



THE WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461
Vol. XVII No. 4 May 27, 1993

MEETING

WHEN: 7:30 PM Thursday, May 27, 1993
WHERE: Room 133 Brunswick Community College, Southport
WHO: Mark Ramsing and/or Richard Lawrence from Fort Fisher
WHAT: Underwater Archaeology in nearby waters

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The North Carolina Division of Archives and History has completed a research report on Fort Johnston. It is over 300 pages of well written technical data on Fort Johnston. We will have copies available at the Southport Maritime Museum and the Southport Brunswick County Library for review. This summer the Division of Archives and History and the Southport Historical Society will condense the report and work toward publication of a very interesting book.
2. The Old County Jail will be held open again during the July 4th celebration. If you cannot be at the meeting, please call and tell us when you can help register visitors and answer questions.
3. A display case has been completed for our Bicentennial Quilt. Location of the display and status of historical information on each square will be announced at the meeting.
4. The Southport Women's Club has asked for a July 4th Heritage House Display. Any ideas you have would be greatly appreciated.

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"Looking Back" - The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor

MAY 1993



Bill Shannon writes from California about his school days in Southport. He lived here with his family while his Dad was Manager of the old W. B. & S. Railroad:

GOING TO SCHOOL IN SOUTHPORT - Bill Shannon

I think it was in the year of 1929, when I was six. The first day I remember very well. I sat behind a girl named Susie and it was not a good day for her, either. When the class marched over to the auditorium I decided I had had enough and went home. We lived across the street from Evelyn Autry, which was close to the school.

The first couple of years I was more interested in playing than learning, so I spent two years in the first and second grades. In the second grade I got caught shooting spit balls, wound up getting spanked in front of the class. Then I decided to move on to the third grade. I didn't like that grade, either, because when it was my turn to stand up and read the whole darned class laughed. School became fun in the eighth grade when I had Mr. Livingston for a teacher.

Mr. Livingston made science and math intriguing. He was the first one to tell us about an exciting new invention - television. Science was a challenge because we did not have a lab to work in.

Rev. A. L. Brown taught a class in mechanical drawing, too. I enjoyed that very much.

Basketball made school that much more enjoyable. I remember playing with Johnny Simmons, John Julius Swain, John O'Daniel, Basil Watts, Rudolph Sellers, Billy Wells and "Bobo" McKeithan.

I especially remember the first day of the tenth grade - there was a new girl in class! I sat behind her and found out that her name was Nannie Fraser. We have now been going steady for fifty-three years. Now her name is Nannie Fraser Shannon. (Editor's note: Congratulations to two special people!)

Graduation was exciting. Frances Cox (now Cumbee) and I were Valedictorians, and I had to make the speech. Mr. Lingle, our Principal, wrote the speech and all I had to do was learn it! It was fun giving the speech and watching Mr. Lingle squirm in his seat on the front row. I guess he was afraid I would make a mistake and he was nervous for me. I kept expecting the whole crowd to laugh any minute like they did in third grade when I stood up to read.

When the diplomas were given out, I stood up and took Nan's for her because she was in the hospital recovering from an appendectomy. I got a big hand from the crowd.

Our mascots were Hope Harrison and Jimmy Harper, Jr.

The diplomas that year were dated May 4, 1942, and were signed by I. B. Bussells, Chairman of the Board of Education, Mrs. Mary E. Cranmer, Secretary, Miss Annie May Woodside, Superintendent, and W. R. Lingle, Principal.

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The class motto was "Impossible is un-American". The class flower was red carnation and the class colors were red and white. The class roll read as follows:

Gilda Arnold
Joy Arnold
Martha Grey Brown
Margaret Carr
Frances Cox
Nannie Fraser
Robert Imbeau
Mildred Lancaster
Norton Munn
Basil Watts

John O'Daniel
Glennie Price
Doris Price
Mary Jeanette Russ
William Shannon
John Simmons
John Julius Swain
Jeanette Tyndall
Carl Ward, Jr.

The Valedictory, which the Principapl wrote for Bill to read, ran like this:

"On behalf of the class may I express to the County Board of Education, the School Committee, and Mr. Lingle our thanks and appreciation for the diplomas which have been presented to us tonight. We appreciate everything that has been done for us as members of this class. We appreciate the opportunities which have been given us as individuals. We appreciate all that our parents have done for us through all our school days. We realize that we are already in debt for what life has already given us. We shall, by worthy living, try to repay society our debt of gratitude.

We shall ever strive to live true to the principles of good students. We shall ever try to keep before us the goal which all good citizens should try to reach: To serve mankind for the betterment of mankind.

Today we are engaged in a terrific struggle which is taxing the loyalty of every citizen of this nation. Today we are grappling with the foes of democracy. Today as never before are the very foundations of our government threatened from within and without, from above and from below, from all directions, in all matters and in all ways.

There is but one course for us to take and that course is - Forward with Democracy. Youth must go forward with America. We must bend our minds and hearts to the job before us.

Yesterday we rode on cushions of air. Today we stand on two feet. Yesterday our eyes were attracted by the glitter of the world. Today we evaluate everything for its worth and usefulness to America's future. Yesterday we thoughtlessly spent our money or put it into the bank. Today we put our money in defense bonds or stamps. Today we are lined up for America's defense. We must give. "To give rather than to take" must be our slogan now. We must give in money, energy and in service. We must give by enduring hardships and doing without pleasures. We shall meet the crisis as every generation in America has done. As those before us fought to give life to this nation - as those before us fought to preserve this nation and nurture it - so we will serve that America may live.

Classmates! Today we perform the last exercises as a class. Tomorrow we shall be scattered. But wherever we may be, may our hearts ever be high with hope. Let's keep our belief in the future of this nation unshaken and as a great people of a great nation, go forward with Democracy. Farewell."

My special thanks to all of you who have sent in items for "Looking Back". You will see them in print sooner or later! We so few issues each year and a limited number of pages, I have to put them in as I can. If those of you who have sent in items do not stop me, then one of these days I would like to gather all the articles into a book and have it published. It would be such fun. Now for one other Southport High School article to go with that of Bill Shannon. This one is from my dear friend, Hazel Willetts of Bolivia, who attended High School in Southport when it was the only high school in the county. Thanks, Hazel.

MY HIGH SCHOOL DAYS IN SOUTHPORT - Hazel Willetts

I entered Southport High School in September 1925, in the Eighth Grade. That was the only High School in the County.

I roomed and boarded with my aunt, Mrs. Laney Southerland. My roommate was Annie Laurie Harrelson.

Then in 1926-27 three more schools opened. In my Sophomore and Junior years (9th and 10th grades, then), I went by bus to Town Creek Consolidated High School, which was later changed to Bolivia High School.

For my Senior year (11th Grade), I went by bus back to Southport High School from which I graduated on May 13, 1930. The Class of '30 was the first class to wear robes. We rented them for the Baccalaureate Sermon, Class Night and Graduation Night. Some of the teachers at that time were Claude Chadwick, Science; John Farrior, English and French; Gertrude Knox, History. L. J. Dawkins was the principal and also taught classes.

Others from Bolivia who attended Southport High School in those days were: Jimmy Galloway, Frances Galloway, Adrian Galloway, Homer Holden, Roderick Holden, Russell Johnson, Edwin Taylor, Jr. and Annie May Henry.

The next issue will have another fish story for you - thanks to Jeff Brooks. You'll love it!

Recently Mrs. Lucy Blocker of Maryland has sent in a contribution for the memorial to the merchant seamen buried in Old Northwood Cemetery. A special thanks goes to her and to Francey Wertz, Mary Shannon and Eula Mae Franck who helped the Editor put on a yard sale for the memorial. It was a small affair but netted \$52.00 for the cause. We'll have more information for you in the July issue. Thanks to all who have made contributions. Forgive me if I have failed to call you by name.