



THE WHITTLERS BENCH Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

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POT LUCK AND PROGRAM. Thursday, May 20, 6:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church at the junction of NC 211 and 133 (Doshier Cutoff). The Wilmington Area during World War II, presented by Wilbur D. Jones, Jr., retired Navy Captain, distinguished author, and Chairman of the Wartime Wilmington Commemoration 1999 Committee. (NOTE: This is the third Thursday in May, not our usual fourth one, due to schedule conflicts.)

PRESIDENT'S NOTES from Chris Suiter

Publicity efforts (and struggles) for our May boat cruise have highlighted our great need for an experienced, professional SHS publicist. Five different people producing brochures, flyers, tickets, newspaper ads and articles (mis)managed to show the wrong boat, wrong times, wrong place, and no date; only the price was right! (Since this is being written before the cruise, I don't know what the impact was, but it sure shortens the life of organizers--ask Cheryl Daniel!) Surely, in the wide range of membership we now have, someone is experienced in this field, and anxious to keep practicing. Help! Help!

All of you are probably familiar by now with the ongoing financial difficulties of the Southport Maritime Museum; however, the community support being shown on all sides has been very gratifying. SHS assistance is being given in two ways: We have deferred our collection of a substantial book sales settlement until September, and are setting aside half of the profits of the May cruise for an emergency operations fund for the Museum. We all realize how important the Maritime Museum is as the symbol of the renaissance of the derelict 1980's downtown Southport. I hope that all of you feel that way, too, and will renew your "Friends of the Museum" memberships.

All organizations, including our own, suffer from this same problem; initial enthusiasm is very high, hundreds rush forward and join, and "the problem is solved!" The "Friends" have dropped from almost 200 to less than 50, with a consequent loss of several thousand dollars income. SHS does not want to fall into the same difficulties, but dues paying in our busy world is easy to forget. Our record in this regard is not good--SHS dues need to be paid, too!

Other ways to help out if you have more time than money: 1) Bob Wojda is holding Tuesday Work Days at the Old Jail, 9-12, with both indoor and outdoor projects. You all can see what the building needs, but our Heritage garden outside also needs lots of love. (We are considering selling jars of "Historic Rust," like the battleship sells "deck.") 2) The Southport Visitor Center needs volunteers for days other than Sunday, especially as substitutes. (The SHS Sunday crew has 25 members now, because it's fun!)

Another ongoing project which has had little notice recently is the cemetery monument to Generals Howe and Smith. The Monument Dedication is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on July 4, 1999. Some additional subscribers are needed; you can see the brass markers on view in the Visitors Center.

WORLD WAR II MEMORIES

Sabrina Davis of Wilmington and Rick Allen from Fayetteville are working on a documentary about U-boats off our coast during 1942 and '43. They would like to talk to anyone who remembers ships burning off shore, debris from sunken ships on the beaches, the black outs or had contact with merchant marines who worked during those years. If you or anyone you know has information that will help them document the German attacks off our coast, please call **Sabrina Davis** at: **Evenings: 799-2573; Daytime: 397-0880; or Bert & Becky Felton at 457-5302.**

! JAIL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !

The Old Jail Committee will be working every Tuesday at the Jail. The hours will be from 9 a.m. to noon, but you can work longer! There are plenty of things to do, as you all know, and right now we are going to be stressing appearances to the jail and grounds in preparation for the 4th of July. If you prefer working on the landscaping, weeding and pruning, bring your own tools. For those who wish to remove rust from bars and repaint, we provide everything needed, even a dust mask. Hope to see you soon, before it gets HOT! If you have any questions, call **Bob Wojda** at **457-6412**. That's Tuesdays, 9-12...we need all the help we can get!

MORE VOLUNTEERS!

Southport Visitors Center is looking for volunteers weekdays and Saturdays. If you like local history, can give directions, want to meet lots & lots of interesting people, this is a fun way to spend a few hours a week. Call **Jim McKee** at the center at **457-7927**

And Speaking of Volunteers...thank you to our members who signed up for the Visitors Center on Sundays from March to October: Chris & Debbie Suiter, Susie Holtz, Kate & Ennis Hardin, Lois Meyers, Dick Hughes, John & Cinda Lewis, Don Johnson, Bert & Becky Felton, Dave Googins, Walt Dempsey, Chuck & Elizabeth Pollock, June Wojda, Susie Carson, Marilyn Lessin and substitutes Peter Wyckoff, Cheryl Daniel, Bob Thorsen and Pauline Swain.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President:	Chris Suiter	457-6629
Vice President:	Peter Wyckoff	457- 5599
Secretary:	Pauline Swain	457-6537
Treasurer:	Wolfgang Furstenau	278-4050

Newsletter:	Rebecca & Bert Felton	457-5302
	June Wojda	457-6412



FROM THE EDITOR OF *"Looking Back"* Quite sometime ago our friend, member and contributor, shared with me a column he wrote for the Wilmington Star-News in 1974. I came across it recently and realized I had never shared it with you, so here it is along with another article from the Wilmington Morning Star (June, 1983) concerning memories of Walden Creek. If you want to know where Walden Creek is located, ask some of our old timers, and also ask about their memories of the creek. In fact, I would like to publish some of them.

The Royal Governor and Walden Creek

by Bill Reaves

About 1724, George Burrington was appointed royal governor of North Carolina. Who was this man and why should he concern the citizens of the Lower Cape Fear? He was from the same county of Devon in England that produced such men as Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake, and like the aforementioned he was a man of forceful action. Upon his arrival in North Carolina he saw that the land in the unoccupied Cape Fear country would attract settlers and the river could serve as a channel for a brisk and profitable trade.

Governor Burrington made the land available to settlers by the simple expedient of defying the will of the Lords Proprietors and ignoring South Carolina's claim to the west bank of the Cape Fear River. Having placed the land in this area within the reach of settlers, he next turned his attention to encouraging settlement. During the last year of his eighteen months in office he made several trips to the Cape Fear country and spent much time charting the river and otherwise preparing the way for those who were to follow. In the winter of 1724-25 he was distributing land there. It was at this time that the town and seaport of Brunswick was settled by Colonel Maurice Moore on the west bank of the Cape Fear River. So great was his faith in this area, he also took a piece of property about 1729 at the mouth of Walden Creek, which is known even now as Governor's Point.

In November 1734, Gabriel Johnston became governor of North Carolina. A short while afterward, Burrington was found to be much broken in health and very nearly penniless. He had been promised a salary of a thousand pounds a year, but had never been paid. To return to England, it was necessary for him to sell his household goods, his linens, his silverware and his books, and to mortgage his lands and stock. In 1759 his body was found floating in the canal in St. James Park in London, but how it came to be there or how he met his death will never be known. A terrible end for a man who contributed so much to the development of the Cape Fear country in which we now live.

Days Remembered on Walden Creek

by Dorothy V. Russell

My great-uncle and great-aunt, William and Liza Guthrie, lived on a little salt water creek five miles this side of Southport. It was called Walden Creek, I believe. During the late '30s and throughout the '40s, I spent many happy childhood days

there. I had an opportunity to do and to witness many things that children only hear about now. Each day was a bright new adventure.

To reach their little cabin on the creek, you had to leave the main highway and drive through rather thick woods on a sandy, white road. Just a drive through these woods was an experience in itself. On summer days we would often see snakes sleeping in the sun right smack in the middle of the road; and because the road was so little traveled, we sometimes encountered deer, 'possums, squirrels and (ugh) even ol' polecats.

Once we reached the cabin, a whole magic world opened to me. I was born and raised in the city (Wilmington), and this little creek home in the woods was a never ending source of excitement. There was no electricity. Light came from lovely kerosene lamps with tall glass chimneys. Aunt Liza cooked on a huge wood range that had a warming oven, and such delicious smells and tastes came as a result of that stove. There was country ham, hot biscuits, cracklin' cornbread, hot coffee with a chickory aroma, spice cakes and apple pie, and terrapin stew (an Aunt Liza original recipe) with onions and potatoes in it. I never liked to eat this stew, but it smelled so good!

Uncle Willy and Aunt Eliza grew their own vegetables, raised chickens, a few pigs and bought milk from a nearby neighbor who had cows. Aunt Liza churned the cream from the milk into butter. She also made her own soap for clothes washing and scrubbing. She made it in a big old cast iron pot in the front yard. I can't remember all the ingredients, but fat renderings and lye played a large part. This she would place in the big pot and light a fire under it and stir and stir with a long wooden paddle. When it got to the readiness stage, she would pour it into a shallow wooden box and let it cool. Then she would cut it into big bars. It would be snowy white, and I was always warned against handling it because of the lye content.

The creek was the biggest source of excitement for me. I would sit on the little dock and crab and fish for hours. There were lots of big blue-clawed crabs and the largest croakers I have even seen. The most fascinating thing was that the creek had alligators in it! I soon learned to spot a 'gator' coming round the bend in the creek by the two small 'knots' on his head that stuck above the water as he floated along with the tide. I'd yell for Uncle Willy or Aunt Liza and they would bring a .22 rifle and shoot the 'gator.' Today this might sound cruel and criminal, but then it was done to protect the ducks, geese, and chickens, a major food source. One night an alligator even killed one of the family's small dogs. So at that time 'gators' were not very well respected when they trespassed.

There was a small church nearby called Bethel Church. On special Sundays the minister would hold baptizings in the creek. Being Episcopalian and used to the 'sprinkling' method, I held this 'whole body' method in awe. It was very humorous sometimes to see the reactions of the person being baptized. And when the minister was holding very large people, he sometimes went down with them! It was a serious, religious ceremony, but it was also fun-filled at times. Me, I always worried about the 'gators' but they never made an appearance during one of these baptizings.

Congratulations !!

4th of July 1925

Bill Reaves has been awarded the **Clarendon Cup**. Bill has been a long time friend of the Historical Society and his work is used every day by people doing research. His work dealing with black history in Wilmington was the focus of the award. Our best wishes go out to a truly deserving winner.

Also **Beverly Tetterton** was announced as the winner of the **Wilmington Cup**. Beverly is always ready to help us get on track when we are looking for that exact piece of the past in the NC Room of the New Hanover Public Library.

Southport celebration

Southport is going to celebrate July Fourth with a varied program of entertainment throughout the day. The Coast Guard and Rum Chaser boats will give exhibits in front of the government reservation, and on the same front there will be swimming contests. A baseball game will be played in the afternoon; the city fire truck will make a run; a greased pole to climb with a purse on top for the successful climber; a greased pig run, a ferris wheel and a merry-go-round will be some of the attractions. There will be an open air dance at night and the Oak Grove will be available to picnickers.

Your Dues Help SHS . . .

Some folks have overlooked membership dues. Check with Wolf if you are not sure. You surely don't want to miss a single edition of your exciting newsletter! We do appreciate your support.

Thanks

Southport Historical Society membership

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

please print name _____
address _____
city, state, zip _____
telephone _____

mail to: 501 North Atlantic Avenue, Southport, NC 28461

Southport Coverlet

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.

This unique, custom woven coverlet is available in the following classic colors: Williamsburg Blue, Hunter Green and Cranberry Red, all with Natural as a second color. The price is only \$50.00. Member discount, 10%.

Please enter the desired quantity of each color:

___ Williamsburg Blue	@ \$50.00 each	\$ _____
___ Hunter Green	@ \$50.00 each	\$ _____
___ Cranberry Red	@ \$50.00 each	\$ _____
	Sales Tax @ 6%	\$ _____
	Shipping (if necessary)	\$ 5.00

TOTAL enclosed \$ _____

Checks should be made payable to The Southport Historical Society and mailed to 501 N. Atlantic Ave., Southport, NC 28461.

Ordered by:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

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 in mid-1998.

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, NC. 1995, 2. printing 1997, 364 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$17.95

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-Brunswick County, North Carolina, Volume III, 1920-1940, A Chronology 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 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.