MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The story is told that a professor on a visit to Rome took his young son to see the Forum. The boy, after gazing in amazement at the broken columns and the bare foundations, asked his father the question that has been asked by historians since the beginning of time. “What happened?” the boy wanted to know.

The power to stir the imagination often is greater in the suggestion than in the fact. In the music of Debussy many times the harmonies dissolve in the moment of their emergence and tones suggest the half-forgotten lilt of a line of poetry rather than a sustained song. Often in the canvases of contemporary painters colors and forms find identity only in the eye of the beholder. One of J. S. Bach’s “Brandenburg Concertos” contains a movement consisting of only one written chord. The remainder of the movement is left entirely up to the solo performer to let his own fancy take flight. Now the basic chord which liberates the imagination has been struck in the excavation of old Brunswick.

It takes but little effort to see in one’s imagination, while standing in the clearing of the “Street on the Bay” those almost legendary figures of the Eighteenth Century Town. There are the wells carefully constructed of small curved brick which must have been centers of domestic life. There are the ballast-rocks foundations of the houses of Nathaniel Moore and William Dry, two gentlemen almost lost in the dimness of the past.

When the reason is sought for digging up an historic site such as old “Brunswick” the answer is found partly in the knowledge historians gain but even more in the stimulation to intellectual curiosity it offers. It is this quality which prompts us all to ask as did the little boy in Rome—“What happened?”

The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society welcomes the North Carolina Society of County and Local Historians as their guests for an historical tour on Sunday, October the nineteenth. A tour has been planned which should be of interest to our local members as well as our visitors. There are houses on the tour which have been generally overlooked and by calling attention to them the directors feel they will come into their share of appreciation as good examples of period design. Considerable effort and time has gone into tracing the titles which establish as near as possible the date of their erection. Family traditions often are vague and sometimes inaccurate but the deeds in the Court House are recorded facts. It is an object of the Society to seek the proof and record with accuracy the facts.

Besides the well-known and justly celebrated Burgwin-Wright House and Belamy Mansion we will also be able to visit on the tour the interiors of two other excellent examples of houses of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: The former is the Cameron House and the latter the Harriss-Boney House. The Cameron House, a country house when built, is a perfect specimen of West Indian Colonial architecture and has noteworthy interiors. Experts on Georgian design have remarked on the circular staircase which they say is unlike any other. The Harriss-Boney House is a beautiful ante-bellum town house. The transitional architecture has the simple rectangular form of the Georgian period, the columns on the piazza are classic and delicate but the cornice brackets are Victorian. The handsome South drawing room is divided into front and back parlors by free-standing columns instead of the more usual sliding doors. These two houses will be visited by the gracious permission of their owners.

The complete guide for the tour is elsewhere in the Bulletin. It is regrettable that no other day of the week was possible since many members have Sunday duties which interfere with taking part in the whole tour. However all members who can are urged to attend not only for the pleasure and information they derive themselves but also because each member is a host to our visiting guests from all over the State.

—HENRY JAY MacMILLAN.
MEMBERSHIP

Total number joined to October 1 | 396

NEW MEMBERS

351. Mrs. James F. McMillan | 907 Live Oak Parkway
352. Mrs. B. F. Hall | Wrightsville Beach
353. Miss Martha P. Archbell | 123 S. 5th Street
354. Mrs. Clarence Maflitt | 507 Ann Street
355. Mrs. E. W. Nelson | 302 Castle Street
356. Mr. Richard Meares | 105 Colonial Drive
357. Mrs. Louie E. Woodbury, Jr. | 619 Forest Hills Drive
358. Charles J. Blake | P. O. Box 701
359. Mr. R. V. Ashbury, Jr. | 516 Dock Street
360. Miss Anne Hargrett | 417½ Orange Street
361. Mr. Thomas F. Bradshaw | 1212 Country Club Road
362. Mrs. Thomas F. Bradshaw | 1212 Country Club Road
363. Mr. Samuel A. Troy, Jr. | 1312 Grace Street
364. Mr. Hugh MacRae II | 1224 S. Live Oak Parkway
365. Mrs. Hugh MacRae II | 1224 S. Live Oak Parkway
366. Mrs. Z. K. Bell | 906 South Fourth Street

DUES

Dues are payable in May. Article II, Sec. 3 of the Bylaws reads: “Dues are payable at the annual meeting. Members failing to pay their dues by the end of the calendar year shall be dropped from the rolls.”

MEETINGS, 1955-1959

Time and Place: Wilmington College, 8:00 P.M.
First General Meeting October 22, 1958
Topic: Tryon Palace Restoration
Speaker: Miss Gertrude Carraway, Restoration Director
Second General Meeting—February 18, 1959
Miss Mildred Johnson in charge
Topic: Colonial Architecture in Eastern North Carolina Slides (in color) made and shown by R. V. Ashbury
Speaker: Bruce Wilkinson, Archaeologist in Charge
Annual Meeting—May 6, 1959
Topic: To be announced later
Speaker: Dr. Hugh Talmage Leffler—Historian and Author, University of North Carolina

GIFTS RECEIVED SINCE MAY, 1958

The Society gratefully acknowledges gifts from Mr. R. V. Ashbury, Mr. L. P. Hall, Mrs. M. N. Hartley, Miss Eleanor Jordan, Mr. J. D. Martin and Mrs. Eric Norden.

North Carolina Society of County and Local Historians Tour of Wilmington and Nearby Area

October 19, 1958

9:30—MEET AT THALIAN HALL, Third and Princess Streets, Wilmington, North Carolina at 9:30 A.M.
Registration.

Greetings from Mr. Henry J. MacMillan, President of Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc., and Tour Director.
Greetings from Hon. J. E. L. Wade, Mayor of Wilmington.
Introduction of guests by Mrs. Taft Bass, President of the State Society of County and Local Historians.

Announcements

10:00—TOUR BEGINS at Thalian Hall with Mr. Thomas Bradshaw, President of Thalian Association speaking on the history of the THALIAN ASSOCIATION.

THALIAN HALL—In his biography of Thomas Godfrey, Archibald Henderson said of Wilmington that it was “the cradle of American Drama.” Thomas Godfrey lived and died in Wilmington. He was the author of “The Prince of Parthia,” published in 1768, the first tragedy written by an American and performed on the American professional stage. A letter written by Charles W. Harris in Hillsboro in 1797 states, “William Hogrog attended the play in Wilmington for two evenings where great numbers were present of all classes.”

The earlier Thalian Hall occupied the lower floor of the Innes Academy. The present Thalian Hall was built with money raised by members of the Thalian Association which had been formed and was presenting amateur theatricals in Wilmington by 1788. John Triemel of New York designed the building and James F. Post was the architect and builder. The cornerstone of Thalian Hall was laid December 27, 1855, and it opened with a performance on the evening of October 12, 1858. When it was built there was no other theatrical hall in the South and few in the United States which surpassed it in beauty. Professionals who have performed in Thalian Hall (first and present building) have been Elizabeth Arnold, later Mrs. Edgar Poe, mother of Edgar Allan Poe; Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth, Salvini the great Italian actor, Janasbeek the Polish actress, Richard Mansfield, Mary Anderson, Maude Adams, Nazimova, Robert Mantell, Maxine Elliott, Nat C. Goodwin, Edward Forrest, Katy Putnam, Mrs. John Drew, Maurice Barrymore, Otis Skinner, and others.

This year (1958) the Thalian Association is celebrating the Centennial year of Thalian Hall and City Hall building.

(STOP) 10:15—ST. JAMES CHURCH—St. James Parish was established by Act of the North Carolina Assembly in 1729. The cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1839. The building was designed by T. U. Walter of Philadelphia. During the Federal occupation of Wilmington the key of the church was seized, the pews removed, and the building was used as a Federal Hospital. The graveyard contains the graves of many early citizens, among the most prominent of whom were Thomas Godfrey, the author, and Cornelius Harrett, Revolutionary patriot.

TEMPLE OF ISRAEL—Citizens of the Jewish faith of Wilmington organized the FIRST Jewish congregation in North Carolina in 1872. They called Rabbi Samuel Mendelson to serve their Temple in 1876 and he gave a long life of service here.

PUBLIC LIBRARY—A brick and marble structure erected in 1885 by J. A. Taylor. Tradition says his fiancé wanted to live in a marble house. The building was later occupied by L. T. Governor Charles M. Studman, and in 1892 it was bought by the Wilmington Light Infantry. In 1955 it was given to the City and converted into the public library, which was then quartered on the second floor of City Hall.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH—The members of the First Baptist Church are today (Oct. 19) celebrating their 150th Anniversary. They were organized in 1808, bought the lot on the corner of Market and Fifth Streets in 1858, and immediately began building the present Church building.
BEERY HOUSE and FEDERAL HOSPITAL — Corner of Second and Nun Streets. It was built and used by Captain Benjamin W. Beery prior to the War Between the States. When the Federal troops occupied Wilmington it was taken over and used as a hospital, while the Beery family was evacuated from their plantation near Laurinburg. Captain Beery was owner of the Confederate Navy Yard on Eagles Island when it was taken over by the Confederate government. He was then commissioned as Captain in the Confederate Navy.

2:30—CAMEO HOUSE — 6 Church Street. The early history of this house is obscure, but it was probably built before the Revolution. It is situated on the original John Watson grant, sold to James Wimble about 1734, bought by Thomas Macalpine from the Wimble estate in 1778 and from Macalpine to Henry Toomer. In 1793 Henry Toomer sold it to William Hooper and at this time there was a dwelling and a warehouse on the lot which extended from Front Street to the river. George Hooper was a brother of William Hooper, the signer of the Declaration of Independence. In July 1806, George Hooper sold this lot to Captain George Cameron, who sailed his ships from the old shipyard at the foot of Church Street. The house is now owned by Mrs. Clifton Nash Dixon, a direct descendant of Captain George Cameron. The house is in West Indian or Huguenot style with refined Georgian details. The stucco exterior is unique in colonial architecture. When it was built it faced an old road running diagonally across the lot and the original front is now the back of the house. Admission to house by courtesy of Mrs. Clifton Nash Dixon.

DUDLEY MANSION — 329 S. Front Street. Home of Governor Edward Bishop Dudley, elected 1837, first governor elected by the citizens of North Carolina. Many famous men have been entertained here. The building is a great Georgian mansion. Built prior to 1825.

ANDERSON HOUSE — Corner of Front and Orange Streets. A brick house built around 1800. It was left by will of Alexander Anderson (1844) to his daughter Margaret Y. Davis. In 1871 it came into the possession of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Lillie L. Anderson, and at that time it was known as the home of Dr. Edwin A. Anderson, surgeon in the C.S.A. His office stands next to the brick house on Front Street. The iron balcony which encircled the Anderson house has been removed.

ST. JOHN'S TAVERN — 114 Orange Street. The corner stone was laid on June 12, 1804. St. John's Lodge No. 1, was founded in 1755 and this building was the first building in the state erected for Masonic purposes, but it was not the first home of the Lodge. American soldiers, Major John Walker, Captain John Kingsbury, William Lord the paymaster, and many others, were members of this lodge. The building was designed by Joseph Jacobs, architect from Hingham, Mass. In 1824 it was sold to Thomas W. Goodwin for a residence and remained in his family until 1943 when it became St. John's Tavern. Miss Annie Hart taught a private school here in the 1880's.


BUNTING HOUSE and COOK HOUSE — 315 and 321 S. Fourth Street. Both houses were built by Captain William Cook who resided in the Cook House for many years. The Cook House was built in 1784 and had the tradition of a tunnel connecting it with the river. It was the home of Captain Silas Martin during the War Between the States. When the house was built Nun Street was a country road and it faced the road.
Later it became the property of Richard Quince the elder, a merchant of Brunswick and one of the administrators of the William Moore estate. His grandson, Richard Quince deeded it to Governor Benjamin Smith in 1796 and it was the home of Governor Smith for many years.

The gardens have been developed by J. Lawrence Sprunt, present owner, who has graciously invited the County Historians to tour the gardens.

ST. PHILIPS CHURCH — An Act to build a church at Brunswick was passed by the North Carolina Assembly in 1751. The construction of the building was begun soon thereafter and the building was completed in 1768. In 1760 the Church Wardens were: John Davis, Jr., and Richard Quince, and the Vestrymen were Robert Snow, Richard Eagles, Benjamin Davis, Thomas Neal, James Murray, John Watters, James Watters, and William Dry. Two governors, Dobbs and Smith, are said to be buried here. The building was destroyed during the Revolutionary War, but the heavy walls still stand, a monument of stability.

(STOP) OLD BRUNSWICK TOWN — First permanent town on the Cape Fear River. It stands on a grant to Col. Maurice Moore in 1725, and in 1726 three hundred and twenty acres of this grant had "been laid out for the Town of Brunswick." It was abandoned during the Revolution. Excavation of the ruins was begun by Dr. E. Lawrence Lee and the program is now under the direction of Mr. Stanley South, archaeologist from the N. C. Department of Archives and History.

HAULOVER FERRY — Across the river from Brunswick Town once stood Haulover Ferry House. The N. C. Assembly in 1727 "ordered that a ferry be kept for that river (Cape Fear) by Cornelius Harnett from the place designed for a Town on the West side of the River to a place called HAULOVER and that he receive the sum of 5 shillings for a man and horse & 1/4 crown for each person." Ruins of the old ferry house could be seen in the late 1800's. This ferry is sometimes referred to as the "Ferry to the landing at Big Sugar Loaf."

3:00 — PLEASANT OAKS — An original grant dated October 22, 1728, to Justina Moore, widow of John Moore, a brother of Roger, Col. Maurice and Nathaniel Moore. At her death it descended to her eldest son, James Moore, who willed it to Mary, daughter of George Moore. Mary Moore and her husband, Thomas Davis, Esq., of Brunswick, sold it to Josiah Alston of South Carolina in 1772. PLEASANT OAKS is now owned by Mr. Hargrove Bellamy of Wilmington, first president of Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc., who invites the Local and County Historians to see the gardens.

(STOP) 3:30 — CLARENDON — One of the plantations of the Lower Cape Fear which has retained its identity. In the 1880's it was one of the rice plantations of the area. Of special interest is the ancient canal leading from the front of the house to the river. Nearby is the site of Old Town or Charlestown, the original and unsuccessful attempts to settle the Cape Fear area in the 1660's, first by the New England Company and then by the Barbadians led by Sir John Yemas. Mr. Cornelius Thomas is the present owner, and his courtesy adds this historic place to our tour.

WINNABOW — As you close your tour and leave the area you will pass through Winnabow, another place which has kept its identity since 1737 when Jere Bigfund sold Nathaniel Rice "200 acres at a place called Winnebigh." Nathaniel Rice was governor of North Carolina in 1734. Another governor, Daniel L. Russell, governor of North Carolina, 1807-1801, lived in a house nearby.