



# THE WHITTLERS BENCH

## Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue  
Southport, North Carolina 28461  
Vol. XV No. 1 January 15, 1991

### ANNUAL MEETING (Covered Dish)

The annual meeting will be held January 24, 1991 at Trinity United Methodist Church located at the corner of Nash and Atlantic streets. This will be a business meeting, therefore, no speaker has been chosen. The time is 6:30 PM. Please bring your favorite covered dish. LET'S HAVE FUN IN NINETY ONE! This is the most important meeting of the year.

1. Your Executive Board will present a detailed progress report on accomplishments in 1990.
2. It's time to plan for the 1992 Bicentennial. The membership will discuss the ideas and a plan of action will be prepared.
3. Take control: Elect a Director, express your concerns, tell what you would like approved or disapproved of in By-laws changes. Set Society goals.

### MATCHING GRANT

A Regional History Sites Program Grant from the State of North Carolina, Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History has been requested. It is expected that confirmation of a \$1,000.00 Challenge grant can be announced at the Annual meeting. The purpose of this grant is "General Development of Public Historic Attractions Program in Southport. Items that can be budgeted for this fund will be

OVER

### 1991 DUES

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- \$10 INDIVIDUAL
- \$15 HUSBAND/WIFE
- \$25 SUSTAINING
- \$100/150 LIFE
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ DONATION

MAIL TO: Southport Historical Society  
501 North Atlantic Avenue  
Southport, NC 28461

## ANNUAL MEETING CON'T

discussed at the Annual meeting.

### HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Did you see our Old Jail Headquarters over the holiday season? A wreath gave the whole building a very festive look. (and I forgot to get a picture). Thanks to whoever put it up and a very Happy New Year to all.

### DUES

It's time to pay annual dues again. Even with the expected increases in postage, printing, and everything else; the cost of annual dues will remain the same for this year. However, this is the last opportunity to purchase life memberships before the cost increases. If the proposed by-laws changes are approved, the cost of lifetime membership will increase from \$100 to \$150 for individual membership and \$150 to \$200 for husband/wife memberships.

### MEETINGS

Unless we hear different, meetings will be held on the fourth thursday of the month except for July, November, and December. General meetings will be held every other month and Executive Board meetings on alternate months. Plan now to attend.

The Editor gratefully acknowledges the following article which was compiled by Ms. Sandra McCracken and Ms. Regina Alexander. It has been slightly edited because of space limitations.

#### HISTORY OF BROWN'S CHAPEL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

This history is written from the church's records back to 1898 and from memories of Elder Howard C. Lee.

Brown's Chapel began in the late 1800's with a group of people going from house to house having prayer services. With a desire in their hearts to do the will of God, they built a temple of worship. This church was built over the Branch by the fathers of J. T. Lee, J. W. Jackson, H. McCracken, and others.

In 1898, under the leadership of the Rev. R. G. Smith, Secretary G. R. Swain, Treasurer L. H. Lee, Church Stewards J. T. Lee, J. W. Jackson, C. Brown, H. McCracken, H. Sexton, and J. W. Brown, the church moved from across the Branch to its present location (Jabbertown Road). This wooden structure was turned toward Highway 133. In those days train and trolley ran right in front of the building. It seems that when the train came by on Sunday the services would halt because the message could not be heard. We never had problems about money because we treaded the same fields and shared what we had with one another. The pastors often settled for food for their pay. The members were paying at the most two to five cents in class. The highest amount paid the pastor was \$12.35. From the records it appears that Brother Sexton must have been the knight in shining armor, because the church was always paying him back money which he had loaned to it, or he was clearing an indebtedness for the church. Progress was slow, but we worked hard and paid for the bells and all repairs. The most important problem was keeping a pastor incharge. Therefore, with this in mind, in the year of our Lord 1912, July 9th, the Trustees of the church, Brothers J. T. Lee, J. W. Jackson, G. E. Brown, Thomas Jackson, J. W. Galloway, R. C. Mills and Sister L. McCracken paid \$40.00 for the land which the church was on, and the very same date, our forerunner bounded this area and properties to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Conference to have and to hold to be used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of Divine Worship, subject to discipline usage and ministerial appointment of the church.

This transaction in business was a blessing. Under the appointed pastor, Rev. S. P. Hill, in 1918, with the same officers, the church was turned toward "Jabbertown Road", which was then a dirt road. This move helped alleviate some of the noise made by the train. "Jabbertown" was a peculiar name for a community and questions were often asked (even as they are today) about how it got its name. Mr. Howard Lee stated: "The ladies would arise early in the morning and finish their chores for the day, and in the afternoon they would gather on each other's porches and 'jabber' until night. This happened five days a week, but on Sundays everyone made their way to the little church to worship."

In 1930-40 under different leadership, the church was bricked in. The members, even though we were in The Great Depression, went on with determination to beautify God's temple. One member stated, "The progress was slow and hard, but we paid as we

went and every Wednesday night we had prayer meetings and left it in the hands of Jesus and he surely supplied our needs." During this time our leaders felt we should become a Mission Church under St. James which is now our Assistant Church. Following that movement in 1934, the younger people of the church and community formed a club to provide financial help. The name was YPA (Young People's Auxiliary). The club consisted of thirty members under the direction of Brother E. Joyner, President and Sister V. Parker, Secretary. The church's records show the names of these young people. The club stayed active and raised money for the upbuilding of the church until they moved from the community. In the late 40's and early 50's the leadership changed and the then eleven members began to reconstruct the club under the name of "The Lucky Star". Most of the members left the church and the church entered a period of disaster for about five years. However, the remaining fifteen members kept the church open.

In the late 50's and early 60's the young adults of the church formed themselves into a club by the name of the Willing Workers. Under the leadership of Brother James McCracken, President, Sister Thelma Lee, Vice President, Sister Mary White, Secretary, and Sister Flossie Brown, Treasurer, they followed the same pattern of giving financial assistance to the church.

In the years 1964-76 the exterior of the church was completed. The floor was carpeted, the sanctuary paneled, new material was put in the pulpit, and vinyl was placed on the floor of the other rooms. We were so glad and happy for the blessings we were receiving.

In 1977, the Conference sent us a young man. As we were a very young congregation, we were happy to have someone we could relate to. However, Reverend Staccato Powell did not stay with us long because he had a higher calling. After Rev. Powell left we had a low period during which we had three pastors in one year.

Rev. Foy came to us in 1978-81 and we did not give up but became unified and contented. In 1982, the Conference sent us our Rev. James Canty, with whom we have remodeled our sanctuary and started work on our dining hall and Sunday School rooms. Rev. James Canty has made many positive strides to enhance Brown's Chapel Church and to increase membership. We are grateful to God and appreciate our heritage and are thankful to God that he enabled our foreparents to leave us a beautiful temple and has given us to opportunity to make footprints in the sands of time.

Now, in the year 1985, with the Rev. Canty leading, we hope to press on to the high calling of Jesus Christ, proclaiming the Good News.

In the year of 1988, with the Rev. Canty still leading, we have completed the Fellowship Hall. Much hard work, raising money, determination, sacrifice and faith has seen us through. Many thanks to Brother James McCracken and others who kept their eyes cast above, continuing to work even when days were dismal and money short.

In 1988, Rev. Canty was called to another church and the Rev. Elijah Coleman came as pastor in November 1988.

BITS OF OTHER NEWS

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY:

Bill Reaves, our first lifetime member and author of the two volumes of Southport Chronology published by the Society, has donated to the Southport Historical Society two special books which were once a part of the library of Dr. F. W. Potter, quarantine physician at Smithville from about 1874 to 1877, or perhaps longer. Dr. Potter at one time was Clerk of the Superior Court of Brunswick County and several times is referred to in the Southport Chronology, Volume I, as being a delegate to the Annual Convention of the "P.E. Church of North Carolina." We assume that his was the Episcopal Church because Dr. W. G. Curtis was also listed as one of the delegates and we know he was active in St. Philip's Church in Smithville. The books are The Spectator (1851 edition), and The Works of William Shakespeare, Complete (1854). In the Shakespeare book Dr. Potter wrote his name followed by the date "Jany. 28, 1857." We deeply appreciate this gift from Bill.

Another special gift is a donation of One Hundred Dollars to the Cemetery Endowment Fund and One Hundred Dollars to the Society's General Fund by Mrs. Karl Vickers (Dorothy), who is also a member of the Society. Several years ago she gave us scrapbooks containing "The Way It Was" pictures clipped from the State Port Pilot. Thank you very much, Dorothy.

RECOGNITION:

The U. S. Coast Guard, Wilmington Office, has awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to our Vice President, Susan Carson, for her "outstanding support of the U. S. Coast Guard's Bicentennial Birthday". Susie worked with Coast Guard officials and an auxiliary member in accumulating information about John Brown, second captain of the early revenue cutter, "Diligence". Captain Brown was one of the very earliest settlers of Smithville, he having been the person who talked Joshua Potts into coming to the area for his first visit before the town was established. Captain Brown and several members of his family are buried in the Old Smithville Burying Ground.

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QUIZ

On recently checking over our membership list, the Membership Chairman realized that only ten of our members were actually born in Southport. Can you guess who these are? If so, you will get a prize! Communicate with Susie Carson before the next meeting. You may not guess all of them, but give it a try.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Financial Statement

January 31, 1990 through November 31, 1990

Balance January 31, 1990

\$ 2870.14

RECEIPTS

BOOKS	\$ 4753.50		
BOOK REIMBURSEMENT-CITY OF BRUNSWICK	210.00		
MEMBERSHIP	1131.00		
ANTIQUE SHOW	1341.00		
CERTIFICATE	5.00		
JAIL DONATIONS & CARDS	106.89		
CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT	2049.76		
INTEREST FROM CHECKING ACCT.	98.96		
HISTORICAL PLAQUES	400.00		
		TOTAL	<u>10,096.11</u>
			<u>\$12,966.25</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

STAMPS	234.99		
PRINTING SUPPLIES	342.56		
CEMETARY ENDOWMENT FUND	540.00		
N.C. HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP	15.00		
CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT PURCHASE	2000.00		
SUPPLIES	368.64		
ANTIQUE SHOW EXPENSES	318.71		
SOUTHPORT CHRONOLOGY	5053.76		
MAINTENANCE-JAIL	5.33		
SPEAKER FEE	25.00		
CHURCH RENTAL	30.00		
CHECK PRINTING EXPENSE	12.17		
THE SIGN SHOPPE (PLAQUES)	351.75		
		TOTAL	<u>9,297.91</u>
CHECKING BOOK BALANCE			\$ 3,668.34

ANTIQUe SHOW BREAKDOWN

Dealer Booths	\$ 871.00
Door Receipts	470.00
	1341.00
Expenses	318.71
Dinner Supplies	97.95
	\$ 924.34