



# NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOX 874, SHALLOTTE, N. C. 28459

VOL. XXV NO. 3

AUGUST 1984

## WHY SMITHVILLE CHANGED INTO SOUTHPORT

During a four-year period, 1888-1892, some men of mighty minds and means conceived a plan whereby the dormant port of Smithville could become the terminal for a Great Lakes at Chicago to Smithville.

About 1900 a corporation was organized under the Laws of North Carolina styled THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY FOR the avowed purpose of promoting the establishment of railroad trunk line from Smithville to Bristol, Tennessee. There to continue to Galaz and on to Chicago for the purpose of bringing coal for export at Smithville England and European ports.

Among the men of prominence who visited Smithville were several nationally prominent individuals, such as Stuyvesant Fish and George Pullman, then latter a big factor in the Pullman Car Company. They contacted the prominent citizens of Smithville.

Two years after the organization of the South Atlantic and Northwestern Railroad Company, the Southport Construction Company was chartered under the laws of North Carolina with the authorized capital of \$25,000 and with the following listed as charter Stockholders: W.H. Pike, H.H. Daugherty, William Weeks.

At this time "Mister Mike" Guthrie suggested that the name of Smithville be changed to Southport, claiming such a name would indicate that it was the most southernmost port in North Carolina. Then the old town of Smithville surrendered its individuality of its name by adopting a name that had no connotation. For the little marine villagers other than their desire that Southport, North Carolina, would become as important as the port of Southport, England.

But the projected railroad "died a-borning" shortly after Miss Laura Weeks, daughter of William Weeks, dug the first shovel of dirt, the project having been killed as a result of The Great Depression in England, as it was reported that several english financiers were interested in the trunk line project.

While Southport never did get a trunk line railroad, the town did become the terminal for a short line with a long name. The Wilmington, Brunswick and Southern Railroad, which began operations on a thirty-mile railroad line on November, 1911, from Southport to Wilmington, or at least to Wilmington Via a junction at Navassa.

From RAH! RAH! Carolina And Three Confluent Rivers Cap Fear And Cape Fear Cape.  
by Harry Hayden  
Via Amarette Pierce

## CURRENT CONCERNS

The next meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society will be August 13 at eight o'clock in the Old Courthouse at Shallotte. The program will feature the Reverend Tracie Varnum who will speak on the North Carolina Lighthouses.

The state winners of the History Bowl Contest are from East Yancey Middle School in Burnsville. Teacher Helen Hughes coached the team who won three consecutive contests in Raleigh to become the first state champions.

The Society of North Carolina Archivists was organized March 9, 1984, in Chapel Hill. The purposes of the society are to promote cooperation and exchange of information among individuals and institutions interested in the preservation and use of the archival and manuscript resources of North Carolina.

Dr. Charles Joyner's book Down by the Riverside is now available at most book stores. It presents plantation life and folklore along the Waccamaw River in South Carolina before 1865.

Professor David Quinn's book on The Lost Colonists is available from the Historical Publications Section of Archives and History.

The Museum of History Associates provided 1500 eighth grade social studies teachers in public schools with a one-year subscription to the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine; also presented was information on the Junior Historian Program.

The Visitor Center at Elizabeth II in Manteo is being completed and tour guides are being trained.

Dr. Stanley South, formerly at Brunswick Town, was one of the recipients of the Halifax Resolves Awards for 1984. He was the first staff archaeologist for the Historic Sites Section and led the Brunswick Town excavation program and research in this area.

The Association of Historians in Eastern North Carolina met at Methodist College in Fayetteville. The afternoon session was opened by James M. Clifton of Southeastern Community College who read a paper entitled "Jehosse Island: The Antebellum South's Largest Rice Plantation".

The Archives Workshop for Beginning Genealogists is scheduled for August 16 and 17. The first eighty applicants will be accepted.

A symposium on Sir Walter Raleigh and his career is planned for 1986 when Wilson Library at Chapel Hill is reopened after renovation. Here the largest extant Raleigh collection is located.

The exhibition on North Carolina Blockade Running 1861-65 opened May 1, 1984 at the Eastern Office of the Division of Archives and History. This display is free and open from eight to five Monday through Friday at 117 West Fifth Street in Greenville, N. C.

Members, please be prepared to list and give addresses of persons interested in local history and who might become members.