



# THE WHITTLERS BENCH

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

• SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

April 17, 1980

Volume V Number 11

## DINNER MEETING APRIL 24th

Our fourth anniversary meeting and covered dish dinner will be held Thursday April 24th in the fellowship hall of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Bring your favorite covered dish and join us for dinner at 7:00 p.m. Members will be contacted for food suggestions.

Our guest speaker for the meeting will be Mr. Thomas Lambeth. Mr. Lambeth is executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation which gave The Southport Historical Society the grant that enabled us to start the restoration of the old jail building.

## WORK ON JAIL PROGRESSING

Work on the jail is progressing very well. The roof has been repaired and has a 20 year guarantee. All boxing is complete and the bricks have been repointed.

## CASWELL TOUR MAY 3rd

The tour of Fort Caswell last fall was so successful that many have requested that we offer a spring tour. The tour will be hosted by The Southport Historical Society in conjunction with the N.C. Baptist Assembly. Carol Lee Williams will conduct the tour. Miss Williams has done extensive research on the history of Fort Caswell.

The tour group will meet at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 3rd in Hatch Memorial Auditorium, which is located on the grounds of Ft. Caswell. All tour participants must pay a 50¢ insurance fee. There is no other charge for the tour.

Following the tour, a luncheon will be served in the Assembly Cafeteria at a cost of \$3.50 per person. Luncheon reservations are required and may be made by calling 457-6940.

## CEMETERY COMMITTEE REPORT

The cemetery committee has been taking advantage of the spring weather to record names and dates in the local cemeteries. Mrs. Dot Schmidt, chairman of the committee, reports that they are about half completed. The group is presently working at the old Southport cemetery.



BOOK SALES GOING WELL

"The Architecture of Southport" has been well received. Anyone who does not have a copy may purchase one at the meeting Thursday night. The books are also available at the Curiosity Shop, Leggett's, and Belk Berry in Wilmington. If you wish to order by mail, please use the form below.

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ORDER FORMTHE ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTHPORT  
by Carl Lounsbury

By mail, \$3.00 per copy plus \$.75 postage.

Return this form with your check or money order payable to:

Southport Historical Society  
501 N. Atlantic Avenue  
Southport, N.C. 28462

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of copies @ \$3.75 \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(CITY) \_\_\_\_\_

(State) (Zip Code) \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Our Membership Chairman, Mrs. Susan Carson, reports that we presently have 48 members and 2 lifetime members. The deadline for dues has been extended to April 24th. If you have not already renewed your membership please fill out the form below and bring it to the meeting or mail to 501 N. Atlantic Avenue, Southport, N.C. 28461. The Southport Historical needs you.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark the category of membership desired and enclose payment.

// Individual, \$5.00 annually      // Student, \$2.00 annually  
// Business, professional \$15.00 annually      // Sustaining \$25.00 annually  
                                 // Life \$100.00

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The Southport Historical Society is continuing its efforts to obtain oral histories from our residents. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Katherine St. George Garrett. Mrs. Garrett was born June 26, 1897 on Lord Street. The origin of her family is Federal Point. Her father was born on Bald Head Island and was a river pilot. Her grandfather was a blockade runner. Mrs. Garrett was interviewed by Mrs. Dot Schmidt.

"When we were children we liked to go swimming. The girls started swimming at the dock where the Light Ship is now and stopped at every dock to the Wilmington Steamer dock. We never saw a shark and if there was one he didn't bother us. We liked to row. If Mr. Richards boat didn't have oars in it we swiped one that did and rowed from the dock to Battery Island and sat on the bank. There was a little house there. I don't know whose it was. Up until we were 15 or 16 Capt. Craig would take us. If Papa didn't look after us Capt. Craig did. We rode all the way to the Quarantine Station with the tide. When we were against the tide we couldn't get back so we pulled up and crossed over Fiddlers Drain."

"The old pavilion is where we had all our school plays. It had a stage and a beautiful dance floor. The pavilion was there when Mama was a girl. The Brunswick Inn was across from the Pavilion. Whoever operated it must have had some connection with the Pavilion. Mama said that young men from Charleston came here for the dances. It was right over the water. Pat Galloway and some others had two cottages over the water there. When we were teenagers we went there to dances. Mama and Miss Florence went with us. For music we had anything that would grind; a record player, and sometimes an orchestra from Wilmington. When the older ones went, Char, Lottie Mae, and Mary Doshier, the grown girls would have a big dance; sometimes a masquerade dance."

"We didn't date separately until we were 16. We went on group dates and the boys would walk us home from church. We went to the Garrison at night. The town had wooden benches on the lawn and it was lit up. The hill was real pretty and it had big rocks overlooking the Govt. Docks. We had lawn parties there and the churches would sell lemonade."

"After Millers Hotel was built we would go there. There was a dining area and he had a juke box and you could dance. When we were a little older we went to the McRackan's for hay rides and watermelon cuttings. We would go out in the county to the Swain property for candy pulls and square dances. We went to the Old Coast Guard Station at Oak Island for beach parties."

"I remember one time during WWI Ella Bell and I had to have a chicken for Celia Watts to have a party. Artie was in Wilmington and she had a chicken. A few days after she came back from Wilmington we were sitting at Miss Tally's and Artie asked Miss Tally if she knew where her black rooster was and Mama looked at me, and I looked at Mama, and Miss Tally looked at me.. Nobody said anything but Mama knew where the black rooster was."

"On Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, the "City of Savannah" stopped at the Coal Dock. It was carrying labor from Puerto Rico on their way to build Ft. Bragg. The men were cold and sick. They had the flu. All they had were summer clothes. Some had died at sea. The Garrison was fenced off. The band from Caswell played until after midnight to calm the men. The stores stayed open all night and gave food. The people of Southport gave clothes. The men got all the crackers they could eat. One boy escaped into the county, went to Washington D.C. and became an artist. Orderlies from Ft. Caswell were put on the ship to take care of the men on their way back to Puerto Rico."