

Mother County Genealogical Society

Established 2003
Bladenboro Historical Building
818 South Main Street
Bladenboro, NC 28320
910-863-4707
<http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/mcgs/>

August, 2009 Newsletter

Attendees:

- Jason Bordeaux, Sam & Jo Ann Pait, Linda Smith, Jan Avant, Layton Dowless

Treasurer Report:

- No updates. \$2,642 was on hand as of May 18, 2009.

Minutes:

- Jason Bordeaux asked if anyone had applied for a historical marker to mark the Bladenboro Museum. He made a motion that we move forward with that application. Sam Pait seconded the motion. However, this must wait until the museum is officially recognized by the state; that application is in process.
- Sam Pait stated that we do need pointer signs to direct people to the museum. Jason Bordeaux will check into who can do this from the state.
- Sam Pait has donated all of his genealogy books to the Mother County room.
- Linda Smith is working on rescheduling the Soles family presentation that was scheduled for today by Stevie Soles. She is also trying to schedule Mrs. Rutland for a presentation on the Lee family in December.
- Jason Bordeaux mentioned that he is going to work on getting a copy of the Joseph Wagers collection for the Mother County room.
- Jason Bordeaux is going to contact Nash Odom for a publication list of his books.
- Sam Pait closed the meeting with a prayer.

2009 Presentations:

- February 14th - Researching Bladen & Robeson County history - presented by Nash Odom.
- April 4th - King families of Bladen and Columbus - presented by Jason Bordeaux
- June 13th - Underground Railroad Quilts - presented by Linda Rivenbark
- August 8th - Business meeting
- October 10th - Ashford family - presented by Gene Allen
- December 12th - Business meeting and 2010 elections - Layton Dowless

2009 Officers:

- President - Layton Dowless
- Vice-President - Jason Bordeaux
- Secretary - Linda Smith
- Treasurer - Margie Bridger

Next Meeting:

- October 10th, 2009 at 12:30 pm at the Bladenboro Historical Building. Gene Allen will give a presentation on Street Ashford of Bladen County and his ancestry. Street Ashford was a very prominent figure in early Bladen County. He was a member of the NC House of Commons (now the House of Representatives) from 1800 to 1803. Street married into the Bryan family and his descendants in present day Bladen include King, Allen and other allied lines such as Brisson, Dowless, Kinlaw, Wilkins, Hester, Carroll, Britt, and Munce.
 - Please remember to bring a refreshment to our next meeting.
-

Dee Thompson has donated more books to the society! She personally purchased them from Margaret Hoffman and had them shipped to us. They are listed below:

- Abstracts of Minutes of the Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions Cumberland Co, NC Volume 2
- Bible Records Book Collection in Cumberland County, NC
- Cumberland Cemetery Survey Volume 1
- Cumberland Cemetery Survey Volume 3
- 1850 Federal Census of Robeson County, NC
- Abstracts of Deeds Cumberland Co, NC Volume 2 Books 4-7 1770-1785
- Ironclads and Columbiads (History of the Civil War in coastal NC)
- Columbus Co, NC Abstracts of Deeds Volume II 1816-1829
- Abstracts of Letters of Resignations of Militia Officers in NC

Our library is growing! Please stop by the museum and visit the Mother County genealogy room on the 2nd floor.

We need more participation!!! Please invite a friend to come with you to the next meeting. Please tell more people about our group. We have over 30 members, but there is very little local participation. If you know of someone who might want to give a presentation, please let us know.

Bladen County NC GenWeb Website Update

The Bladen County NC GenWeb page has been updated to a new format. The new website address is <http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/>. A historical summary from the website on the establishment and settlement of the county is included below.

Attempts were made in 1732 in the [General Assembly](#) to provide two new precincts, [Onslow](#) and [Bladen](#), from the larger precinct of [New Hanover](#). [Bladen Precinct](#) was erected on 31 October, 1732, but at this time, a controversy arose over constitutional authority to erect new precincts. Further attempts made in 1733 were also unsuccessful. When the matter was brought before the Council in [Edenton](#), it was again refused. The Council stated that “in Bladen there are not over three freeholders, Nathaniel Moore, Thomas Jones, and Richard Singletary, and not over 30 families, including these freeholders”. The proposal, however, was finally passed and [Bladen Precinct](#) was officially recognized on 11 November, 1734. All precincts were re-labeled as counties in 1739.^{1,2}

The bounds of the original [Bladen Precinct](#) were described as follows: “Beginning at the mouth of Livingstone’s Creek and bounded by the said creek to the head thereof; then by a line West, to the bounds of government; and that the said precinct be bounded to the Northward by [Black River](#), as follows; viz, beginning at the mouth of said river, and bounded by the Main River up to the fork, and that then the Westermost Branch to be the bounds to the head thereof.”¹

Bladen was named in honor of Martin Bladen (1680 – 1746), [Lord Commissioner of Trade and Plantation](#).¹

What little is known of the [Native Americans](#) living in the area was described by [James Sprunt](#) in [Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916](#): “In reference to the [Woccon](#), [Saxapahaw](#) (*Sissipahaw*), [Cape Fear](#), and [Warrennuncock](#) Indians, we find it stated: Of the NC tribes bearing the foregoing names almost nothing is known, and of the last two even the proper names have not been recorded. The [Woccon](#) were [Siouan](#); the [Saxapahaw](#) and [Cape Fear Indians](#) presumably were [Siouan](#), as indicated from their associations and alliance with known [Siouan](#) tribes; while the [Warrennuncock](#) were probably some people better known under another name, although they cannot be identified. Unfortunately the identity of the [Cape Fear Indians](#) has not been revealed, and it may ever remain a mystery. The name was first bestowed, by the early colonists, upon the Indians who they found occupying the lands about the mouth of the [Cape Fear River](#), and more especially the peninsula now forming the southern part of [New Hanover County](#). It is also possible the term “Cape Fear Indians” was applied to any Indians found in the vicinity, regardless of their tribal connections. The area was frequented by numbers of different tribes.”⁸

An excerpt by [S. A. Ashe](#) within [James Sprunt's](#) book states the following: “The Indians on the lower Cape Fear are said to have been [Congarees](#), a branch of the [Old Cheraws](#). Soon after the settlement, they were driven away. In 1733, [Governor Burrington](#)

mentioned that the small tribes that had resided near the settlements had entirely disappeared.”⁸

The modes of transportation and communication were determining factors in the settlement, growth, and development of Bladen County. In the days of the settlement of the county, rivers were the only means of transporting goods to any great extent; therefore, the settlers occupied the lands along the [Cape Fear River](#) and [South River](#). The Cape Fear, a much larger river, attracted more of the early settlers, yet along both rivers homes were built and plantations were developed. It was said that those who lived quite some distance from the rivers lived in the “backwoods”.²

Lawrence Lee described the progress of settlement in [The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days](#): “As late as the winter of 1724-25, according to General Burrington who was there, the Cape Fear region was uninhabited. Sometime between then and the spring of 1726, the settlement had begun. The earliest known resident was Maurice Moore, who was there on 30 April, 1726. It is unlikely that Moore was there alone, but the number and identity of his neighbors are not known. By the end of June, 1726, Moore had laid out [Brunswick Town](#) in the new settlement and had sold the first Lot.”³

“Because many of the small groups were related by blood or marriage, they became known as the family. In addition to Maurice and Roger Moore and their brother, Nathaniel, the recipients readily identified as members of the group were Eleazar Allen, John Porter, Edward Moseley, John Baptista Ashe, Samuel Swann, John Swann, John Davis, John Grange, Edward Hyrne, Thomas Jones, Edward Smith, and Moseley Vail.”³

The earliest recorded land grants were made under the [Lords Proprietors](#) in 1727. David Donahoe and John Baptista Ashe received grants in 1727. Richard Singletary received a grant in 1728.¹

The first homogeneous community in the county was the [Quakers](#) according to Stephen B. Weeks, writing in [Southern Quakers and Slavery](#). “The earliest of these meetings in NC seems to have been that at [Carver’s Creek](#) in Bladen County. It was named from the founder of the settlement, [James Carver](#), who removed from [Pennsylvania](#). It was begun about 1740, and asked for a Monthly Meeting as early as 1743; in 1746 one had been settled. It belonged to the Eastern Quarter. From 1749 through 1752 some of the families represented are Carver, Clark, Clayton, Benbow, Beals, Ballinger, Chamness, Cox, Kemp, Mayer, Mathews, Sommers, and Wright. Most were from [Fairfax Monthly Meeting, Virginia](#), but others came from [Pennsylvania](#). The meeting continued until about 1797 when some of the members went west and others went to [Guilford](#) and [Randolph Counties](#).” Although a majority of the [Quakers](#) left Bladen County, some of them remained including Isaac Jones, Hugh McAden, James Seames/Sims, George Brown, Neal Shaw, Duncan McCoulskey, Griffith Jones, and the families of Raynor, Baldwin, Granger, Roan/Rowan, Anderson, and Lewis.¹

[Gabriel Johnston](#), who became [Royal Governor](#) in 1734, persuaded [Highlanders](#) from his native [Scotland](#) to come and settle in North Carolina. Several [Highlanders](#) came in the

early 1730's. Alexander Clark brought several immigrants in 1736 from the [Isle of Jura](#), [Argyll County, Scotland](#). These men had suffered religious persecution and they were seeking freedom. Dougald McNeill and Colonel McAllister brought another 350 Scotsmen in 1739. In 1767 a ship load of immigrants sailed from the [Isle of Jura](#) and arrived in [Brunswick](#) on the Cape Fear below [Wilmington](#). Surnames included Clark, McDougald, McLean, Buie, Russ, and Campbell. On 4 April, 1804, the immigrant ship, Minerva, arrived in [Wilmington](#) from [Greenock, Scotland](#) including Scotsmen with surnames Clark, Sinclair, McBride, Livingston, McGregor, Buchanan, Graham, McLaughlin, and Johnson. Many of the Scotsmen settled in what became [Cumberland](#) and [Robeson](#) Counties.¹

[Old Bladen County](#) was home to many of the ancestral families of the [Lumbee Indian Tribe of NC](#). They were found on the tax lists and census records variously listed as whites, mulattoes, and mixed bloods. Bound together by a common ancestry, they have survived to this day as a unified group. Their mark has been indelibly stamped on North Carolina's history.⁴ A [1773 petition](#) records the surnames of several members of this community: Ivey, Sweat, Chavers, Dees, Groom, Grant, Vann, Locklear, and Cairsey.

The [General Assembly](#) passed a statute in 1723 requiring that wives and other females in households of free persons of color should be taxable. The policy originated as a result of so many mixed blood people who were moving into the colony and intermarrying with whites. Inter-racial marriages were forbidden by an earlier statute passed in 1715.⁴ There is an abundance of evidence available in the records to show that settlers and slaves formed unions and had children. These children and subsequent generations became free persons of color and enjoyed much prosperity.

Between 1790 and 1800 a number of [Sampson](#) and [New Hanover](#) County residents from the Coharie Section moved across [South River](#) into Bladen County. It was during this era that the State of North Carolina issued many land grants, particularly to [Revolutionary War](#) veterans and their families. Research indicates that a number of families made this sojourn, and appear in the 1800 Federal Census of Bladen County.⁷

It is very important to note that the harbor at [Wilmington](#) and the coast of NC in general was very difficult to navigate in the [18th century](#). While Bladen was settled by a few immigrants coming into [Wilmington](#), the vast majority of the settlers came from various locations in the colonies at the time. From [North Carolina Through Four Centuries](#) by William S. Powell: "NC had permanent settlers at a later date than most of the other colonies, and it came to be regarded as a frontier region open to settlement by people from [Virginia](#) and [South Carolina](#) particularly, but also from [Maryland](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [New Jersey](#). Others arrived from the crowded cities of [England](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), from the [highlands](#) and [lowlands](#) of [Scotland](#), and from the valleys of the [Rhine](#) and the [Danube](#) rivers in [central Europe](#)."⁵

Bladen's first courthouse was erected on the west bank of the North West Branch of the [Cape Fear River](#) about 50 miles above the forks and about 3.5 miles from present day Elizabethtown. The location is known today as Courthouse Landing.¹

The earliest available list of inhabitants for Bladen County is the tax list of 1763. At this time, Bladen included portions of present day [Brunswick](#), [Columbus](#), [Hoke](#), and [Robeson](#) Counties. The tax list gives a total of 490 entries with 1,244 taxables. This can be broken down into 577 white taxables and 667 black taxables (376 black males and 291 black females). Given an average family size of about 6, the 1763 population can be estimated to be around 5,000.⁶

The [federal census of 1790](#) gave the total population of Bladen as 5,206. This can be broken down into 837 free white males over 16 years of age, and 830 under 16 years of age; 1,863 white females; 1,676 slaves. Note that [Cumberland](#) and [Robeson](#) Counties had already been carved from Bladen at this time.² Due to the formation of other counties, Bladen was only about half the size it was in 1763.⁶

Present day physical features of Bladen County: Bladen County is situated in the southeastern part of NC. It is bordered on the north by [Cumberland County](#), and on the south by [Columbus County](#), and on the west by [Robeson County](#). The county line follows [South River](#) and [Black River](#) on the east. Bladen comprises an area of 976 square miles, or 624,640 acres (including lakes). The topography is prevailingly flat. Bordering the bottom lands west of the [Cape Fear River](#) is a bluff line rising from about 75 feet to more than 100 feet above the normal water level of the stream.²

For information on Bladen County statistics, townships, towns, etc. please refer to [Wikipedia](#).

1. [Bladen County Heritage North Carolina Volume 1](#), copyright 1999. Material extracted with permission from Bladen County Historical Society.
2. [Years of History, A Limited History of Bladen County NC](#), by C.E. Crawford. Material extracted with permission from Bladen County Historical Society.
3. [Columbus County NC Recollections and Records](#) by Columbus Bicentennial Commission, copyright 1980.
4. [Bladen County NC Tax Lists, 1768 through 1774, Volume 1](#), by William L. Byrd III, copyright 1998.
5. [North Carolina Through Four Centuries](#) by William S. Powell, copyright 1989.
6. [1763 Tax List of Bladen County, North Carolina](#) by Bladen County Historical Society.
7. [Over Colly, The Smiths of South River in Southeastern NC](#) by William Carter Smith.
8. [Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916](#) by James Sprunt. Second edition; Edwards & Broughton Printing Co.; copyright 1916.