

THE WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461
Volume XXII, Number 1, January, 1998

Regular Meeting

We are starting off the New Year with a triple-threat meeting - a covered dish dinner, installation of new officers and an outstanding program.

Please come and bring a guest or two. The date is Thursday, January 22, at 6:30 PM and the place is Sacred Heart Church.

The speaker is Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr., a Wilmington native who received his Ph.D from the University of South Carolina and is presently on the faculty of UNCW. He is the author of the recently published book, "The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope", which covers the Ft. Fisher campaign and the subsequent battles along the Cape Fear River, ending in the fall of Wilmington.

The topic of his talk is, "My Favorite Cape Fear Civil War Stories". Members who have heard him speak have found his talks to be interesting, informative and enjoyable. We are extremely fortunate to have Chris as our speaker this month.

New Officers

Installation of the new officers for 1998-1999 will be held at the next meeting. They are as follows:

President - Chris Suiter	Vice President - Peter Wyckoff
Archivist/Historian - Susie Carson	Secretary - Pauline Swain
Treasurer - Wolf Furstenu	Directors - Marilyn Lessin
	Bert Felton
	June Wojda

Meeting Dates

The meeting dates for 1998 are:	January 22	July 4 - Old Jail Open
	March 26	Sept 24
	May 28	Nov 19

New Members

We are so pleased to welcome new members, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Cook, Mrs. Ann Price, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wolff, Mr. Henry Williams, Mr. & Mrs. Ian Davidson, Dr. & Mrs. Gary Brown, Dr. & Mrs. Jon Lewis, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Newton and Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Rosser.



Dues are Due !!

Who could have predicted how fast 1998 would arrive in Southport? Can you believe that its dues paying time again? I guess the members of the Southport Historical Society were having so much fun the time just flew by! If you haven't paid your dues, please take just a moment and write a check or bring it to the meeting on the 22nd. The dues amounts are as follows:

Individual	\$10.00 annually	Sustaining	25.00 annually
Husband & wife	15.00 annually	Life, individual	150.00
Student (through high school)	2.00 annually	Life, husband & wife	200.00
Business, institutional, club or professional	15.00 annually		

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

Please make checks payable to the Southport Historical Society and forward to: 501 North Atlantic Avenue Southport, N. C. 28461. For additional information please call 910-457-6940. (Editor's note - donations are always needed and are tax deductible!)

Get Well, Bill

Unfortunately, charter member Bill Reaves is experiencing some health problems and is presently in a rehabilitation center for a short stay. We send him our best wishes for a rapid recovery.

ROOTS, TWIGS & BRANCHES

GENEALOGY NEWS

DOREEN (SUZY) HOLTZ, EDITOR

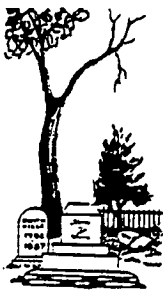
You Genealogists who are searching by computer will be pleased to know that Brunswick County information is now available through the US GenWeb. The website is www.genweb.com



Mr. Fred M. Hintze, Jr. of Richlands, N. C. compiled the 1790 census of seven Southeastern North Carolina counties and donated a copy to our genealogy committee. We are indeed grateful to Mr. Hintze for his generous gift and we will place it in the local history room at the Southport library so everyone will be able to use it.

Civil War Soldiers

Be sure to mark your calendars for February 7th at 2:00 PM for the rededication of the graves of Pmts. Abram Blount and Abram Galloway, 37th U.S.C.T. This marvelous service will be held in the John Smith Cemetery on Leonard Street in Southport. This is a community effort and the Society is taking part. For more information, please call 910-457-7927 or 1-800-388-9635.



In Memoriam

Our deepest sympathy to the family of Herbert Gardner, one of the gallant survivors of the Merchant Ship, John D. Gill, torpedoed off the coast of Bald Head Island by a German U-Boat during World War II. He passed away January 10, 1998 after a valiant fight against emphysema. We truly regret that he was not able to fulfill his wish to revisit his friends in Southport and the monument erected in memory of his fellow crewmen and his ship.

"LOOKING BACK" - THE HISTORY PAGE

SUSAN CARSON - EDITOR



The following article is a memoir of Mr. John Wescott, Brunswick County's last surviving veteran of the Civil War, who died in 1936 at the age of 91. When the Civil War broke out, Mr. Wescott, who was born and reared near Southport, joined the coast guards and fought at Ft. Fisher until it fell. Later he joined the land forces and took part in the battles of Bentonville and Bennettsville. The old soldier said that he was in Capt. Wesley Galloway's Company and that he believed that he was in the 20th regiment. At the time of his death, his semi-annual pension check was \$182.50

Our thanks go to Society members Dorothy Hardee and her son, Lewis, Jr., who submitted this story. Dot and Lew are descendants of Mr. Wescott.

HOME COMING FROM WAR

John H. Wescott

After General Johnston surrendered near Bentonville, there was quite a hustle making preparations for going home. Those of us whose home was in Brunswick, after laying our guns and cartridge boxes aside, and placing our blankets on our shoulders, headed for home. We didn't travel far before we reached the stage road leading from Fayetteville to Georgetown. It was in bad repair so much that it was impossible for vehicles to travel on it, but it served a good purpose for pedestrians and we made good use of it. The people living near the road were kind to us, giving us food and shelter and so we traveled on till we reached Fayetteville. Mr. S.P. Tharp and I were a distance behind our comrades, he being unable to travel fast. On arrival at the old town, was a dwelling near the road and a well of water stood in the back yard. Being very thirsty, Mr. Tharp asked me to take our canteens to the well and fill them with water which I did. I saw signs of life on the premises but on going back to the gate where Mr. Tharp was waiting for me the lady of the house opened the front door and asked what we wanted. We told her a morsel to eat if she had it to spare. She told us to come in, we did so, and sat on the steps of the porch. She invited us to the dining room but we asked to be excused and told her if she had a bite of food she could give us. We took it there. She went into the dining room and soon returned with two well filled plates of excellent food such as we had not seen for quite a while. After satisfying our appetites could not consume all. We told her if she would give us bit of paper we would take what was left for our supper. She went in the dining room and soon returned with a well packed lunch, more than enough for our supper. After talking with her for a while, thanking her for her kindness, we bade her goodbye and went in search of our comrades. On reaching the river-front we found they had secured for our quarters a boat shed. After supper we talked about the best way home, thinking we would have to travel on foot. We spread our blankets down for the night. Next morning two gentlemen, whose home was in Wilmington, told us had a large row boat and gave us passage down the river. We gladly accepted the offer and went on board the little craft. Loosing her moorings we started down the river. Having a strong current in our favor and two oars which we used alternately, we made good time, far better than we could have done on foot. We admired the large growth of Magnolia trees which

time, far better than we could have done on foot. We admired the large growth of Magnolia trees which grew on each side of the river, covered with white blossoms exhaling an aroma far more agreeable than that of burnt gunpowder we inhaled on the battlefields. Having some good singers on the boat we would occasionally strike out on some familiar song which made time pass more cheerfully. Thus we glided down the old Cape Fear arriving in Wilmington late in the afternoon. Those of us whose homes were in Brunswick asked to be landed on the west side of the river which was granted. After thanking the gentlemen for their kindness, we headed homeward. There being no road leading from the river we traveled through the woods. Night soon overtaking us, we camped for the night. On waking next morning, we were told by the noise of the chickens made that we were near someone's home. And going in the direction of the noise the chickens made, we soon arrived at a small farm house. Some of the inmates had just returned with a pail of milk which they divided with us. Filling our canteens, we thanked them for it and continued our journey. We soon arrived at the home of Mr. W. W. Drew. They were through with breakfast but had enough left over which with our milk furnished a good breakfast. After talking for a while with the inmates of the house, we continued on homeward journey. Having some relatives living several miles from there we called on them. They gave us a hearty welcome and insisted our stopping with them that night which we did. Next morning we readied for our homeward journey. My good old uncle hitched his mule to the wagon and sent us within a few miles of our house. After thanking the young man for kindness and bidding him goodbye we concluded our journey homeward. Arriving home at twilight it was a joyful meeting. After supper we talked for a while and then retired. I rested the next day. After that I joined the farmer hands in preparation for crop. This ended my war experience. War with its constant train of evils is a terror to any country. We hope this lovely land of ours will not learn war any more.

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. \$10.00.

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.

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.

Note: Membership entitles you to purchase these books from the Society at a 10% discount.

