



THE WHITTAKER'S BENCH Southport Historical Society

Volume XXIX, Number 3

September 2005

September Meeting

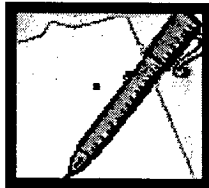
Thursday
September 22, 2005
The Old Jail Museum
Beginning at 6:00 PM

Catered Dinner
Society Members
No Charge
\$7 For Guests

RSVP to
Pat Kirkman
By September 16th
457-0579 or
shs@ec.rr.com

SHS Officers & Directors

President	
Peter Wyckoff	457-5599
Vice-President	
Pat Kirkman	457-0579
Secretary	
Karen Knighton	454-8018
Treasurer	
Wolf Furstenau	278-4050
Historian/Archivist	
Marilyn Lessen	457-0004
Directors	
Musette Steck	253-3855
Cathy Fravel	457-4794
Don Parker	253-9703



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

Where or where has the summer gone? I'll tell you.
It's been busy, busy, busy.

First, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the new curator of the new Southport Historical Society Old Jail Museum. Yes, if you haven't yet heard, the museum opened to the public on June 1, 2005, exactly seven years after restoration of the 1904 building at the corner of Rhett and E. Nash Streets in Southport began. And, with the new museum, we gained a volunteer curator.

Beverly Wyckoff, yes, my wife, eagerly accepted the daunting task in early May and ran as though possessed to get everything ready for the June 1 opening. And, she will be the first one to adamantly state that she could not have done it without the legions of volunteers who have stepped up to help.

Beverly started her service work as a pre-teen with 4-H and the Girl Scouts. She earned a BS degree from Western Connecticut State University with a major in education and a minor in history. With the arrival of her first child, she took a leave from the classroom, but quickly found herself as a steering committee member, founder, and later 10 year president of the board of directors of the Newtown (CT) Montessori School. Returning to the classroom was like a vacation from the responsibility of managing a prospering school. To better accommodate children's schedules, she took field executive positions, first with Campfire Girls, and later, Girl Scouts. The latter led to a position as a volunteer on the Board of Directors. After moving to Southport, she hardly missed a beat, and while working a full time job, also became a Board member of the Girl Scouts of Coastal Carolina. For the past nearly four years, she has held the position of President of the Council. Beverly is extremely detail oriented and brings many years of leadership skills to the challenging job. She is looking forward to "coming home" and riding her bike to the Museum rather than making the hours long trek to the Council's office in Goldsboro. While this summer has been consumed with ensuring that the building is open and staffed two days weekly, she's already planning for 2006 and what programs may be developed and offered. Welcome Beverly. We're all excited to have you on board.

Second, I'd like to invite everyone to the September membership meeting. It will be held on the grounds of the Old Jail Museum on September 22, 2005. A catered dinner will be followed by the recognition of all of the volunteers who have made the restoration a success.

Peter Wyckoff



CHILDREN'S HISTORY TOUR

Captain Bert Felton and first mate Jim McKee took five children on the first Children's River Tour. Bert is the owner/operator of the Solomon T, a 1938 traditional workboat. Bert runs Harbor Tours with stories of the Cape Fear River. Colonial, Revolutionary War, Civil War, WW II, Southport River Pilots, Lighthouses and the Life Saving Service are all part of his discourse. Tours also include coastal birding and marine life.

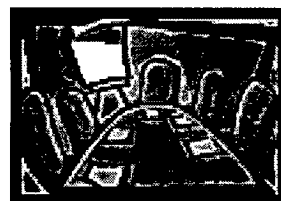
Bert and the museum are testing an idea for a boating, history/science tour to be a part of the Maritime Museum's Children Programs. The children ranged in age from 8 to 15. They performed several science experiments, including salinity and nitrate tests. They identified wildlife, and heard stories of the river and its people. On the radio, they heard a ship requesting a pilot and the time needed—1400 hours—which was explained to the kids. Of course, no boating adventure ends without getting a turn at the wheel (with supervision) and swabbing the decks. A good time was had by all involved!!

Bert and the museum are planning 2 children's cruises. Dates, of course, are weather permitting, but tentative dates are Saturday, 9/10 and Saturday, 10/15 at 9:00 AM. There are 5 spots open on each cruise, ages 7 to 16. The fee per child is \$5.00 for materials and snack. Call Rene at the museum for more details and to reserve your child's berth, 910-457-0003.

Reprinted from "The Mullet Wrapper", newsletter of the NC Maritime Museum at Southport

SHS BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed and adopted a policy regarding the firing of the cannon.
- Agreed to continue participation in the Community in Schools program by donating \$150 for the purchase of media/books on NC history.
- Appointed Beverly Wyckoff curator of the Old Jail Museum.
- Purchased additional commemorative bricks to replace and correct all bricks which had printing errors.
- Adopted an agreement for a second printing of *Classic Southport Cooking*.
- Agreed to host a picnic at the Old Jail for the September meeting.
- Agreed that Matt James from the local scout troop can complete his Eagle Scout Project by developing a plan and laying the commemorative bricks at the Old Jail.
- Accepted the resignation of Wolf Furstenau as SHS treasurer.



E-NEWS ~ DON'T MISS IT!

There are occasions when we would like to contact you by e-mail to let you know of events and opportunities that do not fit into the time schedule of our newsletters (5 times annually). If your e-mail is correct in the current directory, we already have you in the data base. If we do not have your e-mail address or if it needs to be corrected, please send it to shs@ec.rr.com and you will be added. We will not be sharing our e-mail list with any other organization. We look forward to communicating with you via "cyberspace" now that we are in the 21st century



TREASURER'S REPORT-2nd QTR 2005

Major expenses in the Old Jail Renovation Project are now behind us - a considerable relief to the treasury. Lewis Hardee's printing expenses for *Classic Southport Cooking* are being repaid, as well as royalties. The second printing is now underway, and we will again pay the production expenses. Income this quarter includes the \$5,000 grant for Adopt-A-Trail signs. Despite the unusual expense load during the quarter we continue to maintain a good positive cash balance.

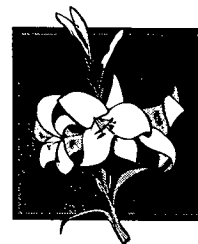
Wolfgang Furstenu, Treasurer

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Book Sales	8,372.75	Accounting Fees	903.00
Cannon Income	860.00	Adopt-A-Trail Signs	4,823.03
Donations		Bank Charge	3.15
Adopt-A-Trail Grant	5,000.00	Book Purchases	122.65
Other	272.00	Book Signing Event	20.68
Dues, SHS	427.00	Brick Project	22.63
Interest	5.58	Cannon	723.00
Plaque Sales	100.00	Christmas Tour (2004)	77.00
Sales Tax Collected	394.98	Donations	650.00
Shipping	12.00	Heritage Walk Stones	150.00
Div. Inc	25.14	Insurance Premiums	132.00
TOTAL INCOME	15,469.45	Meetings	357.33
		Newsletter	623.50
		Office Supplies	22.28
		Old Jail (incl. Alarm Sys., A/C, Architect)	17,219.24
		Postal Service	156.51
		Printing	1,195.17
		Quarterly Tax Return	5.76
		S. Carson Scholarship Award	1,000.00
		Sales Tax Paid	497.20
		Telephone	388.39
		Website Fee	44.85
		TOTAL EXPENSES	29,137.37

NOTES IN PASSING

It is with great sadness that we report the death of two loyal SHS members.

On 6-26-05, Dennis Johnson, a member of the Cannon Crew, passed away suddenly at home. Dennis and his wife Dorothy had signed up to be docents at the Old Jail Museum, and Dorothy, without hardly missing a beat, filled her slot as an honor to her husband.



On July 7th, Antoinette Oliver passed away at her residence. While not recently active, she had been a founder of the Southport Historical Society.

Our sincere condolences to their families.

Fort Anderson Flag



On September 16, 2005, Brunswick Town State Historic Site will open the new exhibit featuring the **Original Confederate Flag Flown at Fort Anderson during the Civil War**. The staff at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson is in the process of readying the exhibit for its grand opening. A private showing will be held for the generous individuals who made the acquisition of this flag possible. It took a year to raise the \$40,000 necessary for the purpose and they are still in need of funds for the display. Donations can be made to the Friends of Brunswick Town.

The State of Indiana was the owner of the flag and had done much conservation work before offering it for private sale in 1962. It has been through 3 other owners before returning to North Carolina. The Flag traveled to Raleigh to be authenticated and checked by DCR conservators and it was proclaimed in excellent condition. The flag is now residing in Brunswick Town State Historic Site Museum, but the area is closed during completion of the new exhibition. Make plans to travel up the road to welcome this historic flag back home again.

Reprinted from "The Mullet Wrapper", newsletter of the NC Maritime Museum at Southport



SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

Cape Fear Maritime Passenger Company, LLC

Capt. Bert Felton and the vessel SOLOMON T

Will offer the following boat tours during the month of October

Thur. Oct. 13 4:00 U-boat operations on the Atlantic coast during WW II
with a focus on the sinking of the JOHN GILL off Southport

Thur. Oct. 20 4:00 anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, the importance of Lord Nelson's death to the Royal Navy, and the impact on America

Members of the Society will pay a reduced rate of \$15 AND a donation will be made to the Society at the end of the month

Call 457-5302 to make your reservation for your boat tour on SOLOMON T

Capt. Felton offers maritime heritage tours that reflect the history and environment of the Cape Fear ~ felton@ec.rr.com

RESEARCHER SEEKING INFORMATION



I am currently researching and writing my third book which will be a regimental history with complete roster of the 20th NC Infantry. The regiments companies were formed in Brunswick, Columbus, Cabarrus, Duplin, Sampson, and surrounding counties. I would like to include photos, military, biographical and genealogical data (including parent's names, soldier's pre-war and post-war occupation(s), marriage info, and burial location) for every soldier. Also of particular interest are newspaper articles, and letters and diaries from the soldiers.

I will pay copy / postage costs for any new information and give credit in the book's acknowledgments section. Please note that I already have the information from each soldier's CSR, Clark's NC Regiments, and the NC Troops series. Thanks for your help. Neil Raiford, 2302 Crown Circle SE, Decatur, AL 35603; e-mail raiford94@bellsouth.net . [Author of *The 4th NC Cavalry in the Civil War*, published by McFarland in 2003 (Winner of the 2003 Willie Parker Peace History Book Award, North Carolina Society of Historians); *Shadow: A Cottontail Bomber Crew in WWII*, published by McFarland in October 2004].

NEWS FROM THE OLD JAIL



Our beautiful Old jail has now been open to the public since June 1, 2005, on Wednesday and Saturday from 11:00 AM– 2:00 PM. The opening day was exactly seven years from the time the restoration was started!

It has been a very successful summer with approximately 700 visitors. (That number includes the three days we were open during the 4th of July Festival.) We are pleased with both the donations received and books sold. We have had approximately 30 SHS members act as Greeters during this time.

We have really accomplished a great many things in the last three months. In June an Advisory Board was formed to be the steering body of the Old Jail. On that Board are: Beverly Wyckoff, Chair, Norm Carathanasis, Site Manager, Susie Carson, Karen Knighten, Marilyn Lessin and Mary Strickland. This Board will be making the decisions on room and building usage. By the end of July it was decided to continue to remain open on Wednesday and Saturday through October 2005.

Also a Task force for the "1904 Family Life" Room has been formed. This Task force is charged with doing the research, acquiring and set up of the room to be completed by March 15, 2006. On this Task Force are: Brenda and Bud Birmelin, Ginny Cannon, Sally Disher, Kate Hardin, Harriet Wheeler and Beverly Wyckoff. They have brain stormed a list of artifacts needed for the 1904 room. It was decided to solicit our SHS membership first. A Task Force member will first view all donations before being accepted, as we have no storage room for non-used items. The following is the Wish List for the 1904 Room. If you have any artifacts that you would like to either donate or loan to this project, please call Beverly Wyckoff at 457-5599.

Large items:

small dresser	small wash stand	small bed	2 wooden chairs	wooden bench
small kitchen table	small pie safe			

Small items:

wash board	Kerosene lamps	barn kerosene lantern	Dishpan	dishes
cooking utensils	flour sacks	flat ware	linens	quilt for bed
clothing – men, women, children		shoes	rolling pin	dough bowl
Churn	rug beater	coffee grinder	flat iron – not electric	
cups, mugs, glasses	toys	slop jar	books	
mannequins and or dress form				

A second Task Force has also been created to do research and organize all of the material, now being stored in the Annex, and decide what will be coming to the Old Jail for exhibit and research. The members on this Task Force are: Marilyn Lessin, Chair, Musette Steck and Harriet Wheeler.

The largest expenditure of time and energy has been spent on recruiting volunteer Greeters. If you would like to be a part of this exciting group, please call Marilyn Lessin at 457-0004.

Photos needed:

We have some photos of the Old Jail just prior to restoration. If you took any during the process of restoration, please share them with us. Please phone Beverly at 457 5599 or e-mail them to her at beverlywyckoff@bellsouth.net



LOOKING BACK - THE HISTORY PAGE

Susan Carson, Editor

When my good friend Toni Oliver died recently, my mind went back to the "good ole days" in Southport when Oliver's Grill was such an important part of our town. Toni and her husband Ed (now deceased also) were good citizens dedicated to making our town a better place to live.

Toni was also an artist and active in the Franklin Square Gallery. Both Toni and Ed were my friends so, for this Looking Back, I wanted to do something to honor them.

Then my mind jumped to a chapter about Oliver's Grill in the book Pocket Knives and Picket Fences by Boyce Spencer who was also reared in our town. The book has become a best seller and has gone through several reprints. So I called Boyce and got permission to quote from that chapter of the book in honor of the Oliver's. He was fond of them also.

For those of you who have never read the book I recommend you run down to the Nautical Mile shell shop on Nash Street and purchase a copy. I loved every chapter in it because he tells it so well. You will get a lot of laughs from the book.

One more thing: Boyce and his wife, Deloris, are now members of the Society. I welcome them and thank them. Enjoy the following excerpts.

Oliver's Grill came to life 3-21-49 and for the next 36 years was special place. You could even say it was a place of higher learning, but first and foremost it was a place where thousands of hamburgers were served to thousands of more than satisfied customers.

People from all across the U.S. and many foreign countries had the pleasure of sampling a hamburger made by Ed Oliver.

Oliver's Grill was owned and operated by Ed Oliver and his wife, Toni, who was most often called "Miss Toni" by the regulars at the grill.

The Grill was a small place with very limited seating and was always crowded at the lunch counter. Folks were more than willing to wait for a burger made to order or for one of the other sandwiches on the menu.

Southport High School was just a short walk through the park from the Grill and many of the students were at the Grill during their lunch period. During the school year non-school customers knew better than to try to get waited on until the students vacated the Grill.

With the Grill overflowing with the screaming mass of students, Miss Toni took their orders. How she managed to get the orders right and survive this onslaught was just short of a miracle. . .

As famous as Ed's hamburgers were, his breakfast, in my opinion, rated right up there with them. The breakfast of ham or bacon and eggs with toast and grits always had a couple of slices of tomato to complement the plate.

Coffee at Oliver's was always brewed in an old aluminum percolator on top of the grill and not in one of those new-fangled coffee makers. It was always good and always fresh.

From early morning until late at night Ed was there. Miss Toni would usually go home after the lunch crowd departed and cleaning chores were done.

Ed and Toni knew most the customers and paid special attention to the teenagers, who could always count on the owners for advice if they asked for it. Sometimes they got good advice even if they did not ask for it. I fell into this group. Those of us who heeded their advice fared better than those who chose to ignore it.



LOOKING BACK - Continued

After graduation from high school many of us joined the Navy, Army or some other branch of the service, and when we were home on leave we would always stop by the Grill for a sandwich and a visit with Ed and Toni.

Most of us continued going to the Grill on a daily basis during the evening when it was no longer filled with diners. This went on until Ed went out of business. Our being there was not necessarily to eat, but for the camaraderie and pleasure of being there. . .

Sports were a serious matter that had to be dealt with and it was indeed fortunate that the Grill housed more sports experts and analysts than perhaps any other place in the country. . .

At times a stranger would come into the café and unknowingly say or do something that would not be to Ed or Toni's liking and he would be so informed. There was one such fellow off one of the ships at Sunny Point Army Terminal that made the mistake of getting on the wrong side of Miss Toni.

This poor soul had a couple of beers while seated at the counter. Miss Toni, as usual, was taking orders. The man asked, "Is there anything to do in this hick town?" Now, Miss Toni was not a tall person, in fact her head was barely visible behind the bar. She ignored the first remark, but when he asked if she was walking in a ditch, that did it. Complete silence fell over the Grill, only to be broken by Miss Toni. She chastised the poor unsuspecting fellow so bad that he grabbed his hat and scurried out the door muttering to himself. The unkind words were continued until he was in his car and out of sight. . .

Oliver's grill ceased to exist on 8-25-85 except in the minds and hearts of us who loved the good food, the good times, and most of all—Ed and Toni. What a shame it is that it all had to come to an end, and the children of today cannot share our experience. Thanks, Ed. Thanks, Toni.

SEPTEMBER MEETING AND DINNER



Our September 22 meeting will be held at the Old Jail Museum and we will be enjoying a barbeque dinner at 6:00. We are taking this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in any way during the last few years to make the renovation of the Old Jail a reality. There will be no charge to society members and guests are also invited at a cost of \$7 per person. Reservations are necessary as we will have to pay for all the food we order from the caterer. You may make your reservations by e-mail at shs@ec.rr.com or phone Pat Kirkman at 457-0579 - we must have a count by September 16. Please bring your lawn chairs. Should we encounter rain that evening, we will meet at Southport Baptist Church fellowship hall. We look forward to a large crowd and if you haven't attended a meeting in a while, we'll especially be looking for you! This will be a great opportunity for you to see the renovation, help us recognize those who made it possible and hear about opportunities you will have to develop the museum. We will also be dedicating the new signs at the Old Jail and the Smithville Burying Ground and if all goes as planned, you will walk on the new brick pathway!