



THE WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

VOL. XXI, NUMBER FIVE, SEPTEMBER 1996

REGULAR MEETING

The September meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, September 26, 1996, at the Southport Maritime Museum on Howe Street in downtown Southport. Refreshments will be served. Museum Director Mary Strickland will give a program on the Maritime History of the Lower Cape Fear. Hope to see you all there!

NEW MEMBERS

David McCracken, Southport
Kelly Brown, Southport
Mr. & Mrs. William M. Taylor, Wilmington
Mrs. M.F. Van Sandt, Boiling Springs Lakes
Mr. & Mrs. William R. Sellers, Sr., Live Oak, FL

FOURTH OF JULY AT THE OLD JAIL

The Old Jail was open to visitors on July 2, 3, and 4; and 334 people came (245 on the Fourth)! Sales of books and cards, plus donations, produced a total of \$118.25. Many thanks to Jail Chairman Ray Bitney, his wife Sybil, Marilyn Lessin, Peter Wyckoff, Walter Reinheimer, Becky Felton, Wolfgang and Mary Furstenau, Susan Carson, and Bill and Thelma Dunn.

WORLD WAR I PROJECT

The North Carolina State Archives has begun an oral history project of World War I veterans. Archives also is looking for photographs to copy and include in the state's military history collection. If you know of anyone who might participate, or have photographs, please contact JoAnn Williford at (919) 733-7305. (The Editor's opinion is that this one is about twenty years too late! We don't want our Southport oral history project to wait until everyone is 95 years old.)

"Looking Back" — The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor

SEPTEMBER 1996



I am very happy that Harold Watson, one of our members, has again shared something with us from "The Good Ole Days" of Southport. I am going to quote him exactly after a brief word of explanation. The man he refers to as "Papa Doc" was owner and operator of Watson's Pharmacy and beloved by all who knew him. The people mentioned in the postscript of Harold's letter to me were his family members. David and Lib live here in Southport, Harold lives at Long Beach, George and Marion are deceased. Here's the letter.

"Papa Doc was the mayor of Southport about 1910. He was Dr. D. I. Watson who operated Watson's Pharmacy for 46 years. My father, Dr. George Y. Watson was a druggist and he would even get out of his sick bed and go down to fill prescriptions for other sick people and to keep Papa Doc from having to do it. My dad died in the flu epidemic of 1920, at age 38.

George Yandell Watson III (Harold's nephew) wrote a poem as a tribute to his father, George Y. Watson, Jr. (It is quoted below)

(Harold added this postscript to his letter): I was only 5 when Daddy died. David wasn't quite one year old. Marion was 9. I remember all the different people coming to our house. How Mom managed, I don't know. She lost her husband, her father and Johnnie Watson, her brother-in-law, all within 10 days. Mom was a good manager or she never would have been able to raise us five children." (Harold's mother was Ida Potter Manson from one of Southport's oldest families).

DAD

A tribute to George Y. Watson Jr., my father

He went to sea at nineteen.

He left the small town, the dirt roads, the shrimp boats,
The family drugstore. . .
To seek his destiny on the far horizon from within the bowels of ships,
The great gray steel behemoths that plyed the world's oceans
And amid the steam and hot steel he learned to tame the metal giants
Still he remembered home and Mom, brothers and sisters
To all he tithed his support.

In a world climbing out of depression
With Nations struggling to survive
The needs of commerce driving men and machines to deliver their cargo
He and the ships he rode delivered . . .
Horses to Cuba, Lumber to New York
Cotton and Turpentine to Germany
Barbed wire and nails for the Stateside
Kanight from Holland
And the Engines beat out a rhythm in their own *thunder song*
As they pushed the steel hulls, filled with the needs of nations
Through the deep rolling blue. . .

And he learned their song;
Of metal singing against metal
The smooth clicking of meshing gears
The roar of the boilers
The expansion of hot steel,
The gliding hum of giant pistons
This was not noise, not a cacophony
But a symphony of sounds . . . to the well tuned ear
And he became their master and the machines sang . . . They sang for him.

Home . . .
And a new school teacher,
Seeking to open young minds and give them direction
Taught his heart a new song. . .
The song was Love
And he would carry it with him for the rest of his life. . .

The sea drew him back and he went, though reluctantly this time
To Vladivostok
And the Philippines
Five months at sea
His heart yearned for his new song...
So he choose the shore and a job at Dupont
Coaching the machines of industry to sing their song
But it wasn't the same
He tried the landmans life, but the call of deep water
Echoed in his dreams and war began to beat its drum

He returned to sea, comrades and brothers
And soon he volunteered, first the Navy and rejection
Both legs had to match.
Then a captains commission in Corp of Army Engineers
An ocean going dredge with a post-invasion mission-
Clear the harbors of France after Normandy
So that supplies and fresh troops could land easily
Flooding the continent to defeat Hitler.
But first a convoy across the North Atlantic battlefield
(They only lost two ships to the German U-boats)
Then England and the business of war.

1945 and the war was won!
A flight home
A blushing bride
And soon a son
So tiny in those large hands that tamed the giants of metal and machine

The sailor retired from the sea
He inspected with experienced eyes the building of ships
But would no longer ride them over the blue horizon
He choose instead his new family and the role of husband and father
Uproot and change now as he sought to find a place
In a nation bursting with growth
He headed South where an uncle and a brother
Had sought to find their place in the sun of the sunshine state.

ROOTS, TWIGS AND BRANCHES
The Genealogy Page

You, my readers, have let me down! I have not had a genealogy page logo submitted since my request in the July issue of Whittlers Bench, AND Bill Reaves is the only person who has returned a completed Ancestor Chart. Now I don't know if you just don't care about genealogy, or if you don't want to take time to help me out. Which is it?

Another big disappointment is that The Other Susie is in the process of returning to the West Coast. This means we are back to square one in a search for someone to head up the Genealogy Section of the Society. Here again I ask for suggestions so I can pass it on to the Executive Board.

Susie Holtz will be missed. However, I hope she will contribute ideas and articles from time to time for this page.

On the next page is something I "stole" from Gwen Causey, one of our members. I hope you will enjoy it, as I did. And, Gwen, please come up with something else for us.



In case you ever need it, here is a home remedy that was in the Wilmington Centinel (I trust they meant Sentinel) on August 27, 1788:

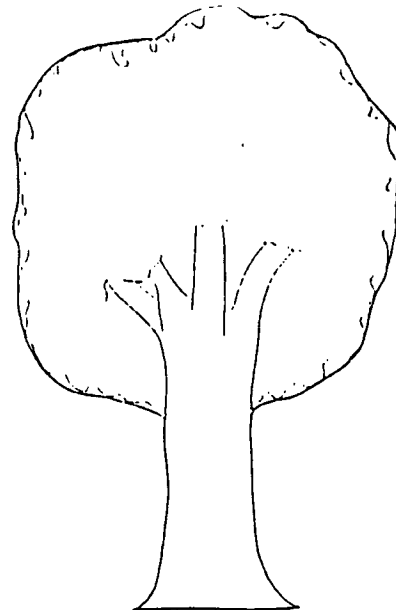
"RECEIPT TO CURE THE AGUE AND FEVER: - Take half an ounce of bark, 20 grams of salts of wormwood, and 30 grains of snakeroot, to be mixed with Madeira wine, and taken three or four times every day, till the malady is removed".

Thanks to Bill Reaves for this

P. S. From Susie C. Do you think this might be a cure for Genealogy Fever as described on the page I "stole" from Gwen? Let me know if it works.

Under the Genealogy Tree

by: Gwen Causey



Genealogy must be a fun hobby. There always seems to be an abundance of cartoons, sayings, jokes, and even tee shirts. Yes, tee shirts. Last summer I received one as a gift. It was purchased in Salt Lake City, Utah and on the front was a pedigree chart with the saying, "Genealogy is my line."

The staff at Brunswicktown State Historic Site shared the following with me:

QUARANTINED

The inhabitants of this place have been
stricken with -

GENEALOGY

FEVER

This is a deadly & infectious disease!
SYMPTOMS: Notepapers stuffed in pockets,
Heart palpitations at sight of gravestones,
Old trunks filled with letters,
Bloodshot eyes from microfilm readers,
Cold sweat upon arrival of daily mail.

**** INCURABLE ****

Old Georgetown Road Log House back in Southport Historical Society news!

As many of you will recall, several years ago the Pfizer Corporation offered the structure to the Society if they would move it off of the property which was (and is) being sold. A brave committee took on the challenge and did a tremendous amount of work. There was research, and surveys, and photographic history, and extensive professional drawings. None of this came cheaply and the Society underwrote the not inconsiderable expense. There were analysis of future locations for the structure, which is believed to date from the early 19th century, and which is only one of a dwindling handful of dwellings representative of the "common man". While there are ample evidences of the dwellings of the wealthy gentry such as the Bellamy Mansion, the mean dwellings of the common man have fallen prey to nature and scavengers.



In spite of the best efforts of the committee members and the Society as a whole, it was not possible to rescue / relocate the old building. It remained

concealed in weeds and hidden from highway traffic by an enormous and beautifully proportioned oak tree. Not to say it was unknown, as it sits at the end of a dirt trail that is well used by the young people of the community for . . . whatever.

From time to time the subject of the old log house was raised in conversations and discussions, and always with a hint of regret, and a healthy dose of concern that the building would be vandalized before it could be relocated and saved. A new committee has emerged with the idea of either rescuing the building or finding out that it was not salvageable.

It is salvageable. Moreover, it is very worth saving! The committee of members and non - members (but to become members), has met nearly every Wednesday late afternoon for an hour to an hour and a half, made telephone calls, talked to individuals, and reviewed the last committee's files. (Thank you for your careful documentation). The project was broken down into three segments. Number 1; is it worthwhile? Number 2; immediate safety of the structure. Number 3; long range restoration and use.

The answer to Number 1 is a resounding yes, and for the reasons stated above.

Number 2. The building is showing accelerating signs of deterioration and has been the target of vandals who have stripped off some of the siding from between the two doors. Such deterioration and vandalism feed on each other in an ever increasingly rapid downward spiral until there is nothing left to destroy. The committee has been able to identify a qualified building mover who is also willing to allow the Society to

store the structure on his property off Hwy 211. This is a "safe" area where the mover stores other buildings in transition. Removal to this area will allow the Society and its committee to protect the structure **WHILE** the answer to Number 3 is researched and decided.

This article is to let everyone know that the existing committee is totally committed to the saving of the old building. Exact costs have not yet been determined but they **will** exceed \$5,000.00. Three of the committee members have already pledged \$100.00 each toward the project, and it is expected that one or two other members will do likewise. Three hundred dollars is hardly the morning dew on the bucket, much less a drop in it. Yet, there are about 150 members of the Society's mailing list. Let's assume that 25 of those are uninterested and that another 25 are on restricted budgets. That's 100 members who might pledge \$100.00 each. **THAT EQUALS TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!**

If we, as a society, will make the effort to raise even half of that \$10,000.00, we will see the gates open to other public and private sources with enough money to treat the old log structure with the dignity it deserves. Each organization or official whom has been contacted has told us the same thing. They will be happy to help - IF we are willing to help ourselves. If we see the project as worthwhile, and are willing to put our money, time, labor and sweat where our mouths are.

The Southport Historical Society is a corporation with tax exempt status. Your donations are tax deductible. A special account will be established just for the old log house into which the funds donated can be channeled, retained, and kept separate from the Society's other monies. If the project cannot meet its goal, the individual contributions can be returned, or earmarked to other purposes if the donor would prefer.

The committee will continue to report to you from time to time on the effort to rescue the Old Georgetown Road Log House, and we promise you a gala when the project is complete and the building is safe, secure, and again benefitting present and future generations.

Below is a tear off coupon on which you can indicate your donation or your pledge. Thank you for your care, concern, and generosity.

Peter Wyckoff, David McCracken, Bubba Smith, John Thompson

Tear off and return to Southport Historical Society, 501 N. Atlantic Street, Southport, NC 28461

I WANT TO SUPPORT THE OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD LOG HOUSE!

I / we pledge \$_____ over the next calendar year for the project.

My / our contribution of \$_____ is attached.

Please make checks payable to the Southport Historical Society and indicate that it is for the Old Log House Project.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

WANTED!



DOUGHBOYS

The North Carolina Division of Archives and History is interested in interviewing World War I veterans as part of an oral history program that will eventually target veterans of all twentieth-century conflicts. Of the 86,467 Tar Heel veterans of World War I, it is estimated that no more than two-tenths of one percent are alive today. We need your help to locate those survivors who are willing and able to recall their experiences in the war.

We are also interested in finding photographs of soldiers in uniform to be copied for placement in the Archives.

If you know of a World War I veteran who you feel will be a good candidate to be interviewed for this project, or if you are in possession of a photograph of a veteran, please contact Jo Ann Williford at (919) 733-7305.

REWARD:
THE PRESERVATION OF
NORTH CAROLINA'S MILITARY HERITAGE.