



NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
5152 NEW BRITTON LP NW. ASH, NC 28420
brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org

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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 - 2024 Term

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

Newsletter Editor: Dave Lewis
Webmaster: Charles Clemmons
brunswickcountyhistoricalsociety.org



NOVEMBER MEETING TO BE HELD AT BEMC IN SUPPLY, NC NOVEMBER 11, 2024 at 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting of the *Brunswick County Historical Society* will be held on Monday, November 11th, 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).

Program

David Bennett, a BCHS member, will speak on the "Bennett's of Southeastern Brunswick County: 1787-2024.

David Bennett was born in Conway, SC and raised in the Hickman's Crossroads Community of Brunswick County. From a young age, David has been interested in history, especially Southern history and the history of his family, the Bennett's of Hickman's Crossroads and the Longs of Longwood. He spent many weekends taking his grandmother, Beulah Long Bennett to family cemeteries and visiting great Aunts and Uncles, listening to their family stories and taking pages and pages of notes.

After graduating from West Brunswick High School, he attended Brunswick Community College and graduated from UNC-Wilmington with a degree in History and a minor in Education. David moved to Myrtle Beach, SC where he lived for many years and just recently moved back to Hickman's Crossroads and lives in his childhood home.

David is a previous member of the BCHS and served as Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. He has rejoined the group and is looking forward to being an active member.

What's in A Name? Brunswick County Places

Written by Allison Ballard on October 07, 2016 for the CoastalReview.org.

Maybe there were once many eagles on Eagles Island and perhaps people were just hungry when they named Brunswick County landmarks like Fry-ing Pan Shoals and Corncake Inlet. The truth, though, is that names of places may not be as straightforward as they appear. They do, however, reflect the families and culture that shape who we are. What we name the things around us does indeed reflect something about us.

Let's start with Brunswick. Those familiar with local history might know the county's name comes from Brunswick Town, the community started along the Cape Fear River in 1726. Founder Maurice Moore choose the name as a way to honor George I, the King of England and Duke of Brunswick. It was a familiar practice in colonial times, and the reason there are so many English and European names along the coast. Brunswick Town was a port on the Cape Fear River that was razed by British troops in 1776 and never rebuilt. For much of its early history, though, the lands west of the Cape Fear River were a part of New Hanover County. For more than 20 years in the mid 1700's those in and around Brunswick Town fought for their own regional independence - something that was finally granted in 1764, said Jim McKee, manager of the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic Site. So the reason Brunswick County is so named today is part an effort to please far-away monarchs and part good 'ole American spirit.

While this story, and others, are well established, other names are replaced over time with new ones or their origins get lost and we can only guess at their meanings. "I try to listen to those 'I heard' or 'I think'" said Musette Steck, former president of the Southport Historical Society. "There's usually a kernel of truth in there, a place to start looking." She and others who follow those leads can see our coastal counties in a different way, in a way were street signs and town names show the way to our local history.

I Am Street: One of the favorite origin stories in Brunswick County is how la street in Southport came to get the name I Am. It's not always a favor-

ite, though. Steck wishes someone would have kept to the tradition of naming the streets after notable figures in the town's history. That was, after all, how Moore and Rhett streets got their name - as well the reason for streets Lord, Howe and Dry. Robert Howe Jr. and William Espey Lord Jr. were two of the founders of the town and William and Mary Jane Dry were among the county's leading citizens, McKee said. Along this set of streets, there was a two - block alley in downtown Southport that wasn't adequately names according to the telephone company doing work in the area in the 1950's. The story goes that a town clerk decided to have a bit of fun by using the well - known ditty, "How Dry I Am." Steck believes that the same group of townfolk who once held a funeral service for a man's legs are also responsible for this bit of fun. (After 18 years, she finally believes she learned where the legs are buried, she said.)

Lockwoods Folly: "It's one of the oldest names in the area," McKee said. This tidal river that flows from the Green Swamp first appears on a map in the 1670's. It's now known as Lockwood or Lockwoods or Lockwood's. But the Folly stays. One of the most popular stories about the origin is that a Mr. Lockwood, about who not much is known, built a boat along the banks of this river, McKee said. The Lockwood Folly Country Club takes its name from the curiously named river. "But it couldn't get down river," he said. The whole enterprise was dubbed an act of foolishness or folly. There is some evidence that the ill - advised venture was related to a settlement that failed for some reason. An alternate theory, according to "The North Carolina Gazetteer," is Folly is a variation on the French term folie. Although it means "madness" today (which supports the previous theories) it could mean a delight or favorite abode in the 17th century and was therefore used in the naming of English estates.

Keziah Lake: Sam Keziah, a retired insurance agent and son of the principal of a Shallotte school, learned about one of his influential relatives soon after moving to Brunswick County as a boy. Bill Keziah was his great-uncle. Sam Keziah said, "he was a newspaper man, along with the Harpers of the State Port Pilot." As a reporter, he was also deaf and would interview his sources via handwritten notes. "I think someone like that at that time, in the '50s, would have really stood out," Keziah said.

Keziah Park is best known for its ancient Indian Trail Tree and maybe that is why there are quite a few Keziah namesakes in Brunswick County. Keziah Park is in Southport, a four-acre parcel home to the Indian Trail Tree. "It's said that these trees were bent to point to good hunting and fishing grounds," he said. Another of those is in Boiling Spring Lakes. It's no surprise that the name of that town comes from the spring that flows through the area and is said to discharge 43 million gallons a day. According to the town, the spring was once known as Bouncing Log Spring, because of a piece of petrified wood churning in the water. "The town is alleged to have 50 lakes there, and there's a Fifty Lakes Drive," Keziah said. "Most of them aren't very big." And some of them do have names, like Seminole or Mirror or Patricia. There's also a Keziah Lake located to the north, close to Pretty Pond and a neighbor of Harper Lake.

Bald Head Island: This island at the mouth of the Cape Fear River is one long known to sailors. The island marks the location of the dangerous shifting sands of Frying Pan Shoals, which are named for their shape, as the jut out handle-like from the island. Perhaps this is why mariners made sure to note any relevant geographical features.

The lighthouse at Bald Head Island is also known as "Old Baldy." "There are a number of different accounts of ship captains referring to Bald Head Island as Barren Head," McKee said. "The island was a part of one of the first land grants in the area, which went to the Smith family, McKee said," and became known as Smith Island. The town that is now Southport was Smithville.

"The island started to become known as a resort area and as a place to enjoy salubrious, healing sea breezes," he said. The current community and resort of Bald Head reverted to a version of its earlier name. Something similar happened with Smithville, McKee said. The town was the site of a natural deep-water harbor. Deep Water Point is located near the Bald Head Island Ferry terminal. Nineteenth century residents wanted to capitalize on that economic possibility. "Eventually, it was decided that maybe the name was the problem," he said. "It was renamed Southport in March 1887 to see if that would get things going."

Waccamaw: Although Lake Waccamaw in in Columbus County, the northwest corner of Brunswick County also takes this name as one of the

Townships, from the Waccamaw Siouan tribal nation. According to tribal history, the name Waccamaw first appeared in 1712.

The Waccamaw Siouan call themselves the People of the Falling Star, for the origin story of the lake - that a meteor streaked through the night sky and waters flowed into the crater to form the lake. Although the history of the tribal name is unclear, historians used the Catawba language for comparison and guess that it came from a game called Wap-ka-hare. Its translation means "ball knock" and it's pronounced something like "wahumwar." According to the tribe, it's assumed that Waccamaw is an English version of this pronunciation.

Brick Landing: Many names in Brunswick County are derived from notable families. The Gause family were influential planters and there have been landmarks called Gause's Hill, Gause Landing and Gause Beach. They are also indirectly responsible for this community. "The Gause Family had one of the nicest houses in the area," Steck said.

There's also the tomb of Capt. John Julius Gause featuring brick walls 18 inches thick. "It got its name because that's where they unloaded the bricks," Steck said. More modest brick tombs were more typical of the era and the elite planter class. The Gause Tomb, though, dates to the 1830's and is considered a show of wealth. The cambered brick-paved roof, supported on the interior by vaulting and a central brick pier, is similar to the brickwork at Fort Caswell and historians speculate that there may be a connection.

Fort Caswell: One of Keziah's favorite namesakes in Brunswick County is Richard Caswell. "He was an accomplished resident of the state," said Sam Keziah.

Caswell was born in Maryland in 1729, but moved to Kinston, where he is buried, to work as a surveyor before pursuing a career in law. He represented North Carolina at the first Continental Congress and eventually became the state's first governor in 1777. He served another term in 1785.

The fort dates to 1825 and was built because the area was vulnerable, according to the site's history. The construction of the fort, built of stone and earthworks, was considered one of the strongest in the world and most of it remains today.

There is also a nearby Caswell Beach in Brunswick county and a Caswell county in the northern

part of the state.

From Bolivia to Winnabow are more curious names and there always seems to be more than one version of good stories. The accounts here come from interviews with local history buffs, as well as local history references. A few are listed below.

Arabella Lane: In what is now the Cottage Point community of Southport, one of the streets is named for an original landowner. "She was an African American woman," Steck said. "I believe she was born Arabella Price, and the Prices owned much of that land."

Batarora or Battle Royal: Versions of this name have belonged to roads, rivers and bays and the prevailing theory is that it came from a 1781 battle between the Tories and the Whigs. The Batarora Branch extends from Hood Creek west of Leland.

Bolivia: Boxes of tar and turpentine from North Carolina pine-focused economy were often stamped "Bolivia" and shipped to South America. The popular story is that the locals liked the name, McKee said, and it stuck.

Bonnet's Creek: This waterway near Southport was once known as Fiddler's Drain, but was renamed for Stede Bonnet, also known as the "Gentleman Pirate", who used it as a hideout before eventually surrendering after a battle with Col. William Rhett.

Calabash: Listed in 1814 as the Calabash River, it's believed to be a reference to the calabash gourd. Perhaps because they are used in water gathering or maybe because of the river's rounded shape.

Cedar Grove: This community got its name from a group of African Americans who met in 1872 to organize a church that would allow them to worship freely. It was built near Stone Chimney Road under a large cedar tree.

Civietown: The popular theory here is that a man grew "seve beans" in the area. Some versions say he grew seaweed, but the name is also a variation of saba or fava beans.

Corncake Inlet: "In some places it's called Corncake and in some other places it's called New Inlet," McKee said. Either way, it was once the inlet that separated Bald Head Island from Pleasure Island - and rumored to be a good fishing spot until it was closed via hurricane in 1998.

Eagles Island: This seven-mile long island

close to downtown Wilmington, and home to the USS North Carolina battleship memorial, has gone by a few names since the late 1600's, including Cranes Island and Buzzards Island. That changed though, when Joseph and Richard Eagles came to the area in 1725. The brothers became prominent local planters and the name Eagles Island first appeared on a map in 1738.

Exum: Mr. Exum is said to be a man from Florida who came to North Carolina in 1881 and built a store and cotton gin - which became a local landmark.

Holler'n Point: Located on the eastern bank of the Shallotte River, across from Shallotte Point, and is said to be a place where locals could shout a message across the water.

Honey Pond: Although it's not certain, people think this area along the Wet Ash Swamp north of Shallotte got its name from a population of wild bees that lived here.

Maco: What was once Farmer's Turnout was renamed Maraco (and eventually shortened) after the development company MacRae Co. The business was a major economic force in the area and Hugh MacRae settled several immigrant colonies on the regional lands.

According to historians, there's no documentation that this happened here, though. This unincorporated community is also the setting for one of North Carolina's best known ghost stories, the Maco Light and the legend of the headless signalman, Joe Baldwin.

Makataka: This community, often called Makatoky by locals, is thought to be named for a Cape Fear Native American tribe and was also the home for men who were cutting cypress in the Green Swamp for the Waccamaw Lumber Company in the early 1900's.

Malmo: This is a bit of a mystery, according to postal service records, the original post office application was for Hansenville for Ludwig Hansen who led the push for a local branch. The name was later changed to Hansen and finally Malmo. Perhaps for the city in Sweden although Hansen was from Denmark.

Midway Road: According to Steck, this decidedly blandly-named road which runs from Bolivia to St. James Plantation has a more colorful history. Before the 1950's, it used to be called Half Hell Road. When moonshiners and other ne'er-do-wells

were running from the law, they'd use this road, or maybe sections of the swamp to get away and when they got there, they were halfway to hell, she said.

Mt. Misery Road: Originally the mountain was more of a hill, one about 25 feet high. Local historians claim the name came from how difficult it was to cultivate the area.

Navassa: Once the home of rice plantations, when this community was one of free people it came to be known for the company that provided many of them work - the Navassa Guano Company. The fertilizer was shipped from an island in the West Indies to North Carolina for processing.

Pea Landing Road: Once the area in southern Brunswick County around Calabash was known as Pea Landing for both the local peanut crop and the ports in the area that allowed the farmers to ship it elsewhere.

Pinch Gut Creek: Is the name of this waterway a result of poor hunting and fishing which led to pinched gut? Or is it just a variation on the term using gut as a small waterway? Steck believes it's the latter, but enjoys the speculation.

Royal Oak: For many years, the landmark of this predominately African-American farming community located on Makatoka Road, was a majestic oak tree known as the Big Oak. An 1892 article in the Southport Leader said the tree trunk was seven feet in diameter and that its branches covered one-quarter of an acre.

Shallotte River: In 1734 there was reference to the Little Charlotte or the Little Charlotta River. This was likely an honor to Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the wife of King George III. Spellings and pronunciations varied but the move to make it Shallotte River might have simple been to differentiate the river and its town from Charlotte, McKee said.

Sunny Point: "This one kind of drives me crazy," McKee said. The military terminal is named for a point on the Cape Fear River. "There are a few of them right there," he said. The base could just as easily been named Doctor Point (named for a doctor whose house was there) or Howe's Point or Reaves Point. "In many cases, although not as much now, they were used interchangeably."

Supply: This town has long been a stop on the river trade route between Wilmington and Shallotte. The trading post was once called Old Geor-

getown Way, but was officially named Supply in the late 1860's.

Varnamtown: Like Thomasboro, Grissetown and several others, many of the communities in Brunswick County are named for the families who lived and owned land there. Mr. W. Harry Varnam operated a store during the early 1900's and the area become known for fishing and shrimping.

Winnabow: Daniel L. Russell was born at Winnabow, his family's plantation. He later became a governor of the state. Governors Road which runs across Rice Creek is still there. It's said the family got the name from a Native American word but the meaning has been lost.

Yaupon Beach: Once a separate community and now la part of Oak Island, the name comes from a native holly called Yopun in Catawban. Street here are named for the holder of the oldest deed, Keziah said.

Editors Note: *Thanks to BCHS member Musette Steck and past member Jim McKee for their contribution to this article by Allison Ballard. There are too many names to go into great detail but I will follow up in future articles for the Newsletter.*

Reaves Chapel

Source: *Gwen Causey and the Coastal Land Trust website.*

Historic Reaves Chapel A.M.E. Church is one of the Cape Fear region's most culturally and historically significant African American structures. The Chapel is a simple, classical wood frame church with colored glass windows, and it is one of the oldest African American buildings in southeastern North Carolina. People who were formerly enslaved built Reaves Chapel on the bluffs of the Cape Fear River shortly before or just after the Civil War. Around 1911 it was moved inland by the congregation using logs and a team of oxen for the move to its current location. The land where they placed the chapel was owned by Edward Reaves, a man formerly enslaved at the Cedar Hill Plantation and for whom the Chapel was named.

Many of Navassa residents' ancestors were Gullah Geechee people of coastal Africa who were forcibly brought to the coastal United States because of their experience in rice cultivation. Rice

plantations once lined the western banks of the Cape Fear River and despite the many contributions of the Gullah Geechee people to this region of the state, there are surprisingly few surviving structures from the Civil War and post-Civil War period that preserve their vital cultural heritage. Reaves Chapel is one of the last remaining buildings from that era still standing.

Reaves Chapel and its small cemetery served an African Methodist Episcopal congregation until the late 1990's. Although the small Chapel has suffered the prolonged effects of weather damage and is not currently inhabitable, it is still cherished by the community. Reaves Chapel was purchased by the Coastal Land Trust in March of 2019 with funding provided by the Moore Charitable Foundation's, the Orton Foundation and the Historic Wilmington Foundation. In partnership with the Cedar Hill / West Bank Heritage Foundation, the building is being restored and once again the bell will ring out to gather the community at the chapel to celebrate community service, faith, and history.

Over the past 3 years, the bell tower was removed, the building was lifted, the foundation was rebuilt, walls opened, new structural components were added and rotting siding and flooring were replaced. The roof was restored and the adjacent cemetery was cleaned. The bell tower has been restored and placed back atop the Chapel as have the stained-glass windows on either side and above the door along with protective plexiglass panels.

The final phase will include completing the interior, finish the design, permitting and construction of an external bathroom, construct a parking lot with accessible parking and finish the landscaping.



Reaves Chapel - Closer to Completion Every Day

Minutes of BCHS Meeting

Brunswick County Historical Society
Brunswick Electric Membership Cooperation
Meeting Room.
Supply, NC
August 12, 2024

The BCHS meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by the President James Green. There were 10 members and 3 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 program was given by Charles M. Clemmons. It was titled, "The Reconstruction Era." After a review of the timeline of the Civil War he told of the relationship between his historical research and his historical fiction novel, "Aila's Journal." The novel is set on a small farm near Wilmington, NC. It is the story of two young women, one White, one Black as they struggle for survival, dignity, and purpose against the tide of history in the late nineteenth century.

The minutes of the May 13, 2024 meeting were printed in the August, 2024 Newsletter. The Acting Secretary reviewed the minutes.

The Treasurer was absent. His report included a bank balance of \$9,901.17.

The President reminded the members about the urgent need for new officers. Also, he mentioned the newly created DAR Research Room at Brunswick Community College.

The various upcoming area events include "Carolina Blues: Indigo on the Cape Fear", September 28, 2024 and "Port Brunswick Days" on October 19, 2024.

There was no unfinished business or new business.

Motion to adjourn.
Continued on page 7

Members present: Jimmy Green, Arty Phelps, Gwen Causey, Charles Clemmons, Carol Jutte, Glenn Kye, David Bennett, Dave Lewis, Judy Holden, David Holden.

Visitors present: Brian Clemmons, Helen Wils, Madison Cates.

Gwen Causey, Acting Secretary

Area Events

November 2, 2024: The Great Pumpkin Blowout, Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. 11am-4pm. Dispose of your front porch jack-o-lantern in a rather explosive way by implementing the same technology used to detonate Civil War era torpedoes! A \$10 fee per pumpkin, must bring your own. Free to watch, but YOU get to press the button to detonate. Tickets for pumpkins can be purchased online in advance at our Square website.

November 16, 2024: Moores Creek National Battlefield Candlelight Tour 2024. 5:30pm - 8:45pm. Experience the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge as it unfolded and learn about the important aftermath that followed this significant battle of the American Revolution. Call 910-283-5591 ext. 2234 for reservations. Admission is Free.

December 6, 2024: A Light in the Darkest of Night, Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. 4pm-7pm. A free program offering visitors the chance to

experience a peaceful evening amongst the ruins of St. Philips Church as it is decorated in its holiday finest, with candlelight and greenery.

December 8, 2024: An 18th Century Christmas, Brunswick Town/ Fort Anderson. 1pm-5:30pm. Explore this holiday season how the American colonists celebrated Christmas. During the program, you can enjoy 18th century inspired refreshments in the Visitors Center, participate in traditional games, or try your hand at Moravian paper stars and other 18th century crafts. The highlight of the evening will be an authentic period candlelit service in the ruins of St. Philips Anglican Church. The service will begin at 5:00pm. Tickets, \$5 per adult. Children under the age of 12, free.

Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson is now closed due to storm damage. Check with them as time for these events nears.

Veterans Day 2024

Veterans Day this year will be observed on Monday, November 11. This years theme is "A Legacy of Loyalty and Service."

Veterans Day does not include an apostrophe but does include an "s" at the end of "Veterans" because it is not a day that "belongs" to veterans, it is a day for honoring all Veterans.

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: 5152 New Britton LP Rd., Ash, NC 28420

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

Email: davelewis@atmc.net

CALENDER OF EVENTS

BCHS Meetings: February 12, 2024
May 13, 2024
August 12, 2024
November 11, 2024



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