



Molly's "Beaufort Town"

*A ten-chapter story in celebration of the
300th Anniversary of Beaufort, NC*

Chapter Eight - "The Pendant is Returned!"

When Molly, Jacob and Father returned home from the Nelsons', 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. It sure was dark under there! The sun didn't come through the cracks much, so there was nothing growing underneath... but there were lots of bugs! Whoa! A leggy spider scurried across her hand. She jumped backwards, then laughed out loud. It was just a granddaddy long legs. Molly knew it wouldn't hurt her, but it had startled her, anyhow. She picked him up 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. It would help if she knew what she was looking for. 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. There was 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 so excited, she 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? It'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 back side. There were the words "You," and "sea." That was 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 Nelson's, 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!"

Next week, chapter nine – "Mystery Solved!"

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Newspaper Activity:

In Chapter Eight, Molly solves two mysteries. She finds what Mother dropped under the porch and figures out the likely owners of the lost pendant. Look for mysteries in the news. Who's trying to find answers?

Learn more about colonial games and toys!

What did children play?

Children of early America did not have much time for play. Most had to work to help their families. When they did have time to play, however, colonial children took part in simple pleasures using inexpensive items or things their families already had on hand.

Marbles, for example, is a game that was passed down from generation to generation. The marbles were made from stone, pottery or broken china. Some even had colorful swirls and designs. As children won, lost or traded marbles, their collections were always changing.

Rolling hoops was another favorite game. Hoops were either hand-made or were from old wooden barrels. To play the game, children would roll the hoop with a wooden stick until it fell to the ground. The person who could keep his/her hoop rolling the longest was the winner.

(At right: a young girl demonstrates the game of rolling hoops at the Beaufort Historic Site. Photo courtesy of the *Carteret County News-Times*.)

