



THE WHITTAKER'S BENCH Southport Historical Society

Volume XXIX, Number 4

November 2005

November Meeting

**Thursday,
November 17th**

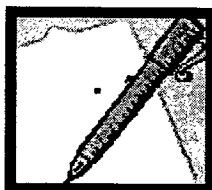
Southport Baptist
Church Education
Building
Corner of N. Howe and
E. Nash Streets.

Social hour begins at
6:00 PM with a pot-luck
supper at 6:30.

2006 Officer Elections
and
Speaker -Louis Hardee
Author of
Classic Southport
Cooking

SHS Officers & Directors

President	
Peter Wyckoff	457-5599
Vice-President	
Pat Kirkman	457-0579
Secretary	
Karen Knighton	454-8018
Treasurer	
Phil Fravel	457-4794
Historian/Archivist	
Marilyn Lessen	457-0004
Directors	
Musette Steck	253-3855
Cathy Fravel	457-4794
Don Parker	253-9703



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

Autumn in Southport. The heat of summer and the winds of hurricanes and tropical storms are behind us. What better time than to take a stroll through town.

Sure, you've seen it all before. But the cool crisp air makes it all worth doing again, and again. Beside, there are many new informational signs along the way, helping to tell the story of the town and its history.

Why not start out at Keziah Memorial Park with its remarkable Indian Trail Tree. Sit quietly a moment and imagine the original settlers, the Native Americans, gathered in their daily life. Stroll past the Adkins – Ruark House where author and journalist Robert Ruark spent many childhood summers with his grandparents. Look up at the massive old oaks with their gnarled branches. Amble over to the east side of town to Franklin Square Park and its band shell, and the Franklin Square Gallery, originally the old schoolhouse. Imagine the sounds of children playing in “The Grove” at recess. Walk further east to the Old Brunswick Jail, now the Old Jail Museum. Just think how hot it must have felt to be a prisoner in the summers before air conditioning, or cold in the winters when the only heat was from small stoves. Wander over to the Old Smithville Burying Ground. What stories the old tombstones have to tell. Back downtown along the waterfront. Let your minds eye conjure up the Kate Stuart House, the coal dock, the many wharves and piers and shrimp and fish houses. Look to your right at The Garrison House at Fort Johnston. Picture the tapia fortifications; the soldiers drilling. Have a seat on a swing at Waterfront Park. Watch the watercraft, pleasure and working, plying up and down; gaze out at Old Baldy, over to the Oak Island Lighthouse, and over your right shoulder the Pilots Tower.

“Southport Trail, A Self-Guided Walking Tour”, is available at the Southport Visitor's Center. Stop in and pick up a copy. Your first walking tour or your five-hundredth; Southport is always unique and wonderful.

The November meeting will be on Thursday, 11/17 (please note the date), at the Southport Baptist Church Education Building at the corner of N. Howe and E. Nash Streets. Social hour begins at 6:00 PM with a pot-luck supper at 6:30. The theme will be “Homecoming” and the speaker will be Louis Hardee, author of Classic Southport Cooking. Louis will be happy to sign your book purchases – you know, the ones that you're going to be buying for Christmas presents for family and friends. Wouldn't it be fun if all of the dishes for the dinner were prepared from Louis' cookbook of old Southport recipes?

Peter Wyckoff



TREASURER'S REPORT-2nd QTR 2005

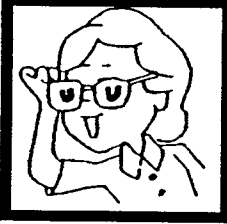
During the quarter ended September 30 by far the largest revenue producer was the sale of books, in particular the new *Classic Southport Cooking*. Printing expenses for this book also represented the largest expenditure during the quarter. Any royalties paid for this book are included in printing expenses. Future reports may show royalties as a separate expense item. The brick project is nearly complete and the expenses listed include most, but not all, of the costs. On October 27, 2005 it was my pleasure to hand over the job of treasurer to Phil Fravel. He was appointed to that position by unanimous vote of the Executive Board. I wish him well in a job that I enjoyed every single day of the past seven years.

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Book Sales	10,134.09	Brick Project	716.60
Cannon Income	1,275.00	Cannon	160.00
Donations	365.26	Dues & fees	65.00
Dues	565.00	Old Jail	427.80
Interest	6.29	Plaque Purchases	357.68
Plaque Sales	300.00	Printing, all	9,163.93
Sales Tax Collected	344.42	Quarterly Tax Return	394.98
Shipping	36.00	Sales Taxes Paid	64.30
Dividend Income	24.64	Telephone	428.71
TOTAL INCOME	13,050.70	Website Fees	44.85
		TOTAL EXPENSES	11,823.85

SHS BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



- ~Agreed to pay the costs for PR and the reprinting the cookbook.
- ~Accepted with regret the resignation of Wolf Fursteanu as SHS treasurer and appointed Phil Fravel to the position.
- ~Passed the following resolution of support for the cannon and its crew:
 - Whereas the SHS cannon "Thor" supports the educational efforts of the organization and
 - Whereas the cannon and crew is invited to participate in local and regional festivals and parades such as the Burial of the Hunley Crew in Charleston, Tabor City Yam Festival, and re-enactments, and
 - Where as the cannon serves as a unique tool for teaching history and helping maintain our heritage and
 - Whereas the cannon is identified with the City of Southport and represents the Southport Historical Society, Therefore, be it resolved that the Southport Historical Society Executive Board endorses and supports the use of the cannon and the work of its crew.
- ~Accepted the following nominations for 2006 officers and agreed to forward them to the membership to be voted on at the November 17th meeting. New officers will take office in January 2006.
 - President: Pat Kirkman Director: Karen Knighton
 - Vice President: Musette Steck Archivist: Larry Maisel Secretary: Ginny Cannon
- ~Accepted with regret the resignation of Norm Caranthanasis as the Jail Site Manager. Jail Curator Beverly Wyckoff will determine the need to appoint a new site manager and get a prioritized list of remaining projects for the restoration.
- ~Agreed to change the locks at the Old Jail to provide security for the archive materials and donated items.
- ~Agreed to continue the SHS Scholarship program and increase the award to \$2,000 payable in equal installments in each of the first two years of study. Scholarship Announcement SHS will offer a \$2,000 scholarship to a South Brunswick High School student in 2006. Students who are graduating in the spring and plan to attend a post-secondary institution are eligible to compete. An application form and essay on a local history topic are required in order to be considered. Application forms will be available at SBHS and the local libraries or by contacting Karen Knighton, 910-454-8018. Application deadline is March 1, 2006.



LOOKING BACK - THE HISTORY PAGE

Susan Carson, Editor

What would I do without my many friends who are willing to share their knowledge about our town and county? A special thanks to Larry Maisel for this interesting article on whaling in Brunswick County. Please continue to share your thoughts and research with me!

Area Fishermen Once Did Whaling - By Larry Maisel

Sometimes something just "doesn't compute" when you see it, or hear about it.

That was my reaction when I found something saying that whaling was once done in Brunswick County. Face it: whaling is something we associate with New England. But if someone ever asks you if whaling was ever done in this neck of the woods, say "that's right." Actually, "right" is precisely the right word.

While we think of whaling as a New England thing, done with large ships, there was whaling in North Carolina. Most of it centered around Cape Lookout, the Bogue and Shackleford Banks and near Hatteras, although the latter usually involved ships from New England in deeper water.

What was done around here was called "shore-based" whaling, which mostly involved right whales, and either meant capturing whales which had gotten trapped in shallow water, or butchering those which had beached themselves. In the former, rowboats were used. These were double-ended craft, which normally carried a crew of six. Some of these rowboats would venture offshore a ways, but still in fairly shallow water. Those whales which washed up on the beach were a gift from the deep to those living there.

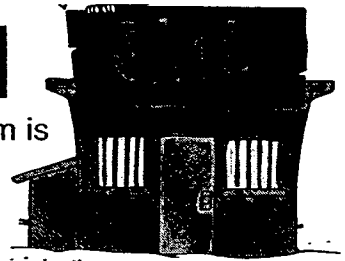
Right whales are still around here. Several were seen migrating southward not long ago, leaving many people curious about why they are called that. Whalers gave them that name early on, because they were the "right" ones for economic reasons. They yielded both blubber for oil and, whalebone, which was flexible, and used for a lot of things. The stays in your great grandmother's corset likely came from whalebone. The oil was used for lamps and lubrication. In the 1600's, the high price paid for whale oil made it as good as gold when it came to riches. In fact, the Royal Assembly declared it legal tender, as was tobacco also.

In Brunswick County whaling was almost exclusively shore-based, but in the mid-1700's the journal of one ship captain tells of some deep-water whalers building houses near Lockwood's Folly, and spending the some of the winter ashore. Whalers often called at Port Brunswick on the Cape Fear and later went up to Wilmington. Colonial port and revenue collection records tell of ships---some as small as 30 tons; others as large as 100 tons---carrying whale oil from Port Brunswick. Records in the state archives list ships carrying whale oil from Port Brunswick in the late 1780's. The destinations were as varied as Martinique, Charleston, and Dublin, Ireland. Shipment dates coincide with the season: December to June.

The records of the Executive Council reveal that there were fights over who had the right to license whaling. Coastal colonies required not only that a license be obtained, but that a cut of the proceeds be given to the Royal Governor. Initially, the Lords Proprietors insisted on half the take, but later reduced that to ten percent. Perhaps predictably, Virginia claimed not only its own waters, but that of both Carolinas too. Colonies impounded each others' vessels, and there were forged papers, lawsuits, and some vessels trying to skip out without paying. Everyone wanted a piece of the action.

Any kind of whaling, of course, was a dangerous undertaking. For those going off-shore, weather was a constant threat. Those were the days of pirates, who no doubt knew the value of whale oil as booty. Also keep in mind that it was during this period when the Spanish sent an expedition to Brunswick Town. For shore-based whalers, trying to harpoon a whale trapped in shallow water from a small boat could cost you life or limb, but success was a fast way to wealth.

NEWS FROM THE OLD JAIL



After being open for five months on Wednesdays and Saturdays the Old Jail Museum is now closed for the winter to the general public. Rest assured that many things will be going on at the Old Jail, during the winter, to get ready for the 2006 season.

The five month opening period has been more successful than any of us could have imagined on June 1, 2005! We have been open to the public as a "real" museum and about 800 folks have really enjoyed their visits. Of course, this would not have happened without all of you wonderful volunteers who have served as greeters and the folks who have been working hard on task forces to make it all happen. A huge thanks to all of you who have helped to make this opening season so successful!!

We will not be resting during the winter but will be very involved getting rooms and exhibits ready for our reopening in the Spring 2006. Some of the areas of winter work will be:

- The Old Jail will be open the day of the Christmas Tour of Homes and it will be decorated for Christmas 1904
- The 1904 Family Life Room Task Force will continue to collect artifacts in preparation for the Spring 2006 opening of that exhibit.
- The Archives Task Force will be hard at work continuing to clean out the Annex and bring Old Jail artifacts back for exhibit. They will also be getting the Resource Room ready for public use.
- We will be having training for greeters this winter. (The date will be in the next Whittler's Bench.) It is hoped that all greeters will attend this training. If you were a greeter this summer or you want to be a part of this fun aspect of our Old Jail Museum, please plan on attending the training for the 2006 season.

We have received some articles from the Wish List for the 1904 Family Life Room, but not as many as hoped. The following items are still needed. Please look in you attics, garages, ect. and see if you can help with this exhibit. Items maybe donated or loaned. Please call Beverly Wyckoff at 457 – 5599 if you have items to donate. Please do not just drop them off.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Large items: | Small items: | linens | coffee grinder |
| small dresser | wash board | quilt for bed | cups, mugs, glasses |
| small wash stand | Kerosene lamps | rug beater | toys |
| small bed | Dishpan | shoes | books |
| 2 wooden chairs | dishes | rolling pin | mannequins and or dress form |
| wooden bench | cooking utensils | dough bowl | |
| small kitchen table | flour sacks | churn | |
| small pie safe | flat ware | clothing – man women, children | |

Still needed are any photos that were taken of the Old Jail during the restoration work, to add to the Jail photo album for exhibit. If you have any, please call Beverly Wyckoff at 457-5599. It is hoped to have the Restoration Scrap Book ready for the Spring 2006 opening.

Beverly Wyckoff, Curator



NOTES IN PASSING

Our sympathies to the family and friends of a long time member of the Society, D. I. Watson, who passed away on September 28, 2005.



Fort Anderson Flag

The Garrison Flag is at Home by Jimmy Bartley

Excerpted From the Brunswick Gazette - Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson Historic Site

"The Garrison Flag which flew over Fort Anderson is now back at Fort Anderson!...The flag, which finally finds its way home after 140 years, is where it belongs. And it comes home to stay, thanks to much effort of so many."

"...the time frame for the fundraising to bring the flag home was only 6 months, yet it was accomplished. It was as if the project to return the flag took on a life of its own, all because of people who care to see rightful things brought back and important things preserved... Make plans to see this incredible artifact, now on display at the Brunswick Town / Fort Anderson State Historic Site. Thank you all for making it happen"

NOTE: The Southport Historical Society was a financial contributor to help to bring the flag back home where it belongs.



NC Maritime Museum at Southport

From the Mullet Wrapper – NC Maritime Museum at Southport

The NC Maritime Museum at Southport will welcome Stephen Bliss as guest speaker at the monthly program on November 15th, 7:00 PM at the Southport Community Building. Steve will examine the history, origin and disappearance of the Cape Fear Indians. This will include their ancestors 12,500 B.C. to early 1800 A. D. when they are known to have gone off the radar screen. The methodology used was based on geography, historical information, archeology, ethnography, iconography, genetics, and linguistics to find once and for all who these indigenous peoples were.

Stephen Bliss was the Director of the Southport Art Museum. He has long been interested in the subject of the Cape Fear Indians and has been researching them for about nine years. After becoming friends with the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe in Bolton, NC, and collecting many artifacts from the Cape Fear area, he approached the University of North Carolina who has guided him toward a brief on the Cape Fear Indians. He holds a MA and a BA degree and has become knowledgeable about the indigenous populations in North and Central America. In January, 2006, he is off to Costa Rica where he will be providing art interpretation to the local University for an indigenous lost city that has been found in the inner reaches of the rainforest.

Treasurer Transition



After having served as Treasurer of the Society for many, many (too many to accurately count) years, Wolf Furstenau has asked to be relieved of the responsibility of treasurer and of keeping the rest of the Board out of financial disaster. He has taken us from worrying about every dollar to only having to worry about every third dollar. Seriously, he has guided us through the huge expenses of the Old Jail Renovation, several new book publications and reprints, and wisely managing investments. We all owe him a huge debt. Thank you, Wolf, for all of your time and effort.

Now, competent Treasurers are not easy to come by, but the Society was fortunate to have one sitting quietly by. When asked, Phil Fravel said that he needed to consider it, then got back with the Board several weeks later and agreed to take on the job. The Board believes that with his banking background, Phil will continue Wolf's excellent management and guidance. Welcome aboard, Phil. We look forward to working with you.