# The time capsule that is Wilmington, N.C.

By Larissa and Michael Milne, For The Inquirer

WILMINGTON, N.C. - Exploring this city is like opening a time capsule. Many historic destinations embody a specific period in our nation's history: Philadelphia and Boston for colonial America; Natchez, Miss., for the South's antebellum heritage; even Honolulu for World War II. Wilmington provides an authentic glimpse into all these eras in one compact, walkable downtown.

Founded in 1740, the city was an important port along the Southeastern seaboard during the 18th and 19th centuries. Perched on the Cape Fear River 30 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, Wilmington joined Charleston and Savannah as a significant commercial center.

However, it was little more than a trading outpost when 22-year-old John Burgwin sailed up the river in 1753. Having come to America seeking his fortune, the enterprising Welshman proved a savvy real estate investor and merchant, soon acquiring a prime lot to build a house. Never mind that it was the site of the dilapidated jail. The property was well-situated, and the jail's foundation, on which the house was to be built, was solid.

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