barren, the stumps of trees are covered with a rank wither’d grass, which makes riding dangerous, Wills (his companion) at the end of 14 miles was taken with a fit of fever & ague, I was obliged to stop him at a log hut called a Tavern. In a few hours his fit went off, & we proceeded 8 1/2 miles to Lockwood’s Folly, & remained there all night.

Half a mile from the log Tavern, there is a swamp without any causeway, after rain it is very dangerous, the (post) rider is often stop’d here, the road is bad farther. Thus far there seems that no care is taken of the roads in this Province.

17th – Good road 5 miles to a small log house; near it there’s two bad bridges, & a little farther there’s a very bad bridge over a run of water, and a very long bad causeway after it. From the last log house we road 9 miles & then the road turns short off to the right leading directly to Brunswick. We proceeded straight forward thro’ deep sand to a saw mill 7 miles & from thence to a Tavern 2 miles from Wilmington, is 14 miles farther in a deep sandy road, without a single hut, & we met but one Traveller all this day. From this Tavern we see the town of Wilmington at the end of an avenue cut through an island, 2 miles across; this island is in the Cape Fear River, & lyes in the manner her described:

The island is a swamp, the road is laid with logs of trees, many of them are decay’d so that the causeway is quite broken & full of large holes, in many places ‘tis with difficulty that one can pass it on foot, with a horse ‘tis just possible. This public avenue to the most flourishing town in the Province, will induce a stranger to believe that the people in this country have no Laws, such is the report concerning North Carolina. This bad swamp detains the Post.

I passed the first ferry (across Brunswick River) on a small leaky flat, the second (over the Cape Fear at Wilmington) in a large one but very wet.”

Over the next 100 years the conditions of travel in Brunswick County undoubtedly became

better but continued to be a lonely experience. At the time of the Civil War, another traveler passed over the road from Wilmington to Smithville and was impressed with “the bareness of the land, and the unbroken features of the county. Continuing on between Smithville and Lockwood’s Folly he further states that, “the county is sandy, poor and sparsely settled-not a respectable dwelling on the roadside the whole distance traveled.”

Because of the lack of roads in some places during the later part of the 18th thru the 19th centuries and the inferior quality of most that did exist, water transportation remained popular among the people of the county for personal transportation and for transporting their products to market. The smaller streams and rivers were in a sense an extension of the road system. Evidence of this is in the court records directing the overseers to open and clean the Old Town Creek, improving navigation of the Lockwood’s Folly River, and clear the Waccamaw River from the South Carolina line to Lake Waccamaw.

In 1839 a bill was introduced to cut a canal from Lockwood Folly to the Cape Fear but died in the legislature. Another ambitious project came in 1855 with the incorporation of the “Waccamaw Canal and Lumber Company.” Its purpose was to open a connection between the Cape Fear and Lockwood Folly rivers, to improve the inland waterway connection from Lockwood Folly and Little rivers, and to open a canal at some point on that route to the Waccamaw River either by a canal, a plank road, or a railroad. There is no evidence that any of this program was accomplished.

By the mid 19th century the railroad began to traverse Brunswick County with the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad Company. Its purpose was to establish rail service between Wilmington and Manchester, South Carolina and continuing to Charleston and elsewhere. Another railroad, the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford Railroad had been chartered to connect Wilmington with western North Carolina. By 1861 the railroad had been completed through the north end of the county and for some miles westward. These railroads were to be important to the future of Brunswick County but were too late to make much impact in the pre-Civil War Period.

*Sources: The History of Brunswick County North Carolina by Lawrence Lee.
Wilmington StarNews article by Susie Carson.*

W. C. Galloway Remembers

Wilmington Dispatch, November 19, 1916

A good many of my kinsmen, now strangers, dwell in the fine old county of Brunswick. Which is now beginning to come into her own, and having been born and reared there until my 15th year, I have always had a warm affection for her people. I came into the world in the usual way, in the lazy and lovely little village of Smithville, now Southport. Smithville is still a better name, and my range extended by water from the mouth of the Cape Fear River to Fort Fisher, and on land two or three miles back of the town. My circumscribed area, with my tender years, prevented an extended acquaintance with the out-lying territory and its people.

While living at Smithville, beautiful our situation, dear old home town, with its wide streets, magnificent live oaks, fine harbor and salubrious climate, I got beyond my narrow confines a few times. Once, as a little fellow, I went as far towards Supply as the cheery and hospitable home of the Mercers, a well-to-do and prominent family, from which sprung Lieutenant Mercer, a gallant and capable officer of the Confederate Army. When about 11 years of age I stopped one night with old Uncle Neal Galloway, a rich planter, who lived in a two-story house on a high bluff overlooking Lockwood's Folly River, about 1 1/2 miles from the ocean, on my way to see my father, Capt. John W. Galloway, of the Coast Guard, stationed at the short beach just south of the mouth of the above river. Again, at the age of 12, I walked unattended, from Fort Campbell, just below Fort Caswell, to Shallotte, a distance of about 22 miles, and followed the sea beach all the way, except a few miles this side of Shallotte, where I had to take the country road.

At Fort Campbell I had the pleasure of seeing the knightly and handsome Colonel John D. Taylor for the first time. It was in the gloaming when I neared the northern bank of Shallotte River, opposite the little village of Shallotte, the objective

point of my journey. I was in the woods all alone, and though quite tired, there was no grass growing under my feet. Things had a somber and weird look to me in the strange, unknown forest, and I was growing anxious to reach the river before the sable curtains of night entirely enveloped the night.

Another time, as a lad of 13, I went with Phillip Prioleau, of Smithville, a chum of mine, through the country over a deep, sandy road to Kendall rice plantation, the home, then, of the elder Owen Holmes. How vividly I recall Mr. Holmes. As a little child of seven or eight summers I had seen him a Smithville. My father lived just across the street from him. My memory of Mr. Holmes and the family goes back more particularly to that glad day an night at Kendall. I was shy, slender chap, built like a pair of tongs and talked but little, but was observant. What elegant and charming hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, even to little boys, and how courteous and intelligent the children were. I remember the air of refinement and gentility pervading the home, but more particularly the excellent and toothsome dinner served for Philip and I, after a long, slow drive, were assuredly hungry. How delicious was that dinner, and the dessert of blanc mange never tasted better this side of Olympus. We ate more voraciously than circumspect, but how we enjoyed it! I looked at my chum and he looked at me, each with appealing eyes, and we finally had to stop for fear of disgracing ourselves. Mrs. Holmes was a large, amiable, attractive, noble-looking woman with a fair, open, cheery countenance that a boy took kindly to at sight. Mr. Holmes was tall, commanding, rather corpulent, but quite a handsome man, with ruddy complexion and sparkling blue eyes, and possessed a clear-cut musical Voice. He must have been a fine reader.

Philip and I were to go back to Smithville that night on the sloop Annie Bell upon the ebb of the tide, and Mr. Holmes was also to be a passenger. Philip and I were students at a musical school under Dr. Curtis, of classic and hallowed memory, after whom I am named, and when we got into the boat we took seats together aft and began to hum some of the catchy songs we had been taught. Our voices had not changed, he singing soprano and I alto. The mate of the Annie Bell, a good-looking mulatto man, while we were singing a familiar song, interrupted us and said: "Boys, if you do not

object, please let me bass that.” The negro’s expression of bassing the song was quite new and amusing to us. Mr. Holmes sat towards the bow of the boat, and finding we had some little knack of singing and that we would be delayed by the tide, kept us an hour or two rendering many of the old songs, “birthmarked with the joys and woes of the nation.”

That is a long digression. Let me hope its length not hurt it.

Editors Note: Dr. Walter Curtis Galloway, born December 13, 1850 in Smithville was the son of Capt. John W. Galloway, Sr. and Sarah Catherine Davis. In 1864, his father died of yellow fever while serving as a pilot on the blockade runner, Mary Celestia and is buried in Bermuda. His mother is buried in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Dr. Galloway married Kate V. Street about 1876 in Virginia and were the parents of six children. After Kate’s death in 1902 he married Pattie J. Hart on December 29, 1903 in Tarboro, North Carolina. They had no children and Pattie died in 1930. On September 10, 1935 he married Birdie B. Thompson of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Walter died on February 18, 1938 in Gaithersburg, Md. and is buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

The Washington Post February 20, 1938 Dr. Galloway’s Rites to be at Gaithersburg. Former Chief of S.C.V. will be buried Tuesday in the Capital. Funeral Services for Dr. Walter Curtis Galloway, 87, retired physician and former Commander in Chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans will be held at the Gaithersburg, Maryland Episcopal Church at 11am Tuesday. Burial will be in Oak Hill Cemetery in Washing. Dr. Galloway died Friday at his home in Gaithersburg. He has suffered from a heart ailment for two months.

A native of Southport, North Carolina he was the son of Captain J.W. Galloway, noted North Carolina lawyer (Note: His father was not an attorney, but his brother, Captain Swift Galloway was a well know lawyer) and Confederate hero. Dr. Galloway was a graduate of the University of Maryland Medical School in Baltimore and served at one time as President of the Medical Association of North Carolina. For many years he acted as a vestry man of St. James Episcopal Church in Wilmington.



Dr. Walter Curtis Galloway

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Birdie Thompson Galloway and four daughters, Mrs. Charles Yopp of St. Petersburg, Florida: Mrs. May L. Swann, Hampton, Virginia: Mrs. Pearl Murrill, Norfolk, Virginia and Mrs. Sarah Sutherland, Wilmington.

More Bear Stories from the Green Swamp

By Gwen Causey

Another story tells of a ghostly bear. Long ago in horse and buggy days, there were no good roads. All they had or needed were buggy trails. Once a man saddled up his horse to go see his girlfriend. That night when he was returning home, he came to a branch that he had to cross.

His horse stopped and didn’t want to continue across the small stream. He surveyed the area but couldn’t figure out why the horse would not proceed. So, he hit the horse in the side with the heel of his boots. Finally, he got the horse to move.

When the horse jumped the branch, something clawed at him but only struck the saddle. Apparently the “ghost” was trying to pull him off the saddle. The horse bolted on across the water, and raced home.

Later, when he was unsaddling the horse, he saw claw marks on the leather and realized it wasn’t a ghost. Sometime later a bear was killed near the spot where he had been clawed.

Local

The **Southport Historical Society** is providing a zoom link to their meetings for those unable to attend in person. For link information email the SPHS; info@southporthistoricalsociety.org Videos for prior events can be accessed thru their website; www.southporthistoricalsociety.org

The 1950's Census records were released April 1, 2022. They are only released once a decade, 72 years after their original date. However, until the indexed, they will not be very user-friendly. Southport Historical Society will be participating in an effort to review and improve a computer-generated form of the census to help get the final index published faster. Stay tuned for updates.

The SPHS is arranging for all issues of the State Port Pilot newspaper from 1951-1960 to be made available online. Over the next few months, all issues from 1951-1960 will be digitized and added to the collection already available at; digitalnc.org When completed all issues from 1935-1960 will be available to the public for free.

The **Southport Old Jail** is now reopened. Hours for April, May, September, and October are Wednesdays and Saturdays, 12:30-3:30. June, July, and August hours are Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 12:30-3:30. Suggested donation: \$5 per person.



**“May we never forget freedom
isn’t free”**

Author Unknown

May 30, 2022

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 08, 2021

May 10, 2021

August 09, 2021

November 08, 2021

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