

# southport historical society

## Whittler's Bench

### Summer 2019



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### Parker's Perspective



Wow! What a great event the 1st Annual Spring Kitchen Tour turned out to be! The SHS event planners in concert with the Southport Tourism Department certainly put on a memorable show. Thanks to all who made it happen: homeowners who opened their kitchens, docents who brought early Southport culinary personalities to life, volunteer hosts and hostesses and, of course, those Southport Historical Society members and Tourism Department folks who worked so diligently over the past several months in taking this idea and bringing it to fruition. Specifically, our appreciation goes out to Lisa Anderson, Liz Fuller, Linda DeTorres, Bob Surridge, Bob Hagerman Sharon Venis, and Randy Jones. This was a great collaboration among visionaries who knew what needed to be accomplished and then quietly got the job done. What a team! I heard many positive comments throughout the afternoon from those who toured the kitchens so it would appear that the "1st Annual" will likely be the first of many.

Meanwhile, Summer is here and things will begin to get busy in the area while the Southport Historical Society takes its usual seasonal hiatus. The North Carolina 4th of July Festival is here already and the region will see the tourist season ramp up. As you wander around Southport, I would suggest you walk by the John N. Smith Cemetery adjacent to Leonard Street and take a look at the new SHS historical sign that was installed in May. In collaboration with the John N. Smith Cemetery Foundation and Southport artist Ricky Evans, the sign tells the story of the cemetery and of the many Southport African American heroes and icons buried there. The John N. Smith Cemetery Foundation continues to do great work and we are pleased to partner with them as necessary in support of their mission.

I have been amazed over the work that has been done at the Garrison and the Old Jail over the past six months. The level of energy that our Board and volunteers have been putting into projects at our two locations as well as our website and social media is quite simply extraordinary. At the midway point of 2019, the Society continues to strive for excellence and relevance to our membership and community at large.

Have a great Summer everyone!

## SHS Upcoming Events



- [Old Jail Tours](#). July 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 – 4 pm, Corner of Rhett and Nash St.
- [USCIS Naturalization Ceremony](#) July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4 pm; Garrison Lawn; SHS will give copies of [A History of Fort Johnston on the Lower Cape Fear](#) by Wilson Anglely to all the new citizens
- [Old Burying Ground Cemetery Tour](#). July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2pm – 3 pm, Corner of Rhett and Nash St.
- [Second Tuesday Talk](#) with Charen Frink *"Southern Women During the War Between the States"*, July 9, 2019 @ 10:30 am - 11:30 am, Margaret and James Harper, Jr. Library
- [Second Tuesday Talk](#) with Travis Gilbert, Historian of Bald Head Island *"History of Bald Head Island"* August 13, 2019 @ 10:30 am - 11:30 am, Margaret and James Harper, Jr. Library
- [Second Tuesday Talk](#) with Bob Surridge, *"Southport Scoundrels"* September 10, 2019 @ 10:30 am - 11:30 am, Margaret and James Harper, Jr. Library
- [SHS General Membership Meeting](#), with Becky Felton, *"Southport Wooden Boat Show"* September 26, 2019 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, Southport Community Building. Potluck Dinner.
- [SHS 4 week History Course](#) with Liz Fuller, Brunswick Community College, Tues., Oct. 29 – Nov 19.

## 2019 Susan Sellers Carson Scholarship Recipient Announced!



*Sophia Rupkalvis, Recipient of the 2019 SHS Susan Carson Sellers Scholarship with her parents, Colleen and Jim Rupkalvis. Sophia will attend UNC-Chapel Hill in the Fall. She will major in Mathematics, Secondary Education. Read Sophia's winning essay on page 13.*  
*Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes.*



## SHS First Annual Kitchen Tour was a Sweet Success!



*Lottie Adkins portrayed by Linda Pukenas with Maryanne Bonifant and Judy Droitcour*

The streets of Southport were abuzz with history in June, when Southport Historical Society's First Annual Kitchen Tour took place.

More than 500 visitors were welcomed into the Robert

Ruark Inn and five beautiful nearby homes. In each kitchen, visitors listened as historic Southport women "came to life" to tell about their days in the early 1900's.



*Robert Ruark Inn - Historic Home of Ruark's grandparents, Charlotte and E.H. Adkins c. 1890*



*Norma Brinkman Loughlin portrayed by Kristan Phillips*

Guests sampled historic desserts based on recipes each woman had contributed to a church cookbook, published in 1907 by St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

The tour concluded with an opportunity to purchase an expanded version of the cookbook written by local author, and Southport Historical Society Board Member, Dr. Bob Surridge.



*Grace Doshier portrayed by Katy Menne at the Historic D. Bender home circa 1895*



*Dr. Bob Surridge signing copies of his book, Hominy Muffins and Oyster Pie*

As an added treat, visitors could examine a 1915 Model T Ford and learn

what it would have been like to drive an automobile in early 20th century Southport.



*"Lizzie" a 1915 Model T Ford owned by John and Sara Laurents*



## SHS First Annual Kitchen Tour (cont.)



*Katy Menne showing visitors the map of the Kitchen Tour*

More than 50 volunteers worked to make the afternoon event a success.



*Tallie Watts portrayed by Pat Kirkman Photo Credit: Judy Rubin*

Desserts were prepared and sponsored by Gabriela's Bakery, Nancy Jo's Homemade Bakery, Gourmet to Go & Catered Affairs, and Mrs. Marian Martin. Additional sponsors were 50 Lakes Cabinet Design, and Coastal Cottage Shoppe.



*Liz Fuller next to "Thor" the SHS Replica of an 1841 Bronze 6 Pounder Cannon*



*Stella Harker portrayed by Tracy Beaulieu*

The Southport Historical Society wishes to thank all the homeowners for sharing their lovely homes: Tracy Beaulieu, Susan and John Delaney, Becky Felton, Becky and Irv Hager, Elizabeth and Bob Lambert, and Linda and Rick Pukenas.

## SHS First Annual Kitchen Tour (cont.)



*Lettie Hewitt portrayed by Martha Johnson Photo Credit: Judy Rubin*



*Jessie Stevens Taylor and C. E. Taylor portrayed by Lisa and Richard Anderson*

Historic Characters were portrayed by Lisa Anderson (Jessie Stevens Taylor), Richard Anderson (C .E. Taylor), Tracy Beaulieu (Stella Harker), Liz Fuller (Francis Davis), Martha Johnson (Lettie Hewett), Pat Kirkman (Tallie Watts), John Laurents (Henry Bridgers), Sara Laurents (Mary Bridgers), Katy Menne (Grace Doshier), Kristan Phillips (Norma Brinkman Loughlin), Linda Pukenas (Lottie Adkins) and Bob Surridge (Mayor Yaskell).

Docents, Kitchen Helpers, and additional Volunteers were: Judy Berg, Maryanne Bonifant, Desiree Bridge, Donna Cassidy, Kathy Craven, Dee Crocker, Debi Dow, Judy Droitcour, Pam Galpin, Alice Gardiner, Bob Gardiner, Bob Hagerman, Rachel Huggins, Suzanne Hunt, Linda James, Sharon Lightbourne, MJ Martin, Barb Morris, Colleen O'Donnell, Sally Pollard, Ruth Ramsey, Karen Rogers, Katie Solecki, Mary Speliotis, Sherry Sutherland, Jerry Suver, Linda Tatro, Sharon Venis, Colleen Webster.



*Mayor L.T. Yaskell portrayed by Bob Surridge*

"Lizzie" the Model T Ford was provided by John and Sara Laurents.

Photography was provided by Zeb Starnes and videography by Bob Fuller.

The 2018 SHS Kitchen Tour Committee was Lisa Anderson, Desiree Bridge, Linda DeTorres, Alice Gardiner, Randy Jones and Linda Pukenas.

All the funds raised during the event will go to the Southport Historical Society. Money will be used to pay for new exhibits, to enhance the Oral History program, and to provide ongoing upkeep and maintenance costs

*Except where noted, all photos in this article are by Zeb Starnes.*



*Francis Davis portrayed by Liz Fuller*



## Southport's Women Didn't Just Stay in the Kitchen

One of the nice things about the Southport Kitchen Tour was that it gave us the opportunity to highlight the history of women in Southport. Too often, women's lives and accomplishments are overlooked in history books. The following are bios of the women portrayed in our tour. For information about more Southport women in the early 1900's, read Dr. Bob Surridge's book, [Hominy Muffins and Oyster Pies.](#)

**Charlotte "Lottie" Morse Adkins (1860-1928)** lived her entire life in Southport, N.C. She married her husband, River Pilot Edward Hall "Hallie" Adkins when she was 22 years old. The home that Lottie and her husband built in 1890, is still standing. Today it functions as a Bed and Breakfast known as the Robert Ruark Inn. Lottie had three children, Elmer, Charlotte and Mae. Her grandson, novelist Robert Ruark, immortalized her in his book, *The Old Man and the Boy*. He described her as a strong-willed woman who would often shoo her husband and grandson out of the house and encourage them to go hunt something up for supper. She was renowned for her cooking, especially her fruitcakes. Ruark wrote, *"For Christmas she would have fruitcakes as large as a mill wheel underway by September...full of dark green citron, fat raisins, candied cherries, and juicy currants."*



*Fanny Price Davis Photo from SCRR Archives*

**Frances "Fanny" Price Davis (1850-1949)** lived to be nearly 100 years old. In her youth she attended the Glen Anna Female Seminary in Thomasville, NC. Born eleven years before the Civil War, she lived through the First and Second World Wars. When she was still a teenager, a Union soldier came to her family home looking for her older brother. She informed the soldier that her brother had done nothing wrong and suggested he remove himself from their property and leave her brother alone. He did. At the age of 18, Fanny married Dunbar Davis, a Civil War veteran and a member of the Oak Island Life Saving Station. She had eight children, three of whom died before the age of three. Fanny lived long enough to know four generations of her descendants, including her granddaughter Norma Brinkman Loughlin. Mrs. Davis was a driving force behind the publication of the 1907 Church Cookbook that helped support St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

**Grace Keyworth Doshier (1882-1948)** was born in Baltimore, Maryland to a prominent family. She met her husband, Dr. J. Arthur Doshier while he was studying at the Maryland School of Medicine. They married in 1903 after he finished his medical training. She had one daughter, Gracie, who was born in 1905. During World War I she took care of her daughter at home while her husband served as a physician overseas. The Doshers lived in a large home on the corner of Moore St, which is no longer standing. For several years in the 1920's, Grace's mother and stepfather lived with the family. When her daughter, Gracie, married, she and her husband moved into the family home. The young couple had two children, Muriel and Robert. In 1939, Grace was widowed at the age of 57. She continued to share her home with her daughter, her son-in-law, and her grandchildren for the rest of her life.



*Grace Doshier, her grand-daughter, Muriel, and her daughter Gracie Doshier Jones. Photo from SCRR Archives*

**Stella Haskett Harker (1880 – 1919)** was a native of Southport. She married her husband, John Harker, when she was twenty-two. She had five children, Laura, Carrie, Elsie, Holmes and Annie. Stella was a founding member of the Southport Civic Association (later the Southport Woman's Club). The organization worked to improve the beauty, cleanliness, education and safety of Southport. They were instrumental in getting trash barrels, streetlights, street signs and a public library in the community.

**Lettie McKeithan Hewett (1875 – 1972)** Lettie was born and raised in Southport, the daughter of a Civil War veteran. When she was twenty-one, she married Charles Hewett, originally from New Jersey. A few years later, she and Charles traveled to Philadelphia to visit relatives. Her husband became a respected businessman and political leader in Southport. Lettie was a devoted gardener and won many prizes from the Woman's Club for her blooms.



*Norma and JJ Loughlin, Jr circa 1915,  
Photo from SCRR Archives*

**Norma Evelyn Brinkman Loughlin (1895 – 1961)** was only twelve years old when she submitted her recipe for Soft Molasses Gingerbread to the St. Philip's Cookbook, making her one of the youngest contributors. Norma had deep roots in Southport. Her mother, and grandmother (Fanny Price Davis) were also Southport natives. When Norma was seventeen, she married Joseph Jackson (JJ) Loughlin, Jr. She had four children, Frances, Evelyn, Joe Sam and Mary Ann. Norma lived to know her grandchildren, who affectionately called her "Gee Gee".

**Jessie Stevens Taylor (1879 – 1961)** moved to Southport with her family when she was ten years old. In 1901, Jessie began volunteering for the U.S. Weather Service. She would raise flags on the fifty-foot weather tower that stands on the Garrison lawn. These flags signaled weather conditions to ships. Jessie manned the weather tower for sixty years. She received a Presidential commendation for her service and was credited with saving many lives. In 1909 Jessie married her husband, C. Edward Taylor. That same year she started the Southport Civic Club which later became the Southport Woman's Club. Jessie served five terms as President of the Club throughout her fifty- year involvement with the organization. Jessie had four children, Elizabeth, Margaret, Anna, and Edward. Following her death, a monument was erected on the Garrison lawn near the weather tower, noting her contribution to Southport.

**Eliza Talmadge "Tallie" Tharpe Watts (1879 – 1940)** was born in Town Creek, NC. When she was twenty-one she married her husband, Samuel Watts of Smithville. She had four children, Hulan, Samuel, Lucy and Susan. Tallie was very talented musically. She gave piano lessons and played the organ at her church. She was a petite woman and had a difficult time reaching the pedals on the church organ. So, she got her sons to take turns pumping the pedals for her! Tallie was intelligent and ambitious. When her husband took the Postmaster exam, Tallie took it as well. They both passed! But in the end, Samuel was given the position and Tallie continued with her teaching.



*Tallie Watts and her son Thomas Hulan, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen Poole*

## Behind the Scenes at the Kitchen Tour



*Desiree Bridge baking soft molasses gingerbread and Sally Lunn bread before dressing in period attire to help serve in the kitchen tour. Photo credit: Marie Bridge*

The Southport Kitchen Tour required an amazing variety of skillsets to put together. One of the experts who contributed to the event was Desiree Bridge, an Historian and Heritage Baker, Educator, Lecturer, and Consultant.

Desiree's unique background, which includes a degree in History from UNC Greensboro and a degree as a Baking and Pastry Chef from Johnson and Wales, made her uniquely suited to translate the historic recipes to work in a modern kitchen.

Her knowledge of food chemistry enabled her to multiply recipes by a large amount without over or under cooking the recipe and ruining the outcome. This is fortunate as Desiree single-handedly made 575 Sally Lunn Breads and 600 Soft Molasses Gingerbread petite muffins for the Kitchen Tour.

Following the Tour, we asked Desiree to tell us about some of the differences in the ways the people of Southport prepared and ate food 100 years ago versus today. Here is some of what she told us.

**Food was eaten seasonally and more locally than today. It was possible to eat items out of season, for instance certain heritage breeds of apples were grown solely for their long shelf life after being harvested, but often they were preserved. Common ways of preserving items were to salt, dry, pickle, or soak in alcohol, like brandied peaches. If you go back far enough into history where almost every home had a brick wood fire oven you would see records of them using them like dehydrators. After using your oven for baking you would let it cool down to where it feels more like a dry hot attic and then you would place trays of sliced fruits or vegetables and leave them in the oven a couple days to dry for storage. You also see them simply stringing food items up and hanging them in their kitchens to dry slowly. Remember electricity is a very modern marvel and in the past you would be using wood fires to cook and bake. Cooking and baking this way will keep a kitchen nice and dry, perfect for dehydrating an item for future use.**

**The people of Southport had access to a wider variety of food than the citizens of isolated land-locked towns would have. They could augment the food they grew with fish and seafood and with items brought on ships like sugar, citrus and bananas. Even so, sugar was expensive and rarely used unless you were wealthy. Other sweeteners, like honey were more commonly used.**

**In many instances, the kitchen garden was the medicine cabinet. Vinegar was used to promote healing as well as a preservative and a condiment. Ginger was known to settle stomach upset and so was baked into muffins, cookies and bread as a tempting food for those recovering from illness.**

**The Kitchen Tour recipes illustrate the challenges that women of the 1900s faced. Lottie Adkin's fruitcake was a traditional method of preserving fruits and nuts so that cake could be eaten out of season. Tallie Watt's vinegar pie was a low-cost way of adding some bite to a custard pie in the absence of citrus juice. Norma Brinkman's molasses gingerbread was a nice balance of flavors and a soothing treat for upset tummies. Grace Doshier's Sally Lunn bread was based on an old European recipe, but it was modified to meet regional limitations by using lard instead of butter. Lettie Harker's hominy muffins used a popular form of corn used in many traditional Southern dishes, like grits. In contrast to the other recipes, Stella Harker's Lemon Oaks cake was a more modern recipe which used baking powder instead of relying on extensive beating to provide air. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that Stella was a young wife and mother when she contributed her recipe. She might have embraced newer methods of cooking.**

Desiree divides her time between Southport and Bald Head Island. She is available to teach classes on baking, traditional recipes, campfire cooking, and Apothecary gardening. Her specialties are bread, cinnamon rolls and other baked goods. She can be contacted at [dhbridgeblue@aol.com](mailto:dhbridgeblue@aol.com).



## New SHS Historical Sign

In May, a new Southport Historical Society sign was installed at the John N. Smith Cemetery, 225 E. Leonard Street. The content of the sign was developed by John N. Smith Cemetery Restoration and Preservation, Inc. The layout was designed by Southport artist Ricky Evans. The sign tells the story of several of Southport's citizens who are buried in the cemetery.

The JNS Cemetery, which dates to 1874, is the only intact African American cemetery in Southport. The 1500+ interred include former slaves, farmers, fishermen, business owners, landowners, midwives, educators, politicians, and veterans from every U.S. conflict from the Civil War onward.

Among those commemorated on the sign are:

- **Malissa Wortham Jackson (1848 - 1944).** Born into slavery, she became a significant landowner in Southport. She was a businesswoman, a philanthropist and a midwife. She gifted the land on which Brown's Chapel AMEZ Church stands today.
- **Abram Galloway (1843-1927)** served in the 37th Regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War. He was active in politics during the late 19th century when African Americans were a major political force in North Carolina. In 1897, he was the Chairman of the Southport Republican Party.
- **Franklin H. Gordon (1856 – 1939)** was born a slave on the Swain plantation. He was the first African American educator in Brunswick County. He worked tirelessly as an educator during the last half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century when there were limited educational opportunities for African American youths.



*John N Smith Cemetery Sign Photo Credit: Liz Fuller*

JNS Cemetery is recognized by the City of Southport as an Historically Significant Landmark and Community Asset.



*(L-R) Gordon Walker, Judy Gordon, Wendell Watson, Ellie De Young, Members of the Board of Directors of John N. Smith Cemetery Restoration and Preservation, Inc. Photo Credit: Joe Siudara.*

John N. Smith Cemetery Restoration and Preservation Inc. endeavors to ensure the physical integrity, the community relevance, and the historical significance of the John N. Smith Cemetery.

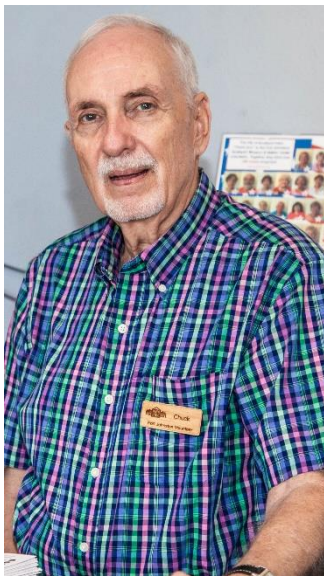


## Grand Opening of the "Life in the Garrison Exhibit"

The Grand Opening of the "Life in the Garrison" exhibit was held in April. The guests of honor were Debbie Mollycheck along with her husband Larry Mitlin, and her brother Franto (Frank) Mollycheck IV.



*Life in the Garrison Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes*



*Chuck Smith, Visitor Center Docent and son of Asst. Keeper James E. Smith, Jr. who saved Keeper Mollycheck's life in 1937*

*Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes*

In an "It can only happen in Southport" moment, it was recognized during the ribbon cutting event that Chuck Smith, the Visitor Center docent working at the front desk that morning, was none other than the son of Assistant Light Keeper James E. Smith, Jr. It was Smith who, in 1937, got the Keeper to safety when he had his heart attack on the Cape Fear River. Smith filled in for Keeper Mollycheck during his months-long recovery. The chance encounter gave Debbie Mollycheck the opportunity to express her gratitude to Chuck for his father's role in saving her grandfather's life.

The exhibit tells the story of Franto Mollycheck II and his family. From 1937 to 1951, Keeper Mollycheck was in charge of the Cape Fear navigation lights. During his service as Keeper, the Mollycheck family lived in the Garrison. The exhibit tells the family's story and displays some of the Mollycheck's original furnishings.

When the Mollychecks moved out in the early 1950s, the government renovated the building and used it as housing for the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) Commander and his family. An adjacent exhibit displays all the Military Commanders who lived in the Garrison.



*Military Commanders at Sunny Point from 1955 to 2005 Photo Credit: Liz Fuller*

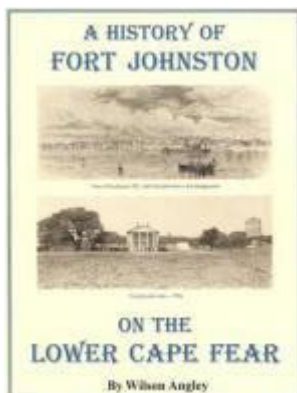


*Life in the Garrison Exhibit, Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes*



## Don't miss this year's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Ceremony.

Last year hundreds of people gathered to witness 78 candidates for citizenship as they took their oath of allegiance. Candidates came from 38 different countries. Many of them waited to take their oath during the Independence Day Celebration.



The Ceremony takes place on the lawn of the Fort Johnston- Southport Museum & Visitor Center Lawn overlooking the Cape Fear River.

Southport Historical Society commemorates this special day by providing a copy of the book, [A History of Fort Johnston on the Lower Cape Fear by Wilson Angley](#) to each new citizen.



2018 Candidates take their Oath of Allegiance to become Citizens. Garrison Lawn, Southport, NC  
Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes

The event is free and open to all.

Sponsored by Downtown Southport Inc., Novant Health & Wilmington's Big Talker 106.7 FM



The Old Jail, built 1904. Photo from SCRR Archives



Old Smithville Burying Ground circa 1792. Photo from SCRR Archives

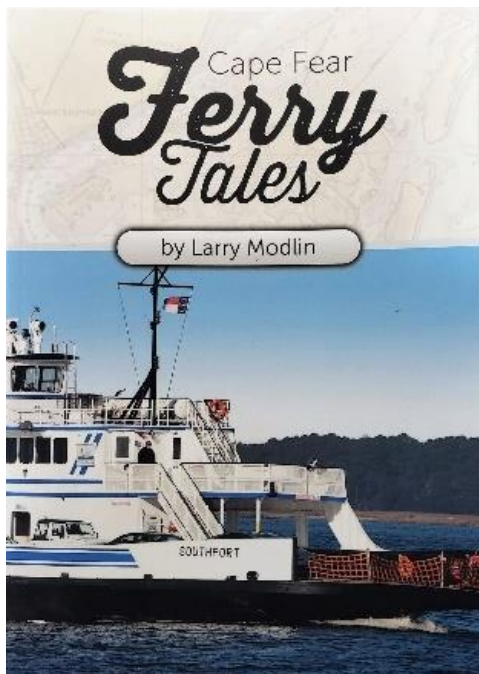
## Extra tours will be available during the 4th of July festivities.

The Old Jail will be open July 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 to 4 pm.  
Tour the Old Smithville Burying Ground July 4<sup>th</sup> 2 – 3 pm.

Both sites are on the Corner of Rhett and Nash St.

**Book Review** by Bob Hagerman**Cape Fear Fairy Tales**

By  
Larry Modlin



Larry, a longtime deck hand on the Ft. Fisher/Southport ferry run gives us a fun and entertaining book. The Cape Fear Ferry is an iconic part of the Southport scene. Riding the ferry is a must do for visitors to the area and an important part of commuting life for people who live on the other side of the river. It is also a link to one of the most important battles of the Civil War, the fight for Ft. Fisher/Wilmington.

Information about the ferries, the route, the rules and operations and the dedicated crew are woven in with stories about the passengers that he meets every day. Some passengers fall asleep, some are friendly, some are rude, some refuse to follow instructions, some are compassionate, some are intoxicated, some have weddings and parties on the boat, but everyone has a story.

He gives us a modern-day version of a Huckleberry Finn tale about life and people on the Cape Fear river. Larry is an everyman's philosopher and gives his personal views on some of the issues that we encounter daily.

The book is about laughter, beauty and respect for others.

Don't miss it.

## Save the Date!!

**Southport Historical Society will be offering a 4-week Class at Brunswick Community College this Fall.**

**Topics in Local Southport History** – Discover the little-known history of Southport, drawn from the years before it became a quaint seaside town. The focus will be on some of the challenges Southport faced during the early 1900s – African American Pursuit of Education; Prohibition, Smuggling, and Moonshine; World Wars on the Shores of Southport; and the Impact of Hazel, Helene and other Hurricanes. Students will learn methods for conducting their own local history research. Each class concludes with an opportunity to visit a local historical site or museum.

Tuesdays, 1 – 3:30, Oct. 29 – Nov 19. Instructor: Liz Fuller

Tuition is Free but class size is limited. See the BCC CHOICES catalog for registration information.



## 2019 Susan Sellers Carson Scholarship Winning Essay

by Sophia Rupkalvis



*Sophia Rupkalvis reading her Winning Essay at the May SHS General Membership Meeting*  
*Photo Credit: Zeb Starnes*

After the Civil War, education became the top priority for freed slaves, and their desire for education was so strong that they often outnumbered white students in southern schools. Booker T. Washington said, "It was a whole race trying to go to school" (Fraser). But this created numerous problems and as Reconstruction ended, whites across the South began to take back control of their states. Even though Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment, by the mid-1870s states began to disenfranchise African Americans (McConarty). This, and the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court ruling, led to racial segregation under the separate but equal doctrine (History.com Editors). Public schools became segregated and African American schools were not funded at the same level as white schools. These schools had serious challenges, suffering from overcrowding, poor facilities, and lack of resources. The solution to these problems came from an unlikely partnership.

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in Virginia in 1856, but became one of the most well-known African American supporters of education. In 1881, he founded the Tuskegee Institute, a school originally dedicated to training public school teachers (History.com Editors). As the condition of African American education in the South got worse, Washington worked to develop solutions to the problems. He devised a plan for a huge program to improve schooling for rural African Americans throughout the South. The only problem was the cost. However, since Washington had used wealthy Northerners to help fund and build the Tuskegee Institute, he decided to try to do the same thing to fund this idea (Hanchett, Saving the South's Rosenwald Schools).

Julius Rosenwald was born to Jewish immigrants in Springfield, Illinois, in 1862. He was not educated, but instead went into the clothing industry. He joined Sears, Roebuck, and Company in 1897 and by 1909, became president of the company. As he made more and more money, he was always looking to help various charitable causes. He became inspired to help African Americans after reading Washington's book, *Up from Slavery* (Wilcox). His friend, Paul Sachs, introduced him to Washington in 1911. Rosenwald became a trustee at the Tuskegee Institute and in 1912, made a \$25,000 donation to the school. Washington used some of that money to help six local communities build rural elementary schools. Therefore, the first six Rosenwald schools were built in Alabama in 1913 and 1914 (Rosenwald School Legacy).

By the time Washington died in 1915, Rosenwald had already provided enough money to build 80 schools in three states (Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina). After Washington's death, Rosenwald continued to fund building rural schools throughout the South. In 1917, the Rosenwald Fund was created and used to build everything from public elementary schools to colleges and universities (Maurer). In 1920, Rosenwald created the Southern office, took over construction management from the Tuskegee Institute, and expanded the services provided to include drawing school plans. By 1924, the Southern Office produced a pamphlet called *Community School Plans*, which included seventeen different school designs based on the number of teachers a school would have (Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina). School designs included a central meeting space or

auditorium so that the school would become the center of the community. The schools were built to strict specifications, including room size, blackboard placement, and paint colors. They also had huge bays of windows to allow as much natural light as possible into the building. This was important because there was usually no electricity in these rural schools (Emanuel).

Rosenwald had a unique way of ensuring that local communities were invested in their schools. Before donating money, he required the African Americans in the community to raise 20 percent of the cost of the school. Once they had raised the money, he would ensure that the local school board, usually run by whites, would agree to operate the school. After those conditions were met, he would donate the money to build the school (Hanchett, *The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina*). This process ensured the ultimate success of the school.

By 1928, over 33 percent of African American students in the South were being taught in Rosenwald Schools. (Rosenwald Schools) That percentage was closer to 50 percent in North Carolina.

Rosenwald died in 1932 and funding for school construction stopped. By that time, Rosenwald had donated money to build 5,357 new buildings, including 4,977 schools, in 883 counties throughout 15 states (Hanchett, *Saving the South's Rosenwald Schools*). These buildings cost over \$28 million, of which \$4.3 million came from the Rosenwald Fund and \$4.7 million was raised by African American communities. The final \$18 million was spent by local governments, including donations from white residents. North Carolina had the most Rosenwald buildings with 813, including 787 schools (Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina). Eleven of those buildings were built in Brunswick County, including the Brunswick County Training School (BCT) on Lord Street in Southport (Southport Historical Society).

The Brunswick County Training School was finished in 1922 as a four-teacher building, and African American residents in the county raised \$2,000 toward its construction (Stack). The school's total cost at that time was \$8,920. The Rosenwald Fund donated \$1,200 toward construction (Joyner).

Unfortunately, the first building burned down in 1922 and had to be rebuilt. The second building was completed in 1924 as a six-teacher school at a cost of \$11,374 (Joyner), and African American residents raised \$5,050 for this building (Stack). The Rosenwald Fund donated a total of \$1,950 toward this school. The school was accredited and also graduated its first graduate, Bertha Bryant, in 1929 (Joyner). From the time it was built through the early 1950s, BCT was the only high school for African American students in Brunswick County.

Many say the success of BCT was due directly to Alvin Caviness. He came to Southport as a teacher in 1925 and became the principal of BCT in 1932, replacing E. Orlando Gandy (Joyner). Caviness was disciplined, innovative, and creative in building and organizing the school, especially with no budget. He took used and second hand books and equipment from the white schools and integrated them into the BCT curriculum (Lewis). He was responsible for school expansion by obtaining both wings from the old high school building in Franklin Square. The State Port Pilot reported on April 1, 1935 that the south wing had finally reached its location at BCT (There at Last). The April 24, 1935 newspaper announced the second wing of the old school would also be given to BCT (Moving Two Wings Old School Building), but was not moved until February 26, 1936 (Reaves, *Southport Brunswick County, North Carolina: Volume III, 1920-1940, A Chronology*). In addition to the facilities, many say the quality of the education improved after Caviness' arrival and the many programs he created and classes he added to the curriculum increased student opportunities.

BCT changed its name to Brunswick County High School in July 1964 (Reaves, *Southport (Smithville): A Chronology, Volume IV, 1941-1970*), but was still only attended by African American students, even though the Supreme Court had struck down racial segregation of children in public schools in *Brown v. The Board of Education* in 1954 (History.com Editors). High schools in Southport were finally integrated in 1969, but only after Southport High School burned down (Lewis). After



integration, there was no longer a need for Brunswick County High School and the Rosenwald School in Southport finally closed in 1971-1972.

Rosenwald's donations to build schools for African American students in the South had a huge impact on communities as a whole. Not only did they help to solve some of the education problems experienced after the Civil War, but they also became a central figure and source of pride for their communities. Even though the schools were originally intended to provide trade skills to their students, these schools produced many prominent individuals, most who returned to their community and served the school in some capacity. The schools improved the lives of many in the community, even beyond the students attending the school. Without the generosity of Julius Rosenwald, an entire generation of African Americans may not have had the same educational opportunities. He is an important historical figure and should be remembered.

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