



Molly's "Beaufort Town"

by Lynn Allred

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

Chapter Six - "The Survivor"

“What 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.

**Next - chapter seven –
“Home Again!”**

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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 18th century cannon pulled from what has been identified as 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.)

