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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society* is a publication of the New Bern Historical Society Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization whose mission is to celebrate and promote New Bern and its heritage through events and education.

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Individuals seeking detailed source and reference information regarding current *Journal* articles or copies of prior articles can access www.newbernhistorical.org and then select menu/Journals/repository.

Observations from the Crow's Nest

Ahoy brave citizens of the Neuse and Trent Rivers! We bring you more stories of New Bern's past from the Journal staff and its writers. We received some good comments from our last edition and made a minor course change in our articles. We have removed citations within the paragraphs for ease of reading and placed the references at the end of each article in case you want to do a further 'deep dive' into the subject matter. We welcome your comments!



New Bern and its surrounding communities have a rich history in the birth of our Nation. Bernard George starts off this issue of the Journal telling the story of the 14 Freeman of Harlowe who continued their families' military tradition in Craven County and joined the Patriot cause to fight for our independence from Great Britain. Then ECU Professor Craig Williams changes course to sail us out of the financial chaos of the banking industry at the end of the antebellum era. Using beautifully designed paper currency in his personal collection, the Professor describes a new bank in New Bern and how two prominent local executives signed these bank notes, produced here in town around 1859. Next, Nathaniel Glasgow who interned at the New Bern Historical Society this past year takes his turn at the helm. Nathaniel steers us up Bachelors Creek in 1864 where Union forces would suffer a catastrophic accident at an outer defensive outpost leading to a significant loss of life.

The next three articles feature key figures in the growth and development of New Bern. First, Jim Hodges, the Society's Curator, shares with us another fascinating series of photographs of life in New Bern in the late 1800's through the lens of photographer Edward Gerock. Claudia Houston, the Society's Historian, paints us a portrait of Sarah Dudley Pettey, an eminent African American

feminist, educator and journalist in the 1890s who was one of a first generation of women born in freedom. Chris Kelso, a Society Board Member, refreshes our memory of the inventor of Pepsi-Cola, Caleb Bradham, and also enlightens us with other dimensions of this business and personal life. Did you know that Bradham was the founder and also an admiral of the North Carolina Naval Militia?

We hit a little turbulent water with Bill Hand's revealing article on the removal of the remains of prominent African American families in Cedar Grove Cemetery to Greenwood Cemetery in 1913. Bill brings us up-to-date on the results of an archaeological study conducted over a 100 years later and the resolution, "to restore the healing, dignity, honor and respect to those individuals and families whose remains were removed and re-interred."

Retired Navy veteran Mark Sandvigen brings to life the sacrifices of many citizens of Craven County during the Great War, especially the service of those in uniform sent to fight in Europe. As a reminder of their forgotten sacrifice, sixteen names were added to the World War I monument at the Craven County Courthouse during a 2019 re-dedication ceremony based on the diligent research efforts of Claudia Houston, Victor Jones of the Kellenberger Room, and Mark. Lastly, Jim Hodges ties this issue up to the pier with a touching farewell tribute of yesteryear to Ceasar Lewis, a dedicated church bellringer of New Bern for over sixty years.

As always, we are looking for writers who love our New Bern history and are willing to research and write articles about another undiscovered chapter of our past!

Jay DeLoach

Editor

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN REVOLUTIONARY CRAVEN COUNTY

Bernard George



“For more than two hundred years, African-Americans have participated in every conflict in United States history. They have not only fought bravely the common enemies of the United States but have also had to confront the individual and institutional racism of their countrymen.” — Retired Lt. Col. Michael Lee Lanning, author, *The African-American Soldier: From Crispus Attucks to Colin Powell*

Forgotten Patriots: An Overview

African Americans played a significant, although often unrecognized, role in the early years of the American military. During the colonial period, African Americans fought either out of a sense of duty to help defend their community or a desire to gain their freedom. With the advent of the American Revolution, however, African Americans also began fighting with an eye toward emancipation for all enslaved people. Studying their service during this formative period reveals the establishment of a pattern of participation by Blacks in the military that includes exclusion during peacetime, initial exclusion during



wartime, and eventual acceptance in the face of critical manpower shortages. This pattern would be repeated throughout U.S. history until World War II.

When General George Washington took command of the Continental Army in July 1775, one of his first acts was to ban the enlistment of all Blacks, both free and slave. Although he had commanded African Americans during the French and Indian War, Washington reportedly viewed them as unnecessary to the patriots' cause. However, Washington began to see things differently after Virginia's British Royal Governor, Lord Dunmore, issued the first of a series of proclamations promising liberty to slaves held by rebelling colonists. At General Washington's urging, Congress authorized the enlistment of free Blacks in the Continental Army in February 1776. As the American cause grew increasingly desperate, the army finally began actively seeking the enlistment of slaves.

African Americans qualified to serve in the Continental Army and the state militias under four different conditions: (1) as free Blacks; (2) as fugitives posing as freemen; (3) as slaves enlisting under the promise of freedom; and (4) as slaves serving as substitutes for their master or his sons. No matter how they entered the army, they were generally relegated to the military's lowest echelons. Most black soldiers served as privates; only a few were able to rise to the rank of staff sergeant. No African American received an officer's commission in either the state militias or the Continental Army. Their history and their contributions to this country were significant and influential. Yet until recently, they were also largely unacknowledged.

New Bern and Craven County

African Americans played a major role in the development of New Bern. For most of the town's early history, the majority of its population was black. The labor of slaves provided the engine of the economy during the hundred years before the Civil War. Also, New Bern had the state's largest concentration of free blacks. Skilled African American artisans crafted the community's buildings, wharves and ships. On his first trip along North Carolina's coast in the 1760s, Governor Tryon commented on the numbers and activities of the many African Americans he saw at work. "The Negroes are very numerous I suppose five to one White Person in the Maritime Counties, but as you penetrate into the country few Blacks are employed," Tryon wrote.

In addition to farm labor, coastal slaves were engaged in the "Making of Barrels, Hoops, Staves, Shingles, Rails Post and Pails, all of which they do to admiration." Black people also played a leading part in the important naval stores industry, handling the "Boxing of Pine Trees to draw off the Turpentine, [and the] Making of Tarr kills [kilns]." African Americans worked as boatmen, both along the coast and up the rivers where Tryon reported "Rocky Stones so as to stop the navigation of anything but Canoes, and those are not safe unless under the conduct of a dexterous Negroe." Royal Governor William Tryon recognized New Bern's growing importance when he made it colonial North Carolina's first permanent capital in 1766. Construction of Tryon Palace began on a site just west of town overlooking the Trent River. By the eve of the American Revolution (April 19, 1775), New Bern's population was approximately 1,000 people. When North Carolina citizens joined other American colonists in the effort to throw off British rule during the Revolution, African Americans added their efforts to the struggle.

The Harlowe Patriots

As the American Revolution began taking shape, many settlers in the Harlowe community of Craven County were free men of color who farmed their own land or were engaged in skilled labor or other private enterprises. They owned property and paid taxes, leaving a paper trail that was rare for the time. Typical of other free Black fami-

lies who migrated to Craven and Carteret Counties from Tidewater Virginia in the early eighteenth century, my ancestor Peter George (born c. 1720) purchased 100 acres of land in Craven County on the south side of Neuse River and on the East side of Long Creek on September 7, 1751. Soon afterwards Peter George and his Harlowe neighbors – John Carter, Abel Carter, James Black, and Jacob Copes – began a strong tradition of military service by African American residents of their small community. They are listed as “free Negroes” in the April 11, 1753, muster of Abner Neale’s Craven County Foot Company.

Tradition of Service Continues

Isaac Carter, Joshua Carter, William Dove, and Isaac Perkins of Harlowe appear to have started their Revolutionary War service in one of two special regiments of militia created in early May 1776 in anticipation of a rumored British invasion along the Cape Fear River. Though some accounts claim the men served under Major John Tillman at Fort Hancock during the winter of 1778, due to the timing involved, it is more likely they served in the 1st Battalion of Militia under Tillman in an expedition to Wilmington that lasted June – August 1776. After building a large barracks complex in Wilmington, these militia units were disbanded on August 13, 1776.

War and the Draft

When the NC General Assembly initiated a draft in 1777, all men ages sixteen – fifty were required to serve or find an able-bodied man to serve as a substitute – no color qualifications were noted. Eligible men from Harlowe quickly responded. The following glimpses into their lives are based on accounts provided by award-winning genealogist Paul Heinegg in his work, *Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina from the Colonial Period to About 1820*.

Martin Black (1751 – 1821), Isaac Perkins (1756-1830), William Dove (born c.1748), and Isaac Carter (born c.1760), each enlisted for three years in Captain Silas Stevenson’s Company of the 10th North Carolina Regiment, then under the command of Colonel

Abraham Sheppard. Black & Perkins enlisted in New Bern on May 16, 1777; followed by Dove on June 14; and Carter on September 1. When North Carolina troops encamped at Valley Forge in the summer of 1778, four of the state's regiments were reduced to cadre status and three regiments were disbanded, leaving only the 1st and 2nd Regiments in full strength. The four men were then assigned to the 2nd North Carolina Regiment under the command of Colonel John Patten. Perkins and Carter were assigned to Captain Clement Hall's company; Dove to Captain John Craddock's company; and Black to Captain Benjamin Coleman's company. On May 16, 1779, Black fought in a skirmish against British troops near West Point, New York and on June 20, 1779, he was part of a highly trained and hand-picked group of Continental soldiers that successfully assaulted and captured a British outpost at Stony Point, New York. Dove fought in the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, and then the Battle of Stony Point on July 15, 1778.

In November 1779, the 2nd NC Regiment was transferred to the Southern Department and marched south to Charleston, South Carolina, to help defend that city. On May 12, 1780, the 2nd NC Regiment surrendered 301 men to the British Army at the Fall of Charleston, including Black, Perkins and Dove. Black and Perkins managed to escape, but Black was soon recaptured. He remained in Charleston in Captain Benjamin Coleman's company of the 2nd NC Regiment until a prisoner exchange and release in December 1782 in Charleston.

Post-war Prosperity

According to the 1790 census, the following households grew and prospered in Harlowe. Black returned to North Carolina where he married Ann Moore on April 12, 1784. He is recorded as the head of a Carteret County household of two "other free."

Isaac Carter married Sarah Perkins, the sister of Isaac Perkins, on February 3, 1786. Carter was head of a Craven County household of five other free. His brother-in-law Isaac Perkins married Deborah Godett (born c. 1763) on March 24, 1784. Perkins was head of a Craven County household of two other free. He acquired

land on the south side of the Neuse River and west side of Macock's Branch on December 9, 1813, and was taxed on 250 acres in Craven County in 1815. Perkins sold 150 acres of the land to Isaac Carter in 1827, along with 40 acres on the south side of Bay River and west side of Trent Creek.

After the war, Dove assigned his rights to military land for 264 acres to John Craddock under Warrant No. 3202, issued on November 26, 1789. Dove had purchased 90 acres on the east side of Hancock's Creek on Cahoque Creek in Craven County from Martin Black on February 6, 1775. He purchased 8 acres in Craven County on June 13, 1790, and was head of a Craven County household of nine other free.

John Carter (1754-1821) and Asa Spelman/Spelmore (born c. 1751) each enlisted in July 1778, apparently as 'New Levies' authorized by the NC General Assembly and required to enlist for only nine months. Carter and Spelman served under Captain Michael Quinn of the 3rd NC Regiment, and both were discharged in the spring of 1779.

Spelman purchased land in Craven County in 1781 and was head of a Craven County household of five other free. On January 1, 1796, Spelman sold 65 acres in Craven County on the north side of the Neuse River between Trent and Smiths Creek. He married Esther Sampson on June 6, 1819, and was counted in a household of four "free colored" in 1820. Spelman and Carter each appeared in Craven County court on September 13, 1820, to apply for Revolutionary War pensions and Spelman testified on Carter's behalf. At the time, Carter was a cooper living with his sister Margaret Fenner.

Absalom Martin (1745-1828) enlisted on April 25, 1781, for twelve months. He served in Captain Griffin John McRee's Company of the 1st NC Regiment and fought in the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina. He initially appeared before a Carteret County court in September 1818 to request a pension, saying that he volunteered as "the fourteenth man which was to be furnished in each county in the state...in order to make up a requisition by the United States to furnish troops for the same..." Martin's August 22, 1820, pension application (S41800 NC) included certification of his service by then NC Secretary of State William Hill, dated July 8, 1819. Martin was

head of a Carteret County household of nine other free.

Simeon Moore aka Simon (born c. 1740) lived in Beaufort County when he and his brother Abram, called “free Negroes,” purchased 300 acres on the south side of Terts Swamp and Durham’s Creek in March 1758. In 1782, Simeon enlisted for eighteen months in Captain Thomas Evans’ Company of the 4th North Carolina Regiment. After the war, he married Mary Davis widow on January 27, 1790, and the census of that year shows him as head of a Craven County household of eleven other free. He owned 450 acres of taxable land in Craven County in 1815, and applied for a Revolutionary War pension in June 1818.

Aaron Spelman/Spelmore (born c. 1753), Hezekiah “Kiah” Stringer (born c.1757), and Mingo Stringer (born c. 1761) served in Captain Anthony Sharpe’s Company of the 1st North Carolina Regiment from May 5, 1781 – April/May 1782. They would have fought in the Battle of Eutaw Springs on September 8, 1781. Hezekiah enlisted again in Captain Benjamin Andrew Coleman’s Company in the 2nd NC Regiment for 18 months. His furlough papers, dated May 26, 1783, granted him a leave of absence from the 1st North Carolina Regiment until his final discharge. He was called Kiah Stringer in 1800, head of a New Hanover County household of five other free.

Spelman was head of a Craven County household of three other free in 1790. On September 12, 1820, he appeared in Craven County court to seek a pension for Revolutionary War service. Mingo purchased 100 acres on the south side of the Neuse River near Long Creek in Craven County from William George and made a quit claim deed to return the property to him on October 2, 1784, because he had not served in the Revolution for him as promised. Mingo was head of a Craven County household of two other free. He purchased the northern half of lot 458 on Norwood Street in the town of New Bern for \$75 on May 2, 1826.

Little is known, at this time, about the service of John Gregory (born c.1758), or George Perkins (born c. 1734). Gregory was head of a Craven County household of two other free in the 1790 census and two “free colored” in the 1820 census. He appeared in Craven County

court On August 15, 1832, to apply for a pension for Revolutionary War service.

Perkins was a taxable head of his own “Black” Craven County household in 1769 and was called a husbandman (farmer) on February 27, 1771, when he purchased 200 acres in Craven County on the west side of Cahogue Creek for 60 barrels of tar. The father of Isaac Perkins, and the father-in-law of Isaac Carter, he was head of a Craven County household of four other free in 1790.

These fourteen men and their experiences remained alive for generations in family stories and local folklore but became faded or lost with the passage of time. However, as more research continues the contributions of these and other forgotten patriots of the American Revolution are finally receiving the long-overdue recognition they deserve.

Patriot Isaac Carter Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution: A First



On March 16, 2014, the NC Society of Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) dedicated a memorial marker commemorating the Revolutionary War service of 14 free men of color from the Harlowe area of Craven and Carteret counties. The historic ceremony was held at the Godette School in Harlowe and attended by more than two hundred people. National SAR President General Joe

Dooley praised the Harlowe community for earning the distinction of contributing the greatest number of soldiers per capita in support of the American patriot cause. Following the marker dedication, serious research efforts were made to identify and recruit eligible descendants and organize a Harlowe SAR chapter.

When chartered on September 3, 2016, the Patriot Isaac Carter Chapter became the first (and only) chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution comprised primarily of African American men. Renowned North Carolina historian and author David Cecelski, a Harlowe native, expressed the thoughts and aspirations of the community: “We in the Isaac Carter chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution stand before you full of pride for the sons of Harlowe. We are humbled by their faith in America. We celebrate them for their role in the founding of this great country. We give thanks to them for reminding us that our nation’s greatness has always been grounded in our diversity and our unity. We rededicate this plaque in their honor. We embrace their spirit of brotherhood. And finally, we pledge to do as they did—to believe with all our heart and soul in America, the America that is today, but also to dream of the America that could yet be.” Amen.

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About the Author:

Bernard George, a retired city planner and Eastern NC historian, earned a Political Science degree from North Carolina Central University. He is a native New Bernian and avid historian who traces his Craven County George-family roots back to the early-18th Century. A veteran Civil War re-enactor, Mr. George is a founding member of the 35th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops Living History Reenactment Group headquartered at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens in New Bern.



SIGNATURES FROM THE PAST THE BANK OF COMMERCE AT NEWBERN

T. Craig Williams, Ph.D.

Introduction

Banking and the printing of currency has a long and colorful history in the United States and, therefore, North Carolina. Out of the financial chaos of the antebellum United States (approximately 1816 – 1860), the Bank of Commerce at Newbern emerged in 1859. Chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly, this financial institution strove to capitalize, encourage, and support the anticipated development and growth in New Bern and Craven County. A group of prominent citizens came together to form a board of directors, and Alonzo Thomas Jerkins was appointed president and Dr. John Amos Guion was appointed cashier. The bank issued beautiful new bank notes that Jerkins and Guion personally signed. These signatures provide an important link to their family history and their own personal service to the city, county, and state. Perhaps, if examined carefully, one can see the excitement and confidence in the growth of New Bern reflected in these signatures.

Early U.S. Banking and Currency – Setting the Stage for New Bern

During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress issued paper currency in an attempt to finance the war effort. Later, from 1791-1811, and again from 1817-1836, the U.S. government chartered central banks to address government debt and bring a degree of order to a chaotic financial system. The central banks aimed to reinforce the value of bank currency by regulating the issue of bank notes and issuing their own currency. However, in 1836, due primarily to the efforts of Andrew Jackson, the charter for the Second Bank of the United States was not renewed. This led to the unchecked proliferation of private bank notes across the country and these notes

varied widely in denomination, design, size, and value. A bank note derived its value from the ability to redeem it for gold or silver at the issuing bank. But of course, many of these banks could not fulfill this promise. As a result, stability and value was a significant problem and some bank notes were nearly worthless.

For example, about two hundred banks were issuing paper currency by 1815, and by 1830, the number was 321. The number was 711 by 1840, and following a modest decline in the 1840s, the number dramatically increased. By 1860 there were 1,562 state banks issuing paper currency. To complicate matters further, numerous other entities such as state-chartered insurance companies, railroads, canal companies, and import-export companies were issuing “money.” Other much more questionable or illegal entities also got into the game, such as unchartered banks and merchants. It is estimated that more than ten thousand different kinds of paper currency were in circulation in the 1850s.

It was not until 1861 that the U.S. Congress authorized the Treasury Department to issue non-interest bearing demand notes. These notes were redeemable in gold or silver upon demand at seven specific banks located in the Union states. The U.S. government did mint gold and silver coins but there were never enough in circulation to be an effective medium of exchange and commerce. In 1862, Congress authorized a new class of currency to replace demand notes known as United States notes or legal tender notes. Both demand notes and legal tender notes were nicknamed “greenbacks.” Prior to “greenbacks,” (with the exception of currency issued by the Continental Congress), the U.S. government did not assume the responsibility for issuing paper currency.

Focusing on North Carolina

Without the influence and near monopoly of a central bank, there were waves of “free banking” experiments in various states, removing or limiting the involvement of state legislatures from the bank chartering process. The decades prior to the Civil War included the depression of 1837 – 1842, recessions, financial panics, bank failures, and various forms of anti-banking backlash. However, North

Carolina had a stable quasi-public bank that weathered the many economic and political challenges during the antebellum period, and offered a system of branches across the state, including New Bern. The North Carolina state banks issued their own bank notes that were generally stable and respected before the war. However, private banks were still needed to supplement local financial needs.

Unlike some other states, the North Carolina legislature remained active in regulating banking, including the chartering of private banks. Prior to the Civil War, several private banks were established in New Bern. These included the Bank of New Bern, chartered in 1804 and beginning operations in 1805, and the Merchant's Bank of New Bern, chartered in 1834 and beginning operations in 1835. Due to anticipated growth in business facilitated by the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, additional banking services were sought during the 1850s. The Bank of Commerce at Newbern was chartered in 1859, primarily through the efforts of Johnson H. Bryan, a Craven County representative to the North Carolina General Assembly.

The Bank of Commerce at Newbern

Stock was issued for the Bank of Commerce at Newbern (later New Bern) and operations began in 1859, with Alonzo Thomas Jerkins appointed president and John Amos Guion appointed cashier. A more contemporary title reflecting John Guion's role is treasurer, with primary duties as the chief financial officer for the bank. According to the New Bern Mercantile and Manufacturer's Business Directory, the following men were listed as directors of the Bank of Commerce in 1866: Isaac W. Hughes, J.D. Flanner, James W. Carmer, E.F. Smallwood, James A. Bryan, and L.C. Desmond. The Bank of Commerce at Newbern commenced doing business in the Primrose building on Pollock Street. An 1865 newspaper advertisement stated "For Rent – The lower part of the brick building on Pollock Street, opposite the Episcopal Church, known as the Bank of Commerce, apply to Dr. R.S. Primrose". Although records make it difficult to confirm with certainty the specific building in which the Bank of Commerce operated, it was most probably 313 Pollock Street, now occupied by Beer Army, a restaurant.



Bank of Commerce at New Bern, Five Dollar Note

As with most banks during the antebellum and war years, the Bank of Commerce at Newbern issued bank notes. One of the many problems with bank notes was counterfeiting or the alteration of bills. Of course, counterfeiting exasperated problems with the value and stability of bank issued currency.

Early bank notes, such as those issued by the Bank of Commerce at Newbern, were individually signed and dated by hand. This attested to the legitimacy of the note and provided a crude means of detecting counterfeit currency. The handwritten signatures of Guion and Jerkins would likely have been trusted in New Bern and Craven County. Additionally, Bank of Commerce notes with signatures could be verified by the bank itself or by local merchants and businesses. Verifying a signature was certainly not foolproof, but the practice would have been part of ensuring a note was legitimate. However, for the Bank of Commerce, ensuring legitimacy would have become increasingly more difficult outside of Craven County and across the state of North Carolina.

Financial Leaders of New Bern

Today, inspecting a Bank of Commerce note with the handwritten signatures of Guion and Jerkins provides both a personal and direct connection with New Bern history. Behind these signatures are the stories of lives and families that significantly impacted the development of the city and county.



Bank of Commerce at New Bern, Stock Certificate

Dr. John Amos Guion (1816 – 1894)

The signature of John A. Guion punctuates a significant family and personal history. He was no stranger to community involvement and banking. His father, John W. Guion, was a leader in New Bern's Christ Episcopal Church and Isaac Guion, his grandfather, pursued a career in medicine in the Onslow and Craven County areas of North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century.

A descendant of French Huguenot refugees who came to America in the seventeenth century, Isaac Guion was a member of the North Carolina Provincial Congress. During the American Revolution he served in the Continental Army as surgeon, commissary officer, and paymaster. After the war, Isaac provided leadership as vestryman or church warden of Christ Episcopal Church. Although the military, politics, medicine, business, and church leadership figured prominently in the Guion family, young John initially chose government service, medicine, and the military as his path.



John A. Guion attended New Bern Academy, and at age sixteen, he became the private secretary of D.S. McCauley, U.S. Consul to Tripoli. Two years later, he returned to the United States and entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Philadelphia, graduating with distinction in 1837 at the young age of twenty-one. Following graduation, he entered the U.S. Navy as an assistant surgeon and held this position until 1843. Through his education and travels, Dr. Guion became an accomplished linguist, speaking a number of European languages and Arabic.

Following his military service, Dr. Guion returned to New Bern, married Susan Sydney Roberts, and raised seven children. As recorded by Watson in 1850, Dr. Guion

worked with E.R. Stanly to build the first factory in New Bern that produced coarse woolen cloth. This factory was a steam operation and was converted to cotton in 1855, taking advantage of the large cotton shipments moving from the interior of North Carolina and through the port of New Bern.

In his role of cashier for the Bank of Commerce, Dr. Guion worked to keep the bank's doors open through the turbulent war years. Following closure of the Bank of Commerce in 1867, Dr. Guion was appointed cashier of the National Bank of New Bern. He continued in this role until 1886, when he was disabled by a stroke. Through his considerable expertise, Dr. Guion is credited with helping save the National Bank from financial ruin.

After partially recovering from his stroke, Dr. Guion became the Commissioner of the Sinking Fund of Craven County. A sinking

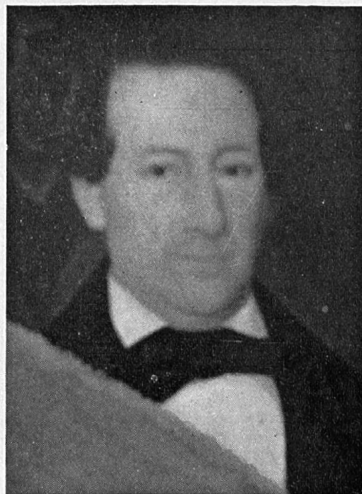
fund is basically a fund established by setting aside revenue over time in order to fund future capital expenditures or repay debt. Additionally, Dr. Guion was a trustee of the New Bern Academy, his alma mater. As his father and grandfather before him, he was a vestryman for Christ Episcopal Church and was active in rebuilding the church after a fire in 1871. Ever a servant of his community and neighbors, Dr. Guion was chairman of judges for New Bern's Fair of the Fish, Game, and Oyster Association in 1894, just before his death.

Alonzo Thomas Jerkins (1807 – 1895)

Like his colleague, Dr. Guion, Jerkins had a significant impact on nineteenth-century New Bern, as well as Craven County and North Carolina. He was a church and community leader, state legislator, and businessman. As a businessman, he was a "staunch" supporter of railroad construction and was active in manufacturing, banking, insurance, and shipping.

Carraway provides a good summary concerning the Jerkins family and Alonzo Jerkin's life and impact. Alonzo's father, Thomas Jerkins, was a sea captain operating between New Bern and the West Indies.

However, he retired from the sea after his wife died in 1824. Alonzo was attending the University of North Carolina at the time, but he chose to return to New Bern and teach school in his home.



A. T. JERKINS

Alonzo Thomas Jerkins

His business accomplishments between 1849 and 1859 included:

- Partnership in the 1849 incorporation of the New Bern Manufacturing Company for the production of cotton or woolen goods;
- President of the Newbern Mutual Fire Insurance Company, organized in 1855;
- Chairman and director of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company;
- An organizing member and director of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad Company;
- An interest in both the Trent River Transportation Company and Neuse River Navigation Company; and
- President of the Bank of Commerce at New Bern in 1859.

Without question, Alonzo Jerkins had a significant impact on ground and water transportation, as well as a number of other key Craven County businesses in the nineteenth century.

Political and community leadership included his 1850 election to represent Craven County in the North Carolina House of Commons (today the House of Representatives).

Closer to home he was a trustee of the First Baptist Church and chairman of the Committee of Public Safety in 1861. Additionally, he was very active in the Freemasons. He joined New Bern's St. John's Lodge, serving in several leadership roles, including Worshipful Master. In 1850, he became the twenty-fourth Grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Today, a portrait of Jerkins hangs in both Lowthrop Hall of Masonic Temple (aka St. John's Lodge, 516 Pollock Street) and Grand Lodge Headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Undoubtably, the signature of Alonzo T. Jerkins on a Bank of Commerce note opens another page of New Bern history. This story, one of both challenges and opportunities, echoes into our century.

Today, visitors to New Bern can walk by the fine homes owned by members of the Jerkins family, including the Thomas Jerkins House, Jerkins-Richardson House, and the Jerkins-Duffy House.

Conclusion

Living in the twenty-first century, we have the advantage of recorded history and hindsight. We know how this story concludes. Within two years after the Bank of Commerce began operations, the Civil War erupted. The Bank of Commerce continued through the war, but eventually succumbed to desperate times in 1867. Jerkins and Guion lived on after the war, continuing to work and serve their community. Yes, two handwritten signatures on an old bank note can tell us a great deal, but only if we are willing to dig a bit and uncover the stories they can tell. We can learn from these stories, and be reminded that we truly do stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

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THE EXPLOSION AT BACHELOR CREEK

Nathaniel Glasgow

Prelude

On the afternoon of May 26, 1864, Adjutant Joseph Palmer of the 158th New York Infantry Regiment approached the train depot at Bachelor (also Batchelder) Creek. His horse “showed great uneasiness, being restive and apparently terrified” and upon reaching the train, the prescient horse suddenly whipped around and fled. Seconds later, a tremendous explosion shattered the very air.

Background

The Union had won the day on March 14, 1862 in New Bern, but had not yet won the war. Military minds determined that two key lines of defense were necessary to defend New Bern’s northwest approaches from inevitable Confederate attempts to recapture the city. The inner line was composed of several forts connected by lines of breastworks situated immediately on New Bern’s west. The outer line of defense consisted of smaller earthwork stations placed strategically along stream crossings to utilize these natural lines of defense.

The Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad crossed Bachelor Creek at a point near what is today called Clarks. This site was first occupied on March 20, 1862, when several companies of the 27th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment drove Confederate cavalry away from the railroad bridge and made camp. This site became a permanent outpost due to the crucial importance of protecting the railroad. Several Massachusetts units exchanged duty at this station in the months after the Battle of New Bern including the 17th, 23rd, and 27th regiments. On January 6, 1863, the 58th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment arrived at Bachelor Creek Station.

Due to its position on the front line, this post frequently saw

guerrilla warfare. This outpost was the kingpin of several other stations along Bachelor Creek due to the railroad crossing the creek. At some point a train depot was constructed to improve the station's access to supply and manpower from New Bern, located approximately eight miles east.

The outpost boasted a blockhouse, as well as a stockade, entrenchments, and a *cheval de fries* (a portable fence-like wooden obstacle with projecting spikes) protecting the bridge. A signal tower some ninety feet tall was built right on top of the railroad track. The railroad towards Kinston had largely been rendered obsolete, making this was the end of the line for the Union Army.

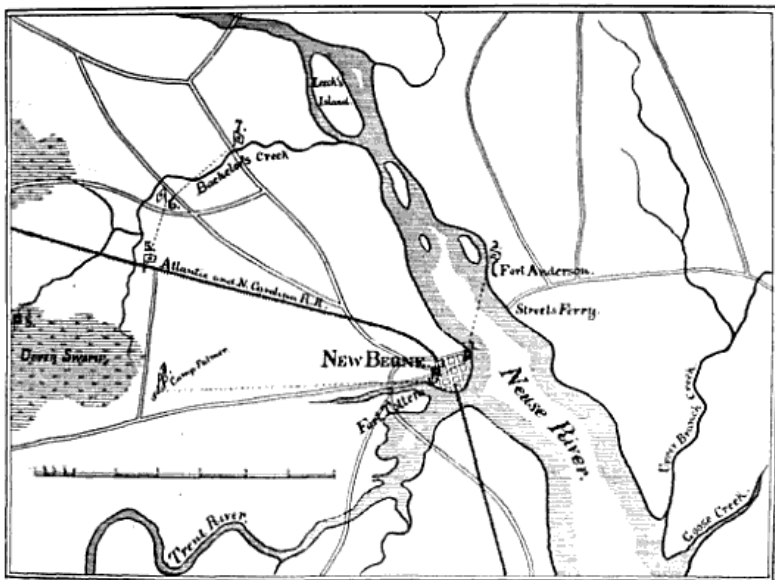
Eventually, the 132nd New York Volunteers arrived. Their camp was located behind the depot along the railroad. This became known as Camp Claassen. Soldiers may have referred to this same site as Camp Hoffman, also. The camp and blockhouse were slightly elevated at roughly 15-20 feet above the waters of the swamp. The position could be accessed only from the direction of New Bern as deep, impassible swamps surrounded the area, and the bridge was accessible by only Union troops.

The Union Army garrisoned in New Bern had already repelled two strong Confederate attacks on New Bern earlier in 1864, in February and in May. The town of Plymouth, some fifty miles to the north, had been captured by the Confederates in April aided by the ironclad CSS *Albemarle*. It was thus rightly feared that the recently constructed CSS *Ram Neuse* could be a major headache if it managed to sail downriver to New Bern. To prevent this disaster, army engineer Lieutenant William Rice King began installing a line of thirteen torpedoes (today called underwater mines) in the Neuse River several miles west of town. The river narrows very quickly upriver from New Bern, being 100-150 yards across in some places.

As it happens, the development of military explosives such as torpedoes and land mines saw two of its biggest fans born in New Bern. Gabriel and George Rains became known as the "Bomb Brothers" due to their work in supplying the Confederates with mines and torpedoes. The defenses of several major southern ports were

aided by torpedoes and mines provided by the Rains brothers. It is unique that New Bern would be the place where torpedoes would continue to cause the Union great loss.

These torpedoes “contained 250 pounds of powder, and were made in barrels, environed with heavy iron hoops” as reported by the newspapers. The site where these torpedoes were to be placed was easiest to reach via Bachelor Creek. The first leg of the journey was the train ride to Bachelor Creek, where the torpedoes would then be transported to the Neuse River. The train left New Bern on the afternoon of May 26 carrying the last four of these torpedoes.



Map depicting the locations of signal stations along Bachelor Creek in The Signal Corps, U.S.A. in the War of the Rebellion.

The Explosion

One can only imagine how much each soldier looked forward to the daily train from town as camp life had few thrills. The train

arrived at the depot once each day and, among other items, would carry the mail and newspapers. As per usual, a large cluster of men gathered by the depot hoping to get mail.

According to W.P. Derby of the 27th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the torpedoes were left in the charge of a Lieutenant Jones, who, upon reaching the station, disembarked to find Colonel Claassen. It appeared that the quartermaster, assuming that the torpedoes were merely barrels loaded with provisions, began to have the train unloaded. The men treated the torpedoes with the care they would have afforded any other barrel and had no reason to think otherwise. Derby later wrote that these torpedoes were made from pork barrels. (As a note, Derby stated “that there were only three torpedoes and each contained 200 pounds of gunpowder.”)

Some say that it was the fourth and final barrel, and some say that it was the second barrel that initiated the explosion. Regardless of the story, while being rolled down from the cars at the station, it seems that a log or stick of wood somehow accidentally hit the cap of one of the torpedoes, causing all of them to explode in a chain reaction. In an instant, the activities of every man in the immediate vicinity were suspended. Perhaps there was half a second of peace in between the first barrel’s explosion and the last three, however, it sounded as one massive blast. The papers reported this sound as being “like the clash of a thousand pieces of artillery fired simultaneously.” To make matters worse, the torpedoes separated from each other as they rolled away, causing the explosion to inflict more damage. A total of approximately 1000 pounds of gunpowder detonated.

George W. Streeter of the 15th Michigan Infantry Regiment, who was ill with a fever in the hospital at Bachelor Creek at the time of the explosion, recalled the following:

Some soldier carelessly dropped a torpedo, and a terrific explosion instantly followed which shook the country for miles around. I was many hundred feet away, and the force of the explosion knocked me down as it did hundreds of others. When we ran to the spot where the men had congregated near the post office we found

nothing but an enormous hole in the ground. There was nothing to be seen of either car or men; but hundreds of feet away in every direction we soon found the scattered and dismembered remains of more than three hundred Union soldiers, which we gathered up as best we could on rubber blankets, and buried as quickly as possible. It was an awful sight. One body was found in the top of a big gum tree fully five hundred feet from the place of the explosion, and seventy-five feet from the ground. When we sawed the tree down and recovered the body, we found that almost every bone had been broken.

Streeter later gained infamy in Chicago for creating the so-called District of Lake Michigan on a sandbar off of the coast of Lake Michigan. The neighborhood of Chicago called Streeterville was named in his honor.

The commissary building, signal tower, log depot building, and the accompanying railroad platform 100 feet long were destroyed. It was reported that the signal tower and commissary building were blasted 800 feet into the air. The force of the explosion threw men and buildings into complete disarray.

The Signal Corps lost two men killed and another wounded. These men were likely on the signal tower when the torpedoes exploded. Being directly above the station, these men were perhaps in the worst position possible. Not only did the explosion and ensuing shockwave destroy the tower, but these men would have fallen a great distance.

The Aftermath

After the smoke cleared, the men were shocked to find bodies strewn all over the countryside. Within a half hour, Colonel Claassen sent a message to the assistant quartermaster requesting fifteen coffins. As the day went on, more and more bodies were discovered, and the terrible cost of the affair became evident. A horror-struck Claassen also messaged the town requesting medical aid, including that "I am too sick at heart to tell you more just now."



**132nd New York
Colonel Peter
Claassen requested
coffins from New Bern
after the explosion.**

There would be no use in relaying verbatim the grim and dreadful accounts of this day. Many of the men were unidentifiable after the blast. In fact, the quartermaster was only recognized by the presence of his ring. Hardtack boxes were used to respectfully bury scattered body parts that were too few to put into a coffin. Remarkably, the train was not destroyed. Those injured were quickly moved to Foster General Hospital in New Bern.

Most sources reported around thirty-five men killed, but an untold number were wounded both physically and mentally. Next to the Battle of New Bern, the explosion was one of the costliest in terms of human life. An exact death toll would be incredibly difficult to determine due to the lack of recording the names of Blacks and civilians killed. Additionally, a blurry line often exists between tallies of wounded and killed. A careful examination of unit muster rolls yielded the following death toll. The 132nd New York lost at least twenty-eight men killed; the 158th New York lost at least four men killed; the 12th New York Cavalry lost at least one man killed; and the 58th Pennsylvania lost at least one man killed. Accounting for unrecorded deaths, the number might approach as high as fifty killed.

Many of these men lost their lives in an instant. But, sadly, the majority of those killed by the explosion lingered for many days. In the case of Private Joseph Ives of Company I, 158th New York, Ives was sent to Foster General Hospital shortly after the explosion and was thought to have been only slightly wounded. Tragically, Ives began enduring terrible internal problems which led to him suffering a hemorrhage twelve days after the explosion. Despite the doctors' best efforts, Ives died two weeks after the explosion. This was the case for a great number of the men who survived the explosion, only to perish soon after.

A post cemetery had already been established at Bachelor Creek for soldiers who died of sickness or from occasional skirmishes with the enemy, but, following the explosion, the cemetery doubled in size. Shortly after the war, men buried in isolated spots in the countryside were moved to the New Bern National Cemetery. In total, fifty-eight bodies were eventually exhumed from Bachelor Creek.

The highest-ranking man killed was Lieutenant W. W. Wells of the 58th Pennsylvania, who was serving Colonel Claassen as a special aide. The youngest man killed is believed to have been a 16-year-old drummer boy named Henry McFarland. McFarland enlisted in the army at age 15 in New Bern.

The oldest man killed is believed to have been Private Michael Briscoe at age 47. Briscoe's commanding officer, Captain John W. Fenton, wasted no time in writing to the family. On May 27, he wrote to Briscoe's wife to offer his "sincerest and warmest sympathies for this sad affliction."



**The graves of accident victims
Private Michael Briscoe and
Sergeant Stephen E. Sanford at
National Cemetery, New Bern**

Once the news of the disaster reached homes, many grieving families may have sought to have the bodies of their loved ones returned. In the case of Sergeant Stephen E. Sanford of Company C, his father wrote to have his son's remains sent home. Sanford's commanding officer in a letter sent to the father informed him that the retrieval of the remains would be impossible at the current time, however, he did send a lock of Sanford's hair home.

This disaster was by no means just another day in North Carolina. On the day after the explosion, Brigadier General I.N. Palmer, commanding Union troops in New Bern, wrote to Lieutenant

King. Already varying tales of the event were spreading. Palmer, desiring to understand exactly how the deadly weapons were left unattended, did not mince words, “Perhaps if Lieutenant King had been present, there would have been more care and lives saved.”

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Nathaniel Glasgow is a 2020 graduate of Appalachian State University and is currently an archaeology field intern at James Madison’s Montpelier. A native of New Bern, Nathaniel plans to use his passion for using archaeology and science to turn New Bern’s history into a life-long pursuit.

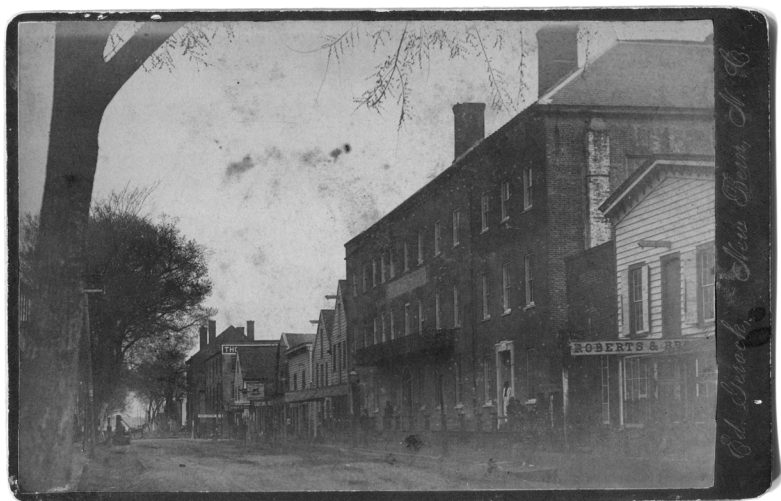


THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF EDWARD GEROCK

Jim Hodges



A North Carolina native, Edward Gerock was most likely born in either Craven or Jones County in 1845. His career in photography began in Raleigh in 1876 and in 1877 he relocated to New Bern where he was active until the early 1900s. He was in partnership with Ignatius W. Brock in 1891 and eventually had his solo studio by 1900 located where the Elks Temple Building is today. He is known for his excellent portrait photography, as well as, capturing the reality of street scenes in New Bern. It is interesting to note that Bayard Wooten apprenticed in his studio in 1905. He died in 1906 and is interred in Cedar Grove Cemetery.



Gaston House
South Front St - East
New Bern
N.C.

The Gaston House Hotel was located on the south side of the current 300 block of South Front Street. It later became the Governor Tryon Hotel and was destroyed by fire in November 1965. The multi-chimney John Harvey House is in the distance.



East Front St. - New Bern N.C.
 Showing Genl Foster's Headquarters
 on the right of Photo and Signal
 station on the left. The point from
 where this photo was taken you have
 an unobstructed view of more than
 10 miles down Neuse River

East Front Street viewing south “showing General Foster Headquarters on the right of photo and signal station on the left. The point from where this photo was taken you have an unobstructed view of more than 10 miles down Neuse River”. The scene is the intersection of East Front and Johnson Streets showing the Charles Slover House on the right and the Jones-Jarvis-Hand House on the left.



Middle St North from So. Front

*New Bernes
NC*

This scene is the 200 block of Middle Street viewing northeast. The three story Hotel Albert is currently 224-226 Middle Street and contains retail businesses. In the foreground is the Windley Building where today you would find Mikes's Downtown Jewelers and The Boathouse.



Ed. Smith, New Bern, N. C.

George St. South from Broad St
New Bern
N.C.

Viewing south at the intersection of Broad and George Streets, the Joseph Rhem House is seen prior to its extensive early 20th century remodeling.



George St. S.
 Portion of Tryon Palace
 New Bern
 N.C.

The former west side of the 200 block of George Street shows the surviving West Wing of Tryon Palace.



Old Academy Building
 used as Hospital
 Academy Green
 New Bern N.C.
 Taken by Edward Geroch
 Photographer, Newbern
 N.C.

The New Bern Academy Building situated on the
 northwest corner of New and Hancock Streets is recognized
 as the oldest school building in North Carolina to be estab-
 lished by law. The 1806-1809 structure proudly stands today.

SARAH DUDLEY PETTEY – AN UP-TO-DATE WOMAN

Claudia Houston

Sarah Dudley Pettey was an eminent African American feminist, educator and journalist in the 1890s who was one of a first generation of women born in freedom. She, along with her husband, Charles Calvin Pettey, helped to establish an African American middle class and promote gender and racial equality in the late nineteenth century in New Bern, North Carolina.



To understand Sarah, one must understand how her family history helped shape her future. “Her optimism and outspokenness sprang from the hopes and fortitude of three generations that came before her.” Dudley’s paternal great grandparents, Edmund and Dinah Pasteur, were born into slavery at the time of the American Revolution and were purchased by a free Black, John Carruthers Stanly. Edmund worked and earned enough money to purchase his wife and children with the intention of manumitting them, but he failed to do so

before his death, leaving the family to remain in slavery. His daughter, Sarah Pasteur, with her sons, Edward Dudley age 3 and James, several months old, became the property of New Bern businessman Richard N. Taylor. He owned a cotton mill with a fleet of schooners. In 1862, upon hearing the rumors of the Union Army advancing on

the city, he fled New Bern taking his family and slaves to Salisbury, NC. While in Salisbury, Edward R. Dudley, Sarah's father, learned the cooper trade, making casks for tobacco, and acting as a foreman on a tobacco farm. Though it was forbidden by law for slaves to learn to read or write, Sarah Pasteur secretly taught her children to do so. When the Civil War ended, the Pasteur/Dudley family moved home to New Bern and freedom.

Edward Dudley, now emancipated, returned to New Bern and became a member of the local police force. During Reconstruction he was elected as a city marshal and later a local magistrate. He was also employed as a cooper, a lucrative trade. He became a leader in the African American community in New Bern by joining the Black Masonic Lodge, St. Peter's AME Zion Church, and the Grand Lodge of Colored Good Templars (the first Black branch of an international temperance order). In 1868, Dudley married his wife Caroline who had learned to read and write also while enslaved. Edward Dudley was then elected to the legislature in 1870.

Sarah Dudley, named for her grandmother, Sarah Pasteur, was the oldest of the Dudley's eight children, and when she was born on November 9, 1869, she was the first child who was free at birth. She was taught to read by her mother and grandmother before she was six. The American Missionary Association came to New Bern in the 1860s and established at least five schools. By the time Sarah entered school, New Bern's Black public schools were graded. She completed the requisite six grades and then attended the coeducational New Bern State Colored Normal School, a state-funded teacher-training school that combined high school work with teaching courses.

One year later, Sarah Dudley, age thirteen, left home for Scotia Seminary a Presbyterian school for women located in Concord, North Carolina. When Sarah arrived, she joined 139 other students, including her roommate, Lula Pickenpack, an older girl from Charlotte who had a boyfriend, Charles Calvin Pettey. Scotia's teachers were racially diverse, and Sarah learned Latin and Greek as well as needlework, cooking, and music.

Sarah graduated with distinction from Scotia in 1883 and

returned to New Bern to teach as an assistant principal in a Black graded public school. During her first teaching year, the average monthly salary of the state's seven hundred Black teachers was \$22 per month. Though it was less than that of white teachers, it was the highest salary a Black woman could earn anywhere. Each school term lasted four months, but during the summer, Dudley attended a month-long teacher training session at the New Bern State Colored Normal School. The following year she became vice principal in the public school system and associate principal of the summer normal school under George White. (Later, he would be elected her congressman.)

During this time, Sarah Dudley kept in touch with Lula Pickenpack and Charles Calvin Pettey. Pettey had been born into slavery in Wilkes County, NC, in 1849. After the Civil War, Pettey farmed during the day and worked as a cobbler and basket maker at night. He traded his handicrafts to white people for reading lessons. After he learned to read, he saved every penny he earned. In 1872 at the age of 23, he put on a pair of shoes he had made; dressed himself in a suit sewn from fabric he had spun; pocketed \$95 in savings; and walked ninety miles to Charlotte to enroll in college at the Biddle Memorial Institute supported by the Presbyterian Church. Biddle offered classical training for men who wanted to become teachers or ministers and Pettey learned to read Latin and Greek.

He remained a member of the AME Zion denomination and on weekends walked more than fifty miles to preach. After graduation, he became the head of a Black public school in Charlotte and four months later became an elder in the AME Zion church. This necessitated a move to South Carolina where he built a national name for himself in the church and in the African American community. He started a school, and with another prominent churchman, John Dancy, began a church newspaper, *The Star of Zion*. The purpose of the newspaper was to encourage Victorianism and temperance and it soon became one of the twelve most important Black newspapers in the nation.

Charles married Lula Pickenpack and they moved to California and not only established a town, Petteyville, but also several new AME Zion churches. This led to Charles' appointment as Bishop of Texas. Lula died in 1887 and Charles returned in 1888 to North

Carolina for a church conference and reconnected with Sarah Dudley. One year later, on September 1, 1889, Sarah and Charles were wed. They would eventually raise five children of their own, along with the two children of Charles and Lula.

Sarah, age twenty and now married, left her teaching position. She was a model teacher and her experience at a college which emphasized Victorian values and morals, plus her marriage to Bishop Pettey, allowed her entry into a small but growing African American middle class in New Bern which at the time was composed largely of teachers and preachers.

Charles was assigned to the church's western district covering Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, and California. Sarah took on the role of her husband's private secretary. This was indicative of Charles' wealth as most African American couples survived on two salaries. Over the next few years, the couple traveled extensively on church business, crossing the country by train and traveling to Europe via steamship. Sarah kept a journal of the couple's travel experiences and in 1893 submitted a selection detailing their Atlantic Ocean crossing to a volume celebrating the achievements of African American women. The Petteys left New York and went to Wales, England, and France. They were well received, and in Cork, Ireland, Sarah noted, "all were white, and yet we were royally entertained." Sarah hoped her intellect and deportment would garner the same treatment and respect at home. Sarah's travel log alone set her apart from the typical African American. She and Charles lived a separate and vastly different life from most of the Black farmers in Eastern North Carolina.

The Petteys lived during a transitional period for African Americans in North Carolina. It was the end of Reconstruction and prior to the enactment of Jim Crow laws which would solidify white supremacy in the late 1890s and 1900s. Many Blacks were educated, industrious and wanted to demonstrate to whites that they were deserving of equal citizenship. In New Bern, the Petteys were one of many successful middle-class Black families consisting of leaders and businessmen who were well educated professionals, who volunteered in the community and believed strongly in race and gender equality.

When the Petteys returned home, they purposely and openly exhibited signs of privilege. Sarah Pettey rode around town in a black carriage drawn by a high stepping mare. Charles Pettey wore silk top hats. The Petteys rented rooms at the best hotels, hosted white townspeople at special programs at St. Peter's and shopped at the best stores. They were doing what whites of the middle class were doing, but whites were annoyed by the Petteys and called them "colored swelldom."

In the summer of 1896, Sarah was invited to write a weekly Woman's Column for the Star of Zion. She had recently been elected as secretary of the Women's Home and Foreign Mission Society and was known and respected. The Star of Zion editor, J.W. Smith, described her "as the best known of Zions' intellectual women." The paper had national recognition and Sarah was the first woman to be given a column in the publication. Women and men in the AME Zion Church had a level of equality not shared in other denominations. At church conferences women were elected to the highest levels of leadership. As a female leader within the church, Sarah was expected to be an able mother, model wife, and outstanding churchwoman. By 1898, Sarah had raised seven children, but she wrote her bi-weekly column without fail and for no pay.

It did not appear that church leaders put restrictions on Sarah's writings. Editor Smith hoped her column would attract a large female readership which it did. In her inaugural piece, written in 1896, Sarah pledged to dedicate her column to "the elevation of oppressed humanity." She wrote about the recent Supreme Court decision in Plessy vs. Ferguson that upheld a Louisiana statute segregating train cars for Blacks and whites. Sarah's decision to address this issue in her first column in the Star was indicative of her boldness. It was clear, as well, that the Star had become a national forum for discussion of politics and issues important to race. Sarah expressed outrage at Jim Crow segregation but urged her readers to remain hopeful. It was difficult to explain to her readers that despite all the good being done by industrious and exemplary Black citizens, the Supreme Court had ruled against them. African Americans were unclear as to how to respond.

Booker T. Washington, in a speech at the International Exposition in Atlanta, told Blacks they should obtain industrial education skills and ignore demands of social equality and politics. The Petteys disagreed with this policy and in fact thought it important for Blacks to strive for higher educational goals and to look back at slavery to see how far their race had progressed in a relatively short time. Sarah's father had held political office and with the election of many Black representatives in local government in 1896, Washington's premise was not one the Petteys could accept.

Despite the attempts by white supremacists to curb Black political activity elsewhere, the Petteys thought the same was unlikely to happen in NC. They presumed that the Black "better class" would lead their race to progress and prosperity by embracing a list of values and behaviors which would directly and ultimately result in equality. The Black middle class, only one generation removed from slavery, promoted ideals of responsibility among the poor and working-class Blacks. Black teachers and preachers and writers like Sarah focused upon improving their race. If Victorianism represented the best of middle-class white society, then many reasoned these values would elevate the Black race as well. They adopted the strict moralistic code of British Victorianism which included industriousness, thrift, self-moderation, and service to others. By adopting this code, the Black middle class thought they would be on equal social and moral footing with whites. They hoped such behavior would generate respect from whites so they would be judged by character, not skin color.

Besides encouraging Sarah to write the column for the *Star of Zion*, Charles also encouraged her to follow his sermons with sermons of her own. She often spoke about women's rights and her favorite two sermons were "Woman, the Equal of Man" and "Women's Suffrage." One of her favorite lines was "Some would say that a woman was good in her place. This reminds me of what some white people say about the Negro: that 'he is good in his place.'" The Negro won't accept it, and neither should woman.

Sarah thought women were qualified to vote and wrote about other states that had already allowed it. She explained that women were in power all over the world and it was time to regard women as the equal of men. She wrote how the "up-to-date woman should be

engaged in all things and take her place in the front rank of the thinkers of her age.” Dudley Pettey connected the oppression of women and the argument that they should be constrained to the domestic sphere as the same as arguing that African Americans should only be educated for “menial labor.” Sarah saw women’s advancement as crucial to the uplifting of the entire race. She thought women would vote, engage in politics, and participate in defeating and outsmarting white supremacists. Sarah’s calls for women’s equality in the *Star of Zion* were matched by her outrage against racism.

In 1898, Charles allowed the ordination of Mary Small as an elder in the Church. This was highly controversial as it was the first time an ordination for a woman occurred in any denomination. This was strongly supported by Sarah who was opposed to gender discrimination.

Charles died suddenly in 1900 from uremic poisoning. Sarah had her husband’s final words carved on his tombstone: “I will lay down here and give up my tools, believing that God doeth all things for the best. Look up on high and believe that I am here, when I am gone.” Sarah, concerned by the passage of Jim Crow laws, moved North with her family and stayed for a time with Mary Small. Although the church leadership delayed repaying several thousand dollars they owed the family, Sarah continued her unpaid position on the mission board. In 1906, Sarah became gravely ill and died a few weeks later, on November 3, at the age of thirty-seven. Both Charles and Sarah are buried at Greenwood Cemetery in New Bern. It would be another fifteen years before women would be allowed to vote and another sixty years before African American men and women in North Carolina would experience the freedom that Charles and Sarah had known in late nineteenth-century New Bern. For many North Carolinians, the closing years of the nineteenth century were filled with unprecedented optimism due to educational opportunities, support by the Black church, and fusionist politicians. By demonstrating their progress as a race, others, like the Petteys, thought they could ward off Jim Crow. They certainly thought suffrage for Black men would remain intact. From the pages of the *Star of Zion*, Pettey was able to advocate for racial uplift, gender equality and women’s suffrage, despite the

tightening grip of Jim Crow.

“Long after her death, Sarah Dudley Pettey’s writings remind us about what we have forgotten about a period known as the “nadir” of African American history.” Her editorials are a written record of the dynamic leadership of Black women in politics throughout this period of North Carolina history. She was a woman way ahead of her time.

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CALEB D. BRADHAM INVENTOR OF PEPSI-COLA

Chris S. Kelso

New Bern, NC, has a rich history of men and women who have made significant contributions to community and culture. Arguably, few New Bernians have made an international impact more than Caleb Bradham. He was the inventor of a fountain drink originally known as “Brad’s Drink” and the founder of the Pepsi-Cola Company. More than an enterprising pharmacist, Bradham was a popular businessman and an engaged citizen in New Bern. Much of the Pepsi-Cola story can be learned by visiting the Pepsi-Cola Museum on the SE corner of Middle and Pollock streets. However, if one reviews his local involvements and personal life, a multi-dimensional man is revealed.



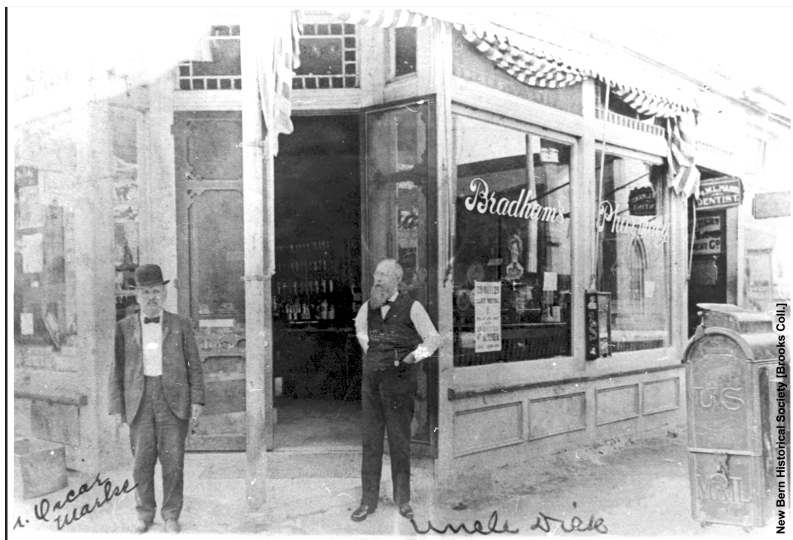
Bradham was born to an upper-class family in Duplin County in southeastern North Carolina during the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. He was educated in various private schools and then graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1889. Thereafter, he attended medical school at the University of Maryland aspiring to be a physician. Unfortunately, he was forced to discontinue medical school and to return to North Carolina when his family was unable to support his medical education due to a family crisis and financial reversal.

Following his return to New Bern in 1890, Bradham taught school briefly at Vance Academy and by 1891, he had begun his foray into business as the bookkeeper at the J.C. Whitney Co., a purveyor of farm equipment and supplies. His investments continued

and included: co-owner of Bradham and Gates Grain Co. and partnering to purchase the C. C. Green Drug Store, then located at the SE corner of Middle and Pollock streets.

By the mid-1890s, he was able to return to the University of Maryland. During his previous tenure there he had apprenticed as a pharmacist assistant and this time he pursued a formal education in pharmacy. He received his NC pharmacist license in 1895 and opened the Bradham and Brock Drug Co., which eventually became the Pepsi Museum. Ever the ambitious businessman, Bradham bought Brock's interest in the partnership and renamed it the Bradham Drug Co. He then leased another building at the southwest corner of Middle and Broad Streets calling his second drug store, Bradham's Pharmacy, now the site of the Chelsea Restaurant.

In the late nineteenth century, drug stores were more than a retail store for patent medicines, elixirs, toiletries, and cosmetics. They became popular social gathering places where various flavored, carbonated fountain drinks were concocted, and local news and opinions were shared. Bradham began experimenting with various fruit flavors, acid phosphates, sugar, and carbonated water. Bradham's



creation, modestly named Brad's Drink, was hugely popular with his drug store clientele. He promoted the drink to be an "exhilarating, invigorating drink which aids digestion." Other pharmacies in the time were experimenting with fountain drinks that may have contained narcotics, uranium, arsenic or other unhealthy ingredients, yet touted their healthful benefits. Bradham was adamant that Brad's Drink would be healthy as well as refreshing. Local demand for Brad's Drink surged and in 1898 he changed the name to "Pepsi-Cola" that he derived from the pepsin and cola nuts in the recipe. He trademarked the new name, and founded the Pepsi-Cola Company, Inc. in 1902. He subsequently secured the Pepsi formula patent (U.S. Patent #40,619) in 1903.

During the flurry of organizing Pepsi-Cola, Bradham (age 34) married Sarah Charity Credle who was originally from Swan Quarter, NC. When they married in 1901, she was the chief nurse at the hospital in Atlantic City, NJ. Bradham and Sarah's family included a daughter Mary (1903), and two sons Caleb, Jr. (1905) and George (1907). In 1908, Bradham used his new Pepsi-Cola wealth to purchase and move his family into a large stately home on the SE corner of East Front and Johnson streets (the Slover-Bradham House at 201 Johnson St.).

Just like the Bradham family was growing, the local demand for Pepsi-Cola was surging. Bradham was reportedly overseeing the production of 35-gallon casks of Pepsi-Cola syrup in the basement of Bradham's Pharmacy on Broad St. As a savvy marketeer and recognizing the growth potential of Pepsi-Cola, he embraced the modern concepts of mass advertising and business franchising. To expand the production of Pepsi-Cola syrup and start a bottling operation, in 1904 he purchased a vacant manufacturing building (the Bishop Factory) at the NW corner of Hancock and Johnson streets. The bottling operation of carbonated beverages was a relatively new process in the fledgling industry. Bradham mastered the process which meant that bottles of Pepsi-Cola could be purchased and consumed away from a drug store. In 1906 the US Congress passed the "Pure Food and Drink Act" that Pepsi complied within all aspects. By 1909, Pepsi-Cola was being bottled and distributed under franchise agreements in 250 plants in 24 states. The Pepsi-Cola plant on Hancock St. was producing 56,000

gallons of the drink daily.

The meteoric success and growth of the Pepsi-Cola Company paralleled Bradham's broad range of local civic achievements including:

- Member of the New Bern Steam Fire Engine Company;
- Founder and officer of the NC Naval Militia, a forerunner of the U.S. Naval Reserve, from which he would retire as an admiral in 1917;
- Exalted Ruler of the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks (B.P.O.E.) in 1909-1910;
- Treasurer of the New Bern Rotary Club;
- Trustee First Presbyterian Church;
- Chairman of the Craven County Board of Commissioners in 1915;
- Vice president of the Peoples Bank of New Bern;
- Honorary president of the NC Railroad Company; and
- Master of the St. John's Lodge #3 of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons.

Locally, Bradham, a lifetime Democrat, was encouraged and promoted as a possible gubernatorial candidate. Instead of pursuing state politics, he used his energy to grow the Pepsi-Cola company. In 1910, he hosted the first Pepsi-Cola convention for franchisees and business associates that later became a gala annual event in New Bern complete with river cruises and oyster roasts. The year 1915 was perhaps the peak of Bradham's career and Pepsi-Cola's growth in New Bern. World events would change everything for him and his company.

As world became engulfed in the global conflict of World War I in 1914, the supply of sugar, a key ingredient in the Pepsi-Cola formula, became a scarce commodity and was eventually rationed in

the United States. Bradham saw the price of sugar steadily rise from three cents per pound to more than twenty cents a pound. Expecting even higher prices, he invested huge sums of cash to buy sugar at war-inflated prices that the company stockpiled to support Pepsi-Cola production. When the war ended in 1918, sugar rationing ended and the price of sugar plummeted to pre-war prices. Unable to raise the bottle price of his product, Bradham and his company began losing money on every bottle of Pepsi-Cola sold.

In 1918 things became even more serious in New Bern. The first cases of the Spanish Flu were recorded, and the pandemic took its toll locally through 1919. While the Bradham family remained physically healthy, the Pepsi-Cola company was financially hemorrhaging. The company was forced to sell off assets and assume more debt. On December 1, 1922, New Bern suffered the Great Fire which burned properties within blocks of the Pepsi-Cola plant on Hancock St. It seemed that everything was going wrong in New Bern for Bradham and Pepsi-Cola.

Six months later on May 31, 1923, the Pepsi-Cola Co. and Caleb Bradham, now age 56, declared bankruptcy. The residual corporate assets of Pepsi-Cola, including the trademarked name and formulae, were placed in receivership. Divestment of his personal assets included: the pharmacy on Pollock Street; a 1,800-acre farm that he owned in the county; and transfer of ownership of his home on Johnson St. to his wife and a son. Dispirited by business failures Bradham lost the verve to continue as a pharmacist. Thus, he accepted a paid position as the recorder (a position similar to an executive director) of the Sudan Temple at the NW corner of E. Front and Broad streets and remained in this position for many of his remaining years. Upon retirement, he was awarded the honorary title of *Recorder Emeritus* of which he was most proud.

Caleb D. Bradham died at home on February 19, 1934, at the age 66 as the US economy was spiraling downward in the Great Depression. His funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church, and he was buried in the Cedar Grove Cemetery with full Masonic Rites. From 1898-1923, he had accomplished many achievements as a pharmacist, inventor, entrepreneur, manufacturer, and business leader



Caleb Bradham's Grave at Cedar Grove Cemetery.

within a six city-block area in New Bern. After the Great Depression, the dormant Pepsi-Cola Company would come under new ownership to emerge and grow strong enough to aggressively challenge its closest competitor, Coca-Cola, for national and ultimately, international dominance of the beverage industry. While Caleb Bradham did not live to see the rebirth of Pepsi-Cola and his name may not be recognized everywhere as the inventor of Pepsi-Cola, he is a lasting credit to the history of New Bern.

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Chris Kelso is an “almost” native of the New Bern area having grown up in James City on the banks of the Neuse. After graduation from UNC-Chapel Hill, he was commissioned and served as a Naval Aviator. He returned to New Bern to pursue a career as an Independent Insurance Agent, retiring as an owner and principal in The Insurance Center. He is an active volunteer, director and officer in the New Bern Historical Society.



GREENWOOD CEMETERY – A CONTROVERSIAL PAST REVEALED

Bill Hand

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”
—Epitaph on the grave of Sarah Rice

In 1913, New Bern City Council had a problem on its hands. The Cedar Grove Cemetery was running out of space.

This old cemetery located along Queen and George streets in New Bern is one of the finest historical cemeteries in the state. Founded in 1800 by Christ Episcopal Church after yellow fever filled up its campus graveyard, Cedar Grove would become the final resting place of many of the city’s founders and heroes. State Supreme Court Judge and author of the state song, William Gaston lies under a massive stone a short walk from the cemetery’s Weeping Gate. Thomas Thomlinson, the city’s first schoolmaster, lies right inside, as do the family graves of some of the Stanlys. John Wright Stanly, the privateer whose ships helped finance the American Revolution, is buried at the church, but Cedar Grove houses his hot-tempered son, the congressman and duelist John Stanly, Jr. Among the prominent women are renowned photographer Bayard Wootten (though her name is misspelled as “Wooten” on the cemetery’s welcome marker) and her writer/poet grandmother Mary Bayard Devereux Clark.

During the Jim Crow era – led in part by New Bern resident and U.S. Senator Furnifold Simmons, in 1882 the City established its unofficial Negro cemetery, Greenwood, located only a few blocks away.

Since the turn of the twentieth century only whites were laid to rest in Cedar Grove. But that hadn’t always been the case. Especially prior to post-Civil War Reconstruction, New Bern had been a largely unsegregated town. Its unusually large population of free Blacks

lived in the same parts of town as the whites, worshipped in the same churches (former slave John Carruthers Stanly was one of the founders of the First Presbyterian Church), and were often laid to rest in the same hallowed grounds of Cedar Grove.

Cedar Grove Cemetery was transferred to the city in 1853. New Bern quickly enlarged the cemetery northward that same year and, around 1900, enlarged it again to Cypress Street. Like many old cemeteries, it was filling quickly and families were demanding new plots. The Board of Aldermen's Cemetery Committee, comprised of Aldermen Solomon H. Scott, William Ellis and R. Justice Disosway, had been trying to decide what to do about it and finally came up with a solution. On August 5, 1913, Chairman Disosway announced its decision to the board. As recorded in the minutes, "Alderman Disosway moved that the city attorney be instructed to move the colored bodies from Cedar Grove Cemetery to Greenwood. Motion seconded and adopted." The meeting was not reported in the press until August 29th, but it seemed to stir up no controversy.

Moving the bodies required permission from the NC General Assembly, but that was not hard to achieve. A special state legislative session was held for that purpose and, at the October 9, 1913, meeting of the aldermen, "R.A. Nunn, City Attorney announced that the legislature had passed a bill authorizing the mayor and Board of Aldermen to remove the bodies of colored persons from Cedar Grove Cemetery and re-inter them in Greenwood Cemetery."

Soon the wheels of government were rolling to make the moves. A legal notice ran several times through December in the Daily Journal and New Bern Weekly Journal alerting Black families of the City's plans:

"Notice is hereby given to all persons holding deeds for or claiming to own lots in Cedar Grove Cemetery... that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of said City... were authorized and empowered to remove the dead bodies of all colored persons now buried in said Cedar Grove Cemetery and to properly and decently re-inter said bodies in Greenwood Cemetery in said city and

that such bodies will be so removed after the first day of January, 1914...”

Anyone wanting to debate the issue was given a token chance:

“...Unless the next of kin, devisee or devisees, of such deceased persons, or the owners of such lots, show cause why such removal should not be made on or before said day.

By order of the Board of Aldermen.

This 3rd day of December, 1913

R. J. DISOSWAY,
Chairman of Cemetery Committee”

With that act, graves purchased and occupied by once-respected African American families in New Bern were taken without recompense, their ancestors’ remains dug up and reburied to make room for whites. By today’s standards, the blandly-stated order is a shocking example of how devalued the Black population had become in the south.

Who was Alderman Disosway and what drove him to form such a plan? Reginald Justice Disosway was by all accounts a respected member of the community. A small business proprietor, he co-managed the Home Bakery on Middle Street with co-proprietor Ernest McLacklan. Disosway’s wife Lula was the chief baker there. Disosway represented the city’s 5th Ward along with fellow Alderman Satterthwaite. He was by no means the most powerful alderman on the board, which included a bank president, bank vice president and a number of prominent business owners.

If Disosway was a white supremacist, he was apparently not an active one. His name rarely showed up in the newspapers of the day, other than in articles about aldermen meetings – in a day when the social lives of the town’s most leading citizens were regularly followed in the press. Advertisements for the Knights of Harmony Craven Lodge No. 1 list him as the organization’s secretary – a post he held periodically at least as far back as 1900. The Disosways were

active members of the historic Christ Episcopal Church, where his wife, Lula, was listed as superintendent of the church school.

Age 55 at the time of the 1913 disinterment order, Disosway would live to the age of 64 and die at St. Luke's Hospital on September 14, 1922. He and Lula had five children: Annie, William, Lula, Katherine and Ruth who had died in infancy. The family home was on Spencer Avenue.

Given his leadership role in the disinterment scheme, the story of Disosway's eldest daughter, also named Lula, is curious. Lula was a devout Christian who by age 11 had already determined to become a medical missionary. She would become one of the city's most honored, leading citizens, spending years at a Shanghai hospital and serving in an Alaska hospital as a missionary for the Episcopal Church. She would eventually serve as director of the Good Shepherd Hospital – the hospital for coloreds in New Bern – until 1966. She worked tirelessly with the city's minority community helping young and inexperienced mothers. The current CarolinaEast Medical Center chapel is named in her honor. Lula credited her parents as helping to lead her in her faith; obviously she had a respect and admiration for minorities that is at odds with her father's stance.

The most likely motivation for Disosway's disinterment plan was the deep entrenchment of the Jim Crow segregation laws in society. The concept of racial inequality was so deeply woven into the south's cultural fabric that it was largely and unthinkingly accepted as the norm. Such a contradiction is hard to comprehend today. But I have interviewed numerous senior Black citizens who recalled the days of segregation with the simple phrase, "that's just the way it was." Though African Americans doubtless felt the sting, such prejudice was an accepted way of life. As one man told me, "I just thought that was the way it was supposed to be."

Despite the general acceptance of "separate but equal," there are ironic and even puzzling exceptions, examples of the engineers of racist policy stepping out to help those same Blacks they disenfranchised. After the Great Fire of 1922, which destroyed much of the Black community, leaving hundreds homeless, Senator Furnifold

Simmons worked tirelessly to quickly move hundreds of large tents from military bases to New Bern, setting up a tent city among the ruins to give the homeless residents places to stay. After the Great Fire and within three months of Alderman Disosway's death, his widow Lula Disosway was hailed as a hero by the Morning New Bernian under the headline "While Son Fought Fire Mother Made Bread for Hungry."

Disosway's plan – or the committee's at least – rolled into action with little or no resistance. If any Black families stepped forward to defend their claims to their plots, the newspapers and city minutes are silent. This is not surprising. Of the graves dug up, the most recent had been put in place 54 years before in 1859.

The graves were opened shortly after the start of the year in 1914. The Daily Journal of January 9, 1914, gave a lurid account of the openings under the headline "Strange Sights Greet Grave Openers' Eyes – Their Experiences, When Told, Read Like a Fairy Story." The unnamed writer added "Many years ago, eighty or ninety maybe, a number of colored persons who souls had passed into that bourne from which no traveller has yet returned, were interred in Cedar Grove cemetery which is now and has for many years been used exclusively by the white people."

One of the first bodies exhumed was that of "an old colored preacher who came to New Bern about eighty years ago from Africa" – mostly likely the preacher John Cook who died in 1856. "It is said that the parson was a mighty leader among his race but evil days befell him and he finally took to his bed and later succumbed to some malignant malady," the article declared.

It went on to note that only a few human remains were found: "The men who are engaged in the work found that, although the coffin had almost entirely decayed, that there were parts of the skeleton remaining and one part of the skull was intact. Several of the African's teeth were also found."

The opened graves were located from the southwestern corner of Cedar Grove, running along George Street, across the street from the present-day police station and Kafer Park. Over a few days what

remains were found, along with a dozen tombstones, were removed and placed in Greenwood Cemetery. Those unfortunate citizens whose remains were summarily dug up include:

Elisha Branson (d. 1858)	Robert Walker (d.1846)
Richard Smith (d. 1840)	William Harvey (d. 1855)
Eliza Johnson (d. 1805)	Hannah Bremage (d. 1858)
Robert Lipsey (d. 1859)	Margaret Sawyer (d. 18__)
Sarah Rice (d. 1821)	John Cook (d.1856)

Especially touching is the gravestone of Delia (no last name) who perished in 1816 at age 60. Presumably laid to rest in Cedar Grove by her white owners, her epitaph reads, “From her childhood an affectionate, faithful and invaluable servant in the family of Edward Graham....”

A lost grave of historic significance is that of Sarah Rice. She had been a slave of Richard Dobbs Spaight, the signer of the U.S. Constitution, while her son, John Rice Green, was the son of John Stanly Jr., the firebrand congressman who took Spaight’s life in a duel in 1802. Rice would ultimately gain her freedom upon the death of Spaight’s wife Mary in 1810. Her mixed-race grandson, John Patterson Green, would become a state legislator in Ohio in 1882 where he would be credited, in 1890, with creating Labor Day in that state – which would go on to be declared a national holiday by Congress in 1894.

Not every Black person in Cedar Grove was disinterred. Many unmarked graves remain, unmarked and unknown as well, for many cemetery records were lost in 19th century fires at both Christ Episcopal Church (1874) and the county courthouse (1861). At least four are known today to remain in Cedar Grove, according to New Bern Historical Society Curator Jim Hodges – among them Sally McLure Green, first wife of John Rice Green, the son of Sarah Rice.

In February 1914, Disosway had the plots in the cemetery redrawn, "The lots numbering from 1-77A," the board of aldermen minutes read, "SECTION 'A' being the part of the cemetery vacated by the removal of the colored bodies."

In May, Disosway finalized the whole project with another ordinance: "No lot to Cedar Grove cemetery shall be sold to any negro person or person of negro descent... and no lot in Greenwood Cemetery shall be sold to any white person." The bill passed with only one dissenting vote.

In Greenwood Cemetery the remains were buried and the stones set up in three rows of four stones each, and whether the remains were placed beneath them or in a common grave was soon forgotten...until 100 years later.

While researching for a history column a few years back, I came upon some of the newspaper articles discussed above and, on February 10, 2014, published a column about them in the Sun Journal. A couple of years later that article came to the attention of Ben Watford, a local Black historian and then president of the James City Historical Society, which oversees the Crockett-Miller Slave Quarters that stands on airport property along the edge of town.

Angered by what he learned, Watford in 2018 enlisted the aid of Reverend Robert Johnson, African American pastor of the historic Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, and Black business leader Mary Peterkin. They began a drive to correct the wrong. Citing research by Tryon Palace historian Holly Fisher, the men were convinced the bodies had been placed in one mass grave. "What they did was absolutely wrong," Watford told me in an interview in March 2018. "It was a disgrace to desecrate the dead like that. And, not to put them in individual graves was the other thing that bothered me." He added that, "No care was taken. They just dug them up and dumped them." He added that the issue should have been addressed years before: "Every board of aldermen since 1913 bears some responsibility for what happened."

Watford and Johnson addressed the city aldermen, demanding

that the remains be returned to Cedar Grove. The idea was controversial even in the Black community. Sharon Bryant, Director of African American Studies at the Palace, for one, called for memorial plaques at both cemeteries but not for moving the bodies. “They shouldn’t have been put in (Greenwood) in the first place,” she told me. “Now you’re talking about digging them up and moving them again? No.”

Johnson and Watford met with Mayor Dana Outlaw, City Manager Mark Stephens and Aldermen Sabrina Bengel and Barbara Best. As a result, advice was sought from Dr. Charles Ewan, principal investigator with the Department of Anthropology at East Carolina University. Dr. Ewan had recently overseen anthropological research at the site of the final battle of the 1711-15 Tuscarora War at Fort Neoheroka near Snow Hill. He agreed with the City Council to conduct a study in Greenwood Cemetery using ground penetrating radar (GPR) to search for any signs of remains.

On September 10, 2018, a research team located GPR anomalies beneath the ground that led Ewan to decide that an archeological dig would be worth the time. He and a team of graduate students went to work on March 15, 2019, armed with screens and shovels and a backhoe provided by the city. Several of the tombstones were pulled from the ground to be cleaned and then properly replaced by Parks and Recreation Department (the department now managing city cemeteries). Ewan’s mission was threefold: to look for burials beneath the tombstones; if burials were discovered, to determine whether they were buried separately or in a mass grave; and to learn the condition of any human remains found.

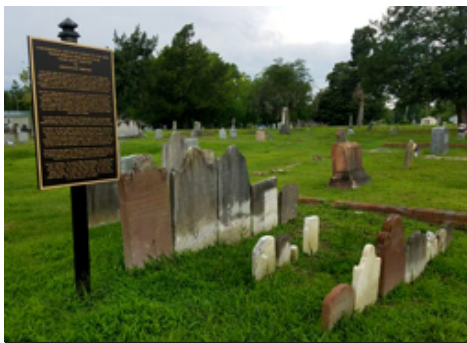
After the backhoe removed a couple feet of earth, Ewan and his team came upon a surprise: the remains – such as there were even in 1914 – had not been placed under their tombstones, but neither had they been simply dumped in a single, open grave. Rather, “Excavations revealed a 6.2 by 6.5-foot brick-walled vault with remains encountered at 5.7 feet below the ground surface,” according to an archeological report. The floor was also of brick, and a bagful of bone remains, most of them tiny, were recovered from the floor, recorded, placed in plastic bags and replaced. “The roof of the brick vault had collapsed in the past,” the report continued, “and the vault

filled with dirt.”

The report concluded with suggestions that some kind of educational and memorial markers should be employed. The report went on to suggest another dig: “More extensive inventory and osteological analysis of the human skeletal remains from the site could provide... additional demographic information,” it read in conclusion. “Should further analysis be desired, the backfill would be removed and the bagged and any loose bones would be recovered and the vault fully exposed and recorded. Additional historical research should be undertaken in any event to better understand the transferal event and perhaps determine who [was] responsible for the construction of the brick vault.”

The lack of remains precluded their being removed once more to Cedar Grove Cemetery, a situation Watford was willing to accept – particularly since he did not have strong support in the Black community.

City Parks and Recreation Director Foster Hughes worked with Watford’s group to write and produce two brass 2-by-3-foot markers commemorating the 1913-14 history. On February 29, 2020, a ceremony was held at St. Peter’s AME Zion Church, across the street from Cedar Grove, after which celebrants held the dedication of temporary markers at both cemeteries. The finished brass markers were placed in March 2020.



Greenwood-Cemetery

Photo credit: Wendy Card, New Bern Now

The plaque outlines the story of the graves. “Five years after the reconstruction era ended,” it read, “the city of New Bern passed an ordinance that blacks and whites could not be buried in the same cemeteries owned by the city. Greenwood Cemetery was founded in 1882 as a burial place for the city’s black residents. Cedar Grove Cemetery, founded in 1800, was the original burial place for all the city’s residents prior to the introduction of segregation and Jim Crow laws....”

Outlining the history of both the reinterment and the archeological dig, it concludes, “This information is being highlighted in an effort to restore the healing, dignity, honor and respect to those individuals and families whose remains were removed and re-interred.” I hope this article does the same.

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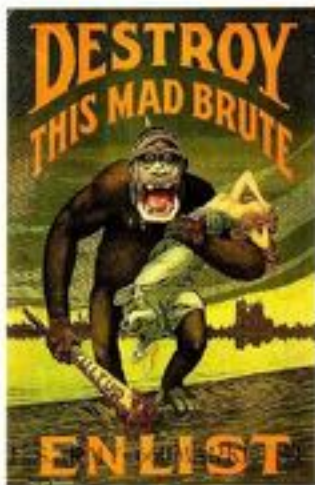
Bill Hand is a New Bern journalist, historian and playwright who wrote for the New Bern Sun Journal for many years. More recently he is editing and writing the online Newbernlive.org newspaper. His recent forays into the arts includes the development of the North Carolina History Theater whose showcase piece is his and Simon Spalding’s musical rendition of the 1802 Stanly-Spaight duel, “Honour.”



THE GREAT WAR AND CRAVEN COUNTY

Mark Sandvigen

WAR! The headline screamed from newspapers around the country on April 6, 1917. The United States had declared war on the German Empire; we were finally in it.



President Woodrow Wilson would state in his request for a Declaration of War, “To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.”

Yesterday, like today, the nation’s newspapers had a field day. They missed all the nuanced elements of Wilson’s speech to Congress and overnight whipped America into a frenzy of war fever.

The following story tells of our country's and Craven County's preparation for war, and three Craven County men who were caught up in the maelstrom of the country's mood as it lurched towards war: the physician, the volunteer, and the draftee.

America Prepares for War and Craven County Responds

President Wilson's call to arms would turn out to be a three-pronged problem: creating a fighting force, engaging the civilian population, and converting industry from consumerism to wartime production. This did not occur overnight, nor did it occur without major disruptions to people's lives. Ultimately, the war would change everything.

It is one thing to advocate war, it is quite another to finance, equip, train, transport, feed, and create an army out of whole cloth. As of April 1917, the United States, had a couple hundred thousand men under arms, while European armies and navies numbered in the millions. The US Army's 127,151 soldiers were deployed throughout the United States, the Philippines, Cuba, Central America, and the Panama Canal Zone. Navy manpower stood at 194,617 and was deployed throughout Asia, as well as engaged in coastal defense and, since early April, fighting the Atlantic submarine war. This scattering of experienced soldiers and sailors meant they were not immediately available to deploy or train the armed forces needed for Europe.

President Wilson alluded to conscription in his war address to Congress. However, he naively thought that he would get 500,000 volunteers and that would be that. The all-volunteer force failed miserably. Exacerbating the manpower shortfall, the United States had over ten million recent immigrants, many from countries requiring military service – they would not volunteer for the US. Compounding this, the Irish immigrants refused to serve alongside the English, the Germans refused to fight their countrymen, and immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire realized they could fight the Italians and the Serbs just as well on the streets of American cities as in Europe.

Facing a very rough start on the road to preparing America for war, North Carolina would respond by mobilizing its 5500 National

Guard (NCNG) troops for federal service. The new national army was in luck, the NCNG troops came with a unique qualification, they were combat ready. The NCNG had recently returned from Pershing's punitive expedition on the southern border of the United States chasing and fighting the forces of the Mexican revolutionary, Pancho Villa.

Records indicate that some 43 NCNG soldiers of this expedition were citizens of Craven County. These combat veterans would go on to help form the core and serve in several American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) divisions throughout the war. These Craven County guardsmen would participate in some of the most decisive AEF battles of WWI. This core group of veteran guardsmen – John Frank Bennett, Macon Earl Cavanaugh, John Clen Daugherty, Kenneth Meredith Rea, Burton E. Stilley, and William Harvey Toler – are remembered for their service on Craven County's World War I Memorial.

Converting America's industrial base and citizenry would also pose problems. The citizens of Craven County had enjoyed three years of a boom economy. Farmers had seen crop prices increase year after year as the United States did its best to feed our soon-to-be European allies and the county had almost full employment.

Change, however, was in the air. To finance the war, the businesses and people of New Bern and Craven County participated in the first issuance of Liberty Bonds. They also began to feel the pinch as the U.S. government implemented the 16th Amendment, allowing Congress to levy an income tax. The people of New Bern and Craven County also noticed pro-war posters popping up in shop windows, government buildings, and the post offices. Last, but most important, they started to see their friends and neighbors disappear from farms, industry, and places of worship as the first volunteers left for the war.

The Draft Builds Momentum

Those men currently serving plus the volunteers were not enough. In desperation, the War Department dusted off a document created by Secretary of War Elihu Root, who served from 1899 to 1904, about how to mobilize the country should the need arise. His

Creation of the Doughboy

Once called up for induction, White inductees would entrain and be sent to Camp Jackson Columbia, South Carolina; Camp Green Charlotte, North Carolina; Camp Hancock Augusta, Georgia; Camp Sevier Greenville, South Carolina; and Camp Wadsworth Spartanburg, South Carolina).



The South, still enforcing segregation through Jim Crow laws found large influxes of African American inductees to southern camps unwelcome. The Army, sensing further social unrest, sent Black draftees to Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois. Upon completion of basic training at Camp Grant, those who enlisted or were drafted would find themselves in non-combatative support roles. Most African Americans would serve in the Services of Supply (nicknamed S.O.S.) units of the AEF.

The Physician

America had not anticipated its medical needs in standing up its new army. Nor did war planners understand the impact to local communities once the nation put out the call for 17,000 physicians. Difficulties arose in North Carolina almost immediately. “Some towns with young physicians were completely denuded when they all volunteered....”



One such town, and one such volunteer, was Dr. Steven James Hawes of Dover, NC. Hawes had attended UNC, and after graduation, attended the University College of Medicine in Richmond, Virginia, graduating in 1911. With medical degree in hand, he began practicing medicine in Dover, NC.

When war was declared, Hawes did his patriotic duty and registered

for the draft on June 5, 1917. He listed his address as Dover, his occupation as a physician, and place of employment as the Goldsboro Lumber Company in Dover. His service record also noted that he had a wife, Lena White, of Belhaven, NC, and a son, Stephen James Hawes Jr.

As a reservist, he was activated and made a 1st Lieutenant in the Medical Corps on April 5, 1918. His initial duty stations were stateside, where he would get additional training at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia; Camp Jackson; and Newport News in Virginia before deploying to France. On July 26, 1918, Hawes left on the USS Susquehanna headed for France and his new duty station, Evacuation Hospital #14, where he served until his death there of the Spanish Flu on October 28, 1918.

He was initially buried in the American Cemetery of Les Islettes in Meuse, France. Hawes' body was disinterred on June 2, 1919, and reburied at the Argonne American Cemetery in the commune of Romagne-sous-Mountfacon in Meuse, France. He was disinterred and reburied one last time on December 2, 1921, and now rests in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in France.

The Volunteer



As a boy, Wiley Clifton Bissett grew up in Wilson, North Carolina. In June 1916, he enlisted in the North Carolina National Guard and went to bootcamp at Fort Sevier. Upon completion of his initial training, he would serve for eighteen months before applying for and accepting a commission. It was during this time Bissett would meet and begin courting Christine Thomas of New Bern.

He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on December 28, 1917, and promoted to 1st Lieutenant in April 1918.

As an up-and-coming officer, he applied for a marriage license at the Craven County Courthouse and in April 1918 1st Lieutenant Bissett and Ms. Thomas were wed. They took up residence in their new home on 70 Hancock Street but their honeymoon would be cut short for he had received orders for immediate deployment to Europe. The newly promoted officer left his new bride in New Bern and departed for Boston, Massachusetts, where he boarded a troop ship, the British steamship SS Laomedon. On May 12, 1918, they sailed for Europe.

1st Lieutenant Bissett was an officer in Company D of the 119th Infantry, 30th Infantry Division, United States Army. The 30th Infantry Division (almost 100% North Carolinian), was created on July 18, 1917. Nicknamed “Old Hickory,” it was formally activated into federal service in August 1917 at Camp Sevier. Upon arrival in France, his division was assigned to the British 2nd Army to replenish their ranks decimated by nearly four years of fighting. After further training, he was sent to the front-line trenches at Ypres, Belgium. On June 17, 1918, two months after his marriage, and at the age of twenty-two, Bissett was killed in action. Bissett is buried at Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium.

The Draftee

The response by the Craven County’s Black community was wholehearted in its patriotism. However, the draft was not a panacea in escaping discrimination. While the war would bring about significant changes, political and social bias would reduce the ability for Black Americans to fully serve their country.

James M. King was an African American born to Lafayette and Alice King, September 20, 1895, in Fort Barnwell. King, age twenty-two, listed his occupation as “Farmer” on his draft registration card. He would sign his draft registration with an “X” rather than a signature. The 1910 census stated he had attended school but could not read or write. He would be just one of many on June 5, 1917, requested to “make your mark.”

He was living in Dover when inducted into the military in New Bern on July 29, 1918, and sent to Camp Greene. Upon graduating

from training camp, Private King would be assigned to an S.O.S. battalion. His unit and other S.O.S. battalions would be essential to the maintenance and supply of our Allies and the AEF. Feeding populations suffering from malnutrition in Great Britain, France, and Belgium, plus support for combat operations on the Western Front, would have been severely hampered without their significant contribution.

King served honorably in Company D of the 344th Labor Battalion QMC (Quarter Master Corps) of First Army of the United States. He departed onboard the British Navy hospital ship SS Oxfordshire from New York on September 25, 1918, but died of the Spanish Flu on October 7, 1918, shortly after his arrival in England. King was originally buried in Everton County, Lanes, Liverpool, England. During WWI, King, like the 700 other American servicemen that died in the military hospitals of Liverpool, England, would be buried in Everton Cemetery. In 1920, their remains were disinterred and moved to the Brookwood American Cemetery or returned to the United States. Pvt. James King's body returned to the United States on the USS Antigone, arriving home to his waiting family in Craven County on August 25, 1920.

Service and Sacrifice Remembered

A hundred years later, the story of Craven County, its men, and the war are all but forgotten. However, in 2019, the American Legion Post 539, and the New Bern Historical Society partnered with the Craven County Department of Parks and Recreation on a project to clean the 75-year-old granite monument on the Craven County Courthouse grounds and add the names of Craven County's WWI servicemen not listed on the stone monument previously. This author worked with New Bern Historical Society Historian, Claudia Houston, and Special Collections Librarian, Victor Jones of the Kellenberger Room at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library, to research other Craven County men who served in the Great War. Their collective efforts yielded the following sixteen names who would join the twenty – nine names on the obelisk:

Bissett, Wiley Clifton	Cavanaugh, Macon Earl	Coley, Thomas
Hawes, Dr. Stephen James	Higgins, Elmer J.	King, James†
Lofton, Solomon	Merritt, John	Pumphrey, Charles Tilden
Simmons, Peter N.	Stanley, Ernest†	Taylor, John Thomas†
Thomason, Jasper W.	Thompson, Lawrence E.	Wallnau, Maurice
Wilson, Joseph Powell		

Names on the World War I Monument prior to 2018:

Adams, Daniel Marven	Bennett, John Frank	Civils, Bennie Ormond
Daugherty, John Ephraim	Daugherty, John Clen	Donerson, William Van
Evans, John C.†	Everington, David Ruffin	Havens, Alonzo
Hawkins, Raymond William	Henry, Castillia†	Hill, James Arthur†
Ipock, Jodie Francis	Jenkins, Emmett Joshua	Lancaster, Herman Gardner
Mitchell, William Roy	Parrott, Samuel	Price, Milan Gray
Rea, Kenneth Meredith	Rowe, Depp	Skinner, George T.
Sprill, Joseph†	Stallings, Washington Wyatt	Stilley, Burton "Bert" E.
Tilly, Franklin Leach	Toler, William Harvey	Weatherly, William Jesse
Wilson, George Felton	Wise, Sherman†	

† Denotes African American

The re-dedication ceremony was held on September 16, 2019. The commemoration celebrated an updated and cleaned memorial along with the centenary of the American Legion's charter. The event was attended by families whose ancestors had served during WWI. Keynote speaker County Commissioner E. T. Mitchell noted that World War I "marks the beginning of our modern age" that introduced the destructive power of the new machines of war – machine guns, tanks, airplanes, submarines, and chemical weapons.

Few Americans would imagine that President Wilson's words, "when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might..." would bring so much death and sorrow to families across the country. After less than six months on the Western Front, American forces suffered 53 thousand deaths/MIAs; 63 thousand deaths by disease or wounds; and 250 thousand returned home maimed. Unofficially, 2,188 North Carolinians were killed. The three soldiers profiled herein represent a cross section of those from New Bern and Craven County who rallied to the call to serve. Their names plus 42 others reside on

the Craven County's World War I Monument as a reminder of their forgotten sacrifice.

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About the Author:

Mark Sandvigen graduated from Southern Oregon University, served in the U.S. Navy on surface combatants, and earned three Masters degrees. Upon retirement from the Navy, he held executive engineering and management positions. Now fully retired, he is an active participant in veterans organizations in New Bern. Due to his family's service in WWI, he researches, writes, and visits the cemeteries, port cities, and battlefields of the Great War.



CEASAR LEWIS - FAITHFUL BELLRINGER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Jim Hodges

This wonderful acknowledgement of devotion and dedication was found in a collection of documents and letters preserved by Mary Bryan Hollister (1868–1959) and acquired by the New Bern Historical Society. This testimony to Ceasar Lewis was signed H. A. Ives, January 8, 1922. Most probably, H.A. Ives was Hannah Allen Ives who died in 1923 and is interred in Cedar Grove Cemetery.

It is but fitting that there should be included in the record of the life of this church an account of the faithfulness and service of Ceasar Lewis, Sexton for a period of more than sixty years.

A slave of the late Alexander T. Mitchell, Ceasar assumed the duties of his office long before the Civil War,—perhaps as early as 1846, and except for the time during the war, when there was no pastor and the church building was used as a hospital, his work was uninterrupted, (except for a short illness) until ended by his death in May, 1909.

Winter and summer, in cold and heat, he was never absent from his post. His skill as a bell-ringer was notable, and his was the hand and ours the bell which sounded the Sabbath morning to all the other Church bells to be ready to take their appointed places in the round of ringing. As I remember the succession, it was first, Presbyterian,—second, Methodist,—third, Baptist,—fourth, Episcopal,—each striking once in their turn, for five minutes,—then for five minutes all rang together, followed by a quiet period of tolling, until at the precise moment for service the bells ceased and the soft tones of the organs were heard within the different churches.

About two years before his death, Ceasar's health seemed to be failing, and most reluctantly he consented to allow another to take his place. One of the daughters of the Church—Mary Allen,

(who is now Mrs. Potter, of Boston) asked contributions from the members, and a chair was bought for Ceasar, in which he might be comfortable during his declining years. For several Sabbaths the old man from his retirement listened to his successor's bungling efforts with the bell, — the weak uncertain tones, — the mistakes in succession of the other ringers. Then when he could hear it no longer, he arose in indignation from his easy chair, and coming back to his beloved Church he announced that he was well and wanted his old place.

Ceasar Lewis, with several other colored people, was a member of this Church, and always received the communion in the East gallery, the bread and wine being carried to them by the elders, after it had been partaken of by the white communicants. His and their memberships were transferred to the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, which largely through the efforts of Dr. Vass and Mr. George Allen had been built for the colored people.

Having expressed a wish to be buried from this Church which he had served, such arrangements were made for Ceasar's funeral at his death in May, 1909. His white friends occupied the gallery, the floor of the house being given to the colored people, and there for a while, where his feet wont to be so busy, rested the body of the old man.

Truly it could be said unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

Truly it could be said unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"
H. H. Jones
January 8. 1922.



About the New Bern Historical Society

The New Bern Historical Society has been celebrating New Bern's rich heritage through events and education since 1923 when Minnette Chapman Duffy, Judge Romulus A. Nunn, and other interested New Bernians founded the Society "to preserve for future generations the wealth of historical material found in New Bern." The vision of these New Bernians continues today and is reflected in an active calendar of educational events/programs and social gatherings. The Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, member-supported organization. Our membership has grown to over 1000 with hundreds of volunteers contributing to our projects, programs and events each year. Membership support and tax-deductible donations go toward educational events and programs and stewardship of important historic properties such as:

- Historic Attmore-Oliver House – home to our administrative offices and exhibits
- New Bern Civil War Battlefield Park activities and tours
- Lunch & Learn lectures
- Dr. Richard K. Lore Annual Lecture
- Annual Ghost Walk 3-Day Event
- Heritage Home Tour
- New Bern Historical Society *Journal*
- Quarterly New Bern Historical Society Newsletter
- New Bern Historical Society Website and Facebook page
- Monthly articles in *New Bern Magazine*
- Gingerbread House Contest during the Holiday Season
- Harriet Marks Scholarship
- Over 6000 accessioned historical photos, artifacts and furnishings

We ask you to share our mission with family and friends and encourage them to become active members promoting New Bern and celebrating its rich heritage.

511 Broad Street
New Bern, NC 28560
Phone: 252-638-8558

Remember Old New Bern

The following extracts are observations by W. B. Wadsworth from an article published in the Sun-Journal in December 1951. While these comments are part of our history, they do not necessarily represent the views held by the New Bern Historical Society.

- ☞ Do you remember when we had a shingle mill which cut good cypress shingles? It was located near Union Point on East Front Street and was operated by Warren Ellis.
- ☞ Do you remember when we had a business school, a military school, a cotton market, a branch stock market with hourly quotations from the New York Exchange? The New Bern Military Academy was owned by J.W. Stewart, J.A. Holiday was superintendent, and Major B.B. Moss was in charge of the military training.
- ☞ Do you remember when we had a canning factory, a plug tobacco factory and many more industries? Walker's Plug Tobacco Company was located on Craven Street where the Craven Foundry is now located.
- ☞ Do you remember when we had a regular boat to northern points, carrying both freight and passengers? The Old Dominion Steamship Company operated such a line.
- ☞ Do you remember when there were several wholesale fish houses and boats came supplying them from down the river and sound?