

# southport historical society

## Whittler's Bench

Winter 2015



### IMPORTANT DATES

**January 22, General Business Meeting, 6:30pm, Dinner, Southport Community Building**

**March 26, Chris Fonvielle, 6:30pm, Dinner, Southport Community Building**

#### MISSION STATEMENT:

Southport Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization registered under 501(c)(3) of Internal Revenue Code dedicated to bring together persons interested in local area history. SHS endeavors to do so by providing opportunities for learning through programs and special events; published articles and books; educational classes; and community projects that will both enhance and preserve the unique history and heritage of Southport and the surrounding area.

Southport Historical Society was established January 1976 and maintains the Old Jail on Nash St. and the Susie Carson Research Room in the Garrison.

#### OFFICERS:

President: Musette Steck  
Vice President: Don Parker  
Secretary: Charles Christianson  
Treasurer: Phil Fravel  
Archivist: Bill Johnson

#### DIRECTORS:

Martha Johnson  
Betsie Lytton  
Joni Schinske  
Bob Surridge

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## Musings from Musette, President SHS

On behalf of our President, Musette Steck, and the entire Southport Historical Society Board of Directors, I wish all of our membership a Happy New Year! We hope that the Holidays were enjoyable and that everyone is looking forward to 2015. The Southport Historical Society had an extremely successful year in 2014 and we intend to showcase our accomplishments at this month's General Membership meeting on Thursday, January 22nd, at the Southport Community Building beginning with our usual covered dish dinner at 6:30 PM. We have made progress on every project and initiative over the past year concluding with another highly successful Christmas Tour of Homes last month. Our membership has grown and participation within the Society has increased. We are thankful for the many contributions of our membership, as it is through your efforts that we remain relevant and viable.

The Old Jail continues to improve and has recently received a new roof. Go by and take a look! The Susie Carson Research Room (SCRR) in the Garrison House is continuing to develop and the materials are now accessible through appointment. We were recently visited by a Traveling Archivist from the State who provided some excellent recommendations on document accessibility, preservation, and organization. We'll be focusing on these issues in the coming year. Meanwhile, as usual, Thor has continued to be busy throughout the year, providing exciting cannon firings at both public and private events. Our finances are strong thanks to the continued success of the Christmas Tour of Homes fund-raising. All of these topics will be covered at our General Membership Meeting on January 22nd. In addition to our review of the past year, we will vote on the changes to the Constitution as they were presented at our last meeting as well as vote on a Board seat that is expiring. We hope you will plan to attend.

Again, we look forward to another great year and thank all of you for your membership and participation in our Society.

Don Parker  
Vice President

## House Plaque: A Brief History of 307 E. Nash Street by Bill Johnson

According to a search of Brunswick County Real Estate Records the home listed at 307 E. Nash was built in 1900. Dr. Thomas Brown McClintic was the first owner of this structure.

Dr. McClintic was born 12/27/1872 at Hot Springs, Bath County VA, the son of William S. McClintic and Hettie Jane Montgomery. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia, 1896. He did hospital work in New York and Santiago. Dr. McClintic entered the marine hospital service in 1899. After a tour of duty at Old Point Comfort, Virginia he took command of the Cape Fear Quarantine station on March 22, 1900. At which time construction began on the Nash Street home.

On November 21, 1902 he was transferred to the Hygienic Laboratory in Washington, D.C. In 1904 Dr. McClintic had extensive service on army transports and was engaged in Yellow Fever quarantine in Tampico, Mexico. He was on duty at the Marine Hospital in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake. He next served as medical officer on a Revenue Cutter in waters off of Alaska. Later he was sent to Manila where he served as quarantine officer. In 1911 he began studies in Montana on Spotted Fever, which caused his death on August 13, 1912.

At some point T.W. McClintic sold the Nash Street property to Oscar F. Swasey born 1827, of Essex Massachusetts. Swasey was a wealthy northerner who came south after the Civil War and prospered off of real estate. He purchased several of the original town lots and had cottages built on them and returned to Massachusetts. Oscar later transferred the Nash Street property to his daughter, Marion born 1877.

Marion Swasey then sold the property to William A. Bowman born 1879 in Illinois and his wife, Florence Bowman born 1884 in North Carolina. In 1910 Pvt. William A. Bowman of the 19th and 31st Companies U.S. Coast Artillery was posted at Ft. Caswell, NC. His wife Florence was living on Lord Street in Southport with their children William J., Florence M., and Hazel S. Bowman. The family had moved to Wilmington by 1920. William had taken a job at the shipyard. The Bowmans added three more children to their family, Edgar, Ruby, and Elmer. They had moved to Mason City, Illinois by 1930.



William listed his occupation as an engineer at an ice plant. William A. Bowman died in Mason City March 31, 1946.

The Bowmans sold the house to J. B. Russ June 30, 1919.

On May 2, 1955 a quitclaim deed was made from Charles H. Swan and his wife Ella Lee Russ Swan to J.B. Russ. The 1940 Census shows Mr. & Mrs. Swan renting the house on Nash Street.

J.M. Russ and his wife Agnes entered into a contract with Susie S. Carson on October 20, 1955 selling her the house for \$10. On the same day Susie Carson sold it back to J.M. Russ and wife Agnes.

Agnes Russ Doby (daughter of J.M. and Agnes Russ) Estate sold property to the Watsons in 2012. They then sold the house to the present owners, Robert and Michelle Carroll.



## Old Smithville Burying Grounds Work 2014 by Charles Christianson

Work was done in the months of October and November. Since it was often cold we worked when the weather was a bit nicer than 40 degrees and a blowing wind. We focused in the Nash / Rhett street part of the cemetery (NR quarter).



In all we raised / glued ten stones, straightened six, put one back on its original foundation, and reset one. The one that was reset was the Rebecca Caraway stone that was pushed over to be flat on the ground, then it was set back up, but it was three feet lower than its foundation. Bob Brandon and I lifted the stone from the ground to the foundation and then glued it to its original foundation stone. It won't slide again.



Judge Samuel William Watts' and his wife Harriet, stones were down in the dirt, broken and had been previous patched with cement.

It is estimated that the Watts stones have been broken for over 20 years as evidenced by the layer of cemetery material that was laid up on the side of the 2 stones. The earlier cement repair was not well done as it was rough and some of the cement was placed over the words engraved on the stone.



Judge Samuel William Watts was born in Williamston, Martin County, North Carolina, on April 16, 1826. He married Harriet E Crawford, in Williamston, and had 5 children. He passed away on October 6, 1881 in Smithville, Brunswick County, North Carolina. Harriet E. Watts was born in Williamston, North Carolina, February 2 1828, and died on July 22, 1890 in Williamston, NC.

Williamston, NC, is the Martin County seat. Martin County is north of Greenville, and has state highways 17 and 64 running through it. He was a Martin county lawyer before the Civil War and represented that county at the 1868 state Constitutional Convention. In 1868 he moved to Franklin County, where he was promptly elected judge of the 6th Judicial District Superior Court, serving until his resignation February 1, 1877. In the late 1870s he moved to Smithville in Brunswick County. Watts was very active in state and local Republican Party activities during the Reconstruction period.

There is correspondence from and to him held in NC State archives that deals primarily with state politics between 1875 and 1880. A letter of April 22, 1875, from the Raleigh mayor's office, asked Watts to be in that city on May 3 in order to prevent Democrats from intimidating Republican voters. Other correspondence from the same archive, dated April 29, 1876, apparently from an Asheville Negro, informed Watts that blacks from the Asheville section would not be able to attend a particular function, possibly the July 12, 1876 Republican nominating convention in Raleigh, unless they received financial assistance. The writer complained that blacks were upset with state Republican politics and were disappointed that they had not received their share of appointments.

An undated letter from the foreman of a grand jury directed the solicitor to insure that Ed Graham Haywood and T. F. Lee (Wake County politicians) appeared in court in connection with charges of bribery that had been filed against Watts.

### Burying Grounds Work continued...



Captain Joseph Allen's stone was described in Dot Schmidt's 1980 book of "The Cemeteries of Southport and Surrounding Area". Dot Schmidt documents the line "Died in Southport, NC" on the stone. That line can't be read now due to the cement fix and the missing stone parts. It is not known what the title "Captain" comes from. There is a note from Reverend Alexander Bett's book about the Reverend giving money to a Captain Joseph Allen during the war that occurred in the United States between 1861 and 1865. Also, we can tell that Captain Allen died after 1887, when the name of the city was changed to Southport from Smithville.



Miss Olivia Johnson's stone has been down for some time, however, it is hard to tell. Again it was broken off at the foundation, and then broken again. It is placed between the Penelope Lewis and the Jacob Lewis stones. However, it appears that Olivia was a sister to Penelope for Penelope's maiden name was Johnson. Also, Miss Olivia died on 10/20/1905. Penelope died on 10/07/1934 while Jacob died a short time later on 03/12/1935.



### The Traveling Archivist Program by Martha Johnson

Martha and Bill Johnson applied for and received a grant for the prestigious **TRAVELING ARCHIVIST PROGRAM**, an initiative of the State Archives of North Carolina.

The purpose of TAP is to encourage best practices in the preservation of and access to special collections such as that located in the Susie Carson Research Room. On November 4, 2014 Dick Lankford, the Traveling Archivist, and Courtney Bailey, Records Analyst, N.C. Division of Archives and Records conducted the visit. They spent a full day with Martha and Bill and later sent a very thorough report with the following conclusions:

- Developing a collections policy should be a primary objective for the society's board of directors to pursue. Implementing a strong collections policy will impact the society well beyond just its holdings.
- The society should build on its many accomplishments by reaching a consensus on how to proceed with providing enhanced access to its archival collections, prioritizing some of the preservation needs, and establishing a budget for the management and care of its unique archival holdings.
- The Southport Historical Society is to be commended for its multifaceted programs that are helping preserve and provide access to the history and cultural heritage of Southport and the surrounding community.

## Exciting News from the Susan Carson Research Room by Bob Surridge

### Research Collections to go Online!

Exciting News...The Susan Carson Research Room (SCRR) is going online! At its November meeting, the SHS Executive Board made a unanimous commitment to make the SCRR research collections available on the Society's website! This will make many of the Society's research collections accessible to anyone who can access our website.

Going Online...The plan is to start the process with 10 years of weekly "Bit of History" columns that were written for the *StarNews* by Susan Carson (permission has already been secured from the *StarNews*). Once these files are up and running, we will follow up with our collections of photographs, newsletters, correspondence, diaries, family genealogies, pamphlets, and subject files. Also, on the agenda is the establishment of a SHS Facebook page, which will increase the Society's use of social media to inform members and the public about the SCRR and other SHS activities.

Volunteers Needed...Much needs to be done and many hands are needed to help this project succeed. Following are some of the tasks that volunteers can undertake. It is certainly possible that a number of these tasks can be completed at home.

- Take photographs at SHS activities and events
- Catalog and scan photographs
- Catalog and scan diaries, scrapbooks, personal correspondence and other historical materials
- File, organize and preserve research collections
- Create and maintain a catalog of publications available at the SCRR
- Collect news articles from the STATE PORT PILOT and other sources about future subjects of Southport history
- Staff the SCRR one afternoon a month
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities to support SCRR activities
- Recruit and coordinate volunteers

Please Contact... Bob Surridge at (910) 454-4055 or [rws23@ptd.net](mailto:rws23@ptd.net) if you would like to help the SHS make its historical collections available to Southport friends and family across the country (world).

## Membership by Betsie Lyton

### *Welcome New Members*

We welcome these new members who have joined since our last newsletter. We are delighted to have each of you and look forward to your involvement in our organization!

Gene Britt  
Julie & Ron Clark  
Owen & Libby Garner

Aline Harrell  
Carol Holder  
Andreas & Dawn Lixi

Roger & Delores Matson  
Surf Tours  
Grant Truesdale

### Don't let your membership become "history"!

Last year was an exciting year for Southport Historical Society. We added 29 new members to our roll and look forward to an even better year in 2015.

2015 annual dues are due now. Please bring yours to our meeting on January 22 or mail your check today to: SHS, Box 10014, Southport, NC 28461. <http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/donate/membership>

## Old Jail Report by Nancy Christianson

I am happy to report that the new roof is on the building! A special, 30 year architectural shingle was chosen that is also energy efficient and may help with heat and air conditioning costs. We think the roof looks really good and invite SHS members to come by and check it out. We continue to rent the Old Jail from the city but we are responsible for any repairs.

You will also notice that the Old Jail is all decked out for Christmas, especially for the House Tour on December 13. Our thanks to Norm Carathanasis for the greenery which he provides us every year. Susan Bailey, a new docent worked hard inside to put the candles in most all our windows. We thank Dan Griffith for putting up the tree in the 1904 room as well as upstairs in the solitary cell. Dan also helped Charles put up the greens on the exterior. Thanks to Dottie Capriotti and Shirley Johnston for additional decoration inside.



During February and March, we will be updating the displays in the museum in preparation for the 2015 season. To that end, we will form a new Advisory Committee to suggest and work on various displays, old and new. Anyone interested in working on that committee, please email me: christiansonn@juno.com

## Christmas Tour of Homes by Phil Fravel

It was another good year for Southport Historical Society's Christmas Tour of Homes, the 25<sup>th</sup> year of this event and 15<sup>th</sup> year of our sponsorship. Our event was part of the City of Southport's Winterfest Festival and was held on December 13, 2014. We were very fortunate to have seven homes available for the tour and we would like to thank each of the homeowners: Lisa and Hugh Fosbury, Sherol Lappala, Norma Suggs, Ashley Kincaid, Linda and Rick Pukenas, Hillary Meehan and Vickie Pelfrey.

Thanks to generosity of these homeowners, and the Home Tour Committee, we anticipate a profit close to \$10,000.00. Proceeds are used to further our mission to bring together persons interested in the history of Southport and to promote a better appreciation of our heritage. Funds from this event will enable the Society to continue to maintain the Old Jail on Nash Street, provide funds for scholarships at South Brunswick High School and continue to enhance the Susie Carson Research Room at the Visitors Center. An incredible amount of time and effort by the Home Tour committee members and the homeowners goes into organizing the Tour. The Home Tour committee greatly appreciates the members' and Homeowners support and interest in the Tour.

Next Year's tour will be held on Saturday December 12, 2015. 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 2015 tour please contact Shirley Wilson at 910-617-6720 or Phil Fravel at 910-512-7597 or contact the Society from our Web Site, <http://www.southporthistoricalsociety.org/>