



THE *Susie*  
WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue  
Southport, North Carolina 28461

Volume XXII, No. 6      November 1998

*Southport Historical Society*  
**Thursday November 19**  
Pot Luck Meal  
**6:30 Sacred Heart Church**

**“Rice Culture of the  
S.C. Low Country”**

special guest: Marvin Nicholson  
will make this presentation against the  
backdrop of Gullah culture of the Low  
Country. Marvin is a retired educator and  
a Tour Guide at Brookgreen Gardens. He  
recently presented a program for the  
Brunswick Co. Library on “Colored Troop  
Units of the Civil War.”

*Looking Toward Christmas . . .*

It is not a bit too early to review your Christmas gift list. Is there someone on that list who might enjoy a gift membership in the Southport Historical Society? Or is there someone who would enjoy a good book about our region selected from our book list? Also, you might consider giving a relative a framed Pioneer or Century Family certificate. To place an order call 457-6940, 457-6629, or 278-4050.

*Thank you*



Susan Carson, Editor

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Note: Mrs. Mary Pierce now lives in High Point. When she lived on Dry Street her name was Mrs. Mary Floyd.

### **Things I Remember About Living in Southport More Than 60 Years Ago**

by Mary Pierce

One thing that comes to mind is the old CCC Camp from WWII times. My two young sons were fascinated by it and would slip away from the house and do some exploring there. In later years my son Joe bought a house on the old site.

I also remember when the battleship "Raleigh" anchored off shore. More than 2000 visitors came to visit the ship. My husband, George Floyd, took passengers out to go aboard the ship.

Boat rides along the Inland Waterway were a favorite activity. I remember how exciting it was to walk along the Southport waterfront in the late afternoon and watch the shrimp boats and fishing boats come in with their catch. The phlox bloomed so beautifully in front of the old Garrison House along the river banks sloping down to the sandy beach. I also enjoyed going over the Fort Caswell and exploring the old Army barracks.

One thing I loved so much about Southport were the majestic oak trees all over town. There were several down near the Whittlers Bench on the waterfront where the elderly men would sit and whittle and enjoy the company of each other. Nearby was Mack's Café with good food and more chances to talk.

There was a beautiful little park near my house (Franklin Square Park) that we called "The Oak Grove." It was tended by an old gentleman called Piccolo Pete. He planted camellias and many other shrubs, including one with a lovely smell called Sweet Shrub. Pete really knew how to make things grow. Also in the park was a hand pump where one could fill a pitcher with almost ice cold water. Nearby was a little store where you could order a pitcher of Coke with crushed ice. Now that was a treat in those days!

It was great walking along the strand in the early evening and watching as the moon made a path of gold across the water. Most of all, though, I enjoyed my next door neighbors who were so friendly and attentive while my mother was an invalid. Those neighbors were none other than Mr. and Mrs. Ledrew Sellers (the parents of Susie Carson, Thelma Dunn, and William Sellers).

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P.S. from Susie: Mary and her family were then, and still are, very special people, although they have moved away from Southport. They were good citizens and good neighbors!

**“Looking Back”** contid.

## **WORKING IN OLD SOUTHPORT**

**by Thelma S. Dunn**

Do you remember when grocery stores were more like general stores, with lots of “personal touches”? There were several of these in Southport at one time and they all seemed to do fairly well. Some people went to Wilmington to do their shopping, but most of the Southport people did not have a car to go to “Town”, as Wilmington was called.

I worked at Lancaster’s store on the corner of Howe and Nash Streets, across from the Southport Baptist Church, for about six years. My main job was to keep the charge accounts up to date, so every afternoon, after the “morning rush” was over, I would check the accounts. Other times I worked the counter.

Mornings were usually spent taking orders over the telephone and delivering them as they were filled. We had very few packaged foods then. We weighed the foods in paper bags or wrapped them in craft paper tied with twine. We added the prices and rang them up on the cash register. The store (one long room) was arranged so that groceries were on one side and dry goods on the other. The meat counter was in the back of the room. Fresh fruits and vegetables were in the center. About halfway toward the back was an oil heater where people would meet to warm their hands and visit with friends. It was a great gathering place.

It wasn’t a very fancy store, but it was quite adequate and a very pleasant place to work. You got to see most of the people when they came to town because ours was the corner store, the place where people stopped first.

Some of the people I worked with at Lancaster’s were:

Uncle Willie Lancaster was the boss; John Williams, Jr. drove the small delivery van; Ed Marlowe drove some, too; Pearl Mae Lewis (Soukup), like me, worked behind the counter; Sam Rees was mostly in the warehouse area bringing goods out to stock the shelves and taking in supplies as they were delivered at the back door. I mostly kept the accounts checked so that when people wanted to pay their bills, they were ready. Jessie Lancaster (Walker) and Vickie Lancaster (Aldridge) worked when they were available. Vickie was away at school part of the time and Jessie was still in high school.

Those were good days. Almost anything one needed could be bought “downtown”, as we called it.



Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson

State Historic Site

8884 St. Philips Road SE

Winnabow, NC 28479

910 371-6613

## Renovation Has Started !!

On Wednesday, October 28, the museum display was closed and removal of artifacts to Raleigh was begun. The closing of the entire Visitor Center is imminent, but as this newsletter went to press (10-29) an exact closing date has not been announced. Visitors can still see the slide presentation and walk around the site for the next few days. Funding is complete with \$435,000 slated for the building renovation and \$385,000 for exhibit design, fabrication, and installation. Once the building is closed the entire site will be CLOSED and all visitation will be limited. Those wishing to visit the site must make contact with the staff prior to arriving. Please call ahead or you will find the main gate locked.

### Tree Report

The city will receive the report from the Live Oak Survey on Nov.12, Thursday, at the evening meeting of the city council. Thanks to Jon Lewis, David Nash, and a host of other volunteers for your hard work. Let's stick with this project to insure a unique and beautiful future for our town.

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cut here and send form with your check

### *New Membership Registration*

Join the Southport Historical Society and receive the newsletter on a regular basis

individual \$10  
couple 15

student \$2  
(up to age 18)

business/organization \$15  
sustaining 25

life membership \$ 150

life membership for couple \$ 200

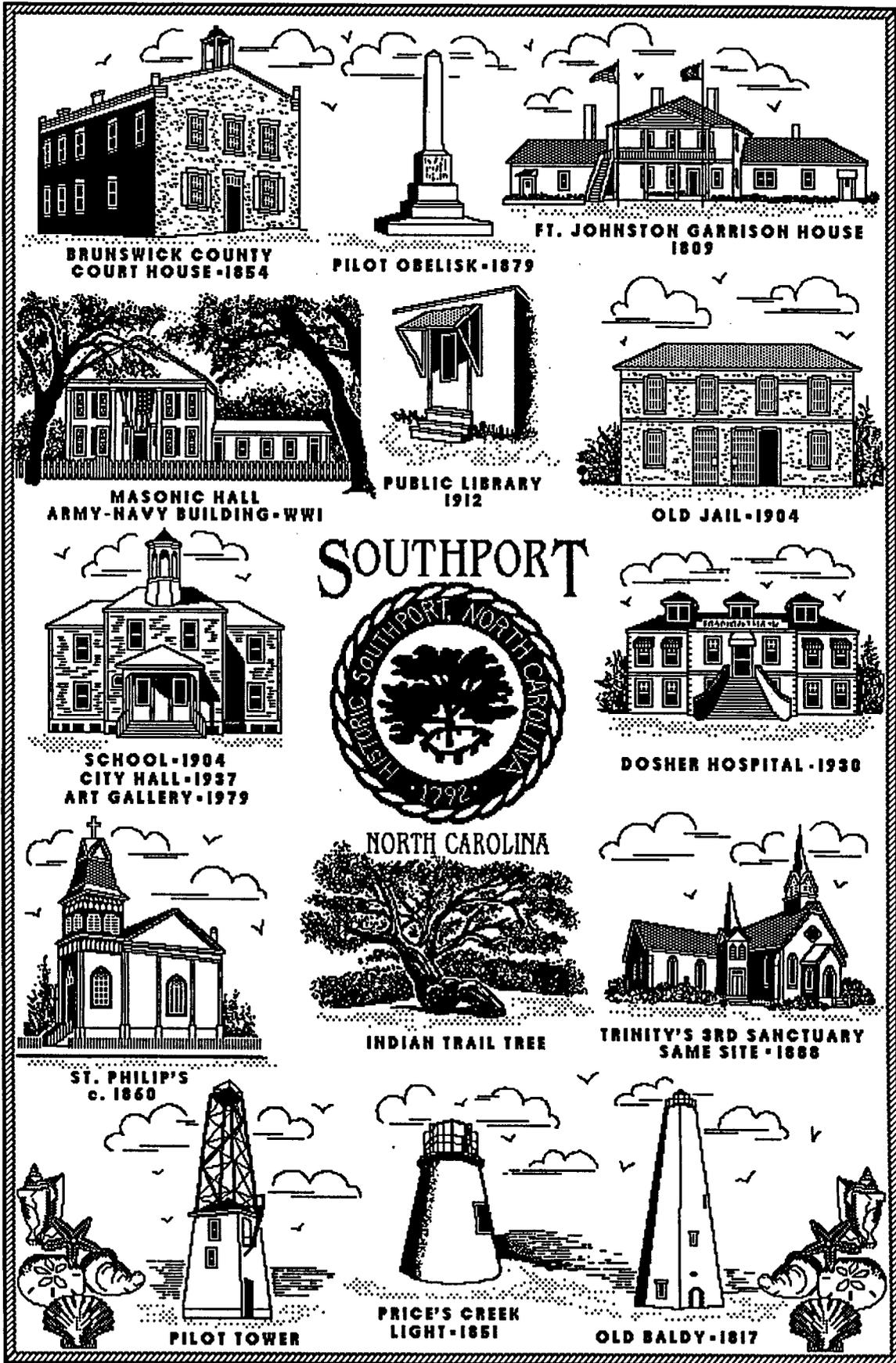
name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

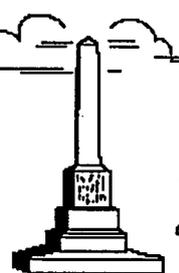
city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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



**BRUNSWICK COUNTY  
COURT HOUSE-1854**



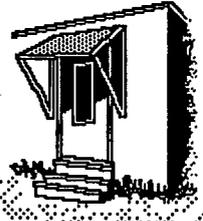
**PILOT OBELISK-1879**



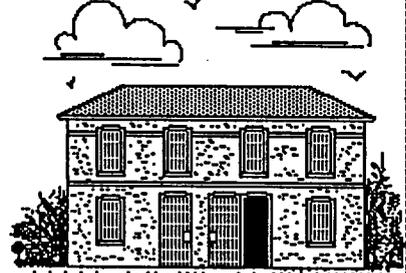
**FT. JOHNSTON GARRISON HOUSE  
1809**



**MASONIC HALL  
ARMY-NAVY BUILDING-WWI**



**PUBLIC LIBRARY  
1912**



**OLD JAIL-1904**

**SOUTHPORT**



**DOSHER HOSPITAL -1938**



**SCHOOL-1904  
CITY HALL-1937  
ART GALLERY-1979**

**NORTH CAROLINA**



**INDIAN TRAIL TREE**



**TRINITY'S 3RD SANCTUARY  
SAME SITE - 1888**



**ST. PHILIP'S  
c. 1860**



**PILOT TOWER**



**PRICE'S CREEK  
LIGHT-1851**



**OLD BALDY-1817**

## Introducing the 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%.

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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%	\$_____
	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.

*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.