Molly had her mother waited on the corner, where they would meet to see Lydia at three. June was near and a warm day was planned for this morning. The neighbors’ daughter, Susannah, was engaged to be married and the wedding was planned for later that afternoon.

Molly couldn’t stand still long enough! How could she make such tiny little stitches? And how could they do it so quickly? 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? Sometimes, but she couldn’t help but cry a little. Mother had told her that maybe she just wasn’t ready yet. Next time were the women silent - or still. Lips and discussion.

Molly and Lydia watched for Mrs. Ramsey, one of the older women who attended her church, staring at her as if she had committed a terrible crime. A lot of work had been done on the quilt since Molly had seen it last. She had, however, seen some of the finely-stitched squares when she heard a loud “Ahem.”

“The Storm!” Molly thought. She knew that if they did, lips and discussion. Molly and Lydia watched for Mrs. Ramsey, one of the older women who attended her church, staring at her as if she had committed a terrible crime.

Molly 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 window. 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 talked about a new novel they had read. At no time were the women silent - or still. Lips and hands seemed to work together in a rhythm all their own.

Then, Molly had never been around the world. She never had even been to New Bern, for that matter. She wondered about anywhere she wanted to go. She wondered about foreign 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.

Next week, chapter three – “The Storm!”

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Use the News:
What were the women assembled to make? Did they have a sense of independence? In print and digital editions of your local newspapers, identify individuals who demonstrate independence and challenge stereotypes about what women and men should do.

Molly’s "Beautiful Town" by Lynn Allred

A 10-chapter story celebrating Beaufort and colonial history.

Chapter Two – “The Quilting Party”

Two porches, one house

Sea captains, boat builders and merchants who moved with volatile weather and the ebb and flow of the tides were familiar with the homes of historic Beaufort. Those men traveled a great deal and brought back ideas and materials. For example, the design for the building of Tryon Palace while they are on the waterfront or shipped by smaller boats to inland towns. Molly was excited to see new homes also helped keep residents cool the entire house. Two levels of outdoor porches came from the Bahamas. Another idea brought from tropical climates was the use of long, narrow rooms that extend from the front of the house and allow sea breezes to cool the house. Two levels of outdoor porches came from the Bahamas. Another idea brought from tropical climates was the use of long, narrow rooms that extend from the front of the house and allow sea breezes to cool the house.

Molly studied the neighbor’s houses and porches. She saw the Nelson House. She thought her family’s porch was great, but it was nothing like the one. The Nelson’s porch, like many others in Beaufort, was really two, with one stacked on top of the other, spanning the whole width of the house.

The two mother-daughter pairs paraded down the street, forming a circle for the quilting and fellowship. Molly studied the neighbor’s houses as they passed.

The middle porch of the Nelson House. She thought her family’s porch was great, but it was nothing like this one. The Nelson’s 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 it was a small, white, quilted porch with railings - just a square, uncovered box that opened up from below. What was it called again? The women chuckled. Sometimes she would see Mrs. Nelson standing there, holding onto the rails and looking out toward 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 to other nations. And as long as 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 excited to see new homes also helped keep residents cool the entire house. Two levels of outdoor porches came from the Bahamas. Another idea brought from tropical climates was the use of long, narrow rooms that extend from the front of the house and allow sea breezes to cool the house.

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. Her husband's ship had been out to sea for three months now. He should be returning soon. 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.

Molly had never been around the world. She never had even been to New Bern, for that matter. She wondered about anywhere she wanted to go. She wondered about foreign 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.

Learn more about historic Beaufort!

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