

THE WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

Vol. XIV Number 5 September 1990

MEETING (Covered Dish)

Historical meeting will be held September 27, 1990 at the Southport Presbyterian Church at 6:30 PM. Mr. Rich Halbrook, Director of the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell will speak on the History of the Fort. Come out and bring your favorite dish.

OLD COUNTY JAIL

Sunday opening of the jail for visitors through the summer has been successful. Visitation averaged 14 persons signing the Old Jail record each Sunday. The low was 3 visitors, and the high 33.

During the three days the jail was opened for the July 4th celebration, 400 people registered in the log book. Some of their reasons for being in jail were:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Being a big brat | Cruisin |
| Being a mother | Playing tourist |
| Overeating | Child abuse |
| Being silly | Spitting |

Many thanks to our members who made the jail available. Your efforts were greatly appreciated.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be 7:00 PM Thursday, November 1, 1990 at the Old County Jail. Complaints welcome.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jail donations & postcards	\$ 89.39
Antique Show	\$1021.29
Book Receipts	\$3074.53
Membership	\$1053.00
Balance in checkbook as of 8-31-90	\$3789.39

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MANY THANKS

Mr. Roy Pollitt of Prince George, VA has given the Society a subscription to the "Genealogical Helper", which will be on file in the Society's Library at the Old Jail. Mr. Pollitt previously gave to the Society's library a large collection of genealogy books.

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Reprint from VOL I NUMBER I 4 March 1976

" If you have an announcement or some item of interest to the society, let us know. Contact the editor or one of the officers about any information that you would like to have in the newsletter. We welcome announcements, comments and requests from any group in the community about anything that should concern our members. Letters to the editor will also be printed as space permits.

Kathryn Carson, Editor "

DEADLINE for the next issue is 29 October 1990. Call or send articles and information to: Mary Gore, Editor-in-chief. 457-4490

ANNOUNCEMENT

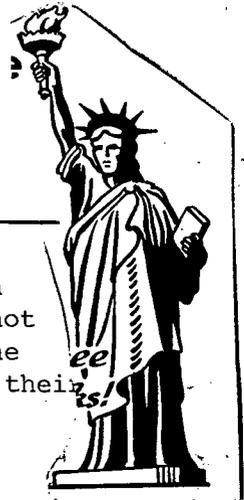
The following was announced in the State Department of Cultural Resources Federation Bulletin for September, 1990:

The Southport Historical Society recently has published Southport: A Chronology, Volume II, 1878-1920, by Bill Reaves. This book (625 pages including photographs and illustrations) contains a complete index and is an excellent source of historical and genealogical information. To order this volume or Southport (Smithville): A Chronology, Vol. I, also by Bill Reaves, specify volume and quantity and forward \$24.00 per volume plus \$3.00 for postage and handling to The Southport Historical Society, 501 North Atlantic Avenue, Southport, NC 28461.

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NOTE: Please excuse quality of The Whittlers Bench. Having reproduction problems.

Edited by Susan Carson



St. James A.M.E. Zion Church of Southport has agreed to share with us its history (1871-1987). The history given to us for this page is not signed, so we cannot thank a particular person. Therefore, we thank the entire church. We encourage other churches and organizations to share their histories with us.

The history of St. James A.M.E. Zion Church is sparse. It comes to us in bits and pieces according to the memory of our older members.

We don't know how this parcel of land was acquired, but we are told that a few God-fearing patriots secured material here and there and built a place of worship on this spot which later came to be called St. James A.M.E. Zion Church.

Some of the pioneers who founded this church were Mr. Peter Rutland, grandfather of Mrs. Alice C. Davis; Mr. John "Bug", as he was called; Mr. Gibb Davis; and Mr. Lem Freeman, great-great grandfather of Mrs. Lureva Swain. Mr. Freeman obtained the foundation from an old hospital frame up the beach. (We all know where "up the beach" is). The parts were held together with lightwood pegs.

Mrs. Julia McDonald; Mrs. Sarah Cotton, mother of Mrs. Alice Cotton Davis; and Mrs. Eliza Freeman, relative of Mrs. Lureva Swain; and others worked nights clearing and landscaping the site on which the church was to be built. These were our church founders. This was the first black church to be established in Southport.

The first pastor of the church was the Reverend Julius Robinson. Some of the first trustees were: Brothers Anthony Davis, Anthony Galloway and Johnny Davis.

We do not have the exact facts, but we can imagine that the church progressed in spirit, in membership and in finance.

The first cornerstone was laid July 18, 1915, with the Reverend E. F. Rollins as pastor.

We do not know when St. James became a part of the A.M.E. Zion connection, Cape Fear Conference, Wilmington District, but we are told that Bishop Hood served as our Bishop in 1875. Others who followed were: Bishops Lomack, Lee, Warner, Slade, Madison, Shaw, Leake, and currently, Bishop Rubin L. Speaks.

Some of the Presiding Elders who served us were: Elders Yelverton, Lawrence, Mitchell, Shaw, Smith, Wathers, Moore, Hazel, Dunn, Howie, Hassell, Burnie, and our present Elder T. D. Robinson.

Some of the ministers of our church were: The Reverends Raspberry, Maultsby, Jones, McCoy, Kelly, Alexander, John Moore, Rollins, Beck, Sims, Richardson, Alston, Fisher, Reed, Coleman, Coffee, Torrence, Turner, Allen, McCrae, Davis, Howell, Burney, Watts, Steward, Daniels, Hill, Gerald, Newkirk, McClain, Ampiauw, Hough, and our present pastor, Rev. Anthony Beard.

"LOOKING BACK" (CONTINUED)

Some of the early class leaders were Brothers, Anthony Davis, Robert Smith, John Eagles, John Frink, Sam Frink, Been Galloway, Gib Davis and Edward Swain.

Many faithful workers followed the early founders thus making our church the great institution it is today.

In 1957 the members saw the need for some space for Sunday School rooms, kitchen, dining room, rest rooms and a lounge. Thus the annex was added. Before this was fully completed, Hurricane Helene in 1958 destroyed the main body of our church. While this, our present sanctuary was being rebuilt, the worship services were held in the auditorium of the Brunswick County Training School, thanks to the consent of the Principal, Mr. Alvin C. Caviness, and the County Board of Education.

The rebuilding was done under the pastorate of Rev. G. F. Burney and a dedicated Board of Trustees and membership. Every financial plan that could be thought of was launched to pay off the mortgage that was made to finance the building project.

The year of 1960 was a most memorable one for St. James Church. During that year we moved into our present sanctuary with Rev. G. F. Burney as pastor. Later we held our Dedicatory Service and laying of the cornerstone took place - all in 1960.

On February 9, 1969, while Rev. N. H. Daniels was serving as pastor, the mortgage was burned.

We have been blessed with the services of some of the most dedicated ministers in our conference. We are thankful to God for bringing the present St. James A.M.E. Zion Church thus far. We ask His blessings that we may continue to walk humbly and work faithfully.

EDITOR'S NOTES: Apparently, the above history was given on some special occasion for St. James Church. If any of our readers know the occasion being celebrated, please let us hear from you. Also, we would like to have the history updated, if possible.

There are only 32 copies left of the second printing of Volume I of the Southport "Chronology" by Bill Reaves. This has been a very popular book.

If you think of something that would be of interest to you to appear on the History Page, please call or write the editor at the Society's address, 501 North Atlantic Avenue, Southport, N. C. 28461. The telephone number is (919) 457-6940.

We always welcome material from you for the page.