



THE WHITTLER'S BENCH

Southport Historical Society

Volume XXVIII, Number 1

January, 2004

January Meeting

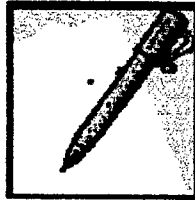
The SHS will gather for the January meeting at Fort Caswell Thursday, January 22nd. at 7 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD...

- March 25 - Meeting
- May 27 - Meeting
- July 4 - Old Jail Centennial Celebration
- September 23 - Meeting
- November 18 - Meeting
- December 11 - Tour of Homes

SHS Officers & Directors

President	
Peter Wyckoff	457-5599
Vice-President	
Pat Kirkman	457-0579
Secretary	
Karen Knighton	454-8018
Treasurer	
Wolf Furstenau	278-4050
Historian/Archivist	
Marilyn Lessen	457-0004
Directors	
Shirley Wilson	454-4327
Musette Steck	253-3855
Bob Lucas	457-6723



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

I can't believe that it's all over for another year! The annual Tour of Homes was a wonderful success with some 1050 tickets sold. The threatening weather shaved off some sales, but it was brisk enough to lend the event a truly festive air and give good reason to pull out all the beautiful Christmas sweaters.

The event is truly a monumental effort and it could not happen without the months of dedicated work put in by the committee, all of the support from the hosts and hostesses, and most of all, the generous hospitality of our proud property owners. They eagerly opened their lovingly decorated homes and delighted in telling their visitors all about their home and the unique furnishings and decorations.

And, the appreciation brunch at The Pharmacy was the perfect cap to the tour. The food was delicious and the presentation beautiful, but best was the fellowship of friends.

I thank you all so very sincerely, stand to applaud you, and ask that you take a well-deserved bow.

Peter Wyckoff

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have, of course, an ongoing need for volunteers at the Old Jail. Please consider giving a few hours a week to do whatever the task of the day may be. There is always painting and clean-up, and just being an extra pair of hands. Call Karen Knighton for the schedule.



Our treasurer, Wolf, has also asked to have some assistance with his job. If you have some experience and are willing to help from time to time as he has needs, please call him.



DUES ARE DUE

Dues for 2004 are payable in January. We are sending out reminder postcards. If you have already paid your dues for 2004, please forgive the reminders and thank you for your promptness.



LOOKING BACK - THE HISTORY PAGE

Susan Carson, Editor

Quite some time ago, while I was teaching a local history class at Brunswick Community College, we got engrossed in happenings of the Civil War period. We had a great time and one night we had a dinner meeting and my good friend and fellow member of Southport Historical Society, Bob Lucas, gave an outstanding program on Civil War music. He had enlisted the help of Cindy

Sellers on the piano and we enjoyed it so much.

I was so taken with the program that I asked Bob to write an article on the subject for use in Whittlers Bench. He did as I asked and gave it to me last March. Now you can imagine what happened! I carefully put it in a folder to be used in the next issue – and then forgot where I put the folder. I assume I can blame it on a “Senior Moment”, or even “Miss Susie is crazy”. Anyway, I have finally located it and I’m happy to have it for this issue of Whittlers Bench.

I’m very thankful, too, and I hope that soon the Program Committee will ask Bob and Cindy to do the program on this subject for a Society meeting. I assure you it will be most enjoyable.

Southern Music in the Civil War Era By Bob Lucas

At the outset of the war there was generally a shared body of music enjoyed throughout America. Of course, there were regional, ethnic and religious songs and many of these favorites were adapted to the sympathies of both sides. Ironically, the greatest musical pieces of each nation had its roots in the domain of the other.

“Dixie” was written by a Northern minstrel man, Daniel Emmett, who introduced it in his traveling minstrel show in New Orleans in 1859. Its popularity grew so rapidly that it was featured at Jefferson Davis’ inauguration in 1861 and quickly became the South’s anthem. During these years, the minstrel shows and sheet music were the principal means of presenting new music to the countryside.

As for the Union, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was first introduced as a poem by Julia Ward Howe. Having been inspired to write this by a military review in Washington, DC, she sold the work to the Atlantic Monthly Magazine for \$4.00. It was soon set to the tune of an old Southern camp meeting revival hymn and soon became a rallying call.

As the war progressed, new songs emerged throughout the Confederacy. Among the more popular were “The Yellow Rose of Texas”, a song written by a slave to his girlfriend and “the Bonnie Blue Flag”, a tune representing Arkansas’ state flag. The early music was lively and great for morale, especially when enjoyed by the troops around their campfires at night. Many songs such as “Lorena” and “Home, Sweet Home” remained popular among both armies.

As the war wore on, Southern songs began to take on a more somber tone. The lyrics of “Somebody’s Darling” touched on the horrors of death and the agony of wounded young men. Indeed, its words took on a macabre humor when soldiers on the battle field would point to a dead or dying man as “there lies somebody’s darlin’ ”.

One grand episode of music in this war occurred in the Winter of 1862-63. As Union forces were encamped along the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg, Virginia, several Union Regimental bands assembled near the river’s edge as dusk approached. As they began to play such northern favorites as “Rally Round the Flag Boys”, “John Brown’s Body” and “Maryland My Maryland”, Union troops began to gather around. Soon an audience of Southern boys gathered on the opposite bank to enjoy the singing. Remarkably, there soon some 150,000 men gathered on the river banks. When it appeared that the Yankee bands were about ready to stop, a cry came up from the men in gray “Play some of Ours!”. To which the bands responded with “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” to great applause and cheers. In closing, an attempt was made to join in singing “Lorena” and “Home, Sweet Home”. It is recorded that neither side could finish the last song, being overcome with homesickness and loneliness.

Thus music and its singing was a needed diversion on both sides. With little money and often no near-by towns to visit, the campfire sing-a-long was the only means to forget one’s miserable circumstances. It is little wonder that so many of the songs of this era ran as high as six stanzas! Naturally many of these stanzas were changes and improvised upon.

So many of the songs of this period are etched in our national psyche and remain popular to this day. Most of the tunes mentioned earlier are still well known. The tune of “Aura Lee” is now “Love me Tender” and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” is revitalized with each of our nation’s wars.

Thus, even as we are united today by one grand “National Anthem”, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “Dixie” remain revered.



TREASURER'S REPORT NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

INCOME

Book Sales	\$3,304.01
Cannon Committee Income	350.00
Christmas Tour of Homes	10,580.00
Donations	557.00
Income from Dues	469.00
Bank Interest	4.09
Hist. House Plaque Sales	100.00
Raffle (Throws)	91.00
NC Sales Tax Collected	109.08
Postage & Shipping Charges	7.00
Sales Tax Refund	102.79
Sales of SHS Throws	446.60
Income Total	\$16,120.57

EXPENSES

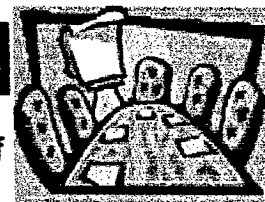
Cannon:	
Brochures, Certificates	\$322.00
Crew attire	150.00
Christmas Tour of Homes:	
Insurance	250.00
Luncheon	390.00
Misc. Expenses	20.93
Custom Plates	100.00
Rent-A-John	130.00
Tickets, brochures, posters	638.00
Fees (ISBN, Copyright)	30.00
Meeting supplies and fees	618.75
Newsletter	205.00
Office Supplies	8.44
Old Jail	3,984.87
Postal Service (stamps, postage)	84.54
Printing: Joshua's Legacy	8,180.00
Refund for overpayment	26.00
Sales Taxes Paid	59.99
Expenses Total	\$15,198.52

Bank statements for December were not available at the time of compiling the figures. Please view this report as a preliminary draft. A final December report as well as the annual report will be available later in January 2004.

Wolf Furstenau, Treasurer

SHS BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Agreed to help Coastal Water Watch and the NC Department of Tourism acquire a Civil War Trail marker for the area around Ft. Johnston. SHS agreed to provide the \$200 annual fee and to assist with grant writing.
- Agreed to the contract with Ft. Caswell Baptist Assembly for the January 22 dinner meeting. Postcards requesting that members RSVP will be mailed.
- Pat Kirkman agreed to develop book signings for books about our area in the months in which the society does not have general meetings.
- Agreed to continue SHS support for the Susie Carson scholarship which will offer a South Brunswick High student \$1,000 for their higher education expenses.



IN MEMORY...

Southport native and dear member, Dot Schmidt, passed away on Friday, January 9th. Dot was active in many civic affairs, served on the Doshier Long Range Planning Committee and on the Southport Cemetery Commission. As a member of SHS, she compiled the data for the book "Cemeteries of Southport and Surrounding Area."

The Southport Historical Society will greatly miss Dot and we extend our deepest sympathy to her husband, Smitty, and family.





NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

November 25, 2003 - Southport Historical Society General Meeting
Southport Community Building

Peter Wyckoff welcomed everyone to the November meeting and following the invocation, a covered dish dinner was enjoyed by all.

New members to the society were welcomed and then introduced themselves.

As the first order of business, the Secretary and Treasurer's reports were approved as printed in the newsletter. Marilyn Lessin reported the nominees for office from the nominating committee:

Peter Wyckoff	President
Pat Kirkman	Vice President
Karen Knighton	Secretary
Shirley Wilson	Director
Marilyn Lessin	Historian/Archivist

At the January meeting additional nominations can be made from the floor and the election will be held.

Two Southport throws were raffled to members.

Announcements:

- Tickets for the SHS Home Tour are on sale this evening and at the Visitor's Center and the Franklin Sq. Gallery.
- Tickets for the Wilmington Tour of Homes sponsored by the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society are available this evening and at the Visitor's Center.
- Southport holiday ornaments from the Lions Club are on sale this evening and at the Southport Visitor's Center.
- SHS books and throws are available for sale this evening.

Pat Kirkman, House Tour chair, encouraged members to get their tickets early and to volunteer as a host or hostess. Kathy Fravel is recruiting hosts and hostesses and is available with signup sheets this evening. The tour is scheduled for December 13.

Kirkman also reported that the Southport History Strolls had earned \$420 this fall and a total of \$840 this year for the society.

Peter Wyckoff "passed the hat," asking that everyone contribute to the pot to help offset the cost of the building rental.

Following the business meeting, President Wyckoff recognized Miss Susie Carson and Jon Lewis and congratulated them on the completion of Joshua's Legacy. They spoke about their collaboration, the 40 contributors who worked to write the individual pieces and their editors, Kathy Fravel and Jane Felber.

President Wyckoff introduced Larry Maisel who presented the program, a series of reading from Joshua's Legacy. Following the readings, books were available for purchase and Miss Susie and Jon signed copies for members.

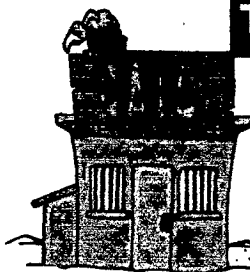
Respectfully submitted, Karen Knighton

LOST AND FOUND

LOST... Casserole top from the last meeting (November). Jane Martin has a dish with a lid that almost, but not quite, fits her dish. So, somewhere there must be a person with the same situation. Please bring the lid to the January meeting for a swap!



THE OLD JAIL



Work on the old jail continues and the jail was open during the recent Christmas tour of homes. Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard thus far to make the old, old jail renovation a success. As we prepare for the completion of the jail, Miss Susie would like to thank all of the folks who have already donated items for display. These include:

1. Mrs. Margaret Connaughton – a folder of clippings from old newspapers and magazines that her late husband compiled.
2. Mrs. Harriett Wheeler – a collection of school photographs from her late uncle, Lester J. Dawkins. He was principal of Southport High School for at least ten years, probably longer. He was my principal when I entered school in 1926 until I entered the 10th grade (back when we graduated from the 11th grade).
3. Mrs. Ragnhild Bairnsfather of Winchester, MA. – a book entitled The Potter Family of North Carolina, Indiana and Kentucky. Mrs. Bairnsfather has done extensive research on this family and several of them lived in Southport during its early days (especially Samuel and Robert who were prominent in town affairs). One of the Potter houses still stands on East Moore Street. Ragnhild, a Potter descendant, and several others of that family held a reunion here in Southport several years ago. They even “adopted” me into the family because I had lived in the Potter house!
4. An article about Margaret Swan Hood, daughter of Captain Charlie Swan, written by Mrs. Phyllis Boggs and Mrs. Dawn Hazlett. This was written to be a part of Joshua's Legacy but was received too late for the book. The article will appear soon in the “Whittlers Bench”.
5. A well-researched article on Civil War music, by Bob Lucas, as appears in this issue of “Whittlers Bench”.
6. Mrs. Janice Singletary of Supply – large framed pictures of “Buddy” Brown, the man who lived for a long time in a small building at the foot of the old Oak Island Bridge and got written up in several magazine and newspaper articles.
7. Gary McDaniel of Boiling Springs Lakes – a very good picture of one of his ancestors, Captain John W. Harper who had several steamers that ran between Wilmington and Southport. The one named “Wilmington” was the most famous of his fleet. We have a picture of that, too.



LOCAL AUTHOR APPRECIATION

As a part of their 25th anniversary celebration Brunswick Community College will host an evening honoring Brunswick County authors. There will be music, food, readings and signings. Many of our SHS authors have been invited to participate. The event will be held on January 27th from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Odell Williamson Auditorium. There is no charge for admission. A portion of all proceeds from book sales will benefit the BCC foundation.