



THE WHITTLERS BENCH Southport Historical Society

PO Box 10014
Southport, North Carolina 28461

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November 1999

Southport Historical Society

Wednesday, December 1



Pot Luck Dinner and Public Program

6:30 p.m. Southport Community Building on the grounds of Fort Johnston. The Potluck Dinner and Society business meeting will be held first, and the public program will be at 8:00 p.m.: "Historical Districts," with Guest Speaker J. Myrick Howard, the Executive Director of Preservation North Carolina in Raleigh.

President's Note

As I am sure you noticed above, we have moved our "November" meeting slightly into December in order to have our distinguished guest speaker appear here. Myrick Howard and his organization are leaders in North Carolina on the subject of historic preservation, and he brings us a broad-scale perspective on Historic Districts, far beyond the "What color are the curtains?" approach adopted by many opponents. Events in the last year in Southport and environs have clearly shown us how much we are at risk, with the destruction of four buildings that were in the "Architecture of Southport" book, and the tragedy of the bulldozed two hundred year old school house. Consequently, the Society's first order of business for the coming year will be a concerted effort to establish some statutory regulations protecting our already identified National Register Historic District. This was an election issue in the recent election, and our efforts will be in conjunction with the new city government and other groups in the community. We are not knee-jerk preservationists dedicated to saving buildings regardless of condition; our interest is to maintain the character, ambiance, and particularly the human scale of Southport--it is distressing to see that new buildings always seem to be much larger than the old ones!

Our other principal project, the Old Jail restoration under Committee Chairman Bob Wojda, is making tremendous progress! If you haven't seen it lately, you'll be amazed! The 1970 vintage fence and porch have disappeared as we go back to original 1904. Twelve new windows for the second floor have arrived and will be painted and installed shortly. One room inside has been stripped of its modern additions as the way is cleared for restoration. Special thanks are due to super volunteers Irv Green and Richard Dieterick, and to the Horticulture Class from Brunswick Learning Center. Rob Gandy's and Ed Honeycutt's crews from the city pulled up the fence and hauled away the debris (despite being heavily involved in wetter activities simultaneously.) Come get involved--we're going to have a showplace!



It is impossible, of course, for me to express in mere words just how much I appreciate what the Southport Historical Society and many of the individual members did in nominating me for the American Association of State and Local History Award. You did not stop with just the nomination, but when I was one of the winners you have gone that extra mile in making it one of the most special things in my life. One of the very best things about it was that you made it possible for my daughter and her husband to be with me at the presentation. And the reception at the Captain's Quarters was another very special thing. That gave me the opportunity to see you individually and visit with many others I had not seen in a long time. Just the word "thanks" seems so inadequate to express how I feel, but I shall truly be forever grateful to you for what you have meant in my life these past twenty-three years as well as for this honor that you have given me in winning the history award. My thanks to every one of you, but especially to June, Cheryl, Marilyn, Gwen, Don, Beverly, Peter, Pat, Bert and Becky, who went way out of their way to do things for me. If I have left out anyone, it is because I'm getting "senile"!

This issue of *"Looking Back"* focuses on the **Quarantine Station** which was an important part of Southport life for many years. The Station burned in 1951 and only the water tower base remains today. This letter describing the Southport Quarantine Station was sent to me from Lucy Anderson Avant dated July 28, 1991:

"The Office was at the foot of Atlantic Avenue. It had Dr. Berg's office and an operating room on the first floor and one room downstairs with all kinds of medicine and two large rooms with beds for patients. That was the only place Southport people had as a hospital. I had my tonsils taken out there, plus about 30 or 40 splinters cut out and cuts sewed up. Dr. Berg and one of the men were on duty 24 hours a day.

The Station was in the middle of the river about a mile or a mile and half up the river from Southport. You had to get to it by boat. There were several buildings there, a large dock for the ships to tie up to be fumigated. There was a boat house and living quarters for the men. That building had one big room with beds at one end and the living room was at the other end and dining room, bath, kitchen, and off from the kitchen was living quarters for the cook. It had a hospital for men that were sick or needed surgery. Another building was where they fumigated all bedding and mattresses. Then the whole ship was fumigated all bedding and mattresses. Then the whole ship was fumigated for everything alive like bugs, rats and things like that. They also had buildings where they housed the men from the ships that were being cleaned up. Every ship that came into Southport had to stop there to be inspected before going on to Wilmington.

Dr. Berg was the big boss overall and Mr. Tobiason was in charge of the station. As best I can remember, Dr. Berg (the pharmacist), Dr. Doshier and Dr. Broadway were the doctor who boarded the ships at the Bar. Ships came from ports just about all over the world.

Here are a few of the men who worked there:
Dr. Berg, born in Denmark. Annie May Woodside was his stepdaughter.
Mr. Tobiason, born in Norway who had one son.
My father, William Anderson, born in Denmark. He was a marine engineer and in charge of the boats belonging to the station.
Mr. Jorgesen, born in Norway. His daughter, Vera Jorgensen Howard, still lives in Southport.
My grandfather, B. Ellis, born in Jacksonville, NC.
Charles Doshier, from Southport. Married to Gertrude Aldridge.
Boisey McKoy was the cook, and the best cook around.
There was another man named Beatty but that's all I know about him.

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"How I Lost My Tonsils at the Quarantine Station"

(Dr. Walter Harrelson, native of Brunswick Co. and now retired to Southport)

It must have been about 1927 or 1928. Doctors were recommending that all children my age have their tonsils and adenoids removed, so my parents agreed that mine had to come out, too.

On an October Friday afternoon after school had let out, they took me to Southport and turned me over to the nurses who were preparing the children for operations the next day. There must have been six or eight of us. We were placed in a large room in the Quarantine Station. I was on a double-decker bed beside a window that gave me a good view of the river, so the night was full of river sounds, sights and smells.

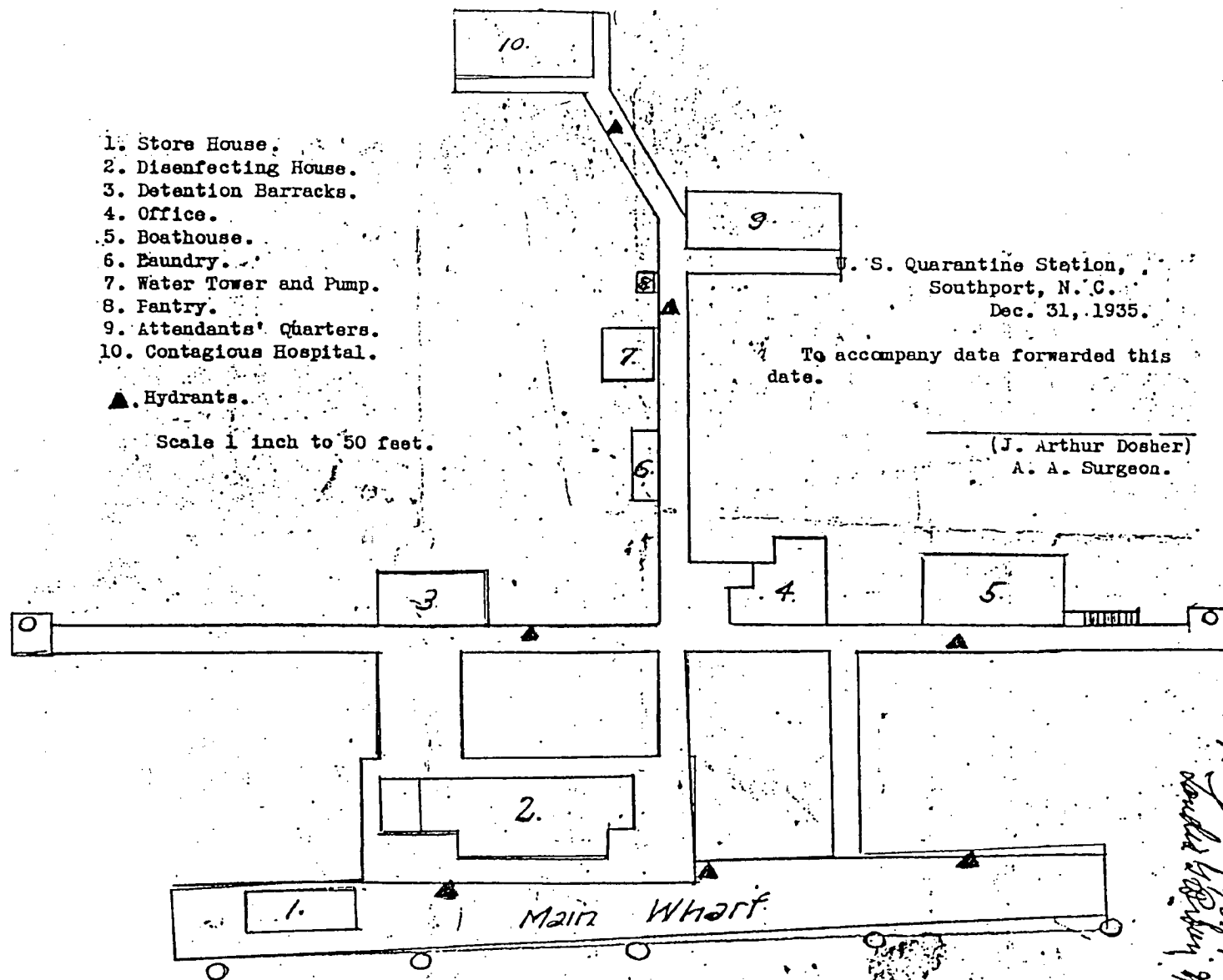
Early the next morning I was taken into the operating room. The anesthesia was ether, which was suffocating for a moment, and then came the sensation of whirling around the room on my bed, time after time, faster and faster ...

I awoke and found myself back on the bed. My parents were there, with ice cream from Watson's Drug Store, which they had promised me – all I could eat – when the operation was over. But of course I couldn't swallow and had to watch while Ed, my younger brother, ate the ice cream.

As I remember, I was required to spend a second night in the room just in case some problem developed. Nothing happened, and on the next morning my parents once more came with ice cream. You can be sure that Ed didn't get a bite that morning!

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Note from Susie: I'm in the process of writing a Quarantine Station article for "A Bit of History" in the Brunswick Up Close section of the Wilmington Morning Star printed on Thursday. Watch for it.



This 1935 layout of the US Quarantine Station was furnished to Dr. Landis Brown by Charles E. Doshier in September of 1970. The handwritten note indicates that the water tank held 12,000 gallons and was supplied by a deep well at a depth of 440 feet. At the given scale the Main Wharf would be about 300 feet.

OLD JAIL

There has been a significant change to the Old Jail's appearance, at least on the outside. Irv Green dismantled the chain-link fence and the City pulled out the posts and hauled away all the material. Irv Green and Richard Dieterich removed the canopy over the front doors, which had been added sometime after 1970. The next big restoration to the outside will be to replace the two front doors with heavy solid wooden doors and bars on the outside like the jail originally had. The chain-link fence was added sometimes after 1945, which, beside being unattractive, was not original. It is the jail itself that is being restored but to improve the general appearance and keep a consistent motif, a wooden picket fence (much like that around the cemetery) will go around the grounds. A small section of the new fence is up and some Saturday (s) we will try to get a work party together to complete it. Also, we've had volunteer groups of students from the Learning Center's Horticulture classes and their teacher, Bob Simmons, helping with the grounds. Rob Gandy and Ed Honeycut have been giving the project excellent cooperation and things would not look as good or be this far along without them.

The inside is coming along too. The progress is not as dramatic but it's definitely moving along. The inside is where the real lion's share of the work is at... all the 1970 changes have to be torn out; walls have to be repaired; all the metal has to be sanded and repainted; the electric wiring and fixtures have to be replaced and the new replacement windows on the second floor need to be trimmed-out. Last week, our craftsman, Ashland Fedley, installed the replica windows he made but there is a lot of work left doing the trim.

Tuesday mornings are still the regular work mornings but we will open the building just about anytime anyone wishes to get into it to do some work. There is a job in there for every skill level to fit everyone's schedule, just ask Becky Lucas. Now, when was the last time you had such a good offer and it's not going to cost you any *money...*, *just show-up Tuesday 9ish or call Bob or June at 457-6412* if your not in a restoration mood just then!

Southport Historical Society membership

individual	\$ 10	student	\$ 2	business / organization	\$15
couple	15	(up to age 18)		sustaining	25
lifetime	150	lifetime couple	200		

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Send to NEW address: PO Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461

The Book Page

Southport Historical Society is actively engaged in publishing books dealing with the history of the lower Cape Fear. Works listed below are available for sale by the Society, and at book stores in the area.

Architecture of Southport, by Carl Lounsbury. Southport Historical Society, second printing 1966, 62 pp., soft-cover. \$15.00. The styles of old Southport homes are described and illustrated.

Bald Head, by David Stick. Southport Historical Society, 1998 reprint, 143 pp, ill., hard-cover. \$14.95.

Cap'n Charlie and the Lights of the Lower Cape Fear, by Ethel Herring. Southport Historical Society, fourth printing 1995, 120 pp, ill., soft-cover. \$10.00.

The Cemeteries of Southport, compiled by Dorcas W. Schmidt. Southport Historical Society, 1983, 94 pp., soft-cover. \$8.00. A unique reference book listing names of those buried in the cemeteries of Southport and environs.

Fort Caswell in War and Peace, by Ethel Herring and Carolee Williams. Published by Broadfoot's Bookmark, Wendell, North Carolina, 1983. 138 pp., ill., hard-cover. Sold out. New edition expected June 1999.

A History of Brunswick County, by Lawrence Lee. Published by Brunswick County, Bolivia, North Carolina. 1980, 279 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$18.30

A History of Fort Johnston, by Wilson Angley. Includes index. Published by Southport Historical Society, in association with the Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1996, 150 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$10.00.

Joshua's Dream, a history of old Southport by Susan S. Carson. First printing published by Carolina Power & Light Company in 1992, second printing published by Southport Historical Society, 1994. 168 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$15.00.

Long Beach, A North Carolina Town: Its Origin and History, by Wolfgang Furstenau. Published by the author in Long Beach, N.C., 1995, 2. printing 1997, 364 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$17.95

Reminiscences of Wilmington And Smithville---Southport 1848-1900, by Dr. Walter G. Curtis. Published by Southport Historical Society, 1999, 88 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$12.95.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume I, 1520-1887, by Bill Reaves. Published by Broadfoot Publishing Company: Wilmington, North Carolina, 1978. Second edition 1985, 129 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$15.00.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume II, 1887-1920, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1978. Second edition 1990, 324 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$20.00.

Southport, North Carolina, A Chronology, Volume III, 1920-1940, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1996, 248 pp., 46-page index, ill., soft-cover. First edition. \$12.00.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume IV, 1941-1970, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1999, 281 pp., ill., soft-cover. 16.95.

Southport Secrets, compiled by Donald K. Johnson. Published by Southport Historical Society. Southport, NC. 1998, 88 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$12.95.

Note: Membership entitles you to purchase these books from the Society at a 10% discount. Please include \$2.00 per book for mail orders.

Christmas GIFT!

Southport Coverlet

An excellent choice for Christmas gifts!

Remember: your member discount is available only on items purchased from the society

This beautiful coverlet was commissioned by the Southport Historical Society and created by *We Love Country*. It is 100% cotton, two-layer, Jacquard woven in the U.S.A., preshrunk, colorfast and machine-washable. It is handsome and practical, measuring approximately 48 x 68 inches, and fringed on all four sides.

The design captures the history and spirit of early Southport, as seen in old photographs taken many years ago. Depicted are the Brunswick County Courthouse, the Pilot obelisk at the old cemetery, the Ft. Johnston Garrison House, the Masonic Hall during World War I, the entrance (1912) of the Southport Public Library, the Old Jail, the early school (1904) which is now an art gallery, Doshier Memorial Hospital, St. Philip's, Trinity Methodist, the old Pilot tower, Prince's Creek light, Old Baldy on Bald Head Island, the Indian Trail Tree and the Historical Society logo. The perfect gift for family members and friends both near and far, it captures special memories and will become an instant keepsake.

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