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THE
WHITTLERS BENCH

Southport Historical Society

501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, North Carolina 28461

Vol. XVI No. 1 January 23, 1992

ANNUAL MEETING

The Southport Historical Society Annual meeting will be held January 23, 1992 at Trinity United Methodist Church at 6:30 PM.

The meeting will be a covered dish supper. We are asking everyone to bring their favorite dish. You may also invite someone.

AGENDA

1. Status reports by the Executive Board and committee chairpersons.
2. Election of Officers and Directors.
3. Installation of officers - By Mrs. Margaret Harper.
4. What's NEW for '92?

FINANCING

1. The 1991 Regional Sites Program Grant from the State of North Carolina, "Division of Archives and History" was used to help reprint Southport (Smithville) A Chronology, Volume I 1520-1887.

OVER

1992 DUES

NAME _____

\$10 INDIVIDUAL

ADDRESS _____

\$15 HUSBAND/WIFE

\$25 SUSTAINING

\$150/200 LIFE

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

\$ ____ DONATION

MAIL TO: Southport Historical Society
501 North Atlantic Avenue
Southport, NC 28461

FINANCING CON'T

2. A contribution by the United Carolina Bank covered expenses for printing our new brochure: "Southport Trail: A Self-Guided Walking Tour".
3. A 1992 Matching Grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation will help finance a "Historic Structures Report" on the Historic Timber Home we have been trying to preserve. The grant was made possible by a gift from Mrs. Damon R. Averill of Brevard, NC to establish the Terence L. Mills Memorial Preservation Services Fund.

BICENTENNIAL HISTORY

1. Congress established the first government coining mint at Philadelphia.
2. George Washington's election campaign was embittered by Federal Party strife.
3. The Columbia River was discovered in the Oregon Territory and partially explored by an American.
4. Tennessee was still a territory claimed by North Carolina.
5. Kentucky will be admitted to the Union as a Slave State.
6. The French revolution was in full progress.
7. England was ruled by King George III.
8. The Russian monarch was Catherine the Great.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Has anyone got the time or inclination to write a few lines (such as the above) of "Bicentennial News" for each of our next six issues of the Whittlers Bench.

THANKS

I sincerely appreciate all the help I received to make 1991 a successful year. With the support of the Executive Board, Committee Chairpersons and members, there were informative meetings, the Old Jail was kept looking great, local Historic classes were conducted, the Old Jail was held open, books and cards were sold, a bicentennial quilt was started, non-profit tax status was obtained and six issues of the Whittlers Bench were sent out.

A VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL "QUILTERS ABOUT TOWN"

PLEASE bring your completed Heritage Quilt squares to the meeting of the Southport Historical Society on January 23, 1992, and give them to Sue Kaufman or Susie Carson. We want to show them to the members and let them know of our plans and activities.

ALSO - if you have not completed your square by that time, be sure to have it ready by the absolute deadline of Thursday, January 30, 1992, which is the next scheduled meeting of the "Quilters About Town". We will meet at 7:00 P.M. on that date at the Southport Campus of Brunswick Community College. At that time, we must have all the squares so we can begin stripping the quilt so it can be placed in the frame and the actual quilting can begin.

If you CANNOT finish your square by that date, please bring what you have done to Sue Kaufman and she will arrange to get it completed by the 30th. We have been "dragging our feet". We must get on with the project in order to have it completed by the 4th of July Festival - which will be here before we know it!

"Looking Back" — The History Page

Susan Carson, Editor



In the early days of World War II, your History Page Editor had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with Phillip and Wanda Golden of Manito, Illinois. Phillip was in the U. S. Coast Guard stationed at Oak Island and Wanda came to Southport as a War Bride to be with him. Today the Goldens are still happily married and living in Manito. They have two children and several grandchildren. They made many friends in Southport and return to visit whenever they can.

Recently I asked Wanda to share with us something of her days as a War Bride in Southport. The following article is what she wrote.

A WAR BRIDE IN SOUTHPORT, N. C.

"What I remember about Southport, N. C. as a Yankee War Bride, May 1943 through October 1945.

I remember we lived at Miss Louise Watson's on the left hand side of the hall, in one big room. Later we moved across the hall to two rooms. I washed clothes on a scrub board and cooked on a kerosene stove.

I remember Archie (Watson) coming down the hall afternoons calling "Miss Wanda". They had a fig tree in the backyard. That was my first look at a fig tree and first taste of fresh figs. They were delicious.

I remember the Baptist Church, located diagonally across the street. Here we met the Rev. and Mrs. A. L. Brown and family. They took me "under their wing" and treated me like a daughter. Lulu, Homer and the boys; Myrtle, Martha Grey, Bobby and Edith, all became friends of ours. Last October (1990) we visited Southport again. We visited Lulu and Homer McKeithan and Myrtle and D. I. Watson.

I remember going to many homes after church on Sunday nights to the servicemen's fellowship. There we met Thelma Sellers (Dunn), Eula Mae Smith (Wilmoth), Evelyn Smith (Dosher), Evelyn Autry (Anderson), Pearl Mae Lewis (Soukup), Dolores Hewett (Swan), Afton Smith, Susie Sellers (Carson) and many others.

I remember helping Susie publish The Short Circuit, a newsletter written especially for the boys in service, a project of the young people at the Baptist Church. Mr. Jimmy Prevatte, a lawyer, let us use his typewriter, and Rossie Whatley ran the copies on a mimeograph machine in her office. The church did not then own any office equipment.

I remember going down to the Yacht Basin. Marjorie Potter (Livingston) worked at the Post Office and became a good friend. The Potters lived at the Yacht Basin (on Brunswick Street - also called "Tin Pan Alley"). Mr. Potter and his sons mended their nets on the front porch. Being from the Midwest corn country, I had never seen shrimp boats, nets etc. This fascinated me.

I remember going out the River Road to the home of Mrs. Margaret McCracken. They raised tobacco, which I had never seen. The tobacco barns were all new to me. We also went out the River Road to the Collins' house on the Cape Fear River. Lillian Collins lives in town now and is still a good friend of ours.

I remember that first Easter, going to Orton Plantation. What a beautiful sight with all the flowers blooming. We had Easter Worship Services at the Caswell Naval Base. The sun coming up over the water was "Soul Thrilling".

I remember working at the Court House as a sort of "Floating Typist". Whoever needed extra typing that day, got me. I often went to Leggett's Drug Store for a cherry smash with Myrtle Watson, Josephine Smith (Stevens), Louise Rees, Ressie Whatley and Susie Sellers. Susie worked for Jimmy Prevatte. Sometimes we were all at the Post Office (seeing Marjorie) or at Leggett's together! These ladies all became good friends of mine. In fact, we spent a week with Susie while in Southport last October.

I remember Lancaster's grocery store, the rationing stamps, and Vicki Lancaster (Aldridge). Vicki and I spent many afternoons swinging in the porch swing at their house which was just back of the store, facing on Nash Street.

I remember walking down to the U. S. O. Building on the Garrison and walking along the waterfront on moonlight nights. We walked a lot in those days.

I remember (after getting a bicycle) going out the road to Ralph Sellers' place. I visited Essie and Grandma Sellers often. When Grandma Sellers went to Dosher Memorial, I sort of "lived" there, too. Ralph Sellers, Connie Lupton, Adrian Willetts, and Walter Lewis were all officers at Oak Island Coast Guard Station, when Phil was stationed there.

I remember Southport as then being a very beautiful village, with oak trees, Spanish moss, very sleepy and slow paced, with fishing and shrimping going on. How it has changed! Southport, though, still has a special place in my heart."

Wanda Golden
12429 Herrman Road
Manito, Illinois 61546

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I'm sending Wanda copy of this newsletter with a fervent "Thank you, Wanda" from all of us in the Society. It is my sincere wish that more of you members would help me recruit people with memories of Southport to write articles such as this. Will you?

The Editor of the History Page



Genealogy



Abbie Bitney

Interviewing

Family oral history is an important part of your family story. During the coming Holiday Season many of you will have opportunities to gather family history and family folklore. Family visits, dinners, and reunions are great places to talk to other, and maybe older family members.

You should remember that although the story itself about your family is important, as it's told by older family members, the information it conveys to you will be particularly important to your genealogical research. You must listen carefully for genealogy clues when your family members talk. Listen, don't compare stories as told by other family members at this time! You should be prepared with questions that will help others recall events of their childhood, and stories told to them by their parents.

Start with yourself, today, and write your family history. Ask yourself these basic questions (or similar questions) and record your answers in a notebook. I like to use a regular three ring school type notebook, then pages can be taken out and rearranged when you want. The best questions, the ones that start the best stories coming, are questions from a well informed person.

Also, remember that family tradition does not have to be old to be worth recording. Stories and events of today are worth recording for your children and grandchildren.

This list of questions may be helpful for your initial efforts. The most useful questions will be those that you develop through your knowledge of yourself and your family. These questions are only suggestions, you may use these or similar ones to start your family story.

1. What do you know about your family surname? What was its origin? Did it undergo any change from the Old Country to the United States? Are there other spellings, which sound like your name? Are there any stories about your surname?

2. Are there any traditional first names, middle names, or nicknames in your family? Is there a naming tradition, such as always giving the firstborn son the name of his paternal grandfather, or is a girl usually named for her maternal grandmother? Does your family use surnames for given names?

Interviewing Continued

3. Can you sort out the traditions in your current family according to the branches of the larger family from which they have come?

4. What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors? Do various relatives tell the same stories in different ways? How do these versions differ? Are relatives anxious or reluctant to discuss the past?

5. How did your parents, grandparents, or other relatives come to meet and marry? Are there family stories of lost love, jilted brides, unusual courtships, arranged marriages, elopements, runaway lovers?

6. Have any historical events affected your family. For example, how did your family manage during the Great Depression? Was there a conflict over some national event such as the Civil War, or Vietnam War that caused a break in family relationships.

7. How are holidays celebrated in your family? What holidays are most important--national, religious, or family?

8. Have any recipes been preserved in your family from past generations? What was their origin? How were they passed down: by word of mouth, observation, written recipes? Are they still in use today? Does grandmother's apple pie taste as good now that it's made by her granddaughter?

Once you have started with yourself and answered these questions, then think of your own family members. Who are your relatives? Write their names and addresses on a "family group" page. Which are the ones who are most likely to have information they are willing to share?

These are some of the questions how should ask yourself before you start interviewing other family members. Start recording your family's history today. If you don't do it who is going to?