

southport historical society

Whittler's Bench



Winter 2018

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OFFICERS:

President: Don Parker
VicePres: Pat Kirkman
Secretary: Audrey Daigler
Treasurer: PhilFravel

DIRECTORS:

Nancy Christianson
Bob Hagerman
Scott Len
Ken Morris
Cindy Sellers
Bob Surridge

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Parker' Perspective



As we usher in 2018, it is with great pride that we reflect upon the past year within the Southport Historical Society. Our many activities, programs and events over the past year served to promote the history and legacy of Southport in varied ways that made for an interesting and highly successful year. Once again, the very popular Christmas Tour of Homes proved to be the most anticipated event of the year and the Board thanks all of those involved in planning and coordinating this very important fund-raising activity. Further, as we closed out 2017, our Vice President Pat Kirkman ensured that the 225th anniversary of the establishment of Smithville did not go unnoticed. Her work in providing an informative general membership meeting in November highlighting the legacies of Joshua Potts and Benjamin Smith coupled with an event on December 31st at the Garrison celebrating the proclamation of City establishment was extremely timely and, as usual, very professionally done.

Our memorial brick program also closed out on December 31st. I am heartened by the response to this initiative and now we look to lay the bricks at the Garrison House in the coming months. We thank Director Scott Len for spearheading this effort and to all those who participated by buying a brick. It is our hope that we expand this program, in concert with the City's Tourism Department, into an annual opportunity for folks to buy a memorial brick to be laid at the Garrison House. Each fall, we intend to open the "brick buying" season for subsequent development of walkways at Fort Johnston.

Each year the SHS Board experiences some level of turnover in personnel. This year, we are fortunate in that the Board will remain completely intact pending the re-election of a few members. I have been nominated for a second term as President for 2018-2019 and Pat Kirkman has been nominated for a second term as Vice President. Further, Bob Hagerman has been nominated to serve a full three-year term as Director.

All other Officers and Directors continue on the Board under current terms. As last year, election and approval of this slate for 2018 will take place at our February 1st luncheon meeting. So, please mark your calendars for Thursday, February 1st, at 12:00 noon, at the Southport Community Building when you will be treated to lunch and updated on the State of the Society. I look forward to continued success in 2018 and extend my very best wishes to all for a happy and healthy New Year!

Don Parker, President

SHS Upcoming Events



Jan. 9th – Second Tuesday Talk with Southport native Alexis Graves. The title of Ms. Graves's talk is "*Growing up Black in the 1940's and 50's*". The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library

Feb 1st – Luncheon Meeting. SHS members will be treated to lunch and updated on the State of the Society. The luncheon will begin at 12:00 noon at the Southport Community Building.

Feb 13th – Second Tuesday Talk with Becky Felton, Becky is a member of the SHS and the cofounder of the Southport Wooden Boat Show. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

March 13th – Second Tuesday Talk with Donna Silva. Ms. Silva will speak about the sinking of the John D. Gill off the coast of Southport during World War II. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

March 22nd – General Meeting with UNCW Associate Professor Dr. Chris Fonvielle. Chris will speak about some of his latest research concerning the *War Between the States*. Dinner will be at 6:30 pm and the program will begin at 7:00 pm at the Southport Community Building.

April 4th – The Brunswick County Old Jail Museum reopens for the season.

April 10th – Second Tuesday Talk with Southport native and author Brooks Newton Preik. Brooks will speak about Southport in the 1950s and 60s. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

May 8th – Second Tuesday Talk with SHS Board member, Nancy Christianson. Nancy will speak about the development of the Old Jail Museum. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

May 24th – General Membership Meeting with a speaker to be announced. Dinner will be at 6:30 pm and the program will begin at 7:00 pm at the Southport Community Building.

June 12th – Second Tuesday Talk with SHS member Tim Terman. Tim will discuss the threat of German Uboats during World War II. The program will begin at 10:30 am at the Harper Library.

Old Brunswick County Jail Museum - 2017 Highlights

When the Old Jail Museum reopened in April of 2017, there were many new displays for visitors to see. New artifacts included a Polaroid camera which is identical to one found in the Jail when the Historical Society took it over, a candlestick phone, a 1930s dress and a new board for international patches. Also a photo donated by Trudy Young of herself at age 4 demonstrating how a rotary phone works for a reporter. We were also donated a cap from the New York Police Department, Harbor Unit found in the Hudson River after 9/11. Another donation was from Nick Kern of a rocker circa early 1900s.

We received more requests for private tours in 2017 which included Wilmington Newcomers, Coastal Carolina University and Charlotte Country Day. A UNCW student requested permission to film a scene from the movie, "Silence of the Lambs". Then WWAY visited the town and the Old Jail. We have participated in the community activities at the Maritime Museum for Girl Scouts each year on the first Saturday in June. Also this year we were invited to put up a display at Harper Library. Finally, we completed the redo of some of the Old Jail storyboards to make them more accurate.

All we do at the Old Jail is only made possible by our docents, for whom we are very grateful.

By Nancy Christianson, Curator

Zeb Starnes – Volunteer Photographer

Meet Zeb Starnes, the volunteer photographer for the Southport Historical Society. Zeb is a semi-retired (somewhat!) professional photographer who has owned his own business for more than 30 years. Zeb and his wife Julie moved to Southport from Durham, NC. Both are very active in the community. Zeb is still professionally engaged as a photographer. His Facebook page is wonderful as is his webpage.



Zeb sings in Sea Notes as well as the Trinity United Methodist Choir. Zeb also just completed four plus years of piano lessons to master that instrument. In addition, he is a faithful member of a local drumming circle.

His hobbies include skydiving with over 400 jumps, mostly from airplanes but a couple from hot air balloons. He is a skydiving instructor. Here in Southport, he can indulge another of his favorite hobbies, scuba diving. When he isn't involved in those activities you may find him on a motorcycle or bicycle. To wind down from those adrenaline inducing activities, he plays golf, walks on the beach or goes boating. In addition to all these activities, he graciously donates his time photographing Southport Historical Society events!

Thanks Zeb!!!!

By Ken Morris

Christmas Tour of Homes – 2017 Recap

It was another good year for Southport Historical Society's Christmas Tour of Homes, the 28th year of this event and 17th year of our sponsorship. Our event was part of the City of Southport's Winterfest Festival and was held on December 9, 2017. We were very fortunate to have nine homes available for the tour and we would like to thank each of the homeowners.

Thanks to the generosity of the homeowners and the members of the Home Tour Committee, once again, our largest fundraiser was a great success. Proceeds from the tour are used to further the Society's mission to bring together persons interested in the history of Southport and to promote a better appreciation of our heritage. Funds raised from this event will enable the Society to continue to maintain the Old Jail on Nash Street, provide improvements to the Fort Johnston museum, make improvements at the Smithville Burying Ground, fund a scholarship at South Brunswick High School, and continue to enhance the Susie Carson Research Room. An incredible amount of time and effort is expended by the Home Tour committee members, the Homeowners, and Docents to make the Christmas Tour of Homes a success. Next year's tour will be held on Saturday December 08, 2018. If you want to mark your calendar for future Home Tours, it is always held on the second Saturday in December. As always, **we are in need of Homes for the Tour**, so if you are willing to have your home on the 2018 tour please contact the Society from our Web Site, southporthistoricalsociety.org/ or via email at info@southporthistoricalsociety.org.

By Phil Fravel



News and Reminders



Congratulations and Best Wishes to Mary Strickland

Please remember to say "thank you" and "job well done" to Mary Strickland as she retires from her leadership position at the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport.

Memorial Brick Program

On December 31, 2017 sales ended for the 2017 Memorial Brick Program. Nearly 100 Memorial Bricks were sold. The new bricks will be placed as part of new walkways at Fort Johnston. If you missed the 2017 program, don't despair as the sales will be open again in the fall of 2018.



Membership Renewal



Please mail your check for the annual dues during January or bring it to the meeting on February 1 - THANKS!
(If you joined since September you do not have to renew for 2018)
INDIVIDUAL - \$15 COUPLES/BUSINESS - \$25
LIFE MEMBERSHIP - \$150 Individual \$200 Couple
Mail to: SHS - PO Box 10014 - Southport, NC 28461

History Class at the Harper Library

Former SHS president, Musette Steck will be offering a four-week history course at the Harper Library beginning at 10:30 am on Friday, March 2nd. The course will focus on the first families of North Carolina with special emphasis on the Cherokee nation..

Intern or Volunteer Needed

A college intern or a volunteer is needed to assist develop exhibits and displays at the Old Jail Museum and the Ft. Johnston Museum. Please contact Nancy Christianson or Bob Surridge at info@southporthistoricalsociety.org.

Find us on Facebook!

The Southport Historical Society has joined many of the Society's members and friends and launched a Facebook page. We are using our page to keep our members and friends informed about the Society's events and activities and to post information about Southport's history and heritage. We hope you will "Find us on Facebook" and of course let us know that you "Like" the Southport Historical Society.



Smithville (Southport) 225th Anniversary - 1792 Charter Day

The members of the Society's board of directors were happy to host a well-attended open house at the Ft. Johnston Garrison on Sunday afternoon, December 31st. The public was invited to join us in commemorating the 225th anniversary of the signing of the charter to establish the town of Smithville, now Southport. Mayor Dove presented a proclamation recognizing this important event and the guests enjoyed cake and tea as they toured our city museum. The charter was signed on December 31, 1792 at the North Carolina General Assembly meeting held in New Bern. Benjamin Smith was the Brunswick County representative who asked for the charter and the town was subsequently named in his honor. Joshua Potts had been instrumental in drawing out the plan for the new town and for circulating the petition to ask for a charter. The photos below were taken at the event.

By Pat Kirkman



New Post Caps at the Old Smithville Burying Ground

As per the Society's 2017 Cemetery plan, Charles Christianson and crew placed new caps on all the 6 x 6 posts in the cemetery. The new caps are needed because the tops of the corner posts have rotted. White caps were used for the corners and bronze colored caps for the gate posts. The new tops are plastic and are attached with two stainless steel screws.

While all the fence posts were not rotted, to have the posts a uniform size, the crew cut off all of the old post tops. One of the 6 x 6 posts was rotted to a lower point, however with the new cap being held by three inch screws, the crew believes that it will hold.

The crew used plastic because they were concerned that copper caps would be removed by vandals. Also, over by the sewer corner, where the posts are united with the trash can covers, the crew ran out of plastic caps because the company shipped one less cap than was ordered. The total cost for caps and other materials was less than \$130.

The first two of the following photos show how the tops of the corner posts have rotted. The third photo shows the new white caps for the corners and the bronze colored caps on the gate posts.



By Charles Christianson

Visitor's Center Store

The Historical Society has recently taken ownership of the retail shop located in the Fort Johnston Garrison/Southport Visitors Center & Museum.

We invite you to stop in and take a look at some of the items and books available for sale. Your purchases will go toward the upkeep of this historic building.



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