

Thomas J. Marcinko. FEDERAL OPERATIONS AT HATTERAS INLET, NORTH CAROLINA 1861. (Under the direction of Dr. David Long) Department of History, August 2000.

The purpose of this thesis is to detail the events that created Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina, show the importance of the inlet in the commercial livelihood of the state prior to the Civil War, and relate the part it played in the first year of the war. The geographic emergence of the inlet in eastern North Carolina and its rise as an important commercial port in state is traced through historical records, from both maps and charts and primary sources, before and during the war. The development of two Confederate defensive installations preceded the military actions at the inlet. The Confederates used the forts as a privateering and blockade-running base. During 1861 a Federal amphibious assault on the forts resulted in a strategic and emotional victory for the North. The importance of the victory for the Union combined with the inlet's strategic value as a passageway into the North Carolina sounds aided the Union greatly during 1861-2. Despite military successes in North Carolina, after 1862 the Union did not attempt any further exploitation of its occupation in eastern North Carolina.

FEDERAL OPERATIONS AT HATTERAS INLET,  
NORTH CAROLINA 1861

A Thesis

Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in History

by

Tom Marcinko

August 2000

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by

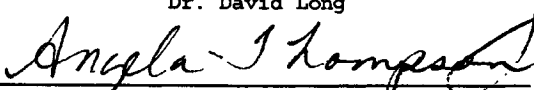
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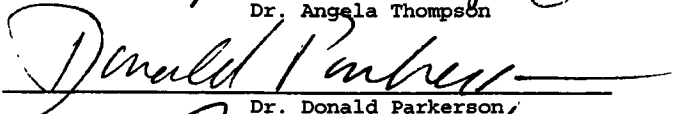
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LOC	Library of Congress
NA	National Archives
NCDAH	North Carolina Division of Archives and History
ORA	Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies
ORN	Official Records of Union and Confederate Navies
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

## PREFACE

During my preparation of this thesis on Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina, I met with many obstacles to my research. Because the battle at Hatteras Inlet was a minor one in the Civil War, it is barely mentioned in most historical works, save those exclusively dealing with North Carolina or amphibious warfare. Thus first hand accounts of the information about the planning and construction of the defensive works and primary accounts about the Union offensive are scarce. Most primary source information comes from the Official Records for the Army and Navy. Less important is primary source material housed in North Carolina institutions, primarily the North Carolina State Archives and the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Much of the primary source material is found in correspondences to the governors of North Carolina and personal journals. Some primary sources are found in Federal archival sources in Washington D.C., including the National Archives and the Library of Congress, primarily soldiers' personal journals. Much of my information regarding the geographic history of

Hatteras Inlet came from secondary source material. This paucity of primary source material is most likely due to the area's remoteness and sparse population during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The historiography regarding Hatteras Inlet and the Civil War battle fought there in 1861 is limited. While most secondary historical sources treat the battle little if at all, the battle played an important role in the development of Union war strategy in 1861 and early 1862. The victory at Hatteras provided the opening the Union needed to control all of coastal North Carolina. Success in eastern North Carolina meant that a significant Union force could effectively threaten Norfolk and the rest of Virginia from the south. But the Union never fully took advantage of its strategic advantage in North Carolina and because of that the battle at Hatteras Inlet became memorable because it was the first Federal victory of the war. Had the Union pushed further into North Carolina in 1862 while General George McClellan was conducting his Peninsula Campaign history might have unfolded very differently and Hatteras Inlet may have become one of the most important sites of the Civil War. But the Union did not advance far into North Carolina and as a result the



battle at Hatteras Inlet is considered a sideshow of action  
in the Civil War.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE OPENING OF AN INLET ALONG THE OUTER BANKS

Located along the Outer Banks of North Carolina is a series of inlets and ports long used by the maritime community. Among these is Hatteras Inlet. Since its creation in the mid-nineteenth century, Hatteras Inlet has provided a direct economic and military link between the interior of North Carolina and the major ports on the East Coast and the West Indies.

Originally Hatteras Inlet developed as a center for maritime commerce in the middle of the nineteenth century, providing inland ports such as New Bern, Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, and Elizabeth City with an accessible passageway from Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds to the Atlantic Ocean. Hatteras Inlet also served as an important Confederate coastal defensive and privateering base during the first year of the Civil War. Today, Hatteras Inlet is no longer used by commercial or military vessels. Its only maritime traffic consists of local fishermen and pleasure boaters.

Throughout time the ocean has continually been reshaping the Outer Banks. Water rips through the sandy beaches and creates new inlets while elsewhere

sand accretes and slowly closes up other inlets. A search of historical literature on the subject reveals numerous former inlets along the Outer Banks (see Map 1, page 105). Hatteras Inlet is different from most inlets along the North Carolina coast in that it has been located in two different positions at two different times. In 1884, William Welch, who developed a curiosity about the inlet while stationed there as a Federal soldier in 1864, contacted then Governor Thomas J. Jarvis regarding information about the inlet. Jarvis in turn enlisted the aid of Redding Quidley, a Hatteras Island citizen and pilot, to help trace the history of the inlet. Quidley gathered information from other residents and reported to Welch that the old inlet was located in an area which is now part of Ocracoke Island called the "Swash" (this area is not to be confused the area label "swash" on Map 1, they are two separate and distinct areas).

John Austin, at the time the eldest resident of the southern portion of the Outer Banks at 75 years of age, told Quidley he recalled his grandfather saying:

there was an inlet about six miles southwest of where the inlet is now;... there was an English vessel, a ship, ran on the bar of said inlet

and was lost, and the wreck sanded up the beach made down to it and finally closed up the inlet.<sup>1</sup>

A second interview by Quidley, of William Balance, 72 years old and the second eldest resident of the area, reinforced Austin's description of the closing of the first inlet. Balance told Quidley he remembered hearing:

His father say that he had seen a piece of wreck standing up, right at, or near the place that Austin speaks of as being the place where the inlet was, and had been told by other people, that it was the stern post of the vessel that closed up the inlet. This place that they speak of is about five or six miles from this inlet we have now, between two points known now as "Shingle Creek" and "Quake Hammock."<sup>2</sup>

The exact date of the closing of the old inlet is currently unknown, but the old Hatteras Inlet last appeared as a navigable inlet on a chart made in 1738 by James Wimble. A 1764 chart made by Daniel Dunbibin showed the inlet as non-existent.<sup>3</sup> From this information, it appears that over the span of those twenty-six years, the old Hatteras inlet closed due to the wreckage of a ship, possibly English, and the eventual accretion of sand around the vessel.<sup>4</sup>

The area between Cape Henry, Virginia and Ocracoke Inlet, North Carolina remained devoid of an inlet until 1846. Because of the lack of other inlets along the banks, Ocracoke Inlet became the dominant passageway into and out of the North Carolina sounds. An 1842 government report cited the fact that 1400 vessels sailed out through Ocracoke Inlet during twelve consecutive months in 1836-7. The report also stated that occasionally, because of unfavorable weather, it was "not uncommon to see from thirty to sixty sail of vessels anchor in the roads [at Ocracoke] at one time."<sup>5</sup> So it was evident that before nature opened Hatteras Inlet, most of the maritime traffic via Pamlico Sound passed through Ocracoke Inlet.

Residents of the northern Outer Banks unsuccessfully petitioned the Federal government to create an inlet in the vicinity of Nags Head. They believed another inlet would allow the merchants and sailors from the Albemarle region an alternate route to Atlantic shipping lanes, therefore bypassing the treacherous shoals off Cape Hatteras, making the shipping route safer and quicker. Nature obliged them when a strong storm hit the Outer Banks in September 1846. This storm created not one, but two inlets between Cape Henry and Ocracoke.

The influx of water associated with the storm broke through the barrier islands and established connections between Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean at Hatteras Inlet and also at Oregon Inlet, located south of Nags Head. This gale force storm gained additional power from a perigeon spring tide.<sup>6</sup> The new Hatteras Inlet emerged on September 7, 1846. Quidley noted that "Hatteras Inlet was cut out by a heavy gale, a violent storm on the 7th of Sept., at night, 1846."<sup>7</sup>

The best account of the "hurricane," which some meteorological scholars dispute was a true hurricane, came from the United States coastal survey brig *Washington*. The *Washington*, taking scientific measurements of the Gulf Stream current, encountered the storm off Nags Head early on the morning of September 8. During that morning *Washington* foundered:

when a heavy sea struck her, and, toppling over the side, poured a deluge of water down upon the decks, crushing the deck cabin, and tearing it and the berth deck from their fastening; throwing the vessel completely on her beam ends, and sweeping those on deck into the raging sea.<sup>8</sup>

Eleven men from the *Washington* were lost at sea including Lieutenant Commander George M. Bache, the vessel's commander. Having lost her main yard,

mainmast, and foremast, the *Washington* managed to ride out the remainder of the storm and stay afloat until on September 17 the frigate *USS Constitution* towed her safely to Philadelphia, arriving on September 24, 1846.

Quidley noted that many families who resided on Hatteras where the inlet was created were quite surprised on the morning of the eighth to find nothing left of their homes, including that of Quidley's uncle whose fig orchard and potato patch had been destroyed.

Further north on the Outer Banks, the storm caused great destruction and havoc. A local man who lived on Bodie Island, Mr. Midgette (first name unknown), stated that the storm broke through the beach creating an inlet there. Subsequent flooding from Pamlico Sound covered all save the highest knolls on Bodie Island, about five and a half feet above sea level.

At first the breach measured only twenty feet across and the islanders believed that the new inlet would soon close, but today Oregon Inlet remains open.<sup>9</sup> Oregon Inlet derived its name from the first vessel to pass through the inlet, a small steamboat called *Oregon* in 1848. Due to its shallowness Oregon Inlet could not accommodate the large draft vessels that regularly entered Hatteras Inlet.

Even after the new Hatteras Inlet had been cut, it too remained unusable until another storm in October 1846. The second storm, known as "The Great Hurricane of 1846," scoured the inlet out even more so that it could accommodate deep draft vessels.

This second hurricane caused only excessive high tides and the deepening of Hatteras Inlet in North Carolina. However other locations including Cuba, Florida, the mid-Atlantic states, and New England, the coastal region was not so fortunate. The second storm caused a significant loss of ships, massive property damage, and flooding particularly in Cuba and Florida.<sup>10</sup>

Once the storms had increased the depth of the inlet sufficiently to accommodate deep draft vessels, on February 5, 1847 Redding Quidley piloted the first vessel to pass through it, the schooner *Asher C. Havens*.<sup>11</sup>

Maritime activity at the new Hatteras Inlet increased steadily during this time period even though the older Ocracoke Inlet, about fifteen miles away, remained operable. Several factors caused this shift of maritime commerce from Ocracoke Inlet to Hatteras Inlet. By far the most important was the ability of Hatteras Inlet continually to keep a depth of fourteen to sixteen feet.



This allowed deeper-drafted vessels to enter Pamlico Sound. The depth of Ocracoke Inlet, on the other hand, was subject to the shifting sands and severe shoaling consistent with the Outer Banks. In an 1884 letter to Welch, Quidley stated that he:

cannot give the exact time that vessels left off passing through Ocracoke. I was one of the first Commissioners of Navigation appointed for Hatteras Inlet, I think in 1852: there has been but very little passing through there [Ocracoke Inlet] now except perchance, that a vessel goes in case of distress of weather, on head winds, and draws light draught of water, 4 or 5 feet.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the opening of Hatteras Inlet, Ocracoke Inlet served as the primary passageway from eastern North Carolina's ports to the Atlantic. The Federal government estimated two-thirds of the state of North Carolina's exports passed through Ocracoke Inlet during the late 1830's.<sup>13</sup>

Elizabeth City, New Bern, Washington, and Plymouth constituted the primary export cities on Pamlico Sound and its tributaries (see Map 2, page 106). Table 1 shows the approximate foreign export tonnage for select ports in eastern North Carolina. Vessels carrying cargo from these cities had several options to enter the Atlantic. Those bound for West Indian destinations would exit through

Ocracoke. Later they changed to Hatteras Inlet. An alternative method was to leave from southern Virginia, via the Albemarle and Chesapeake or Dismal Swamp Canals. The port cities also competed with the Wilmington and Weldon railroad as the avenues for distribution of goods in the North Carolina.

Table 1.--Estimated Export Tonnage From Select North Carolina Ports, 1830-60

Port	1830	1835	1840	1845	1850	1855	1860
Edenton	2100	700	400	400	200	300	400
Eliz. City	4100	3300	1100	1900	3000	2000	2600
New Bern	3200	2800	6300	4000	3600	2200	1000
Ocracoke	0	900	300	100	0	0	0
Plymouth	1400	1300	1000	1600	1200	1700	1900
Washington	1000	3000	2900	3000	1300	3000	2800

Source: Byron Long, "An Historical Geographic Study of North Carolina Ports," (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1956), 92.

The creation of Hatteras Inlet did not change the volume of goods exported, but it did change the shipping patterns of North Carolina by diverting the maritime traffic from Ocracoke Inlet to Hatteras Inlet. After the inlet's creation, a port was built on Hatteras Island. There is evidence of significant maritime traffic from the West Indies that went through this port. While Wilmington

remained the largest port in the state by the start of the Civil War, Hatteras was not a distant second. Hatteras Inlet customs records from January 1, 1858 to July 1, 1861, provide a detailed view of the maritime traffic entering at this inlet. During this period 158 incoming schooners passed through the inlet. In 1858 forty-two vessels from foreign ports entered at Hatteras, but the records only list the vessels' names and dates of entry.

Records kept by John W. Rolinson, customs agent at Hatteras Inlet, provide the destination, port of departure, cargo, tonnage of the vessel, and master for most of the inbound ships. Unfortunately, Rolinson did not record the number of both outward bound vessels and local coastal trading vessels that used the inlet. It is believed that the same vessels entering North Carolina waters through Hatteras Inlet from the West Indies also traveled outward bound through the inlet.

During this brief period, only schooners arriving from the West Indies passed through Hatteras Inlet. The tonnage of the vessels (all schooners) ranged from 58 to 149 tons, though most were approximately 100 tons.<sup>14</sup>

Table 2.--Cargo of Vessels Entering at Hatteras Inlet,  
North Carolina 1858-1861

	1858	1859	1860	1861	Total
Cargo	0	26	29	10	65
Ballast	0	14	9	3	26
Unknown	42	20	5*	0	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>158</b>

\*In 1860, two vessels were listed coming into Hatteras Inlet, but their recorded destinations were outside North Carolina. The *Hugh W. Fry* carried 116 boxes of precipitate copper and 133.5 tons of copper ore from Cuba to Baltimore. The *William T. Henden* carried 55 tons of guano from the Bahamas to Richmond, Virginia. Presumably, both vessels continued their voyages' to their respective ports of call.

Throughout 1859 and until mid-1861 the main West Indian trading ports included (descending in importance) St. Martin, Barbados, St. Kitts, Turks, and St. Thomas. The schooners brought a variety of goods from the West Indies, but their primary cargo was salt and sugar products. Cargoes included molasses, sugar, salt, rum, and different types of fruit such as oranges, coconuts, pineapples, and tamarinds. Out of the ninety-one schooners that had manifest lists, twenty-six returned loaded only with ballast. Many schooners that returned with only ballast also brought gold or silver specie that they obtained for the goods they sold in the West Indies. Elizabeth City, Edenton, Washington, Plymouth, and New Bern imported the most cargo.<sup>15</sup>

On the export side of the West Indian trade, North Carolina primarily exported naval stores such as lumber, turpentine, barrel staves, pitch, and tar. By 1860 New Bern, Elizabeth City, Plymouth, Edenton, and Washington all exported naval stores and foodstuffs valued at \$250,000. Only New Bern and Elizabeth City had noticeable exports of foodstuffs. Elizabeth City shipped wheat and corn, while New Bern exported pork products such as ham and bacon in addition to corn and flour.<sup>16</sup>

Elizabeth City was easily the foremost import city among these eastern North Carolina cities. During the two and one-half years from 1859 to mid-1861 ten different schooners carried goods from the West Indies to Elizabeth City on forty separate trips.<sup>17</sup> At least three different vessels, the *J.F. Debenport*, *Lydia and Martha*, and *Loucinth*, returned exclusively to Elizabeth City. Unfortunately for the *Loucinth*, it wrecked five miles north of Hatteras Inlet on June 25, 1860, carrying 200,000 shingles. It had previously completed at least five successful voyages to and from the West Indies. The most active schooner was the *J.F. Debenport*, which made twelve round-trip voyages to the Caribbean between January 1858 and June 1861.

Table 3.--Ports of Origin for Vessels Entering Hatteras  
Inlet, North Carolina 1858-June 1861

Port of Origin	1858	1859	1860	1861	Total
Anguilla	0	0	0	2	2
Antigua	0	0	2	0	2
Bahamas	0	0	3	0	3
Barbados	0	7	4	1	1
Cuba	0	0	1	0	1
Denmark	0	0	0	1	1
Dominica	0	0	1	0	1
Guadeloupe	0	3	3	1	7
Haiti	0	2	0	0	2
Jamaica	0	0	1	0	1
Martinique	0	1	1	1	3
Nevis	0	2	2	0	4
Rum Key	0	1	0	1	2
St. Eustatius	0	1	0	0	1
St. Kitts	0	5	3	1	9
St. Martin	0	1	9	1	11
St. Thomas	0	7	1	1	9
St. Vincent	0	1	1	0	2
Trinidad	0	3	2	0	5
Turks and Caicos	0	2	3	2	7
Unknown	42	23	1	2	68
Illegible/Mixed	0	1	2	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>158</b>

Table 4.--Goods Imported Through Hatteras Inlet,  
North Carolina 1859-61

	1859	1860	1861 (Jan.-June)
<b>Salt</b>	11,111 803	31,701 731	11,874 bushels 448 barrels
<b>Molasses</b>	246 123 3 0	254 7 1.5 0	32 puncheons* 44 hogsheads 44 barrels 1 cask
<b>Sugar</b>	150 100 0 0 0	58 0 0 0 0	1 barrels 0 pounds 44 bushels 3 hogsheads 3 casks
<b>Fruit</b>			
Tamarinds	9	29	2 kegs
Oranges	19,000	7800	2100 individuals
Coconuts	0	1450	0 individuals
Pineapples	0	1340	0 individuals
Lemons	0	5	0 individuals
Bananas	0	20	0 bunches

Note: A puncheon is a measure equal to approximately 120 gallons.

Table 5.--Destination of Vessels Entering through Hatteras  
Inlet, North Carolina 1858-1861.

Port	1858	1859	1860	1861	Total
Edenton	0	12	6	0	18
Elizabeth City	0	15	17	8	40
New Bern	0	2	4	3	9
Plymouth	0	5	5	2	12
Washington	0	3	6	1	10
Outside NC	0	0	2	0	2
Unknown	42	23	0	2	65
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>158</b>

The time required for a round trip voyage, obviously dependent upon the weather and the destination, appears to have averaged about two months.

Many of the schooners operating in the North Carolina-West Indian trade from the smaller ports, such as Edenton, Washington, New Bern, and Plymouth, did not have a set trading route. They usually departed from the same eastern North Carolina port, but not always, and sailed to various West Indian ports.<sup>18</sup>

Tables 6 and 7 show the number of vessels registered for foreign trade and enrolled in domestic trade from the eastern North Carolina ports. While these numbers cannot be used as exact measures of volume of trade they can be used to estimate the relative size of the trading fleet. It should be noted, for example, that if a vessel that was enrolled in the domestic trade and decided to export cargo, it would be required to exchange its domestic enrollment certificate for a registration certificate allowing it to trade overseas. Also, any change in a vessel's rig, construction, or ownership required a new enrollment certificate. As both tables indicate, after the Civil War maritime trade in eastern North Carolina declined dramatically, most likely due to the increase in rail



traffic on the Wilmington and Weldon railway and the destruction brought on by the war itself.

Table 6.--Number of Vessels Registered for Foreign Trade

Port	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880
Edenton	2	2	3	5	1
Eliz. City	5	7	13	0	0
New Bern	13	6	9	8	4
Ocracoke	1	0	0	0	0
Plymouth	8	11	12	0	0
Washington	16	5	8	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 7.--Number of Vessels Enrolled in Domestic Trade

Port	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880
Edenton	6	16	13	11	6
Eliz. City	36	53	35	2	0
New Bern	14	25	22	7	17
Ocracoke	7	1	5	0	0
Plymouth	16	15	20	0	0
Washington	13	24	21	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>

Source for Tables 6 and 7: Anne Merriman, "North Carolina Schooners, 1815-1901, and the S.R. Fowle and Son Company of Washington, North Carolina", (M.A. thesis, East Carolina University, 1996), *passim*.

In addition to the volume of cargo going through the port and numbers of vessels enrolled and registered in foreign and domestic trade being indicators of maritime traffic, the number of pilots also proved to be good

indicators. In the 1850 North Carolina census, four years after the opening of Hatteras Inlet, fifty-seven pilots lived at Ocracoke and Portsmouth, while only eleven resided at Hatteras.

TABLE 8.--Number of Pilots Residing at Hatteras, Ocracoke, and Portsmouth, North Carolina

Year	Ocracoke/Portsmouth	Hatteras
1850	57	11
1860	27	35
1870	16	9
1880	0	26
1890	*	*
1900	2	0

\*The 1890 census records were destroyed in a fire.

Source: Fred Mallison, *The Civil War on the Outer Banks* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1998), 20.

This figure changed dramatically a result of the 1860 census, though the total number of pilots declined slightly. The number at Hatteras had increased threefold to thirty-five pilots. While not conclusive, the number of pilots residing at a port can only be used as a crude estimate of the relative importance of the maritime activity at that port.

By the end of the 1850's, Hatteras Inlet reached its peak of commercial maritime activity. In addition to its

economic importance during the antebellum years, Hatteras Inlet became a place having military importance during the Civil War. The beginning of the Civil War brought unprecedented attention to the area. Confederate privateers sailed forth from Hatteras and disrupted and captured a number of Northern commercial ships in 1861. Hatteras Inlet became a haven for Confederate privateers and blockade runners. Also, the inlet constituted a strategic passage into and out of the sounds of North Carolina. Hatteras Inlet provided a direct link with many important mainland cities via the navigable sounds and rivers of the state, and the railroads that ran from these ports into the interior. For these reasons the Union attacked and captured the two forts, Hatteras and Clark, located adjacent to Hatteras Inlet in August 1861. The inlet remained in Union hands for the remainder of the war.

It is apparent that during the 1850's Hatteras Inlet emerged as an important maritime trading center along North Carolina's Outer Banks. After its creation Hatteras Inlet quickly surpassed and replaced Ocracoke Inlet as the main maritime port on the southern portion of the Outer Banks. The inlet operated as the principle passageway into the sounds for vessels from eastern North Carolina port cities

such as Elizabeth City, Edenton, New Bern, Plymouth, and Washington. Ships carried cargo, including sugar products, salt, and fruit from the West Indies into North Carolina, while exporting naval stores and lumber products. Hatteras Inlet's importance as a maritime commercial passageway was short-lived however. Secession and the Civil War effectively ended Hatteras Inlet's commercial importance.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CIVIL WAR COMES TO NORTH CAROLINA

By the end of the 1850's, Hatteras Inlet had reached its peak of maritime activity. The beginning of the Civil War brought devastating consequences to the area. Prior to President Lincoln's call for troops in April 1861, the counties surrounding the North Carolina sounds were primarily pro-Union. But after Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the Southern rebellion, many of the residents of the Outer Banks and the state of North Carolina changed their allegiance and became supporters of the Confederacy. On May 20, 1861, over a month after South Carolina militia forces opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, North Carolina formally seceded.<sup>19</sup>

Since it was one of the last states to secede from the Union, North Carolina was slow implementing defensive measures along its coast. However, once the state seceded, North Carolina Governor John W. Ellis ordered the construction of additional defensive works to protect North Carolina's coastline. The fortification of the sounds progressed steadily with the construction of Forts Hatteras and Clark at Hatteras Inlet, Fort Ocracoke on Beacon Island

in Ocracoke Inlet, and Fort Oregon at Oregon Inlet (see Map 3, page 107).

The Outer Banks were important to the Confederacy as a defensive barrier on the North Carolina coast. Control of Hatteras Inlet provided a direct link from the ocean to the rivers and towns of North Carolina. Those rivers and towns supplied the state and the armies of the Confederacy with weapons and supplies. Union control of these rivers and sounds would threaten major towns such as New Bern, Washington, and Elizabeth City, and more importantly could provide a southern access to Virginia. In a letter to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, Lieutenant R. B. Lowry, a Federal sailor, wrote about the Confederates at Hatteras:

They have a back outlet by way of the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal . . . thence through Coanjock Bay, by the North Carolina cut of the canal, into North River, through Albemarle, Croatan, and Pamlico sounds, . . . vessels of heavy draft can be easily passed into the ocean . . . vast internal water navigation unmolested, thereby having an egress and retreat to and from the sea for vessels loaded with provisions and munitions, and an easy harbor for prized or captured goods taken out of prizes of too heavy a draft to cross the inlet, or a safe refuge for privateers from our heavy ships of war.<sup>20</sup>

It was important that forts be constructed and garrisoned at Hatteras Inlet and other island positions as soon as possible to defend the internal waterways of eastern North Carolina.

By June of 1861, the construction of Fort Hatteras was well underway employing 180 free African-Americans. The fortifications at Hatteras Inlet consisted of two facilities to control the entrance to the channel, Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark (see Map 4, page 108). Both forts were hastily built and were constructed of sand, sheathed by planks topped with marsh grass.<sup>21</sup> The larger of the two forts, Hatteras, was located approximately one-eighth of a mile from the inlet. Octagonal in shape, it had four sides 140 feet long and four sides 42 feet long. The walls measured twenty-eight and one-half feet in thickness at the base and twenty feet at the top. There was room for twenty guns at Hatteras, four along each face and one at each of the salients; however, at the time of the battle, the fort only mounted ten thirty-two pounders that had been sent down from Norfolk, with five other guns still unmounted. These included one ten inch Columbiad from the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond.<sup>22</sup>

Construction on the second fort did not begin until mid-July. It was located one mile east of Fort Hatteras and was closer to the ocean. It was fashioned in the same configuration as Fort Hatteras, but only about one-half the size. Its walls consisted of sod and turf five feet high. They were twenty-five feet wide at the top and had a forty-five degree slope. The bombproof in the center of the fort measured one hundred yards long. Its sides were covered with sand ten feet thick and five feet thick on the top, reinforced with sod and turf. On the ocean side Fort Clark had a parapet eighteen feet thick with an eight inch naval gun. The side facing Pamlico Sound had a parapet five feet thick designed for defense by soldiers armed with muskets. The fort mounted five thirty-two pounders and two six pounder cannons.<sup>23</sup>

Major William B. Thompson, chief engineer of the state's coastal defenses, said of these forts: "These two redoubts, secure to us a cross fire upon the bar and the entrance to this inlet. I now consider this inlet secure against any attempt of the enemy to enter it."<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Thompson was correct that the Rebels could deter vessels from entering the inlet and crossing the bar, but the same could not be said of repelling vessels that stood off from



the forts and bombarded them at long range. The weakness of the forts was in their short range guns. The older thirty-two pounders mounted at the forts could not match the rifled and long range guns the Federal ships carried.

Throughout the summer of 1861 Confederate troops arrived at Hatteras to garrison the forts. Several companies of the Seventeenth North Carolina Regiment, one company of the Thirty-Second Artillery, and two independent companies manned the two forts. They constituted only 503 men under the command of Colonel William F. Martin. The Confederate garrison consisted of:

	Officers	Enlisted
<b>Seventeenth North Carolina Volunteers</b>		
Company A (Independent Grays) Pasquotank County Captain John T. Cohoon	4	94
Company F (Roanoke Guards) Martin County Captain John C. Lamb	4	111
Company G (Hamilton Guards) Martin County Captain Lycurus Clements	4	100
<b>Independent Units</b>		
Jonesboro Guards Camden County Captain William A. Duke	3	66
North Carolina Defenders Camden County Captain G. Gratiott Luke	3	47

**Thirty-second North Carolina Artillery**

Company K (Lenoir Braves)

4

63

Lenoir County

Captain William Sutton<sup>25</sup>

The Roanoke Guards manned Fort Clark, while the Independent Grays, the North Carolina Defenders, and the Lenoir Braves were stationed at Fort Hatteras. The Hamilton Guards and the Jonesboro Guards were stationed at Camp Glynn, a position located three miles northeast of the forts on the sound side of the island.<sup>26</sup>

In early June 1861, the Confederate forces at Hatteras were severely short of arms and modern ordnance. The commander anxiously sought all types of armament including, but not limited to, shot, shells, spongebuckets, bayonet scabbards, and musket balls.<sup>27</sup> One soldier stationed at the forts noted that Hatteras had only "8 cannons mounted . . . powder of two hours . . . our cannons are mostly old fashioned 32 pounders, so that any steamer of superior guns, can shell our fort without endangering the loss of a single spar."<sup>28</sup> This final observation proved to be remarkably accurate as a prediction of what would happen to the two forts' if a battle occurred with a Federal fleet. The problem of shortage of munitions and arms persisted at

Hatteras until the Rebels surrendered the position in August 1861.

Though some officials considered the forts well placed and secure, the Rebel forces stationed at the inlet faced an even more serious problem than the outdated guns and lack of ammunition. The forts were located many miles from people and supplies and, therefore, faced the logistical problem of being inaccessible. Reinforcements and supplies had to travel long distances over water to reach the forts. The closest troops were stationed at Fort Ocracoke, Portsmouth, and New Bern, the closest being at Fort Ocracoke about fifteen miles by sea.

Along with the construction of Forts Clark and Hatteras, a small squadron of seagoing vessels was created at Hatteras Inlet. They constituted the North Carolina Navy stationed at this portion of the Outer Banks. Thomas Selfridge, a Union Navy lieutenant serving on the USS *Cumberland*, stated in a letter to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles:

It seems that the coast of Carolina is infested with a nest of privateers that have thus far escaped capture, and, in the ingenious method of their cruising, are probably likely to avoid the clutches of our cruisers. Hatteras Inlet . . . seems their principal rendezvous.<sup>29</sup>

The squadron consisted of four vessels, *Winslow*, *Beaufort*, *Raleigh*, and *Ellis*. The *Winslow*, formerly the *JE Coffee* of Norfolk, was a 207 ton side-wheel steamer which originally sailed from Norfolk to the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Its captain, Lieutenant Thomas B. Crossen, formerly of the United States Navy, proved an effective commander for the vessel. It was armed with one thirty-two pounder pivot gun and one rifled brass six pounder. It had a crew of forty sailors.<sup>30</sup> The *Beaufort*, formerly the *Calendonia*, was an eighty-five ton steam tug from Edenton, originally purchased in New Bern. It measured eighty-five feet in length, seventeen and one-half feet at the beam, and drew just under seven feet. Commanded by Lieutenant W.C. Duval, it mounted one thirty-two pounder and had a crew of fifty men.<sup>31</sup> The *Raleigh* mounted one thirty-two pounder and was commanded by Lieutenant J.W. Alexander. The *Ellis*, a steam tug, was bought in Norfolk and commanded by Commander W.T. Muse. It mounted two guns and carried a crew of from twenty-five to thirty men.<sup>32</sup>

Lt. Selfridge also informed Welles of the actions of these vessels at Hatteras Inlet:

Here they have a fortification that protects them from assault. A lookout at the light-house proclaims the coast clear, . . . they

dash out and are back again in a day with their prize. So long as these remain it will be impossible to entirely prevent their depredations, for they do not venture out when men-of-war are in sight; and, in bad weather . . . cruisers cannot always keep their stations off these inlets without great risk of going ashore.<sup>33</sup>

Attacks against Union shipping began in May 1861. The *Lydia Frances* of Connecticut, returning from Cuba to New York laden with sugar and mahogany, wrecked on the beach at Hatteras on May 6. The following day Rebels captured the vessel's master, Daniel Campbell, and detained him at Fort Hatteras until mid-July. Little did the Rebels realize at the time the importance Campbell would later have in the capture of the forts.

During Campbell's imprisonment at Hatteras he observed the activities at that took place there and made mental notes about the number of soldiers, strength of the forts, and number of vessels passing through the inlet. Upon his release, he related his observations to the Federal military. These proved important in the planning for the expedition to capture Hatteras.<sup>34</sup>

During the month of June, the North Carolina Navy enjoyed the capture of several Northern vessels. The *Winslow* captured the first prize vessel, the schooner

*Willet S. Robins*.<sup>35</sup> In late June the *Winslow* also captured the 193 ton transport schooner *Transit* of New London, Connecticut, as it was delivering provisions to the Federal forces at Key West. A prize crew safely took the *Transit*, worth approximately \$13,000, to New Bern. Three members of the *Transit's* crew opted to join the crew of the *Winslow* (which included sailors from other prizes as well), while the other four members of the crew were taken prisoner.<sup>36</sup>

On June 25 the *Winslow* captured the hermaphrodite brig *Hannah Blatch*, which had been captured by the USS *Flag* the previous week while trying to run the blockade at Savannah. Ultimately the cargo found its way into the Confederate market. The Federal prize captain, Albert Kautz, remained a Rebel prisoner for four months.<sup>37</sup>

The months of May and June proved successful for the Confederate vessels at Hatteras. They captured three ships, found another one shipwrecked and began to establish themselves as a potential problem for Yankee ships that had to pass the Outer Banks.

July proved to be even more profitable to the Confederate privateers. On July 3 the *Winslow* captured the *Herbert Manton* of Massachusetts as it was returning from Cuba with over 175 hogsheads of sugar and 70 hogsheads of

molasses, a cargo valued at \$30,000. It mistakenly strayed near the North Carolina coastline where the *Winslow* spotted and subsequently overtook it. The Rebels detained the crew until late July and then put them aboard vessels bound for Halifax sailing under British colors.<sup>38</sup>

To aid in the capture of Northern vessels, the Rebels removed or destroyed navigational aids along the coast. By July 8 the lens for the light at Ocracoke had been removed and taken to New Bern.<sup>39</sup>

The first action between a Federal vessel and the Rebel forces at Fort Hatteras occurred on Wednesday July 10. That morning Rebel spotters sighted a sail on the horizon. Officers immediately moved twenty-five men from the beach to reinforce the fort, while two companies secured positions behind the sand dunes in case of a troop landing. The vessel turned out to be the USS *Roanoke*, flagship of the West Indian blockading squadron on its way to Charleston, South Carolina.

Around 2:30 in the afternoon as the vessel neared the inlet, the Confederate batteries opened fire. According to Federal accounts all of the rounds fell short. The *Roanoke* returned fire from its fore and aft pivot guns and howitzers. After nearly an hour of action with no damage to

either side, the Roanoke continued southward to Charleston.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately for the Rebels, none of their vessels was engaged in the action that day because "all of the navy . . . [was] beastly intoxicated in the town of New Bern." This circumstance was not unusual.<sup>41</sup>

Training and discipline at Hatteras were not the ideal hoped for by the Confederate government. In a letter to Governor Henry T. Clark (who became governor of North Carolina after Ellis died in early July), one of the soldiers, Cader Abrams, stated:

The majority of them, (the naval officers especially) are drunk and rowdyish, and devote more than 2/3 their times [sic] to drunken sprees . . . Captain Roberts of steamer Albemarle . . . all of his time is hoped [sic] in drunken debauchery.

Alcohol consumption and lackadaisical officers were but two of the many problems at the fort. Abrams also summarized the conditions at the fort by stating that they had "inferior cannons no powder scarcely, very few balls, no cartridges, no caps, and inadequate supply of men, no provisions, no water, and last though not least no place of refuge for the sick." In spite of pleas for more and



better cannons, arms, and associated supplies, the forts remained poorly equipped.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the problems with the officers and the shortage of supplies at Hatteras, the privateers still effectively annoyed Northern shipping in the area. On July 16, the bark *Linwood*, returning from Rio de Janeiro to New York carrying coffee, ran aground on Hatteras Island. Henry Penny, the master, joined Campbell as a prisoner at Fort Hatteras. His crew was sent to New Bern.<sup>43</sup>

The disruption of Northern shipping only worsened after the North Carolina Navy was commissioned to the Confederate States Navy and privateers started using Hatteras as their main base in late July. In addition to the *Winslow*, the *York*, *Mariner* and *Gordon* also used Hatteras Inlet as a base for privateering operations. The *York*, formerly the Norfolk-based pilot boat *Florida*, a sixty-eight ton schooner, mounted one six pounder rifled gun and carried a crew of thirty men. It received its commission as a privateer on July 9, 1861, while under the command of John Geoffrey. The screw-steamer *Mariner*, formerly a Wilmington tugboat of 135 tons, was armed with two twelve pounder smoothbore guns and one six pounder rifled gun. It was commanded by Captain B.W. Berry with a

compliment of thirty men. The vessel received its letter of marque on July 14, 1861. The *Gordon* of Charleston, a 500 ton side-wheel steamer 175 feet long, mounted three guns and carried a crew of fifty with Captain Thomas Lockwood as skipper.<sup>44</sup>

On July 23, the Rebels hoisted the Confederate colors above Fort Clark. The same day, the *York* captured the brig *B.T. Martin* sailing from Philadelphia to Havana loaded with a complete sugar mill and barrel staves. While returning to the inlet, the prize crew spotted the *USS Union* which gave chase forcing the prize crew to run the *B.T. Martin* aground. In an effort to avoid the cargo falling into Confederate hands, the *Union* crew burned the prize and its cargo worth \$60,000.<sup>45</sup>

Despite this minor setback, Rebel success continued in late July. On July 25, the *Gordon* captured the brig *William McGlivery* of Bangor, Maine. It was bound from Cardenas, Cuba, with a cargo of 337 hogsheads and 27 tierces of molasses destined for Boston. After spying the sail on the horizon early that morning, the *Gordon* overtook the *William McGlivery* and fired a shot across its bow. The prize ship came to and the *Gordon* towed it to Hatteras Inlet. The crew was then sent to New Bern as prisoners.

The same day the *Mariner* captured the schooner *Nathaniel Chase*. The *Gordon* struck again three days later, this time taking the schooner *Protector* of Philadelphia, bound from Matanzas, Cuba, carrying fruit.<sup>46</sup>

The addition of more privateering vessels sailing out of Hatteras Inlet, resulted in an increased number of prizes. Rebels captured five vessels, though one was purposely scuttled, and a sixth vessel was shipwrecked on the beach. The successes of the privateers attracted the attention of both the United States government and navy.

In early August, the privateering proved even more lucrative than during the previous month. On August 2, the *Gordon* captured the schooner *Priscilla*, bound from Curacao loaded with salt, and brought it to New Bern. When it was discovered that its owner lived in Maryland, it was released to finish the voyage to Baltimore.

When the vessel resumed its passage to Baltimore, it carried prisoners from the crews of the *Nathaniel Chase* and the *William McGlivery*. Their passage was paid for by the Confederate government.

Just two days later the privateers enjoyed their most successful day when they captured three prizes. The *Winslow* returned to Hatteras with the brig *Itasca*, loaded

with 500 hogsheads of molasses from Cuba. The *Gordon* captured two Northern vessels this day. The first was the schooner *Henry Nutt* laden with mahogany and logwood, traveling from Key West destined for Philadelphia. The second was the *Sea Witch*, loaded with tropical fruit from Cuba, bound for New York. After the battle at Hatteras Inlet, the Federal forces recaptured the *Henry Nutt* as she was trying to enter the inlet into North Carolina waters.<sup>47</sup>

The *York* did not fare as well as the *Winslow* or the *Gordon*. On August 9 it captured the schooner *George Baker* seventy-five miles off Hatteras. Originally the *George Baker* was taken by the USS *South Carolina* off the coast of Texas, and was sent north under a prize crew. The USS *Union* spotted the two sails on the horizon and gave chase. Upon overtaking the *York* near Bodie Island, the Yankees decided to throw its gun overboard and set fire to the vessel. After the *York* had burned to the water, the *Union* chased and captured the *George Baker*. Ironically it was the *York*, having previously beached a captured northern vessel, which again lost its prize (and itself in the second instance). This was the last vessel captured by Confederate privateers operating out of Hatteras Inlet.<sup>48</sup>

Overall the Confederate vessels at Hatteras returned to port with nine enemy vessels, four apiece for the *Gordon* and *Winslow*, and one for the *Mariner*. The *York* captured two other vessels, but neither was brought back to port. One was scuttled and the other retaken by a Federal ship. Two other ships ran aground on Hatteras and were salvaged by the Confederates.

The activities of the Confederate privateers did not go unnoticed by the United States government. Two Northern captains, Henry Penny and Daniel Campbell, observed:

as many as 50 vessels pass in through the inlet (9 of them prizes) and as many go out, some bound to Liverpool and Halifax (Nova Scotia), and the larger number reported bound to the West Indies, loaded with naval stores, rice, lumber, etc.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the acknowledgement of the privateering problem by Union officials, six marine insurance companies informed Secretary Welles that their loss "is and has been very heavy" and that "Any project by which this nest of pirates could be broken up would be hailed with gratitude by all interested in commerce."<sup>50</sup> A second letter, this one from the New York Board of Underwriters, urged the Federal government to take action against the privateers at Hatteras because "of the large number of vessels with

valuable cargoes . . . (which) pass in the vicinity of Cape Hatteras."<sup>51</sup> The pleas of the commercial community helped to focus the attention of the government in Washington on the problem of Confederate privateers and the inlets of North Carolina.

In mid-July the Blockade Board held a conference to evaluate the situation along the Confederate coastline and to construct a plan to blockade the area. The Board concluded:

. . . (the ports of Norfolk and Richmond) are not effectually blockaded until the entrance into Albemarle, Pamlico, and Core sounds is stopped against the enemy . . . interior communication with Norfolk by the Dismal Swamp Canal and by the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal and by the rivers and railroads with North Carolina and Virginia is complete. The several towns of Elizabeth City, Edenton, Washington, and New Berne . . . are connected in trade and intercourse by numerous steamers suited to the navigation of these shallow waters. This trade includes a considerable foreign commerce with the West Indies . . . vastly important to the rebels.<sup>52</sup>

The Union Blockade Strategy Board, in charge of the blockading of Southern ports, decided to permanently halt the blockade running and privateering from Hatteras Inlet. Their plan consisted of capturing the inlet and its forts, obstructing the inlet, and eventually closing it entirely by sinking hulks filled with stone in the channel. In

addition to closing Hatteras Inlet, the Board advised closing Oregon, Ocracoke, Beaufort, Bogue, New River, New Topsail, and New Inlets.<sup>53</sup>

Federal officials decided the Confederate position at Hatteras Inlet would be vulnerable to attack. By August 9 Secretary Welles had decided to enact a plan to "effect in closing the ports and inlets on that troublesome coast."<sup>54</sup> Welles turned to Commodore Silas Stringham, commander of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron, to deal with the problem at Hatteras.

The expedition came together quickly. Stringham suggested a combined effort between the army and navy. General Winfield Scott ordered Major General John E. Wool, commander of the Department of Virginia, to begin to prepare troops for the expedition. Originally Wool lobbied for 25,000 men, but he received only 860 soldiers. These army troops were placed under the command of Brigadier General Benjamin F. Butler. Butler had been appointed to his high rank not because of his military ability, but rather because of his political connections. While Butler was in charge of the army contingent, Stringham commanded the naval complement of the attack force.<sup>55</sup>

Union naval officers received intelligence reports

concerning Hatteras Inlet and its fortifications from two sailors, Masters Penny and Campbell. They described the hydrographic details of the channel through the inlet, dimensions and locations of the two forts, approximate number and size of the cannons. They also observed that Confederate ammunition there was scarce, so scarce that defense forces only had about one hundred kegs of powder and the pickets could not carry loaded weapons. These observations proved influential in the planning and execution of the expedition.<sup>56</sup>

By August 1861, the Confederate force at Hatteras Inlet had proven itself to be a successful predator upon Northern commercial shipping. Loss of revenue and insurance money from these vessels ignited a fire in Northern commercial circles. They subsequently enlisted the aid of the Federal government to stop the privateering off the coast of North Carolina. Along with the desire to stop the privateering, a limited few Federal officers saw an opportunity to establish a foothold in North Carolina. A victory in eastern North Carolina could lead to control of the sounds and waterways of the area. This in turn would halt the communication and transport of goods to southern Virginia via the backdoor presented by the North



Carolina sounds. Realizing the potential geographic importance of Hatteras Inlet, the Federal government quickly enacted a plan to capture the Confederate defensive works there. The plan was to bombard the forts and then to put amphibious forces ashore to take the forts by direct attack if necessary.

During the planning stages of the attack, Stringham consulted with the prisoners from captured vessels who had been imprisoned on Hatteras, including Penny and Campbell. Based upon their advice Stringham deduced that it would be useless to sink stone schooners in the inlet once it had been captured. Stringham convinced Butler of the strategic importance of fortifying and holding Hatteras both for its importance as an entrance way into Pamlico Sound and also its potential use as a coaling depot to be established at Beaufort. This would be important for the North Atlantic blockading squadron.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the Confederate government's belief that Hatteras and its defensive works were a solid defensive position, it was vulnerable to attack from the Federal forces from its inception. The two most important flaws were its outdated armament and its geographic isolation from other Confederate forces. These two factors weighed

heavily in the battle at Hatteras. Thus the stage was set for the first battle of the Civil War in North Carolina.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE BATTLE OF HATTERAS INLET

On August 27, 1861, Confederate Brigadier General Benjamin Huger telegraphed the North Carolina state government "The enemy's fleet - - 2 steam frigates, 2 transport steamers, 8 smaller steamers with boats in tow, and a body of troops - - left last evening; passed out of the capes, and steered south, I think to coast of North Carolina." Unfortunately for the Rebels at Hatteras Inlet, they never received this warning telegram.<sup>58</sup>

Huger had watched the combined Union navy and army expedition, led by Flag Officer Silas Stringham and Major General Benjamin Butler, set sail from Fortress Monroe in Hampton Roads, Virginia, bound for Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina. The attack force included seven warships and numerous other support vessels. The fleet consisted of the *Minnesota*, *Wabash*, *Cumberland*, *Pawnee*, *Monticello*, *Harriet Lane*, *Adelaide*, *George Peabody*, *Tempest*, and *Fanny*. The *Susquehanna* met the fleet at sea while returning from blockading duty.

The flagship *Minnesota* was a 3,307 ton screw-frigate commanded by Captain Gersholm J. Van Brunt. It had been

built by the Federal government in 1855 and could make 5.5 knots under steam and 12.5 knots under sail. It mounted forty-six guns: twenty-eight nine inch Dahlgren smoothbores, one ten inch Dahlgren smoothbore, fourteen eight inch rifled cannons, two twenty-four pounders, and two twelve pounders. It carried a crew of 540 men.<sup>59</sup>

The *Wabash* was a 3,274 ton screw steam-frigate commanded by Captain Samuel Mercer. Built by the Federal government at the Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1855, it could make nine knots, and mounted forty-six guns; two ten inch Dahlgren smoothbore cannons, twenty-eight nine inch Dahlgren smoothbores, fourteen eight inch cannons, and two smoothbore twelve pounders. It carried a crew of 523 men.<sup>60</sup>

The *Monticello* was a 655 ton screw steamer measuring 180 feet long with a beam of 29 feet and a draft of 17 feet. It was commanded by Commander John P. Gillis, and though originally chartered by the Navy, it was purchased after the battle at Hatteras. The vessel averaged ten knots and mounted three guns: one ten inch Dahlgren smoothbore and two thirty-two pounders with a crew of ninety-six.<sup>61</sup>

The *Pawnee* was a 1,289 ton twin-screw steam sloop with Commander Stephen C. Rowan at the helm. Built at the

Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1860, it could make ten knots and averaged five. It mounted ten guns: eight nine inch guns and two twelve pounders and was manned by a crew of 161.<sup>62</sup>

The *Cumberland* was markedly different from the rest of the fleet. It was the only vessel completely powered by sail. The 1,708 ton sailing sloop, commanded by Captain John Marston, mounted twenty-four guns: twenty-two nine inch smoothbores, one ten inch smoothbore, and one seventy pounder rifle. It had a crew of 288. Unfortunately, after the victory at Hatteras the *Cumberland* had the distinction of being sunk by the Confederate ironclad *Virginia* at Newport News in March 1862. Its appearance and participation at Hatteras marked the last time a vessel relying completely on sail operated in a naval engagement for the United States.<sup>63</sup>

The *Susquehanna*, which joined the fleet on the battle's first day, was a 2,450 ton side-wheel steamer measuring 257 feet in length, 45 feet at the beam, and drawing 26 feet. It could make twelve knots with an average of eight. Skippered by Captain John S. Chauncey, it mounted fifteen guns and carried a crew of 264.<sup>64</sup>

The *Harriet Lane* was a former Coast Guard Revenue Cutter, built and launched in 1858. Commanded by Captain John Faunce, the 674 ton steamer measured 180 feet in length, 30 feet at the beam, and drew 10 feet of water. It mounted five guns: four rifled thirty-two pounders and one rifled hundred pounder. The ship made twelve knots and had a crew of one hundred men.<sup>65</sup>

The remainder of the fleet consisted of chartered troop carriers and tug boats. The troop transport *Adelaide*, a former packet that ran between Norfolk and Baltimore, was commanded by Commander Henry S. Stellwagen. The *George Peabody*, captained by Lieutenant R.B. Lowry (who had notified Welles of the circumstances at Hatteras earlier in the year) towed stone schooners loaded with surfboats for the beach landing. The *Pawnee* and the *Monticello* also towed surfboats. Lieutenant Pierce Crosby commanded the *Fanny*, a flat-bottomed canal boat perfect for use in the shallow sounds of North Carolina (some had thought the passage across the open Atlantic to be too risky for the vessel). Filling out the small fleet was the steam tug *Tempest*.<sup>66</sup>

The Federal landing force of 880 soldiers, led by Ben Butler, was comprised of 500 soldiers from the Twentieth

New York Volunteers, commanded by Colonel Max Weber; 220 members of the Ninth New York Volunteers (companies C, G and H), commanded by Colonel Rush Hawkins; 100 men from the U.S. Coast Guard led by Captain Nixon, and 60 members of the Second United States Artillery. The Union fleet and force carried 149 guns and over 2900 men. They greatly outnumbered 500 men and 17 guns that comprised the Confederate forces at Forts Hatteras and Clark.<sup>67</sup>

The Federal armada's trip down to Cape Hatteras proved uneventful, though the seas caused "even the *Minnesota* . . . [to reel] to and fro like a very drunkenman" resulting in seasickness to some of the soldiers. The fleet sighted the Cape Hatteras lighthouse at 9:30 A.M. on August 27. The vessels anchored south of the cape in about eleven feet of water near sunset in preparation for the battle the next day.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, at the two Rebel forts, Colonel Martin spied the Federal fleet off Hatteras late in the afternoon on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Immediately realizing that his small force could not both operate the guns and resist a landing party, he dispatched a vessel to Portsmouth requesting reinforcements. This message did not reach Portsmouth until the following morning.<sup>69</sup>

Having spotted the fleet, the Rebels quickly distributed powder to the men, who because of the shortage of ammunition did not regularly carry powder. The Jonesboro Guards, the Hamilton Guards, and the North Carolina Defenders were stationed at Camp Glynn three miles from the fort. That night the men at Camp Glynn moved to a lookout point dubbed "Prospect Hill". This afforded them a better reconnaissance of the Federal force should they choose to land troops.<sup>70</sup>

The next morning the Jonesboro Guards and part of the North Carolina Defenders marched to the Rush House, a building located north of the fort. At the same time the rest of the North Carolina Defenders returned to the fort. The Hamilton Guards remained on the shore in the event of a landing.

Later that morning the weather increased to a heavy surf. In preparation for the amphibious operation, the *Monticello* sent two guns, a twelve pounder rifled gun and a twelve pounder howitzer, to the *Adelaide*. Meanwhile Butler and the marines from the *Minnesota*, moved to the *Harriet Lane* in order to supervise the landing. At 6:45 A.M. the order was given to launch the landing craft. The *Pawnee*, *Monticello*, and *Harriet Lane* positioned themselves two



miles east of the forts off the beach in order to support the amphibious operation. Butler had planned to "attack on the land side, and . . . carry them (the forts) with the bayonet."<sup>71</sup>

At about 11:30 the troops commenced landing approximately two miles above the forts. The landing troops consisted of 102 men of Colonel Weber's Twentieth New York, 68 men of the Ninth New York (primarily G Company), 28 Coast Guardsmen, 45 marines from the Minnesota, 28 sailors, and 45 men from the Second United States Artillery. They brought with them two six pounder guns, though one had a broken wheel and was effectively unusable. The seas soon grew rougher, swamping and destroying several of the landing boats. The rough weather forced the rest of the proposed landing party to return to the transport steamers. This left the first wave onshore without water or rations since the second wave was supposed to carry these supplies. Forty-five minutes after the *Monticello* had successfully launched all her marines, the *Minnesota* ordered it to move toward the forts to support the troops' movement. While advancing down the beach the *Monticello* provided covering fire for the marines.<sup>72</sup>

In preparation for the naval portion of the assault on Forts Hatteras and Clark, the *Wabash* towing the *Cumberland*, and the *Minnesota* steamed toward Fort Clark.<sup>73</sup> Preparing for the ensuing battle the crew of the *Wabash*:

cleared (the decks) of all the familiar paraphernalia which usually aids the everyday uses of peaceful hours of shipboard life . . . the decks were sprinkled with water and covered with sand to give the men footing and to absorb the blood.<sup>74</sup>

At 10:00 A.M., the *Wabash* and the *Cumberland* commenced firing upon the Rebel position. Instead of using the traditional anchored stationary naval bombardment, Stringham ordered the Federal fleet to fire while continuously moving in a circular pattern near the forts (see Map 5, page 108). To further trouble the Rebel gunners the ships did not follow the same path on each pass of the forts nor did they follow in line thereby constantly forcing the Rebels to adjust the ranges on their guns, thereby providing them a more elusive target. The *Wabash* opened fire using a salvo from her starboard battery with ten-second shells. Ten minutes later, the *Minnesota* passed in front of the *Wabash* and *Cumberland* and opened fire from her starboard batteries.<sup>75</sup>

Among the crew of the *Minnesota* were six free African-Americans who had recently escaped to Fort Monroe and been accepted by General Butler. Originally trained by the Rebels at Yorktown, they now worked a gun in the bow of the flagship and thus became the first African-Americans to fight in the Civil War.<sup>76</sup>

As soon as the Federals opened fire, the Rebels at Rush House returned to the cover of the fort. Fort Clark, commanded by Captain Lamb and garrisoned by the Roanoke Guards, returned the fleet's fire, but most of their shells fell short and proved ineffective. One gun from Fort Clark did hit the *Wabash* twice, once in side of the vessel and another shell struck below the waterline and penetrated the hull enough to be flush with the copper sheathing on the bottom of the vessel. But those were the only two shots the Rebels fired during this phase of the battle which did not cause any damage at all to Federal vessels.<sup>77</sup>

After firing all of their shot and using up their powder by 12:25 P.M., the Confederate troops at Fort Clark spiked their guns and abandoned their position in favor of the larger and more defensible Fort Hatteras. A Rebel soldier remarked in a letter to his wife that:

We retreated under the heaviest shelling any man ever saw; we were compelled to run and fall at almost every step to escape the fragments. Some of our men were killed, some wounded, some cut off.<sup>78</sup>

Lt. Colonel A. Weiss observed the evacuation of Fort Clark, and along with a small detachment from the amphibious party, immediately occupied it. Observers on the *Susquehanna*, who had arrived on the scene about an hour earlier, saw the Rebels evacuate Fort Clark. Believing the Rebels had surrendered both forts the *Susquehanna* towed the frigate *Cumberland* away. In the evacuation of Fort Clark the Federals captured two six pounder field pieces which they later used for their defense of Clark.<sup>79</sup>

Once inside the fort Lt. Col. Weiss hoisted the United States flag. Colonel Weber led the remainder of the troops into the protection of Fort Clark, only to be mistakenly bombarded by the Union fleet. Not until a Federal soldier raised an American flag along the beach adjacent to Fort Clark did the Union vessels cease firing on Fort Clark. During the Federal bombardment of Clark, the Yankees suffered their only casualty when a private was injured in the hand by the friendly fire. By 2:00 in the afternoon, the Federal troops had completely occupied the abandoned

fort.<sup>80</sup>

Now all the Confederate forces on the scene were inside Fort Hatteras. Unfortunately for the Rebels, the Federal ships, which had been within the range of guns at Clark, laid out of range of the cannons of Fort Hatteras. To conserve their ammunition the Rebels decided to wait until the Federal ships came into range before firing. After hours of enduring the Federal barrage, the Federal fleet presented the Confederates the opportunity for which they had been waiting.

Believing the Rebels had surrendered since there was no flag atop Fort Hatteras (it had been blown to pieces by the steady winds at Hatteras and had not been replaced), and Fort Clark had been abandoned, the captain of the *Minnesota* ordered the *Monticello* to enter the inlet and secure the area. A sailor aboard the *Wabash* noted that it was evident that the soldiers at Hatteras had not surrendered and were ready for more fighting. He signaled the *Minnesota* to this effect, but to no avail. After receiving a pilot from the flagship, the *Monticello* commenced passage into the inlet. She slowly felt her way through the inlet, looking for the deepest water, striking bottom several times in the attempt. The Confederate

forces, seeing an opportunity in which their short-range guns might be effective, took advantage of the Federal ship's proximity. The batteries at Hatteras opened fire. For fifty minutes they fired on the *Monticello*. Immediately the *Wabash* and *Susquehanna* returned effective fire toward the fort.<sup>81</sup>

At this point the Confederate reinforcements from Portsmouth arrived within sight of the battle and witnessed the exchange of fire between the fort and the vessels. The *Monticello* returned fire with its pivot gun and two thirty-two pounders on the port side. After fifty minutes the vessel successfully navigated its way out of the inlet. Overall, the Confederates hit the *Monticello* five times with eight inch shot and shell. Despite these hits, it suffered little serious damage. However the damage did keep the ship's carpenter busy that night making repairs.<sup>82</sup>

The weather worsened as the evening drew near, forcing the Federals to cease their bombardment near twilight. At 6:15 the Union vessels stopped firing and stood off for the night, save for the *Harriet Lane*, *Monticello*, and *Pawnee*, which moved up the beach to protect the troops who were ashore.

During the day's bombardment one Federal sailor impressed Flag Officer Stringham with his bravery and respect for duty. J.D. Kraigbaum, while sponging a gun, lost his sponger overboard. Without hesitation he jumped in after it, grasped it and swam back to the vessel where his crewmates safely helped him back aboard. The reason for his actions was that he did not want his gun to be disgraced. Gustavous Fox, Acting Secretary of the Navy, commended him on his action and recommended his promotion to master's mate. For some unknown reason, the *Minnesota's* skipper, Captain Van Brunt, did not recommend him for master's mate. He did, however, indicate that he would promote Kraigbaum to petty officer at the first opportunity.<sup>83</sup>

At nightfall, Colonel Weber assigned Captain Nixon and his twenty-eight Coast Guardsmen to occupy the fort, while the bulk of the Union forces returned to the landing area. After the day's fighting the Federal troops "acquired" some feral sheep and geese and roasted them on their cutlasses and bayonets for supper and the following day's breakfast. Returning to the landing site, Federal troops captured several slaves who had cooked for the Rebels. The slaves revealed that the Confederates expected reinforcements

later that evening, a fact that the Federal troops camped on the beach a few miles from enemy force assuredly did not find consoling.<sup>84</sup>

The mood within the Union forces that evening was grim and pessimistic. Over three hundred Union soldiers were ashore unsupported on a beach near a Confederate force that was larger than they were and that was being reinforced. A news correspondent aboard the *Minnesota* noted:

the feeling throughout the ship at this time was that we were beaten . . . During the night the secessionists might make our soldiers prisoners, reinforce their own forts, repair damages and be ready to show that they were not to be easily vanquished.<sup>85</sup>

After receiving the call for reinforcements at Hatteras during the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, Confederate forces stationed at Fort Ocracoke and Portsmouth embarked to Hatteras to reinforce the garrison which was under attack by the Union combined operation. The men from Portsmouth and Ocracoke arrived in time to see the end of the day's fighting. The reinforcements consisted of one company of artillery and three companies of infantry totaling 373 men:

**Tenth North Carolina Artillery**

	Officers	Enlisted
Company K (Washington Grays)	6	63
Washington County		
Captain Thomas Sparrow,		



**Seventeenth North Carolina Volunteers**

Company C (Tar River Boys)	4	92
Pitt County		
Captain George W. Johnson		
 Company D (Hertford Light Infantry)	3	108
Hertford County		
Captain Thomas Sharp		
 Company H (Morris Guard)	4	93
Washington County		
Captain Henry A. Gilliam <sup>86</sup>		

Upon entering the inlet earlier that day, the Federal forces had spied the reinforcements and opened fire upon them though the fire inflicted no damage. In addition to the infantry reinforcements, the *Winslow* also arrived that night from New Bern. It carried several prominent Confederate officers including Commodore Samuel Barron, commander of the Naval Defense Afloat in Virginia and North Carolina; Colonel J.A.J. Bradford, colonel of artillery and engineers and chief of ordnance of North Carolina; Major W.S.G. Andrews; and Lieutenants William H. Murdaugh and William Sharp of the Confederate States Navy. Upon arrival Commodore Barron assumed command of the forts at the request of Colonel Martin and Major Andrews.<sup>87</sup>

That night Barron and the other Rebel officers consulted on their strategy for the following day. Barron devised a plan of attack upon Fort Clark dependent upon the

arrival of additional troops from New Bern. But the second set of reinforcements did not show up until the following day. Hence, the Confederate attack on Fort Clark was postponed. Several other factors also influenced the decision not to attack. The Rebels believed the Federals had landed between 700-800 troops, significantly more than the 318 who actually landed. Combined with the late arrival of the reinforcements from Portsmouth and Ocracoke, the hope that that rough seas would render the Federal fleet ineffective, the shortness of ammunition, and the faith that they could hold the fort for another day all weighed heavily in their decision to postpone the attack on Fort Clark.<sup>88</sup>

Late on the evening of August 27, a Rebel scouting party set out from Fort Hatteras and Captain Thomas Sparrow noted the group had:

advanced to within a few yards of Fort Clark and had seen no signs of an enemy. We learned afterward that only a small force (of Yankees) was left there and they got drunk on the whiskey found there and went to sleep. This is told by one of the free negroes who remained there. The fort might have been taken had the fact been known.<sup>89</sup>

By waiting and not attacking the small garrison left at Fort Clark, the one fort whose guns proved that they could

reach the Federal fleet, the Rebels missed their opportunity to have any chance of winning the battle. Had they attacked the Union land forces on the first night they could have easily captured the Federal detachment in the fort, if not all of the troops ashore, and been ready to resume cannon fire from Fort Clark on the following morning.

Because of the fatigue of the soldiers who had commanded the guns during the first day's attack, the reinforcements manned the guns for the second day of the battle. On the channel batteries Captain Thomas Sharp commanded guns two, Lieutenant George Johnston commanded guns four and five, while Major Henry Gilliam commanded gun number six facing the bar and gun number seven facing Fort Clark. Gun number eight was mounted on a naval carriage, and it was commanded by Lieutenant Murdaugh, while gun number nine, under the command of Lieutenant Sharp, was mounted on an eccentric axle and could not be brought to bear and was useless. Due to the placement of the guns and their distance from the fleet, only guns numbered six, seven, and eight could be brought into action on the second day. All Confederate soldiers not on active duty were ordered to remain outside the fort on the sound side for

their safety, while relief crews for the guns were to remain in the bombproof until needed.<sup>90</sup>

The second day's action proved too much for the outnumbered and outgunned Rebel forces stationed at Fort Hatteras. This was inspite of the additional troops from Portsmouth. Again the Federal forces launched their attack early. At 5:30 A.M. the *Minnesota* gave the signal to prepare to fire. At 7:15 the *Wabash*, *Minnesota*, and *Susquehanna* came within range of the forts. Forty-five minutes later the *Susquehanna* opened fire followed by the *Wabash* and the *Minnesota*, with the *Cumberland* joining in an hour later. Since the Federal shot was exploding before reaching the fort, they were ordered to cease firing. When they opened up again the order was given to use only fifteen-second fuses with ten inch guns. This change spelled disaster for the Confederates. The Federal gunners rained shots down on them now. At approximately 9:00 A.M., the *Harriet Lane* also added its guns to the Federal assault.<sup>91</sup>

During the Federal bombardment, the Confederates returned fire but soon realized that the Federal fleet lay out of range of their guns. Major Andrews stated in his report that "after a few shots had been fired and it was

ascertained that we could not reach them, our guns ceased fire, and only answered the fire of the enemy occasionally to show we had not surrendered."<sup>92</sup>

Major Andrews described the Federal naval bombardment as "literally tremendous, as we had falling into and immediately around the work not less on an average of 10 each minute, and the sea being smooth, the firing was remarkably accurate."<sup>93</sup> Federal guns dismounted two of the Rebel guns during the bombardment. Captain Sparrow commented that:

such a bombardment is not on record in the annals of war. Not less than three thousand shells were fired by the enemy during the three hours. As many as twenty-eight in one minute were known to fall within and about the fort. It was like a hailstorm.<sup>94</sup>

The *Monticello* and *Pawnee* returned to their duty as support for the land based operation. Stringham ordered them to remove the troops if they so chose or to provision them if they opted to remain on shore. The men chose to remain, so the *Monticello* retrieved a surfboat off the beach and sent it to the *Adelaide* where they provisioned it and returned it to the troops on shore.

During the morning, additional Rebel reinforcements and powder arrived aboard the Confederate steamers *Colonel*

*Hill* and *Winslow*, but were repulsed by a Federal battery consisting of the field pieces landed the first day and a six pounder captured from the Rebels.<sup>95</sup>

As the day progressed the Confederate situation grew steadily worse. Realizing the hopelessness of their situation, Commodore Barron was left with the options of surrendering or retreating. Retreat would prove risky since all of the Rebel vessels were over a mile away and any approach would jeopardize them, but Barron decided to effect a retreat regardless. Lieutenant Johnson signaled the Confederate vessels from atop the fort and spiked the guns.<sup>96</sup>

Before they could retreat, a shell exploded in the ventilator shaft adjacent to the main magazine, causing an extensive amount of smoke. Panic ensued among the men who believed the magazine was on fire. Rebel commanders unanimously agreed to surrender. A piece of white canvas was raised at the front of the fort, but the Union fleet did not cease firing. So Lieutenant Stuart Johnston quickly tore all but the white bar from a Confederate flag (one taken from Fort Clark) and put it atop the bombproof at 11:07 A.M. This time the Federal forces recognized the surrender signal and ceased firing.

Seeing the surrender flag, Colonel Weber and his German troops quickly ran over to Fort Hatteras and planted the Federal flag and formed a cordon around the fort. Upon seeing the surrender and taking a shot from the steamer *Fanny*, the *Winslow* and *Colonel Hill* escaped unharmed into the sound carrying the second wave of reinforcements.<sup>97</sup>

Butler dispatched a rowboat from the *Fanny* to convey the terms of surrender. Barron stated he would surrender the fort at Hatteras, with all the arms and munitions of war, except officers' sidearms, if his officers and men could go free. Butler retorted that his terms were: "Full capitulation; the officers to be treated as prisoners of war. No other terms admissible."<sup>98</sup>

During this time the *George Peabody*, the *Adelaide*, and *Harriet Lane* headed toward the inlet with the remainder of the troops to secure the area. The *George Peabody* crossed the bar without incident, but the other two vessels ran aground. The *Adelaide* quickly freed itself, but the *Harriet Lane* did not fare as well and remained hard aground. The *Harriet Lane* finally backed off the bar, and sent the pilot to sound out the inlet, leaving it without a pilot on board the vessel. It was then ordered into the inlet again following the lead of the *George Peabody*.

Again the *Harriet Lane* found itself hard aground and despite the crew's best efforts the vessel remained stuck.<sup>99</sup>

Captain John Faunce decided to try something he had neglected to do when the *Harriet Lane* had run aground previously. He lightened the vessel by heaving overboard four thirty-two pounder rifled guns, two Maynard rifles, coal, rations, ammunition, powder, and other assorted materials.<sup>100</sup> The lightening of the vessel did not free it and the *Harriet Lane* remained aground throughout the evening and all of the next day. During this time one crew member recounted that:

we lay there helpless for 48 hours and for the first 24 the sea was making a clean breach over us. The *Lane* lay on her side and all that saved us was that the seas hit the bottom of the vessel instead of the decks . . . The steamer was bent and buckled so that bolts were snapped off the bulkheads and the boilers were wrenched so that it was impossible to make steam.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, on August 31 at about 2:20 P.M., the *Harriet Lane* succeeded in extricating itself from the bar, and the *Fanny* and the *Tempest* towed it to anchor off Fort Hatteras.

The grounding of the *Harriet Lane* placed the Federal troops in a precarious position. If Barron decided not to accept Butler's terms of unconditional surrender, the Rebels could easily commence firing and inflict serious



damage to the Federal vessels now that they were within range of the Confederate guns. Butler realized the danger of the situation but "decided to abate not a tittle."<sup>102</sup> The crisis passed when Barron did finally accept the terms. Accompanied by his highest ranking officers, he boarded the *Minnesota* and signed the articles of capitulation. The terms of capitulation stated:

all munitions of war, arms, men and property under the command of said Barron, Martin, and Andrews be unconditionally surrendered to the Government of the United States in terms of full capitulation. And . . . that the officers and men shall receive the treatment due to prisoners of war.<sup>103</sup>

Despite the heavy and extensive Federal bombardment, casualties on both sides were quite low. The Federals suffered one casualty, a result of the friendly fire on Fort Clark. The Rebels suffered more. Thirteen Confederates, who were prisoners of war, required medical attention after the surrender. Two of them had mortal injuries, and at least three others killed. The Federals captured 691 Rebel soldiers. The exact number of dead and wounded could not be ascertained, because several of the wounded and dead had been taken off in Confederate steamers near the end of the battle. In addition to the prisoners of war, the Federal forces captured two forts, one thousand

stand of arms, seventy-five kegs of powder, thirty-one cannon, one brig loaded with cotton, stores, and two light boats.<sup>104</sup>

Analysis of the Confederate defeat at Hatteras Inlet reveals that the Rebels never had a reasonable chance of victory in the battle. The main factor that had led to their defeat was the lack of long range guns. The armament they possessed did not have the range to hit the Union vessels, while the Federal Navy's guns effectively shelled the forts. The one opportunity the Rebels had to strengthen their position and to make it a more advantageous one, by capturing Fort Clark and the Federal troops stranded on the beach, the Confederates failed to seize. Again their location far from reinforcements proved advantageous to the Federals. Had the reinforcements from New Bern arrived on the first evening of battle, it might have spurred the Rebels to attack the Federal land force. But they had not arrived then, and the Confederate troops did not retaliate or withstand the second day's bombardment. Therefore they surrendered.

The Federal victory at Hatteras Inlet was important to the Union cause for several reasons. First, it established a foothold in Confederate territory. The site afforded

Union forces a base from which to operate against the interior portions of eastern North Carolina. After the victory at Hatteras the Union was able to launch expeditions and capture Roanoke Island, Washington, Elizabeth City, Plymouth, and New Bern. The Federal occupation of these eastern cities that bordered on the rivers and sounds of the state, effectively shut down the link between Virginia and North Carolina via the sounds. The Confederates had used this passageway to supply provisions to Confederate troops.

Second, the victory at Hatteras afforded the Union its first victory in the war. After the major setbacks at Manassas, Virginia, and Wilson's Creek, Missouri, Union confidence in its army and navy had begun to wane. Conversely, Southern confidence began to rise as time had passed in 1861. This Federal victory showed that the war was far from over.

A third result of the victory was the demonstrated success of a combined assault upon Confederate defensive land positions. Stringham's successful tactic of having the vessels move while firing, instead of the traditional firing from a stationery position, was repeated in the campaign against Port Royal, South Carolina where it proved

quite successful again. For the Union forces the victory at Hatteras Inlet in the first year of the Civil War proved to be the stepping stone into Southern territory, and brought about a resurgence in confidence in the United States Army and Navy.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE UNION TAKES CONTROL OF THE INLET

After enduring two days of unrelenting Federal bombardment, the Confederate troops were exhausted and in poor condition. Following the surrender the prisoners were loaded on the gunboat *Fanny* and transported to the *Adelaide* where they remained overnight. The next morning they were transferred to the *Minnesota* for the trip north to New York. There a prisoner of war camp awaited them. They were to be imprisoned at New York Harbor on Governor's Island.

When the *Minnesota* arrived in New York harbor on September 4, it was greeted by scores of vessels filled with onlookers hoping to get a glimpse of the secessionists. There the Confederate prisoners of war remained until winter, when they were exchanged for Union prisoners between December 17, 1861 and February 20, 1862.<sup>105</sup>

Meanwhile, immediately following the Federal victory at Hatteras both Union commanders, Stringham and Butler, conferred and decided to purposely disobey a direct order. The blockading committee originally selected Hatteras Inlet as one of the inlets to be obstructed in order to halt the

blockade running and shipping along the sounds. The committee issued direct orders to destroy the forts and block the channel at Hatteras by sinking stone vessels. Stringham and Butler concluded, however, that holding Hatteras Inlet would give the Union a strategic entranceway into the North Carolina sounds. With that passage in Union possession, Butler realized that:

the whole coast of Virginia and North Carolina from Norfolk to Cape Lookout, is within our reach by light-draught vessels . . . from it offensive operations may be made upon the whole coast of North Carolina to Bogue Inlet . . . to Washington, New Berne, and Beaufort.<sup>106</sup>

In order to defend their decision Butler traveled to Fort Monroe, Virginia. There he informed Major General John E. Wool of his and Stringham's decision. Wool agreed with them that the inlet should not be closed. So Butler continued on to Washington, D.C. to make his case to the administration. Arriving at the capital in the middle of the night, the general announced to President Abraham Lincoln that the Union had finally won its first battle of the Civil War at Hatteras Inlet. The following day, Butler reported to Lincoln's cabinet and advisers explaining why he and Stringham had not blocked the inlet. They agreed

with the decision to garrison Hatteras Inlet and not obstruct it as had been planned.

Despite Stringham's and Butler's well-founded decision to keep Hatteras Inlet open to serve as a base of Federal operations, Northern newspapers chastised them for not following up their victory by penetrating into North Carolina. The reality was that they could not have done so even if they had wanted. Two major factors limited the ability of the Union force to continue the fight in enemy territory. First, the size of the garrison there was far too small to both man the forts and conduct offensive operations against the Rebels. Second, only the *Fanny* possessed a shallow enough draft to safely navigate the sounds and it had no armament and only room for about one hundred soldiers. Had more shallow-draft vessels accompanied the fleet, and the original request for 25,000 soldiers been granted, Butler might have continued the advance further into North Carolina.

Southern press was equally critical of its leaders after the defeat at Hatteras. Following the aftermath of Hatteras, a reporter sent a letter to the *Petersburg (VA) Express* saying:

What does the entrance of the Yankees into our waters amount to? It amounts to this: The whole of the eastern part of the State is now exposed to the ravages of the merciless vandals . . . Newbern (sic), Washington, Plymouth, Edenton, Hertford, Elizabeth City, are all now exposed, besides the whole of the adjacent country.<sup>107</sup>

Once news of the defeat at Hatteras reached other Rebel troops on the Outer Banks, they quickly abandoned Portsmouth, Fort Ocracoke, and Fort Oregon to concentrate their forces on Roanoke Island.

Butler left Colonel Rush Hawkins, commander of the Ninth New York regiment, in command of the remaining troops at Hatteras. The troops consisted of portions of the Ninth and Twentieth New York Volunteers and the Union Coast Guard. Along with the army forces several naval vessels remained: the *Pawnee*, *Monticello*, *Susquehanna*, *Harriet Lane*, and *Fanny*, all under the supervision of Commander Stephen Rowan of the *Pawnee*.

Despite the overwhelming victory, problems arose for the Union at Hatteras. Immediately after the Federal occupation of the forts, soldiers from the Twentieth New York committed criminal acts. They raided former Rebel encampments and private residences on the island. Hawkins reported to Major General Wool that:



they (soldiers of the Twentieth New York) have plundered and destroyed. The first night they were on shore they visited one of the (abandoned) encampments . . . under the charge of . three or four commissioned officers; that they first commenced breaking open trunks left behind . . . After they had broken all the trunks and boxes open and partly destroyed what they did not want or could not carry away, they then set fire to the buildings.<sup>108</sup>

This scene was repeated at Fort Clark. To make matters worse they also broke into private homes and absconded with personal property including "ladies silk dresses, bonnets, gaiters, shoes, and all manner of evening apparel." Outraged at the soldiers' actions, Colonel Hawkins chastised Weber for the conduct of his men and returned a few of the stolen articles to their rightful owners.<sup>109</sup>

In spite of the poor behavior of some of the Union troops, Hawkins saw great potential for strategic and military gains now that Hatteras Inlet was under Union control. Hawkins recommended establishing a small unit of shallow-drafted steamers in the sound to control Hatteras Inlet so that it could be used as a base of operations to further penetrate the interior of North Carolina.

Commander Rowan also believed in the potential importance of Hatteras and told Fox that he considered:

the capture of this place (Hatteras Inlet) the most important event of the war. There is a perfect panic throughout all parts of this State bordering on the water. The inhabitants are abandoning their dwellings and seeking safety in the interior. I learn today that the State authorities have recalled 10,000 of their troops from Virginia.<sup>110</sup>

But in order to hold Hatteras and defend it from Confederate attacks he needed to strengthen the position. Understanding the precariousness of his situation at Hatteras, Colonel Hawkins notified Wool of his need for more men and better guns to strengthen the two forts.

Wool sent one company of artillery and five additional companies of the Ninth New York Volunteers aboard the *Spaulding* from Norfolk to reinforce the Federal troops at Hatteras. On the *Spaulding's* return to Fort Monroe she carried 500 of Weber's German troops. This was clearly an attempt to curtail the problems those soldiers caused in the area.<sup>111</sup>

The Federal troops kept busy on Hatteras in the late summer and fall of 1861. To ensure safe passage over the treacherous bar at the inlet, they remarked the channel. Despite their initial success at Hatteras, the garrison of

troops on the island still remained under constant threat of Confederate attack. To strengthen the defensive capability of the forts they removed the spikes from the guns, dismounted the ones facing the sea and mounted them in a more defensive position on the landward and sound sides of the forts, knowing this was the direction from which a Confederate attack would come.<sup>112</sup>

By September 12, Hawkins had decided to extend the Federal camp further up the beach. This served two purposes: first, it provided more space for the extra troops stationed at Hatteras (a total of 946 at this point); and second, the extension allowed for a greater coverage of the island, enabling the Federal forces to better detect Confederate movements in the area. Hawkins sent four companies under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Betts to establish Camp Wool, named in honor of the commander at Fort Monroe.<sup>113</sup>

In early October while provisioning the force near Chickamacomico, the Federals suffered a minor setback when the Rebels captured the steamer *Fanny*. Hawkins had dispatched the *Fanny*, which mounted two rifled cannons and carried forty-five men, to Chickamacomico to resupply Federal troops with clothing, munitions, and provisions.

On October 1 at approximately 4:00 P.M. after offloading the first boatload of provisions, the Federals spotted an enemy steamer. It was soon followed by two more Rebel vessels. These were the *Curlew*, *Raleigh*, and *Junaluska*. The Rebels soon opened fire and after thirty-five minutes the *Fanny* surrendered. It managed to fire at the Rebels eight or nine times, but eventually realized the hopelessness of the situation and the captain ordered it run aground, without putting the guns or the bulk of the provisions over the side. In all the Rebels captured forty-nine soldiers, one servant, most of the provisions destined for the Federal troops, and the *Fanny* with all of its armament.<sup>114</sup>

Following the debacle at Chickamacomico, Hawkins was criticized for dividing his forces leading to the Confederate capture of the *Fanny*. Hawkins did not accept the criticism gracefully and was reprimanded by his superiors. On October 7 Brigadier General Joseph K.F. Mansfield relieved Hawkins as commander at Hatteras.

The victory at Hatteras had an immediate impact upon trading vessels running the blockade through this area of the Outer Banks. Stringham ordered the commanders at Hatteras to:

be vigilant in blockading, capturing, and sending forward for judicial investigation all vessels heretofore American, now sailing under British consular certificate, attempting to enter any port of the seceding states.<sup>115</sup>

After the Federal occupation of Hatteras Inlet, the Union forces captured several Southern merchant vessels attempting to enter the inlet on their way to North Carolina ports. The USS *Monticello* captured the first vessel attempting to enter Hatteras Inlet on August 31, 1861. After spotting a strange sail upon the horizon it set out in pursuit and finally overtook the merchant brig *HC Brooks* bound from North Carolina to Liverpool, England. Its cargo included turpentine, tar, tobacco, and cotton. Its value was estimated at \$50,000. Upon capture, Charles Gallagher, the ship's captain, refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Union and was taken prisoner. The *HC Brooks*, formerly from New York, had previously wrecked on the Outer Banks in March 1861 and was subsequently salvaged and taken to Washington, North Carolina for repairs and refitting.<sup>116</sup> That same night, the *Henry Nutt*, a schooner laden with mahogany, ran aground attempting to cross the bar into Hatteras Inlet. It remained grounded until the end of September. Finally on September 30 the *Henry Nutt* was able to get free of the bar.<sup>117</sup>

Federal confiscations of Southern owned merchant vessels continued throughout the first month of occupation. On September 9 the USS *Pawnee* captured the *Susan Jane* bound from Nevis. Previously known as the *Charles McCleese* of New Bern, the renamed *Susan Jane* had departed from North Carolina days before the blockade began, carrying turpentine to Nevis. From the West Indies, it sailed to Halifax where it picked up supplies much needed in the South including iron, steel, cloth, and blankets, all purchased in New York or Boston before the return voyage to North Carolina.<sup>118</sup>

Also on September 9, the *Pawnee* captured the schooner *Harriet Ryan*. The *Harriet Ryan* left Plymouth for Barbados in July and returned from several West Indian ports including Antigua and St. Thomas, loaded with salt, molasses, and rum.<sup>119</sup>

Yet still the same day, the Federal fleet also captured the *Mary Wood* and the *Ocean Wave*. The *Pawnee* captured the *Ocean Wave* returning to Washington from Guadeloupe with a cargo of molasses. The *Mary Wood* was captured carrying a cargo of salt and molasses. Union prize crews sailed the *Harriet Ryan* and the *Susan Jane* to Philadelphia, while the *Mary Wood* and the *Ocean Wave*

remained at Hatteras, the latter due to its poor condition and unseaworthiness.<sup>120</sup>

On September 13, the USS *Susquehanna* captured the schooner *Argonaut*, sailing under the English flag, bound from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Key West, Florida loaded with fish, soap, coffee, and cotton. Upon confiscation the *Argonaut's* captain claimed that he didn't know that Hatteras Inlet was a haven for Confederate blockade runners and privateers and that he was near shore because he was out of fresh water and unsure of his position. This was a tale the Union officers assuredly did not take too seriously.<sup>121</sup>

The capture of Southern vessels trying to run the blockade and enter the North Carolina sounds continued into late September. On September 28, the USS *Susquehanna* captured the *San Juan* trying to enter at Hatteras. Bound from Anguilla to Elizabeth City, it carried a cargo of salt, sugar, and gin. The vessel had already completed one successful run through the blockade at Hatteras before the battle and on three occasions had crossed the bar at Hatteras prior to the war.<sup>122</sup>

Also on September 28, 1861 the *Susquehanna* added to its captures the *Prince Alfred*. The captain of the *Prince*

*Alfred* stated it was bound to Baltimore, not North Carolina, and therefore should be released. But the captain of the *San Juan*, having himself been captured only days earlier, contradicted the skipper of the *Prince Alfred* by saying it was in fact bound to a North Carolina port and owned by a North Carolinian.<sup>123</sup>

On September 29 the *Susquehanna* captured the *Baltimore*, veteran of at least twelve voyages through Hatteras Inlet since 1858. It was captured returning from the Turks and Caicos to Elizabeth City loaded with sugar, coffee, and salt, though the vessel's incessant leaking had ruined most of the cargo.<sup>124</sup>

Many of the vessels captured near Hatteras Inlet flew English flags in the hopes that this would permit them to pass unmolested by Federal vessels. One Federal captain noted that "nine out of ten of the vessels captured by our cruisers display the English flag in order to evade capture."<sup>125</sup>

Over the course of the first month of their occupation of Hatteras Inlet, Union forces captured ten prize vessels. The *Pawnee* and *Susquehanna* each captured four, *Monticello* one, and another ran aground in the inlet. At least seven of these trading vessels cleared through Hatteras Inlet



incoming or outgoing before the war. Many if not all the vessels captured at Hatteras, were not "aware of the change of circumstances at Hatteras nor of the blockade at Beaufort" when they fell into Federal possession.<sup>126</sup>

Meanwhile by mid-September, after initially abandoning the defensive works at Portsmouth, and Forts Oregon and Ocracoke, the Rebel forces decided to return to Fort Ocracoke on Beacon Island in order to salvage arms and munitions with which to strengthen their position at Roanoke Island. Learning of this new development, a Union expedition was ordered to destroy the remainder of Fort Ocracoke.

The Federal detachment steamed to Beacon Island aboard the *Fanny*. A quick reconnaissance of the fort found eighteen of the twenty-two guns still in place, four eight-inch and fourteen thirty-two pounders naval guns. The Confederate vessel *Washington* had removed the other four guns the day before, taking them to New Bern. The detachment, commanded by Lieutenant Eastman, destroyed all eighteen of the remaining guns. In addition to destroying the cannons, the Federals burned the four bomb-proofs located at the battery, all the lumber, and a lightship found at the site. The Federal troops also found four guns

at Portsmouth, and destroyed them by "breaking off the cascabel and leaving them in the salt water on the beach." They also managed to salvage eighty shells from Beacon Island and returned with these to Hatteras.<sup>127</sup>

Stringham notified Secretary of the Navy Welles of the successful operation and that "the property of the Rebels at Ocracoke Inlet has been destroyed, and that point is ready for being closed up, as proposed by the Department." But personally, Stringham believed and recommended that Ocracoke should be occupied and fortified just as Hatteras had been.

By mid-October Welles, who had considered leaving Ocracoke open, changed his mind and ordered the sinking of stone vessels on the inner bar there. Navy administrators and naval officers stationed at Hatteras debated the effectiveness of the sinking of vessels to close the channels. The majority of the pilots familiar with the area believed that sinking hulks at the bar at Ocracoke Inlet would be at best a temporary measure due to the unpredictable and strong currents flowing from the sound into the Atlantic. Lt. R.B. Lowry, commander of the USS *Underwriter*, reported to his superiors about Ocracoke Inlet that:

no earthly power can stop the rush of these waters to their destination - the ocean. Everywhere the bottom sands are creeping; and either engulfs them (stone schooners) to a greater depth or quickly and surely washes a channel elsewhere.<sup>128</sup>

The administration disregarded the recommendations of these men and decided to close Ocracoke Inlet. Flag Officer L.M. Goldsborough attached "little consequence to the opinions of pilots" and "wished to have (his) orders executed, if possible, and nothing more."<sup>129</sup>

Thus on November 14 the Federal ships *Underwriter*, *Stars and Stripes*, *General Putnam*, and *Ceres* steamed with stone schooners in tow to Ocracoke. Three vessels were sunk across the channel in nine feet of water on the inner bar. This closed Ocracoke Inlet, albeit temporarily.<sup>130</sup>

The Federal victory at Hatteras allowed Union planners to begin preparing a major operation into eastern North Carolina. This would also be a combined army/navy operation and their goal would be to capture Confederate fortifications at Roanoke Island. Subsequently they would seek to control the sounds in North Carolina. The government chose Major General Ambrose Burnside to lead the expedition. By January 1862, Burnside had begun his

expedition using the deep-water Hatteras Inlet as his entry into the sounds.<sup>131</sup>

Once the expedition rendezvoused at Hatteras, they undertook their conquest of coastal North Carolina. The first strategic goal was the capture of Roanoke Island, the Confederate stronghold in the sound. Rebel Brigadier-General Wise described Roanoke Island as:

the key to all the rear defenses of Norfolk. It unlocked two sounds (Albemarle and Currituck); eight rivers (the North, West, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Little, Chowan, Roanoke, and Alligator); four canals (the Albemarle and Chesapeake, Dismal Swamp, Northwest, and Suffolk); and two railroads (the Petersburg and Norfolk and the Seaboard and Roanoke). It guarded more than four-fifths of all Norfolk's supplies of corn, pork and forage, . . . It endangers the subsistence of his (General Huger's) army, threatens the navy-yard at Gosport, and to cut off Norfolk from Richmond, and both from railroad communication with the South. It lodges the enemy in a safe harbor from the storms of Hatteras, gives them a rendezvous, and large rich range of supplies, and the command of the seaboard from Oregon Inlet to Cape Henry.<sup>132</sup>

After nearly a month of delay at Hatteras Inlet, on February 6, 1862 the armada arrived off Roanoke Island. Two days later Burnside and his men defeated the Confederate forces there and controlled this strategically important position. Following their victory at Roanoke, Burnside's troops continued their conquest of eastern North

Carolina. They captured Elizabeth City, Edenton, and Winton (located on the Chowan River) by the end of February. By March 16 Burnside had captured New Bern as well. From New Bern the Federals besieged and captured Fort Macon, the last Confederate military stronghold along the sounds.

Federal forces occupied other once important inland ports cities such as Washington and Plymouth by mid-May. These seemingly easy Federal victories in eastern North Carolina prompted Lee to shift much-needed troops from Virginia to North Carolina to defend against further invasion into the interior of North Carolina. Confederate General D.H. Hill noted

The occupation of this territory in the rear of General Lee's army by a mobile force that could be safely increased by water in a few hours was a constant menace to operation in Virginia.<sup>133</sup>

Though the expedition had begun slowly and at the mercy of the weather and seas off Hatteras, it proved a total success by April 1862. Burnside realized his goal to firmly establish Union control in eastern North Carolina, thereby threatening both Richmond and the Army of Northern Virginia from the south. Historian John Barrett summarized the Union victory in North Carolina by saying "the results

of these Federal operations in North Carolina were far greater than (Confederate) authorities ever anticipated."<sup>134</sup>

After Burnside's successes in the first half of 1862 the Union stood poised to take advantage of their gains in North Carolina. During McClellan's Peninsula Campaign Burnside had been ordered to march his 7,000 man force to Goldsboro to begin a second offensive attack, but just as he started Lincoln ordered him instead to reinforce McClellan in Virginia, thereby relieving the immediate pressure on Lee's flank and drastically reducing the Federal force in North Carolina to only 9,000 men. In addition to establishing a military offensive in North Carolina, further penetration into the state could have allowed the Federals to disrupt or even altogether halt the flow of supplies from North Carolina via the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. Disruption of the railroad would have had serious consequences for Lee's troops in Virginia. Once the Union had established its presence in eastern North Carolina it never fully utilized the strategic advantage it had achieved.

A secondary benefit of the victory at Hatteras Inlet and Burnside's expedition was that there remained only one viable port in North Carolina still open to Confederate

blockade runners, Wilmington. This left Union blockading vessels to concentrate their attention around Wilmington alone, instead of spreading it between the numerous inlets and ports along coastal North Carolina.

The Civil War history of Hatteras Inlet is short. But what happened there was critical to subsequent Union operations in North Carolina and on the blockade. Before the Civil War Hatteras Inlet was a strategic commercial passageway for trade from and into the state. Being a strategic passageway set the stage for Hatteras' involvement in the early part of the Civil War. During the early stages of the war, Hatteras Inlet provided the Confederacy a means to disrupt the Northern shipping by privateering, but it also provided the Union with a poorly protected region of the Rebel coast to attack. The Union forces quickly exploited the Confederate weakness at Hatteras Inlet with a swift defeat in August 1861. The victory at Hatteras immediately halted privateering blockade running in this area, while also isolating Wilmington as the only viable port in North Carolina. The Confederate defeat provided the Union with both a morale boost after the earlier Confederate victories. More

importantly, it gave the Union easy access to the sounds of North Carolina and southern Virginia and the towns that bordered on them, thereby providing the Union with the means to attack and disrupt Confederate supply lines to North Carolina and Virginia. This the Union did do, but they did not capitalize on this strategic victory as well as they could have. Had they taken advantage of their victory in North Carolina after the battle at Hatteras Inlet by either advancing further into the state or severing the railroad from Wilmington, they could have possibly altered the course of the war. But the Union did not pursue its advantage in North Carolina and the victory at Hatteras Inlet became a footnote in history.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>William Welch, "Opening of Hatteras Inlet," *Essex Institute Bulletin* 17 (1885): 41.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Commerce Report, 27th Cong., 2d. sess., 1842, 1-4.

<sup>6</sup>A perigeon spring tide occurs only once every twenty-eight days when the moon and the sun are aligned on the same side of the Earth. This alignment causes a higher gravitational pull on the tides, therefore resulting in a higher high tide and a lower low tide.

<sup>7</sup>Welch, 40.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 29th Cong., 2d sess., 1846, 53-68.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 1847, 76-77.

<sup>10</sup>Fergus J. Wood, *The Strategic Role of Perigeon Spring Tides in Nautical History and American Coastal Flooding 1635-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1976), 85, and David M. Ludlum, *Early American Hurricanes 1492-1870* (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1963), 151-154.

<sup>11</sup>Welch, 40.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 41-2.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Commerce Report, 27th Cong., 2d. sess., 1842, 1.

<sup>14</sup>List of vessels incoming to Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina, 1858-61, John W. Rolinson Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC (hereafter referred to as SHC).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Logan, 90.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>20</sup>R.B. Lowry to Gideon Welles, 1 June 1861, Richard Rush, et al., eds., *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, 31 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1927), series I, volume V, 688 (hereafter referred to as ORN).

<sup>21</sup>Statements of Daniel Campbell and Henry Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 79.

<sup>22</sup>The Reports of Committees of the Senate of the United States, 37th Congress, 3rd sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), 284; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record* (New York, 1864), 7, 15.

<sup>23</sup>Statements of Campbell and Penny, ORN 6, 79; Moore, 7; W. Bevershaw Thompson to Warren Wilson, 25 July 1861, R.N. Scott, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the*

*Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), series I, vol. 4, 587 (hereafter referred to as ORA).

<sup>24</sup>Thompson to Wilson, 25 August 1861, ORN 6, 713.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas Sparrow "The Fall of Hatteras" in *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865*, ed. Walter Clark (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1901), 5 vols., 5, 42; Report of William F. Martin, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 141; Mallison, 29; Louis Manarin and Weymouth Jordan, Jr., eds. *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster*, (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1966) 14 vols., 1, 375-85; 6, 118-192; 9, 73, 87; Elonzo E. Bell Diary, North Carolina Division of Archives and History (hereafter referred to as NCDAH). The original Seventh Regiment Volunteers was redesignated the Seventeenth Regiment North Carolina Volunteers in November 1861 due to duplicate set of regiment numbers between the volunteer units and the state troops. After their capture at Hatteras the two independent units were assigned to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, the Jonesborough Guards became 1<sup>st</sup> company I and the North Carolina Defenders became 1<sup>st</sup> Company H.

<sup>26</sup>There are several discrepancies relative to the number of Confederate troops at Hatteras. In this paper data from Manarin's examination of the official muster rolls is used.

<sup>27</sup>H. T. Erwin to John W. Ellis, 6 June 1861, Governor's Papers John W. Ellis, NCDAH.

<sup>28</sup>Cader Abrams to Henry T. Clark, 13 July 1861, Governor's Papers Henry T. Clark, NCDAH.

<sup>29</sup>Thomas O. Selfridge to Welles, 10 August 1861, ORN 6, 72-73.

<sup>30</sup>Report of Simeon Backus, 16 August 1861, ORN 1, 67; report of Albert Kautz, 20 November 1861, ORN 5, 744; report of Penny and Campbell, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 79; H. Wilding to F. W. Seward, 3 August 1861, *ibid.* 101; Mallison, *Civil War*, 22.

<sup>31</sup>Statistical data of the CSS Beaufort, ORN series II, vol. 1, 249; Mallison, *Civil War*, 23.

<sup>32</sup>Statistical data and muster roll of the CSS *Ellis*, ORN series II, vol. 1, 252, 285; Mallison 23; Treadwell, Adam "North Carolina Navy" in Clark, *Histories of Several Regiments* vol. 5, 300.

<sup>33</sup>Selfridge to Welles, 10 August 1861, ORN 6, 72-73.

<sup>34</sup>Report of Campbell and Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 78-80; *Charleston Mercury* 6-10-61.

<sup>35</sup>No other details of this incident were found.

<sup>36</sup>Wilding to Seward, 3 August 1861, ORN 6, 101; *Charleston Mercury* 7-3-61.

<sup>37</sup>Report of Kautz, 20 November 1861, ORN 5, 744-5; *Charleston Mercury* 7-3-61.

<sup>38</sup>Report of Backus, 16 August 1861, ORN 1, 67; *Charleston Mercury* 7-12-61.

<sup>39</sup>P.N. Murphy to Warren Winslow, 8 July 1861 Governor's Papers John W. Ellis, NCDAH.

<sup>40</sup>Charles W. Knight to Warren Winslow, 10 July 1861, Governor's

Papers John W. Ellis, NCDH; G. J. Pendergast to Silas Stringham, 14 July 1861, ORN 5, 792. Anecdotal histories of the Outer Banks inaccurately state that the Union vessel in this episode was the *Harriet Lane*, but historical research shows unequivocally that the vessel involved was the USS *Roanoke*.

<sup>41</sup>Abrams to Clark, 13 July 1861, Governor's Papers Henry T. Clark, NCDH.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Report of Campbell and Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 78; list of Rebel captures, (no date), ORA 4, 588.

<sup>44</sup>J.B. Hull to Stringham, 4 August 1861, ORN 1, 50-52; George Blunt to Welles, 9 August 1861, *ibid.* 59; report of Backus, 16 August 1861, *ibid.* 67; Welles to Stringham, 7 August 1861, ORN 6, 68; Thompson to Wilson, 25 July 1861, *ibid.* 79; statistical data of the CSS *Winslow* and CS privateer *York*, ORN series II, vol. 1, 272; muster roll of the CSS *Ellis*, letters of marque for the *York*, *Mariner*, and *Gordon*, *ibid.* 368-71.

<sup>45</sup>Thompson to Wilson, 25 July 1861, ORN 6, 713; letter from six different marine insurance company executives to Welles, 9 August 1861, ORN 1, 59-60.

<sup>46</sup>Charles Smith to S.L. Breese, 19 August 1861, ORN 1, 51-2; *Charleston Mercury* 8-3-61; no more information was found regarding the capture of the *Nathanial Chase*.

<sup>47</sup>Statement of Hiram Carlisle, August 1861, ORN 1, 50; list of vessels seized by Confederates, ORA 4, 588; *Charleston Mercury* 8-3-61.

<sup>48</sup>Report of J.R. Goldsborough, 10 August 1861, ORN 1, 60-62; log of USS *Union*, 9 August 1861, *ibid.*; report of William Abbott, August 1861, *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Report of Campbell and Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 78-80.

<sup>50</sup>Letter from insurance executives to Welles, 9 August 1861, *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>51</sup>Daniel Smith, Leopold Bierwith, and William Thompson to Welles, 13 August 1861, ORN 6, 78.

<sup>52</sup>Report of the conference for consideration of blockading the South Atlantic coast, 16 July 1861, ORN 12, 199-201.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Welles to Stringham, 9 August 1861, ORN 6, 70.

<sup>55</sup>Robert Browning, *From Cape Fear to Cape Charles: The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 12.

<sup>56</sup>Report of Campbell and Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 78-9.

<sup>57</sup>Benjamin Butler, *Private and Official Correspondences of General Benjamin F. Butler during the Period of the Civil War*. 5 vols. (Norwood, MA: Plimpton, 1917), 213-4.

<sup>58</sup>Telegram from Benjamin Huger to S. Cooper, 27 August 1861, ORN 6, 137.

<sup>59</sup>List of United States vessels in the Atlantic Blockading Squadron 1861, ORN 6, xvii; statistical data of the USS *Minnesota*, ORN series II, 1, 145.

<sup>60</sup>Vessels in Atlantic Blockading Squadron, ORN 6, xviii; Statistical data of the USS *Wabash*, ORN II, 1, 234-5.

<sup>61</sup>Vessels in Atlantic Blockading Squadron, ORN 6, xvii; statistical data on the USS *Monticello*, ORN II, 1, 150-1.

<sup>62</sup>Vessels in Atlantic Blockading Squadron, ORN 6, xvii; statistical data on USS *Pawnee*, ORN II, 1, 172.

<sup>63</sup>Vessels in Atlantic Blockading Squadron, ORN 6, xvii; statistical data on USS *Cumberland*, ORN II, 1, 69.

<sup>64</sup>Vessels in Atlantic Blockading Squadron, ORN 6, xviii; statistical data on USS *Susquehanna*, ORN II, 1, 217.

<sup>65</sup>The vessel was named after President James Buchanan's niece, Harriet Lane, who at the time of the vessel's launching served as hostess at the White House for the bachelor Buchanan. The *Harriet Lane* saw action on April 13, 1861 arriving off Charleston, South Carolina to reinforce the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter. The vessel arrived after the bombardment had begun and could only helplessly watch. While standing off Charleston, the *Harriet Lane* ordered an incoming steamer to show its colors, but the other vessel ignored its request. Immediately the *Harriet Lane* fired a shot across its bow, and the vessel then falsely raised the American flag. The incoming vessel was the Confederate steamer *Nashville*. Thus the *Harriet Lane* fired the first shot from a vessel at sea during the Civil War.

<sup>66</sup>Stringham to Welles, 2 August 1861, ORN 6, 120; Bell Diary, NCDH; Richard West, Jr., *Mr. Lincoln's Navy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 76-77.

<sup>67</sup>Matthew J Graham, *The Ninth Regiment New York Volunteers (Hawkins' Zouaves)* (New York, 1900), 79; Moore, 8.

<sup>68</sup>Butler *Official Correspondences*, 228; Stephen B. Luce Diary, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection (hereafter referred to as LOC).

<sup>69</sup>Report of William F. Martin, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 140.

<sup>70</sup>Bell Diary, NCDH; report of Campbell and Penny, 12 August 1861, ORN 6, 79; Sparrow, "Hatteras", 41-2.

<sup>71</sup>Butler, *Official Correspondences*, 228.

<sup>72</sup>Log from USS *Monticello*, 27-31 August 1861, ORN 6, 135; Max Weber to Benjamin Butler, 5 September 1861, ORA 4, 589; Moore 24; Graham 79.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>John Sanford Barnes, "The Early Blockade and the Capture of the Hatteras Forts" from *The Journal of John Sanford Barnes*, eds., John D Hayes and Lillian O'Brien, *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 46 (January 1962), 77.

<sup>75</sup>This technique was originally used by the Allies during the Crimean war and was used again on the Federal expedition to Port Royal, South Carolina. There Flag Officer Samuel du Pont used this tactic to overwhelm Confederate forts. Stringham to Welles, 2 September 1861, ORN 6, 121; Report of John Faunce, 16 September 1861, *ibid.*, 130; Charles Boynton *The History of the Navy during the Rebellion* vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1867), 339; Barnes, 77; Luce LOC.

<sup>76</sup> John Abbott, *The History of the Civil War in America* (New York: Henry Bill, 1863), 202.

<sup>77</sup> Barnes, 78.

<sup>78</sup> J.B. Fearing "Federal Attack on Hatteras-Letter of John Bartlett Fearing" Yearbook-Pasquotank Historical Society, ed., J.E. Wood (Elizabeth City, NC: Historical Society 1956), II, 110-11 quoted in John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press 1963), 39-40.

<sup>79</sup> Report of Butler, 30 August 1861, ORA 4, 582; Moore, 23.

<sup>80</sup> Report of Butler, 30 August 1861, ORA 4, 582; Rush Hawkins, "Early Coast Operations in North Carolina" in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, ed. Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956), 4 vols., vol. 1, 633.

<sup>81</sup> Barnes, 81.

<sup>82</sup> Report of John P. Gillis, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 126.

<sup>83</sup> Report of Stringham, 3 September 1861, ORN 6, 124, 133-4.

<sup>84</sup> Moore, 25.

<sup>85</sup> Moore, 19.

<sup>86</sup> Numbers of troops are taken from Manarin's volumes.

<sup>87</sup> Report of Samuel Barron, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 138-9; Sparrow, "Hatteras", 36-42.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Sparrow Diary, 28 August 1861, Sparrow Papers, SHC.

<sup>90</sup> Report of W.S.G. Andrews, 1 September 1861, ORN 6, 143; Moore 15; Sharp, *Several Regiments*, 44.

<sup>91</sup> Report of Stringham transmitting report of Gillis, 2 September 1861, ORN 6, 122.

<sup>92</sup> Report of Andrews, 1 September 1861, *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Sparrow Diary, 29 August 1861, Sparrow Papers, SHC.

<sup>95</sup> Report of Butler, 30 August 1861, ORA 4, 582.

<sup>96</sup> Sparrow, "Hatteras", 49-50.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 50-52.

<sup>98</sup> Moore, 7.

<sup>99</sup> Report of Butler, 30, August 1861, ORA 4, 583.

<sup>100</sup> Report of John Faunce, 6 September 1861, ORN 6, 130.

<sup>101</sup> Frank H. Pulsifer, "Reminiscences of the Harriett Lane" *Journal of the United States Coast Guard Academy*, 1917, 32.

<sup>102</sup> Moore, 7.

<sup>103</sup> Articles of capitulation for Forts Hatteras and Clark, 29 August 1861, ORA ser. II vol. 3, 32-3.

<sup>104</sup> William King to Henry Stillwagen, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 128; Moore, 14.

<sup>105</sup> James Whitehead Diary, NCDAAH; Bell Diary, NCDAAH; Stewart Sifakis *Compendium of the Confederate Armies North Carolina* (New York: Facts on File 1992), 108.

<sup>106</sup>Report of Butler, 30, August 1861, ORA 4, 584-5; Benjamin Butler, *Butler's Book* (Boston: AM Thayer and Co. 1892), 282-3.

<sup>107</sup>Moore, 26.

<sup>108</sup>Rush Hawkins to John Wool, 7 September 1861, ORA 4, 608-9.

<sup>109</sup>Hawkins to Wool, 7 September 1861, Hawkins to Weber, 2 September 1861, Weber to Hawkins, 3 September 1861 ORA 4, 608-13; Letter from J.T Doughtey to Captain Samuel Mercer, 30 August 1861, National Archives Record Group 45 (hereafter referred to NA).

<sup>110</sup>Stephen Rowan to Gustavious Fox, 5 September 1861, ORN 6, 173-4.

<sup>111</sup>Wool to Winfield Scott, 13 September 1861, ORA 4, 607.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*; Hawkins to Wool, 7 September 1861, ORA 4, 607-10.

<sup>113</sup>Hawkins to Wool, 19 September 1861, ORA 4, 617.

<sup>114</sup>Rowan to Welles, 5 October 1861, ORN 6, 275-8.

<sup>115</sup>Stringham to Chauncey, 31 August 1861, ORN 6, 159.

<sup>116</sup>Rowan to Fox, 28 September 1861, ORN 6, 263-4.

<sup>117</sup>Rowan to Chauncey, 30 September 1861, ORN 6, 273.

<sup>118</sup>Rowan to Chauncey, 30 September 1861, ORN 6, 195-6.

<sup>119</sup>List of incoming vessels, Rolinson Journal, SHC.

<sup>120</sup>Letter from Stephen C. Rowan to District Court Judge of Philadelphia, 30 September 1861, NA Record Group 45.

<sup>121</sup>Chauncey to Stringham, 13 September 1861, ORN 6, 205-6.

<sup>122</sup>Chauncey to Welles, 28 September 1861, ORN 6, 262; Rolinson Journal, SHC.

<sup>123</sup>Chauncey to Welles, 28 September 1861, ORN 6, 262; Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 12-2-61, Senate Executive Document 1, 37<sup>th</sup> Congress 2d. sess. 1862, 150-1.

<sup>124</sup>Rolinson Journal, SHC; ORN 6, 263.

<sup>125</sup>Chauncey to Welles, 28 September 1861, ORN 6, 262.

<sup>126</sup>Chauncey to Stringham, 13 September 1861, ORN 6, 206.

<sup>127</sup>Hawkins to Wool, 19 September 1861, ORA 4, 617.

<sup>128</sup>Lowry to Reed Werden, 29 October 1861, ORN 6, 378.

<sup>129</sup>Werden to Goldsborough, 20 October 1861, ORN 6, 344-5; Werden to Goldsborough, 2 November 1861, *ibid.* 378; Goldsborough to Werden, 6 November 1861, 410.

<sup>130</sup>Werden to Goldsborough, 17 November 1861, ORN 6, 428; William Jeffers to Werden, 10 November 1861, *ibid.*, 29; T.S. Phelps to Werden, 10 November 1861, *ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>131</sup>For a much more detailed examination of Burnside's entire campaign please see Richard Sauers, "General Ambrose E. Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1987).

<sup>132</sup>Report of Brigadier-General Wise, no date, ORA 9, 187-8.

<sup>133</sup>D.H. Hill, *North Carolina in the War between the States-Bethel to Sharpsburg*, (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1911) I, 259-60 quoted in Barrett, 129.

<sup>134</sup>Barrett, 129.

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APPENDIX A

SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCES OF HATTERAS INLET ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE CIVIL WAR

While this is by no means a comprehensive list of vessels sunk near Hatteras, North Carolina, this list provides details concerning vessels directly involved in the Civil War which sunk near the inlet relative to the battle on August 28-29, 1861 and Burnside's Expedition, January 1862. The action of the Civil War at and near Hatteras produced submerged cultural resources in the form of several shipwrecks and a ballast pile. Listed are data on five shipwrecks, some more detailed than others, and one ballast pile. All the information obtained below is taken from the Shipwreck Files at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Underwater Archaeology Unit Fort Fisher Kure Beach, North Carolina.

Chronologically the first submerged resource at Hatteras during the Civil War was the armament, munitions, and supplies jettisoned by the *Harriet Lane*. After running aground on the bar across the inlet on August 31, 1861 and unable to free itself by engine power, the captain ordered

the jettisoning of heavy and unnecessary objects to help reduce the vessel's load in its attempt to extricate itself. Items thrown overboard included:

- 4 rifled 32 pounders
- 2 Maynard rifles
- 40 shot for 8 inch guns
- 30 shells for 8 inch guns
- 129 shells for 32 pounders
- 100 shot for 32 pounders
- 5 cases of shell, shrapnel, canister for howitzer
- 100 pounds white lead
- 100 pounds red lead
- 13 iron bars of various sizes (3/4" to 1½")
- 1 tank of quicksilver

Since the *Harriet Lane* is the first vessel to have fired a shot during the Civil War when it fired across the bow of the *Nashville* entering Charleston in April 1861, it is likely that one of the jettisoned guns fired that shot and it still remains on the ocean floor off Hatteras Inlet.

Most of the submerged cultural resources associated with the inlet occurred during the beginning of Burnside's expedition in January 1862. During the treacherous sail down to Hatteras the expedition encountered gale force weather and out of the more than one hundred vessels in Burnside's armada five Federal vessels sank. They were the *City of New York*, a 600 ton steamer and supply ship; the gunboat *Zouave*; the *Grapeshot*, an old canal boat converted to a floating battery; the *Pocahontas*, a thirty year old

screw steamer used as a horse transport; and the coal vessel *T.P. Larned*.

The *City of New York* was a 574 ton wooden hull freight vessel. It was powered by two masts and steam engine (a two-cylinder vertical direct-acting engine, built by Hogg & Delamater of New York) which drove a single propeller. Built in 1852 by Capes & Allison in Hoboken, New Jersey, she measured 166 feet long, had a beam of 27 feet, a draft of 24 feet, and a depth of hold of 18 feet. Prior to the Civil War the ship sailed primarily between Boston and New York carrying freight as well as passengers. In the early months of the war, the United States Government chartered the vessel to carry supplies along the East Coast. In January 1862, the Federal government chartered it for \$300 per day to carry supplies for Burnside's Expedition to North Carolina. Captained by Joseph W. Nye and manned by a crew of eighteen, it arrived at Hatteras on January 12, 1862. Attempting to cross the bar the following day the vessel grounded numerous times, causing leakage around the propeller shaft. A second attempt to cross the swash was made. This time the vessel struck the bottom and remained aground hard. For the remainder of the night and all of the next day the seas pounded the stranded vessel. The

crew tried to lighten the vessel by cutting away the foremast and smokestack but this did not help. Finally on the January 15 several crewmembers managed to launch a lifeboat and notify other vessels of their dire situation. Soon help was sent and all hands were removed from the vessel before it sank. The *City of New York* sunk off the Hatteras bar with \$20,000 worth of supplies and munitions, but with no loss of life. The Federal government reimbursed the owner of the vessel \$40,000 for its loss.

Several other Union vessels suffered the same fate as the *City of New York*, among them was the gunboat *Zouave*. The *Zouave*, formerly called the *Marshall Nye*, was a 170 ton screw steamer measuring 106 feet in length, 21 feet at the beam, with an 8 foot draft. It was armed with four guns, one thirty pounder Parrott gun, two twelve pounder rifled field pieces, and one twelve pounder boat howitzer. The vessel reached the inlet without incident, carrying two companies of soldiers from the Twenty-fifth Massachusetts. During the evening of January 13 the ship suddenly swung upon its own anchor and put a hole in her hull. Fortunately the vessel sunk in water shallow enough to keep her deck above the water and all hands were rescued.

Another loss for the Federal expedition was the canal boat *Grapeshot*, which was to be used as a floating battery. On January 14 while the *New Brunswick* towed the *Grapeshot*, the hawser parted and the *Grapeshot* began to drift away. An attempt to resecure the canal boat failed, and the six men aboard the *Grapeshot* managed to launch the lifeboat and safely reach the *New Brunswick*, while the *Grapeshot* silently sunk into the "Graveyard of the Atlantic."

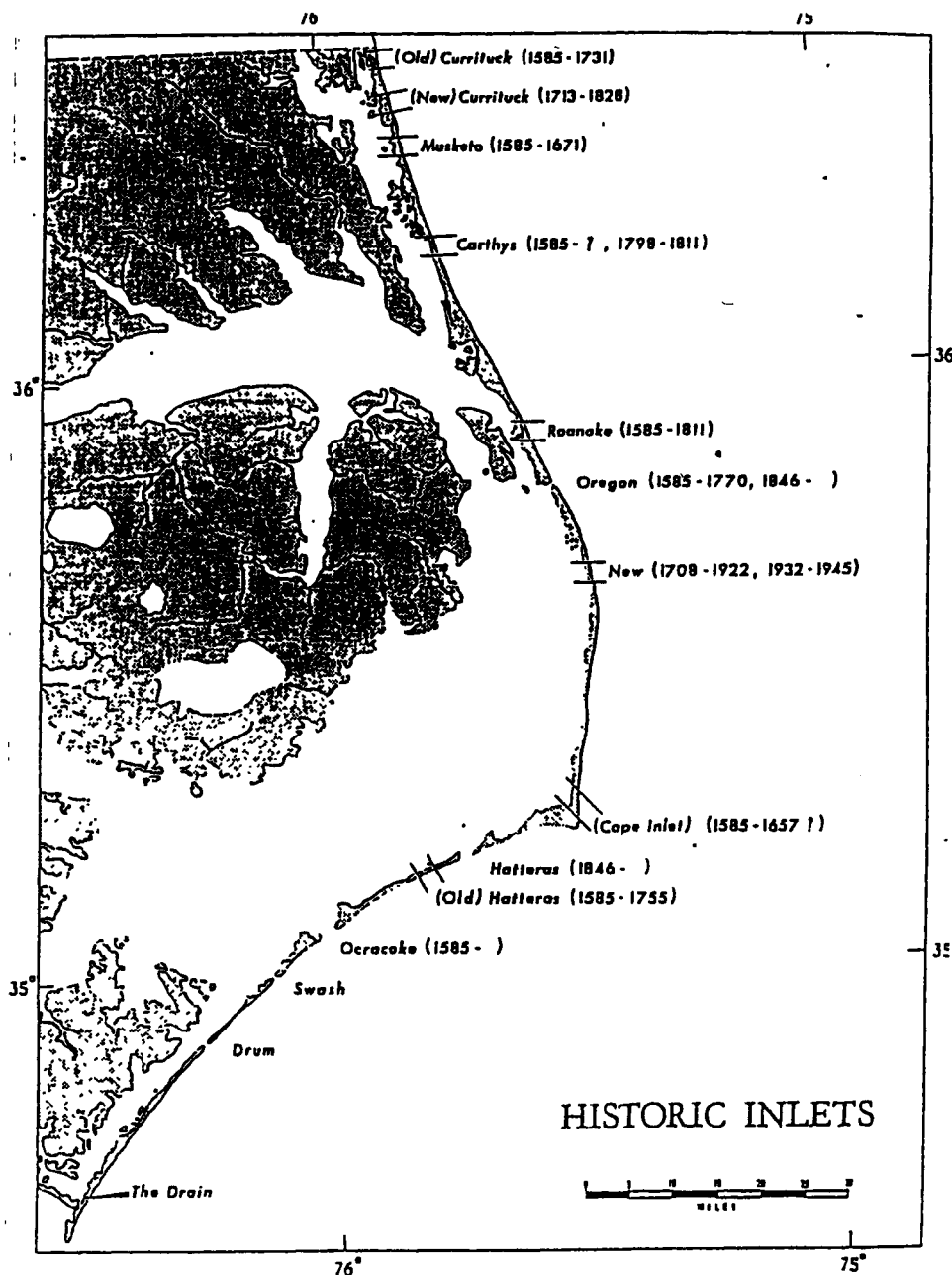
The *Pocahontas*, a thirty year old screw steamer used as a horse transport, suffered the same inglorious fate. It was originally built as a 428 ton passenger transport by Beacham & Gardiner in Baltimore, Maryland in 1829. In 1847 the vessel underwent a substantial overhaul increasing its tonnage to 612, overall length to 136 feet in length, 36 feet at the beam, and 13 foot draft. For the expedition the Federal government chartered the ship for \$550 per day. On its passage to Hatteras the *Pocahontas* carried 60 men and 107 horses. Upon nearing Cape Hatteras the vessel experienced several mechanical failures including parting both rudder chains and a hole in the boiler. Any attempt at correction of these problems was difficult due to the constant inebriation of the captain. To try and save the crew and horses the pilot ran the vessel toward the beach



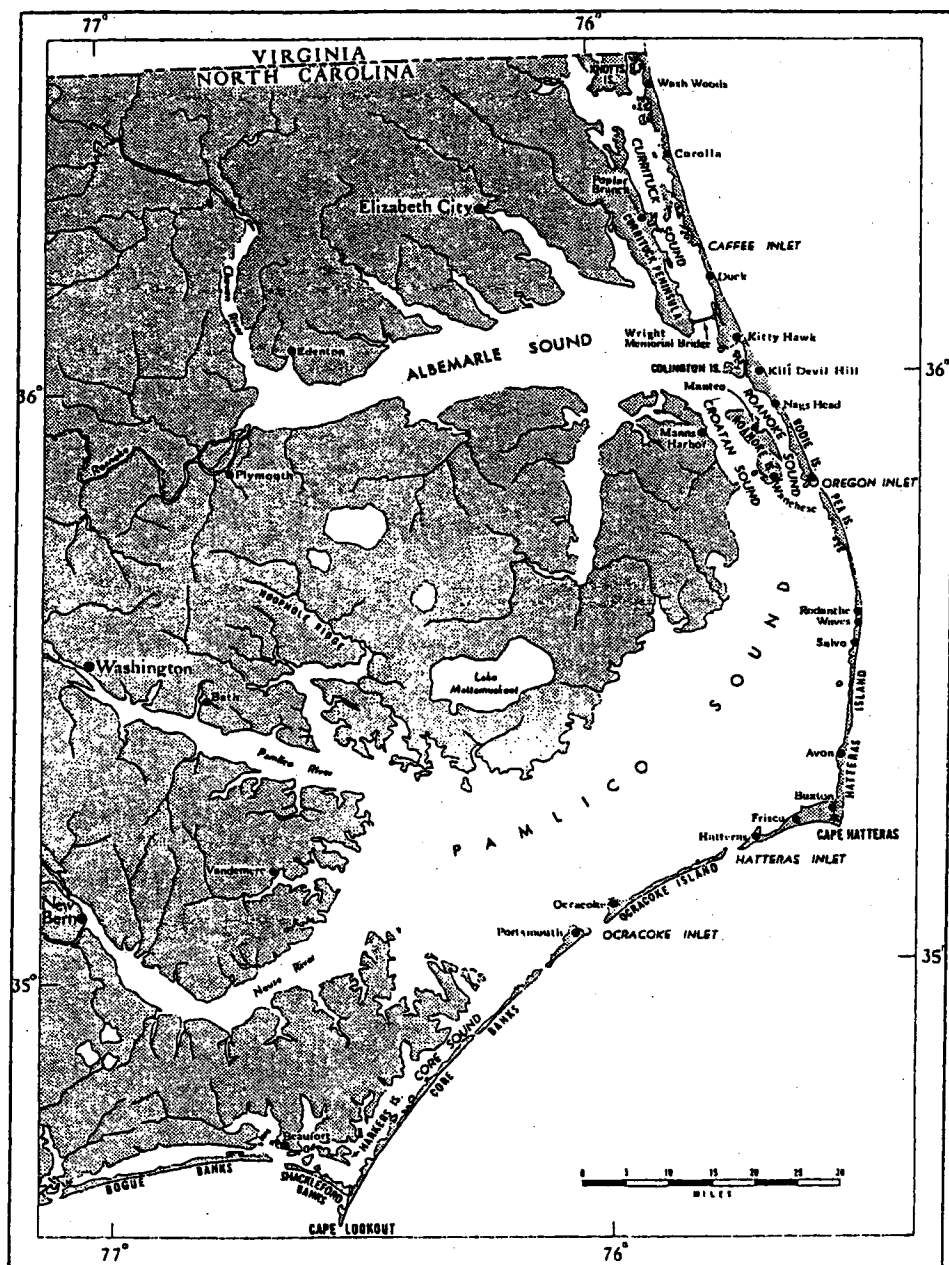
approximately twelve miles north of Little Kinnekut Shoal. All the crew members safely made it ashore, while only nineteen of the horses did. Once ashore the men and horses marched the fifteen miles down the beach to Hatteras Inlet on foot.

Also a less significant vessel the coal transport *T.P. Larned* sunk on January 13. Scant records exist regarding the construction of or the circumstances surrounding the vessel's sinking.

## APPENDIX B MAPS



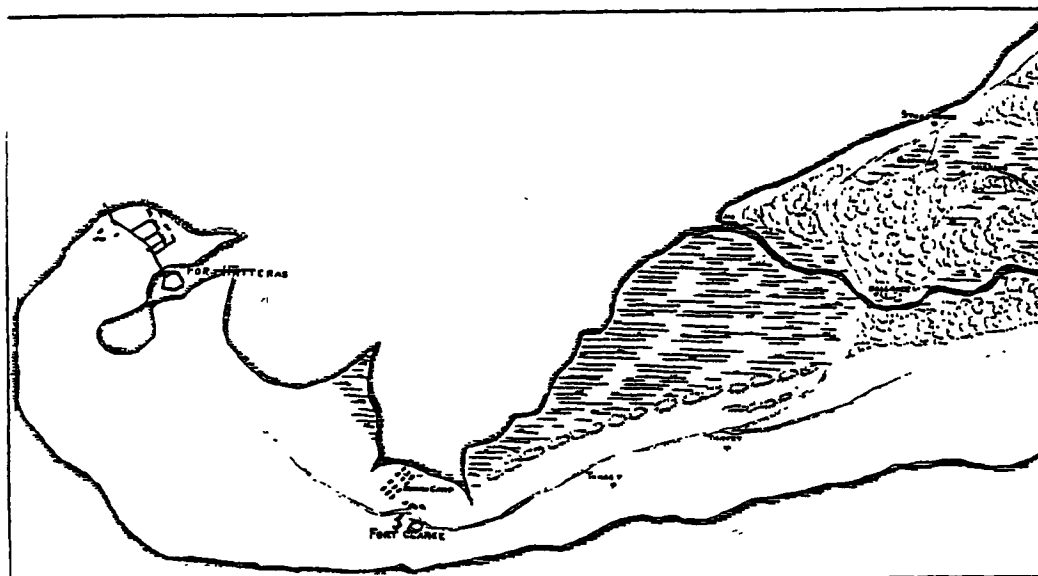
Map 1. Map of historic North Carolina inlets.  
 From Fred Mallison, "Ocracoke and Portsmouth Islands in the Civil War"  
 (unpublished M.A. thesis East Carolina University, 1994), 163; original  
 source uncited in Mallison's work.



Map 2. Map of eastern North Carolina's waters.  
 From Gary S. Dunbar, *Historical Geography of the North Carolina Outer Banks* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 4.

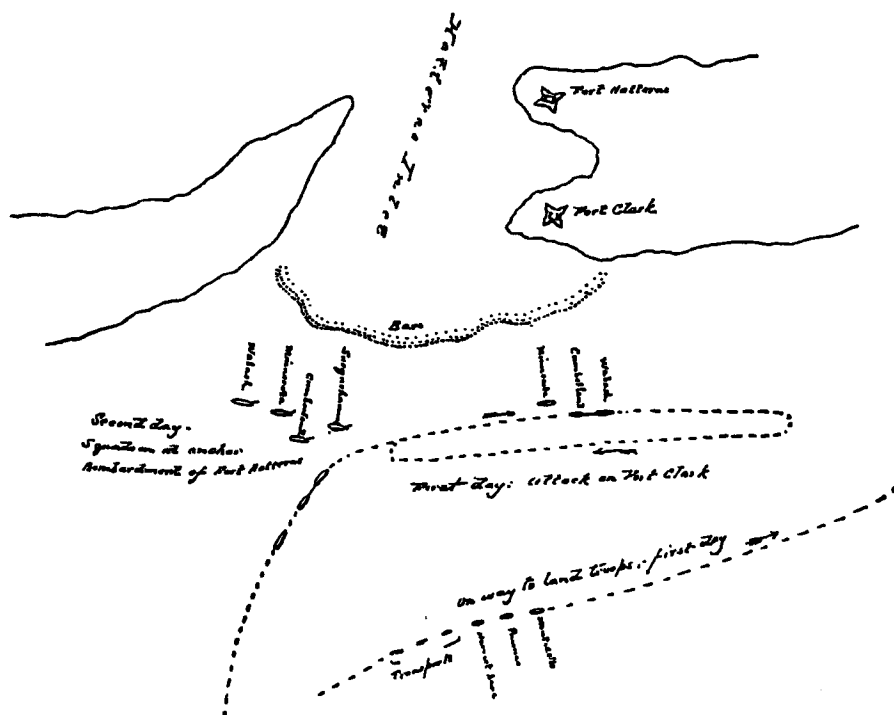


Map 3. Civil War forts on the Outer Banks.  
 From David Stick, *The Outer Banks of North Carolina 1584-1958* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 123.



Map 4. Map of Hatteras Island.

From "Map of Part of Hatteras Island" 1864, by Capt. F.U. Farquhar, Chief Engineer, Dept. of Va. and N.C., and Pvt. Solon Allis, Co. K, 27<sup>th</sup> Mass. Map No. 143-23, National Archives.



Map 5. Plan of attack on Forts Hatteras and Clark, August 28 and 29, 1861, this map is not geographically correct (see above map for correct positioning of forts).

From David Dixon Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: Sherman, 1886), 48.