



THE WHITTLERS BENCH

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

• SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

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MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Southport Historical Society will meet Thursday evening January 22nd at 7:30 at the Southport Library. All members are urged to attend.

The nominating committee has met and Elizabeth Watkins will give their report on Thursday night. We will vote for officers for the coming year.

Betty Leggett will present a slide show produced by the Associated Artists of Southport titled "100 Years of Southport Art, Phase 1"; composed by Lewis J. Hardee, Jr., with photography by H.A. Schmidt.

We would like to congratulate the Associated Artists for their worthwhile contribution to local history.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to wish all our members a Happy New Year. We are looking forward to a productive year and hope to have an exhibit at the "Old Jail" during the Fourth of July Festival. We will have four meetings during 1981.

January 22nd
April 23rd - Dinner Meeting
July 23rd
October 22nd - Dinner Meeting

I urge all members to attend these meetings and work with our various committees.

Eleanor Smith

NEW COMMITTEES

The Southport Historical Society will be forming two new committees this year. The Fourth of July committee will work on exhibits to present during the festival. The Preservation committee will be a spokesman for the Society's preservation goals.

Anyone interested in joining these committees please contact Eleanor Smith, 457-6921, or 457-6118.

BOOK SALES

Kathryn Carson reports that we still have copies of "The Architecture of Southport" available at the original price of \$3.00. Members who wish additional copies are urged to purchase them before the Fourth of July Festival, when we hope to sell remaining copies. Books are available at the Curiosity Shop. Copies may also be obtained by sending your check for \$3.00 (plus .75 postage and handling) to: Kathryn Carson, Southport Historical Society, 501 N. Atlantic Ave. Southport, N.C.

WILLIE MC KENZIE'S CONFECTIONARY

Several generations of Southport youngsters enjoy fond memories of Willie McKenzie's Confectionary. Willie, a native of Southport worked as a cook on a government boat. His mother helped him save money until he could open his own business. In 1910 he had two buildings constructed on Howe Street. One building was the Confectionary and the other one was a dance hall. They were built by Mr. John Smith. He experimented on the ceilings and people still admire them.

In 1914 Mr. McKenzie married Anna Deborah Lee and they ran the confectionary for 58 years. Mrs. McKenzie cooked the custard and they made their own ice cream. They had a big freezer that had to be packed with salt and ice. When strawberries and peaches were in season they were added to the ice cream. Sometimes they made tutti-frutti. Every Saturday evening they would make 15 to 20 gallons for Sunday. They also sold sodas, milkshakes, snowballs, pies, and "Brown Dogs".

The "Brown Dogs" are an original recipe from Southport, but Mrs. McKenzie said she was not the first one to make them. The first ones she had were made by Mrs. Perry Reaves.

Perry Reaves had the first ice cream store in Southport. It was on the corner of St. George St. and Shell Road (Howe Street). Mr. Reeves went around town selling saucers of ice cream in a yellow wagon pulled by a white horse.

The above is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. McKenzie. The interview was conducted by Dot Schmidt. Mrs. McKenzie resides at the family home on Howe Street next to the Confectionary.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership dues for 1981 should be paid at this time. In spite of inflation our dues are still \$5.00.

If each member could enlist a friend who is interested in Southport to join we will have our most successful year.

Susan Carson, Membership Chairman

This interesting historical note, reproduced below as it appeared in the "Wilmington Chronicle" August 27, 1845, reflects the reality of life two decades before the Civil War.

"Drowned, A negro man named Sam, the property of Capt/John Davis, of Smithville, attached to the fishing smack Mary Ann, was drowned in the river on Monday by falling overboard from the vessel. The smack was lying at the time at the wharf below Market Dock."

"The old Cedar Bench still hung together, but flimsylike, because it had been whittled at until parts of it were no wider than your hand. It had so much aimless knifework on it that the Old Man once remarked that if you sat long enough on enough sections of it your behind would eventually be engraved with the initials of everybody in town who was over fifty years old."

Robert Ruark "The Old Man And The Boy"