

THE WHITTLERS BENCH

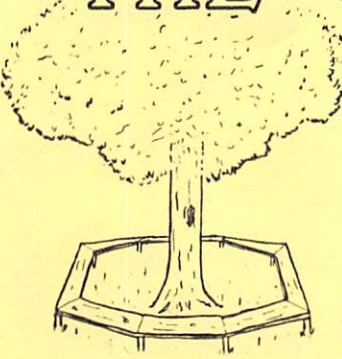
SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

313 East Moore St. • SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

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* MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT *



The July meeting of the Southport Historical Society will be held on Thursday, July 26, at 8:00 P.M. in the Southport Rescue Squad Building, next door to the fire station. Bob Thorsen will be in charge of the program which he calls "Odds and Ends of Southport History." In the remaining time he will show slides and hear discussion on the proposed revitalization of Southport's downtown area. Members and guests are cordially invited to attend.

BOOK GOES TO PRESS -- AT LAST!

After innumerable delays, the publication of Carl Lounsbury's architectural study of Southport became a reality early this month when all materials were turned over to the printer. Delivery of the books is expected in September.

Of the one thousand volumes to be printed, Southport Historical Society will receive nine hundred for distribution while the remaining hundred copies will go to the Division of Archives & History in Raleigh. This publication, as well as the field study on which it is based, was financed through a grant from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, a federally funded program.

Entitled "The Architecture of Southport," the book includes photos and descriptions of 151 architecturally and/or historically significant buildings.

FUNDS SOUGHT FOR MUSEUM

Mrs. Eleanor Smith and Mrs. Julie Lambeth are working with Mayor Tomlinson to investigate the possibility of obtaining the old jail building for future use as a museum. The success of this project will depend greatly upon being able to secure grant money for extensive renovations and repairs.

The first floor of this early 20th-century structure was thoroughly remodeled about twelve years ago for use as the Sheriff's Department offices. The second story, however, remains intact. Having stood vacant for a year, the jail

(see "Museum Funds", p. 2)

EXHIBIT FEATURED AT FESTIVAL

Old photographs of Southport drew a small but enthusiastic crowd to our society's exhibit during the Fourth of July Festival. The exhibit was housed in the first floor corridor of City Hall. Although there appeared to be fewer visitors than last year, hostesses reported that they were busy all day answering questions and distributing brochures.

A new feature this year was a set of photos portraying well-known Southport people of the recent past. These pictures were loaned by Mrs. Lelia Pigott.

Another popular display was a collection of historic 20th-century newspapers, contributed by Eleanor Smith. Also on view were Civil War period artifacts which are on long-term loan to the City of Southport from the Fort Fisher Preservation Laboratory.

Our thanks to Eleanor Smith, chairman of this year's exhibit committee, and to all our members who assisted her.

FAMILY DATA NEEDED

Our president reports that she has been in correspondence with several genealogical researchers who have contributed information on some of the old families of this area. Material now on file includes the Frink, Gause, Sellers, Potter, McRackan, and Springs families.

Copies of all the society's family history files will be placed in the Southport--Brunswick County Library where it will be readily accessible to the public.

If you have collected any genealogical

(see "Family Histories", p. 2)

MUSEUM FUNDS... continued

needs continuing maintenance while it awaits development of the museum. Then, major restoration and modification will be required to create museum facilities.

We hope to have a progress report from Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lambeth soon.

FAMILY HISTORIES...continued

information relating to the Southport area please allow the historical society to make copies for our permanent files. We have had particular requests for assistance with research on the Doshier, Watts, Newton, and Brinkman families. Any information about these or other families of the area will be a valuable contribution. Please contact Mrs. Susan Carson if you have material we may copy.

REAVES BACK AT TYPEWRITER AFTER BATH

Bill Reaves has returned to Wilmington after his six-week job assignment in Bath, N.C., and is again working on Volume II of the Southport (Smithville) Chronology. The second volume is scheduled for release on July 4, 1980. We will be happy to take reservations for copies anytime during the interim. Please send requests to the Society at 313 East Moore Street, Southport, or to Bill Reaves, 610 South Third Street, Wilmington, N.C., 28401.

Less than a dozen copies of Volume I remain, and these will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. They are available only at the Curiosity Shop on Howe Street.

BOOK REVIEW

L. Leon, Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier; Stone Publishing Company, Charlotte, N.C., 1913. *

Civil War history is most often told in scholarly accounts of military strategy and the memoirs of famous generals, but this little diary offers a rare glimpse of "the life of the man behind the gun." Private Leon's diary is remarkable for its simplicity and candor and its lack of sensationalism.

Leon was not quite nineteen when he enlisted in the Charlotte Grays, Company C, First N.C. Regiment. The new recruit's romantic dreams of army life are quickly shattered with his first view of a battlefield strewn with the dead and wounded. From then on, Leon and his company are never far from the harsh reality of war. Often without adequate shelter and clothing, subsisting on meager rations, sleeping only when totally exhausted, the men march to the defense of Richmond; as the war continues they meet the enemy at Fredericksburg, Gettysburg and Culpeper Courthouse, fighting countless small engagements between.

Throughout the story, Leon's admiration for General Lee is evident: "Our father, Lee," as Leon frequently calls him, "was scarcely ever out of sight when there was danger.... I care not how weary or hungry we were, when we saw him we gave that Rebel yell, and hunger and wounds would be forgotten."

In the Wilderness Campaign of 1864, Leon is wounded and captured. He spends the remainder of the war in Union prison camps where humiliation, cold and hunger, and disease take their toll of those spared in battle. Hearing of Lee's surrender, Leon joins many of his fellow prisoners in taking "the cursed oath" of allegiance and is released to find his parents whom he has not seen for over ten years. "And the end of all is a desolated home to go to," Leon writes in conclusion. "The four years that I have given to my country I do not regret, ..my only regret is that we lost that for which we fought.... I shall now close this diary in sorrow, but to the last I will say that, although a Private, I still say our Cause was just...."

*(from the North Carolina Collection, Southport-Brunswick Co. Library)