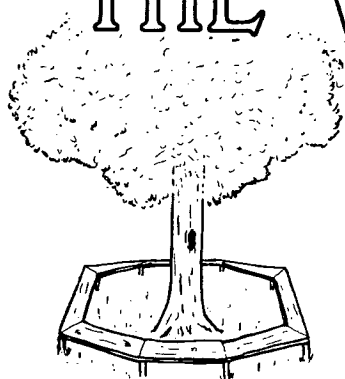


THE WHITTLERS BENCH

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

501 N. Atlantic Ave. • SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

February 14, 1989



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: As President I want to restate the purpose of our Society.

1. Bring together persons interested in the history of Southport and surrounding area.
2. Discover and collect materials which illustrate the history of this area including histories, genealogies, biographies, photographs, and anything else that illustrates the life, conditions, and events of the past.

With this purpose in mind, I hope we will make this year a building year for the Society and increase our membership. I urge all members to get their annual dues in and most especially urge members to bring a new member to our next meeting.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE MEETING: In order to get our Membership Drive for 1989 underway with a "BANG", a meeting will be held Tuesday, February 28, 1989 in the Board room of the Library at 7:30 PM. We need your dues and your IN PUT. Please be present.

WHITTLERS BENCH: This copy of the Whittlers Bench is a make-up copy for the January Issue in order to bring members up-to-date on the happenings of the Society. Please forgive us for missing our regular publishing date.

HISTORICAL MEETING DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR: (Meeting places to be announced)

APRIL 27, 1989

JUNE 22, 1989

SEPT. 28, 1989

ANTIQUÉ SHOW: Plans are being formulated for our 4th of July Antique Show. We hope to have the plans complete by our next regular meeting. We are expecting another successful show. JUST LIKE LAST 4TH.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Please note that membership forms plus envelopes are enclosed with this issue of the Whittlers Bench. If you have not paid your 1989 membership dues, please use the form and addressed envelop to mail yours in. Your cooperation is appreciated.

HISTORY CLASS: Susie Carson will begin another class in Southport History on March 2nd at the Brunswick Community College Annex on Lord Street in Southport. It is requested that anyone interested in attending please call Susie immediately so the name can be added to the list to whom the College will send notices and further information.

MEMBERSHIP LIST: It is hoped that the Membership List for 1989 will be ready for printing in the April Whittlers Bench.

HURRY AND GET THOSE DUES IN.

GENEALOGY COMMITTEE

The PROJECT 1890 got off to a good start in September, but has bogged down since. We still hope to read and every surname index the Southport Papers for the years from 1890 to 1900. This will fill an historical gap left by the lost 1890 census. Anyone interested in helping with this PROJECT please contact either Abbie (457-9466) or Susie (457-6941) and we will get you started. All you have to do is read a microfilmed newspaper at the Southport Library. You can read the paper anytime that is convenient for you when the library is open. Reading one paper usually takes an hour or two, to read, depending on how interesting you find it. You write down the names of persons on prepared papers stored in a box near the microfilm reader.

The New Hanover County Library in Wilmington is sponsoring some Seminar/Workshops in Genealogy. Abbie will be conducting the session on Census Records, scheduled for January 18 from 7 to 9 pm. Other sessions will be conducted by other area genealogists, once a week, until the first week in March. If you are interested in any of these sessions contact the Local History Section of the Library in Wilmington, or Abbie Bitney, for more information. Classes at Brunswick Community College will start in the Spring. Local History to be taught by Susan Carson, and Genealogical Research Techniques to be taught by Abbie Bitney.

The Genealogy Committee urges you honor your ancestors with the Pioneer Family and Century Family Certificates. Send us a stamped addressed envelope for an application blank. This is a continuing project designed to honor your ancestor by recording your family history in a secure place and making it available for other researchers. You will receive in return for your family story a beautiful gold certificate, suitable for framing!

We have no family queries for this Whittlers Bench.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Report from the Cemetery Committee: One of our \$500 CDs matured this fall, and it was the decision of the committee that it would be more convenient to have one large CD rather than three smaller ones each maturing at a different date. So we cashed them in and got a \$1500 CD at Security Savings and Loan, Southport. We now have a balance of \$1666.23. Please remember the Cemetery Endowment Fund with donations and by letting people know about it. We have made a good start to having funds to undertake some real care for the heritage of Southport but we must not stop.

LIVE OAK - Quercus virginiana: One of Southport's most beautiful and distinctive features is an abundance of graceful old live oak trees shading the streets and gardens. Among the last remnants of the vast live oak forest that once covered the outer coastal plain from Virginia southward, these trees are well adapted to our sandy soils and have great tensile strength against the ravages of Atlantic storms. So, whether by nature of design, the live-oak was an ideal choice for Southport streets and gardens. Indeed, Southport people have long had a special love for their oaks, as is evident from the large number of trees that have been preserved to reach maturity, and by the numerous spots in which a street or sidewalk bends in deference to an elderly tree.

While today we see the live-oak only as an ornamental shade tree, our forebears viewed it with a more practical eye. John Lawson, whose 1713 history extolled the Carolina colony's natural resources, noted that the heavy, durable wood of the live-oak was an excellent material for shipbuilding. "...The firmness and the great weight thereof, frightens our Sawyers from the Fatigue that attends the cutting of this Timbre," he declared, but "A Nail once driven therein, tis next to an Impossibility to draw it out." He commented that the wood was also used for window frames, mallets, and pins for blocks. Lawson and other early writers were interested, too, in the ways that the native Indians used live-oak acorns in their cooking. Mark Catesby reported that the acorns were used to thicken venison stew and that an oil extracted from them was "...very pleasant and wholesome, little inferior to that of almonds." Lawson added that the Indians knew how to make a cocoa-like substance from the acorns "...whereof they have made a Chocolate, not to be distinguished by a good Palate." In the long run, however, it was the shipyard rather than the kitchen that made the Southern live-oak famous.

European oak had long been favored for shipbuilding, and the colonists were quick to discover that American live-oaks were as good, if not better, for framing ships and boats. Because live-oaks begin branching relatively close to the ground, they could not supply long planks for decking and sides, but the thick joints and curved limbs were perfectly suited for making the ribs and knees of vessels. By the early 1800's, live-oak was in such demand for naval vessels that the federal government began contracting with Northern shipbuilders to send teams of workers south where they would harvest huge quantities of live-oak timber and rough-cut it to the desired shapes before sending it on to the shipyards. "Live-oaking", as this practice was called, continued on a massive scale throughout most of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, the live-oak forests were quickly depleted, forcing operations to move further and further southward. Resources along the Cape Fear must have been exhausted at an early date. A government survey made between 1815 and 1817 indicates that only 300 sound trees remained on Smith Island (Bald Head) - a mere trifle when the Navy required about 600 live-oaks to frame just one ship of the line. The live-oaking industry ended when wooden ships became obsolete, but the use of wood for decorative purposes and trim work continued long after.

Botanically, the live-oak is a member of the beech family, Fagaceae, and grows naturally only in the sandy soils of the southern and Gulf coasts. In an uncrowded area, the live-oak may reach 60 or more feet in height with a trunk up to 7 feet in diameter. Its branches are typically very long and spread in a broad graceful arc. Liveoaks frequently become gnarled or grow in strangely bent shapes which adds character and charm to their appearance, as may be seen in Southport's well-known landmark, the so-called "Indian Trail Tree". Live-oak is also one of the few oaks that remain green all year, shedding its old leaves in spring as new ones grow in. With its remarkable strength, beauty and longevity, the live-oak is truly a magnificent tree, and Southport is especially fortunate to have many fine examples.

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
YEAR 1988

Balance January 1, 1988 \$ 207.50

RECEIPTS:

1988 Dues	\$ 615.00	
1989 Dues	195.00	
Note cards	92.50	
Tote bags	536.00	
Postage	17.25	
Withdrawn Book account Security Savings & Loan	1,380.00	
4th July Antique Show - Spaces	640.00	
4th July Antique Show - ticket sales	868.00	
4th July Antique Show - Drink sales	88.70	
Book sales:		
Architecture	\$ 524.50	
Cemetery	154.00	
Chronology	300.00	
Ft. Caswell	60.00	
Bald Head	42.00	
Capt. Charlie	79.60	
Brunswick County History	210.00	
Book of Wilmington	<u>24.00</u>	1,394.10
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 5,826.55

DISBURSEMENTS:

Postage newsletter & general	197.40	
Postage 4th July Antique Show	69.00	
Dues and subscriptions	66.00	
Supplies including newsletter, refreshments, certificates, gold seals, Halloween etc.	148.13	
Federation of N.C. Historical Societies - payment on loan (balance due \$500.00)	2,350.00	
4th July expenses including watchman, advertising, drinks, postage etc.	463.40	
Brochures	149.36	
Repairs air conditioner and garden edging Old Jail	100.12	
Flowers	43.00	
Note cards & envelopes	148.10	
Tote bags	525.00	
Broadfoot Publishing - percentage sale Books including Ft. Caswell, Chronology, Book of Wilmington and Capt. Charlie	150.91	
Brunswick County (sale Brunswick County History)	210.00	
Copy of Gov. William Hawkins Papers	<u>30.00</u>	4,650.42
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$ 4,650.42
 BALANCE DECEMBER 31, 1988		 \$ 1,383.65