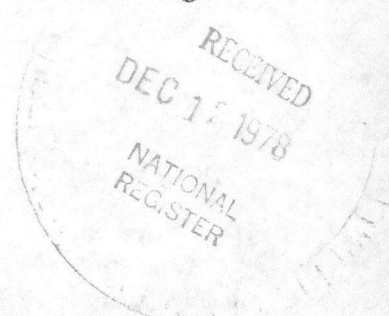


Share of time & price



BRUNSWICK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Historical Sketch

In 1764 Brunswick County was formed from Bladen and New Hanover counties. Its first courthouse was built of wood in that year at Lockwood's Folly. In 1808 the county seat was established at Smithville and the following year a new wooden courthouse erected there.<sup>1</sup> The structure served for many years but by the 1840s was in need of considerable repairs. In 1841 the court appointed a committee "to make such alterations and repairs in the Jury Boxes and bar of the Court House as they may think proper for the better accommodation of the Court."<sup>2</sup> But repairs were not enough and before long the county was making efforts to construct a new building.

The new courthouse was built in Smithville around 1844. In 1889 the name of Smithville was changed to Southport because it was the most southerly seaport in the state. Extensive alterations were made to the courthouse's front and second floor in 1922 following a fire which started in the office of the Register of Deeds. A fire also damaged the building in 1958.<sup>3</sup> The 1844 courthouse is still standing today, although the county seat of Brunswick County is presently being moved to the more centrally located town of Supply and a new courthouse erected there.

Architectural Description

Set on a shaded corner lot in Southport, the Brunswick County Courthouse is a plain, two-story, stuccoed brick building three bays wide by seven bays long. Built in 1844, the courthouse has undergone fewer exterior renovations than interior.

The building is a gable roof rectangle with a slightly parapetted gable end on the front elevation and a one-story flat roof porch sheltering the main entrance which features double doors below a graceful fanlight. A mousetooth cornice encircles the building and is also used as a decorative element on the modern design wings which flank the rear half of the building. Old photographs reveal that the fenestration has been altered along the sides, but the stone sills and eight-over-eight sash have been retained. A simple board belfry is set on the roof ridge behind the front parapet. It has a flat roof and is crowned with a hemispherical dome and plain metal finial.

<sup>1</sup>William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 67; Olds, Story of the Counties, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Brunswick County Court Minutes, December 6, 1841.

<sup>3</sup>Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer, p. 466; Ralph I. Mintz, "Court Houses: Brunswick County," in Bicentennial Brunswick County (Brunswick County Historical Society, 1964), p. 10.

### Brunswick County Courthouse

The interior plan is the conventional lengthwise hall flanked by offices on the first floor and the courtroom on the second. The interiors have undergone many changes over the years, including vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot, lowered acoustical tile ceilings, and asphalt tile floors. The original, tall, five-panel rear doors remain, however. The variety of styles in the second floor courtroom also illustrates the number of remodelings the interior has undergone over the one hundred and thirty-five years of the building's existence.

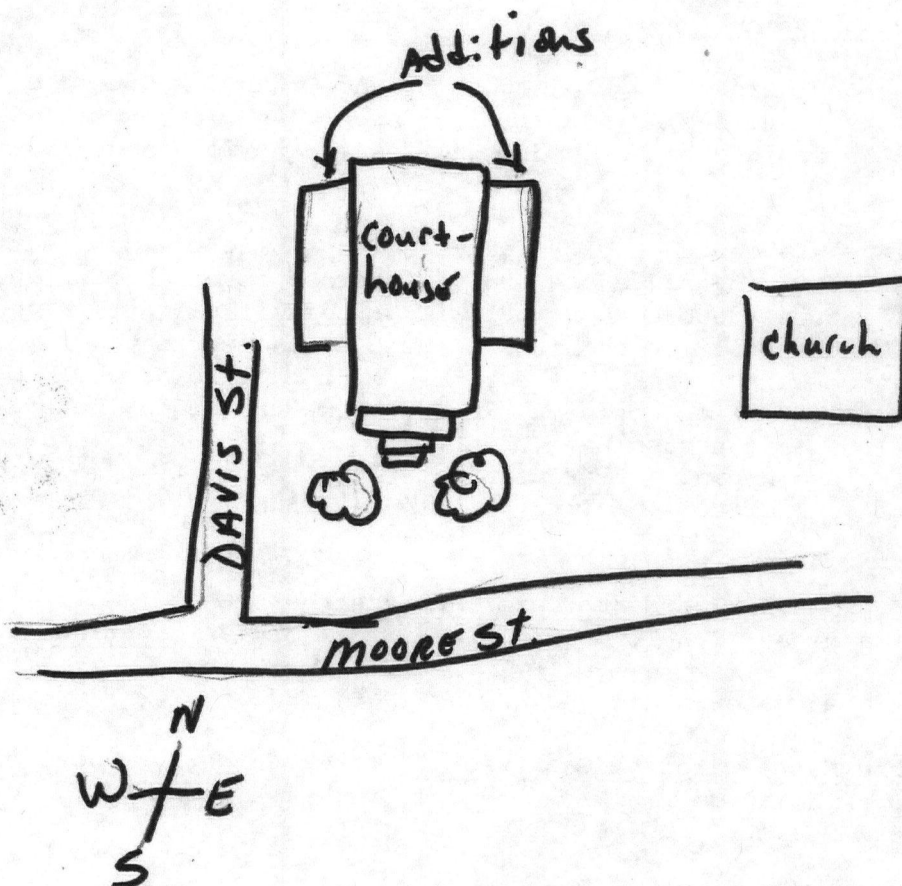
A historic landmark in Southport, the still sound Brunswick County Courthouse should be adapted for another use once the new facilities are completed at Supply.

Address: Cletis Clemmons, Chairman, Brunswick County Commissioners, Brunswick County Courthouse, Southport, N.C.

Acreage: less than one acre

UTM reference: Latitude: 33°55'08" Longitude: 78°01'05"

Verbal Boundary Description: The courthouse is bounded to the north by Nash Street, to the west by Davis Street, to the south by Moore Street, and to the east by a lane connecting Moore and Nash streets.



## BRUNSWICK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - addendum

Built around 1844, the Brunswick County Courthouse is probably the second courthouse on the site. W. D. Morrell may have been the architect-builder.<sup>1</sup> Since its construction the courthouse has suffered from several fires and has been repaired and somewhat altered. The interior woodwork dates mainly from the 1890s and 1920s. In 1922 a one story porch with piers was added to the facade by A. J. Robbins while making repairs following an extensive fire. The building was covered in stucco when two wings were added in the 1960s. However, none of these changes has been so drastic as to destroy the architectural integrity of this otherwise simple building or to lessen its historical significance. Set on a large town lot and surrounded by mature live oaks, the Brunswick County Courthouse is still one of the most impressive buildings in Southport. One of only seventeen antebellum courthouses still standing in North Carolina, it is the only antebellum courthouse surviving in the southeastern quadrant of the state. Abandoned in the summer of 1978 when the county seat was moved to Bolivia, the courthouse today serves as the Town Hall for the community of Southport which owes its existence to the Brunswick County Courthouse.

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Lounsbury, An Architectural Inventory of Southport, North Carolina, an unpublished report for the N. C. Division of Archives and History, 1978.

Property

North Carolina Courthouses Thematic Group

State

N.C.

Working Number

12.12.78.4763

TECHNICAL

Photos

#62

Maps

57

CONTROL

OK 12.14.78

HISTORIAN

57 county courthouses ranging from early 19th century to 1930s. Significant in long time associations with ~~the~~ commercial, political and legal activities in the communities they serve. Some questions on integrity of subject, justification on 1930s examples. Needs call for minimal information.

ACCEPT / DOUBLE 3/6/79

The inventory forms contain adequate descriptions and statements of significance yet lack conveyance of the courthouse sets are sent separate or for many buildings are being nominated. I think we should return for proper completion.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

RECALL / 3/6/79

1930's structures justified in continuation sheets; additional photos received. Brunswick Co. Courthouse has suffered some loss of integrity but retains massive fenestration, being symbolizing public building - would accept but defer to architectural historian opinion.

ARCHEOLOGIST

ACCEPT 5/8/79 DOUBLE

OTHER

HAER

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

Review \_\_\_\_\_

articulate presentation of significance of these courthouses.

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

one apparently eligible property held back because of county opposition, but I cannot see rejecting entire thematic or exclusion of one property.

Accept / 5/10/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

6-5-79

Send-back

\_\_\_\_\_

Entered

MAY 10 1979

Federal Register Entry

Re-submit

\_\_\_\_\_

5/10/79



NEGATIVE NUMBER N. 56-9-224

MAY 10 1979

PHOTOGRAPHER Clarence Griffin

PHOTO DATE 7-18-48

SUBJECT Brunswick Co. Courthouse - 1948 documentary before application of stucco and addition.

Southport, Brunswick Co.

North Carolina Courthouses Thematic Group  
(Currituck County courthouse and jail)  
Alamance County # 63  
Currituck

FROM DIVISION OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY  
RALEIGH, N. C.

APR 9 1979

PRINT BY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION

221-224



NEGATIVE NUMBER N-77-5-392

MAY 10 1979

PHOTOGRAPHER Jane K. Seapler

PHOTO DATE April 1977

SUBJECT Brunswick Co. Courthouse

North Carolina Courthouses Thematic  
Group - ~~Alamance~~ <sup>Currituck</sup> County

Brunswick

#57 762

FROM DIVISION OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY  
RALEIGH, N. C.

MAY 22 1980

JAN 20 1980

PRINT BY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION

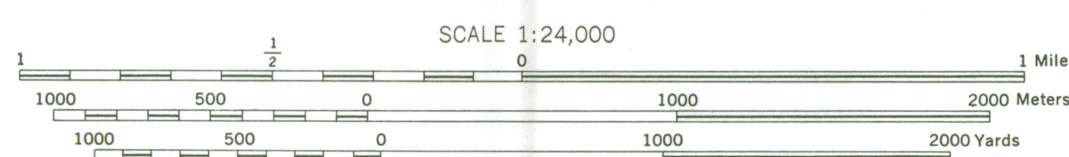
DEC 12 1978



Brunswick County Courthouse  
 Southport, North Carolina  
 Latitude 33°55'08" Longitude 78°01'05"

A.M.S. V842  
 First Edition (AMS 1), 1944; (AMS 2), 1946.

Prepared under the direction of the Chief of Engineers by the Army Map Service (AM), U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. Copied in 1946 from North Carolina, 1:31,680, AMS, Sheet 5351 I NE, 1944. Original map compiled by USCGS; planimetry from aerial photography by stereophotogrammetric methods; topography by planimetric surveys. Aerial photography by USCGS, 1942. Horizontal and vertical control by USCGS. Scale changed and marginal data revised, 1946. Map field checked, 1943. This map complies with the national standard map accuracy requirements.

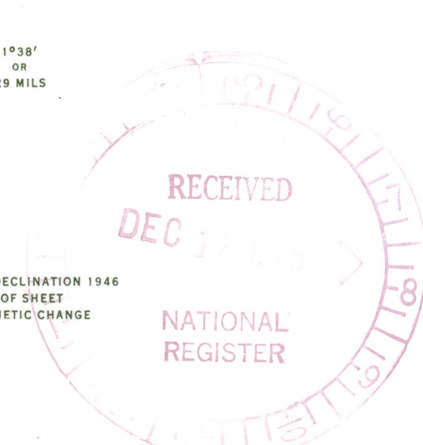


CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

POLYCONIC PROJECTION  
 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM

LETTERED CONTROL STATIONS  
 A-WATER TANK  
 B-BENCH MARK  
 C-SPIRE  
 D-BENCH MARK  
 E-SIGNAL MAST

APPROXIMATE MEAN DECLINATION 1946  
 FOR CENTER OF SHEET  
 NO ANNUAL MAGNETIC CHANGE



**LEGEND**  
 ROAD DATA 1943

Hard surface, heavy duty road, more than two lanes wide	Loose surface, graded, dry-weather road
Hard surface, heavy duty road, two lanes wide; Federal route marker	Trail; dirt road
Secondary, hard surface, all-weather road	Railroad in street; Carline in street
Two lanes wide; State route marker	

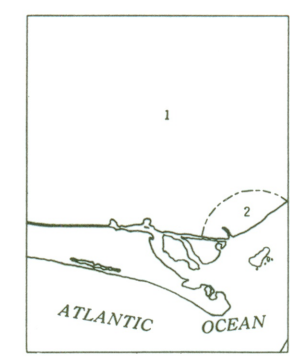
**RAILROADS**

Standard gauge	Single track	Double track	UNDER CONSTRUCTION	ABANDONED
Narrow gauge	Single track	Double track	Single track	Double track

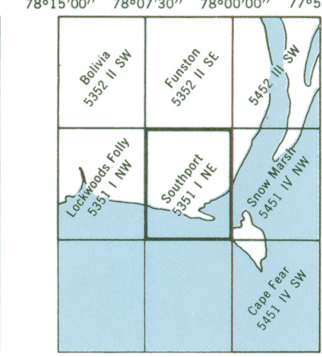
**BOUNDARIES**

International	Mine	Intermittent lake
State (with monument)	Triangulation station	Intermittent stream
County subdivision	Bench mark	Dam
Reservation	Spot elevation	Rapids; falls
Military reservation	Woods	Large rapids and falls
School; Church	Woods-brushwood	Swamp, marsh
Cemetery	Brushwood	Rocks awash at low tide
Churchyard	Orchard	Wharf, pier
	Vineyard	Man-made shoreline

INDEX TO BOUNDARIES



INDEX TO ADJOINING SHEETS



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SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA  
 BRUNSWICK COUNTY  
 N3352.5-W7800/7.5

MAY 10 1979

