



THE WHITTLED'S BENCH Southport Historical Society

Volume XXIX, Number 2

May 2005

MAY MEETING

Thursday, May 26, 2005
Southport Community
Building

6:00 – 6:30 Social

6:30 – Pot-luck dinner
(How about some of the
wonderful old recipes from
the mid-40's era?)

7:00 – Brief meeting

7:10 – Speaker

*Please note change of
location for this meeting
only.*

SHS Officers & Directors

President	
Peter Wyckoff	457-5599
Vice-President	
Pat Kirkman	457-0579
Secretary	
Karen Knighton	454-8018
Treasurer	
Wolf Furstenau	278-4050
Historian/Archivist	
Marilyn Lessen	457-0004
Directors	
Musette Steck	253-3855
Cathy Fravel	457-4794
Don Parker	



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

Beverly and I recently had the honor and privilege to be invited to attend the formal naming ceremony of the Sealift Ship MV TSGT John A. Chapman at Military Ocean Terminal, Sunny Point. Principal speaker was General John P. Jumper, USAF, Chief of Staff, U. S. Air Force. It was an awe inspiring event that reminded us that history is not only something that happened in the ancient past but is rather the living events that surround us daily.

On March 4, 2002, U. S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Chapman's aircraft came under heavy machine gun fire in the vicinity of Gardez, in the eastern highlands of Afghanistan. The aircraft took a direct hit from a rocket propelled grenade which caused a United States navy sea-air-land team member to fall from the craft. Though heavily damaged, the aircraft was able to make an emergency landing. Once on the ground Sergeant Chapman established communication with an AC-130 gunship to begin the search for the missing team member. He requested, coordinated, and controlled the helicopter that extracted the stranded team and aircrew members. Without regard for his own life Sergeant Chapman volunteered to rescue his missing team member from an enemy stronghold. The team made contact with the enemy. Sergeant Chapman engaged and killed two enemy personnel. He continued to advance, reaching the enemy position, then engaged a second enemy position, a dug-in machine gun nest. At this time the rescue team came under effective enemy fire from three directions. From close range he exchanged fire with the enemy from minimum personal cover until he succumbed to multiple wounds. His engagement and destruction of the first enemy position and advancement on the second position enabled his team to move to cover and break enemy contact.

Sergeant Chapman's Navy sea-air-land team leader unequivocally credits him with saving the lives of the entire rescue team. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, and the dedication to the service of his country, Sergeant Chapman reflects the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Sergeant Chapman was also posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross at ceremonies at Pope Air Force Base, NC on January 10, 2003.

The MV TSgt. John A. Chapman (T-AK 323) will operate in the Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Atlantic Ocean to pre-position Air Force ammunition at sea, adding greatly to the U. S. military's combat readiness. At-sea prepositioning of combat equipment has become increasingly important as U. S. bases overseas continue to close. Ships like MV Chapman provide a powerful presence 'forward . . . from the sea'.

Peter Wyckoff

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



The 2005 Susie Sellers Carson Scholarship was awarded to Peter Daniel Almirall, Oak Island, who is a senior at South Brunswick High School and plans to attend NCSU. Daniel is a great student who participates in wrestling and track and field events. He is involved in community service and has offered computer courses to senior citizens, worked with Beach Sweep and has been a Meals on Wheels and Soup Kitchen Volunteer. His winning essay, "The Eventful Life of Abraham Galloway" will be printed in a later edition of the Whittler's Bench.



MARCH MEETING MINUTES

March 31 Membership Meeting

Vice President Pat Kirkman opened the meeting, welcomed guests and members and invited everyone to enjoy the covered dish dinner.

Following dinner, Pat announced the upcoming events for Heritage Days which kicks off with the Society's meeting, May 25 and continues with activities until May 30. Details will be in the Whittler's Bench. The theme for the activities is the 60th Anniversary of the end of WWII.

Congratulations were extended to Miss Susie Carson who was awarded an honorary degree from Brunswick Community College at a special ceremony early in April. Congratulations were also extended to Dick and Judy Hughes on their anniversary.

Minutes and the treasurer's report are available in the Whittler's Bench.

Karen Knighton updated the members on the work at the Old Jail and again ask for volunteers. Cleaning and painting are the main tasks that need to be completed by Heritage Days. Harriett Wheeler and Andy McPherson are searching for furnishings. If you have items to contribute to the museum contact them.

Karen also discussed the trail signs that are nearing completion. Signs have been designed by Shirl Sawyer and are currently being proofed before printing.

Musette Steck had the paper weights available for those people who had ordered commemorative bricks. A second order for bricks will be placed when 50 or more are ordered. Landscape architects from BCC are meeting with SHS to discuss plans for the Old Jail landscape and using the bricks.

Announcements:

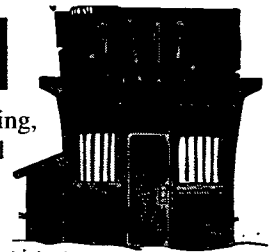
Outer Banks Society will visit Southport April 30 and a special dinner will be held at the Old Jail. Contact Randy Jones for details. Battery Island Bird Tour is scheduled and tickets are available at the Visitor's Center.

Bert Felton presented the program, Jack Tar and the Tall Ships. B. Felton is a longtime member of the Society and currently works for NC Tourism in southeastern NC. The program focused on 18th century wooden ships and the lives of the sailors who worked them.

Respectfully submitted ~ Karen Knighton, Secretary

THE OLD JAIL

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!! Volunteers are still needed to help at the Old Jail. Tasks now include cleaning, washing windows, painting and lawn work. Norm Carathanasis and Marvin Johnson head up the crew and usually work on Tuesdays, starting at 9:00 am. Our phone line now works - on Tuesday you can call and check to make sure someone is on hand. 457-0575



Donations of furnishings are still needed. Furniture or clothing from the early 1900's would be great. Contact Karen Knighton (454-8018) or Harriet Wheeler (253-3159). Stories about the jail would also be helpful..

Lowes Food will credit the Society's account with your Greenpoints! Just call or check at the store and give them our account number: 42022072365. This process has already provide us with much needed equipment but we need a new "infusion" of Greenpoints to help with additional articles for the Old Jail project.



DAR EVENTS

This from the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC Chapter 3) in Wilmington:

There will be a presentation entitled The Lives and Fashions of Wilmington Ladies during the War Between the States on Saturday, May 28, 2005 from 1:00 until 4:30 pm at the Bellamy Mansion Museum of History and Design Arts. Visitors will be able to view a Antebellum period fashion show and learn the history of Southern ladies. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children 5-12 years (under 5 are free).

Other events include a lecture and book signing with David S. Cecelski on May 11, 7 pm at the New Hanover Public Library. Cecelski's books are discounted 10% at this event. On May 18 Catherine Bishir will talk about African-American builders at the Bellamy Mansion in Wilmington, at 7 pm. For more information call Pat Gasson at 392-0381 or Madeline Flagler at 251-3700.



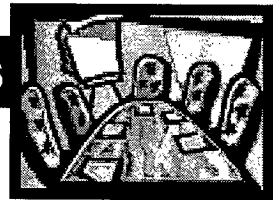
TREASURER'S REPORT-1st QTR 2005

New in the nature of our expenditures is the appearance of monthly utility charges. With the renovation of the Old Jail now nearly complete we have installed telephone service including a monitored alarm system. The web site we maintain is likewise a continuing monthly expense. The meeting facility also represents a recurring expense. Our financial position is sufficiently strong to support these expenses.

Wolfgang Furstenau, Treasurer

INCOME	EXPENSES
Book Sales 1,378.75	Brick Project 4,566.50
Cannon Income 100.00	Cannon 370.77
Donations 725.00	Dues & fees 50.00
Dues, SHS 1,115.00	Meetings 272.40
Insurance Premium Refund 7.00	Old Jail 2,434.98
Interest 3.87	Postal Service 186.10
Plaque Sales 200.00	Printing (Bar Codes) 22.00
Sales Tax Collected 5.76	Quarterly Tax Return 36.02
Tax Refund 136.81	Sales Tax Paid 70.65
TOTAL INCOME 3,672.19	Website 44.85
	TOTAL EXPENSES 8,054.27

SHS BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



Recent SHS Board actions include:

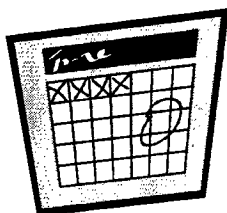
- Established a committee to handle the sale and distribution of SHS books. W. Furstenau will chair. Also established a budget committee.
- Agreed to make the schedule of cannon firings available to the community.
- Approved a \$500 donation to the Ft. Anderson Flag fund to help acquire the Ft. Anderson garrison flag.
- Received a report on the status of the Old Jail: Heat and air, wiring and alarm system are all near completion. Painting and cleaning are on going and the acquisition of furnishings has begun. Landscape architects are helping designs the grounds with the commemorative bricks.
- Agreed that meetings of the Society will be held at the Baptist Church until further notice.

MAY MEETING SPEAKER

The speaker for the May Southport Historical Society meeting, kicking off Southport Heritage Days, will be Wilmington native and military historian Wilbur D. Jones, Jr. Mr. Jones is an alumnus of the University of North Carolina with a history degree, retired Navy captain, and former assistant to President Ford. He is the author of fifteen outstanding history books, and is the recipient of the 2003 Willie Parker Peace Book Award, awarded by the North Carolina Society of Historians. Leon Uris, author of *Exodus*, *Trinity*: WW II Marine said of him: "Jones, one of our finer military authors, has portrayed the enormous contribution of one small city and its sacrifice in human treasure . . . a real trip down memory lane."



Mr. Jones will be focusing on the end of WW II, 60 years ago, in southeastern North Carolina, following the theme of Southport Heritage Days 2005. He will have available his newest book, *The Journey Continues: The World War II Home Front*, a natural sequel to the award-winning *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs of a Wartime Boomtown*, and would be pleased to inscribe your purchases for you.



UPCOMING EVENT - THE LOST LIGHT

A collaborative effort will bring Kevin P. Duffus, well known author of *The Lost Light: The Mystery of the Missing Cape Hatteras Fresnel Lens* to the Southport Community Building on June 8, 2005, 6:30 PM.

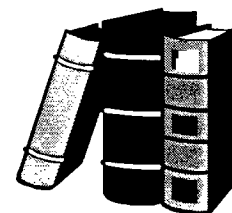
"In 2002, Kevin Duffus solved the long-standing mystery of the missing, first-order Fresnel lens from the 1803 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, lost for 140 years. Confederate officials secretly removed and hid the 6,000-pound, 12-foot tall, bronze and crystal optic from the historic Hatteras tower in 1861 to prevent it from aiding the enemy. In its wake, the missing lens left a trail of destruction, defiance, and recrimination—careers were lost, towns were threatened, and the steamboat that transported the apparatus was captured and sunk. Mr. Duffus discovered more than the storied lens; he compiled a volume of research that for the first time accurately portrays the fate of the South's lighthouses during the Civil War."

"Kevin Duffus is a researcher, author and documentary filmmaker who specializes in North Carolina maritime history. With 32 years of experience in the television industry, Duffus has combined his skill of research, writing, photography and editing to produce a series of feature length documentaries. Some of his award-winning documentaries include: *The Graveyard of the Atlantic: Four Hundred Years of Shipwrecks, Mysteries and Heroic Rescues*; *The Cape Hatteras Light: America's Greatest Sentinel*; and *Move of the Century*, documenting the remarkable relocation of the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. Mr. Duffus is also a regular contributor to *Our State* magazine".

Co-sponsors at the time of this writing are the local Power Squadron, The Southport Historical Society, and the Southport Department of Tourism.

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

The History of Brunswick County was written by Lawrence Lee around 1978 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution. The undertaking was funded by the Board of Commissioners of Brunswick County or, more succinctly, by the people of Brunswick County. This work deserves its place on the bookshelf of every county resident.



Following the second printing of the book by the County, the Southport Historical Society was given the rights to reprint and market the book, albeit with one caveat: that the rights were not to go into effect until Lee's work was brought up to date and made a part of a new edition.

For all practical purposes the work is now 'out of print' and we are desperately seeking a writer who very likely could, within a six month period, bring the text up to the present. While it seems a formidable task, the format of Lee's work suggests that perhaps 20-30 pages would do the job.

Considerable assistance is currently available to get our writer started, guide him along if he so wishes, and to do a final editing of the work. Funding for the printing will be provided by the Southport Historical Society.

Wolfgang Furstenau



SOUTHPORT HERITAGE DAYS 2005

A Tribute to the 60th Anniversary of the end of WW II

- May 26th** **Southport Historical Society Kick-off Meeting**
 Southport Community Building
 6:00 PM - Social
 6:30 PM - Covered dish supper
 7:00 PM - Program speaker: Wilbur Jones, Jr., Author Historian
 Sponsor: Southport Historical Society, Inc.
 Contact: Peter Wyckoff – 523 0266
- May 27th** **Dedication of Memorial Stone and Wreath Laying Ceremony**
 Waterfront Park
 2:00 PM
 Sponsor: All Participant Groups
- May 28th** **Military Canteen – USO Tribute**
 Southport Community Building
 2:00 to 4:00 PM
 Sophisticated Six - period music – Jitterbug contest – Movie
 Sponsor: NC Maritime Museum at Southport
 Contact: Mary Strickland – 457 0003
- May 29th** **Song Styling by Dusty, (Summer Sundays Concert Series)**
 Keziah Park
 2:00 to 4:00 PM
 Sponsor: City of Southport / Dept. of Tourism
 Contact: Anne Richmond – 457 7927
- May 30th** **Official Memorial Day Ceremony**
 Southport Community Building
 2:00 PM Memorial Ceremony
 Speaker: Woodrow O. Wilson, Jr. Colonel (RET)
 Apple pie and ice cream social
 Sponsor: Southport Junior Women's Club

SOUTHPORT COOKING

Before the summer barbeque grills are wheeled out and dusted off a new Southport cookbook will be coming off the presses, as it were. Southport Historical Society is publishing the new Lewis Hardee Jr. book, fully illustrated and indexed and with a distinctive historical Southport flavor. Titled Classic Southport Cooking. Recipes and Reminiscences, the 300-page tome includes some 700 recipes, 106 reminiscences of old Southport and three! indices. A price for the case-bound book will be set once all the costs are in hand and, as always, members will be eligible for the 10 percent discount.



CANNON NEWS

The Smithville Guard has a busy April with participation in 7 events. The most important being the re-certification of the crew by the National Civil War Artillery Association. All the other events contributed to the coffers of the Society through donations. We were especially pleased to fire in period uniform at Orton Plantation for a wedding on 4/23/05 in that wonderful Antebellum setting. The month of May is scheduled to have 3 events, 2 paying and one a door prize from the "Bridal Fair".

Norm Carathanasis, Co-Chairman
 Smithville Guard



LOOKING BACK - THE HISTORY PAGE

Susan Carson, Editor

Since we will soon be celebrating Memorial Day, I thought that this article concerning the way things were in the area during WWI would be fitting. This article contains excerpts from a talk I gave to the Southport Historical Society in

March of 1998.

Southport and Fort Caswell in World War I

Southport (and Smithville, as it was once called) has many times been a wartime town, from 1745 until Desert Storm, but never more so than just before, during and immediately following WWI. Fort Caswell, constructed in 1825, saw activity of sorts in numerous wars, from the Mexican War through Desert Storm. The history of these two places has always been intertwined.

Following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, the United States began a big buildup of forces at Ft. Caswell which had a direct effect on Southport. After the German declaration of war on Russia in August, German and British ships began to come into the Southport harbor which increased the fears of the town's people. Increasing construction at Fort Caswell had a direct impact on the economy of Southport. The Miller hotel was built, the W.B. & S. Railroad was quite busy, the city undertook supplying water and electricity for the fort from its newly built works and at last Southport got street lights. Menhaden fishing was fast becoming the main industry, the coaling dock for vessels came into being and the Southport Building and Loan Association was organized. Insurance was now available which enabled many families to begin construction of their own homes for the first time. The newspapers reported that real estate was changing hands rapidly and new people were moving here to take advantage of the building and real estate boom.

The news from Europe was not encouraging and the buildup of troops and training exercises at the fort accelerated. On February 15, 1915, a fire of unknown origin blazed through the business block between Howe and Dry Streets and destroyed many of the buildings and damaged others. Seeing the fire and smoke, a large contingent of soldiers from Fort Caswell hurried across the bay to lend their assistance.

The fire had a devastating effect on Southport not only to the business establishments but also to many others because many of the town's records were destroyed. At that time there was no city hall or central storage place and town officials kept whatever records they were responsible for in their offices or place of business downtown.

The town recovered quickly and about six weeks later some of the businesses were back in operation and others followed quickly. Just prior to the fire, on Howe Street in an area not affected by the fire, Price Furless, a leading citizen began construction on what was called "a modern theater". This was particularly pleasing to the soldiers from the fort and sailors who sometimes came into the harbor.



LOOKING BACK - Continued

In 1916 a volunteer fire department had been organized and a fire bell was erected on a tower in the edge of Franklin Square (called The Oak Grove). An engine house was built next to the tower and in two rooms over the engine house we could now boastfully say we had a "city hall". The fire engines were pulled by horses and a special stable was built for them. At that time the town of Southport had a population of around 1800 and the total property valuation was estimated to be \$700,000.

As more and more grim news came from Europe, on April 2, 1917 two chapters of the American Red Cross were organized locally, one white and one black. The duties were to raise money, knit socks, sew bathrobes, roll bandages, and arrange for beds in town in the event of a bombardment of Fort Caswell. Just four days later the US declared war on Germany and Southport again became a war town.

June 5, 1917 was official registration day and the Brunswick County Courthouse, then on Moore Street in Southport, was decorated with flags, bunting and Red Cross emblems. In the afternoon there was a patriotic parade as 184 men registered for the draft. Most men from the county went to Ft. Jackson, S.C. for training in the infantry and were soon sent overseas.

Gardens were important to the war effort and for feeding people at home. Almost every backyard and vacant lot in town became a garden. Those who did not have a place for a garden at home rented space in The Swamp Garden in the swampy area along Bonnet's Creek, or Fiddler's Drain, as it was called by the locals. Men from Caswell were heartily welcomed to all activities of the town. Some sang in church choirs, visited in the homes and shopped in the stores. The Masons offered their building on the corner of Nash and Dry Streets and very soon the Army and Navy Club, forerunner of the USO, was set up. The downstairs floor was given over to the service men and there was a library, a Victrola and records, and places to rest and write letters. There was also a bowling alley, gymnasium, band stand and auditorium, which was quickly added as a wing to the lodge building. The ladies of the Episcopal Church opened a little lunch room on Howe Street near the waterfront and here soldiers and sailors could get a home cooked meal for a low price. Parties, oyster roasts, dinners, plays, musicals and ball games were staged often.

Soon however, the festivities were silenced for the most part as the Spanish Influenza epidemic hit the lower Cape Fear in the fall of 1918. Many lives were lost and schools and the Amuzu Theatre were closed. Churches and civic meetings were cancelled. Then came November 11, 1918 – one of the happiest days that Southport has ever experienced. News of the Armistice was quickly relayed from person to person, business to business and to the schools. Bells rang, whistles blew, hundreds of flags waved joyously, and voices laughed, cried, sang and gave thanks to our God that "the war to end all wars" was over!