



VOLUNTEER SCOTT MILLIGAN (far left) shows fourth-graders from Shallotte Middle how to make a broom out of dried marsh grass. Waiting their turn are (from left) Tamara Gause, Brenita Marlowe, Casey Ashmore and Alyxandra Kuigre from Linda Inman's class.



MICHAEL WOOTEN TRIES to keep a wooden hoop spinning as Brunswick Town volunteer Linden Mathews-Boone (left) teaches games that were popular with children during the late 1700s.

STUDENTS STEP INTO PAST AT BRUNSWICK

Heritage Days Offers Hands-On Learning

BY DORI C. GURGANUS  
Fourth grade students at Waccamaw and Shallotte Middle schools visited a setting that resembled life in the late 18th century last Thursday.

They were the last of three groups of students to participate as Brunswick Town State Historical Site opened its gates for Heritage Days.

Since 1983, the ruins of the colonial settlement have been part of the Heritage Day program, an educational hands-on experience for local students.

Brenda Marshbourn, assistant site manager, recalled that the annual event was originally named Fall Heritage Days, but by the late 1980s park officials had moved the schedule to spring. In the spring of 1991,

Sunny Point military base was being utilized for ammunition shipments to the Persian Gulf, and Brunswick Town was shut down temporarily.

This year marks the return of Heritage Days to the fall.

Working in conjunction with the Brunswick County Public Schools and the Friends of Brunswick Town, the staff at the former port of Brunswick use Heritage Days to teach students about life in the late 1700s.

The curriculum for fourth grade covers American and North Carolina history, and field trips of this sort are scheduled specifically to fit in with the state's required lesson plans.

In groups led by their teachers and several parents, students moved from one station to another, watch-

ing as volunteers dressed in the fashions of the mid-to-late 1700s showed them a bit of what it was like to live in Brunswick County 250 years ago. At many stations students also got to try their hand at a craft, chore or game.

They listened to Ellen Dorsett explain how candles were made at home by hand. She reminded them first that homes were not equipped with electrical outlets back then, and that candles were the only source of light during the evening.

Tammie Bangert described the types of food cooked by colonial women of that period. Ash cakes, roasted hens and ears of corn, gingerbread, rice, cornbread and other recipes prepared in the New World were cooked over a fire with unsophisticated cast-iron or wooden tools.

The students also learned how brooms were made, where the fibers for ropes could be found and the types of games colonial children played.

Volunteers for the program came from the Friends of Brunswick Town, the county schools, Fort Fisher and Caswell-Neuse historic sites.

Leland Middle School fourth grades visited Tuesday; Bolivia and Southport Elementary students toured the ruins Wednesday.

Brunswick Town was founded in 1726 as a port under British colonial rule. Its people were some of the first to show resistance to the empire when in 1765 they revolted against the Stamp Act. Residents held royal Gov. William Tryon under house arrest while they unloaded cargo that was not stamped from ships at the port.

The settlement was soon vacated as Port Wilmington became more popular. British soldiers burned the deserted town in 1776, leaving it in ruins.

Years later the site was used by Confederate States Army soldiers during the Civil War. Called Fort Anderson at that time, the Confederates were forced to aban-

don the fort when federal soldiers attacked nearby Fort Fisher.

Admission to Brunswick Town is free. Information about tours and schedules is available from the site staff, 919-371-6613.

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STENCILING BY HAND was the best way to decorate a home before wallpaper became available in the colonies. Demonstrating the art form to Shallotte Middle School students are volunteers Ed and Frances Allen.



DEMONSTRATING HOW CANDLES were made during the late 18th century, volunteers Joan Howard (left) and Jan Calhoun melt beeswax over a fire.



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