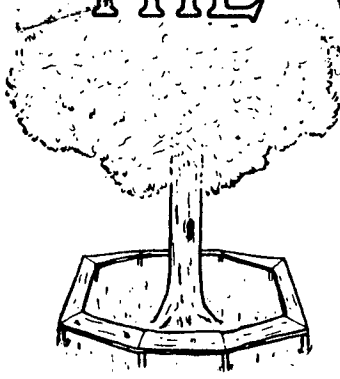


THE WHITTLERS BENCH

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

501 N. Atlantic Ave. - SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

September 11, 1989



MEETING: The Historical Society meeting will be held on September 28, 1989 at 7:30 PM at the CP & L Visitors Center. Bill Reaves, Author of The Chronology of Smithville will be the speaker. Any member who has a copy of the Chronology may want to get Mr. Reaves' autograph. This promises to be an interesting and informative meeting.

TRIP WORTH MENTIONING: John and Donna Michaux were host and hostess to some members of the Society when they gave a scenic cruise along the Brunswick area of the Cape Fear River. Everyone was happy to have been included on such a pleasant outing. THANKS GUYS!

CHRISTMAS TRIP: One of our members has scheduled a bus trip to Asheville, N. C. December 15 & 16. It will include a tour of the historic George Vanderbilt estate known as "Biltmore". You will find this European estate as it was when the Vanderbilts lived there in the dawning years of the twentieth century; decorated with giant tapestries, elegant furniture and paintings, as well as flowers and plants from the estate greenhouses.

At Christmas time, the house is decorated with hundreds of poinsettias, and each room of the mansion has it's own Christmas tree, each decorated in a different motif. For more information, call Pat Singletary at 278-3435.

PUBLICATION: Heartening Heritage on a Carolina Crescent by J. M. M. Holden. This is a new publication on the christian heritage of the Coastal Carolinas: Early Settlements and Anglican missionaries until 1776; early Methodist missionaries; Circuit, riders and Societies; Two Centuries of Methodist Ministry. To order by mail send \$20.00 (ck. or M. O.) to LHG Research Associates, P. O. Box 351, Supply, NC 28462. May also buy book at Holden Beach General Store or at the Beach Mart on the Causeway.

GARDEN PAGE: Due to an over load of school opening duties, Flora Greensleeves Garden page is omitted for this printing. We hope to include it in the next printing of The Whittlers Bench. Thank you for understanding.

NEWS OF IMPORTANCE: Since the Whittlers Bench is a publication of the Historical Society, news items of interest and importance to the Society are welcomed from the members. Call 457-4490 or 457-6122 to include information beneficial to our members.

NOTE: PLEASE START PLANNING TO PAY 1990 DUES. MAIL DUES TO 501 ATLANTIC AVENUE.

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(The following was submitted, at my request, by Mrs. Margaret Dodd, 55 Summit Ave., Chatham, N. J. 07928. In her study of family history, Mrs. Dodd found that her roots were deep in Old Smithville. She has kindly agreed to share with us, and we are very grateful. The Benjamin Blaney mentioned by her was prominent in the affairs of the town in its early days, at least from 1800 to 1811. He is mentioned several times in Volume I of our Chronology.)

"MISS CARRIE"

A ragged, faded FORGET-ME-NOT album with beautifully scripted pages inscribed to "Miss Carrie", dated 1859 and 1860, placed in Smithville and Wilmington, N. C.; a silver spoon engraded "H and C Mason"; a picture of a beautiful women of the 1860's marked "my mother"; letters written in the 1870's to "my darling husband"; a footstool from her home; notations in the family register stating that Caroline Wade had been born 13 September 1841, in Wilmington, N. C., married May 1861 in Wilmington to Hamilton M. Mason by the Rev. Charles Deems, and died January 1883 in Newark, N.J., were mementoes kept by my grandmother, Susan Mason Kingston as loving memories of her mother who had died when Susan was only 12. Later these were given to me. They interested me; they intrigued me. Who was this Caroline Wade Mason who had many suitors in North Carolina, who married Hamilton Mason and ran the blockade north with him, bore seven children and died before the age of 42? Who were her family? Where did they come from? What did they do? I just had to know!

My search started with a brief stop in Wilmington. That "brief stop" has stretched into many visits to Wilmington and Southport, several years of correspondence to Southport, and a love affair with the Cape Fear area.

On that first visit, a very helpful librarian at the New Hanover County Library in the North Carolina Room directed me to the 1850 census where I found that 8-year old Caroline M. Wade was the daughter of Margaret H. Wade (39), widow, head of household (the 1840 census named J. A. Wade as head of this household), whose oldest daughter, Ann, was 19 years old and youngest son, John, was six. In the marriage bonds we found that Jno. A. Wade obtained a bond to wed Margaret H. Blaney on Jan. 15, 1829, in Brunswick County. Further research told me that Margaret Blaney Wade was a member of the Front Street Methodist Church in Wilmington in 1836, that her husband John A. Wade had bought a 1/3 interest in a rice mill on Front Street in 1837; that the rice mill was destroyed by fire on an early morning in the early 1840's; and that Margaret had bought land in her own name in 1843 (signifying that John was probably dead by then) on the northwest corner of Castle and Surrey Streets. She had also received a bequest of \$200 from Ann Smith in 1842, and her son served in the 3rd Regiment of the Confederate Army.

The mention of Benjamin Blaney in SOUTHPORT/SMITHVILLE, A CHRONOLOGY, VOL. I, 1520-1887, by Bill Reaves, brought me to Southport. Something about this pretty little town made me feel as though I had "come home". I looked out over the river on which my ancestors must have sailed many, many times, and looked at from their waterfront homes where "Miss Carrie" had visited with her FORGET-ME-NOT ALBUM in 1859.

The book told me that Benjamin Blaney, a carpenter, was living in Smithville in 1804, having come from Roxbury, Mass., that he was appointed to build the new courthouse in 1808, appointed the second postmaster in 1811, after the death of John Conyers; and that his friend, Engineer J. G. Swift, attempted to locate his grave in 1818. Houses in Smithville were reported to have been built by him. The New Hanover County Court records mention him being a juror in 1796 and 1797, a deed was proved to him in 1797. Abstracts from newspapers in 1800 told that he was in possession of house and land in Wilmington and that there was a store, "Milne and Blaney", on Front Street and that there was a \$10 reward for "Blaney's Nan", a run-away slave.

A gravestone in the St. James Churchyard, Wilmington, reads: "Here lies deposited the body of Joseph Milne, who died December the 4th, 1801, aged 38. Stop here my friend and cast an eye. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you must be. Prepare for death and follow me". By Benjamin Blaney".

From the MEMOIRS OF GENERAL JOSEPH GARDENER SWIFT, who was Commander of Fort Johnston, Smithville, we find reference to his friend Benjamin Blaney; that Benjamin Blaney visited relatives in Roxbury in 1807, and that Swift's family lived at the "Blaney Place" near the Fort in Smithville in 1810. A notation in the St. James Church records of 1737-1852 shows that Benjamin Blaney and his wife of Smithville in 1800 sold to the Vestry a lot to be used as a burial ground. This land was formerly the property of William Evans, deceased, and became the property of his daughter Margaret and her husband Benjamin Blaney as a part of the division of the Evans estate.

The Chronology mentions that Benjamin Blaney was a carpenter from Roxbury, Mass. Gen. Swift in his MEMOIRS comments that in 1807 Benjamin Blaney escorted Swift's family from Roxbury where Benjamin had been visiting relatives, to Wilmington, preparatory to Swift's return to Fort Johnston on official duty. These items sent me to the Roxbury, Mass. records.

Benjamin Sharpe Blaney had been born in Roxbury, 20 October 1766, to William Blaney and Mary Gridley who were married there 17 February 1755. Massachusetts records further show that William Blaney's family go back through Ambrose and Joseph to John Blaney who was born in England about 1627, settled in Lynn, Mass. as a planter prior to 1659. Perhaps our Benjamin was named for William's cousin, Benjamin Blaney, who was captain of a group of Minutemen at Lexington on April 19, 1755. Mary Gridley's family records go back to Richard Gridley born in England who arrived in Boston in 1630 (he became a sympathizer of the Anne Hutchinson party there), and to Lt. John Sharp who was reported to have been killed by Indians in King Philip's War, and to Robert Sharp who arrived on the Abigail in 1635.

The Reaves CHRONOLOGY mentions in 1790 a "Mrs. Wade's residence", a "pilot" by the name of John Wade in 1800. The Census of 1784 shows a John Wade. An Anna Belle Wade married a Warner Lockwood in 1828. A letter from Caroline from Charleston, S. C. in 1874 mentions visiting cousins Tom and Robert Lockwood. Susie Carson has sent me a deed of 1814 naming Robert Wade and Abraham Wade. All this information awaiting me in North Carolina! I must return to put it all together and complete my information about "Miss Carrie" and her family. Caroline Wade's family history is just waiting to be discovered!

Editor's Note: I hope there are some of you out there who are working on this same line. If so, you, too, will be special guests of our town when the Bicentennial is celebrated in 1992. Let me hear from you - or anyone else who ancestors in Smithville in its early days.

And articles such as the above, or anything else of an historical nature, relating to Smithville or Southport, will be more than welcome.

How about hearing from some of you who attended school at Old Southport High? All such would make interesting items for the newsletter. Send in your entries to The History Page, Whittlers Bench, 501 North Atlantic Avenue, Southport, N. C. 28461. If you have questions, please call me at (919) 457-6940.

Genealogy

MARK YOUR CALENDAR ** Saturday, September 23 ** The emphasis will be on Historic Southport (Smithville) and Brunswick County. We will be hosting the September meeting of the Old New Hanover Genealogical Society. This genealogical society was formed last March and already has over 200 members. Some of us are charter members, as its special attention is on the Old New Hanover Precinct, from which Brunswick, New Hanover, Bladen, Pender, Duplin, and Sampson Counties were formed.

Southport Historical Society, with executive board approval, and society approval at the last meeting, issued an invitation to the ONHGS to hold one of their meeting in our town. They were pleased to accept for their September meeting.

We will need everyone's help to make these visitors feel welcome. These are the plans that are being formulated by the committee to host the event -- We will have our Headquarters in the Old Jail open from 10 am until noon, to greet the visitors. We will serve them a cool drink, cookies. We hope to show our slide show tour of historic Southport and sell some of our books. At noon the Old New Hanover Genealogical Society will gather in Franklin Square Park for their picnic lunch (they will spread their carry-in meal, bring their own paper plates, etc.) We are encouraged to come with our covered dishes too. Their meeting will start at 2, and I'm told the business will be very brief, only necessary announcements.

Bill Reaves, author of Southport (Smithville) A Chronology, Vol. I (1520 - 1887) will present a program with a focus on the early settlers of Southport and Brunswick County. After the meeting we will have the Old Jail Headquarters open again for another hour. This will allow any who missed a morning visit to our Headquarters a chance to purchase any books or just look about.

The Parks and Recreation Department of Southport will get as many picnic tables as they can in the park for us. We've asked for extra trash barrels. The city will also set up their speaker system for our use. We are suggesting that everyone bring their own comfortable lawn chair.

The Genealogy Committee thanks all who have volunteered to help host this event. We expect about 100 ONNGS people to attend. Some will come on the Ferry and plan to spend the day. Many are looking forward to visiting Southport for the first time. Most are anxious to talk with residents and learn some of the history of this area. If you have not been contacted, and can help in any way, please call Abbie Bitney, 457-9466, or Susan Carson, 457-6940. EVERYONE COME and give us a good representative number present. It will be an interesting and fun time.

Cemetery Committee

submitted by Abbie Bitney, Chairman

The Cemetery Endowment Fund continues to grow, but slowly. The Certificate of Deposit now has a balance of \$1,737.70. There is \$162.69 in the Savings Account. We extend our thanks to Mr. and Mrs Kenneth Butters of Florida for their recent donation. We expect some of the earnings from the Antique Show to be added to this Fund soon. We must continue to work to add to this fund. We have no indication when it may be needed to take over some critical repair or service for our Historical Cemeteries. Only the interest can be spent, and so far our interest is only a few dollars.

Mr. Lowell Avery from Hamstead, NC has set a U.S. Government Marker for a U. S. Veteran for his ancestor, John Conyers, a Revolutionary War Soldier, in the Old Morse Cemetery. He has placed beside it a private marker for John Conyers' wife.

Members of the Society who are working with the City Cemetery Committee continue their duties there trying to formulate some workable and acceptable rules and regulations regarding all the cemeteries of Southport.

A SOCIETY SURVEY

We constitute a group effort to illuminate and share our past in terms of discovering and presenting accomplishments of those who have gone before us. Many tasks and chores make up our effort. Most are fun. Others simply are necessary.

To help each member contribute time and energy where he/she wishes, let us first find out who can do what.

Please think about each item. Mark those you can or want to do. Comment as you wish to help those who will solicit members to do things.

Note: When both family members answer this questionnaire, please note who checks which item. Thanks/

IMPORTANT!! PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME(S) & PHONE NO. HERE:

Please check mark items you would like to do:

DIGGING, DISCOVERING AND RECORDING

1. Writing for:

1.1. Publicity

1.2 Grants

1.3 Brochures

1.4 Newsletter articles

2. Talk with people to:

2.1. Gather oral history

2.2 Learn facts

2.3. Locate historic places and things

2.4. Record information on tape recorder

3. Meet and talk with experts to explain what we need and get their ideas on how they can help, etc.:

3.1 Book binders

3.2 Consultants

3.3. Conservators

3.4 Contractors

3.5 Fund raisers

3.6 Newspapers

3.7 Printers

3.8 Researchers

- 3.9 Researchers
- 3.10 Historians
- 3.11 Genealogists
- 3.12 Others as needed
- 4. Talk on the telephone (inquire, notify, etc.)
- 5. Walk/search in the brush and woods
- 6. Map cemeteries and record tombstone data
- 7. Make photographic records
- 8. Keep scrapbooks
- 9. Write and receive letters such as inquiries
- 10. Read/abstract/analyze (research) old written records.

SOCIALIZING, AND SHARING OUR TREASURERS:

- 11. Meeting/greeting members, new members, and visitors
- 12. Recruiting new people
- 13. Working with children
- 14. Selling: ads, tickets, books, and other things.
- 15. Cooking or serving good food and refreshments
- 16. Recording books in or out of a library
- 17. Drive a car, for errands and people transportation
- 18. Helping with antique show
- 19. Tell a stranger about where you live (city, county, region)
- 20. Tell someone about our historical society
- 21. Set up exhibits of historical items
- 22. Give two to four hours a month to help the society grow
- 23. Give any time at all, to better the society
- 24. Help put out small bulk mailing
- 25. Count money (not yours)

- 26. Typing
- 27. Filing
- 28. Bookkeeping and working with numbers
- 29. Transcribing information from a tape recorder
- 30. Preserving something old
- 31. Painting .
- 32. Making things, carpentry, etc.
- 33. Making a place neat and tidy
- 34. Scrubbing something and making it shine
- 35. Helping tally this questionnaire

MISCELLANEOUS

- 36. Maintain the garden
- 37. Making costumes
- 38. Trying something new -- with "how to" training

WHAT PROGRAM TYPES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AND HEAR?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE AN OCCASIONAL DINNER MEETING AT A RESTAURANT THAT HAS A MEETING ROOM; Yes, No, Maybe,

YOUR COMMENTS;

Return your completed survey to:
 Survey committee, Ray Bitney, Chairman
 811 Memory Lane, Southport, NC 28461