

Susie

THE
WHITTLERS BENCH
Southport Historical Society

PO Box 10014
Southport, North Carolina 28461

Volume XXIII, No. 5 September, 1999



Southport Historical Society
Thursday, September 23rd
Pot Luck Dinner

6:30 p.m. Sacred Heart Church
(☺ Please come early to help set up tables & chairs ☺)

“Ft. Anderson: Battle for the Brunswick Bastion”
Guest Speaker: Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr.
(Book signing by Chris will follow talk)

Vice-President's Message:

The Southport Historical society has been honored by association. And challenged. Two of our members have received Certificates of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History. **Susie Carson** and **Bill Reaves** were selected with three others in the State of North Carolina for this distinguished honor. **Beverly Titterington** was also recognized for her contribution to Bill Reaves' most recent book. Let's give them a standing ovation and let them know how much we appreciate them.

The Challenge: to continue the honorees' outstanding work, echo their remarkable achievements, and make the Society an ever more dynamic force for the preservation of local history and the education of the youth of the area.

The Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina

Another of our members has been selected by a State organization for an honor. Jim McKee has been asked to serve on the Board of Advisors of Preservation North Carolina for a three year term. Jim will assist by communicating local preservation needs and promoting the work of Preservation North Carolina in our area. Congratulations, Jim.

We are extremely pleased to announce that Pat Kirkman has agreed to be the society's Public Relations person. Pat has a wonderful writing background and we are fortunate to have her skills at our disposal. Thank you for answering a need sorely felt, Pat.



Looking Back brings two reminiscences of Southport. In the first, Harold Watson recalls an event from the "good old days" of growing up in Southport (circa 1925) and Jack Hart recalls trips to Southport from Wilmington on a steamer during the 1920's. Susie invites you to share your memories of Southport with our readers.

A New Year's Eve Adventure

by Harold Watson

Some of the older boys went to the old Army and Navy Club (now the Masonic Lodge) and stole the flag halyards from the tall flag pole. From there they went across the street to the new Southport School building and took the halyard from the school's new flag pole. They were ready to celebrate the arrival of the new year!

The boys next broke into the old school building and climbed the ladder from the second floor up into the belfry where the old school bell hung. This bell rang out every day calling students to school. The boys attached one end of the halyards they had collected to the bell clapper and through it out to the front side of the building. By tying the halyards together, they were able to extend the ropes from the school across to the oak trees near the fire station and city hall. A couple of the smaller boys were helped up into the oak tree where they stretched the ropes tight to the top of the tree. Then the boys waited until midnight and rang in the new year from the safety of the oak tree.

When Cecil Lewis, Police Chief, heard the bell ringing, he quickly gathered a few men to help and directed them to the old school house. The boys in the tree could hear him as they continued to ring the bell. Chief Lewis found the back door of the school house open and went in with flashlights to find the bell ringers. At the bottom of the ladder, Lewis yelled "You boys come on down, we have you surrounded." About that time, the boys in the tree decided to call it quits and climbed down and went home. Reports were that Chief Lewis never caught or arrested anyone for the mysterious bell ringing. Just another unsolved Southport mystery!

A Trip to Southport on the Steamer Wilmington

by Jack F. Hart, Jr. as told to John Nelson

I used to go down the river on the steamer Wilmington. We'd leave from the foot of Princess Street and Captain Harper would blow the whistle - the most beautiful whistle ever on a ship. They would cast off the lines and we would pull out into the stream and head down the river.

We would get down about Town Creek and Captain Harper would always slow down to see if anyone was coming out in a row boat to pick up any packages

that he might be delivering down that way or maybe some mail. If there was, we took it on and went our way. And we would get on down the river. It was a beautiful trip.

The next stop was the old fish factory. It was a huge building on the river. That fish factory was where they brought the catches of menhaden. They ran it through a press to get fish oil. The fish oil was used for everything under the sun - from the treating of the groin itch to in-grown toenails. They would take the residue that was left and grind it into chicken feed and hog feed. They never threw away anything.

And then we'd go on down to the next stop. It would be the quarantine station. That was a beautiful installation; it was right on the edge of the channel above Southport. It was built and operated by the United States Government - the health department or somebody in Washington, DC. They had these things all over the country. They had doctors, medicine and nice beds. They had to perform a few emergency operations at times.

When a ship would come in they always had to be inspected to be sure they weren't bringing in any diseases or parasites or whatever. If they were clean, the Government gave them a clearance to come on into Wilmington to discharge their cargo up there above the Wilmington cotton compress (a cotton shipping operation run by the Sprunt Company). When the ships returned, they would pick up their passengers or whatever was ready to go.

As we drew closer to Southport, Captain Harper would let me sit on the bow of the boat on a piece of timber near where they tie the ropes when they were docking the boat. He would say "Hey, we're going out and cross the bar." The bar was near where Southport reached the ocean. Actually it was south of Bald Head Island which at that time had only a light house manned by the Willets who were from the Outer Banks (they were some of my mother's relatives from way back). Anyway, we would cross the bar and Captain Harper would holler to me, "Jack, hang on, I don't want you fallin' overboard." We'd go out and hit those waves and come back in.

We'd land at Southport and I'd get off there with my Momma and my Daddy and we'd go see "Gray Burriss" which is the great Thomas Gray Burriss residence (now Eleanor Smith's house at 410 Brunswick Street). We'd always go to the cemetery where a lot of my mother's family (the Burriss clan) are buried.

Then we'd come back home to Wilmington. When we got to the foot of Castle street, Captain Harper would let out with that whistle and we would come on in and tie up at the foot Princess street.



OLD JAIL

OLD JAIL PROGRESS REPORT: 12 new replacement windows have been ordered from Ashland Fedley who is having the lumber specially kiln dried. Ceiling tiles have been removed in the main room downstairs, revealing a rusted girder supporting the 2nd floor. This can be shored up and hopefully is the only one. With the advent of cooler weather, we need help scraping paint, painting, doing electrical work, taking down the outside fence, tearing down the porch covering and gardening. We still meet on Tuesdays 8 a.m. to noon. We will be scheduling work days on weekends soon to accommodate helpers too busy during the week.

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT ITEMS: Please buy any books or coverlets at members' discount from Wolf Furstenau-books (278-4050) or Marilyn Lessin-coverlets (457-0004) or at our meetings. Shops or the Maritime Museum sell full price only. A good reason to renew membership!

cut here and send form with your check

New Membership Registration

Join the Southport Historical Society and receive the
newsletter on a regular basis

| | | | | | |
|------------|------|----------------|-----|-----------------------|------|
| individual | \$10 | student | \$2 | business/organization | \$15 |
| couple | 15 | (up to age 18) | | sustaining | 25 |

life membership \$ 150

life membership for couple \$ 200

name (please print) _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

Send to NEW address: PO Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461

Southport Coverlet

An excellent choice for Christmas gifts!

Remember: your member discount is available only on items purchased from the society

This beautiful coverlet was commissioned by the Southport Historical Society and created by *We Love Country*. It is 100% cotton, two-layer, Jacquard woven in the U.S.A., preshrunk, colorfast and machine-washable. It is handsome and practical, measuring approximately 48 x 68 inches, and fringed on all four sides.

The design captures the history and spirit of early Southport, as seen in old photographs taken many years ago. Depicted are the Brunswick County Courthouse, the Pilot obelisk at the old cemetery, the Ft. Johnston Garrison House, the Masonic Hall during World War I, the entrance (1912) of the Southport Public Library, the Old Jail, the early school (1904) which is now an art gallery, Doshier Memorial Hospital, St. Philip's, Trinity Methodist, the old Pilot tower, Prince's Creek light, Old Baldy on Bald Head Island, the Indian Trail Tree and the Historical Society logo. The perfect gift for family members and friends both near and far, it captures special memories and will become an instant keepsake.

This unique, custom woven coverlet is available in the following classic colors: Williamsburg Blue, Hunter Green and Cranberry Red, all with Natural as a second color. The price is only \$50.00. Member discount, 10%.

Please enter the desired quantity of each color:

___ Williamsburg Blue @ \$50.00 each \$_____

___ Hunter Green @ \$50.00 each \$_____

___ Cranberry Red @ \$50.00 each \$_____

Sales Tax @ 6% \$_____

Shipping (if necessary) \$ 5.00

TOTAL enclosed \$ _____

Checks should be made payable to The Southport Historical Society
and mailed to PO Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461

Ordered by:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

The Book Page

Southport Historical Society is actively engaged in publishing books dealing with the history of the lower Cape Fear. Works listed below are available for sale by the Society, and at book stores in the area.

Architecture of Southport, by Carl Lounsbury. Southport Historical Society, second printing 1966, 62 pp., soft-cover. \$15.00. The styles of old Southport homes are described and illustrated.

Bald Head, by David Stick. Southport Historical Society, 1998 reprint, 143 pp, ill., hard-cover. \$14.95.

Cap'n Charlie and the Lights of the Lower Cape Fear, by Ethel Herring. Southport Historical Society, fourth printing 1995, 120 pp, ill., soft-cover. \$10.00.

The Cemeteries of Southport, compiled by Dorcas W. Schmidt. Southport Historical Society, 1983, 94 pp., soft-cover. \$8.00. A unique reference book listing names of those buried in the cemeteries of Southport and environs.

Fort Caswell in War and Peace, by Ethel Herring and Carolee Williams. Published by Broadfoot's Bookmark, Wendell, North Carolina, 1983. 138 pp., ill., hard-cover. Sold out. New edition expected June 1999.

A History of Brunswick County, by Lawrence Lee. Published by Brunswick County, Bolivia, North Carolina. 1980, 279 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$18.30

A History of Fort Johnston, by Wilson Angle. Includes index. Published by Southport Historical Society, in association with the Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1996, 150 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$10.00.

Joshua's Dream, a history of old Southport by Susan S. Carson. First printing published by Carolina Power & Light Company in 1992, second printing published by Southport Historical Society, 1994. 168 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$15.00.

Long Beach, A North Carolina Town: Its Origin and History, by Wolfgang Furstenau. Published by the author in Long Beach, N.C., 1995, 2. printing 1997, 364 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$17.95

Reminiscences of Wilmington And Smithville---Southport 1848-1900, by Dr. Walter G. Curtis. Published by Southport Historical Society, 1999, 88 pp., ill., hard-cover, \$12.95.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume I, 1520-1887, by Bill Reaves. Published by Broadfoot Publishing Company: Wilmington, North Carolina, 1978. Second edition 1985, 129 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$15.00.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume II, 1887-1920, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1978. Second edition 1990, 324 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$20.00.

Southport, North Carolina, A Chronology, Volume III, 1920-1940, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1996, 248 pp., 46-page index, ill., soft-cover. First edition. \$12.00.

Southport (Smithville), A Chronology, Volume IV, 1941-1970, by Bill Reaves. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, North Carolina, 1999, 281 pp., ill., soft-cover. 16.95.

Southport Secrets, compiled by Donald K. Johnson. Published by Southport Historical Society, Southport, NC. 1998, 88 pp., ill., soft-cover. \$12.95.

Note: Membership entitles you to purchase these books from the Society at a 10% discount.
Please include \$2.00 per book for mail orders.



Dosher Memorial Hospital Documentary

A Community's Hospital

The Project:

To produce a documentary that charts the development of Dosher Memorial Hospital from its conception to its present standing in the community. The focus would be the special relationship between the hospital and the Brunswick County community shared over the past seventy years.

The format would follow a 100 year time line with emphasis on the 70 years the hospital has served the community. Still shots of vintage photographs, readings of historical documents, letters, newspaper items and interviews with volunteers, former employees, patients and others.

The feel of the documentary will be set in an informative but informal style.

What is Needed:

- A list of key people to be interviewed and/or recorded.
- Stories about the 100 year history of the county related to health care or significant events.
- Photographs of significant events, hospital staff, facilities, neighborhoods, vehicles, etc.
- Documents, letters, newspaper articles related to the hospital, staff, and significant events.
- Items from the early years of the hospital or items that would have been used in hospitals.
- Contacts with people from all over the county who would be able to talk about the need for and advantage of having a hospital.
- Persons in the community willing to serve on project committees related to Publicity, Fund Raising, Documentation & Research.
- Persons willing to serve as volunteer administrative clerical support.

How to Get In Touch:

Dosher Memorial Hospital Documentary

Cape Fear Films

129 East Moore Street

P.O. Box 10041

Southport, North Carolina 28461

910-454-9336 – Phone

910-454-9337 – FAX

