



Susie

THE
WHITTLERS BENCH
Southport Historical Society

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Please take time to fill out the **Survey** enclosed with this newsletter. We are fortunate to have so many talented members in our Historical Society who are willing to share their time and expertise. We are in particular need of Grant Writers and Public Relations people to help with our growing needs and to broadcast our efforts and events. If you have these skills or can help train other members, please call us or mail the survey to our new address.

NEW ADDRESS: SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. 10014
SOUTHPORT, N.C. 28461

Speaking of the newsletter, if you see a red dot on this newsletter's label, that means this is the last newsletter you will receive **UNLESS** you kindly remit your dues by filling out the attached membership form. We understand how busy life gets, but the 4th is over and we need to fund future and present projects. In other words, no dues, no news, boo-hoo.

Good News! Bill Reaves' **Southport (Smithville) - A Chronology, Vol. IV**, is hot off the press and a fine book it is. Covering 1941-1970, it brings us to many people living in Southport. Purchase your copy now to see who's who. \$16.95 less 10% for members (another reason to renew your membership!).

Finally, but not least, we include a list of SHS Officers and Directors so that you may communicate directly with them on any Society matter. We appreciate your feedback and participation in our endeavors.

Southport Historical Society Officers and Directors

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Chris Suiter - President - 457-6629 | Susie Carson - Archivist - 457- 6940 |
| Peter Wyckoff - Vice- President - 457-5599 | Marilyn Lessin - Director - 457- 0004 |
| Pauline Swain - Secretary - 457-6537 | Becky Felton - Director 457- 5302 |
| Wolf Furstenau - Treasurer 278-4050 | June Wojda - Director 457-6412 |
| Anne Brown - Representative for Southport Visitor Center - 457-6710 | |



1921 newspaper account
PILOT BOAT *RUTH* HITS WRECKAGE AND SINKS

Southport January 31, 1921 (special to The Star) In these days of the movies, one can pay a dime, with war tax added, and see the nth installment of a serial as crammed with hair-breadth escapes as it is possible to crowd into the allotted reels. Daring, exciting, altogether marvelous, but—there is always the director. Take away the camera, remove the director and behold, Southport has a real thriller almost at her very gates.

A steamer was expected with the dawn of Monday, a steamer needing a pilot to guide her through the treacheries of the wily Cape Fear. In Southport there are two pilot companies, headed respectively by the Adkins and the St. Georges. At 3:30 AM, under cover of darkness the pilot boat *Ruth*, commanded by Capt. Hawley Adkins and Engineer Cradie Arnold aboard, crept out of the harbor and made for the open sea. Thirty-five minutes later the pilot boat *Reliable*, carrying Capt. Charles St. George, Tom St. George and Tom, Jr., started in hot pursuit. Several thousand feet of chase. Close-up of the *Ruth* nearing the bell-buoy. Title "Flash for the *Reliable*—Full Speed Ahead!"

With the ocean still a dark, tossing mass, the *Ruth* forged ahead, the crew ignorant of a hidden, menacing piece of wreckage. On came the *Ruth*, unsuspecting, intent of business. A crash that filled the boat with water, a blow that stove in the bulk-head. The sea going occupants, realizing that nothing could save the craft, seized the life preservers, and flung themselves overboard, clearing the boat just as she went down exactly one minute after the collision.

Followed then a fight with waves. In darkness, with no means of signaling, chilled to the bone with the suddenness of their icy plunge, the three shipwrecked mariners waited. There was nothing else to do, kicking around to keep up their circulation, yet desirous of saving strength, swimming as best they could with heavy, clogging clothes. Ten, fifteen minutes but no relief. Twenty-five minutes, and the waves rolling in rocked them in their chilling cradles. The bell-buoy rang. Hitherto the buoy had been a guide. Would it now toll for them? The time lengthened to thirty minutes—an interminable wait. Thirty-five and still the rolling waves tossed the blue-lipped men like bits or wreckage. Forty minutes, and then, truth unbelievable, lights and the sound of an engine. The cries of the struggling men rose above the noise of the waves. They were heard! Lights fore down upon them. The *Reliable* was true to her name and rescue was near. Firm hands grasped them and lifted them aboard. Coats and wraps were thrust around them and external stimulation applied. The captains looked at each other and smiled. They were no longer striving for a common goal. They were snatching their own from the grasp of the common enemy.

Heading for home, the *Reliable* reached Southport in perhaps a little less time than it took her to make the buoy, but how different the same number of minutes seemed to the crew of the ill-fated *Ruth*. On arriving in port, the rescuers turned the chilly survivors over to competent hands, and soon the news spread over the town and citizens gathered to hear the story—a tale to tell to visitors to the charming little sea-grit city, a story to recall on a hot summer day and to repeat in the carved and whittled benches under the wind-blown cedar at the foot of the Pilot's tower, while out at sea the bell buoy rings and wave-wash ceaselessly of the *Ruth* in her final resting place.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A SOCIETY SURVEY

We constitute a group effort to preserve the natural and man - made beauty of Southport, and to record the past accomplishments (and foibles) of our forbearers. That is not to be a stagnant, musty file. We also seek to share that rich history with future generations.

There are many tasks. Most are fun. Some are not. All are necessary.

This survey will help the Executive Board to assess each members' talents and interests, and to be able to use them as needed for the mutual benefit of the Society.

Please think about each item. Mark those that you can or want to do. Feel free to make comments and / or suggestions.

Please don't set this aside. You'll forget it, so take a minute right now, complete it and mail to: Southport Historical Society, PO Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461

Thank you for your support.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

DIGGING, DISCOVERING, RECORDING

1. Writing for:

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| _____ a. | Publicity | _____ b. | Grants |
| _____ c. | Brochures | _____ d. | Newsletter articles |

2. Talking with people to:

- | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|-------------|
| _____ a. | Gather oral history | _____ b. | Learn facts |
| _____ c. | Locate historic places and things | | |
| _____ d. | Record history (audio tape / video tape / written / computer) | | |

3. Talk with experts to explain our needs and enlist their help:

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|----------|--------------|
| _____ a. | Book binders | _____ b. | Consultants |
| _____ c. | Conservators | _____ d. | Contractors |
| _____ d. | Fund raisers | _____ e. | Newspapers |
| _____ f. | Printers | _____ g. | Researchers |
| _____ h. | Historians | _____ i. | Genealogists |
| _____ j. | Other (please suggest) | | |

4. _____ Telephone contact (inquire, notify, etc.)
5. _____ Walk / search in the fields, brush, and woods.
6. _____ Map cemeteries and record tombstone data.
7. _____ Other mapping and field recording (written / audio tape / video tape)
8. _____ Photography / photographic recording.
9. _____ Create / maintain scrapbooks.
10. _____ Write / receive correspondence such as inquiries.
11. _____ Read / abstract / analyze (research) old written records.

SOCIALIZING AND SHARING OUR TREASURE

12. _____ Recruit new members.
13. _____ Meet / greet members, new members, and visitors.
14. _____ Work with children
15. _____ Selling: ads, tickets, books, other.
16. _____ Cooking / serving meals / refreshments.
17. _____ Recording books in or out of a library.
18. _____ Driving.
19. _____ Set up exhibits of historical items.
20. _____ Assist with bulk mailing.
21. _____ Typing / word processing.
22. _____ Filing / organizing.
23. _____ Bookkeeping.
24. _____ Preservation skills;

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| _____ sweeping | _____ scrubbing | _____ washing windows |
| _____ scraping | | |
| _____ painting | | |
| _____ carpentry | _____ plumbing | _____ electrical |
| _____ gardening | | |

MISCELLANEOUS

25. _____ I am a Southport native / Lived in Southport for _____ years.
26. _____ I am a Brunswick County native / Lived in Brunswick County for _____ years.
27. _____ I hail from _____.
28. _____ My employment career is / has been _____.
29. _____ I would like to present a program. Please call me.

Please don't set this aside. You'll forget it. Take a few minutes - right now - to complete it and return it to:

Southport Historical Society
PO Box 10014
Southport, North Carolina 28461

OLD JAIL

Progress Report:

Significant improvements have been made since the "Tuesday morning work day" commenced:

1. Walter Reinheimer replaced two half sets of missing window bars on the 1st floor and has cell doors working better upstairs.
2. Becky Lucas sanded (the hard part) and painted the stairs and steel door at top of stairs.
3. June Wojda cleaned, mopped and swept 1st floor.
4. Mary and Wolf Furstenau invented a whole new industry by refining and bottling several gallons of old jail bar rust to sell when we have walk- thru tours.
5. Bob Wojda sanded all front and east side bars, repainted them and worked on lawn & garden with John Knowles, Becky Lucas and Marilyn Lessin.
6. Ashland Fedley is building new window units most reasonably. Restoration will resume in the fall with cooler weather. We need help with porch, paneling and ceiling tile removal. You'll never get the winter blahs or cabin fever if you do Jail Time on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. - Noon!



THANKS to Marilyn Lessin and a crew of volunteers, the Old Jail was open for visitors during the July 4th festivities. More than 160 visitors came to view the exhibits and wonder at the upstairs cells. Cool water from our new water cooler was a major attraction.

Also during the July 4th weekend, the memorial to Benjamin Smith and Robert Howe was dedicated at the Old Smithville Burying Ground. This is a good time to consider a contribution to the Cemetery Endowment Fund. This fund was established several years ago and the interest generated by the fund will be used for special cemetery projects.

The Southport Forestry Committee

was able, with the City Council's approval, to put some barriers around city trees for the 4th of July. This included temporary protection for the Indian Oak tree. The city provided the materials and volunteers did the job!



Division of Archives and History

Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson

Visitor Center is still under renovation, but the Main Gate is open and visitors can walk around the site. Pick a day with a little breeze during July and August.

Fort Fisher also has no Visitor Center available, but you can walk the grounds.

Congratulations

Students in Greg Bland's history class, Cape Fear Studies, wrote essays describing five items to represent the history of Smithville/Southport in a time capsule. These essays were judged by a committee of the Southport Historical Society and winners were presented with **¶The Susan S. Carson Excellence in Local History Award¶** and a cash bond at the May historical society meeting. Congratulations to:

Tyler Johnson **¶Southport in a Box¶** First Place
Allison Clemmons **¶A Small Town with Big Time Capsule Needs¶** Second Place

Southport Historical Society membership

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| individual | \$ 10 | student | \$ 2 | business / organization | \$15 |
| couple | 15 | (up to age 18) | | sustaining | 25 |
| lifetime | 150 | lifetime couple | 200 | | |

please print name _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone _____

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

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 Angley. 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.