

southport historical society

Whittler's Bench

Spring/Summer 2017



MISSION STATEMENT:

The Southport Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization registered under 501(c)(3) of Internal Revenue Code dedicated to bring together persons interested in local area history. SHS endeavors to do so by providing opportunities for learning through programs and special events; published articles and books; educational classes; and community projects that will both enhance and preserve the unique history and heritage of Southport and the surrounding area.

OFFICERS:

President: Don Parker
Vice Pres: Pat Kirkman
Secretary: Audrey Daigler
Treasurer: Phil Fravel

DIRECTORS:

Nancy Christianson
Bob Hagerman
Scott Len
Ken Morris
Cindy Sellers
Bob Surridge

PO BOX 10014
Southport, NC 28461

info@southporthistoricalsociety.org

Parker' Perspective



Spring has sprung! I always experience a sense of renewal and energy during this time of year. The opportunities to make a difference from one day to the next seem to be boundless. In that regard, I believe we have been extremely successful in leveraging our opportunities as we build upon our many achievements across our City and community in recent years. These achievements just don't happen by themselves. Dedicated Society members who take on our lifeblood projects throughout the year are sincerely appreciated.

I'd like to give a specific shout-out to our Christmas Home Tour committee. These folks work year-round on our major annual fund-raiser, mostly behind the scenes and without fanfare. Well, it's time to highlight their efforts. The Christmas Tour of homes is a signature event for the Historical Society as well as the City of Southport at large. The complexity of organizing and orchestrating such an event requires a team effort that begins early in the year and doesn't end until the lights are turned off at the showcase homes after the second Saturday in December. Committee members enjoy this project so much that they usually participate for many years. Such was the case for the retiring Committee chair, Shirley Wilson. Shirley was a long-time member of the Committee before stepping up and becoming the Committee Chairperson in 2013. She worked tirelessly with the Committee to ensure a successful event every year. On behalf of the entire Southport Historical Society, I thank Shirley for her dedicated commitment to the Home Tour that has brought such high regard to the Society over the years. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Dianne Boguskie who served on this Committee for many, many years. Thanks, Dianne!

We welcome our new Home Tour Committee Chairperson, Linda DeTorres. She, along with the current committee members, will continue to strive to make our Home Tour the very best it can be. We thank committee members Joanne Wesson, Mindy Ellington, Libby Garner, Marty Loughlin, Colleen Webster, and our Society's Treasurer, Phil Fravel, for their untiring efforts in bringing the Southport Historical Society Christmas Home Tour to reality each year.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge our new Board members who came on "board" earlier this year. Please welcome new Secretary Audrey Daigler, and new Board members, Ken Morris, Bob Hagerman, and Cindy Sellers. Along with VP Pat Kirkman, Treasurer Phil Fravel, and continuing Board members Bob Surridge, Nancy Christianson and Scott Len, we have assembled another great team to take the Southport Historical Society to the next level!

Upcoming Events



May 9th – Second Tuesday Talk with Southport native Tommy Harrelson. Tommy will talk about his experiences in the early 70s as a newly elected member of the North Carolina House of Representatives. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

May 25th, General Meeting. Speaker will be Southport native Don Sellers. Don will share his experiences, from his book *"When Dreams Take Flight,"* about the Menhaden fishing industry. The potluck dinner will begin at 6:30 and speaker at 7:00 pm. The location will be the Southport Community Building

June 3rd – Cleanup at the Old Smithville Burying Ground (9:00 am – Noon)

June 13th - Second Tuesday Talk with former SHS president, Musette Steck. Musette will present an "Interview with the Daughter of Slaves" The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

July 4th – "Living Voices of the Past" – Society members will don period attire to tell the stories of some of the people interred in the Old Smithville Burying Ground. Presentations will be from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.

July 11th - Second Tuesday Talk about the history of the Southport Woman's Club. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

August 8th - Second Tuesday Talk with Morgan Harper, Features Editor, State Port Pilot. Morgan will talk about the role of the Stevens, Taylor, and Harper families in Southport history. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

September 12th – Second Tuesday Talk with SHS board member Bob Hagerman. Bob will detail the short history of Wilmington, Brunswick and Southern railroad, which once had a station at the NW corner of Rhett and Moore streets.. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.



A Southport Lawn Party – 1887

A Reprint of from the newspaper files
of Bill Reaves

I think this will be an article the ladies will enjoy, and perhaps some men, as it is an account of a lavish lawn party given in the spring or early summer of 1887. The hostesses, the Daggett sisters, were daughters of a Wilmington attorney who entertained their friends here in Southport at their summer cottage. The descriptions of fashions ("toilets") certainly spark the imagination and it's almost as if we can hear the music and laughter and see the lantern lights flickering. We are not certain, but believe the cottage was near the waterfront around Rhett Street. I was especially amused at the term used for the local folks who came to watch the fashionable festivity – "the lookers-on".

This clipping from the Wilmington newspaper society column reads like a Who's Who in Southport's summer society 130 years ago. The photograph is one I borrowed from the internet to set the scene for *"A Southport Lawn Party"* – enjoy!

Pat Kirkman

<http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org>

A SOUTHPORT LAWN PARTY – 1887

The event of the season, in social circles at Southport, was the lawn party given by the Misses Rhea and Julia Daggett at "Magnolia Cottage" the summer residence of W.T. Daggett, Esq., on Thursday evening last. It was a veritable scene of enchantment; the beautiful lawn was lighted up by many colored Japanese lanterns, dotted here and there by daintily-spread tables, from which were served from time to time the most delicious ices and other refreshment; but who can describe the matchless beauty and bewildering toilets of the ladies which greeted us at the "inner portals" where Miss Rhea Daggett, with charming grace, received her guests. The music for the occasion was furnished by the Southern String Band, led by Captain Pete Moore, a musician of "ye olden time". The merry dance was open by Mrs. Daggett and Mr. Thomas Thompson, Jr.

The following is a partial description of some of the most ravishing toilets. Miss Rhea Daggett, satin foulard and velvet. Miss Julia Daggett, pink embroidered lawn. Miss Hattie Whitaker, of Wilmington, exquisite evening costume of lilac crepe and white lace. Miss Emma Thompson, pink silk, lace overdress and diamonds. Miss Birdie Munger, cream satin, garnet trimmings and roses. Miss Lettie Thompson, debutante costume of ice-blue satin. Miss Emma Davis, white mull, handsome sash. Miss Josie Pepper, white mull embroidered. Misses Nannie and Carrie Weeks, very small young ladies, were attired in white etamine. Miss Annie Thompson, striped silk and blue velvet. Miss Laura Weeks, white cashmere and lace.

I give the names of a few of the young gentlemen present: Mr. Bennie Mitchell, of Wilmington; Messrs. Phil and Ward Lettig, of Baltimore; W. W. Daggett, Walter Daggett, Eddie Cranmer, Johnnie Cranmer, Robert Morse, Leta Potter, and Thomas Thompson, Jr. of Southport. Among the lookers-on we observed Captain and Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Captain Munger, Lieutenant and Mrs. Reid, Mrs. Philip Lettig and Mrs. Cranmer of the revenue cutter COLFAX, Miss Kate Stuart, Dr. Frank and Dr. Curtis of Southport. The festivities of the evening were brought to a close by dancing an old Virginia reel, in which all engaged.

Introduction to our Summer Intern



Hi! My name is Sam Tanck. I am an upcoming sophomore at UNC Asheville, majoring in political science. Once I graduate with my bachelor's degree, I plan to continue my education by attending law school. I am so excited to have been chosen as this summer's Susie Carson Research Room intern as I have always had a passion for history. My hope is that through this internship I will learn more about our local history and have the opportunity to share my passion for history with our community.

Editor's Note: Many members are familiar with Sam as she is a 2016 graduate of South Brunswick High School. She will be at the Research Room in the Garrison beginning on June 7th. Please stop by to welcome her to the Southport Historical Society.

Old Jail Report

The Old Jail is open for the season! My deep thanks to our Advisory Committee for this year. Those docents who signed on to help were: Linda deTorres, Shirley Johnston, Eric Royer, Ken Morris, Jerry Suver, Michelle Carroll, and Charles Christianson. A lot of work goes on during the winter and early spring to prepare for the next season. Below are just a few of the changes we made:

- Got rid of one display case which had limited glass for display purposes, and received \$50 donation for it.
- Bought a new display case on sale.
- Moved displays around with new documentation in all.
- Obtained a Polaroid camera which was the same as one found by Irv Green in the Jail while under renovation by the Society and used for mug shots.
- Obtained an antique "candlestick" phone, which the county commissioners ordered for the Jail.
- Put away some butter churns and recycled different ones in 1904 room.
- New photo of Susan Tunstall Loughlin, who along with her husband and three children lived on the first floor of the Jail with prisoners on the second floor according to the 1910 census. Also added her recipe for "Topsy Cake"!
- Put away a dress from our 1904 room and changed the clothes on the mannequin so that she now wears a 1930s yellow dress.
- The Patch Room now has a board for just international patches, and we currently have 5
- Windows were washed all around inside and out.
- The Jail was cleaned and bug sprayed
- The two front doors and sills were painted and the deck was stained.
- The ramp was replaced as the original was loose and dangerous

There have been and will be three separate events taking place at the Jail this month. On April 7 a student from UNCW filmed a scene from the movie, "Silence of the Lambs" and Morgan Harper from the Port Pilot took a photo which was in the paper this week. On April 14, WWAY came to Southport and Bald Head Island to do some filming of the Spring Festival and the Bald Head Island 200 year anniversary celebration. They also requested to film inside the Old Jail, all of which was on the 5:30 newscast. On April 27, Wilmington Newcomers will visit the Old Jail and the cemetery, and Charles and I will do those tours.

We are starting off with a bang!

Nancy Christianson, Curator

Visitors Center Store

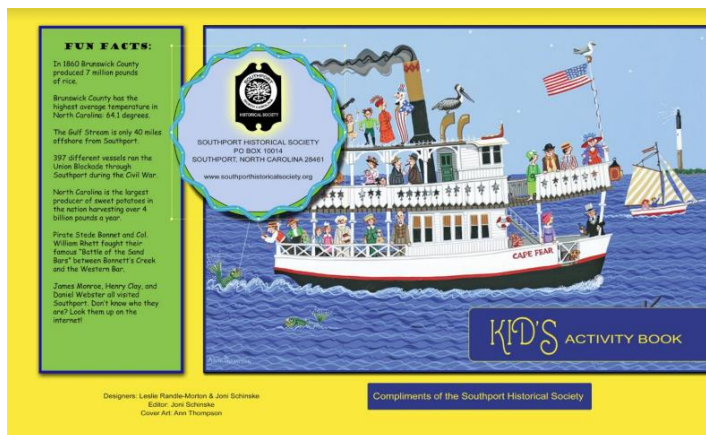
The Historical Society has recently taken ownership of the retail shop located in the Fort Johnston Garrison/Southport Visitors Center & Museum.

We invite you to stop in and take a look at some of the items and books available for sale. Your purchases will go toward the upkeep of this historic building.



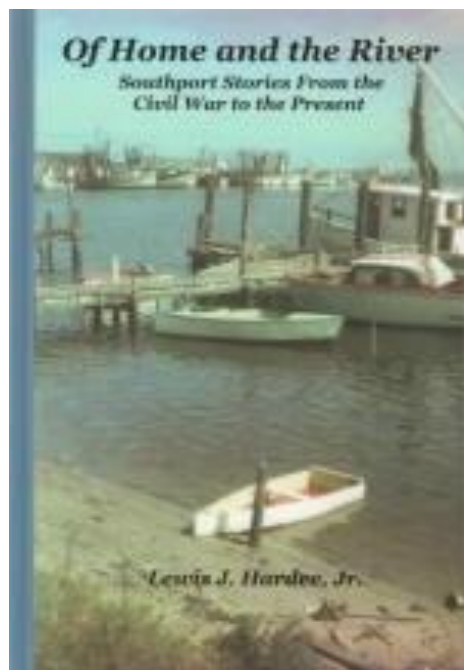
Kid's Activity Booklet

The Kid's Activity booklet contains 14 pages of puzzles and activities highlighting Southport history. Members can pick up copies at the Fort Johnston Visitor's Center or the Old Jail for \$1.00 a copy.



How to Fall in Love with Southport: A Book Review By Hadassah Poteet

As most visitors find, Southport is the haven for all. Her waterfront paradise that is surrounded by historical landmarks and the memories of many generations, Southport is the home of the soul. For the past ten years, this lovely town has been my escape. At first, it was the escape of my menial adolescent years but now has transformed into the tonic for my anxious mind. I tend to think of this town as the safety net that asks for no compensation but grips you in her tight hug and holds on until the storm has passed.



When you pick up *Of Home and the River*, you will find a heavy book with a picture you might not recognize on its front. Even though most of us deny it, you will most likely judge this one by its cover. However, when you put the book back and meander over towards the t-shirts what you will miss is the heart and soul of Southport herself. For that book you just judged contains the truest love story of all time: a love for home.

Lewis J. Hardee Jr. describes Southport in a way only a native can. Through his memories, he captivates his readers in the magic that is Southport. His stories will have you plunging back into history you never knew you would so enjoy. You will laugh at humorous moments of the old children of Southport. You will cry when those lives leave for the unknown. And at the very end, you will fall in love with a town you knew always had a special something that nothing else has.

And there my friends, is where you will find the love of home. Nothing compares to those moments when we too ran wild with our siblings and friends. Our adolescent years were filled with hilarious fails and triumphs. But most importantly, our home is where our adult selves will seek refuge. *Of Home and the River* gives you just one place more to be at peace.

Editor's Note: Hadassah Poteet was the 2016 summer intern at the Susie Carson Research Room.

Living history

'Southern hospitality' nothing new

Since becoming involved with the Southport Historical Society, it has not been unusual for people to share their families' memorabilia with me. The following came from Lewis Hardee Jr., native son, author of local history and resident of New York City. The narrative reflects the experiences of John Wescott's four-day journey from Bentonville to Smithville (Southport) several weeks before the end of the Civil War. As the crow flies, the distance is about 100 miles.

"Home Coming From War"

"After General Johnston surrendered near Bentonville, there was quite a hustle making preparations for going home. Those of us whose home was in Brunswick, after laying our guns and cartridge boxes aside and placing our blankets on our shoulders, headed for home.

"We didn't travel far before we reached the stage road leading from Fayetteville to Georgetown. It was in bad repair, so much that it was impossible for vehicles, but it served a good purpose for pedestrians. The people living near the road were kind to us, giving us food and shelter, and so we traveled on till we reached Fayetteville. Mr. S.P. Tharp and I were a distance behind our comrades, he being unable to travel fast.

"On arrival at the old town was a dwelling near the road and a well stood in the back yard. Being very thirsty, Mr. Tharp asked me to take our canteens to the well and fill them, which I did. I saw no signs of life on the premises, but on going back where Mr. Tharp was waiting, the lady of the house opened the front door and asked what we

wanted. We told her a morsel to eat if she had it to spare. She told us to come in; we did so and sat on the steps of the porch. She invited us to the dining room but we asked to be excused. She soon returned with two well-filled plates of excellent food such as we had not seen for a while. After satisfying our appetites, we told her if she would give us a bit of paper we would take what was



Musette Steck

left for our supper. She went in the house and soon returned with a well-packed lunch, more than enough for supper. After talking a while, thanking her for her kindness, we bade her goodbye and went in search of our comrades.

"On reaching the Cape Fear riverfront, we found they had secured for our quarters a boat shed. After supper we talked about the best way home, thinking we would have to travel on foot. We spread our blankets down for the night. Next morning two gentlemen, whose home was in Wilmington, told us they had a large rowboat and gave us passage down the river. Having a strong current in our favor and two oars, we made good time. Far better than on foot. We admired the large growth of magnolia trees with white blossoms exhaling an aroma far more agreeable than that of burnt gunpowder on the battlefields. Thus we glided down the old Cape Fear, arriving in Wilmington late in

the afternoon. Those of us from Brunswick asked to be landed on the west side of the river. After thanking the gentlemen for their kindness, we headed home.

"There being no road leading from the river, we traveled through the woods. Night soon overtaking us, we camped for the night. On waking, we were told by the noise the chickens made that we were near a home. And going in the direction of the chickens, we soon arrived at a small farmhouse. Some of the inmates had just returned with a pail of milk, which they divided with us. Filling our canteens, we thanked them and continued our journey.

"We soon arrived at Mr. W.W. Drew's home. They were through with breakfast but had enough left over which, with our milk, furnished a good breakfast. After talking a while, we continued homeward. Having relatives near there, we called on them. They gave us a hearty welcome and insisted on our stopping with them that night. We did.

"Next morning we readied for our homeward journey. My good old uncle hitched his mule to the wagon and sent us within a few miles of our house. After thanking him for kindness and bidding him goodbye, we concluded our journey homeward. Arriving home at twilight, it was a joyful meeting. After supper we talked and then retired. I rested next day. After that, I joined the farm hands in preparation for crop. This ended my war experience."

One hundred and fifty-two years later, John Wescott's experiences could be titled "Southern Hospitality".

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission of the State Port Pilot and Musette Steck

Find us on Facebook!

The Southport Historical Society has joined many of the Society's members and friends and launched a Facebook page. We are using our page to keep our members and friends informed about the Society's events and activities and to post information about Southport's history and heritage. We hope you will "Find us on Facebook" and of course let us know that you "Like" the Southport Historical Society.





Don't forget to tell your family and friends, in nearby and faraway places, that the Society's collection of research materials are now easily available at the Susie Carson Research Room.

NEW Items!!

[Chronicles](#) of the Cape Fear 1660 - 1916 by James Sprunt (1916)

[Experiences](#) of a Confederate Chaplain 1861 - 1864 - Dr. Alexander Betts

[Dixie Cookbook](#) - Published in 1885 over 600 pages

[Dolphin](#) - 1956 Southport High School Yearbook

[State Port Pilot](#) - From April 24, 1935 to December 28, 1949

[Jeanes Teachers](#) - Presentation by Alexis Gore Graves

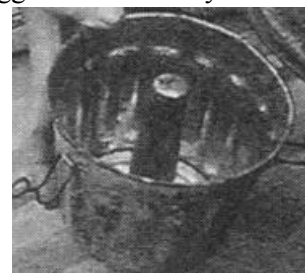
[Oral Histories](#) - From the UNCW Randall Library

[Janet Shaw](#) - Journal of a Lady of Quality 1774 - 1776

Turtle Egg Duff Mold

Thank you to Edythe Smith, widow of Southport native and SHS charter member, Afton W. Smith, Jr., for donating an item unique to the history of Southport to the Southport Historical Society: Afton's turtle egg duff mold. Edythe is a long-time resident of Southport and remembers when times were quite different here. For one thing, turtles and their eggs were plentiful and not protected. In fact, one of the ways many youngsters earned spending money was to collect turtle eggs from nests on Bald Head Island and sell them for 15 cents a dozen to regular customers in Southport who used them to make a delicious concoction called Turtle Egg Duff.

Bald Head lighthouse keeper, Capt. Charlie Swan's recipe was printed on the first page of the Southport Junior Women's Club cookbook published in 1966. It is as follows:



TURTLE EGG DUFF

4 cups self-rising flour

2 tbsp. shortening

24 turtle eggs

Separate egg yolks from whites. Beat yolks with a pinch of soda until well blended (about 5 minutes); beat sugar in egg yolks, dredge raisins in flour and add to egg mixture. If too stiff add enough water to make soft batter. Pour in double boiler, duff mold or cloth bag and cook in boiling water for one hour. Serve with butter and sugar sauce.

SUGAR SAUCE

1 ½ c. sugar

Stir until blended. Add canned cream to make sauce thin as desired, flavor with nutmeg.

Capt. Charlie Swan

¼ c. sugar

2/3 pkg. raisins

1 tbsp. Vanilla or lemon extract

2 tbsp. butter or oleo

Betsie Lytton

Books, Books, Books

Why do we sell books? Books are the lifeblood of history. The Southport Historical Society (SHS) sells books to help people learn more about the history of Southport and the surrounding area. Many of our books were written by members of the SHS who are longtime Southport residents or are Southport natives. These books give us access to a great wealth of historical information about the area that would otherwise be lost.

Book sales are also one of the more important sources of revenue for the SHS. We sell books directly to the public and to various vendors who resell them. We also sell books directly to the public on our web page, at the Old Jail, at the Farmers Market and at local fairs and festivals.

We also sell books to vendors for resale. These vendors range from retail stores to other nonprofit organizations. Currently our vendors are the Ft. Johnston Visitors Center, the Maritime Museum, Fort Fisher, Fort Anderson, the Old Baldy Museum, the Cardsmart shop near Walmart, and the Southport Cheese Shoppe on Howe Street. The Fort Johnston Visitors Center store is an unusual vendor in that it is operated by the SHS. For accounting reasons we sell books to the Visitors Center store at a discounted price and then the store sets its own price for sales to the public. All of the vendors pick from our book list what books they want to sell based on the interests of their customers. Some sell a few book titles and some sell most all of them. Also, vendors often also sell books that SHS does not offer.

Currently we offer 22 titles on the history of Southport and the Cape Fear area. This number changes slightly as new books are added and old books are dropped. Our most popular books are: *Masters of the Shoals* by James McNeil; *Classic Southport Cooking* by Lewis J. Hardee, Jr.; *Joshua's Dream* and *Joshua's Legacy* by Susan Carson and Jon Lewis; and *Southport Secrets*, which was compiled by Don Johnson.

I am looking for volunteers to help sell more books and for volunteers to help develop a plan for adding new books to the list. Both of these activities will help provide more money for SHS projects. If you are interested in these SHS volunteer opportunities please contact Bob Hagerman. 910 854 0326 or b_hagerman@msn.com

Bob Hagerman - Book Sales

Southport Historical Society
PO BOX 10014
Southport, NC 28461

