



# THE WHITTLERS BENCH

## Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue  
Southport, North Carolina 28461

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 6

November 13, 1991

NOVEMBER MEETING - Please note change of place. This one will be held Thursday, November 21, 1991, at 7:30 P. M. in Room 100 at Brunswick Community College, Southport Campus, on Lord Street. We express our appreciation to President Reaves and the Trustees for making this room available to us.

SPEAKER: The speaker for the meeting will be one of our own lifetime members, Mrs. Dorcas (Dot) Schmidt. Dot is chairman of the City's Cemeteries Commission and will speak to us about our historic cemeteries and what is being done to preserve them. You will definitely want to come out and hear this program.

-----

AWARDS CEREMONY: Ten members of the Southport Historical Society traveled to Raleigh on November 8th to be a part of the Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association and the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies (we are members of the latter) in a joint session. Bill Reaves, a lifetime member of this Society, received the American Association of State and Local History award at the meeting and our members wanted to show support for him. Bill is a well-known writer and speaker on anything that has to do with the lower Cape Fear. We are especially indebted to Bill for preparing our Southport Chronology, Volume I and II.

Dr. William S. Price, Jr. of the North Carolina State Archives was chosen to present the award to Bill. In his remarks he recognized Bill for the immense amount of work he has done in the related fields of genealogy and local history. Southport Historical Society members attending the awards ceremony were Susan Kaufman, Francey Wertz, Joan Lawrence, Mary Gore, "Bubba" Smith, Paul Sweeney, Betty Gavin, Gertrude Blake and Susie Carson. Several others had signed up to attend but last minute problems kept them away. The Society presented Bill with a small monetary gift and the members who had planned to attend the ceremony presented him with a "Celebration" basket of gourmet goodies. This was another one of Sue Kaufman's successful projects!

Bill has called to ask that we say a hearty thank-you to the Society for these gifts. He has been an active member of the Society since 1976 - our very first lifetime member.

-----

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Although our President is away this month on a cruise, he has left word that he has a "Volunteer Opportunity" - we need some help on the Cemetery Committee. He will be back soon, so get ready to volunteer. If you are interested, please call Susie Carson at 457-6940 and she will get the word to Don as soon as he returns.

"Looking Back" - The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor

11/13/91



The "Looking Back" Editor is so very busy these days teaching and writing history that she is hard pressed for a history item this time. Therefore, and please forgive her, this page will be tidbits of news rather than history. History will resume in the January 1992 issue!

BILL OF RIGHTS BICENTENNIAL: Several organizations in our county, including the Southport Historical Society, are joining together in a celebration of the adoption of the Bill of Rights on Sunday afternoon, December 15, 1991, at the Student Center at Brunswick Community College at Supply. Our own Walter Reinheimer will be taking part. I hope many of you will take time out for this observance. We are all busy, especially at Christmas time, but the Bill of Rights is our treasured heritage and we need to express our gratitude for it.

SOME BELATED THANK-YOU NOTES: Quite sometime ago, one of our members in California, Bill Shannon, sent the Society several pictures of "Cap'n Charlie". I don't believe he has ever been publicly thanked. We do that now. Both Bill and his wife are "Old Southporters", as we have often been called.

Another thank-you goes to another Shannon. Robert and Mary Jacobs Shannon from Wilmington provided the Society with a bound copy of the minutes of Bethel Baptist Church for the years 1839-1920. We deeply appreciate this gift, also.

Bill Reaves continues to provide items that are copied and placed in the Local History collection at the Brunswick County Library. Your Editor worked during several weeks this past summer on bringing that collection up to date. She will resume that work soon. If you have anything at all that would be suitable for the local history collection, please share it. A copy will be made and the original returned to you immediately.

HISTORY CLASSES ENDING: The Local History classes at Brunswick Community College (Southport Campus) which began in September will end on November 27. To those of you who may be interested in future classes, two more will be taught during the Spring Quarter. If you want information on these, please call Susie at 457-6940. Also, if you would be interested in a class in "Genealogy Can Be Fun" (strictly for beginners), please let her know that, too.

CHANCE TO BE FAMOUS: If you would like to become famous, or at least see your name in print, just write something for Whittlers Bench! A great many of you out there grew up in Southport, or have been here long enough to see many changes in the town. Why not write me a few words about your experiences. History doesn't necessarily have to be ancient history. Recent history is interesting, too.

-----  
(Item copied from the WILMINGTON ADVERTISER, Friday, Feb. 12, 1836, by Kathryn Carson, first Editor of Whittlers Bench)

"STOP AND CONSIDER! I will sell the house and lot at present occupied by Mr. Jewett - the improved lot lying between it and the residence of Samuel Black, Esq. during the summer, - also the house occupied by myself, known as the Russell House,

History Page, continued

---

all very pleasantly situated. I will with the latter, dispose of any furniture, which will be found well adapted to the wants of a small family. My terms shall be accommodating, as my principal object in selling is to be able with truth to sing:

'No foot of land do I possess  
Nor Cottage in the Wildnerness'

EDWARD J. FITZGERALD

Smithville, N. C. February 10, 1836."

Your Editor was intrigued. She would just love to know what happened to cause such sentiments in Mr. Fitzgerald. And who was he? If you know any of his descendants I'd love to invite them to Founders Day!

-----

SPEAKING OF FOUNDERS DAY, plans are going well for a fine celebration. Another letter to descendants of the early settlers (we found out who more of them are) will be sent out in the early part of 1992. We will keep you posted. I hope to soon have a list of events that are scheduled for that weekend.

-----

The University of South Carolina Press has recently published An Irishman in Dixie: Thomas Conolly's Diary of the Fall of the Confederacy, edited by Nelson D. Lankford. Conolly came to the coast of North Carolina on a blockade runner in February 1865. His experiences are recorded in his diary which was recently discovered in Europe, now published for the first time. This may not yet be in our public library, but it won't hurt to ask. You Civil War buffs are sure to enjoy it.

-----



P.O. Box 12000 • 2619 Western Blvd. • Raleigh, N.C. 27605 • (919) 821-8790

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Contact: Barbara Mannen  
Charlene A. Bassett

October 23, 1991  
(919) 821-8790

### **SAVE OUR SOUNDS 1992 COASTAL CELEBRATION SCHEDULED**

The fourth annual WRAL-TV/Save Our Sounds Coastal Celebration will be held April 11 and 12, 1992, in the Kerr Scott Building at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. The two-day event is part of WRAL-TV's Save Our Sounds project, a continuing effort to involve all North Carolinians in preserving our coastal resources.

In its first three years, the Coastal Celebration has attracted nearly 40,000 people from throughout North Carolina. Each comes away with a new understanding of how individuals can preserve and protect the environment. Learning comes in many forms: coastal artisans demonstrating skills such as boat building and net making; coastal folklore from balladeers and storytellers; delicious seafood, fresh from the North Carolina coast; and children's activities such as a touch-tank and treasure hunt.

Project Director Barbara Mannen has been involved with the event since its beginning. She says, "What's great about the Coastal Celebration is that it involves all the senses...sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smell...to teach people what they can do to help the environment. And it's such a fun way to learn!"

Save Our Sounds 1992 Coastal Celebration is sponsored by WRAL-TV, the North Carolina Coastal Federation, and many other non-profit and governmental organizations. All members of the public are invited to attend the event, April 11 and 12, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Kerr Scott Building. For more information, contact Save Our Sounds at (919) 821-8790.