

southport historical society

The Whittler's Bench

Post Office Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461
<http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/>
info@southporthistoricalsociety.org



IMPORTANT DATES

Feb 13 (Date Change), General Business Meeting, 6:30pm, Dinner, Community Building

Mar 27, Chris Fonvielle, 6:30pm, Dinner, Community Building

Publication of the Southport Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

OFFICERS:

President: Musette Steck
Vice President: Don Parker
Secretary: Charles Christianson
Treasurer: Phil Fravel
Archivist: Bill Johnson

DIRECTORS:

Martha Johnson
Betsie Lytton
Joni Schinske
Bob Surridge

MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of this society shall be to bring together persons interested in the history of Southport and surrounding areas. We endeavor to provide programs of historical interest at regular meetings, publish articles and books for the purpose of education and encourage community participation in the preservation of our heritage. Southport Historical Society was established January, 1976 and maintains the Old Jail Museum located at 318 E. Nash Street, Southport, NC

Musings from Musette, President SHS

At the November 21, 2013 general meeting, the slate of nominated officers for the Southport Historical Society was presented to the membership. It will be voted on at the annual business meeting in 2014. Although I've served on non-profit boards for about forty years, I have never been on a board with such qualified and enthusiastic people in each position. We have an executive board composed of women and men who go beyond their job description to further the mission and needs of the Southport Historical Society.

The nominated officers are:

President: MUSETTE STECK. I continue to go to meetings in other towns and counties to learn and share. Recently the Bellamy Mansion invited about ten other historical societies to meet and form a group to sponsor a heritage trail from Southport to Moore's Creek which I think will emphasize the Scottish influence on the Lower Cape Fear area.

Vice President: DON PARKER. As with most non-profits, he will be in charge of programs for the general meetings. But as a former commander of Sunny Point who lived at Fort Johnston, he has a deep personal interest in the museum we are developing at the old garrison.

Secretary: CHARLES CHRISTIANSON. He has previously served in this position while maintaining the Heritage Garden at the Old Jail where he supported his wife, Nancy, in her position as its chairman. He has also righted, cleaned and repaired innumerable gravestones and pickets at the Old Burying Ground.

Director: MARTHA JOHNSON. She will continue to compile our newsletter and send it to members. She is also in charge of our web page and does a great job of keeping it up to date as well as directing items to board members.

Director: BETSIE LYTTON. She greets members and visitors before meetings at the membership desk. Betsie also keeps our membership list up to date. It's not in her job description but she types most of my Living History columns that appear monthly in the State Port Pilot.

Director: JONI SCHINSKE. She was a museum director in Washington State before moving to Southport where she is the administrative aide to Cindy Brochure. In her spare time, Joni shares her wealth of knowledge as how to best display an artifact or develop new theme displays at the Old Jail as well as at the new Visitors Center and museum rooms at the Garrison.

Director: BOB SURRIDGE. He is a published author and most qualified to help the board make decisions relating to reprints and new publications. Bob is also in charge of selling the 23 publications we already have and is willing to take them to any venue that might generate sales.

Archivist: BILL JOHNSON. Has over 40 years experience with genealogy and research. This position is an appointment in support of SHS.

Treasurer: PHIL FRAVEL. According to our by-laws, the treasurer is appointed by the executive board of SHS, so there will be no vote for the position of treasurer at our business meeting in 2014. Both Phil and Bill are very qualified for the position they hold; each goes way beyond his job description to support the Southport Historical Society.

Another order of business during our annual business meeting will be to recognize our many dedicated volunteers for their years of service.

Update from the Garrison Building by Don Parker

The Garrison House East Wing continues to be developed by the Southport Historical Society. Of particular note was the installation of the Southport Bicentennial Quilt being moved from the Visitor Center area to the Southport Historical Society's area. This was a logical move in that the Society owns the quilt and it has indeed found a place of prominence in the east wing.

The most daunting task over the last several months, however, has been the organization of the Society's huge archival collection of files (most of which were Susie Carson's), documents, photos, books, and artifacts. Toward that end, the archive room has been cleaned up, organized, and is being readied for Society and public use as a research facility. Named the "Susie Carson Research Room" it appropriately honors Southport's most venerable historian and founder of the Southport Historical Society. Her vast collections of files that capture Southport's history "A to Z", as well as her books, photos, and lesson plans represent a huge portion of the



Susie Carson Research Room

materials in the archives. A core group of Society members continue to wade through all the items, documenting them, and organizing them in a coherent manner so that these resources will be available to those who wish to research specific Southport topics in the near future.

OLD JAIL REPORT by Nancy Christianson

The Old Jail is now closed until the start of the 2014 season in April. The Jail was open in November for the N.C. Maritime Conference and for the Charles Dickens Weekend. Our docents dressed in period attire for Charles Dickens. We were open in December for the Southport Christmas House Tour and had 209 visitors. The Jail was decorated with the help of Norm Carathanasis, Sandra and Dan Griffith, Bonnie Ericson, Shirley Johnston and Charles and Nancy Christianson. We had 3 Christmas trees, electric candles in the windows, garland on the stairs and over doorways and greens in various locations. The interior will be taken down, but the exterior greens and bows will be left up for several weeks.

We have a group of docents and interested persons on our Old Jail Advisory Committee to work on new and older displays during the months of February and March. Members of the Committee for this year are: Nancy Christianson, Jim McGaughey, Shirley Johnston, Connie Hendrix, Bonnie Ericson, Sandra Griffith, Theresa Walker and Charles Christianson. We will report on our projects as they progress.

We are deeply indebted to Morgan Harper of the State Port Pilot for her coverage of Brunswick County Sheriffs and Jailers. Included in that article is information about a loan given to the Society of a scrapbook kept during the term of Sheriff Elbert Gray and his sweep of stills in Brunswick County, 1955-59. We now have an excellent copy of the book encased in plastic for people to read, thanks to Joni Shinske. Also donated to the Society a number of years ago is a night stick with the name Agnes Dobie on it. Thanks to Trudy Young, we know that Agnes was married to one of the Russ family who were jailers and sheriffs in Brunswick County and that will also be on display at the Jail. The Russ family home was on Nash St. a short distance from the jail. The Old Jail is available for special tours out of season by contacting Nancy.

As we close this year, we have a new Docent scheduling person of Dottie Capriotti, she has placed the docent name list on an excel sheet so that we can define which days we signed up to work. We added Nancy Christianson as curator.



*Old Jail decorated for
Christmas, 2013*

Old Smithville Burying Grounds Work Musings 2013

by Charles Christianson

Granite Stone Up!

Sometime in 2012, vandals pushed over a large granite grave marker on the Pepper lot, in the MR section of the Old Smithville Burying Grounds. It landed on its face so no one could read the stone. However, shortly afterwards, some one turned the stone over so the name of Olympus Victoria Vernon Pepper (MR, F5) could be seen. However, since that time in 2012 until this year, the stone has not been moved.



Stone on ground



Beginning to rise up

Getting the stone back onto its base was one of this year's goals. Using steel straight bars and some concrete blocks, the stone was moved to its base and lifted off the ground.

Using more time and more bricks, the stone was moved sufficiently so that a hydraulic car jack could be placed under the stone (about 650 pounds (estimated)) so that it could be pushed up and placed at a 45-degree angle on bricks and concrete blocks.



More work on stone



FINISHED!

The time came that the car jack would not work as it could not push the stone up without losing its grip and falling away from the stone. Fortunately Bob Brandon came the next morning with his son-in-law and

grandson. While there was a method to lift the stone using tools, the two young men wondered if they could not lift the stone up the rest of the way and turn it around. So they tried, and were successful. Once the stone was facing the correct direction, it was dusted off and glued onto its base. Another one of this year's Old Smithville Burying Ground goals was met!

Red Stone Grave Marker

In the BN section of the Old Smithville Burying Grounds, around the Carrier lot (BN, G4), there was a red stone that Musette Steck and I have wondered about. It is a stone that is not native to this area and it was buried in the dirt/sand.



Uncoverd on ground



Upright to dry out

In December 2013, the stone was lifted up and reviewed. There are no words that can be found on either side of the stone. The size and shape of the stone indicate that it is a grave marker, but both ends are broken away with large chunks missing. Also found in the same area was a brick in the Carrier lot. It was unusual as it was under the soil/sand, and one could just see an outline. Upon uncovering it, there were more bricks on either side. Using a probe, the boundaries of the bricks were found and it appears that it is a small grave with a brick crypt. Since there was no grave where the red stone was buried, and the grave in the Carrier lot had no grave marking stone, the red stone was moved over to the brick covered grave and placed into the ground. Placing the stone upright will allow it to dry out somewhat and hopefully will slow down the decay. If any one knows about the red stone and where it should be please contact us. We need to know where it belongs and what name should on it.

Contact nfo@southporthistoricalsociety.org

Also, if you see anyone in the cemetery that appears to be bashing and crashing items, please let the police know. We have several incidents where stones and boundaries have been damaged for no good reason.

Additional information about the work in the Old Burying Grounds can be found at:
<http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/projects/old-burying-grounds>

Bill Reaves Continues to Give to Southport!

by Bob Surridge

In the March 2001 issue of the "Whittler's Bench", Southport historian Susie Carson wrote how much she and the other members of the Southport Historical Society missed their friend and colleague William Marion Reaves. She recounted that Bill Reaves, was the first person to do a program for the Society. In addition, he was the Society's first lifetime member and the first person to write and publish a book for the Society. She also noted that up until his very last days Bill Reaves continued to research and submit articles to the "Whittler's Bench."

The first book Reaves wrote for the Society was *Southport (Smithville) A Chronology Volume I (1520 - 1887)*. With a great deal of pride, the book went on sale at Southport's 1978 Fourth of July celebration. The July 27, 1978 issue of the "Whittler's Bench" reported that during the three day festival, Bill Reaves autographed over 300 copies as they were sold. The newsletter further noted that many out-of-town visitors, as well as Southport residents were eager to buy the book. Copies were also purchased by mail to locations in Michigan, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania.

Following Volume I, were Volumes II, III, and IV. In the March 2001 article, Carson wrote that Bill Reaves: "...had come under the spell of the history of our area and became a Southport *treasure* as he wrote three more volumes of the *Southport (Smithville) Chronology*." Each volume, like Volume I, was published by the Society and written by Mr. Reaves without charge to the Southport Historical Society.

Now, more than a decade after his death, Bill Reaves continues to give to Southport. Historical Society volunteers recently located thousands of 3" x 5" index cards that contain Bill Reaves' notes for each volume of the *Southport (Smithville) Chronology*. In addition to the published material, there are twenty-four unpublished entries to Volume II (1887 to 1920). Readers are able to access these entries from the year 1900 at the Society's website at <http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org>. Volunteers are still reviewing the index cards to determine and document their contents. In their review they are on the lookout for more unpublished materials. We are optimistic there is more. In the March 1997 issue of the Whittler's Bench, Bill Reaves wrote an article about the creation of Volumes, I, II, III and IV of the *Southport (Smithville) Chronology*. I'll close this article with the words that Bill Reaves used to end his 1997 article: "Don't be surprised to see more."

SHS Board member Bob Surridge is looking for volunteers to help sell books at local special events. If interested, please contact Bob at (910) 477-9143 or rws23@ptd.net

Membership by Betsie Lyton

Welcome New Members

We welcome these new members who have joined this year. We are delighted to have each of you and look forward to your involvement in our organization!

Sue MacCallum
Southport Tea House
Robert Ruark Inn
Southport Tours

Mary Friend
Joe and Linda Farrar
Bonnie Ericson
Brenda Rewalt

Joann Klug
Jerri Blanton
Bob and Carole Surridge

Don't let your membership become "history"!

Annual membership dues are due on January 1 of each year. Dues amounts are shown at the end of this newsletter in the membership application/renewal form.

Southport Historical Society's Opportunities

Each time the Southport Historical Society adds another element to its organization (garrison in 2012-2013), it creates opportunities within the Society that need volunteers. While the SHS has competition with other historical groups, its goal is to support the history of Southport area for this part of Brunswick County. The current SHS organization has the following list of items it is currently involved in. Some of the positions are currently filled, but most need volunteers to continue the activities and this allows participation for people in the Southport and neighboring Brunswick County.

1. Old Jail
 - A. Docent scheduling
 - B. Curator of OJ artifacts and new displays
 - C. Building maintenance
 - D. Heritage Garden maintenance
2. Garrison (SHS side)
 - A. Volunteer* scheduling for Research room
 - B. Curator of Society material and new displays
3. Cannon Crew
 - A. Shooting scheduling
 - B. Firing Crew* scheduling
 - C. Equipment maintenance
 - D. Crew member training
4. Archivist
 - A. Genealogy support
 - B. Historical house plaques
 - C. Historical verifications
5. Books
 - A. Sales -Stocking Books in different sales areas
 - B. Book stock and inventory maintenance
 - C. New book development
 - D. Review of new books to sell.
6. Fund Raisers
 - A. Christmas House Tour
 1. Finding the houses
 2. Scheduling* the hosts
 - B. Buy-A-Brick
 1. Person to coordinate the effort.
 2. Get Order forms, process order forms
 3. Have bricks ordered, and delivered
 4. Install bricks
7. Education
 - A. Adult Education classes
 - B. Local Schools education
 - C. Scholarship questions and review
8. Cemetery upkeep
9. Programs for General member's meetings
 - A. Scheduling of Community Center
 - B. Scheduling* of set up and take down crew
 - C. Finding presenters for programs
10. Local Publications
 - A. Self Guided Tour Brochures
 - B. Historic Southport
 - C. Post cards
 - D. Thor brochure
11. Membership rolls
 - A. Yearly review of members
 - B. General meeting greeting
12. Special tours of Southport (includes Cemetery)
13. Newsletter
14. Electronic Communications
 - A. Website updates / maintenance
 - B. Sending Blasts to the email community
 - C. Facebook
 - D. Information email
15. Publicity
 - A. Local papers
 - B. Other historical societies
 - C. Posters & flyer
16. Visitor Center - Volunteer scheduling for Sundays

If you are interested in any of these activities and would like to volunteer please contact SHS at

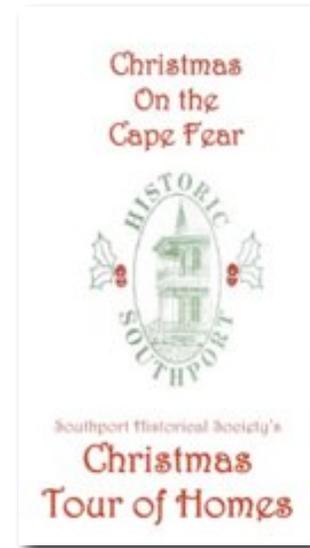
info@southporthistoricalsociety.org or call Musette Steck at 910-454-0437

Tour of Homes by Shirley Wilson

The Southport Historical Society held another successful Tour of Homes on Saturday, December 14. This was the 24th annual Tour of Homes and even though the weather was rainy and windy, more than 900 tickets were sold. One hundred plus tickets were sold on the day of the event, which was fantastic.

The SHS would like to thank the homeowners, hosts and hostesses and all ticket holders for ensuring that this was another fun, successful event. There were a variety of homes that were beautifully decorated and so welcoming to everyone.

Please put Saturday, December 13, 2014 on your calendar for the 25th annual SHS's Tour of Homes. We look forward to seeing you then



Susan Sellers Carson Scholarship by Karen Knighton

Thanks to the success of the Tour of Homes each year the Southport Historical Society awards a scholarship in honor of Miss Susie Carson. It's a two-year award of \$1,000 each year. Students must maintain a B average to be eligible for the second years' award. The money is sent directly to the student's college and requires full-time enrollment. If a second candidate is worthy of an award, the SHS has periodically approved a small second award, usually \$500, for one year. The annual award can be divided between the academic terms at the school if that is the school's policy.

The application is updated and usually new questions based on local history are added each fall. An announcement regarding the application is published in the State Port Pilot as soon as applications are available.

SHS volunteers evaluate each of the application components rating them on a scale such as 1-5. Notifications to students are done by early May and the winner is invited to the May General Meeting.



southport historical society

Membership Application

<http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/>

Yes, I (we) would like to support the Southport Historical Society.
Please accept this membership in the category checked below:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple | \$25.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (Through High School) | \$2.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business, Institutional, Club, or Professional | \$15.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$25.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Individual) | \$150.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Business or Couple) | \$200.00 |

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone # _____

Email Address _____

Please Make Check Payable To: Southport Historical Society
Post Office Box 10014
Southport, NC 28461