

THE WHITTILERS BENCH



THE SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Southport
N.C. 28461

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PRESERVATION FUNDS IN DANGER

President Ford has asked Congress for a drastic cutback in appropriations for the National Park Service Historic Preservation Grants and Assistance program. This reduction would severely limit many projects now underway in North Carolina.

Under the president's proposal, North Carolina could receive only half its NPS grant. If this happens, at least 14 temporary and permanent jobs in historic preservation would have to be eliminated, meaning fewer people to work with local groups and community planners. Funds to help communities with preservation planning (a proven boost to business, tourism and private property values) will be cut to half the present amount. Valuable landmarks and historic sites will be destroyed or remain unidentified throughout the state. Money for development at existing State Historic Sites will be very limited.

Bills are now pending in the Senate and the House concerning the legal authority to increase appropriations for historic preservation. The most immediate problem, however, is the fate of appropriations for the fiscal year 1977.

Now is the time to write our legislators and express your opinion on the need for adequate funding

Our congressman is Mr. Charlie Rose, 218 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515. Our senators are Mr. Jesse Helms, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20515 and Mr. Robert Morgan, P.O. Drawer 2719, Raleigh, N.C. 27602.

Southport Historical Society will meet on Thursday, April 22, at 8:00 P.M. in the conference room of the Security Savings and Loan building. Bill Reaves will be the guest speaker.

RARE MAP ON DISPLAY

During this Bicentennial year, a valuable 200-year old map of the Lower Cape Fear is being exhibited at the Southport-Brunswick County Library.

The first version of this map was "A New and Exact Plan of the Cape Fear River, from the Bar to Brunswick, by Edward Hyrne, 1749." Thomas Jefferys, a London map engraver who later served as cartographer to King George III, printed and sold the Hyrne map in 1753. Fifteen years later it appeared in Jefferys' A General Topography of North America and the West Indies. Although Jefferys died before finishing his compilation of maps and charts of the New World, the first volume of his work was published in 1775 by Captain James Cook. The following year both volumes were issued by engravers Bennett and Sayer in London. The Hyrne map, which Jefferys had revised during his service to the king, appeared as chart number 7 in volume two of this 1776 edition.

One of the original engravings of the Hyrne map from this 1776 edition is now owned by Barry Smith of Greensboro who has generously offered it for display in the library this year.

BICENTENNIAL PHOTO CONTEST

The Brunswick County Bicentennial Committee is sponsoring an amateur photography contest. Any resident of the county may enter up to four prints, either color or black and white, which will be judged for composition, quality and appropriateness of subject.

Winning entries will be displayed throughout the county, and purchase awards of \$150, \$ 75 and \$ 25 will be made to winners in each category. The deadline for entering the contest is April 30.

Why not stop by the Bicentennial Office at 114 East Moore Street and pick up a copy of the contest rules. The snap some photos. Remember, this is an amateur contest and YOU could be a winner!

HISTORY FILMS TO BE SHOWN

In upcoming weeks the Evening Film Series sponsored by the Southport-Brunswick County Library will present three of the highly acclaimed American Heritage programs on important periods in the nation's history.

The first, to be shown on April 12; is Lincoln: Trial by Fire, a chronicle of the difficult years from 1861 to 1863. George Washington and the exciting events of 1754 are portrayed in The World Turned Upside Down, to be shown May 3. The film on May 17 tells the story of one American soldier during World War I in The Yanks Are Coming.

These films are presented on Monday evenings at 8:00 P.M. in the board room (side entrance) of the library. There is no admission charge and everyone is invited to attend.



ON THE SHELF

Silversmiths of North Carolina: 1696 to 1850, by George Barton Cutten. Raleigh, N.C., Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1973.*

Early North Carolina, with its agricultural economy, does not seem a likely place to find craftsmen working in precious metals. Yet from the late 17th century to the mid 19th, more than two hundred silversmiths lived and worked here.

Because history has often overlooked these men, we might suppose they were merely itinerant jacks-of-all-trades who never achieved a high level of craftsmanship. But the study made by Dr. George Cutten shows that silversmiths often remained many years in the same communities, producing items of beautiful design and skilled workmanship.

Dr. Cutten's book originally appeared in 1948. The present edition has been revised and updated by Mary Reynolds Peacock of the Division of Archives and History.

An introductory chapter sets the historical scene. Following is a catalog of the individual artisans with a summary of their lives and works. Many excellent photographs accompany the text.

*this book is in the Southport-Brunswick Co. Library

DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT MAILING ADDRESS? Please check the address on this newsletter and contact the editor if it is not correct. Also be sure to notify the society if your address changes.

SOCIETY STARTS COLLECTION

The Southport Historical Society has begun a collection of materials about the town's history. Maps, documents, photographs and drawings, old letters and diaries, newspaper clippings, local publications and programs will be compiled for the society's permanent archives.

Mrs. Susie Carson, who is in charge of this project, requests that members who have anything to contribute get in touch with her.

The Southport library has provided storage space for these materials. All items in the collection will be carefully stored and cataloged so that they will be available to everyone.

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Would you like to learn more about local history and do something really important to preserve the story for future generations? There's an easy and enjoyable way to do it.

According to Mrs. Mary Gornto, director of the county Bicentennial Committee, volunteers are urgently needed to conduct interviews with older people in the area. No special talent is needed -- just the willingness to spend a little time. The Bicentennial office will explain how to conduct the interviews.

Oral history is an important part of our heritage, but it will be lost forever unless we work now to preserve it. The stories and memories of our older citizens give us a personal view of history and contribute to a better understanding of the past.

If you would like to help with the oral history project or if you know an older person who would be willing to talk with an interviewer, contact the Bicentennial office in Southport. Write to P.O. Box 1775 or call 457-5777.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After living in Southport for almost four years, I find that I still know hardly any of my neighbors. Today's lifestyle makes it almost impossible to find time for socializing. Everyone goes his own way and does his own thing, and when we see a neighbor we just throw up a hand and say "Hi!" and that's about as far as it goes. I'd like to see some very good organizer take the town of Southport and surrounding communities on a block basis and organize "block parties" where everyone would be invited to attend and get acquainted with folks living around them. I think it would help communities in general and make this a friendly place to live....If this is not the kind of project that the Historical Society could or would push, maybe someone would have an idea on how these type projects could be brought about. Since the Whittlers Bench is the traditional place for friends to meet in Southport, maybe it could be made the site for our block parties....

Well, you asked for ideas in your newsletter, so thought I'd give you some "input." Thanks for the opportunity to communicate.

JERRY B. ENNIS

Southport, N.C.

(This letter is from a former Southport resident who recently joined our historical society)

It was good to receive the newsletter of the Historical Society. I read every word of it and enjoyed it very much....One of our secretaries retired in February, who is from Wilmington and quite interested in the history of our area. She has written several articles for the State. I plan to mail these newsletters to her for I know she will enjoy them as much as I.

NEIL LEWIS

Jacksonville, Florida

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