

## **A Brief Summary of the History of the Town of Beaufort, North Carolina**

by Mamré Marsh Wilson

1701 In Lawson's book "A New Voyage to Carolina," our Topsail Inlet, present day Beaufort Inlet, is said to be above 2 leagues to the west of Cape Look-out, a fair channel and a good harbour to come to anchor, at a course over the Bar northwest latitude 34 degrees 44 minutes.

1707 Farnifold Green purchases in December 780 acres beginning at the mouth of the Core River [today's Newport River] running north 245 poles [5.5 yards per pole] to a pine, east 34 poles to a gum, northeast 45 poles to North River, down the river 420 poles and along the sound to the first station. This is the area of Beaufort.

1709 Mr. Ashe stated that "lands along the shore, even between North River and Core River [near the present town of Beaufort] were taken up in 1709."

1711 Lawson was killed by Indians, who then threatened to "make war on the English people along the Neuse, Pamlico and Trent Rivers and on Core Sound for the settlers had established themselves even in that locality."

1713 Mr. Ashe wrote "On Core Sound and North River lands patented during Cary's usurpation were now occupied, in October the town of Beaufort was laid off into lots which were sold." Richard Graves, Deputy Surveyor was asked by Robert Turner, now owner of the town, to do the survey in July.

1718 Blackbeard scuttled his ship the Queen Anne's Revenge in the Topsail Inlet.

1722 April 4, the Lords Proprietors appointed Beaufort a Port for the unloading and discharging of vessels. The first commissioners of the town included Christopher Gale, John Nelson, Joseph Bell, Richard Bell and Richard Rustull.

August, the Council established Carteret Precinct, with Beaufort as the seat.

1723 November 23, Beaufort was incorporated and five lots were sold that had lapsed from former owners who had not built on them.

1724 St. John's Parish of the Anglican Church was established, covering the entire precinct area. Vestry members included most of the first commissioners of

the town!

Early Court minutes began in June.

1727 The first justices were appointed, many of whom were vestrymen and commissioners of the town!

1728 New Town was added with Pollock Street as the dividing line.

A second court house, also used as the church, was built by William Davis on lot 101, where Purvis Chapel sits today.

1736 The first jail was built by Daniel Rees at the foot of what is today Queen Street. Note that the lots on the west side of Queen are shorter than all others laid out in town.

1739 An Act of the Assembly in March converted all Precincts to Counties.

1744 The first schools were established in Beaufort, through the will of James Winwright.

1747 The Spanish invaded Beaufort, the local militia forced them to leave.

1764 Samuel Leffers came from New York to be the Schoolmaster in Beaufort and at the school in Straits.

1766 A canal between Beaufort and New Bern was begun joining the Clubfoot and Harlow's Creeks. It took 40 years to finish it, and in 1824 it ceased to operate.

1782 The school in Beaufort was used by the militia to meet and negotiate with the British when they invaded Beaufort. At their departure, the school was burned.

1796 The third Court House was built in the intersection of Ann and Turner Streets. Today it sits, fully restored, on the grounds of the Beaufort Historical Association.

1804 The first Cape Lookout lighthouse was authorized to be built. It began service in 1812.

1808 Jacob Henry was elected representative of Carteret County to the NC House.

1811 An earthquake in Charleston, SC shook the area.

1813 A rumor spread that Beaufort harbor was blockaded by two British schooners. Otway Burns received letters of marque, sailed on his ship Snapdragon and fought the British. He served in the legislature, and later in his life he was lighthouse keeper at Portsmouth where he died and was brought to Beaufort for burial.

1826 Fort Macon was begun. Bricks were made locally. Masons also worked on the jail and the Odd Fellows Lodge.

1836 A new court house was begun on Court House Square. The third one was moved to a nearby lot.

1850s Public schools were established.

1851 The first steam sawmill was erected on Gallants Channel.

1854 The Atlantic Hotel overlooking Taylor's Creek was built, as were three churches, the Baptist, Episcopal and Methodist.

1861 Beaufort Harbor Guards took over Fort Macon at the beginning of the War Between the States.

1863-5 "Union Town" was established on the north side of Beaufort as a refugee camp for freedmen and former slaves.

1867 Washburn Male & Female Seminary and St. Stephen's Congregational Church were built by the American Missionary Society of the Congregational Church.

1885 John Hopkin's established the first marine scientific laboratory in Beaufort.

1899 A laboratory was established by the Federal Government on Piver's Island for marine biological study, known today as NOAA/NMFS/NOS.

1907 The Core Creek Canal was built. The railroad came to Beaufort. The fourth court house was built on Court House Square.

1910 A library was started in Beaufort, and incorporated in 1943 as the Carteret County Public Library.

1927 A new road bridge was built over Gallants Channel using Ann Street, and extending across another bridge into Morehead City.

1933 The Duke University Marine Laboratory was built on the south end of Piver's Island.

1940s The Menhaden plant was running in Beaufort and surrounding areas.

The local airport was built and used during the war by the CAP. It is at this airport that Michael Smith learned to fly.

1950s The Beaufort Historical Association was organized and began having tours, antique shows and pirate invasions. The beginning of tourism!

The North Carolina Maritime Museum was started as the Hampton Mariner's Museum located on Turner Street. Ten years later land on Front Street was donated and the NCMM was built.

1970s Urban renewal was begun on Front Street.

2006 The Tall Ships came to Beaufort.

I am sure that there are other memorable years and times in the life of Beaufort during the 20th century and even into this one. These are the ones that I have read about and written about since moving to Beaufort.