

# Molly's "Beaufort Town"

*A 10-chapter story celebrating Beaufort and colonial history.*



by Lynn Allred



# Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE	
“Busy Bees” .....	3
CHAPTER TWO	
“The Quilting Party” .....	7
CHAPTER THREE	
“The Storm!” .....	11
CHAPTER FOUR	
“After the Storm” .....	15
CHAPTER FIVE	
“Stranded!” .....	19
CHAPTER SIX	
“The Suvivor!” .....	23
CHAPTER SEVEN	
“Home Again!” .....	27
CHAPTER EIGHT	
“The Pendant is Returned!” .....	31
CHAPTER NINE	
“Mystery Solved!” .....	35
CHAPTER TEN	
“Off to Sea!” .....	39



## Chapter One

# “Busy Bees”



Molly, a bright-eyed girl of colonial Beaufort, twirled her dark curls with one finger while dipping another into her mother’s pudding.

“Is it sweet enough?” her mother asked.

Molly had been rolling hoops with her cousin Lydia. When Lydia had been called in for dinner, Molly had come in through the kitchen door with a sad look on her face. Only a couple of minutes had passed since Molly and Lydia had parted, but Molly was already bored. When she saw her mother making fig pudding, Molly ran over to the table to help.

Mother had picked the figs right from their backyard and had just cooked them over the hearth fire. Now she was adding the sugar, eggs and spices. Molly begged to mix it with the wooden spoon. She quickly wiped her dusty hands across the front of her apron and started stirring, making lopsided circular motions in the large pottery bowl. Her mother smiled as Molly absentmindedly stuck out her tongue and placed it at the left corner of her mouth. That was Molly’s way of concentrating when she was doing something she thought was important.

“Have you and Lydia been in the creek today?” Mother asked. She knew that on hot days, the two girls loved to jump into the nearby creek - in just their underclothes, mind you - when they thought no one was watching. Mother had warned them over and over again to be more “ladylike” but had long given up when the warnings continued to fall on deaf ears. Besides, the neighbors didn’t seem to mind. In fact, by talking to them to find out what the girls had been up to, Mother found out that the neighbors secretly wished they could do it, too.

Molly whined. “Yes, but it was so hot! And we didn’t *mean* to do it. We were

just wading up to our knees. But the water was so cool - we wanted to pretend that we were otters, swimming and playing in the sea!" Molly flashed that wide, snaggle-toothed grin she had. Then a puzzled look suddenly came across her face. "How did you know we went swimming?"

Mother smiled. "Mothers just know these things, Molly," she explained. She didn't share the rest of her secret. The real reason she knew the girls had been swimming was because Molly's dress was buttoned wrong - all the way down the back!

Molly went back to stirring, glad her mother was not angry. Summer days in Beaufort could be so hot when no breeze came from across the harbor. Even now, at the table in the corner of their house, she and Mother were wiping sweat off their brows as they finished dinner for Father, her brother Jacob and baby Sarah.

Tonight, they were eating fish, roasted corn, stewed potatoes, applesauce and cornmeal bread, with fig pudding for dessert. Molly sure was tired of eating potatoes. How many more ways could her mother cook them? And whatever was not eaten tonight was sure to be served tomorrow. She hoped her father and Jacob were hungry, so not much would be left to eat later.

Thinking about Father and Jacob made Molly wonder where the two of them could be. Everyone else was accounted for. Nine-month-old Sarah was there in the kitchen where Mother could watch her, sleeping peacefully in the cradle next to the open window. Every now and then a breeze would come in and flutter the crisp white curtains.

Sarah had almost outgrown the cradle that their grandpa had built when her mother was born. Her family had brought it over from England and all the children in her family had slept in it. Toby, Jacob's pet beagle, was sleeping too, there on the hook rug at the back door. His feet were moving back and forth as he slept. He was probably dreaming about chasing rabbits, again.

"Where are Father and Jacob?" Molly asked. "Will they be late for dinner?"

"They're out raking clams," Mother said. "I want to make a pot of chowder tomorrow and the tide is out, so they should be able to find plenty. We have lots of potatoes to add to the clams and we can get milk from your Aunt Susan's cow. It's a good thing our families share what we have."

Molly groaned. Just thinking about eating more potatoes, even if they were to be added to a clam chowder, did not appeal to her at all. Where was it going to end? It seemed to her that all Mother ever did was work. She cooked. She cleaned. She made candles. She sewed clothes. She wove rugs. She made jellies and jams. She churned butter. And now she was cooking enough clam chowder for two families!

But for some reason, Mother was always smiling. She even sang a little song as she worked. The same tune, always, but the words were hard for Molly to make out - something about a busy bee?

Molly finished stirring the pudding just as she heard her father and Jacob coming up the stairs of the wide front porch. How she loved that porch! The railings needed to be painted – Father said he would do the painting this fall when the weather was cooler – but it was a special place. After dinner, her parents would sit there in their cane chairs and the children of the neighborhood would play together as friends and family came to visit. Porch gatherings were an after-dinner ritual in Beaufort. And at dusk, the fireflies, which she, Lydia and all the other children on their street called “lightning bugs,” would be flickering beneath the live oak trees, just waiting to be caught and released, one by one.

Baby Sarah started to stir and cry. “She must be hungry,” Molly thought. “I wonder if she likes fig pudding? And I wonder if one day she’ll swim in the creek and catch lightning bugs, just like me?”

## **USE THE NEWS:**

Choose newspaper photos of people to represent Molly and members of her family. Be sure to include the family pet. Compare Molly, her family and pet with people today.

Use print and digital sources provided by your area newspapers. Digital sources may include E-editions, blogs or websites, apps and/or tweets.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation*

## Learn more about colonial life!

### Colonists cooked in kitchen fireplaces

In colonial American homes, the kitchen served as the main room of the house. Because fires provided heat and light, families spent much time in front of their kitchen fireplaces where they also prepared meals on the hearth. For “hearth cooking,” colonists used pans with long handles and iron kettles that hung inside the fireplaces above the fire. They boiled vegetables or meats and vegetables together to make hearty soups and stews. Heated bricks placed in or close to the fireplace served as an oven for baking breads.



*County News-Times*)

(Photo of hearth cooking, courtesy of the Beaufort Historical Association and the *Carteret*

## Chapter Two

# “The Quilting Party”

Molly and her mother waited on the corner where they were to meet Lydia and Aunt Susan. A quilting party was planned for this morning. The neighbors' daughter, Susannah, was engaged to be married and the ladies of the church were making a wedding quilt. It was going to be beautiful – redbirds centered in white squares, with ivy leaves all around the border. Molly had seen the quilt last week, when Mother made her go and watch the ladies work.

“All proper young ladies should learn to make quilts,” Mother had said. Molly hated to admit, but watching the women's hands at work amazed her. How could they make such tiny little stitches? And how could they do it so quickly? But she couldn't watch them for long - she couldn't stand still long enough!

Molly had tried to sew once – just once. When she stuck her finger with the needle, she had tried so hard to be brave. But the stick hurt, and she couldn't help but cry a little. Mother had told Molly that maybe she just wasn't ready yet. Next time, she might learn to sew a square or two. But for now, she should just watch and learn.

Aunt Susan was making Lydia go to the quilting party, too. The grown-ups seemed to look forward to the event - but not the girls. They could think of better things to do. Molly watched for her aunt and cousin from the shade of a spreading cottonwood tree. “There they are!” she announced as she spotted them popping around the corner.

The two mother-daughter pairs paraded down the street for their morning of quilting and fellowship. Molly studied the neighbor's houses as they passed.

She saw the Nelson House. She thought *her* family's porch was great, but it was nothing like *this* one. The Nelsons' porch, like many others in Beaufort, was really two, with one stacked on top of the other, spanning the whole width of the house. And on the rooftop was another small porch with railings - just a square, uncovered box that opened up from below. What was it called again? Oh, yes... a widow's walk. Sometimes she would see Mrs. Nelson standing

there, holding onto the rails and looking out towards the harbor, waiting for her husband's ship to return home.

Captain Nelson sailed a merchant ship that traveled all over the world. When the ship left Beaufort Harbor, it would be filled with goods to trade for items that were needed here. When the ship returned, cloth, tea and other items would be unloaded and either taken to the general store on the waterfront or shipped by smaller boats to inland towns. Molly was excited to see new products in the store window and wonder where they came from.

Molly didn't see Mrs. Nelson on the widow's walk... yet. But she knew she would be there later. Her husband's ship had been out to sea for three months now. He should be returning soon.

And here was the Thomson House. It was similar to theirs, but the window shutters were closed tight. Mother said that the Thomsons had gone to New Bern. "Maybe they will see the building of Tryon Palace while they are there!" Molly thought. She knew that if they did, William, the Thomsons' son, would tell her all about it. William could be a little know-it-all sometimes, but he had lots of stories to tell about his family's travels.

Molly had never been around the world. She had never even been to New Bern, for that matter. She wondered about travelling any place she wanted to go. She wondered about faraway England, across the Atlantic Ocean. That's where her family had come from when she was just a little girl, but she was too young to remember it. She'd sure like to see England again one day. Maybe she could visit her grandparents....

Her thoughts were interrupted as Molly's group turned up the path to the Gible house. There, Susannah, the bride-to-be greeted them at the door. Susannah had two brothers Fredrick and Dedrick. Molly always thought it was odd that the brothers had rhyming names. Susannah took the ladies' hats and hung them on the rack near the stairs, then led them into the living room.

The *quilt* was in the middle of the room. It was stretched out tight on a huge rack, and chairs were placed all around. A lot of work had been done on the quilt since Molly had seen it last. She reached out to touch one of the finely-stitched squares when she heard a loud "Ahem." She jerked back her hand and looked up to see Mrs. Ramsey, one of the older women who attended her



church, staring at her as if she had committed a terrible crime.

“Dirty fingers make dirty quilts,” Mrs. Ramsey said sternly. Molly gulped. Lydia was fidgeting beside her.

Mother jumped to Molly’s rescue. “I made sure the girls washed up before we left,” Mother explained. Molly gratefully looked up at her mother, who gently pushed her to stand beside a chair near the quilting frame. Mother sat down in the chair and picked up her needle and thread as the other ladies arrived.

Soon, the room filled with lively conversations and discussions. Molly and Lydia watched for a while as the women chatted and sewed. At no time were the women silent - or still. Lips and hands seemed to work together in a rhythm all their own.

Soon, however, Molly became bored. She stared at the ceiling and shuffled around on restless feet. And, with all the women here in one room, it sure was hot. All she could think about was the cool creek water waiting for her just a short distance away. She imagined her bare toes squeezing into the murky mud at the water’s edge.

Suddenly, all the ladies stopped talking and sewing and looked toward the front windows. Molly was puzzled but glad for the change of pace as excited voices and the shuffling of feet were heard just outside. Like a small herd of sheep, the women moved toward the windows to find out what was happening in the street.

“What a way to end a party,” Molly thought.

### **USE THE NEWS:**

What were the women assembled to make? How did Molly demonstrate independence? In print and digital editions of your local newspaper, identify individuals who demonstrate independence and challenge stereotypes about what women and men should do.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about historic Beaufort!

### Two porches, one house

Sea captains, boat builders and merchants who traded with seagoing vessels built many of the houses in historic Beaufort. Those men traveled a great deal and brought back design ideas and materials. For example, the design for steep rooflines covering front and back porches came from the Bahamas.

Another idea brought from tropical climates was the use of long, narrow rooms that extend from the front to the back and allow sea breezes to cool the entire house. Two levels of outdoor living allowed residents to catch the incoming breezes from both the upstairs and downstairs. The “double porches” on many of Beaufort’s historic homes also helped keep residents cool in warm weather.



(Photo of the Hammock House, courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*)

## Chapter Three

# “The Storm!”

**W**hen Molly finally made her way to the window with the women, she couldn't believe what she saw. The sky was so dark, it looked as though she could catch fireflies right then and there – but it was the middle of the morning! People were running up and down the street, grabbing up children and pets and holding onto each other as they ran for the safety of their homes. And the wind! It was howling! How could the quilters not have heard it before? The treetops that lined the streets were blowing around and around, like the whirligigs in Molly's front yard.

Molly spotted her mother among the group of frantic women and hurried to her side. She reached for Lydia, grabbed her hand and held it tight. From across the room, Aunt Susan ran over to join them. While the other women were pushing their way out to the front porch, Molly's group found their way out the back. The hinges of the screen door were already coming off the doorframe as they dashed across the neighbors' lawns, racing against the oncoming storm.

Out of breath, they arrived at Molly's house, which was the closest. They ran up the front steps and into the parlor. Father and Jacob were there waiting for them, holding onto Sarah and trying to keep Toby at bay as they urged the women and girls inside. Quick as a flash, the baby and the dog were handed over as Father pushed the door closed against the wind. Then he and Jacob started closing the rest of the shutters as they all stood together in the middle of the room, waiting. “Waiting for what?” Molly wondered. She trembled and held Lydia's hand even more tightly.

Then the rain came. And it came in buckets! Molly did not remember a time when so much rain fell so hard and so fast. It seemed to never end. It beat against the roof so hard Molly thought that the ceiling would come crashing down at any minute. And through the cracks of the house and down the chimney, the wind whined and whimpered like a frightened puppy, then grew

louder, like the bellows of an angry bear. Molly looked at Toby. He was quiet as a mouse, sitting anxiously at Jacob's feet, but his ears were up and alert.

Mother was trying to keep Sarah occupied so she would not be frightened. She held a rattle close to Sarah's ear and played hide and seek with it for what seemed like an eternity. Despite all that was going on around her, Sarah smiled and cooed.

Gradually the rain stopped. The air was still. And the sun shone through the cracks around the windows.

Slowly, ever so carefully, Father and Jacob opened the window shutters and peered outside. When Father announced that all was well again, Molly, still holding onto Lydia's hand, stepped out onto the front porch. Tree limbs, yard tools and pieces of the neighbors' fence were all over the street. Even a couple of doors had been ripped off their hinges and leaned against the live oak trees. The two girls tiptoed down the steps. The water in the front yard covered their ankles and went halfway up to their knees.

"What happened?" Molly asked. She had wanted to sound brave, but when the question left her, she realized her voice was trembling.

"We must have been brushed by the edge of a hurricane," Father replied. "It came up real quick, but I've seen worse. It looks like the storm hit harder to the west of us."

Aunt Susan suddenly remembered her own house, just down the street. She grabbed Lydia, her only child, and rushed home to find her husband. Molly's Uncle Aaron was the pastor at their church. He had been visiting newcomers to invite them to the Sunday service when the storm hit.

Father had gotten a slower start than Susan, but, using long strides, he was quickly right behind his sister-in-law to help where he could. Mother stayed behind with the children to see what damage had been done to their own home. Molly groaned. When Father was gone, Jacob seemed to puff up and boss his sister around. She decided to stay outside, as far away from her brother as she could get.

Molly listened to the sounds all around her. *Now*, Sarah was crying. And Toby was barking. Water steadily dripped from the edge of the house... plunk, plunk, plunk. And neighbors on all sides were emerging from their doorways,

calling out to one another to see if all were well.

Molly lifted the hem of her dress and waded out farther into the street. Well, she had wanted to go swimming today but not like this! Molly muttered to herself, "As Mother would say, be careful what you wish for!"

She looked around the yard. There was the hoop she had been playing with earlier, wrapped around the boxwood in the Thomson's yard. And there was the doghouse Jacob had been building for Toby, smashed against a tree. But her brother was clever. Maybe he could fix it.

As she turned around, she glanced up at the Nelson House. There was Mrs. Nelson, standing on top of her roof, holding onto the rail of the widow's walk. "I'll bet she can see for miles from up there," Molly thought. Then she had a startling thought. Captain Nelson was out there somewhere in his ship! Would he be all right? Suddenly the term "widow's walk" had a whole new meaning. What a terrible name for such a beautiful part of a house!

And what about the Thomsons? They were to the west, in New Bern, where Father said the storm was headed. She worried about William. He could be a pain, just like the other boys on the street, but deep down, she really liked him.

Molly ran back inside to help her mother quiet Sarah. If Jacob tried to boss her around, she'd have a thing or two to settle with him!

### **Use the News:**

What was done to protect Molly and her family? Use print and/or digital editions of your newspaper to find reports of weather warnings and/or storms. Why do you think newspapers include local weather reports? Produce an image that could appear in the newspaper to illustrate today's weather.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about weather in N.C.!

### National Weather Service

Today, hurricanes and tropical storms can be predicted and their paths tracked to help residents prepare for a weather emergency. Using the latest in radar, satellite and computer equipment, weather experts at the National Weather Service, located in Raleigh, Wilmington and Newport, constantly watch the areas' weather conditions and issue weather warnings to counties in central and eastern North Carolina. Other weather stations serve western North Carolina.



(Photo of the National Weather Service in Newport, courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*)

## Chapter Four

# “After the Storm”

Molly looked all around her as she stepped out onto the front porch. “Now, if I were a visitor here,” she thought, “I would never know that a storm hit right where I’m standing, less than one week ago!”

Molly took note of all the changes she had seen in just a few short days. All the tree limbs had been picked up and burned. All the walkways and lawns had been cleaned and swept. All the doors were nailed back onto the hinges. And the shutters of every house were thrown open wide, welcoming family and friends. “That just goes to show you,” Molly thought, “we don’t let a little storm get in *our* way!” Life returned to usual.

Molly ran down the street to get Lydia. A fleet of ships had come in and they were going down to the waterfront to see if anything new had arrived for the general store. On the way, she passed Uncle Aaron, making his visitation rounds to the families who had just moved to Beaufort. When the storm had hit last week, he had run to the closest house he could get to – *Mrs. Ramsey’s!* Afterwards, he jokingly said that he didn’t know which was worse – the storm, or having to soothe Mrs. Ramsey’s raw nerves until the storm was over! Molly chuckled. For some reason, her uncle always looked up to the heavens for forgiveness each time he spoke of Mrs. Ramsey!

No word had come yet about Captain Nelson and his crew. Other ships had come and gone since last week, but none reported hearing anything from the Captain. Mrs. Nelson had been seen on her widow’s walk every morning and afternoon, scanning the horizon, anxiously watching each ship that sailed in. Molly was starting to worry – not just about the Captain but about Mrs. Nelson as well. How would she take the news if his ship had been lost at sea?

The good news was that the Thomsons had returned home! The storm had not hit New Bern as hard as her father had thought. The wind had lost speed as the hurricane made landfall. By the time the storm had passed over New Bern, the pounding rain was all that was left. New Bern had some

flooding, but the waters had quickly receded and the Thomsons were able to get home. They arrived a few days later than expected, but they made it, nonetheless.

Once the Thomsons returned, William told Molly and Lydia all about his family trip. While they were in New Bern, they had watched the building of Tryon Palace. What a grand place it was going to be! Lydia and William pretended to be the Royal Governor and his wife, hosting tea parties and re-enacting the grand balls they imagined would take place there. Molly, however, pretended to be an English queen, on a visit to the governor's mansion. How William and Lydia had laughed when she adjusted her imaginary crown!

Now, Molly was skipping down the road with Lydia lagging behind, as usual. "Come on," Molly urged. "You're as slow as that old turtle we saw yesterday!"

The waterfront became all hustle and bustle as loads of lumber and salted fish were being hauled onto one ship while large barrels and bolts of cloth were being taken off another. Molly and Lydia inched closer to the ships to get a better look at the fabrics that were being delivered today. Their mothers had promised to make them some new dresses if they found some material they liked. The friends were close enough now to touch each and every bolt stacked on the docks.

One pattern caught Molly's eye. It was lilac, with tiny yellow rosebuds. Lydia picked out a pale-blue gingham. The girls hoped these were being delivered to the general store. They decided to check with the storekeeper later to see if the bolts had been priced to sell. Plus, they had a few coins in their pocket – just enough for lemon drops!

Molly scanned the waterfront to see if William and his family were there. She and Lydia had planned to steal William away if they saw him so they could share their lemon drops with him. William's mother didn't allow him to eat candy – she said it was bad for his teeth - but he loved the taste of lemon drops. He could hold them between his cheek and gum for the longest time, never even letting them *touch* his teeth! Molly and Lydia sneaked him a few pieces whenever they could.

No sign of the Thomsons, but Molly spied Mrs. Ramsey perched on the



edge of the walk, talking to Mrs. Nelson and patting her hand! Molly and Lydia ran for cover, hiding behind a nearby barrel so the crotchety old woman wouldn't see them. What was *Mrs. Ramsey* doing there? It was bad enough that she looked down on them through the spectacles on the tip of her nose, but here she was, right in their path! Molly was sure she would take great satisfaction in telling Mother and Aunt Susan that she had seen the girls on the docks - alongside sailors and ruffians - where young ladies should never be!

Molly motioned for Lydia to stay put, then darted to the edge of the harbor, where she found a small round pebble. Aiming carefully, she tossed the pebble just past the heads of the two women. When they turned to look in the direction of the noise, Molly and Lydia sneaked around the barrel and made their way back to where the docks met the street, with no one the wiser.

"Whew," said Lydia. "That was close!" The two girls skipped towards the walkway, heading for the general store, when Molly suddenly stopped. What was that on the edge of the docks? She was sure she had seen it out of the corner of her eye, but where did it go? She took a step backward and looked again. There it was! The sun was hitting it just right, now, reflecting off of a shiny surface.

Molly moved closer. There, lying across some seaweed and broken seashells that had been washed up by the storm, was a silver necklace. The delicate chain was broken, but the heart-shaped pendant was intact, with some kind of engraving on it. Molly rubbed it between her thumb and forefinger to see if she could make out the words. There were two names – Dorothea and Josiah – and underneath was a date – Dec. 12, 1742. On the back of the pendant was a phrase, but it was too worn and smooth to read. The only words she could make out were "You" and "sea."

Molly turned to show the necklace to Lydia, and the two girls studied the pendant. They were curious about the people it represented and wondered what the phrase might mean. Then, remembering that they had to be home soon, Molly tucked the necklace into the pocket of her apron as the girls hurried off to the general store.

## USE THE NEWS:

Find and read the “Lost and Found” section in your local newspaper’s Classifieds section, published in print and/or digital editions. Write a lost and found ad for the pendant.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about the colonial capitol!

### Tryon Palace

Tryon Palace, North Carolina’s colonial capitol, is centrally located near the state’s coast in New Bern. The building of the palace began in 1767 and fueled controversy because of its cost. Governor William Tryon and his family moved in in 1770 but lived there barely a



(Photo courtesy of Tryon Palace, New Bern, N.C.)

year. Governor Josiah Martin lived in Tryon’s Palace until the early days of the Revolutionary War. Today, the site consists of three historic homes, 13 gardens and the New Bern Academy Museum. Guides, craftspeople and interpreters bring American history to life for visitors. The North Carolina History Education Center opened in October 2010, adjacent to Tryon Palace. [www.tryonpalace.org](http://www.tryonpalace.org).

## Chapter Five

# “Stranded!”

Mother had a straw broom in her hands and was just beginning her daily chores. The first job was to sweep off the front porch. The children had brought home several pocketfuls of seashells and pebbles and had left them right there at the front door. When Father left this morning, he had stepped on the seashells and broken many of them into tiny bits. Sand and shell fragments were scattered all over the porch, so Mother was attempting to clean up the mess the children had left behind when they ran off to the creek.

Jacob, Molly and Lydia were with William Thomson and William’s cousin Samuel, who was about Jacob’s age. They were taking the Thomson’s nieces, Elizabeth and Ann, to show them the periwinkles and fiddler crabs that could be found around the marshes.

Elizabeth and Ann were from Virginia and were visiting Beaufort with their parents. Their father, Mr. Thomson’s brother, was a wheelwright and was thinking of moving here. If his skills were needed in Beaufort, he and his family would be moving right next door.

Mother leaned on her broom for a moment as she thought about all the people who had moved to Beaufort in the last few months. More homes were being built as the edge of the town was gradually moving to the north and east. Soon, if the growth continued, they would have to clear more trees to make room for additional streets and houses.

Realizing she had much to do, Mother went back to sweeping off the front porch. She had almost finished the job when she spotted Molly’s apron, thrown across one of the rocking chairs. “Molly would lose her head if it was not attached to her shoulders,” Mother thought to herself. She picked up the apron and shook off the sand before taking it into the house.

As she shook the apron, something fell out of Molly’s pocket and onto the floorboards of the porch. Mother reached out to grab it, but it fell through the cracks, onto the ground below. She didn’t know what the object was, but

she reminded herself to ask Molly to crawl under the porch to get it when she returned home.

---

At the creek, the group of children splashed at the water's edge. They were looking for fiddler crabs to show Elizabeth and Ann. Few were out today. The tide was low. "It's even too hot for fiddler crabs," Molly thought to herself.

Looking around to find something else to do, Molly spotted a small boat, belonging to the Thomsons, pulled into the marsh grass. She tugged on William's sleeve. "How about if we go over to the island?" she asked. "Elizabeth and Ann will love it over there!"

William was willing, but Jacob wasn't so sure. The dinghy didn't look too safe to him, but William assured him that it was "seaworthy enough" to get them across the harbor. Working together, the children pushed the boat out of the grasses and into the edge of the water.

Elizabeth and Ann stepped into the boat first, followed by Molly, Lydia and William. As the oldest, Jacob and Samuel gave the boat a shove then jumped in at the back of the boat. The boat had only two paddles, so Jacob, Samuel, William and Molly took turns rowing.

With seven children aboard, the boat was crowded. Lydia whispered a prayer that the boat would not sink under their combined weight as the boat rocked from side to side. Elizabeth and Ann, not accustomed to boating, shifted around nervously on the narrow seats.

"Sit still or you'll tip us over," William warned. The two girls froze in their seats and did not move again until the boat was safely on the eastern tip of the nearby island.

Here, the children had much more to see and do. In the shallow inlets, egrets waded, looking for small fish to eat as horses grazed in the grasses nearby. The children knew not to bother the horses, which were skittish around people, but they pointed them out to Elizabeth and Ann, who clapped their hands with delight. This was the first time they had seen horses that were not fenced in or pulling a wagon.

Molly suggested going further down the beach where there would be more of a breeze. Here, waves lapped against the shore, covering and uncovering hundreds of coquina clams. The children watched as the tiny clams stood on their ends and burrowed their way back into the sand, disappearing as if they had never been there at all.

Because the day was hot, the children played in the water for a long while. The boys rolled up their pant legs and the girls hiked up their dresses to wade out as far as they could. Under their bare feet, they could feel the bristly hairs of sand dollars tickling their toes. They counted to see how many they could find. They dug their toes into the sand and flicked them up, one by one. So far, they had counted almost one hundred of the round, flat creatures.

The tide, which had been low until now, gradually reversed itself as the children continued to laugh and play. Then the waves started to come farther up the beach as the sun began to drop in the western sky.

Suddenly, Jacob remembered the boat that had brought them over earlier in the day.

“Oh, no!” he cried. “The boat! The tide may take it out to where we can’t reach it!”

One behind the other, the children raced back to where they had left the boat, leaving their shoes behind them and a trail of footprints in the sand. Out of breath, they rounded the corner by a clump of low-lying bushes and looked toward the shoreline.

The boat was nowhere to be found! Molly groaned. Boy, were they in trouble now!

**USE THE NEWS:**

Use print and digital editions of your local newspaper to find words, phrases and photos about your community’s natural surroundings. Compare your physical environment with the natural surroundings of the island described in the story.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about Cape Lookout National Seashore!

### Shackleford Island

Shackleford Island is the southern-most of the three barrier islands that make up today's Cape Lookout National Seashore. The island is approximately nine miles long and a half-mile wide. In 1702, the English settled the island. Most of the former residents lived on the east end of the island and worked as whalers and fishermen.

According to legend, the wild horses that live on the island survived Spanish shipwrecks in the 1500s. When the island's settlers needed horses for farm work, they caught and used the animals to pull plows and wagons. Settlers released the horses into the wild, when their work was done. Today, 100 horses roam the island, but no person lives there. Federal law protects the herd.



(Photo of wild horses of Shackleford Island courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*)

## Chapter Six

# “The Survivor”

“**W**hat are we going to do?” cried Elizabeth. Ann, the younger of the two girls, used the hem of her dress to wipe the tears away from her cheeks.

Molly gave her hand a squeeze. “It will be all right,” she said. “Jacob will figure something out, won’t you, Jacob?”

Molly looked at Jacob for reassurance. Her brother shifted his weight from one foot to the other. *What could* they do? The boat was gone. It had probably been taken out and pushed around by the tide, and who knows where it might have ended up? “Let’s split up and try to find it,” Jacob suggested. “It couldn’t have gone too far.”

Molly grabbed Lydia’s hand and the two girls planted themselves beside Molly’s older brother. Jacob nodded toward his sister and her friend. “The three of us will go *this way*,” Jacob said as he pointed west, down the long side of the beach, “and the four of you can go *that way*.” He pointed to the south, where an inlet cut across the island. “The boat couldn’t have gone the way we just came from or we would have seen it,” he explained. “So if you cut across to where that inlet is, maybe it floated over there into the trees.”

Samuel nodded and assumed leadership of his group as the two teams headed off in search of the boat. All Molly could hear as they parted was the whining and whimpering of the two visitors from Virginia. Samuel and William remained grim and silent.

---

Jacob led Molly and Lydia across the hot sand. Their bare toes were sore and raw, and the tops of their feet were sunburned, so every few minutes they took turns walking at the water’s edge. They had gone halfway around the island, but still, they found no sign of the boat.

They had just turned around to come back and find the others when Jacob stopped in his tracks. There, lying on its side in a grove of live oak trees, was a small rowboat – but it wasn't theirs.

Jacob put out his arm as a caution to the two girls. He then put his index finger over his lips, asking for silence, as he tiptoed closer to get a better look. The two girls should have stayed behind, but they moved right behind Jacob, following his every step.

They inched closer and closer to the overturned boat, and just when they were almost there, Lydia stepped on an oyster shell. "Ouch," she cried out.

Jacob and Molly both froze in mid-step. They had just turned to stop Lydia from making any more noise when a man slowly raised his head from the nearby brush. His face was bruised and swollen and his head had been bleeding. "Help me!" he cried. His voice was so low they could just barely hear it against the cry of the seagulls flying overhead.

Cautiously, the three children moved forward. Then Molly recognized the injured man. "Help him!" Molly yelled. "It's Captain Nelson!"

Molly was first to reach the captain's side. She could see he had been badly hurt. The captain had a huge gash across his left arm, and his leg was twisted underneath his body. She tore away the hem of her dress, just as she had seen her mother do when Jacob had been bitten by the neighbor's dog a few month's back. She handed the strip of cloth to Lydia.

"Go wet this," she instructed. "I need to wrap his arm!" Lydia, eyes wide, ran off to dip the cloth into the shallow water then raced back to return it. "Now go find the others and bring them over here!" Molly's voice was strong, but she was trembling inside. She was afraid, but someone had to keep a clear head. She looked at Jacob. He was still standing where she had left him.

"Jacob!" Molly yelled. Her brother looked startled as he suddenly came back to his senses. The surprise of finding the captain had caused him a moment of confusion, but now that he could think more clearly, he wondered about the boat and how the captain had gotten here, so close to home but yet so far away.

He leaned down over the captain. "Can you speak?" he asked.

Captain Nelson nodded. "The storm... the storm," Captain Nelson



muttered. "My ship and my crew, lost!"

"So that's what happened," Molly thought. "His ship was wrecked in the storm!" But that meant he had been here on this island for over a week. How had he survived?

Molly could tell that the captain was weak. He was thin and pale, and he could barely speak. She turned to ask Jacob what they should do, but he was no longer there. He had moved to where the captain's rowboat had run aground and was examining it closely.

Jacob turned the boat over and checked the hull. Other than being banged up a bit, it looked like it could get him back to the harbor. He looked around the edge of the trees and found a large branch, then he found a smaller one and bent it in the shape of a semi-circle. Taking off his suspenders, he used them to tie the rounded piece of wood to the larger branch, then pulled his shirt over his head and tied the sleeves across the wider end.

"Well, I'll be," Molly muttered to herself. "It's a homemade boat paddle!"

Jacob smiled triumphantly then returned to Molly's side. "It's up to you, Molly," he said. "Stay with him until the others arrive... and keep him calm and still. I'm going for help!" He squeezed Molly's shoulder as he raced off for the captain's rowboat. He pushed it into the water, jumped in and slowly paddled out. Much to Molly's surprise, the boat floated! Molly smiled. See, she knew her brother was clever!

Jacob turned for a final look back as he rowed the boat in the direction of home.

### **USE THE NEWS:**

Jacob and Molly teamed up. How? Use print and digital editions of your newspaper to identify local people who work together to meet a challenge or solve a problem.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about shipwrecks!



### Graveyard of the Atlantic

North Carolina's coastline is called the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." Hundreds of ships have been wrecked or run aground off North Carolina's coast. The state's barrier islands are difficult to maneuver, and two currents meet near Cape Hatteras. The Gulf Stream, with warm currents from the south, runs head long into cold currents coming down from the Arctic region. Their turbulence constantly shifts the underlying sand to form many dangerous areas.

(Photo courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*: Aboard a recovery vessel, the diver inspects a 18<sup>th</sup> century cannon pulled from Queen Anne's Revenge, the flagship of Blackbeard the pirate. The now-famous shipwreck discovered in 1996 offers historical details about piracy and artifacts that attract visitors to museums and the Beaufort area.)

## Chapter Seven

# “Home Again!”

Molly, Jacob and their friends stood at the gate on the edge of the Nelson’s walkway, waiting for news about the captain. After Jacob had reached the Beaufort docks, he had raced home to get help. Hearing what had happened, Father ran to get the doctor as Mother took off to sit with Mrs. Nelson and wait for more news. Sarah bounced up and down on Mother’s hip as she bounded up the front steps of the wide double-porch.

News about finding the captain spread fast. As soon as Father, Jacob and the doctor got to the rowboat, other men of the town were taking off after them. Jacob recognized Mr. Thomson in Uncle Aaron’s boat, and right behind them, paddling furiously, was Mr. Thomson’s brother - the wheelwright - with three other men. Jacob commented to Father that the wheelwright was already making a contribution to the town – and he hadn’t even met all of the people yet!

Once on the island, the doctor had examined Captain Nelson’s wounds but did not comment on his injuries. They carried the captain to Uncle Aaron’s larger boat and rowed him back to Beaufort, where they took him home to be cleaned up and examined more closely.

Molly, Jacob and the other children were divided up and carried back across in the remaining boats. Molly knew they would be in trouble for going to the island without permission. Going was her idea, so she expected she would be punished the most. Father had not said a word to her yet. She suspected he was very angry.

Now, everyone gathered at the Nelsons with many of the other townspeople, anxiously waiting for the doctor to come out and give his report. Molly could hear the people closest to her whispering anxiously. “What do you suppose happened?” she heard one neighbor ask another. “I hope he’ll be all right,” said the storekeeper, who had closed his doors to hear the report firsthand.

Mrs. Ramsey, of course, chimed in. "It's got to be bad news," she said. "Poor Thea! Whatever will she do without the captain?" Molly wanted to kick her in the shins! Why was Mrs. Ramsey always so unpleasant?

After what seemed like an eternity, the doctor emerged from the Nelsons' front door. He was wiping his hands with a bloodstained white cloth and was looking down as he walked. His face was hard to read.. Presently he spoke. Molly later said that you could have heard a pin drop as he finally looked up and gave them the news they had been waiting to hear...

"The captain is going to be all right."

Everyone cheered. Father grabbed Molly and gave her a tremendous hug as he grabbed Jacob with the other arm. "I'm so proud of both of you," he said. "Once you found the Captain, you kept a clear head and did just what you were supposed to do. Your mother and I have taught you well!"

Molly scanned the crowd, looking for Lydia. Uncle Aaron was picking her up and covering her with kisses. Molly smiled as Lydia wiped her face with the sash of her dress. She knew that Lydia hated it when her father did that in public!

Just then, Mrs. Nelson stepped onto the porch to stand beside the doctor, her head held high. As the cheering subsided, Mrs. Nelson called each child by name, Molly, Jacob, Lydia, William, Samuel, Elizabeth and Ann, and asked them to come inside the house. The captain wanted to thank them in person. The crowd cheered even more as the children filed into the house, one after the other.

As they stood beside the captain's makeshift bed, the girls held hands as the boys stood proudly behind them, peering over their heads. Captain Nelson, weak and obviously in pain, acknowledged the children's arrival as he tried to sit up on the edge of the bed. Mrs. Nelson moved forward to stop him, but the captain waved her away. As he struggled up on his elbows and straightened his back, he raised his right arm, the one that was not in a sling, in a salute. "Thank you, children," he said hoarsely. "I had given up on being found, but you found me, nonetheless. I am forever in your debt."

Mrs. Nelson moved to the captain's side. "I thank you, as well," she added. "You have brought my husband safely home. Josiah and I are together again.

And although I am sure there will be more travels for him in the future, for now, he is home with me. We are both grateful, to all of you.”

The children took turns shaking the captain’s hand, then the doctor ushered them back out onto the porch. “He needs his rest, now,” the doctor said. “I’m sure you will be welcome to come back in a day or two.”

The children turned to go but as Molly passed, the doctor touched her arm. “Molly, the captain’s bandage.... wherever did you learn to do that?”

“My mother taught me,” Molly replied. “When Jacob was injured, I helped change his bandages. Mother said that they should always be clean and tied tight if the wound was to heal properly.”

“You learned well,” the doctor said. “Tell your mother that you might have a future in medicine. I could use an apprentice like you one day!”

Molly blushed. “Oh, I don’t know about that,” Molly answered. “I think I might want to do some traveling when I grow up. Maybe even sail on a ship, like Captain Nelson. What do YOU think I should do?”

The doctor laughed. “There’s no reason at all you can’t do both!” he said.

“I guess you’re right,” Molly replied. Then she had a thought. “Does all this mean we’re not going to be punished for taking the Thomsons’ boat to the island? I have enough chores to do already!”

The doctor chuckled and patted Molly on the head. “I’ll see what I can do to help,” he said. Then he turned and went back inside to check on Captain Nelson.

### **USE THE NEWS:**

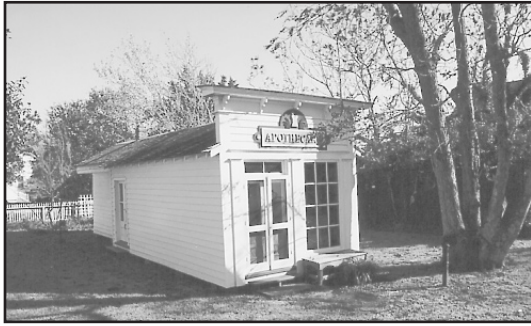
Pretend you run the newspaper in Beaufort. Write one or more headlines for a story about Captain Nelson’s rescue and homecoming. Use as models headlines in print and digital editions of your newspaper. If you were supplementing your news story with a photo or video, which scene(s) from Chapter Seven would you choose?

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about history!

### Beaufort's Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places lists Beaufort's Historic District. Each of the 100 homes in the district bears a plaque that tells the name of the home and the date it was built. The Beaufort Historic Site is within the historic district. This site covers more than two acres and includes homes



(Photo of the Apothecary Shop, courtesy of the Carteret County News-Times.)

and buildings dating from 1732 to 1859. All have been restored to show how people lived and worked during colonial times. The historic site includes the courthouse built in 1796, the county jail built in 1829 and the Apothecary Shop constructed in 1859. The shop features medical instruments, bottles and prescriptions used by the county's first doctors.

## Chapter Eight

# “The Pendant is Returned!”

When Molly, Jacob and Father returned from the Nelsons’ home, Mother was kneeling on the porch, peering through the cracks of the floorboards. Once she had learned that the captain was going to recover, she had brought Sarah home for her nap. Now she was on her hands and knees, with a quizzical look on her face.

“Whatever are you doing?” asked Father.

“I’m looking for something that fell out of Molly’s pocket earlier today,” Mother replied. She looked at Molly apologetically. “Molly, I hope what you had in your apron was not important. I took it off the rocker and, when I shook out the sand, something fell through the floorboards here. I haven’t been able to see what it was, but it’s down there somewhere.”

She pointed to the spot where the object had been lost. “If you can crawl under the end of the stairs here, you may be able to find it.”

Molly thought for a moment. Whatever could Mother be talking about? She didn’t know of anything that may have been in her apron pocket. She had to take a look.

She jumped off the edge of the porch and dropped on all fours to crawl underneath the stairs. The space sure was dark! The sun didn’t come through the cracks much, so nothing grew underneath... but she felt lots of bugs! Whoa! A leggy spider scurried across her hand. She jumped backwards then laughed out loud. It was just a granddaddy longlegs. Molly knew it wouldn’t hurt her, but she was startled, anyhow. She picked up the granddaddy longlegs and moved him carefully to the side, so she wouldn’t crush him.

While she was crawling on her hands and knees, Molly tried to figure out what Mother may have dropped. Knowing what she was looking for would help. She looked up to see if she saw the bottom of Mother’s feet through the cracks – that would give her a better idea of where to look. She saw shadows moving above her head and knew this must be the spot.

She felt around on the ground with her fingers. There was a small round

object. It was hard and smooth. What was it? When her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she saw that it was one of the marbles she had lost last week. She loved to play marbles with Lydia and William. It must have rolled under here. Molly was glad she found it, but it wasn't what she was looking for.

And what was this? She picked up a lightweight object that was about the size of her fingernail. It was circular shaped and she felt four smaller circles on it – the edges of the smaller circles were raised up from the surface. She held it up to see if she could make out what it was through the filtered light coming in from the cracks. Light shone through the smaller circles. They were holes, so this was a button! But her apron didn't have buttons, so that couldn't have been what had fallen out of her pocket.

Molly continued to feel around on the cool, damp ground. When she had just about given up, her fingers closed in around what felt like a small, wiry string. She tried to pull it closer but it wouldn't move. She jerked on it and the string broke in two pieces, but not before something sailed through the air and hit her on the cheek. She reached out to rub her face then felt around on the ground directly in front of her. She touched something round and smooth. It felt cool to the touch and it was still attached to the end of the string, which she saw now were the remaining links of a chain. What could it be? Then she remembered. The pendant! She had found it on the edge of the docks when she and Lydia had gone to the waterfront a few days before!

Molly got excited, raised her head and hit it on the joist that held the porch above the ground. "Ouch!" She scrambled out backwards and came out feet first. Mother and Father were standing there waiting for her.

"Well, what is it?" Mother asked.

Molly grinned. "It's a silver pendant!" she exclaimed. "Lydia and I found it at the edge of the docks the other day when we went to the general store! See?"

Molly held out the pendant for Mother and Father to take a look. Mother gently took it from her hands and examined it closely. "It must have been beautiful at one time," Mother said admiringly. "Look at how delicate the chain links are! But what is this engraved on it? The engraving's worn, but I can make out some of it... Dorothea and Josiah. And look, there's a date... Dec. 12, 1742."



Father looked over Mother's shoulder as Molly turned the pendant over so they could see the backside. The words, "You" and "sea," were all any of them could make out.

"I wonder who these two people could be?" Father wondered out loud.

Molly pondered. "Dorothea and Josiah... Dorothea and Josiah...."

"Oh, my goodness!" Molly exclaimed. "Captain Nelson! When we were at his bedside, Mrs. Nelson called him Josiah! Do you think this could be the Josiah on the necklace?"

"There's only one way to find out." Mother added. "Let's go and ask!" Hand in hand, Molly and her mother walked hurriedly down the street, back to the Nelsons' house, with Father close behind. But before they had gotten too far, Mother turned to Molly to ask her an important question.

"Molly, whatever were you doing on the docks the other day when you found this pendant? You know you're not supposed to go there!"

Molly groaned, her head sinking into her shoulders. "Me and my big mouth!"

### **USE THE NEWS:**

What mystery did Molly solve in Chapter 8? Do any stories in print and digital editions of current newspapers deal with mysteries? What are the mysteries? Who are the individuals trying to find answers or solutions? Why?

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

# Learn more about colonial children!

## Games and toys

Because they had to work to help their families, children living in colonial America had little time for play. When they did play, they used inexpensive items or items their families had on hand. For example, the children played with and collected marbles, a game passed down from generation to generation in which they won, lost or traded small stones and



broken pottery or china. Children also made a game of rolling hoops. Hoops came from old wooden barrels or were handmade. To play the game, children rolled the hoops with wooden sticks until the hoops fell to the ground. The child who kept his/her hoop rolling the longest won the game.

(Photo of rolling hoops demonstrated by a girl at the Beaufort Historic Site, courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*.)

## Chapter Nine

# “Mystery Solved!”

Molly rapped on Mrs. Nelson’s front door. Her mother and father were standing close behind. They were all anxious to find out if Mrs. Nelson knew anything about the pendant Molly had found. An eternity seemed to pass before the door finally opened.

Mrs. Nelson looked surprised to see Molly and her parent standing there. “Did you forget something?” she asked.

Molly held out the pendant to Mrs. Nelson. “I found this after the storm last week,” Molly explained. “Is it yours?”

Mother smiled and stepped closer. “The engraving is worn, Mrs. Nelson, but it has two names on it. We know that the captain’s name is Josiah... are you by any chance the Dorothea that is mentioned here?”

Mrs. Nelson’s right hand went straight to her heart as she held out her left. Tears came to her eyes as she examined the names on the pendant then flipped it over to read the other side.

“Why I haven’t seen this in years,” Mrs. Nelson said softly. She paused for a moment to compose herself. Molly shifted from side to side as she waited, looking expectantly at Mrs. Nelson’s face.

Finally, Mrs. Nelson cleared her throat and wiped her eyes. “It is mine,” she answered. “And yes, my first name is Dorothea. Josiah gave this to me the day we were married. Dec. 12, 1742, two weeks before Christmas. I thought it had been lost, but you have brought it back to me.”

Mrs. Nelson looked gratefully at Molly and her parents “Please, come inside,” she said. “I must tell Josiah.”

As they entered the Nelson home, Molly noticed all the nautical objects that were on display. She spotted a sextant - a navigational tool for ships’ captains that helped them follow the stars. And shelf after shelf held compasses, hourglasses and other nautical items, alongside several ship models. Maps and framed charts lined the walls of the hallway leading to the room where the

Captain was recovering. "Why didn't I notice all this before?" Molly wondered.

When they got to Captain Nelson's bedside, Mrs. Nelson tenderly took her husband's arm and helped him sit up. "Josiah, look what Molly has brought to us!"

The captain looked dazed for a moment, but, when Mrs. Nelson placed the pendant in the Captain's hand, he, too, became misty-eyed.

"Well look at that!" the Captain muttered. "Wherever did you get it?"

Molly explained the whole story... from beginning to end. She told about how she and Lydia had been on the docks watching the cargo come off the ships, how they had evaded Mrs. Ramsey so they wouldn't get into trouble, how they had enjoyed their lemon drops, even though they had not been able to share them with William, how they had picked out fabric for the dresses their mothers had promised to make for them...

"Ahem!" Mother cleared her throat beside Molly to remind her to get to the point.

"Oh," said Molly. "I'm sorry. The pendant! Well, we found it at the edge of the water near the docks. It must have been washed up by the storm. The sun was shining and it reflected light, as if signaling for me to pick it up or something. And I did, and now you have it!"

"Yes we do!" exclaimed Mrs. Nelson. "Molly, do you know what a miracle this is? It has been lost for so many years. I never took it off – not for an instant – but one day while Josiah and I were strolling by the side of the creek, where you like to swim, the chain broke and the necklace fell into the water. The tide must have carried it out to sea. I have looked all over for it but have never been able to find it. And now you have returned it to me, after all this time."

Mrs. Nelson paused. "In one day," she added softly, "I have had two wonderful surprises - my husband has come home to me after a long journey, and my most prized possession, my wedding pendant, has been returned. What a wonderful day!"

"But what about the *back* of the pendant?" Molly asked. "What does it say?"

Mrs. Nelson pointed out each word as she read it aloud...

“You and me,  
Forever by the sea.  
I’ll always come home to you,  
So be waiting for me...  
In beautiful Beaufort-town.”

Molly looked at Mother, who was smiling down at her. And as the captain gave her the second heartfelt salute of the day, Molly lit up like the fireflies she liked to catch.

“Thank you, young lady,” the captain said. “We are twice indebted to you. However can we repay you?”

Molly thought for a moment then looked to her father for approval. “I would love to travel to England to see my grandparents. Would you take me the next time you sail, Captain Nelson?”

Mother and Father looked at Molly in amazement. “You want to sail across the ocean?” Mother asked. “Do you know how long a journey it will be?”

“Of course,” Molly replied. “But I’ll have you all here waiting for me when I return, in beautiful Beaufort-town!”

### **USE THE NEWS:**

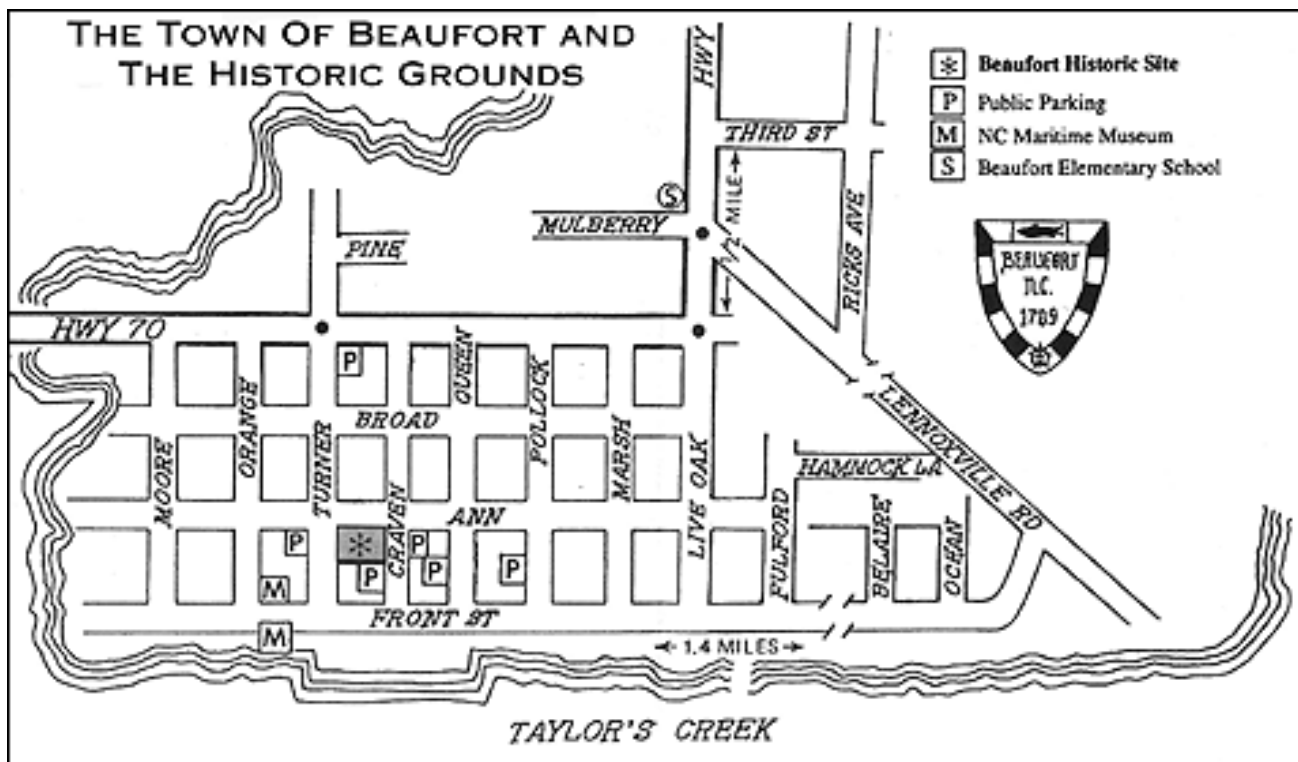
When she was asked how she found the pendant, Molly explained the whole story. From print or digital editions of your newspaper, choose a story or a topic and series of stories and tell or write key events in the order they occurred. Create a timeline!

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

# Learn more history!

## Beaufort's founding

The town of Beaufort was first settled in 1709, but the streets were not drawn until 1713. The plan centered around a 12-block area that is now on the Register of Historic Places. Street names hint at the times and include Ann Street, named for Queen Anne of England; Craven Street, named for the Earl of Craven, Pollock Street, named for the governor at the time; and Orange Street, named for William, Prince of Orange, who later became William III of England. Front Street runs along the Beaufort waterfront, parallel to Taylor's Creek, and looks out over Beaufort Harbor. The name of the town, "Beaufort," came from Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, whose ancestor was one of the first Lord Proprietors who owned and governed all the Carolinas.



## Chapter Ten

# “Off to Sea!”

The morning was beautiful. The sky was clear and there was a crisp breeze, just right for sailing, as Mother helped Molly pack for her trip. In just a few short hours, the captain was setting sail for England, and he was taking Molly with him!

Mother was unsure about this trip. It could be dangerous. Storms and pirates threatened. Also, the colonists were beginning to talk about freedom from England, where the ship was headed. Was now a good time for a voyage across the sea?

After much discussion, Father had offered to accompany Molly if Mother would allow it. Reluctantly, she had agreed, with Father promising to return Molly home soon.

The captain, now fully recovered, had a brand new ship and had hired another crew. William’s cousin, Samuel was one of the crewmembers. He wanted to work as a ship’s mate and see the world. Samuel’s parents had approved, but William made clear that he did *not* like the fact that Samuel was leaving him behind.

“My friend and my cousin - both sailing away on the same ship – and I can’t go!” he had complained. “It’s just not fair... not fair, I tell you!”

Lydia was not happy, either. “Whatever will I do without you?” she had asked Molly. “I won’t be near as much fun here while you’re gone! You and I have *always* been together!”

Molly had done her best to reassure Lydia that all would be well. “Just teach Elizabeth and Ann the games we play,” she said. “Hoops and marbles, hopscotch and jump rope... and you can make cornhusk dolls and play in the creek! You can do plenty together. Just promise you’ll never forget me. I’ll be back before you know it!”

Lydia had finally agreed to give her new friends a chance. But secretly, Molly was glad that Lydia would miss her so much. They were best friends, after all.

Molly was excited to be sailing to England. She had come over to the colonies when she was much younger and did not remember her grandparents at all. She was looking forward excitedly to seeing them again. Mother was sending a jar of apple butter and some homemade candles as a gift. Molly placed them into her satchel, buckled it up, then carried it outside.

Her family was there on the front porch waiting for her. "You sure do look pretty in your new dress," Father said.

Molly blushed. The general store *had* gotten some of the lilac fabric with yellow rosebuds she had wanted, and Mother had sewed a beautiful dress, with Molly's initials embroidered on the back of the collar.

"Mother made it for me," Molly said. "I won't lose it, Mother, I promise. If I do, it has my initials on it, so it can be returned to me, just like Mrs. Nelson's necklace!"

Mother smiled. She would miss Molly so much. Father took Molly's satchel and carried it with his own. The family walked together down the street toward the docks.

"So long, Molly," said new neighbor Mrs. Thomson, the wheelwright's wife, as she swept off her front porch. "Elizabeth and Ann will miss you!"

"I'll miss them, too," Molly replied. "Please tell them goodbye for me." She wondered where her two new friends were and why they were not there to tell her goodbye themselves.

"Goodbye, Molly!" Mrs. Nelson waved to her from the widow's walk where she always stood when her husband sailed out to sea.

"Goodbye, Mrs. Nelson," Molly replied. "I'll take care of the captain for you! If he gets hurt again, I know just what to do!"

Mrs. Nelson laughed. "He's in good hands, then, Molly!"

"Goodbye, Molly!" Susannah Gibble said, as she and her future husband passed her on the street in a horse and buggy. "We'll miss you!"

"Goodbye," Molly said. "Sorry I'll miss your wedding! Good luck to you both!"

More said goodbyes as Molly headed off in the direction of the docks. Even Mrs. Ramsey had wished Molly well. "Everyone here is like family," Molly thought. "I wonder if the people over in England will be like this!"



When they reached the docks, the Thomsons were there to see Samuel off on his first voyage. And Elizabeth and Ann were right beside them. "We couldn't let you go without saying goodbye," they told Molly. "We'll miss you." Aunt Susan, Uncle Aaron and Lydia gave hugs and shed tears while saying farewell to Molly. Lydia did not want to let go of Molly. She squeezed her tight.

"I love you, too, Lydia," Molly said. "And I'll bring you back something from England - something grand, like the things at Tryon Palace!"

Lydia smiled and stepped back as Mother bent down for her final words of advice. "You be a good girl, Molly," she said. "Make me proud. And remember - it's nice to know where you came from, but this will always be your home."

"I know, Mother," Molly said. "And I'll be back soon. I promise." She gave her mother a big hug, gave baby Sarah a kiss on her forehead and winked at Jacob as she took Father's hand.

"It's tough being a little sister sometimes because you're never first at doing *anything!*" she said. "I'm sailing back to England on a ship, and that's something you haven't done yet, Jacob! Imagine that!" She looked towards her baby sister. "Sorry, Sarah, there's not going to be much left for *you* to do first! Not if you follow *me!*"

Jacob laughed as he handed Father the two satchels and tousled Molly's hair. "Have a safe journey, little sis," he said.

When the ship sailed away, all were waving from the docks. The last thing Molly saw of Beaufort Harbor, as her friends and family faded into the distance, were the flags flying high on the waterfront. And as they set sail towards the ocean, Molly held tightly onto her father's hand, thinking about the journey ahead. "Get ready, England," she thought to herself. "Here I come!"

## THE END

## USE THE NEWS:

Define “community.” How does the word apply to the community where Molly grew up? How does “community” apply to the place where you live? Use your experiences and people, places and events found in your print and digital newspapers as evidence to support a description of your home.

*Distributed by the N.C. Press Foundation.*

## Learn more about Beaufort’s founding!

### Beaufort Harbor

Settlers who came to Beaufort were looking for a deep-water port with easy access to the ocean. A port would enable them to trade with England for the supplies they needed. The area that is now Beaufort met their needs, and the town was established in 1709. Only Bath and Edenton are older towns in North Carolina. By 1722, Beaufort had become a main port for shipping vessels that docked to do business with the original colonies. Because a thriving shipping business grew up around the harbor, people continued to move into the area. In 1723, Beaufort was incorporated as a town.



(Photo courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*)