



NEWSLETTER

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

VOLUME LIX

NOVEMBER 2020

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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 & 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

BECAUSE OF THE CONCERN FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR MEMBERS, VISITORS, AND GUEST, THE NOVEMBER MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELED.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2021.

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 November 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 for the year 2021 will be payable by February 2021 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 changes. Make checks payable to the **Brunswick County Historical Society**.

Per our treasurer, Bob Armour, as of October 13, 2020 the BCHS has a balance of \$1427.02 in the checking account.

John Wescott: The Last Surviving Confederate Veteran of Brunswick County

By ccwinslow394 / Sept. 3, 2020 / Brunswick, Confederate affiliation.

Author: Lewis Hardee, Jr. (edited and vetted by Cheri Todd Molter.

Source: North Carolina Civil War & Reconstruction History Center.

Note from Cheri Todd Molter: John Wescott was born on August 28, 1845 to Samuel and Eliza Wescott (also spelled “Wescoat” in some records) of Brunswick County, North Carolina. After the war started, he served the Confederacy, joining Galloway’s Company of the North Carolina Coast Guards. According to his obituary, Wescott also served in the Confederate land forces, but neither of the two compiled military records found for men named “John Wescott” seemed to fit with the other verifiable details of his life: Both soldiers were older than this Wescott, and one died while being held prisoner at Point Lookout (he served in the 30th Inf., NC Troops), and the other was confined at Fort Columbus, New York, through March 1865 (he was a 1st Lt. who served in Batty K, 2nd light Inf., NC Troops). However, not knowing the exact regiment Wescott served in should not diminish the value of the story below. John Wescott died on March 17, 1936, and according to many sources, at the time of his death, Mr. Wescott was the last surviving Confederate veteran of Brunswick County.

Wescott mentions a traveling companion, “Mr. S. P. Tharp” in his memoirs. I believe that gentleman might be Samuel P. Tharp, who was also from Brunswick County. Tharp enlisted in the Confederate Army on July 18, 1861 as a Second Lieutenant. He was commissioned into Company C, 30th Infantry, North Carolina Troops.

Introduction: The following is an excerpt from an article that was published by Star News Onling on Sept. 20, 2006 entitled “Kindness greeted soldiers returning home from War.” The article features John Wescott’s writings about his experiences on his journey home from the war.

These are the memories of John Wescott, the last surviving veteran of Brunswick County at the time of his death in 1936. We do not know when it was written but it was probably very soon after his return home. The article was provided by one of his direct descendants, Lewis J. Hardee, Jr. of Southport and New York City.

Homecoming from the War: After General Johnston surrendered near Bentonville, there was quite a bustle, making preparation for going home. Those of us whose home was in Brunswick County, after laying our guns and cartridge boxes aside and placing our blankets on our shoulders, headed for home.

We didn’t travel far before we reached the stage road leading from Fayetteville to Georgetown. It was in such bad repair that it was impossible for vehicles to travel on it, but it served to good purpose for pedestrians and we made good use of it. The people living near the road were kind to us, giving us food and shelter, so we traveled until we reached Fayetteville. Mr. S. P. Tharp and I were a distance behind our comrades, he being unable to travel fast.

On arrival at the old town, was a dwelling near the road, and a well of water stood in the backyard. Being very thirsty, Mr. Tharp asked me to take our canteens to the well and fill them, which I did.

I saw signs of life on the premises, but on going back to the gate where Mr. Tharp was waiting the lady of the house opened the front door and asked what we wanted. We told her a morsel to eat if she had it to spare. She told us to come in, we did so, and sat on the steps of the porch. She invited us into the dining room, but we asked to be excused. She went into the dining room and soon returned with two well-filled plates of excellent food such as we had not seen for quite a while.

After satisfying our appetites we could not consume all the food. We told her if she would give us a bit of paper we could take what was left for our supper. She went into the dining room and soon returned with a well-packed lunch, more than enough for our supper. After talking with her awhile and thanking her for her kindness, we

bade her goodbye and went in search of our comrades.

After searching the riverfront we found they had secured a boat shed for our quarters. After supper we talked about the best way home, thinking we would have to travel on foot. We spread our blankets down for the night.

The next morning two gentlemen, whose home was in Wilmington, told us they had a large row boat and gave us passage down the river. We gladly accepted the offer and went on board the little craft. Loosing the mooring, we started down the river. Having a strong current in our favor, and two oars that we used alternately, we made good time, far better than we could have come on foot.

We admired the large growth of magnolia trees, which grew on each side of the river, covered with white blossoms, exhaling an aroma far more agreeable than that of gunpowder we inhaled on the battlefields. Having some good singers on the boat we would occasionally strike out on some familiar song, which made the time pass more cheerfully.

Thus we glided down the Cape Fear, arriving in Wilmington late in the afternoon. Those of us whose homes were in Brunswick County asked to be landed on the west side of the river, which was granted. After thanking the gentlemen for their kindness we headed homeward.

There being no road leading from the river we traveled through the woods. Night soon overtaking us, we camped for the night.

On waking the next morning we were told by the noise of chickens that we were near someone's house, and going in the direction of the noise, we soon arrived at a small farmhouse. Some of the inmates had just returned with a pail of milk, which they divided with us. Filling our canteens, we thanked them and continued our journey. We soon arrived at the home of Mr. W. W. Drew. They were through with breakfast but had enough left over, which with our milk furnished a good breakfast. After talking with them awhile we continued our journey. Having some relatives living several miles from there, we called on them. We received a

hearty welcome and they insisted that we spend the night, which we did.

Next morning good old uncle hitched his mule to the wagon and sent us within a few miles of our house. After thanking the young driver and bidding him goodbye, we continued our journey.

Annie D. & Ancrum Jethro Benton

Editors Note & Source: A story written by Diane Fuller of Pocatelo, Idaho. Diane's fond memory of her grandparents from Brunswick County, while they were living in Wilmington, brings to life their wonderful relationship. First printed in the Bent Gras Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 17, 1994. Courtesy of David and Judy Benton Holden. Copied as written.

Annie Benton was the sweetest grandmother I knew. All her children and grandchildren thought the world of her. She was always there to help in time of need, a truly compassionate person. The things you will read about in this paper is what I remember about her. She used to call me Dianesey.

She and granddaddy always seemed to be on the move. I remember them moving at least 6 times when I was a child. When we lived on South Second Street they lived in the middle of the block down from us. Also on that block my Uncle David and Aunt Amelia and their two children, Johnny and Sharon, lived. We were lucky when we were kids because we always had lots of cousins in town to play with. We kids used to play under grandma's front porch in the yellow dirt while mom and grandma visited and snapped green beans or prepared butter beans and blackeye peas. Sometimes we used to get to sweep her front yard, with a home made broom. She had pretty white sand around her flowers. In the south, near the coast, we didn't have grass, just lots of sand. While on South Second, grandma had baby chicks. They were so cute until they grew up and became chickens. Then my mom and grandpa would go out and kill them and put them in the freezer. We never lacked for chicken to eat.

Grandma and mom were always sewing. I watched them as they put together a quilt. They would sew

material onto paper, then into a pattern for the quilt. After it was sewed all together they would lay it on a bed and tie it with yarn. She used to make me skirts to wear and aprons for herself to use. All this was done on a treddle sewing machine using your feet to provide all the power by pushing the treddle bar up and down.

She told me when she was a little girl they would put white sand down on wooden floor then sweep it up. Then they would have to walk across the floor barefooted. If there was any sand left then they would have to sweep the floor again. She told of how they would go to the beach and put ocean water into barrels, then let them sit until all that was left was salt. It is hard for me to understand how this was actually done. Anyway, they then use the salt for drying meat and everyday uses. They lived in the country and had to walk about 12 miles to the ocean. She always used rain water that she caught, and washed her hair. She said it made it really soft. I believed her, because she would let us comb her hair for her. She would braid it, take strands of hair that was in the comb, and tie the ends of her hair like we do with rubber bands today. Then she would wind her hair around her head. She always had shinny dark brown hair.

As a little girl she and her friends used to have to ride in a wooden boat to cross a stream to get to school. Later on they built a bridge to cross. She said that grandpa and the other guys used to hide under the bridge and look up the girls dresses as they walked over. Also, that grandpa used to chew tobacco. When he would go to church he would take it out of his mouth and hide it over the door. Then when he left church he would take it and chew it again.

Grandpa was always in a wheelchair as long as I can remember. He had lost a leg to diabetes. Uncle A. J. built him a ramp so he could get outside. I used to take him for walks. He sure was a brave sole because children are fearless. We used to have to cross 3rd. Street and the cars were always coming as it was a four lane freeway. If it scared him he never let on, but it sure scared me. While they were living at South Third we, the girl cousins, used to sit on their porch and do some major flirting with the guys. The only problem was that most of them

were our cousins. Of course we were teenagers at this time. To shift back a little, while at South Third I used to go shopping with grandma. Once in awhile we would catch a bus and go downtown. It cost 10 cents for a bus ride. Sometimes we would have to go to the bread house. At that time you could get 5 loafs of bread for \$1.00. Shopping with grandma was great. She would always buy 2 lbs. of fresh ground A&P coffee, it smelled so good. Then she would get grandpa his favorite Golden Delicious Apples, along with three dozen brown eggs, fresh fish (spot or flounder) which was always wrapped in paper. But nothing made grandma happier than her grape soda. Then, I of course, would pull the food home in the little red wagon.

To heat their home they had an oil stove in the front room. Then in the main room they kept a Franklin wood burning stove. Grandma always had a ton of coal she used in it. I helped take out the ashes sometimes. Grandpa always sat by the window so he could watch the traffic go by, while listening to the radio. Funny he would never allow a television in his house even after he won one at the grocery store. Him being a preacher had lots to do with it. They had separate bedrooms. I was scared to go into grandpa's room. I was afraid of his wooden leg that was in the closet. In grandma's room it was fun. Behind her bed was her favorite things. I loved playing with her shawls. One was white and the other black. Sleeping was fun. Grandma had a bed with a hole in the middle where she had slept so long. When we would go and visit them I would get to sleep with her. We used to play a game where we would see who would get 10 cars first. Being on a busy street it wasn't hard to play the game. She also kept a pee-pot by her bed so she didn't have to go very far to the bathroom. In the old days it came in pretty handy because one would have to go outside to the privy behind the house.

On Saturdays and old black man would come down the road and sell his vegetables. He would sing out "*fresh collard greens, mustard greens, turnip greens, hot boiled peanuts, and new potatoes*". Grandma would always try to buy something from him. Eating at her house was fun. We used to get into her apple butter and make sandwiches. She was always cooking okra, grits, and bacon which grandpa liked to put the bacon grease on toast.

When it was time for us to go home from our visit, grandma would give the kids a quarter so we could buy us a little something. I always bought a coke and peanuts. They weren't rich people but good people. Grandpa with his long nose and glasses. Grandma being only about 5'3" was full of love. She had bunions on her feet and always had to cut her shoes so her toes wouldn't hurt. Her poor little fingers were crippled with arthritis but her crochet work of grapes was always beautiful.

Diane Bedwell Fuller

More on Ancrum Jethro and Annie Benton, by John Benton with Diane Fuller.

Ancrum Jethro Benton was a pastor in the Pentecostal Holiness Church. He suffered from diabetes and, later in life, lost both of his legs because of complications arising from this disease. Diane recalls, "I remember him always being in a wheel chair and him having us push him all over the place". Her article goes into more detail on this subject. Annie and Jethro attended the same church and school which was located in Leland, North Carolina. They had all but two of their children in Brunswick County. They moved to Harnett County, North Carolina to preach and Alene was born while they were living there. They then moved to Wilmington where they lived on South 3rd Street. Ancrum Jethro was in a nursing home in Harnett County when he died.

Annie moved to Myers Street in Wilmington following the death of Ancrum. She continued to live there until her death.

From the Journal of John Nelson Bennett, 1834-1864

Transcribed as written.

On the second day of August 1853 I commenced school at Smithville, and on that day I recited my first lesson in English Grammar, although I had then through Geography and Arithmetic. The school continued about three months when Mr. Bent the principal was elected president of Wayne Female College, and left for Goldsboro.

My term in Smithville was short, thought it was a

very important one to me. It was the first time that I ever lived more than a few days at the time, out of my immediate neighborhood. I have always found the manner and customs of the people to change very materially in settlements as much as fifteen or twenty miles apart; and Smithville being thirty-six miles from the place where I had formerly resided; and being moreover a fashionable village, it was very different indeed from the retired country place where I had always lived. I made a good many acquaintances, and formed some friendships which are still standing. In this school I made considerable progress in English Grammar, went through a portion of the last part of Arithmetic, and commenced the study of Latin, Philosophy, and Algebra. When the term was up I went before the examining board for a certificate to teach a common school. I made out to stand the examination and get a certificate though the board were not very strict. I went out on Royal Oak Swamp, and took a school for three months for 81 dollars (27 dollars per month) paying 7 dollars per month for board. I had a very pleasant time in this school, and I believe I gave general satisfaction to my employers. When I finished this, my first school, I went back to Smithville to go to school to Mr. Sewell, who was to commence in the Academy in a few days. I went to him about two months and a half, but I did not much like him, though he had some few excellent traits as a teacher. He was a graduate of Dickinson College, Pa. I left that school and went to Shallotte intending to teach another school in the Fall. I then went to school two week to Mr. Thomas G. Rogers, and old Baptist preacher, who had a fair education, though he was not a very good teacher. I then went to Columbus County near where the Seven Creeks intersects with Wackamaw River, and commenced a free school there. I was unpopular there, for I inflicted punishment for so many trivial things and the employers were so unreasonable in opposite direction that we got along badly. We had some quarreling and a disagreeable time generally. My employers and myself were both to blame. I taught there two months and a half, and then went to the neighborhood of Whiteville and taught a two month school there where I got along very smooth by giving general satisfaction. I then went to Shallotte and went to school to Mr. Rogers five weeks. I then went to Shallotte and went to school to Mr. Rogers five weeks. I next went over Lockwood's

Folly River, and took a free school there for three months about thirteen miles from Smithville. In this school I gave satisfaction and was very much beliked by the neighbors. I then went home, and having nothing else to do I commenced cooping for A. B. Bennett and made a hundred barrels. Getting tired of this I again left home and went to school three months to Mr. Rogers at Cool Run. I next took a subscription school for three months on Middle Swamp for which part of the money is still and always will be due me. I then came to Town Creek and taught a free school for three months at Rehoboth Church, at the price of One hundred dollars. In this place I was liked very much. I then went home, and from there to Little River, S.C. where I went to school to Mr. Rogers one month. This was in the Summer of 1856. I was now tired of staying in this vicinity, and determined to go off a greater distance from home, and being persuaded by a few of its friends I made choice of Wake Forest College. It was about this time that I first commenced keeping a journal. The one great object that I then had in view was to educate myself. Unlike very many young men I, at that time had no desire to marry soon, though I was by no means unsusceptible to the charms of the fair sex.

In July 1856 I started to Wake Forest College. At that time I had never been further from home than Wilmington. I took the cars at the latter named place in the evening and arrived at Goldsboro before dark, stayed all night there, left on the train the next morning for Raleigh where I soon arrived and remained nearly a day and night. I then went on to the College distant sixteen miles from Raleigh. I could not enter the Freshman class, so I joined the Senior Preparatory which was quite humbling to my pride. My principal studies were Latin and Greek, (Caesar and Virgil and Greek Lessons.) In four weeks after my arrival I joined the Philomathesian Society, which rendered me unpopular with a portion of the students, as the Euxelian Society thought they had some claims on me. I stayed there one session, five months, and learned a great deal of the ways of the world, but I did nothing extra with my text books. I took up the bad habit of reading Latin by the help of a translation, a practice I have never followed since, having learned by experience that it is very injurious to students though it was then extensively followed at that College. I

read a great deal while at Wake Forest, spending about as much time in reading as I did with my text-books. A practice which is also very injurious to the student. Taking Wake Forest altogether, I did not much like it, though it was in some respects a good institution, and it has since been better than it was while I was there. I returned to Brunswick a few days before Christmas of the same year, and took a three month school on Lockwoods Folly. In this school I started four students in Latin, my first experience in teaching that language. I finished this school and taught another of three months about five miles distant from the former.

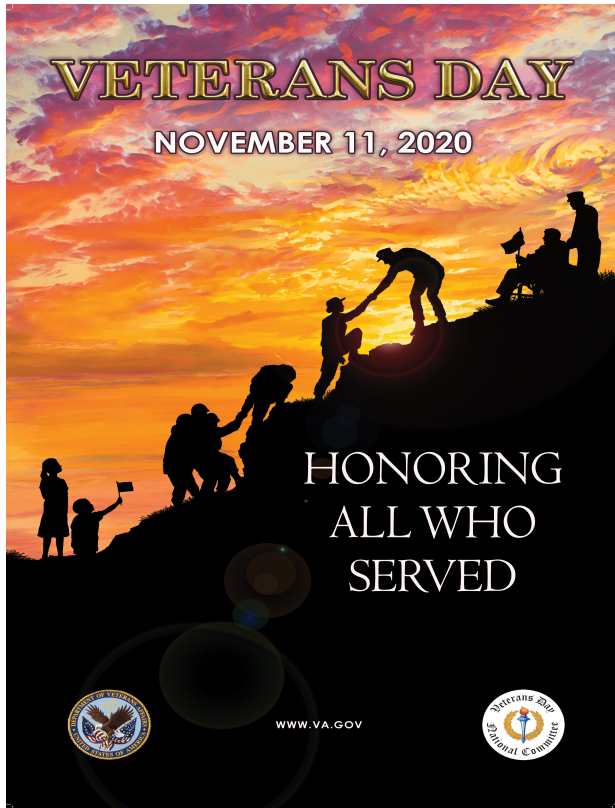
I next went to Smithville and entered a High School as a student, taught by G.W. Jewett and L. Meginney. I went but two months to them when the term closed. Mr. Jewett to whom I recited altogether was the best teacher that I ever had. He learned me more about the duty of a teacher than I had ever learned from any one else. During this school I was not in very good health, being a little dyspeptic, nevertheless it was one of the most pleasant periods of my life. What made the time pass more agreeably than it would otherwise have done, there was a young lady residing near my boarding house for whom I imagined I had a great affection.

To be continued.

Editors Note: John Bennett was born and raised in Brunswick County near the South Carolina line to Samuel Bennett and Anne Mintz. He was married to Mary Elizabeth Biggs, daughter of John Biggs and Sarah Wells. They were the parents of eight children and are buried in the Zion United Methodist Church Cemetery near Leland.

He was elected to two terms in the Legislature and State Senate from his county and district. John kept a journal recording the years 1834-1864 before dying on June 2, 1901 at his home in Winabow. He suffered from a long illness of dropsy and Brights disease.

Will be Sold, at the Court-House in Brunswick County, on the fourth Monday in January next, the following Land, or so much thereof as will discharge the Tax due thereon for the year 1805, with *continued on page 8*



Veterans Day is a time for us to pay our respects to those who have served. For one day, we stand united in respect for you, our veterans. We celebrate and honor you for your patriotism, love of country and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Brunswick County in the Great War

The long awaited book about our Brunswick County ancestors during WWI is now available. Order yours today.

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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

continued from page 6

the cost of advertising. 1000 Acres, more or less, the property of General Ball, South Carolina.

1000 Acres, more or less, the property of Wade Hampton, Esq. of South Carolina, known by the name of Chalking's neck. John G. Scull, Shff.

From "The Raleigh Register and North Carolina Gazette," Raleigh, NC, issue dated October 6, 1806.

Will be Sold, on the 27th of October, at the Court-House of Brunswick County, for the taxes due thereon for the year 1805. 50,000 Acres of Land the property of Mr. John Gray Blount situated in Brunswick County. John G. Schull, Shff.

From "The Raleigh Register and North Carolina State Gazette," Raleigh, NC, issue dated August 18, 1806.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 874
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