



THE WHITTLERS BENCH Southport Historical Society

PO Box 10014

Southport, North Carolina 28461

Volume XXIV, No. 1

January 2000

Southport Historical Society

Thursday, January 27

Potluck Dinner and Program

6:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church

**"Eco-History of the Lower Cape Fear" by Andy Wood, Curator of Education
North Carolina Aquarium, Fort Fisher**

We are pleased to have Andy Wood present a background of the natural history of the Cape Fear River at our January meeting. Andy is a frequent commentator on WHQR, Public Radio as well as a speaker in many venues such as birding workshops, salt marsh explorations and river trips.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

We have worked hard to sustain the momentum from our very successful December 1 program on Historic Preservation. The Society's committee, led by Becky Felton, has met several times with various representatives of our city government and will continue to try to advance the establishment of protection for our National Register Historic District and buildings. This effort is only the beginning of a long-term project of great and lasting interest to all of you friends of Old Southport.

Speaking of "Old Southport," the stonecutters in Wilmington who made our SS John D. Gill monument are working on a Joshua Potts monument, one of Susie Carson's long-term dreams! It will be dedicated in late May, to coincide with a certain lady's 80th birthday--watch for further details. Also, our Susie's book Joshua's Dream is at the printers for its third edition - everything happens at once!

Many, many thanks to Pauline Swain and Marilyn Lessin, who have completed their terms on the Board of Directors. They aren't getting completely away: Pauline will continue to help with the newsletter (she terrifies the Post Office!) and Marilyn will be Social Chairman and "Susie Helper."

Now that it is the new century, we need to remind all of you that "dues are due"! The Old Jail project, two book publishings, and monument all have caused a more pressing need than usual for timely payments--January for the year 2000.



World War II Memories

Mounted Beach Patrol, Long Beach, North Carolina

This article was written by Barbara Wilson who is a fellow writer and friend of mine.

I would like to share with you some of my brother, Jack Hubbard's memories of his duty in the U.S. Coast Guard at Long Beach, NC. Jack grew up on a farm in Cumberland County. He developed at an early age a love of horses and hunting. He became interested in entering the U.S.C.G. when he read an article on the formation of the Mounted Beach Patrols. Since he liked horses so much, it seemed like the perfect branch of service for him to enlist into.

Why was there a need for Mounted Beach Patrols? Packs of German submarines in the early part of WWII operated off the NC coast. During the first six months of 1942 German subs sank seventy vessels. The presence of enemy submarines so close to our shores caused wide spread fear and rumors that Nazi agents and demolition experts would be put ashore on our isolated beaches. This concern prompted the Coast Guard to establish the horse patrols.

The men received their training at Hilton Head, S.C. Hilton Head in the early 1940's was wild, definitely not a resort community. Some of the men were expecting the horse patrol to be a picnic. Jack said, "Many had never ridden anything but a hobby-horse. During training there were men so saddle sore they stood to eat their meals. Those horses from the U.S. Cavalry knew every trick in the book."

Jack was very excited to receive his assignment to Long Beach so near his home in Fayetteville. When the 16 Coast Guard men arrived at Long Beach in February, 1943, they saw high rolling sand dunes, a run-down barrack and barn once used by the Conservation Corps. The men got busy and built stables and corrals for the horses. With some help they built an observation tower on the big hill at the west end of the beach. Wood also had to be cut to fire up the wood stove. In his opening greeting to the new patrol, the officer in command said, "Boys, on these barrier islands you'll have to survive on your own. We will get supplies to you when we can." Supplies when they did come arrived by boat. Once a month coal for the cook stove, hay, oats and bran mash were delivered for the horses along with a few items for the men. Sometimes the men felt the horses received the most attention.

The horses were cared for very well by the men. Jack recalled the fellows being very angry with one young man who after being warned not to ride his horse so fast and for so long continued to mistreat the horse. When it died a burial was held for the horse. The letters USCG and the horse's name were spelled out in sea shells on the grave.

At first no one was assigned to cook so each man was required to take a turn. It became evident after several terrible meals that most of the men couldn't cook a lick. A young fellow from Wisconsin named Van Lynn soon surfaced as the best cook. The men noticed when it was Van Lynn's turn the food tasted much better.

His pancakes were so good they named him "patty cake." Jack and the others offered to take his patrol if he would do the cooking. Van Lynn had been assigned an ill tempered horse named Moon Eye. Jack said the horse was named Moon Eye because his moods changed with the moon. Late one night a message came on the field phone, "Alert, saboteurs coming ashore on the east end of the island. Report immediately!" The men hurriedly dressed and rushed out to saddle their horses. When they returned from the false training alarm, they found Van Lynn still trying to saddle old Moon Eye. The horse was so mean Van Lynn was grateful to make the swap in duties. I guess you could say Moon Eye was finally "court marshaled," since he had to be put down after nearly blinding someone.

Conditions at the station were poor. There was no electricity or refrigeration. Fresh water came from a pitcher pump. Other problems were mosquitoes. Window screens were painted with kerosene to keep the mosquitoes out of the barrack. Sand was forever blowing through the cracks making it necessary to shake out your mattress each night before getting into bed. There was no pavement once you crossed the drawbridge to Long Beach, making travel in the thick sand difficult.

Anyone visiting the beaches before the days of air-conditioning can recall how hot it could get in July and August. On hot days when the sand flies were biting the men would take the horses for a swim in the ocean. Orders were given for one man to be with each horse since horses could become disoriented and afraid to swim through the breakers. They never lost a horse and the men and horses enjoyed the ocean swims.

The duty hours for beach patrol were six hours each day. One man on horse patrol rode the twelve miles of lonely beach during the day and two rode at night. Mile posts with telephone jacks were set up so the men on patrol could call the station from each post. At night no lights would be visible from the thirteen cottages at the east end of Long Beach.

The most dreaded patrols were on cold stormy nights from midnight to 6 A.M. Jack remembered one less than routine June night beach patrol. He and a buddy, Erhart, noticed in the distance two suspicious shapes slowly crawling ashore. Jack felt cold chills go up his spine. Maybe they were German spies. They approached cautiously on horseback with their weapons ready. Jack shouted, "Halt, who goes there?" The command and question brought no response. Erhart, nervous and a little trigger happy, fired his carbine in the air. Not a minute too soon the moon came from under a cloud exposing two giant Logger Head sea turtles making their way to the dunes to lay their eggs.

Some men may have disliked the duty on this remote island but not my brother. He enjoyed getting to know some of the small number of people that lived near their Coast Guard station. In the fall when the mullet were running local fishermen put out nets just beyond the breakers to catch the tasty fish. Lightning, a Coast Guard work horse, would pull the nets full of mullets onto the beach. The dressed fish were immediately put into kegs of brine salt to preserve. The men at the station always received fresh fish in return for their help.

Jack recalled meeting Mr. Swain, an interesting old fellow who lived by himself. "Sometimes I would see him outside his old timey house dressing out a wild

boar." Mr. Swain also raised a few domestic hogs. One of his sows swam across Davis Creek. Not knowing the pig's owner, the Coast Guard men put her in a pen where she soon delivered six pigs. When Mr. Swain found his sow, being a generous fellow, he told the men to keep half of the young pigs. Their military rations soon included pork barbecue. Mr. Swain liked to help the boys. He loaned them a skiff to travel across Davis Creek and up and down the waterway. The men pooled their money to buy a 5 horsepower outboard motor.

Life improved when Jack became friends with Irie. Irie had once been a merchant seaman and had traveled all over the world. He gave that up to become a back woodsman. Irie made his living trapping, selling hides, fish and wood. He liked to brag about a large liquor still he once operated. "The still had so many men working we blew a whistle at 12 o'clock" joked Irie. He brought the Coast Guard men fresh dressed fish. Irie, a bachelor, kept a tame red fox for company.

Irie liked to hunt and so did Jack. Jack kept three coon hounds. When he was off duty Jack, a couple of his C.G. buddies and Irie would go deer or coon hunting. Soon there were coon, deer and fox hides tacked to the side of the barn at the Coast Guard Station. The men received word that the Big Brass were coming for an inspection. Some of the boys thought that Jack was going to get in trouble for the hides tacked on the barn. They advised him not to take any chances. Jack did nothing with the hides and everyone was nervous the day the officers arrived. One officer said, "I see you boys have been doing some hunting. That's good. While you are hunting you might just spot something we need to know about. I do a little hunting myself."

The war years brought hard times and plenty of stress but there were funny moments too. Our family remembers a particular twenty-four liberty pass. Jack arrived home late one night with his friend, Don Tornow. They were driving Jack's two-door Model A Ford. Mama had painted large horse heads on both doors making the bright blue car very distinctive. Everyone was asleep in the house when Jack brought Rusty, a pet raccoon, into the kitchen. Before going to bed, he tied Rusty to the kitchen table. Mama was in for a surprise when she walked into the kitchen to cook breakfast. We heard her scream, but, as always, she was a good sport. Some of the girls at the Southport USO made a little plaid jacket for Rusty.

By the summer of 1944 the Coast Guard decided a Mounted Beach Patrol was no longer needed. The men had taken their job of protecting our coast very seriously. The many hours Jack spent hunting proved beneficial to him when he was transferred to a more dangerous assignment in the Pacific. An officer asked if he had ever done any duck or bird hunting. Jack answered, "Yes sir, I've hunted most of my life." He was assigned to be one of the 40 millimeter anti-aircraft gunners on LST 204 and was soon taking aim at swarming Kamikazes.

My brother remembered the months spent at Long Beach, North Carolina, to be the best months of his war experience.

Barbara Hubbard Wilson

OLD JAIL REPORT

January 12,
2000

Most of the work on the Old Jail has been inside: removing more paneling, taking out duct work, removing drop ceilings, scraping loose paint, plaster and cleaning. We are salvaging all the wood that's sound and storing it in the new Jail. All the second floor bars (outside) are painted and the last on 1st floor are being worked on. A brick layer and a woodworker have volunteered to help brick-in the various holes and finish trimming-out the new windows. (Thanks to Peter & Beverly Wyckoff for donating the bricks.) Sykes Welding will give us an estimate on the front entrance so it can be restored to its original look with steel bars on the outside of the front doors.

The one room in the new Jail that we need for book storage has been washed, lights fixed and added, latrines removed and water pipes capped to stop leaks and prevent any in the future. The room is ready to have the books moved into it. There is still some gym equipment in the back room but Rob Gandy is working to get that out. The Friends of the Library are going to start cleaning and fixing their area so they can store books for the July Book Sale.

Irv Green, June and I have been the regular workers but we've had Arnold Kalmanson, Susie's son-in-law, do a day and Gordon Axon work two days. Wolf Furstenau is going to need some serious help moving books and I'm counting on him getting the help to do that so we can get into those other Old Jail rooms. Anyone wishing to help Wolf move books should contact him to set a date for the project.

Bob Wojda

**Please remit annual dues promptly to insure
projects are funded !**

Thank you

New Membership Registration

Join the Southport Historical Society and receive the
newsletter on a regular basis

individual	\$10	student	\$2	business/organization	\$15
couple	15	(up to age 18)		sustaining	25

life membership	\$ 150	life membership for couple	\$ 200
-----------------	--------	----------------------------	--------

name (please print) _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone _____

send to PO Box 10014, Southport, North Carolina 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.

Southport Coverlet

Remember: your member discount is available only on items purchased from the society

This beautiful coverlet was commissioned by the Southport Historical Society and created by *We Love Country*. It is 100% cotton, two-layer, Jacquard woven in the U.S.A., preshrunk, colorfast and machine-washable. It is handsome and practical, measuring approximately 48 x 68 inches, and fringed on all four sides.

The design captures the history and spirit of early Southport, as seen in old photographs taken many years ago. Depicted are the Brunswick County Courthouse, the Pilot obelisk at the old cemetery, the Ft. Johnston Garrison House, the Masonic Hall during World War I, the entrance (1912) of the Southport Public Library, the Old Jail, the early school (1904) which is now an art gallery, Doshier Memorial Hospital, St. Philip's, Trinity Methodist, the old Pilot tower, Prince's Creek light, Old Baldy on Bald Head Island, the Indian Trail Tree and the Historical Society logo. The perfect gift for family members and friends both near and far, it captures special memories and will become an instant keepsake.

This unique, custom woven coverlet is available in the following classic colors. Williamsburg Blue, Hunter Green and Cranberry Red, all with Natural as a second color. The price is only \$50.00. Member discount, 10%.

Please enter the desired quantity of each color:

___ Williamsburg Blue @ \$50.00 each \$ _____

___ Hunter Green @ \$50.00 each \$ _____

___ Cranberry Red @ \$50.00 each \$ _____

Sales Tax @ 6% \$ _____

Shipping (if necessary) \$ 5.00

TOTAL enclosed \$ _____

Checks should be made payable to The Southport Historical Society and mailed to PO Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461

Ordered by:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____