



# NEWSLETTER

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**5152 NEW BRITTON LP NW. ASH, NC 28420**  
[brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org)

**VOLUME LXV**

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**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 - 2024 Term

President: James Green  
Vice-President: Gwen Causey  
Acting Secretary: Gwen Causey  
Treasurer: Bob Armour  
Directors:  
Dave Lewis

Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis  
Webmaster: Charles Clemmons  
[brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org)



## **MAY MEETING for the BCHS has been CANCELLED. Next Scheduled Meeting will be August 10, 2026 (See minutes on page 6-7)**

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on Monday, August 10th, 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.

Publication of the *NEWSLETTER* began with Volume I, Number 1, printed September 1961. A complete set of the Newsletters from September 1961 to current dates may be viewed on the BCHS website by selecting "Newsletters" in the right navigation panel. The collection also 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).

## **Addendum to the February 2026 BCHS Minutes**

As a result of the motion by Gwen Causey, the May, 2026 meeting is cancelled and the August, 2026 meeting will be held at the scheduled time. The officers will be prepared to discuss the issues and to hear from those members who are present. All members are invited to attend and brainstorm with the Officers.

Items to be discussed include:

1. New Officers
2. Change of meeting day and time
3. Newsletter
4. Storage of old minutes books
5. Website
6. Social Media to include Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, etc.
7. Need for pictures and stories for the website
8. Financial records to include bank balance

**Note: Please read the February Meeting Minutes found within the Newsletter.**

## Long May She Wave

Before we learned our times tables or how to properly print a sentence, we learned the Pledge of Allegiance. Most of us as members of the Brunswick County Historical Society remember being in the first grade and standing at attention before the American Flag in the corner of our classroom with our hands over our heart and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

We didn't yet know all the states, we couldn't yet tell time, but we knew how to go quite. We knew how to press our palms flat against our hearts, how to keep our eyes on the flag and recite the words together. And still today we always begin our BCHS meetings by standing, placing a hand over our heart or Veterans rendering a hand military salute as we recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. This is a tradition the membership has observed for many years.

The Pledge of Allegiance is a patriotic, recited verse that promises loyalty to the United States of America and its founding principles of liberty and justice for all. Written in 1892 by Baptist Minister Francis Bellamy, it is often recited in schools, government meetings, and public events.

The first version was written in 1885 by Captain George Thatcher Balch, a Union Army officer who later wrote a book on how to teach patriotism to children in public schools. In 1892 Francis Bellamy revised Balch's verse as part of a magazine promotion surrounding the World's Columbian Exposition, which celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas.

There have been a few changes over the years. On **June 14, 1923** the National Flag Conference, sponsored by the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, changes "my Flag" to "the flag of the United States of America," in part to ensure that recent immigrants had the US



Dave Lewis, 2026

Flag in mind and not the flag of their nation of origin. On **June 22, 1942** Congress formally recognizes the Pledge and includes it in the federal Flag Code. That same year on **December 22** Congress changes the official manner of delivery to placing the right hand over the heart; the previous stance known as the "Bellamy Salute" of the right hand extended from the body with the palm upward, toward the Flag was too reminiscent of the Nazi salute. Again on **June 14, 1954**, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approves the congressional resolution adding the words "under God" to the Pledge. The Knights of Columbus and other groups, as well as Eisenhower himself, had lobbied for the change.

America is now in its 250<sup>th</sup> year and on July 4, 2026 our nation will commemorate and celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The journey toward this historic milestone is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our nation's past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond.

As we drive on the highways and byways of Brunswick County and the Cape Fear Region, we do not have to travel far to see our flag so proudly waving against the bright blue sky. Hanging on a staff off the front porches or flying atop a flag pole in the yard, maybe attending a sporting event at one of the local recreation parks or school gymnasium we see the our nation colors. Flags overlooking cemeteries, displayed in front of churches, schools and government buildings, or even in front of private businesses, such as the large flag you see driving through Leland. Crossing Brunswick River between Leland and Wilmington, a flag can be seen from the highway, and many flags are on display in Southport during their Fourth of July Festival. Last year the Battleship North Carolina in Wilmington, 250 flags were raised to commemorate the anniversaries of the Marine Corps and the Navy.

Two hundred and fifty years is a long time, and much history has come and gone. In our area we have heard tobacco warehouses ring out with auctioneers' chants and then fall silent. Textiles have given way to tech, fields turned to factories or residual areas. And still we raise our hands to our hearts. We were children when we first spoke those words, but here we are, 250 years on, still rising to our feet. Still looking up. Still believing that this

sandy soil and salt air is worth our full attention, our full gratitude, and our full devotion.

In addition to the entire State of North Carolina, Brunswick County and the Cape Fear region played an integral role in our country's ride toward independence. That history still lives all around us – even if we can't see it. Patriotism is still visible across our region in the flags we fly.

In Pender County, Moores Creek National Battlefield tells the story of the Patriot victory that took place there in February 1776. This victory in time forces some 3000 British soldiers floating on the Cape Fear River to go elsewhere after an ineffective raid on the old colonial capital, Brunswick Town. This was the site of one of the first acts of rebellion. As part of the Stamp Act struggle over a tax on documents and printed materials, hundreds of people confronted Governor Tryon at his home here in 1766 – seven years before the Boston Tea Party.

Just off Broad Street in the little town of Elizabethtown in Bladen County is a spot called "Tory Hole," the slope where many retreating Loyalists launched themselves into a deep ravine near the Cape Fear River during a surprise attack by Patriot on August 27, 1781.

Other lesser known events happened in 1776 in Brunswick County. One such event took place along the Cape Fear River when the Brunswick County Militia stationed at Old Brunswick was moved about a mile up river where a landing party of British soldiers was coming ashore. They were ordered to return to their vessel and not to land, in which they immediately retreated. Later this same Militia heard gun fire and found some of the British soldiers carrying logs to their boat at anchor in the Elizabeth River. The Militia overtook the British, who then surrendered and took their prisoners back to Old Brunswick. Also during the year 1776 the Lockwood Folly Militia were marched from the Lockwood Folly Bridge toward Wilmington rendering service to protect the Whigs citizens and their property against the Tories. Upon reaching Wilmington they remained in camp guarding the town. Another incident occurred when the Lockwood Militia again was involved in a skirmish at Bacon Inlet, a cut through Holden Beach. The British had come ashore killing cattle and other stock for food. After the Militia fired upon the enemy they retreated to their boats. The Lockwood Militia

was then marched through the county and up to the White Marsh, the Brown Marsh, and on to Elizabethtown in Bladen County.

For six months in late 1780 and early 1781, North Carolina was the center of the Revolutionary War. Wilmington was occupied by the British for most of 1781 turning the town into a garrisoned depot to support Lord Cornwallis' operation in North Carolina before evacuating Wilmington in November 1781 following the British surrender at Yorktown.

This anniversary year, you can explore the entire state by walking in the footsteps of a group of freedom-seekers. Not soldiers fighting distant battles in faraway lands but everyday people, our own ancestors fighting for their freedom whose stories we can discover in our own backyard.

**Sources:** 1. *Editorial by Elizabeth Hudson, April 2026; Our State Magazine.*

2. *Pledge of Allegiance Adopted by Congress: "On This Day, June 22," Posted by Kristin Miller on Wednesday June 22, 2016; [www.gilderlehrman.org/news](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/news).*

3. *Pledge of Allegiance; Wikipedia.*

4. *The Pledge of Allegiance: Origins, Changes, 'Under God'; History.com.*

5. *The Pledge of Allegiance, Historic Documents; USHistory.org.*

6. *Statement from Jobe Holden, resident of Brunswick County; State of North Carolina, Brunswick County: Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, March Term, 1835.*

7. *On the Path to Freedom, by Jim Morgan; Our State Magazine, April 2026.*

## **The Origin of Winnabow and the Winnabow Plantation**

Winnabow is an unincorporated community located along U.S. Route 17 near Wilmington and Leland in Brunswick County and is known for its charm and peaceful atmosphere. It is primarily a rural, developing area reaching many miles to the west bank of the Cape Fear River. Featuring farmland, forests, and new residential subdivisions, along with historic sites like Brunswick Town/Fort

Anderson, Orton and Winnabow Plantations.

Helen Taylor wrote on July 9, 1999 in her "The Origin of Winnabow" that "the name Winnabow is not known. We do know that the Winnabow Post Office was named for the Winnabow Plantation." Other sources state that the name "Winnabow" is derived from a Native American word with a lost meaning.

Winnabow Plantation is located on the Southwest side of State Road 1521, known as Governors Rd., along the edge of Rices Creek. It was built approximately in the 1730's and was said to be one of the prettiest plantations in the early settlement days of the Lower Cape Fear Region. This plantation site originally gained prominence when it was owned by Nathaniel Rice and later became incorporated into Governor Russell's Plantation a few hundred feet further south of S.R. 1521.

Nathaniel Rice was one of the most prominent men who ever settled within the Town Creek area in colonial days. He came to the Town Creek section along with John Baptista Ash and a number of other men who became prominent in the colonial life of the lower Cape Fear area when they arrived from Bathe, England about 1727.

Information found in the Colonial Records indicated that Nathaniel Rice was appointed Secretary of the Province in 1729. In 1734 he became justice of the peace for the New Hanover Precinct and a justice for the Kings Court. A few years later he became a member of Governor Burrington's Council of which he became president. Also Rice served by appointment as a vestryman in St. Philip's Parish and he was appointed by the Assembly of North Carolina in 1745 to erect a fort which was named Fort Johnston in Smithville, now known as Southport.

Rice was involved in a controversy with Royal Governor Burrington over the sale of lands in the colony. Other conflicts with the early governor developed when Rice and others compiled a list of complaints against Burrington and sent them to the Duke of Newcastle, one of the King's Secretaries of State. The list was quite lengthy and the accusations against the governor and crown were strong. He was branded a revolutionary when he tried to get more rights and justice for the New Hanover Precincts (before the formation of Brunswick County).

At the death of Governor Burrington in 1734, Nathaniel Rice, who was Secretary of the Council,

became Governor and took his oath of office at Edenton on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 1734, which office he held until Gabriel Johnston was sworn in as Governor at the town of Brunswick in November of 1734. On the death of Governor Johnston on July 17, 1752, Rice became acting Governor of North Carolina since he was ranking Councilor and he held this office until his death in January 1753. He is buried on his plantation.

Also occupying this plantation site was Governor Daniel L. Russell who used a great deal of the Rice house into the building of his mansion a few hundred yards away. He also incorporated all of Nathaniel Rice's land holding on the fork of Town Creek into his plantation site about 1840. Russell owned many slaves and likely had them build the house and operate his naval stores operation.



Daniel Russell House NC State University Library Collection

The Governor Russell's plantation house can still be seen at this location which is in fine repair, illustrating some of the colonial features of that era. Although numerous outbuildings once stood on the plantation, only a single nineteenth-century farm building remains.

- Sources:**
1. *"The Origin of Winnabow" by Helen Taylor, July 9, 1999.*
  2. *"Historic Sites in Brunswick County, second draft", January 1976, Prepared by Brunswick County Planning Department.*
  3. *"The Historic Architecture of Brunswick County North Carolina," a comprehensive survey of historic resources. Authorized by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, 2014.*

## Gause Landing, Famous in Early Brunswick County

Although it has never received much notice of its historical value, Gause Landing on the coast some eight or ten miles below Shallotte was memorable in past days. Before the plantation years of 1721-1774 both pirates and Indians were virtually eliminated from the Ocean Isle Beach area. Most of the pirates were hanged in 1720 in Charleston and most of the Indians had left the area during the Tuscarora Indian War. Therefore, in the 1720's, the area south of Shallotte was ripe and vacant for pioneers to begin settlements. Families such as the Gause family, the Frink family, the Brooks family and the Moore family settled here and started large plantations. Unlike most settlers in the 13 original colonies in the early 1700's who were poor and just trying to survive on a small plot of land, the people who settled here in what was then, Carolina, were from nobility and wealthy families. They brought with them slaves and capital. Mr. William Gause was one such plantation owner during the 1700's. North and South Carolina officially separated into distinct colonies in 1712 due to geographic, political, and economic differences but only became separate royal colonies in 1729. Brunswick County was then part of New Hanover until 1764.

In 1751, William Gause, Sr. purchased land and established the Gause Plantation. Situated along Gause Landing Road, the Gause Plantation encompassed thousands of acres reaching from the ocean inland. He built a two-story house on Gause Landing Road atop a high hill overlooking a channel separated from the Atlantic Ocean by a few hundred feet of marshland and what today is Ocean Isle Beach. The Gause Manor house was described as "a great and solid two-story affair, built entirely of heart lumber."



William Gause married Mary Ann Bryan about 1735 in South Carolina and they had five sons. William Sr. died on February 15, 1761. The Gause Plantation prospered and had more than 200 slaves working the land. The plantation then became known as Gause Manor. Three of William and Mary's children, William Jr., John, and Charles fought in the Revolutionary War in which William Jr. supposedly lost his leg while serving alongside George Washington.

President George Washington visited Gause Manor on one of his horseback Southern tours. In his diary Washington wrote: "Breakfasted at William Gause's, a little out of the direct road 14 miles (from the last stop). After then, we crossed the boundary line between North and South Carolina about half after 12 o'clock which is 10 miles from the Gause Manor." The entry was dated, "Wednesday, April 27, 1791" with Washington's final destination on this tour to be Georgetown, SC. A NC historical marker on Highway 17 acknowledges this part of Ocean Isle history.

Another historical visitor was Bishop Francis Asbury, a circuit-riding Methodist preacher who road his way to fame up and down the Coastal Carolinas for 50 years and often stayed at the Gause Manor. In his diary he wrote that he had preached at William Gause's Manor House in 1801. The Bishop goes on to say: "At this great house, most pleasantly situated on the Brunswick Coast at Gause Town, where I had looked forward to again greeting my once dear friend, William, death had stolen a march on me."

Later, Bishop Asbury came back to Gause Manor where he writes: "I lodged at John Gause's. Our host is a local minister and I trust a dear child of God."

One of the most unusual burial arrangements in the history of Brunswick County is the Gause tomb and final resting place of John Julius Gause, Jr., which is located in the woods a few miles from the site of the old Gause Manor at Gause Landing. The burial vault is of masonry construction with brick walls 18 inches thick. The bricks were brought from England by the Gause family for building the vault as well as other building and structures they owned. This is how Brick Landing got its name.

The tomb is one of the last vestiges of this prominent Brunswick County family. It was lying nearly forgotten amidst a tangle of undergrowth

and overgrown with bushes and trees until Mr. J.R. Robinson found his family's old burial plot and began the cleanup and restoration process in 2015. Surrounding the tomb are unnumbered and unmarked graves and now flying over the restored and fenced in tomb site are three flags; the United States Flag, the North Carolina State Flag, and a 25 star 1836 American Flag.

- Sources:** 1. "The Plantation Years in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina," by Vern Bender, January 10, 2026.  
2. "Gause Landing Famous in Early History of County", BCBS Newsletter, August 1978.  
3. "Family William Gause", By Dr. Fred David and Vern J. Bender, bmggen.com.

### ***Brunswick County in the 1940's, According to the Newspaper***

**New Brunswick Roads:** New roads from the main highway to the waterway are being constructed at Holden Beach, where creosoted docks were built last year for yachts and other vessels. Dr. R. H. Holden said that the extension of the main road from the ferry down through the whole of Holden Beach property and through the Robinson and Bellamy Beaches on the same strand is being planned by other property owners.  
July 15, 1948.

**Brunswick Nurse:** Miss Barbara Adams was appointed as public nurse in Brunswick County to succeed Mrs. Lou H. Smith, a veteran of 25 years service.  
July 16, 1948.

**New Commissioners:** Three new county commissioners for Brunswick County were sworn in at Southport. New officials are George B. Ward, Waccamaw Township; Benjamin Williams, Shalotte Township; R. L. Rabon, Northwest Township.  
December 7, 1948.

**New County Agent:** A. S. Knowles entered his duties as county farm agent of Brunswick County this week. Knowles moved his family to Supply from Hoke County where he had served as county agent for ten years.  
February 8, 1949

**Radios For Wardens:** The trucks of the forest fire

Wardens in Brunswick County are now equipped with radios with the controlling system being at the Riegel fire tower near Makatoka. The fire towers are also linked up with their own telephone system.  
May 6, 1949.

### **Family History Quote**

I am bound to them through I cannot look into their eyes or hear their voices. I honor their history, I cherish their lives. I will tell their story I will remember them for I am the result of the very love, struggle, sacrifice, and journey of thousands.

*Author Unknown*

### **BCBS Minutes**

February 9, 2026

The Brunswick County Historical Society meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by the President, James Green. There were 9 members and 4 visitors in attendance.

The President led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The President extended a welcome to all in attendance.

The President thanked Dave Lewis for another excellent Newsletter.

The November 10, 2025 minutes were reviewed by the Secretary.

The Treasurer reported a bank balance of \$8960.50  
Note: As of April 17, 2026.

The President announced the following events at Brunswick Town State Historic Site: Dancing in Defiance, February 21: Rice Festival, March 4: Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, April 25: Women in Brunswick, May 2. Also, March 27 Marker Dedication by the Brunswick Town DAR Chapter at the Courthouse. April 25, Old Bridge Historical Society Strawberry and Wine Festival at the park in Sunset Beach, NC.

There was no unfinished business.

Under new business the President spoke about the Society needing new leadership and asked those present to be willing to serve as an officer. Extensive discussion followed with several members offering their opinion and suggestions.

A motion by Gwen Causey that we take a break from in-person meetings (May and August). At the August meeting the Society Officers will meet and reconsider the future of the Society. Seconded by Dave Lewis. Unanimous vote to approve.

Members are encouraged to attend the August meeting to give their suggestions and ideas related to the Society.

The program was given by Brett Riggs. He spoke of the early history of Brunswick County as a place people should avoid or pass through despite the best efforts to survive.

Motion to Adjourn.

Members present: Jimmy Green, Gloria Sullivan, Gwen Causey, Richard Hollenbeck, Dave Lewis, Ann Bokelman, Judy Holden, Yvonne Brown, David Holden.

Visitors present: Brett Riggs, Kimberly Riggs, Samuel Riggs, Victor Guarino.

Gwen Causey, Acting Secretary

## Area Events

**May 14, 2026:** Sandbar Lecture Series: **“The Global Impact of America’s Independence.”** Museum of Coastal Carolina, Ocean Isle Beach. Time - 12:00 noon. Lecture is free with museum admission.

**May 25, 2026:** Check your local listings for **Memorial Day** events in your area.

**June 26 - July 4, 2026:** **“North Carolina 4th of July Festival/Southport and Oak Island.”** One of the state’s largest and longest-running Independence Day celebrations. Festivities span a week of patriotic events.

**July 15, 2026:** **“Traveling America 250 Exhibit.”** Rourk Branch Library in Shallotte will welcome the traveling exhibit presented by the State Archives of North Carolina. See the “North Carolinian’s Fight for Independence: The Soldier’s Experience.”

**July 25, 2026:** **“18th Century Dentistry.”** North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport. Explore this often undiscussed aspect of colonial life. A free event from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*Check your local media and look for many other 250th Year Anniversary Events taking place within North Carolina and especially around Wilmington, Brunswick County, and the Lower Cape Fear Region.*

### ***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 **Note: Please include a \$10.00 fee for printing and USPS mailing.**

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

Mail this form with your check to: 5152 New Britton LP Rd., Ash, NC 28420

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

Email: [davelewis@atmc.net](mailto:davelewis@atmc.net)

**CALENDER OF EVENTS**

BCHS Meetings: February 9, 2026

August 10, 2026

November 09, 2026



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