



Molly's "Beaufort Town"

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

Chapter Ten - "Off To Sea!"

It was a beautiful morning. 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. Not only were there storms and pirates, but the colonists were beginning to talk about freedom from England, where the ship was on course to go. 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. One of the crew members was Samuel, William's cousin, who wanted to work as a ship's mate and see the world. Samuel's parents had approved, but William made it clear that he did *not* like the fact that Samuel would be 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. "It won't be near as much fun here when 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! There's plenty you can do 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. It would be nice to see them again. Mother was sending a jar of apple butter and some homemade candles as a gift. Molly placed them into her satchel and 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 at 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!" said Susannah Gible, as she and her future husband passed her on the street in a horse and buggy. "We'll miss you!"

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

There were more 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 there were Elizabeth and Ann, right beside them. "We couldn't let you go without saying goodbye," they told Molly. "We'll miss you." There were hugs and tears as Aunt Susan, Uncle Aaron and Lydia gave Molly a fond farewell, too. 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," said Molly. "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, then 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

© 2009 by Lynn Allred. All rights reserved.

Newspaper Activity:

Using what you learn about your community from your newspaper, write a poem in the style of the poem on the back of the pendant.

Learn more about historic Beaufort!

Beaufort's Old Burying Ground

One of the town's best-known landmarks, Beaufort's "Old Burying Ground," serves as a final resting place for some of Beaufort's first families, as well as for soldiers from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War. The graveyard was deeded to the town in 1731. One of Beaufort's most prominent residents, William Thomson, is buried here.

Thomson came to Carteret County from Ireland. In the 1760's he married Jane Chew Parker, who moved to the area from Maryland with her father and brother. (They had one son, William, Jr., whom the character of William is based on in this story.) Early land records show that William Thomson lived at the southeast corner of Queen Street, near Taylor's Creek. The older Thomson was the naval deputy for the port of Beaufort and served at the first, second, third and fourth sessions of the Provincial Congress. He later became the highest ranking officer from the county during the American Revolution.

Others buried in Beaufort's Old Burying Ground include an English soldier who is buried standing straight up in an eternal salute to his King, Otway Burns, a well-known privateer, and crew members of the *Crissie Wright*, a ship that was wrecked off the shore of Shackleford Banks in the 1800s.

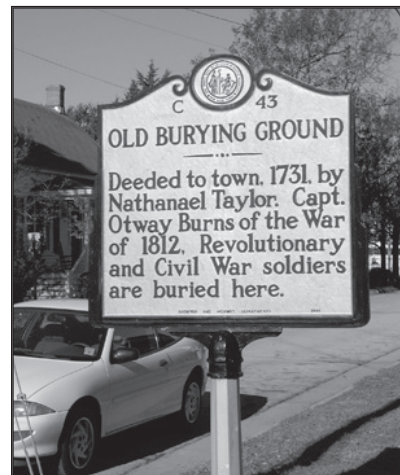


Photo courtesy of the
Carteret County News-Times.