



# The Mullet Wrapper

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- Growing up Black in Brunswick County  
Tuesday July 15 at  
7:00 PM

## G R O W I N G   U P   B L A C K   I N   B R U N S W I C K C O U N T Y

Come Join us this month for a great program from Brunswick County native Hobson Bryant. Hobson will discuss and share his personal remembrances and history in Brunswick County. The Southport Historical Society is sponsoring the program which will take place Tuesday, July 15 at 7:00pm in the Community Building.



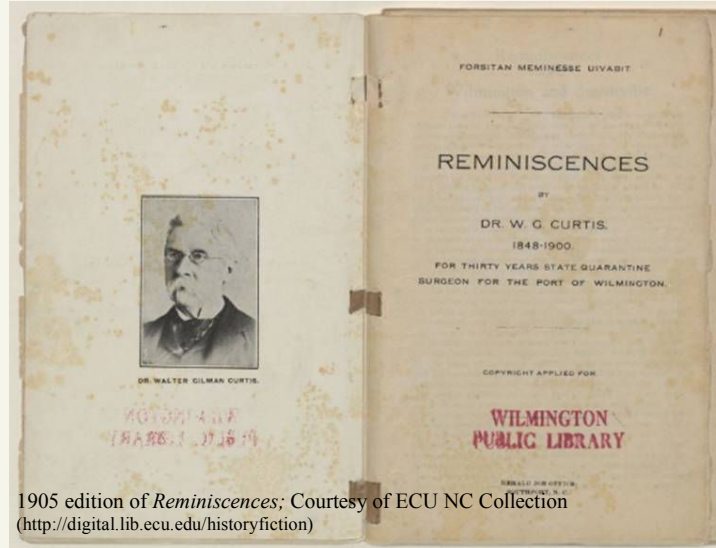
### N E W S   F R O M   T H E   F R I E N D S   O F   T H E   M U S E U M   ( F O M )

We have all enjoyed the wonderful 3rd Tuesday evening programs at the Community Building and we continue to seek out programs that will be of interest to many of us. FOM would like suggestions from you, our membership, for programs you would like to see. You may have a friend, neighbor or even you who has access to speakers or groups who could bring exciting new programs for us. If you know of anyone who could do a program or if you would like to see a program on a specific topic, please contact Shirley Wilson at wayfarer@ec.rr.com or 910-454-4327 or any of the FOM board members or the museum staff at 910-457-0003.

*Shirley Wilson, FOM Board at Southport*

*Insert from*  
**Reminiscences of Wilmington and Smithville---Southport, 1848-1900**  
 By Walter Gilman Curtis

Smithville was reached from Wilmington by the line of ocean steamers which were a continuation of the great line to the south. These were four steamers named "The Gladiator," the "C Vanderbilt, the "Governor Dudley" the "North Carolina," the last of which was a spare ship to be used in case of accident to any of the others. They were commanded respectively by Captain Isaac B. Smith, Captain Sterrit, and Capt Bates, and were very popular, making their trips for many years to Charleston, South Carolina without accident. They started daily from Wilmington on the arrival of the northern train. Breakfast, and dinner were served on board between Wilmington, and Smithville, and they were fine repasts as they had the markets of Charleston, and Wilmington to rely upon, with all the luxuries they afforded. These steamships took passengers, and freight for Smithville, and made their landing at a wharf near where the steamer Wilmington now has her landing. Returning from Charleston they stopped at the same wharf and breakfast served



1905 edition of *Reminiscences*; Courtesy of ECU NC Collection  
 (<http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction>)

between Smithville, and Wilmington. I will here mention the name of a woman quite celebrated in the annals of Smithville; her name was Mrs. Mary Duffy, who kept an eating house on the waters edge, which was long patronized by the citizens of Smithville, especially by the pilots. For over twenty five years Mrs. Duffy arose about three o'clock in the morning, and prepared breakfast for all passengers intending to go up in the steamer. A cup of coffee, or anything else wanted by the pilots, who wanted a morning meal before going to sea in search for vessels. There were several fine deck boats which were very fast, and able to go to sea in all weather; each of these pilot boats carried as many pilots as were necessary, and sometimes did not come into port again until they had put all their pilots aboard of incoming vessels. The bar at that time had about 12 feet of water upon it, consequently vessels coming into this port must be of that draft, and built to carry from 1000 to 2000 barrels of naval stores; they also brought from the northern markets what ever freight was offered, and this was nearly all the northern

freight because the railroad was very uncertain. Mrs. Duffy was remarkable in her powers of seeing and hearing, and her business was, in addition to supplying meals to wake up passengers who wished to take the steamer to Wilmington as these steamers entered port before light in the morning. It was necessary that Mrs. Duffy go by the sense of hearing, and she could always hear these boats which were side wheelers, far enough out to sea to enable the passengers she had collected to get up and dress, and go down to her establishment for a cup of coffee before going on the steamship wharf; as may be well imagined Mrs. Duffy was a very important character in the life of Smithville, and she was duly appreciated by all the citizens of Smithville as a good, and faithful woman; she lived to a great age and all through the war she continued the same occupation so far as the war would permit but her house was finally burned and her business was destroyed, and she retired to

live with her daughter in the house which is now the rectory of St. Philips Episcopal Church, and ended there her long and useful life regretted by all but by none more than the children of Smithville to whom she supplied cakes which were so celebrated as to acquire the name of "Duffy Cakes." This steamship line was discontinued on the completion of the railroad, called The Wilmington & Manchester which carried all through passengers for southern ports or cities. As may be well imagined, this left Smithville aground upon the shoals, and what to do was a matter for serious consideration. How to get any where from Smithville was a difficulty not easily solved; there were few horses or vehicles of any kind in Smithville, but the river was there at any rate, and if you did not wish to go by land, and ride in a cart you could take a boat, of which there were plenty, and plenty of skillful boatmen to to manage them; but neither of these modes of travel suited the public. Walter Gilman Curtis, *Reminiscences of Wilmington and Smithville---Southport*, (Southport, 1905) pg. 3-5

## SHARPIE

by Josiah Bailey

George C. Ives introduced the Sharpie to post Civil War depressed coastal North Carolina at Beaufort in 1875. It was a 34 footer. It out-performed the local craft and was particularly impressive in Spring and Summer "Blows". The shallow sounds could be treacherous in high winds. The Sharpie therefore extended the potential number of working days for fishermen due to the Sharpie's low freeboard, shallow draft and uncluttered deck. It was an improvement for both inshore fishing and oystering.

As a result oystering flourished as a major industry. North Carolina Sharpies were customized to meet local needs and many in the 40 to 45 foot range appeared by 1890. Sharpies were almost perfect in that they were easy and fast built. The flat bottom gave needed access to shallow but prosperous flats. They were simply rigged and manned by one or two crew. They were easily adapted to one or two masts and some had a third thwart for mounting the forward mast aft so that a two master could convert to one (sloop).

The larger Sharpies were often gaff rigged, sometimes utilizing a short bowsprit to accommodate a jib. Some had skegs and every variety of sail plan were attempted....even to overloading with multiple sails in the quest for speed. The changeover from tonging to dredging led to larger Sharpies and schooner rigs. Howard Chapelle states in Chapter 25:

These schooners remained in use well into the 20th century and, in fact, did not go out of use entirely until about 1938. In the 1920's and 30's many such boats were converted to yachts. They were fast under sail and very stiff, and with auxiliary engines that were equally as fast and required a relatively small amount of power. Large Carolina Sharpie Schooners often made long coasting voyages such as between New York and the West Indies.

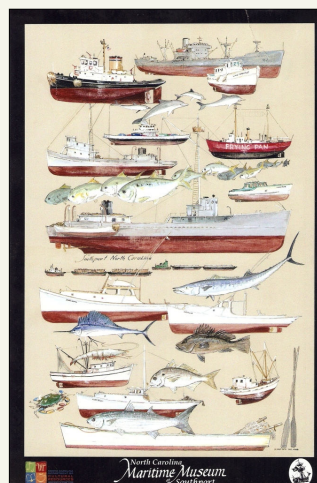
From: *The Sharpie Book* by Reuel B. Parker and *American Sailing Craft* by Howard I. Chapelle



The *Mary S. Sharpie* model donated to the museum by Dr. Gerald Shinn in Mary Strickland's honor. Model crafted by Josiah Bailey



Donna Michaux teaching a program on sea turtles at the museum, on June 27th



### Boats and Fish of the Cape Fear

Fundraiser posters produced by Robert Allen Potter are available signed \$24.95 and unsigned \$19.95. Robert is a native of Southport and has drawn and painted since childhood. Painting the town of his youth and the boats that plied her waters is his favorite pastime. Drop in to the museum and purchase your copy today or call to arrange for mail order, 910-457-0003.

HISTORY MATTERS

THE MULLET WRAPPER



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MUSEUM

In sponsoring this newsletter, the *Friends of the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport* supports the museum in continuing North Carolina's rich maritime history.  
Join us today... Welcome Aboard!  
FOM

**Museum Hours**

Tuesday - Saturday  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

Tuesday, July 15, 2008, 7:00 PM - "*Growing up Black in Brunswick County*" - Hobson Bryant  
(Sponsored by Southport Historical Society)

Tuesday, August 19, 2008, 7:00 PM - "*Marine Biology*" - Troy Alphin from UNC-W

Tuesday, September 16, 2008, 7:00 PM - "*Queen Anne's Revenge*" - Mark Wilde-Ramsing  
(Sponsored by Southport Sail and Boat Club)

Tuesday, October 21, 2008, 7:00 PM - "*Grits, Sand and Southern Landscapes*" - Dr. Bruce Williams  
(Sponsored by Lowe's Home Improvement)

Tuesday, November 18, 2008, 7:00 PM - "*Home Improvement Celia's Way*" - Celia Rivenbark  
(Sponsored by Shirley & Woody Wilson)

*All Tuesday programs are free and held at the Southport Community Building unless otherwise noted.*

**FOM**  
**North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport**  
**P. O. Box 11101**  
**Southport, NC 28461**

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