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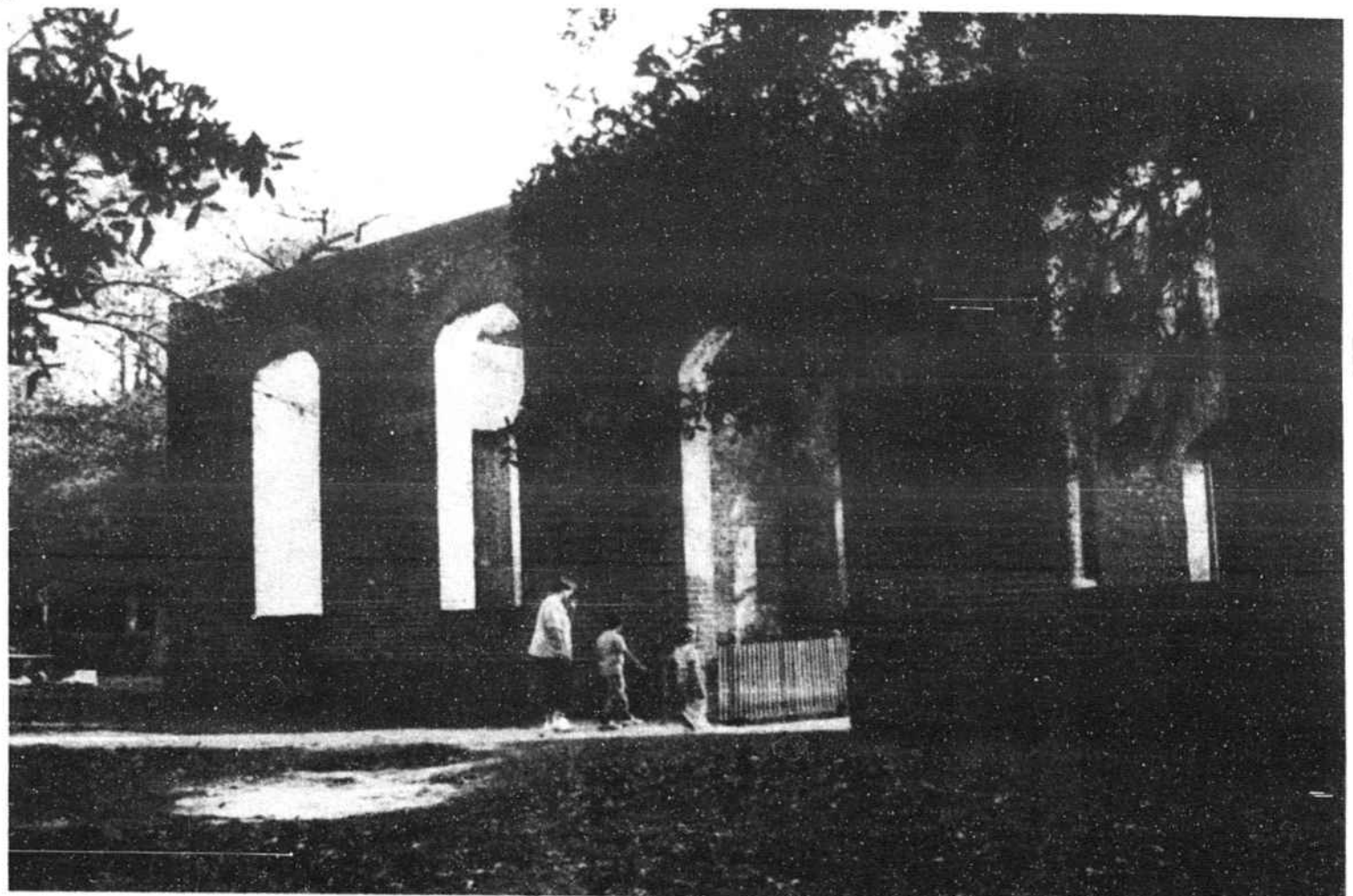
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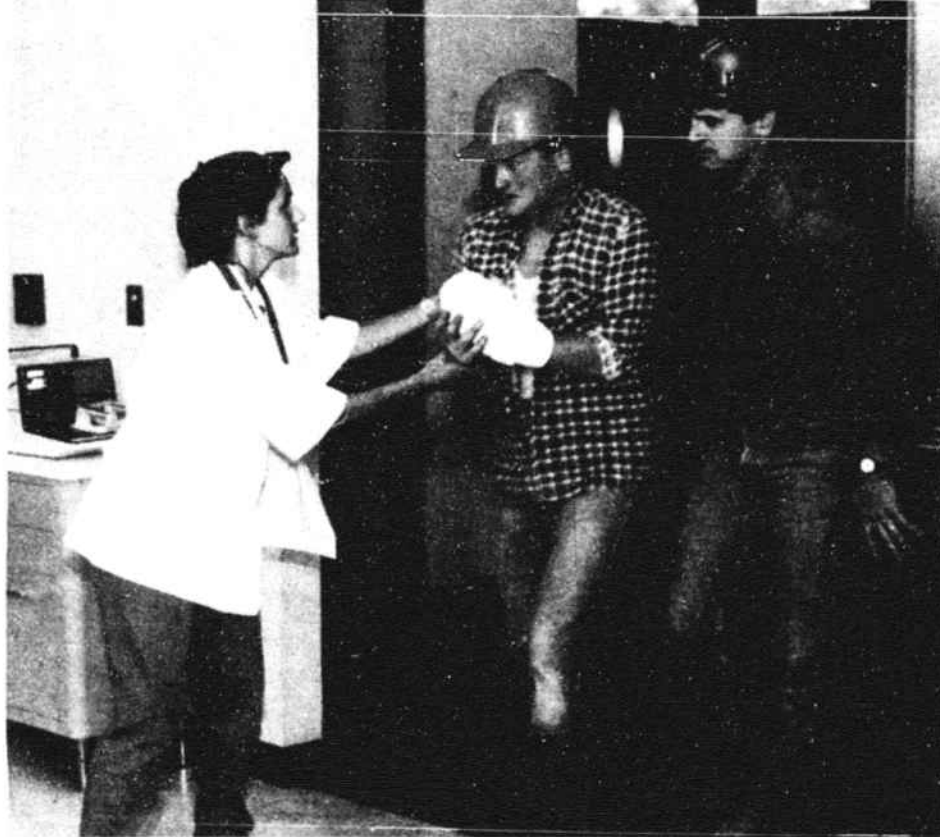


STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER
THE RUIN of old St. Philips Church will reveal its history during guided tours Sunday, Dec. 12, at Brunswick Town State Historic Site as part of the Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson Christmas Celebration.

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Explore Carolina Christmases Past At Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson

What was Christmas like for Confederate soldiers during the Civil War? How did it differ from the holiday celebration of the early residents of the colonial seaport town of Brunswick?

The annual Christmas program at Brunswick Town State Historic Site takes a different twist this winter. Instead of an open house centered around lavish refreshments and period decorations, the focus will be on interpretation through a combination of guided tours of the site and mini-concerts.

This year, said Tammy Bangert, program coordinator, the site staff is "trying to really put some emphasis on the outside."

Costumed interpreters will be posted at two stops on the

grounds—the remains of the Fort Anderson earthworks and the remains of one of the earliest Anglican churches in the state, St. Philips. The interpreters will share their stories during five, 20-minute guided tours.

Bangert said that visitors won't have to take the guided tours, but will be free "to drift wherever they want" about the site, talking with the interpreters unless they are otherwise engaged. "People just need to stop and let the interpreter give their talk when a group arrives," she said.

During the Civil War, Fort Anderson served as a Confederate shore battery overlooking the Cape Fear River. On this site, interpreters will stage a small encampment, with exhibits of Civil War uniforms

and weapons, said Bangert, "but we will have no firing of the weapons."

Saint Philips Church was built under the Act of 1751, which provided for its financing through a lottery. Its cemetery includes the tombs or graves of such notables as early Governors Arthur Dobbs and Benjamin Smith and U.S. Justice Alfred Moore.

In previous years, instrumentalists have performed as a backdrop for an open house in the Visitors Center, with guests moving about, eating, drinking and talking during their performances.

This year, out of respect for the musicians and to allow visitors to better enjoy the music, Bangert said three half-hour mini-concerts will be presented in the Center's orientation room.

Walter Welsh and The Recordaires will perform on English recorders. Other musicians will play recorders as well, along with flute, saxophone and possibly other instruments, said Bangert.

The program will include some early Christmas carols, along with their history.

The Center interior will be decorated and visitors will be offered traditional cookies and "plenty of hot mulled cider," said Bangert.

Admission to Brunswick Town State Historic Site is free. The site includes the ruins of the town, begun in 1762 as a seaport on the Cape Fear River; the earthworks of Fort Anderson; the ruins of Russellborough, the estate home of two royal governors; and a Visitors Center with interpretive exhibits and artifact displays. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Located off N.C. 133, about 10 miles north of Southport.

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