



THE WHITTLED BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

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HERITAGE CELEBRATION - A Taste of Southport

Instead of our regular meeting in September we have been asked to help promote "Southport's rich history and diverse culture."

S A T U R D A Y 19 S E P T E M B E R 1 9 9 2

There will be a celebration in Franklin Square Park (alternative indoor location if it rains) from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM. We will be setting up an informational display to show off Southport past and present. We would like all of our members to show up for an hour or so and share their interesting folklore and oral history with residents and visitors. In addition, we will be allowed to set up a table for sale of our publications and we need a little help in promotion and sales. Please come, and bring friends, neighbors, and guests to enjoy the local entertainment and to help make this celebration a success.

BELATED APPRECIATION

The Jail was opened July 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. I wish to thank all who participated in helping to keep it opened. Several hundred people visited the Jail during this period. A donation of \$67.00 was collected.

Pauline Swain

"Looking Back" - The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor

SEPTEMBER 1992



BICENTENNIAL YEAR:

We did it! We did it! We put on a wonderful, wonderful Founders Day - the first time such had ever been attempted in Southport. People came from many states; they met cousins for the first time; they reminisced, they made new friends. After they returned home they wrote back to say what a good time they had and how much it was appreciated. Our Society can be very proud that we put on this event. Many, many people helped to make it such a success, but special thanks must go to Paul Sweeney and Cheryl Daniel who brought it all together.

The Bicentennial Quilt was on display, thanks to Susan Kaufman, and it had its share of attention. A great big thanks to all who had a part in designing, stitching, quilting and hanging it. Now we can all enjoy taking family and guests to see it when it is hung in City Hall.

ARTICLES FOR HISTORY PAGE:

Quite sometime ago the editor began asking the membership and others to contribute items for this page. At first the response was slow, but now I can report that articles are beginning to come in and that they will be used as space permits. Keep them coming so we can have plenty. Who knows - someday we might be able to put all these together in book form!

BOOK ON SOUTHPORT: For those of you who have listened to me talk about it for so long, you will be relieved to know that Joshua's Dream: A Story of Old Southport is due to be released in late November or early December. Details are not available yet as to price and distribution, but if you are interested, keep in touch with me and as soon as I know I will get word to you.

----- GROWING UP IN SOUTHPORT AND AT FORT CASWELL

(this article is by Edward Jelks, now of Charlotte, but who grew up in Southport and at Fort Caswell, where his father, Sgt. Jelks, was in charge between wars. Eddie started school in Southport in 1926 and graduated with the Class of '37. Those were "the good ole days"! I know - I was there, too!)

I remember Fort Caswell to 1933. Daddy had cattle over there and I was always running and teasing them. When they started back at me I ran and hid under one of the nearby houses.

I remember the big stack of cannon balls and me trying to lift one of them way up over my head. I finally made it.

I remember the City of Southport (the steamer from Wilmington to Southport to Fort Caswell) would stop at the Fort. I had a stand and sold peaches and figs (which were grown at the Fort) and gun belts etc.

I remember Daddy had a lot of sheep at Fort Caswell and when sheep shearing time came I thought I was helping. I know now I was just in the way.

I remember the Coast Guards letting me ride on their cutter sometimes to go outside (out to sea). I would get at the very bow of the boat and get wet all over.

I remember Daddy having a garden and letting us pick vegetables and sweet peas (the flowers) and take them to Southport and selling them.

Oh, yeah, I remember swimming, fishing, seining, walking the beach (seeing a porpoise and shark fight - the porpoise won), and looking for shells. And, I remember the sandspurs!

I also remember walking out on the dock by myself and Daddy giving me a spanking for doing that. He also gave my big brother a spanking for letting me do it. This was the only spanking he ever gave either of us.

In Southport, I remember riding with my Granddaddy on his horse and wagon to deliver milk.

I remember wanting to go somewhere with a couple of fellows and they were about to leave me. I had a cane pole with me so I just threw it in our yard. It broke a window in our house. Mother was having a party at the time. Boy, that sure did hurt!

I remember some of us fellows walking to the Robins' Nest and playing in and on the old lighthouse (Price's Creek Lighthouse), and playing at The Cliffs. We also rode our bicycles to Caswell Beach to go swimming.

I remember going out in the woods and picking chinquapins in the fall and to cut Christmas trees at Christmas.

I remember rowing a boat with another fellow to Bald Head and then not being able to row it back - so we just hitched a tow from a boat going by.

I remember playing basketball in the old gym behind the Masonic Hall, baseball in the Grove and at the ballfield (on Leonard Street), and tennis near the Grove. I remember having to keep the fire going in the boiler so we could have hot showers after our basketball games. (That way I could get out of school for awhile). I also remember swimming off the pier in front of the Garrison.

I remember the old cemetery and going through looking at names and dates, the old train engine nearby and the train station, the Whittlers Bench, Miller's Hotel, Fiddlers Drain (now called Bonnet's Creek) and so many, many other places, things and people.