

Braswell, Peggy Jo Cobb. HALIFAX COUNTY: THE CIVIL WAR YEARS. (Under the direction of Dr. William N. Still, Jr.) Department of History, April 1984.

The purpose of this study is to observe the political, social, economic, military, and naval impact of the American Civil War on Halifax County, North Carolina.

The development of political thought in the county is traced from its early roots based on the concept of state rights. Attention is focused on the complex feelings of the 1850's which determined Halifax County, despite an extremely large slave population, to favor remaining in the Union. Even into the year 1860 secessionists had not gained control of political leadership within the county.

The population make-up of Halifax County and the social influences that governed it were representative of a number of surrounding counties. Although data specifically deal with Halifax County, an effort has been made to portray the county as a typical example of northeastern North Carolina during the mid-nineteenth century.

Geography has dictated the economic development of Halifax County. The single navigable river, the Roanoke, played a key role in the early transportation of goods and development of towns. Agricultural differences, created by the meeting of the coastal plain and piedmont, resulted in two economic bases, cotton and tobacco. The increased movement of people (soldiers and refugees) through the county, especially along railroad routes, had far-reaching economic impacts on the

nature of agriculture and businesses developed throughout the war years.

Despite the constant fear of raids by the Union army, military activities centered largely on the supportive facilities of training camps, commissary stores, and subsistence trading. These activities have been described not only from the view of the Confederate government but also from the impact on the county's citizens.

Naval operations focused on development of vessels to clear and protect the Roanoke River and Albemarle Sound. The preservation of southern control allowed a vital railway, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, to operate until late in the war. Naturally attention has been paid to the career of the C.S.S. Albemarle, but research has also revealed a number of other vessels, either completed or begun, within this inland county.

The end of the war in Halifax County created a period of uncertainty and despair. Unsure of the future, suffering from the shock of defeat, loss of loved ones, and economic failure, the citizens awaited the course of reconstruction.

HALIFAX COUNTY
The Civil War Years

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

by
Peggy Jo Cobb Braswell

April 1984

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HALIFAX COUNTY

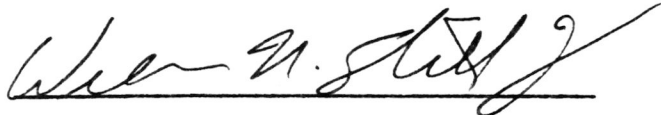
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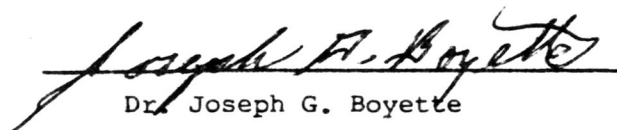
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INTRODUCTION

That from and immediately after the First Day of January next ensuing the said county of Edgecombe be divided by the dividing Line between the Parish of Edgecombe and the Parish of St. Mary; and that that Part of the said county which is now the Parish of St. Mary; remain, be called and known by the name of Edgecombe County, and that that Part of the said county which is now the Parish of Edgecombe, be there forth erected into one district County and called and known by the name of Halifax.¹

Thus stated, the county of Halifax, North Carolina, named for the Englishman George Montagu, Second Earl of Halifax, came into being in 1758.² Bounded by Northampton, Bertie, Martin, Nash, and Warren counties, Halifax is geographically situated on the division where the coastal plain and piedmont meet. An historically significant geographic feature, the Roanoke River, bounds the north. Climatic location of the county allows a growing season of approximately two hundred days. Soils of the region are especially suited for the growth of peanuts, soybeans, oats, corn, and pasture. Certain portions of the county are suited to cotton, vegetables, and tobacco.³

Remains left by early occupants are common finds along the stream beds and open fields. One entry in the journal of Mrs. Catherine Edmondston, who, along with her husband, resided on a plantation near the Roanoke, recorded finds of large shards of pottery after a spring

¹The State Records of North Carolina, XXIII, 496, cited by David Leroy Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 115, hereinafter cited as Corbitt, Formation of North Carolina Counties.

²Corbitt, Formation of North Carolina Counties, 114-115.

³William D. Lee, The Soils of North Carolina: Their Formation, Identification, and Use (North Carolina Agricultural Experimental Station, Technical Bulletin no. 115, Dec. 1955), 136.

flood. Her comment was, "One thing is certain, from the vast quantity of these pieces of pottery and the area over which they are thickly distributed, this country must in former days have supported a dense Indian population."⁴

The fertile lands of the county attracted numerous settlers by the mid-1700's. A navigable river, the Roanoke, allowed development of river trade to coastal waters and southeastern Virginia. Although the yeoman farmer was common throughout the antebellum Halifax County, large landholdings by a few families were well established by the mid-1800's.

The opening of the 1860's revealed Halifax County to be much like others in northeastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia, rural in nature and confused in thought. It is the intent of this study to observe the county as a workable portion of this entire region. Effort has been made to steer away from narrow, parochical topics and to focus on the role of the county in the broader aspect of North Carolina and United States history for the period of 1860-1865. The direction of the work will be to trace the social, economic, and political aspects of the county as well as the military and naval operations.

⁴Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton (eds.), Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston (Raleigh: Archives and History, 1979), 540, hereinafter cited as Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady.

PEOPLE AND POLITICS

The 1860 federal census determined the population of Halifax County to contain 6,641 whites.⁵ Of this number the public feeling was anything but unanimous for secession or war. An 1856 poet appears to reflect public opinion with his lines:

Though by birth one spot
be mine,
Dear is all the rest.⁶

Even those inclined toward separation, such as the prominent lawyer's wife, Mary Wyatt Conigland, who harbored "no love for the north," shied away from the concept of war.⁷ It was this unwillingness to be fire-eater secessionists that led Northern invaders, especially General William T. Sherman, to anticipate a wave of loyal unionism from the people of North Carolina.⁸

⁵ Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Halifax County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Eighth Census, 1860; Rosser Howard Taylor, Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View, James Sprunt Historical Publication, Vol. 18, nos. 1-2 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 63, hereinafter cited as Taylor, Slaveholding.

⁶ Roanoke Republican, Halifax, February, 1856.

⁷ Mary Wyatt Conigland to Edward Conigland, February 2, 1861, Edward Conigland Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Conigland Papers. A brief sketch of Edward Conigland is provided in a manuscript history of Halifax County by S. S. Alsop, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Born in Ireland, Conigland came to the United States in 1834 and to Halifax on February 15, 1844. He first taught school in the home of Issac Falkland, from there he studied law and received his license to practice.

⁸ John G. Barrett, Sherman's March Through the Carolinas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 119-120, hereinafter cited as Barrett, Sherman's March Through the Carolinas.

What happened to alter the hesitance of these people to firm support for the Confederate cause? It is necessary to regress a moment in order to trace the development of political thought in Halifax County. Early in North Carolina's history the concept of state rights gained a firm foothold under the leadership of men such as Willie Jones of Halifax. Jones favored "an independent state democracy" with "fraternal lines" which allowed the states to co-exist. This position, set forth in the 1780's, remained the backbone of popular thought in Halifax County for a number of years.⁹ National events such as the nullification issue in South Carolina and Nat Turner's Revolt in Virginia (but a short distance from Halifax County) tended to increase the acceptance of state rights¹⁰ and create within North Carolina identification with fellow Southern states.¹¹

Whig control of state politics maintained connection with "federal principles,"¹² but as early as the 1840's Whig meetings expressed distress at Northern interest in the slavery issue.¹³ By November 28,

⁹ Henry McGilbert Wagstaff, States Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina 1776-1861, Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Sciences, Series XXIV, nos. 7-8 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), 15, hereinafter cited as Wagstaff, States Rights.

¹⁰ Wagstaff, States Rights, 54.

¹¹ Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina, James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science, Vol. 23, no. 2 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 21, hereinafter cited as Sitterson, Secession Movement.

¹² Wagstaff, States Rights, 54.

¹³ Sitterson, Secession Movement, 40. This is also based on a survey of the Raleigh Register from December 1847 to February 1848.

1850 Andrew Joyner, a Whig of Halifax County, was pushing acceptance of the Compromise of 1850, but at the same time he argued the existence of the right of revolution when a government became "unbearable."¹⁴

As political agitation mounted, Whigs in North Carolina lost control of state government to the Democrats¹⁵ and, refusing to be absorbed by the upcoming Republican party, moved into the American (Know-Nothing) party.¹⁶ According to leading scholars, the slavery issue became the guiding force of politics. The Dred Scott decision, statehood of Kansas, John Brown's raid, and literature, such as native North Carolinian Hinton Rowan Helper's The Impending Crisis of the South, increased public awareness of national issues.¹⁷ Laws were passed in North Carolina concerning literature that might influence a slave revolt and threaten the southern way of life.¹⁸

In preparation for the presidential election of 1860, the Democratic state convention for North Carolina was held. According to reporters of the Tarboro Southerner, the key theme was that the Democratic party was the "only one that can save the country, and secure the blessings of a Constitutional Union." Delegates from Halifax County represented the larger landholders and businessmen including Colonel N. M.

¹⁴Sitterson, Secession Movement, 76.

¹⁵Wagstaff, States Rights, 70.

¹⁶Wagstaff, States Rights, 94.

¹⁷Wagstaff, States Rights, 106; Sitterson, Secession Movement, 146-147.

¹⁸Wagstaff, States Rights, 59.

Long, G. W. Barnes, John W. Johnson, W. D. Faucett, J. H. Prince, N. Bobbitt, Major E. A. Pearson, H. A. Macon, J. H. Ponton, James S. Snow, Dr. M. W. Whitaker, R. A. Watson, Jos. H. Whitaker, and Thos. W. Harris.¹⁹ In an open political letter, Lawrence O'Bryan Branch, a native of the county, expressed favor of Southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge on the grounds that "He is a friend to the Union of the states" but determined to "preserve their equality also."²⁰ Mass meetings were called throughout Halifax County in support of the Breckinridge/Lane ticket. Speakers, barbeques, and pole raisings were the order of the day with supporters of John Bell and the Constitutional Union party denounced as abolitionists.²¹

Earlier efforts to influence political thought included an 1859 notice in the Weldon newspaper which heralded the publishing of the first issue of the Union Democrat under editor C. C. Nicholson. This work, which Weldon's North Carolina Patriot wished "pecuniary success," was to advocate the democratic principles. The Patriot itself was of the opinion that "Democracy is the worst enemy slavery and the South have ever had."²²

¹⁹Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 11, March 17, 1860.

²⁰Lawrence O'B. Branch Scrapbook 1846-1861, Raleigh newspapers July 29, 1860, Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, Durham, NC, hereinafter cited as Branch Scrapbook.

²¹Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 35, Sept. 1, 1860; Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 37, Sept. 15, 1860; Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 9, 38, Sept. 22, 1860; Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 39, Sept. 29, 1860.

²²Weldon, North Carolina Patriot, August 10, 1859. No issues of the Union Democrat were located.

The end result of the 1860 presidential elections determined Halifax County to be split on the various Democratic platforms. John C. Breckinridge received 757 votes; John Bell, 546; and Stephen A. Douglas, 22.²³

Despite the efforts of leading county Democrats toward maintenance of the Union, secession was far from being a dead subject in the area. Not to be outdone by their revolutionary forefathers at Halifax, a spirited group of citizens from Halifax, Edgecombe, Martin, and Bertie counties met at Palmyra, a river-side community in Halifax on October 14, 1860. According to a participant, A. P. Hyman, secretary of the convention, "debate waxed fast and furious with the final motion being the unanimous acceptance of a resolution of secession."²⁴ The seriousness of the citizens can be seen from the early raising of local troops²⁵ and the presence of cannons in the county. As early as the summer of 1859 the citizens of Scotland Neck had empowered a prominent merchant, William G. Biggs, to "Buy or borrow" a cannon for the town. His appeal to Governor John Ellis was for a two pounder from the state arsenal

²³ John L. Cheney, ed., North Carolina Government 1585-1979: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: Department of Secretary of State, 1981), 1330, hereinafter cited as Cheney, North Carolina Government.

²⁴ "First Act Toward Secession," The State, Vol. XII, no. 40, March 3, 1945, pp. 4-5.

²⁵ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 3.

and "one that will not burst."²⁶ Ads in the Patriot called for "veteran sons of Mars" desiring equipment of any description to shop in Weldon.²⁷

The election of Abraham Lincoln was not considered possible by at least one Halifax County resident. Mrs. Edmondston had no fear that a man like Lincoln or Stephen Douglas would ever occupy the White House.²⁸ Her family well represented the emotional struggle of choosing sides. Her parents and particularly her sister had little patience with anti-union feelings and were of the opinion that Lincoln had good intentions.²⁹ These views greatly distressed Mrs. Edmondston, her husband and in-laws being from South Carolina. She recorded it was "painful to go to Father's we differ so widely."³⁰ To her, by March 1861 the flag of the United States was "but a striped Rag!"³¹ Even her Charleston-born husband, Patrick, did not share her militant fire, remarking most prophetically on hearing the news of South Carolina's secession that it was the "beginning of the end."³²

²⁶ Noble J. Tolbert, ed. The Papers of John Wills Ellis (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1964), II, 277, hereinafter cited as Tolbert, Ellis Papers. The actual presence of artillery is verified by the firing of cannon to celebrate the election of W. H. Smith to the House of Representatives in 1859. Weldon Patriot, August 10, 1859.

²⁷ Weldon, North Carolina Patriot, August 10, 1859.

²⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 10; 14.

²⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 11; 16; 33; 35; 41.

³⁰ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 38.

³¹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 46.

³² Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 24.

Another family with divided feelings was that of Edward Conigland. As indicated earlier, his wife Mary was an "ardent secessionist" while he wrote that he hated to see the end of the "best government the world ever saw."³³ Conigland was numbered among the conditional unionists of Halifax County along with Dr. Henry Joyner and Richard H. Smith. It was the intention of this group to exhaust all compromise before considering secession.³⁴ They firmly believed that the sole issue of slavery would not "unite the masses" but once the "doctrine of force" was used there would be a Southern Confederacy.³⁵ This theory was supported by public action when, even after the defeat of Breckinridge and the secession of South Carolina, an attempt in December 1860 failed to call for a state convention to consider North Carolina's action. On February 28, 1861 a compromise bill called for the election of delegates to a possible convention.³⁶ The general feeling of the North Carolina public was evidenced by the election of forty-two secessionists, twenty-eight conditional unionists, and fifty unconditional unionist delegates. The elections assured the failure of the proposed

³³Conigland to wife, Mary, April 16, 1861, Conigland Papers.

³⁴Sitterson, Secession Movement, 197; 217.

³⁵C. B. Harrison to Lawrence Branch, December 2, 1860, Branch Scrapbook. A native of Halifax County, Branch spent most of his political life in Warren County. Sitterson, Secession Movement, 191.

³⁶John Gilchrist McCormick, Personnel of the Convention of 1861, James Sprunt Historical Monographs, no. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1900), 5, hereinafter cited as McCormick, Personnel of Convention.

convention. Surprisingly, Halifax County with over one half the population slave, voted conditional union.³⁷

Despite the cautious attitude of North Carolina prior to Fort Sumter, Lincoln's call for state troops was interpreted as coercion. Anti-union action swiftly followed Governor Ellis' reply, "you can get no troops from North Carolina."³⁸ On May 13, 1861 delegates were elected to attend a secession convention on May 20. Representatives from Halifax County were Dr. Charles J. Gee, Littleberry W. Batchelor, and Richard H. Smith.

Dr. Charles James Gee (1837-1892) was a native of Halifax County. Educated in the field of medicine, he received his degree in 1852 and established a practice in Weldon. After serving in the Secession Convention, he became surgeon of the First Regiment of North Carolina troops until 1862. At this time he was appointed to the staff of General Stephen Ramseur and remained there until the war's end. In private life he was a planter and organizer of the Roanoke and Tar River Agricultural Society.³⁹

Littleberry Watts Batchelor (1823-1885) was also a native of the county and educated in medicine. In addition to his medical practice,

³⁷Sitterson, Secession Movement, 223-224; Wagstaff, States Rights, 134.

³⁸McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 6; Sitterson, Secession Movement, 240; Wagstaff, States Rights, 148.

³⁹McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 6.

he served as Justice of Peace, a member of county court, and was an ardent believer in state rights and the right of secession.⁴⁰

Richard Henry Smith (1810-1893) was born in Scotland Neck, North Carolina. He studied law and maintained a small practice but directed his energies toward farming. Serving in the House of Commons in 1852 and 1854, and later a member of the Convention of 1865, Smith had been hopeful of a peaceful solution to national problems. However, with the election of Lincoln he felt war was at hand.⁴¹

The delegates met in four sessions, adjourning May 13, 1862.⁴² Even so, during the initial meeting on May 20, 1861 debate was short. The issue discussed was not whether to secede or not but the political theory of the right of revolution versus the right "to withdraw from the union at will."⁴³ Based on the ordinance of 1789 in which North Carolina ratified the constitution, it now declared her connection with the union dissolved.⁴⁴ After the unanimous vote by fire eaters and conservatives alike, the convention ratified the provisional government and constitution of the Confederate States of America.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 16-17.

⁴¹ McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 76.

⁴² Cheney, North Carolina Government, 824; McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 6.

⁴³ Wagstaff, States Rights, 150.

⁴⁴ Sitterson, Secession Movement, 246.

⁴⁵ Cheney, North Carolina Government, 830-831; McCormick, Personnel of Convention, 8; Sitterson, Secession Movement, 247.

At this point even the faithful Conigland wrote his wife, "If the horde of Northern barbarians are to be called out to coerce the seceding states, I am ready to take the sword, to throw away the scabbard, and to die sustaining the resolve that a foot of theirs shall never pollute the soil of North Carolina."⁴⁶

The gubernatorial elections from 1858-1864 add further support to theory of divided political thought in Halifax County. In 1858 Democrat John W. Ellis received 721 votes to Distributionist Duncan K. MacRae's 401. Support for the pro-secessionist, Ellis, in 1860 was 788 to Whig John Pool's 595. The turnout at the polls in 1862 was down; Zebulon B. Vance (Democrat) received 451 votes to Republican William J. Johnston's 538. The 1864 swing toward support of Vance (or perhaps extreme dislike of William W. Holden, Republican) resulted in a return of 1,076 for the Democrat.⁴⁷ The writings of Mrs. Edmondston expressed disgust over the publicity Holden received. To her the trouble with the unionst was to be compared with a "storm in a teapot."⁴⁸ Voters from Halifax County evidently shared her views as only eight took him as a serious and desirable candidate.⁴⁹

Throughout the war the political interests of Halifax County were served at the state level by Senators Matthew Cary Whitaker (1858-1861) and Mason L. Wiggins (1862-1867). County members of the House were

⁴⁶ Conigland to wife, April 18, 1861, Conigland Papers.

⁴⁷ Cheney, North Carolina Government, 1400.

⁴⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 599.

⁴⁹ Cheney, North Carolina Government, 1400.

Archibald H. Davis (1860-1866); William B. Pope (1860-1866); and Dr. Henry W. Joyner (1862-1864, 1864-1866).⁵⁰

In terms of the Confederate government, early opinion in the county seemed to agree with Mrs. Edmonston's desire to have a gentleman such as Jefferson Davis serve as president.⁵¹ Few leaders escaped comment from her pen. Opposite Mrs. Edmonston's opinion of Davis as a "wise ruler and Christian gentleman" who should "command the respect and admiration of the world"⁵² was her disgust of Secretary of Navy Stephen Russell Mallory's "stupid wrong headedness."⁵³ By 1864 she voiced the criticisms of many in proclaiming Congress had passed another "foolish bill," one to allow imports of gold braid and stars for uniforms but not laces, silks, cotton, linen, or dolls (necessities!?) and forbidding the export of cotton, tobacco, and rice.⁵⁴ Other venomous attacks were made on the "weak and imbecile" Congress and their role in the suspension of the act of Habeas Corpus; and acts concerning taxes, currency, and conscription.⁵⁵ Further discussion of these measures and their effect on the county will be discussed in the following appropriate chapters.

⁵⁰Cheney, North Carolina Government, 1156-11157; Journal of the House of Representatives of North Carolina, 1860-1865; Journal of the Senate of North Carolina, 1860-1865; North Carolina Standard, XXX no. 38, whole no. 1540, November 30, 1864.

⁵¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 40.

⁵²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 431.

⁵³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 422.

⁵⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 524.

⁵⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 529, 532.

Despite her written discontent with political leaders and measures, Mrs. Edmondston was quick to see the danger of public expressions in undermining the country.⁵⁶ However, by April of 1865 she was of the opinion the cause had been "sacrificed upon the altars of Bad Government and Bad Faith with the people."⁵⁷ Or in the less eloquent but equally effective tongue of her father's slave, "The Gov-ner ought to tell us I can't scuffle for you no longer. Now you scuffle for yourselves. Instead of that, young Missus, he leaves us and take all away wi' him!"⁵⁸

⁵⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 660.

⁵⁷Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 689.

⁵⁸Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 692.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF WARTIME HALIFAX COUNTY

The population make-up of Halifax County during the 1860's reveals that whites as a whole numbered slightly fewer than the combined free and slave black population.¹ Even so, political and economic control lay in the hands of the whites; therefore, social influence was largely the reflection of Anglo-Saxon values.

Education for the general public was based on the thirty-four common schools scattered throughout the county in the 1860's. These schools were supported by taxation and public funds, and were responsible for the education of 669 students. In addition to the common schools, private academies were operating in the county at this time. For males there was Vine Hill with sixty students and two teachers and Glenburning Academy with one teacher and thirteen students. A female seminary, Elba, operated in the western end of the county, serving thirty-six students with its three teachers.² According to recent research by Dr. Ralph Hardee Rives, Elba operated from 1856 to 1868 as a private boarding school. Courses of instruction in 1860 included

¹Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, Halifax County.

²Eighth Census, 1860; Social Statistics Schedule, no. 6, Halifax County. Student enrollment in 1860 was down from the 1850 census of 750 pupils at thirty-two common schools. There was an increase in private schools during the decade as the 1850 survey shows only one female academy with fifteen students and one teacher. Seventh Census, 1850, Social Statistics Schedule, no. 6. Raleigh Register, Wednesday, November 1, 1862; this edition noted the distribution of school funds for Halifax County by the President and Director of the Literary Fund. With a population listing of 15,301 the fall distribution was for \$1,778.31, with \$75.00 to be deducted for George L. Jones as a result of blindness.

rhetoric, algebra, logic, grammar, geometry, botany, ancient geography, chemistry, history, arithmetic, French, Latin, Greek, music, painting, drawing, and penmanship. Young girls often boarded at the home of Dr. L. W. Batchelor, a local minister. The principal of the seminary, Reverend Jesse H. Page, served both Elba and Halifax Male academies.

The Halifax Male Academy operated between 1855 and 1868 in the Brinkleyville area near Elba. Organized and operated by Reverend William Henry Wills, D.D., a Methodist minister, the school opened in his home, "Rocky Hill."³ The Vine Hill Academy operated in the Scotland Neck area. An advertisement for this academy appeared as early as 1810 in a Wilmington, North Carolina paper. Burned and rebuilt in 1832, the school continued operation through the Civil War under Professor Fred Fetter, formerly associated with the University of North Carolina.⁴

A letter written in 1862 requested information from Matthew C. Whitaker concerning his sister's school. Evidently recently opened, the school offered board and tuition for twenty weeks at \$60.00. This fee included standard education such as English classes; however,

³"Cities and Towns: Littleton," Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC, hereinafter cited as Littleton File; Ralph Hardee Rives Papers, articles concerning Elba Seminary and Halifax Male Academy, East Carolina University Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC, hereinafter cited as Ralph Hardee Rives Papers. The 1860 schedule does not specifically list Halifax Male Academy. However, Dr. Rives has done extensive research in the field of Halifax County academies.

⁴"Scotland Neck," Halifax County File, Halifax, NC, hereinafter cited as Scotland Neck File; this reference is taken from an article in the Scotland Neck Commonwealth, no date.

additional funds were necessary for instruction in Latin (\$10.00), French (\$10.00), Drawing (\$10.00), and Piano (\$20.00).⁵

Higher education was rare to county citizens. In 1860 eleven persons were listed as students in institutions of higher learning. Of this number only two females were fortunate enough to attend college. Fifteen-year-old Margaret B. Hawkins attended Wayne Female College and fourteen-year-old Lucy B. Day was a student at Greensboro College. Institutions listed by their male counterparts included the University of North Carolina, George College, Trinity, and William and Mary.⁶

An example of the well-educated female of the 1860's would be Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston. As noted in the previous chapter, the Edmondstons were plantation owners along the Roanoke River. Foreseeing the importance of the national conflict, Catherine Edmondston maintained a journal throughout the war years, confiding to her pages that "the War which is the death knell to so many others is your life. . . ."⁷ It is through this revealing document that the person of Mrs. Edmondston can be studied. She recorded that her education consisted of attendance at a girls school in Belmont, Virginia and had continued with the daily reading of newspapers⁸ and books. Of books she stated, "I fear I am a woman of too many for proper digestion and

⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker to W. W. Brickley, February 3, 1862, Meade Whitaker Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁶ Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule.

⁷ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 290.

⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 93.

reflection."⁹ The entries in her journal make constant references and allegories to heroics of the past, i.e., Greek mythology, the Armada, and Napoleon Bonaparte.¹⁰ Works of poetry appear a favorite reading subject as lines and phrases dot her work.¹¹ Not so bold as to present her own poetic stanzas to the world, she was frequently moved by the events of the war period to confide these thoughts to her journal in verse.¹² Unfortunately, at the war's close she and her husband (a frequent contributor to various papers) burned a large number of personal letters, poetry, and writings to prevent "prying Yankee eyes" from seeing into a Southern home.¹³

For the average reader in Halifax County, newspapers and libraries provided reading material. The 1850 census reported two papers, the Roanoke Republican, and the Weldon Herald.¹⁴ However, the only paper listed in the 1860 survey was the Scotland Neck News, a weekly paper published in that town. Though county newspapers had decreased by 1860,

⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 343.

¹⁰ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 86, 94, 139, 179.

¹¹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 49, 87, 139, 199, 254, 593.

¹² Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 175, 227, 636-637. Besides the general works listed above, other poems include her reaction to the death of Confederate General A. S. Johnston, 148, and her outrage at Union Major General Benjamin Butler, 281. Later in the war her verses were pleas for peace and the end of destruction, 363, 511.

¹³ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 692, 697.

¹⁴ Seventh Census, 1850, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

one public and three private libraries, consisting of approximately 1,000 volumes each, helped fill the reading needs of the citizens.¹⁵ one such private library was the Roanoke Literary Society organized in Weldon in 1852. The society constructed a two-story building; the lower floor was rented out to merchants and the second story housed the cased volumes as well as magazines and periodicals of the era. During the war years, the Literary Hall served as a church to citizens and soldiers stationed nearby. The traffic of the soldiers, who also enjoyed the liberty of relaxing in the Hall, badly damaged the building and the majority of the volumes were lost or destroyed. The final result of this rough treatment was the decline and eventual cessation of the society.¹⁶

As with most rural areas of the period, social life centered around the numerous churches in the county. One of this country's earliest Baptist associations, the Kehukee, was formed in the county near Scotland Neck in 1765. This association consisted of churches in Edgecombe, Warren, Bertie, and Camden counties and on the Kehukee and Fishing Creeks in Halifax County.¹⁷ The early Kehukee church had been

¹⁵ Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

¹⁶ "Fragile Bits and Pieces," Roanoke News, September 25, 1975, Weldon, NC, hereinafter cited as Roanoke News; "Fragile Bits and Pieces," Roanoke News, October 2, 1975. This account was taken from an early, September 17, 1902, article by Mrs. Ida Wilkins. Mrs. Wilkins was a Weldon resident during the Civil War period.

¹⁷ Elder Cushing Biggs Hassell and Elder Sylvester Hassell, History of the Church of God from Creation--AD 1885; including especially The History of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association (Middletown, NY: Gilbert Beebe's Sons, 1886), 662, hereinafter cited as Hassell

formed in 1742.¹⁸ The association evolved into a Primitive Baptist group, which opposed the use of Sunday schools and missions.¹⁹ This stand resulted in the split of Baptists concerning doctrine. The 1860 social statistic schedule clearly separated the Missionary Baptists, with one organized church, from the Primitive Baptists, with two churches.²⁰ Nationwide, the sectional crisis over slavery resulted in the separation of northern and southern Baptists and the establishment of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.²¹

The Primitive Baptists would later maintain that the event of war did not weaken their church. Meeting in Halifax in 1865 to celebrate their centennial year, the elders insisted that, unlike the other denominations, including Free Will and Missionary Baptists, the Primitive Baptists had fought only in self-defense and to the best of anyone's knowledge "met no Primitive Baptist in Federal Rank." Supposedly the northern Primitive Baptist paid to stay out of the army or refused to fight and at war's end northern and southern Primitives "flew to each other's arms." This reasoning led to the belief that, since other denominations had actively fought against one another, they could not

and Hassell, Church of God. This date is disputed in George Washington Paschal's History of North Carolina Baptists. According to him, the Kehukee Association was organized November 6, 1769 (p. 454, Vol. II).

¹⁸ M. A. Huggins, A History of North Carolina Baptists 1792-1937 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Co., 1967), 214, hereinafter cited as Huggins, North Carolina Baptists.

¹⁹ Huggins, North Carolina Baptists, 215.

²⁰ Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

²¹ Huggins, North Carolina Baptists, 266.

possibly be the church of God since the kingdom of Christ cannot be divided. Therefore, the Primitive Baptists claimed to be "the visible kingdom of Christ."²²

The three county Baptist churches organized by 1860²³ were the Halifax Baptist Church formed in 1840,²⁴ Conoconary Church, and Bear Swamp Baptist Church. According to the memoirs of Blake Pittman (1816-1879), three buildings were raised for the Conoconary Church, the first dating prior to a 1763 prayer book in the Pittman family. The second building he recalled to be in a state of decay by 1848 and was replaced by a third which relocated the church at Crowell's Cross Roads a short distance away.²⁵ The Bear Swamp Baptist Church was located between Brinkleyville and Littleton. Organized in 1834, the church was briefly a member of the Kehukee Association, leaving to become a member of the Tar River Association. Initially, this church allowed blacks in worship services, but after the "Colored Bear Swamp Church" was built, black members were asked to join that church.²⁶

²²Hassell and Hassell, Church of God, 803-804.

²³The author assumes these are the same three churches that are listed in the Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

²⁴Randolph Haskins, "Halifax Baptist Church," 1954, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

²⁵Blake Pittman, "A Scrap of History: Old Conoconary Church," memoirs of Blake Pittman, October 7, 1816-July 12, 1879, typewritten by granddaughter Catherine Crowell Beasley, February 10, 1960, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

²⁶Mrs. Charles White, "History of Bear Swamp Baptist Church--Tar River Association," 1930, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

Methodists appear to have been more prominent throughout the county, the total number of Methodist churches in 1860 being twenty-three. Split over issues of church organization, a division was made between the fourteen Methodist Episcopal and the nine Methodist Protestant churches.²⁷ This schism centered around the more formal Methodist Episcopal organization under a bishop and the Methodist Protestant preference of congregational authority. In 1848 the Methodist Protestant association, the Roanoke Circuit, consisted of Eden, Union, Whitaker's Chapel, Bradford's Chapel (near Enfield), Corinth, Haywood's Chapel (near Halifax), Bellamy's School House, Bloomfield, Red Oak, Hickory, Tabernacle, and Dean's School House.

"One of the oldest Methodist churches in continuous operation in America," Eden was organized near Enfield as an Anglican Chapel circa 1760. By 1823 the church was associated with Methodism.²⁸ Built by the Whitaker family, Whitaker's Chapel was organized as an Anglican church in 1740 and became Methodist in 1823.²⁹ Reverend William Henry Wills, founder of Bethesda Methodist Church in 1853 near Brinkleyville, was greatly concerned over the split in northern and southern churches

²⁷ Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

²⁸ "Enfield," article by Ralph Hardee Rives, Daily Herald, February 15, 1976, Roanoke Rapids, NC, Halifax County Library Files, Halifax, NC, hereinafter cited as Enfield File.

²⁹ Enfield File, article by Ralph Hardee Rives, News and Observer, September 12, 1975, Raleigh, NC.

caused by slavery and he attended a Union Convention in Baltimore in the mid-1850's.³⁰

Several churches were begun in the Littleton area. Calvary Methodist, four miles from the town, holds an October 16, 1852 deed. The church was located in the original Gaston site. Also predating the Civil War are Corinth and Bethel.³¹ Bethel Church was begun in 1858 and completed in 1860. Of its three builders, General David Clark, Colonel D. C. Clark, and Colonel Antony Johnston, General Clark was to take active hand in the county's defense.³² The church was located near David Clark's summer home, "Prospect Hill," in Airlie. On the eastern side of the county, from "Ventosa," his three-story, eighteen-room, 4,000-acre estate on the Roanoke, General Clark helped organize the Methodist church at Scotland Neck in 1857. He also employed a Methodist minister to direct services for his family and slaves on his river plantation.³³

The "Old Methodist Church," the Halifax Methodist Episcopal Church in Halifax, was organized in 1856. Until building its own structure,

³⁰Enfield File, article by Ralph Hardee Rives, Daily Herald, February 15, 1976, Roanoke Rapids, NC.

³¹"Littleton: Methodist Churches," Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC, hereinafter cited as Littleton: Methodist Churches.

³²"Littleton: Methodist Churches," article by Mrs. John Harrison, Littleton. News Reporter, 1917.

³³Scotland Neck File, taken from Aubrey Lee Brooks, Walter Clark, Fighting Judge, 3; Scotland Neck File, "History of Scotland Neck Methodist Church, by C. Franklin Grill.

the church, like other denominations in the area, used the "Colonial Church" in the Colonial Cemetery at Halifax.³⁴

The memoirs of an early church member, Ida T. Wilkins, recorded the organization of the Weldon Methodist Church to be in 1854. She noted the visits of Reverend J. Hunt, a minister sent by the Roanoke Circuit to serve the area blacks. She also recalled the use of the church building for daily school taught under the superintendent of Sunday school, a Northerner, Miss Ricker.³⁵

In the middle of the county, Smith's Chapel or Smith's Methodist Church was organized circa 1797. Named for land owner William Smith, the church contained a gallery for black worshippers. At least one soldier, G. A. Green, took a night's refuge in the building during the Civil War.³⁶ Also in the county was a site of numerous camp meetings, Pierce's Campground Methodist Church, built in 1856.³⁷

Besides Methodist and Baptist denominations, two Episcopalian churches were listed in the 1860 survey.³⁸ Old Trinity Episcopal Church

³⁴"Halifax: Old Methodist Church," Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

³⁵Sarah Campbell, ed., Membership Directory and History of Weldon Methodist Church (Weldon, 1959), 3, hereinafter cited as Campbell, Weldon Methodist Church.

³⁶Mrs. Waverly W. Pearson, "History of Smith's Methodist Church 1791-1949," 1949, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

³⁷"Pierce's Campground," article in Daily Herald, April 12, 1962, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

³⁸Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

was organized in Scotland Neck circa 1732 and was in its third building by 1854.³⁹ In Halifax the small parish of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church was organized in 1853 and consecrated October 28, 1855.⁴⁰

Although church activities were the center of social life for all county citizens, the wealthier members of society often engaged in private parties. Examples of organized social functions are a party given by Elba Female Seminary⁴¹ and a ball at the William's Hotel in Halifax on February 25 and 26, 1864.⁴² The excitement of war also created social events. Many Halifax County companies left for training camps and battlefields in grand style, having been presented battleflags by local ladies and entertained with parties. An example of this was the "brilliant military ball" held at Vine Hall Male Academy in honor of the Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen. This gala event included all the local companies.⁴³

³⁹ Scotland Neck File, article in This Week, July 27, 1978.

⁴⁰ Mrs. Nelle Hayes (Quentin) Gregory, "History of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church," 1955, Halifax County Library File, Halifax, NC.

⁴¹ Ralph Hardee Rives Papers, card to party Elba Female Seminary.

⁴² Notice of Ball, February 25 and 26, 1864, Sallie A. Smith Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴³ John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 19, hereinafter cited as Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 3, 11; Tarboro Southerner, Vol. 2, no. 22, June 2, 1860; Tarboro Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 44, November 3, 1860.

More spontaneous activities in this rural county included hunting, fishing, and visits to nearby towns. The Roanoke River, particularly the area near Weldon, serves as the spawning site for the Roccus saxatilis or rockfish. The return of the fish, the rock-run, in the spring was eagerly anticipated by the sportsman and cook alike. An account by Private James M. Mullen, Company A, Thirteenth North Carolina Battalion, is one of the earliest references to the event of "rock season." In his report, Private Mullen attempted to remove a number of fish from a slide located on the water's edge.⁴⁴ Slides were one of the unique methods area fishermen used to trap the incoming fish.

Once war began, the martial spirit of the people was quick to take shape. In late April 1861 the hanging of a man in Weldon for the mere suspicion of being an abolitionist sympathizer was barely prevented.⁴⁵ Despite obvious differences in the characters of Southern soldiers, the romantic idea of the times suggested that the major difference in Northern and Southern armies was that the Southern was composed of gentlemen while the Northern was of "riff-raff."⁴⁶ The spirit and determination of the people of Halifax was applauded in a letter

⁴⁴Walter Clark, ed., Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65 (Raleigh and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 5 volumes, 1901), V, 274-275, hereinafter cited as Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments.

⁴⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 54.

⁴⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 72.

to the governor concerning readiness of community action against invading armies should the occasion arise.⁴⁷

Attachment to the county appears to have run deep, as evidenced by the return of citizens long removed from the area. The poet James Frederick Simmons, born in Halifax on December 19, 1826, served as a prominent judge in Mississippi, moving there in the early 1840's. He returned briefly in 1847 and attempted to publish a newspaper in Weldon. After its failure he purchased a flour mill and was also employed as a depot agent of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. In 1860 he sold out and moved back to Mississippi only to return in 1862 to volunteer and serve in a North Carolina regiment during the war. After serving his native state, Simmons once again turned southward to Mississippi.⁴⁸ Another native, William Whitaker had traveled west and settled in California. He, too, answered the call to arms in support of his home county.⁴⁹

Nowhere was the support and determination of the people more prevalent than in the women's efforts on the homefront. Naturally, letters containing news of home, family, and advice were common contributions to cheer the soldiers at the front. To her brothers at Fort

⁴⁷ Richard H. Smith to Henry T. Clark, February 14, 1862, Governors Papers, Henry T. Clark, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Governors Papers, Clark.

⁴⁸ James Frederick Simmons Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

⁴⁹ William Whitaker Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

Caswell, North Carolina, Ellen Norman sent medical advice: red pepper poultices or red pepper and sage tea for the bowels and two or three tablespoons of peppermint as an "infallible remedy" for dysentery.⁵⁰

Contributions also took the form of equipment, supplies, and food. A fancily decorated note accompanied forty pairs of socks intended for needy soldiers.⁵¹ Mrs. Edmondston's journal carefully recorded contributions by her family and neighbors. Early in the war, her role was largely one of supervisor, such as the purchase of gray wool for uniforms and tents which she directed the Negro women in making.⁵² She noted the willingness of women to aid in making clothing and working in hospitals,⁵³ and as the war progressed, her own hands, unused to toil, took part.⁵⁴ Often the Edmondstons would remember a friend at a nearby camp with a basket of delicacies,⁵⁵ or entertain soldiers

⁵⁰ Ellen Norman to brothers S. B. and J. E. Hunter, June 24, 1862, Hunter-Wills Family Papers, East Carolina University Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC.

⁵¹ Alice A. Bryan note, John T. Gregory Papers, folder C, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

⁵² Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 57, 60.

⁵³ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 87; Richard William Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes: Nine Crucial Months December 1860-August 1861" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1968), 533, hereinafter cited as Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes."

⁵⁴ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 305, 307, 314. Mrs. Edmondston's handiwork included lapping cloth for pants, knitting gloves and socks, and converting table covers into material for clothes.

⁵⁵ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 275, 312, 474.

passing their house.⁵⁶ Even though she was generous to all, Mrs. Edmondston liked to maintain her social position. On one occasion seven soldiers passed enroute to Wilmington and, though she wrote her heart "warms to them," they were housed in the overseer's house and she trusted "both parties like the separation."⁵⁷

Attention was also given to medical needs as linen and cottons for bandages were sent to the front.⁵⁸ A nephew, mortally wounded, resulted in the Edmondstons visiting him in Richmond. This trip began a series of future contributions to the Virginia hospitals in the form of whatever supplies the Edmondstons could gather.⁵⁹ A wounded soldier whose family was behind enemy lines in Tennessee, was forced to recuperate at his sister's residence in Halifax County. The Edmondstons, knowing the financial situation of the sister, decided to provide for all his wants.⁶⁰ The Edmondstons were not alone in their efforts to minister to the needy. One committee, formed of area citizens, left Weldon in July 1862 to tend the wounded then pouring into Richmond.⁶¹

⁵⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 448, 665; Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 530.

⁵⁷Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 325.

⁵⁸Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 210. Mrs. Edmondston recorded this as her third shipment of linen.

⁵⁹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 522, 542. One shipment included thirty-eight dozen eggs at \$1.00 a dozen, \$25.00 came from neighbors' contributions.

⁶⁰Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 487.

⁶¹William B. Pope to Annie Biddle Pope, July 3, 1862, Annie Biddle Pope Papers, Duke University Library, Manuscript Department, Durham, NC.

The presence of war was not always a distant thing for citizens of Halifax County. According to Mrs. Edmonston, the raids and rumors of raids created a "terrible state to live in," one in which "expectations and anxiety unsettle and destroy one's peace of mind."⁶² Ever mindful of the proximity of the railroads and river, plans were made in which citizens would be called on to fell trees, throw obstacles in the roads, burn bridges, and be prepared to move their harvested cotton twenty to thirty miles into the interior of the county and, if necessary, to burn it.⁶³ Threat of raids, real and imagined, called for individual plans also. For the Edmondstons, the ringing of the plantation bell and a horn blowing at the same time meant immediate evacuation.⁶⁴ Their valuables, clothes, silver, and books stayed packed and portions of each were moved into the interior of the county. Arrangements were made to transport slaves out of the reach of an approaching enemy. A rumor that five gunboats were ascending the river sent the Edmondstons fleeing their river home at Hascosea.⁶⁵ A number of journal entries record hearing cannon fire and fear of advancing enemies.⁶⁶ On May 14, 1864, as a result of a Union cavalry attack in

⁶² Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 443.

⁶³ H. K. Burgwyn to Clark, February 13, 1862, Governors Papers, Clark.

⁶⁴ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 115.

⁶⁵ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 179, 292.

⁶⁶ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 442, 443, 444, 547, 619, 659, 688; L. S. Baker to Zebulon B. Vance, August 25, 1864, Governors Letter Books, Zebulon B. Vance, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Governors Letter Books,

Northampton County, an entry read "Weldon people are flying in dismay and the countryside is alive with wild and improbable stories."⁶⁷

The safety of the county was a matter of degree for a number of people that sought refuge in the area. To them the threat of raids was much easier to handle than native citizens thought possible. The writings of Mrs. Edmondston took note of the newcomers to the area. Her father took in early refugees from Chowan County,⁶⁸ and she opened her home to displaced friends from Petersburg and other areas located behind Union lines.⁶⁹ Citizens of Tarboro took temporary refuge during raids on their town.⁷⁰

The war and its many problems did not completely destroy the humor of Patrick Edmondston. In the face of various demands the war had made on all, he addressed a letter to a young friend of the family requesting all Southern women to sacrifice their hair for the cause and signed the note "Mr. Hairbald." His response was a package of false hair,

Vance. In his letter Baker requested forces of the state to confront a rumored Union ironclad headed up the Roanoke River.

⁶⁷ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 561; James L. Ousby to William Clay Ousby, November 7, 1862, William Clay Ousby Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. James had assumed responsibility of his brother's affairs and wrote him of the threat of raids. He commented on the scare of the people and how families and Negroes were being moved out of Halifax. James, himself, considered renting a farm near Oxford to remove his and his brother's slaves.

⁶⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 117.

⁶⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 489, 597, 693.

⁷⁰ Bettie Dickens to Mrs. Bell, August 22, 1863, William Eaton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

to which Mr. Hairbald promptly had the secretary of the association for collecting hair, Mr. James Mohair, to send a sincere thank you along with braided "Native growth" (horse hair and cow tails) as an "hair loom."⁷¹

As stated previously, the white population of Halifax County controlled the social and political nature of the county. However, the large black population and its influence and effects on the county cannot be ignored. According to one authority, Halifax County had a large black population as early as 1789.⁷² By 1790 the average slaveholder in the county had 8.7 slaves.⁷³ The presence of the Roanoke River (especially after the completion of the Roanoke Canal) made the county a profitable one for raising and transporting crops. The result on the black population being the steady increase of slaves in the area. By 1860 the average slaveholding was 14.8, with a density of ten or more per square mile.⁷⁴

Besides the slave population's steady increase, Halifax contained one of the largest groups of free blacks in the state by 1800, approximately 623 people. By 1830 this number had tripled and was being considered a threat.⁷⁵ At this time there was no written discrimination

⁷¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 687.

⁷²Taylor, Slaveholding, 12.

⁷³Taylor, Slaveholding, 19.

⁷⁴Taylor, Slaveholding, 35-36, 50.

⁷⁵John Hope Franklin, The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943; Russell and Russell, 1969), 15-16, hereinafter cited as Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina.

of race in the North Carolina constitution or laws and Halifax polled between two hundred and three hundred free Negro voters.⁷⁶ The presence of such a large voting block that could determine county elections was used as an instrumental argument in the disenfranchisement of free blacks in 1835.⁷⁷

Despite limited rights, the number of free blacks in the county continued to increase. By 1860 there were 2,452.⁷⁸ Before the Civil War began, the right of the free Negro to own land was not questioned, and one black gentleman, David Reynold, reported owning and farming \$3,000 worth of land in the county. More frequently free tenants lived on land owned by whites.⁷⁹ An extract of John Hope Franklin's The Free Negro in North Carolina reveals various occupations of free Negroes in Halifax County in 1860 to be:

3 blacksmiths, 6 boatmen, 2 cake peddlers, 13 carpenters, 90 common laborers, 12 cooks, 1 cooper, 29 ditchers, 2 engineers, 384 farm hands, 175 farmers, 2 firemen, 5 fishermen, 15 masons, 2 mattress makers, 8 midwives, 4 millers, 2 miners, 1 nurse, 2 railroad hands, 1 seaman, 34 seamstresses, 2 servants, 1 shoemaker, 193 spinners, 1 tailor, 1 tanner, 5 timber hewers, 35 washerwomen, 22 weavers, 1 well digger, 2 wheel wrights, and 4 misc.⁸⁰

According to Dr. Franklin, North Carolina laws were not harsh for free Negroes and those in existence were often not enforced. Although he does not single out Halifax County in the following

⁷⁶ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 105-106.

⁷⁷ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 111-113.

⁷⁸ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 17.

⁷⁹ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 149-150.

⁸⁰ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 134.

quotation, it applies to the situation for most of the county: "The economic instability of the slave system, the unsettled state of economic and social life, the presence of a large yeoman class, and the inarticulateness of a predominately rural population go far in explaining the comparatively 'liberal' treatment of the free Negroes."⁸¹

Education of blacks for the period was poor at best. As noted in earlier discussions of various churches, some allowed the presence of blacks for services. In addition, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention of 1850 urged the establishment of schools for blacks. Revivals and meetings were usually separate from whites.⁸² Occasionally, a black would be ordained "preacher" by his owner and allowed to hold services, marry, and baptize among the black population.⁸³

Most often the role of teacher fell among the housekeeping duties of the plantation owner's wife. This instruction, technically against the law, often focused on religious teachings, a job Mrs. Edmondston found a "sore problem." She only consented to teach the basics of Christianity and then only to the very young.⁸⁴ Her opinion of the slavery issue was that "Cuffee" was more satisfied in bondage and in the "very best position he could occupy." Her banner was "Freedom for

⁸¹Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 225.

⁸²J. A. Whitted, A History of the Negro Baptist in North Carolina (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1908), 8-9, hereinafter cited as Whitted, Negro Baptist in North Carolina.

⁸³Whitted, Negro Baptist in North Carolina, 11.

⁸⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 21.

whites, slavery for negroes, God has so ordained it."⁸⁵ When the Confederate Congress passed the "negro bill," promising freedom to slaves volunteering service to the Confederacy, Mrs. Edmondston proclaimed the bill "vile" and declared her slaves were not subject to the act.⁸⁶

Washington Wills was one exception to the rule of poor education of blacks. Wills was the loyal slave of Reverend William Henry Wills, a Methodist minister, and served the family's sons in the Confederate army. His first duties were to George Wills and the letters concerning young Wills' death reveal the deep religious faith and also the mutual trust of the family. Washington Wills apparently traveled freely to and from his charges at the front. A letter in his own hand dealt with his duty to the youngest Wills, Edward, as he wrote his master of "mas Eddy's" safe passage from a recent battle. Although the spelling is unconventional, the letter is both readable and clear, attesting to a rudimentary education.⁸⁷

Not all relations between blacks and whites in the county were as cordial and trusting as the Wills'. Threats of insurrection surfaced as early as 1802.⁸⁸ Publication of works such as Walker's Appeal in Four Articles created such concern in 1830 that Governor John Owen

⁸⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 651.

⁸⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 686.

⁸⁷Randall M. Miller, ed., "It is good to be religious: A Loyal Slave on God, Master, and the Civil War," North Carolina Historical Review, LIV no. 1 (January, 1977), 66-71.

⁸⁸Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 61.

wrote warnings to several state senators, including those from Halifax County.⁸⁹ The Appeal was the work of David Walker born of a slave father and free mother in Wilmington, North Carolina. As a result of his travels in the South, he returned to his Boston home and published a condemnation of slavery.⁹⁰

Growing national tensions increased fears of revolt, especially in areas of high free black and slave populations such as Halifax. To escape the mounting pressures, sixty-four free Negroes from Halifax County emigrated to Ohio in early 1861.⁹¹ Increasing fears resulted in the passage of an act making publishing or circulating publications that might incite an uprising a felony, carrying a mandatory death penalty.⁹² Further laws made it illegal for free Negroes to possess firearms.⁹³ In 1863 concern over the loss of area slaves raised the suspicion of aid being offered to runaways by Quakers in the nearby Northampton community of Rich Square.⁹⁴ In February 1864 a freeman, Henry Cumbo, was suspected in a conspiracy to incite runaway slaves. Supposedly, Cumbo

⁸⁹ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 67.

⁹⁰ Franklin, Free Negro in North Carolina, 64.

⁹¹ Tarboro, Southerner, Vol. 10, no. 6, February 9, 1861.

⁹² B. H. Nelson, "Some Aspects of Negro Life in North Carolina During the Civil War," North Carolina Historical Review, XXV no. 2 (April 1948), 144-145, hereinafter cited as Nelson, "Negro Life."

⁹³ Nelson, "Negro Life," 154.

⁹⁴ Mary Wyatt Conigland to Cousin Edward Nolley, January, 1863, Conigland Papers.

received \$200 from Union officers for every able-bodied man he turned over.⁹⁵

Other blacks fled to Northern lines for fear of being impressed into service for the Confederacy.⁹⁶ This impressment was of growing concern to slave and master alike. An 1862 law called for employment of slaves for work on coastal fortifications. A later resolution, due no doubt to pressure by owners, called for the impressment to come only after a number of free Negroes had been used. State impressments such as this were opposed, but even more disliked were calls from the Confederate government.⁹⁷ A tax in February 1863 created financial discomfort for owners, taxing slaves according to their value.⁹⁸ The poll tax of 1835 was increased from .30 to \$1.20 during 1863 on male Negroes between the ages of 12 and 50.⁹⁹

Not all black effort went to help maintain the system of slavery. Probably not alone in his action, Neptune Smith donned the blue uniform. Originally from the Scotland Neck area, Smith fled to Union lines in February 1864. There he enrolled as a private in Company D, 37th

⁹⁵ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 528-529.

⁹⁶ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 121, 233, 668; M. W. Ransom to Zebulon B. Vance, August 26, 1863, Governors Papers, Zebulon B. Vance, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Governors Papers, Vance. In this telegram Ransom requested the governor to call free Negroes in Halifax to work on fortifications.

⁹⁷ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 158-160.

⁹⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 166.

⁹⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 164.

I certify, on honor, that Neptune Smith a Private of
 Captain Wm. H. H. H. H. Company (D) of the 37th Regiment of Colored Troops
~~VOLUNTEERS~~ of the State of North Carolina, born in Salisbury, State
 of North Carolina, aged 22 years; 5 feet 6 inches high; Black complexion,
Blue eyes, Black hair, and by occupation a Farmer, having joined the company on
 its original organization at Salisbury, and enrolled in it at the muster into
 the service of the United States at Plymouth N.C., on the 16th day
 of February, 1864, he was mustered in service as a recruit, by Capt. South
Co. D, at Salisbury, on the 5th day of March,
 1864, or was drafted and mustered into the service of the United States from the
Enrollment District of the State of North Carolina, at
Salisbury, on the 5th day of March, 1864, to serve in the Regiment, for
 the term of Three years: and having served HONESTLY and
FAITHFULLY with his Company in Co. D to the present date, is now
 entitled to a DISCHARGE by reason of Death.

The said Neptune Smith was last paid by Paymaster
Wm. H. H. H. to include the 31st day of August, 1864, and has
 pay due him from that time to the present date; he is entitled to pay and subsistence for
TRAVELING to place of enrollment, and whatever other allowances are authorized to volunteer
 soldiers, drafted men, or militia, so discharged. He has received from the United States CLOTHING
 amounting to Forty five dollars, since the 31st day of October,
 1864, when his clothing account was last settled. He has received from the United States
100 dollars advanced BOUNTY.

There is to be stopped from him, on account of the State of North Carolina, or other
 authorities, for CLOTHING, &c. received on entering service, 100 dollars; and
 for other stoppages, viz:

100 dollars.
 He has been furnished with TRANSPORTATION in kind from the place of his discharge to
Salisbury; and he has been SUBSISTED for TRAVELING to his
 place of enrollment, up to the 31st day of August, 1864.

He is indebted to George J. Bicknell, BUTLER, 8 dollars.
 He is indebted to LAUNDRESS, 100 dollars.

Given in Duplicate, at Kilmington N.C., this 15 day
 of July, 1865.

Chas. P. Northrup
Major 37th U.S.C.T.
 Commanding Company

[A. G. O. No. 25-Form.]

Illustration 1. Discharge of Neptune Smith, Co. D, 37th U.S. Colored Infantry, Military Service Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Regiment, United States Colored Infantry. Smith died in service at Smithfield, North Carolina on June 29, 1865.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰"Claim Bounty," County Records, "Halifax County Miscellaneous Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. This claim for bounty was uncovered while searching Confederate records in regard to provisions furnished indigent families. It was in the name of Neptune Smith by his niece and nephew Anmanica and Edward Staton and presented September 7, 1898. Verification of Neptune Smith's residence in Halifax County can be found in his military service records, Neptune Smith, Co. D, 37th U.S. Colored Infantry, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF HALIFAX COUNTY

1860-1865

Geography has played a key role in the economic development of Halifax County. The most notable feature, the Roanoke River, provided transportation of goods and produce from the fall line at Weldon to the coastal regions of North Carolina. As early as 1812, legislation was passed concerning "improving the navigation of the Roanoke river from the town of Halifax to the place where the Virginia line intersects the same." The act allowed the sale of stock to create the Roanoke Navigation Company.¹ The work to be carried out involved the building of a canal twelve miles in length, to skirt around the Grand Falls of the Roanoke. A series of canal locks would allow passage of vessels over the hundred-foot drop at the fall line. Carried out in cooperation with Virginia, the canal, which was to be completed by January 1, 1843, would open the river from its mouth to Salem, Virginia, 334 miles inland.²

Conquering the falls of the river did not master the flowing waters. Fed from mountain streams, warm weather and spring rains often meant destruction of crops as floods inundated low lying areas along the river banks. The Roanoke Valley seemed especially susceptible to

¹Charles Clinton Weaver, Internal Improvements in North Carolina Previous to 1860, Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series XXI nos. 3-4 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1903), 57, hereinafter cited as Weaver, Internal Improvements.

²Weaver, Internal Improvements, 60-61.

floods and great energies were spent in the building of dikes, flumes, and "secrete ditches." Adjustments were made by the citizens, apparently used to the idea of trading the horse and carriage for canoes in the spring.³

The terminus of the Roanoke Canal at Weldon attracted further attention in Virginia. On February 10, 1830 a charter was granted to the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad to build from Portsmouth to the north bank of the Roanoke between Weldon and Halifax.⁴ In 1833 this railroad extended into Weldon and in 1847 became known as the Roanoke Railroad Company.⁵

The Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was the most important line to cross the county. This line, the first in North Carolina,⁶ was begun in 1836 and was completed in 1840. The purpose for the railroad was to carry products of the state to the port of Wilmington. Lack of adequate transportation facilities had resulted in most of these goods being sent to southeastern Virginia.⁷ At Weldon this line, along with

³References to the river, its floods, and man's attempt to conquer it are found throughout Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 127, 140, 312, 375, 427, 539, 545, 556, and 657. Physical remains of dikes are still prominent along the Roanoke, especially at the Caledonia State Prison Farm where several feet have been left intact.

⁴Weaver, Internal Improvements, 76.

⁵Weaver, Internal Improvements, 80.

⁶Charles Lewis Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction in North Carolina 1865-1871" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1959), 10, hereinafter cited as Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction."

⁷Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 11.

the Raleigh and Gaston, connected with the northern lines of the Petersburg and the Seaboard and Roanoke.⁸ The Raleigh and Gaston, chartered in 1835, was already in poor shape by 1848. Conditions were greatly improved by its link up with the Wilmington and Weldon and the Weldon and Gaston.⁹

The political division of the county into eastern and western divisions roughly followed the position of the fall line through the county. The geologic differences of the two regions created two very different agricultural pictures. The eastern farmers all tried to produce at least one bale of ginned cotton, virtually ignoring tobacco, while their western neighbors concentrated on tobacco with relatively small amounts of cotton.¹⁰

In the eastern division fifty-two land owners possessed over 1,000 acres with three falling just short of this mark. Of this number only eight owned more than 3,000 acres with the largest holdings belonging to James A. Johnson. Production of cotton was not necessarily relative to land holdings. For example, the Johnson estate of 7,834 acres produced one hundred and twenty-five 400-pound bales of ginned cotton while

⁸ Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 19. Originally this road began as stock for a road from Halifax to Weldon in 1833. In 1836 the stock shifted to the Wilmington and Raleigh and by 1840 this course was altered to be the Wilmington and Weldon. At its completion, the length of the track was 140 miles, the longest railroad in existence. Weaver, Internal Improvements, 82-83.

⁹ Weaver, Internal Improvements, 86-88.

¹⁰ Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County. This observation is based on a survey of the entire schedule.

another planter with 2,000 acres produced two hundred and twelve bales.¹¹ On the larger estates wool, apparently enough for family use, was also produced.

Generally speaking, the common farmers owned 200-400 acres, most in unimproved land. Crops included Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, hay, beans, peas, and Indian corn. Livestock consisted largely of swine, milk cows, and one or two horses, mules, or oxen for work. Occasionally bees wax, honey, cheese, butter, and wine were produced as well as small orchards being grown for personal use. Only two reports of flax were given and only six of tobacco. For the most part the tobacco planted appears to have been mainly experimental for the larger landholders.¹²

In the western division land holdings were generally smaller with five to fifteen acres cleared and a total ownership of less than a hundred acres common. Fifty owners possessed 1,000-plus acres, much in uncleared land. Only five owned 3,000 or more with David Clark, the largest land owner, having 6,379 acres.¹³ Production of tobacco was

¹¹Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County. This is based on a comparison of Whitehead, 5 no. 36, and Johnston, 7 no. 3, eastern division.

¹²Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County. Tobacco reported was on pages 3 nos. 8 and 15, 5 no. 5, 11 no. 30, 15 no. 38, and 17 no. 30. The conclusions drawn are taken from the author's study of the Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, eastern division.

¹³Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County, western division. This information resulted from a comparison study of land holdings by the author. David Clark is located on page 23 no. 34.

the key money crop for the area. Cotton was still grown but often by those close to the dividing line between the eastern and western sections of the county. The further west, the less cotton and wool were grown with almost total focus on tobacco and subsistence crops. Like the east, peas, beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and hay were the most common crops. Additional home products were butter, honey, hops, and wine. A large number of small orchards were cultivated not only for personal needs but also to produce a little extra income.¹⁴

The records of several 1860 Halifax County planters reveal further insight into the agricultural make-up of the area. Nathaniel Dunn, a native of Maine, moved to North Carolina and became a farmer and businessman. Instead of hiring freemen or purchasing slaves, he preferred to hire slaves to cut timber and work his lumbermill. He concentrated on the delivery of lumber to the Naval Yard at Washington, D.C. during the mid-1850's but ran into difficulty paying for the contracted workers. Dunn's account books reveal him to be an astute farmer and sharp businessman. Remaining in Halifax County during the war years, he quickly recognized the money to be made in the sale of merchandise for an owner capable of operating on credit. In 1864 he opened such a store, making arrangement with customers on their future crops to pay off debts.¹⁵

¹⁴Study by the author on products in the western division based on Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County.

¹⁵Account book, letter exchange of Nathaniel Dunn and Benjamin Johnson, 1855-1859, Nathaniel Dunn Papers, East Carolina University Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC.

Another lumber dealer and farmer in the east was John Richard Tillery (1836-1929). Tillery's land bordered the Roanoke River. Numerous land purchases, including one in 1853 that gave him possession of a mill pond and dam, steadily increased his holdings. Tillery remained in the county during the Civil War. He was exempt from service because of his position as a county surgeon.¹⁶

A more typical planter would be William W. Brickell. His account books reveal that he was an active farmer, specializing in corn, cotton, peas, wheat, and apple and peach orchards. Brickell was apparently well read, subscribing to the Weldon Patriot, National Intelligencer, and the American Farmer. His books were clearly and carefully balanced with each item he purchased recorded up through the early war years. However, by 1864 the constant fluctuation of Southern currency frustrated his well-ordered bookkeeping. Additional duties during the war included serving as guardian to four young females. This involved overseeing their school expenses and the hiring out of the slaves willed to them. A note in the record of his charges' expenses clearly displayed the difficulty the deflation of currency caused. Brickell wrote "2335.00 Confederate currency was in my hands at the time of Gen. Lee's surrender. The bal[ance] due wards of \$2620.00 scaled according to act of assembly." The new balance was \$52.40.¹⁷

¹⁶ John Richard Tillery Papers, East Carolina University Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC.

¹⁷ Account Books, William W. Brickell Papers, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC, hereinafter cited as Brickell Papers.

As noted previously, the largest landowner in the eastern district was James A. Johnson. As an absentee owner who resided in Edenton, North Carolina, the production of his Halifax County estate was left to an overseer. The total value of his 7,834 acres by the river was listed at \$130,000 in 1860. Production of goods included 145 bales of ginned cotton; 400 pounds of wool; and 72,500 bushels of Indian corn. Livestock on the estate numbered 80 mules; 20 oxen; 50 milk cows; and 1,000 swine.¹⁸

In the western division, landowner David Clark held 3,720 acres of cleared land out of a total of 6,379. On these he produced 4,000 bushels of corn; 4,000 bushels of peas; 4,000 bushels of beans; 1,000 bushels of sweet potatoes; and 912 tons of hay. His livestock numbered 678 swine and from his sheep he gathered 78 pounds of wool. Additional products included 400 pounds of butter, 623 gallons of sorghum; 100 pounds of beeswax, 500 pounds of honey; and \$250 profit realized from his fruit orchards.

Throughout the county the number of horses owned by individuals was small. Generally, owners possessed less than ten and the majority listed only one or two, with mules and oxen listed in greater numbers as work animals. The exception to this was W. P. Soloman, owner of 2,300 acres in the western division. Besides his 28,000 pounds of tobacco, 14 bales of cotton, and 40 pounds of wool, he appears to have

¹⁸Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County, 7 no. 3, eastern division.

been the only man in the county that raised horses for profit. In 1860 he listed ownership of eighty.¹⁹

The outstanding exception to the usual products of the county was made by the Weller vineyards. A native of New York, Sidney Weller came to Halifax County in 1827 to serve as principal at Quankey Academy. By 1829 he was involved in the Brinkleyville Academy (male and female), which appears to have closed by 1832. However, in 1832, he became associated with the female school of 'La Valle' at Brinkleyville.²⁰

Besides being an educator, Weller was an active horticulturist and focused on growing native grapes and production of wine from the area. By 1840 his vineyards were among the largest in the country and were known nationwide. Attempting to encourage the grape as a profitable crop, he became a member of the Halifax County Agricultural Society, organized in 1852.²¹ His efforts on improved farming techniques were revealed in articles he wrote in the Farmers Advocate, North Carolina Farmer, Farmer's Journal, and Farmer's Register.²²

Always receptive to new ideas, this farmer, educator, Methodist minister, and postmaster²³ opened his vineyards as a resort area. On

¹⁹Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County, 23 no. 32 and 34, western division.

²⁰Sidney Shearin, "History of Medoc Vineyards" (reference work for Medoc Mountain State Park, NC, 1981), 8-9, hereinafter cited as Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards."

²¹Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 11-14.

²²Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 17.

²³Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 16.

September 16, 1841 he advertised in the Farmer's Advocate:

Sidney Weller--Postmaster at Brinkleyville, Halifax Co. NC dealer in Seeds, Fruit, & Ornamental trees, Grape Vines (choicest kinds for American culture) Wines (pure juices of the grape unadulterated with spirits or otherwise) Silk worm eggs, Sewing Silk, Feeding Frames, Piedmontese Reels, Sc.Sc. Prompt attention given to letters, orders, & cash remittances.

Entertainment for travellers and visitors at his establishment.²⁴

Sidney Weller died February 27, 1854 but the vineyards were carried on by the family.²⁵ The 1860 Agriculture Schedule listed E. Weller as owner of 150 acres cleared and 284 unimproved. Production on this land amounted to three bales of cotton and 20,000 gallons of wine.²⁶ The loss of male members during the war contributed to the family's decision to sell the company in 1867.²⁷

Industry within the county focused on natural resources and, to a large degree, use of the river for power. In the eastern division there was a flour and wheat mill, a corn and flour mill, and a corn mill all powered by water. Four saw mills were operating in 1860 using

²⁴Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," advertisement, no page number.

²⁵Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 18-19.

²⁶Eighth Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule no. 4, Halifax County, 11 no. 36, western division.

²⁷Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 20. The vineyards were sold to Charles William Garrett and Dr. Francis Marion Garrett, natives of Edgecombe County. Both had lived in New York and frequented a restaurant that served Weller's wines. When news reached them that the Wellers were selling, they purchased the company and named the site Medoc Vineyards after the French province (Shearin, "Medoc Vineyards," 20-23). Surprisingly little remains of the vineyards today, a tradition not continued after the Garretts and not taken seriously as a cash crop for the county. The area is now preserved in the undeveloped Medoc Mountain State Park.

pine as the raw material and steam as the power source. In addition, a pig and cast iron foundry depended on water power. Two hand manufacturers operated, one producing tin ware and the other using oak to produce staves. These industries employed fifty-one males and had an annual value of \$42,900.

In comparison, the western division of the county listed fewer industries producing in 1860. One steam-powered saw mill worked with both pine and oak. Four grist or wheat and grist mills operated on water power to produce flour from the locally grown wheat or corn.²⁸

Average wages for the common laborer were the same for citizens in either division of Halifax. Monthly wages for a farm hand with board averaged \$10. A day laborer with board brought in 40 cents while the day laborer without board took in 60 cents. A carpenter without board received an average of \$1.25. For the female domestic the weekly wage with board was \$1.50. Those paid directly for their services without board could expect to pay approximately \$1.25 a week to board elsewhere.²⁹

The decade prior to the Civil War was evidently a prosperous one for Halifax County. An 1851-1852 Mercantile and Professional Directory listed fifteen dealers in dry goods, groceries, and hardware; seven

²⁸Eighth Census, 1860, Industry Schedule no. 5, Halifax County. Comparison study of eastern and western divisions.

²⁹Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County. The average county wages were recorded as the same in both eastern and western divisions.

attorneys; seventeen physicians; and three hotel keepers.³⁰ By 1860 there were still seven attorneys but only one, Edward Conigland, appeared on both the 1851 and 1860 lists. Twenty-eight persons listed their occupation as physicians. Obviously, the most common occupation was that of farm laborer. Common among women were spinners and seamstresses. One woman nurse was listed as well as one "lady" owning \$3,500 real property and \$22,000 in personal property. The cultural graces were evidently lacking in the county as only one resident artist, 21-year-old C. E. Ellington, was recorded. Occupations that appeared in the western division but not the eastern section of the county were those of rock mason and miner.³¹

Of the numerous doctors in the county, one in particular, Dr. M. A. Wilcox of Halifax, appeared to have let the social and financial standing of his patients determine the cost of his services. A study of his account books in 1865 reveals he visited and tended to the wealthy as well as the free black. A visit to the household of Nick Long, Jr., and his slaves usually cost the Longs between \$100 for a visit and medication to \$150 for a visit that required staying overnight. A visit and medication for freeman Jackson Barnes cost the patient \$2.50.³²

³⁰Thomoon's Mercantile and Professional Directory Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia 1851-1852 (1851), 194, from the collection of Dr. Claiborne Thweatt Smith, Jr., Philadelphia, Pa., copy courtesy of Halifax County Library.

³¹Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, Halifax County.

³²Dr. M. A. Wilcox Account Books, vol. 6, Michael Ferrall Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

An article on Scotland Neck in the March 24, 1860 issue of the Tarboro Southerner speaks of Clarksville (same vicinity) as a center of activity. Specifically named were the merchants Messers. Higgs and Pittman and Mr. A. M. Riddick. The Scotland Neck Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company was listed as operating under the guidance of R. H. Smith, President; Wm. Fenner, Treasurer; A. M. Riddick, Secretary; and Peter E. Smith, James N. Smith, and W. H. Shields, Directors.³³

In Weldon, two hotels were built along the railroad tracks during the 1850's, providing rail travelers with meals and lodging. Also housed in the hotels were bars and barbershops. The coming of men to military camps around Weldon increased trade for existing stores and resulted in the opening of several new businesses.³⁴ One business in particular that seemed to thrive in several of these towns, increasing its numbers during the war years, was the selling of "spiritious liquor by the small measure." In addition to existing bars, Weldon opened three in 1863, two in 1864, and five in 1865. By 1865 Halifax had increased its number by two, Littleton by one, Gaston by one, and Clarksville by one.³⁵ Other towns and communities in the county that served

³³Tarboro Southerner, Vol. 9, no. 12, March 24, 1860.

³⁴"Fragile Bits and Pieces," Roanoke News, October 2, 1975.

³⁵County Court Minutes 1860-1865: Halifax County, microfilm, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. This information was taken from a study of the August Court 1863, the February Court 1864, and the August Court 1865.

as commercial and social centers included the county seat of Halifax, Littleton, Palmyra, Enfield, and Brinkleyville.³⁶

The tax bill passed by the Confederate Congress on April 24, 1863 established the rate of taxes businesses, professions, transportation facilities, and entertainment centers would be expected to pay in support of the Confederacy.³⁷ For the average household the tax-in-kind was of the most concern. This tax called for the value of a crop (produce and livestock) to be determined by congressionally appointed agents in connection with the Quartermaster Department. Of the total value one-tenth, a "tithe," was to be turned over to the government.³⁸ The tithe tax along with the fluctuation of currency was a focal point of discussion for citizens of Halifax County. Mrs. Edmondston recorded the appearance of the quartermaster from the 59th North Carolina Regiment (4th Cavalry) with orders of tax-in-kind in corn and hay to be paid to him. A few days later he was followed by the arrival of the forage master of the 59th Regiment searching for corn and fodder. Her feeling by early 1865 was that the government had become "oppressive"

³⁶William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 3rd edition, 1976). Towns and communities mentioned in this work include Brinkleyville, 63, having a post office by 1822; Enfield, 163, county seat 1745-1759, incorporated 1861; Palmyra, 369, post office by 1811, incorporated 1883; Halifax, 209, county seat and incorporated 1760; Littleton, 293, community by 1833, incorporated 1877; Scotland Neck, 443, settled 1722, incorporated 1867; Weldon, 524, incorporated 1843.

³⁷"The Confederate Tax Bill," Raleigh Register, April 4, 1863.

³⁸Richard D. Goff, Confederate Supply (Durham: Duke University Press, 1969), 86, hereinafter cited as Goff, Confederate Supply.

as agent followed agent collecting taxes.³⁹ An example of livestock taxation was the amount of pork Peter E. Smith was taxed in March 1865. Of the estimated 11,300 total pounds, he was taxed 1,130 pounds valued at \$5,424.⁴⁰

Records of cotton sales in 1861 show that after shipping and insurance fees to Norfolk, the average net per bale from Halifax County was \$44.58.⁴¹ The importance placed on the buying power of cotton resulted in the creation of state government purchasing agents. Within Halifax County familiar family names reappear as the larger land holders took advantage of the government's purchasing. Under special cotton purchasing agent W. H. Smith, the surnames Conigland, Clark, Whitaker, Edmondston, Smith, and Ousby make up the list of growers able to sell to the state.⁴² One enterprising farmer traded provisions for "King

³⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 482, 521, 524, 668; J. H. Erntt (sic) to Zebulon Vance, June 20, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance. While on leave from the army Erntt discovered his family had no bread, not because there was no grain available but that, according to him, every farmer he approached had orders from government agents. He also stated there was plenty of corn in the county but that it was not available to citizens either.

⁴⁰ Tax-in-kind note, March 27, 1865, Peter E. Smith Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Peter Smith Papers.

⁴¹ Record of cotton sale, Koder Bigs and Co., Norfolk, Va., January 16, 1861, Ferdinand H. Whitaker Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴² "Abstracts of Cotton Purchased by Maj. John Devereux QM at Raleigh in quarter ending on the 31st of March 1863," Record of Abstracts, Adjutant General's Office, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC, hereinafter cited as Adjutant General's Office, Record of Abstracts.

Cotton" that had been left outside the railroad shed at Weldon and was damaged by the weather. He considered his trade profitable until confronted with the order to burn his white gold in the face of enemy advancements.⁴³

Not all farmers tried to focus on the production of cotton. A letter to the editor of the Tarboro Southerner in April 1864 appealed to Edgecombe County planters to concentrate on subsistence crops, not cotton for profit. The letter pointed out examples of other counties, Halifax among them, that had suffered great financial losses as a result of focusing on corn, hogs, and beef cattle production, as well as the harvest of fish from their rivers to feed fellow patriots.⁴⁴

Forage was often sold to the government as hay and Indian corn were common crops grown by almost all land holders.⁴⁵ Impressment of supplies was only carried out if absolutely necessary and then receipts were given and established payments made.⁴⁶ To aid in smooth transactions, price schedules were published announcing prices the Confederate government would pay for goods. On November 4, 1864, the Goldsboro State Journal published a list valid for the next sixty days. According to the list, prices had been lowered. The justification for this was

⁴³ Mr. (?) to Stuart Hall Hill, April 7, 1865, Stuart Hall Hill Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴⁴ Letter to editor, signed "Justice," Tarboro Southerner, April 16, 1864.

⁴⁵ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 337; Record of Abstracts, March 7, 1863, W. H. Smith, Adjutant General's Office.

⁴⁶ Goff, Confederate Supply, 42.

to help increase the value of currency as well as the abundance of the present harvest. The newspaper attacked cotton factories and railroad companies as the prime reason for food shortages in areas. Scarcity of food for citizens was said to be a created situation, not an actual one, as food in abundance was available.⁴⁷

The work of the tax-in-kind and the subsistence department meant the goal of adequate food production for the army was realized. However, the difficulty was with transportation to the front.⁴⁸ The collection of tithes could have supplied one-half the Confederacy's needs for a year, but mismanagement, spoilage, and lack of transportation mean uneven and unequal distribution.⁴⁹ According to Richard Goff in his Confederate Supply, "By 1864 manpower shortage had surpassed supply deficiencies as the major problem of the Confederate Armies."⁵⁰

The war, its economic as well as military hardships, was too much for some citizens of the county to handle. In June of 1860, Halifax was listed as having thirty native paupers.⁵¹ With the heads of households called to the front, the problem increased. On June 5, 1861 a special court voted \$10,000 aid to indigent families of volunteers. A special county tax was placed on citizens to be collected by May 1862.

⁴⁷"Schedule of Prices in North Carolina," Goldsboro State Journal, Vol. VII, no. 31, November 4, 1864.

⁴⁸Goff, Confederate Supply, 211.

⁴⁹Goff, Confederate Supply, 155.

⁵⁰Goff, Confederate Supply, 250.

⁵¹Eighth Census, 1860, Social Statistics Schedule no. 6, Halifax County.

Committees were set up, consisting of three magistrates, within each militia district. These committees could take funds, allotted by Special Agent William H. Brickell, to provide for the needy. One-half of the needed \$10,000 was already in the county's treasury, allowing action before the collection deadline. Provisions were also made for the families of free Negroes working on coastal fortifications.⁵²

County records for June 8, 1861 to May 19, 1862 report distribution of provisions totaling \$333.19. Included among the goods given to indigent families were bacon, flour, rice, sugar, salt, molasses, cotton cards, meal, beef, herring, shoes, pork, and fish. The same names appeared every few days. A typical entry was for Ms. Boom on July 19, 1861: 10 lbs. flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ g. molasses, 12 lb. bacon. A note in November 1861 records money given to persons in District 16 of Halifax County, including two free persons. The highest amount given out was \$11.55, a sum free-woman Priscilla Bower received. By August and September of 1862, money amounts increased with increased inflation. The new amounts given were \$20 and \$25.⁵³

In 1864 Brickell reported 4,161 pounds of bacon were turned over to the committees for distribution as a result of the purchase of hogs

⁵²Goff, Confederate Supply, 545-546.

⁵³"Civil War Accounts of Provisions furnished indigent families of volunteers 1862," Halifax County Miscellaneous Papers 1761-1910, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. At least two districts, 9 and 16, voted relief for families of free Negroes that volunteered services to the state. Records exist for districts 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16.

by order of the county court.⁵⁴ Despite these attempts problems continued. In March 1863, J. A. Fauclon, Captain of the 13th District Militia in Halifax County, wrote Governor Vance to inquire into the power of the militia to halt corn, bacon and other supplies needed for the area. He stated that enough food existed for families of soldiers but all was being shipped out of the region.⁵⁵ At least one widow appealed to the governor herself. She requested to be exempt from the tithe on wheat, claiming not to have enough for herself and three daughters. Her only son was serving in the army and she preferred to let him fight while she farmed. She stated she had complied with all other requests but bacon and corn and would freely give what surplus of wheat she had.⁵⁶

In addition to support for indigent families, a statewide endowment fund was set up for soldiers' orphans. In this statewide effort thirty-two names from Halifax County appeared in the Raleigh Register list of donations, with amounts ranging from \$1 to \$30.⁵⁷

Generosity was not the exclusive characteristic of Halifax County during the war years. After initial patriotic contributions of goods, signs of hoarding and speculation appeared on the homefront.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁴"Records of Trustee of Halifax County," Brickell Papers.

⁵⁵J. A. Faulcon, Captain 13th District, to Zebulon Vance, March 23, 1863, Governors Papers, Vance.

⁵⁶Frances Pittman to Zebulon Vance, May 5, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance.

⁵⁷Raleigh Register, August 9, 1863.

⁵⁸Goff, Confederate Supply, 52.

1861 State Board of Claims reviewed and approved a number of legitimate public claims, including supplying of equipment for the "Roanoke Minute Men" and Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen, lumber for camp in Garysburg, and medicines used in Weldon. Claims were even honored for whiskey and transportation of free Negroes from Halifax to Hatteras to work on coastal defenses. However, the patience of the board was tested in the \$524.50 claim by a Weldon hotel for the overnight room and board of Governor Ellis and his company.⁵⁹

Even so, the majority of personal papers reveal the honest attempt of citizens in dealing with inflation and shortages as best they could. A study of various account books in 1860 and 1861 recorded the prices of a number of staples:

5 lb. bacon	\$1.00
barrell flour	\$11.00
Shoes (men)	\$1.50 pair
Coffee	.18 lb. ⁶⁰
3 lbs. sugar	.50 ⁶¹

Mrs. Edmondston took careful note of increasing prices. Her first alarm was over the high price of Negroes' shoes, coffee, sugar, and luxuries. Her husband's anticipation of the coming war had caused him to stock up on necessities and the Edmondstons lacked little during the

⁵⁹"Halifax County," Board of Claims: Record of Public Claims 1861-1864, 229-231, Auditor, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. The sum allowed this claim was a total of \$50.30.

⁶⁰Account Books, Vick, Whitaker, and Branch, Enfield, NC, Halifax County Miscellaneous Account Books, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁶¹Account Book, Dr. Matthew Cary Whitaker Papers, March 25, 1861, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

war.⁶² Extortioners, the so-named "Army Worms" that sold goods at outrageous prices, disgusted her,⁶³ an attitude that was shared by her father. He had a quantity of salt on hand and in the face of pressing inflation offered to exchange socks, which were to be donated to the army, for salt. Two pairs of yarn or four pairs of cotton socks could be exchanged per bushel of salt, not to exceed five bushels. In this manner he gave away approximately 800 bushels.⁶⁴

The prices of goods in the fall of 1862 were listed by Mrs. Edmondston for future readers:

Bacon	75¢ to \$1.00
Pork	75¢
Coarse cotton cloth	75¢ to \$1.00 yard
Wool per lb.	75¢
Flannel per yard	\$5.00
Shoes (Negro)	\$10.00 to \$18.00
Ladies Gaithers	\$15.00
Spool Cotton	\$1.00
Coffee pound	\$2.75
Sugar pound	\$1.00
Factory Cotton per block	\$8.50
Flour per lb.	\$30.00
Tea per lb.	\$9.00
Boots	\$30.00 to \$35.00
Coarse Woolen Cloth yard	\$12.00
Homespun	\$1.00 to \$2.00
Apple Brandy per gal.	\$20.00
Salt per bushel	\$30.00 ⁶⁵

The result of such increases was that many became "quite home learned." Repairing worn clothes, wearing homespun, making candles,

⁶²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 97.

⁶³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 141, 171.

⁶⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 100.

⁶⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 298-299.

tanning leather, and dying yarn from native resources became a way of life for all social classes.⁶⁶ One inventive cook, determined her young bride would have a proper wedding, prepared a wedding cake with "Confederate Raisins," dried, chopped peaches. The bride, in her linen and cotton bedsheet underclothing, was quite pleased at the outcome.⁶⁷

An updated list of prices in February 1864 shows the radical increase of costs. At Halifax gray uniform material was listed at \$175 per yard and supplies from Petersburg, Virginia placed sugar at \$12.50 per pound; flour at \$300-\$325 per bushel; sausage at \$6 a pound; bacon at \$5 per pound; corn and meal at \$10 per bushel; peas and beans at \$25-30 per bushel; and sorghum syrup at \$35 per gallon.⁶⁸ The continued reduction of the value of currency led to the widespread use of the barter system among neighbors. Examples of the barter were the exchange of weaving for lard, and bacon for transportation.⁶⁹ In late 1864 Mrs. Edmondston made her first installment of butter to pay for cotton cloth.⁷⁰ Accepting the hardships of war, the people of Halifax County adjusted, adapted, and got on with the business of living.

⁶⁶ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 305, 310, 314, 338, 643, 654.

⁶⁷ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 385.

⁶⁸ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 533.

⁶⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 617.

⁷⁰ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 636.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN HALIFAX COUNTY

DURING THE CIVIL WAR

Citizens of the county began preparing for war as early as the late 1850's. In November 1859 the Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen were organized. Patrick M. Edmondston was active in the formation of this group and by June 9, 1860 Mrs. Edmondston recorded in her journal "Mr. E. all day drilling his troops."¹

Evidence of other active groups in the area can be found in Mrs. Edmondston's entry for October 29, 1860. Here she recorded that a first anniversary party was to be given for the Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen the next night, during which a flag would be presented to them. Invited to the gathering were the Enfield Blues (organized in the fall of 1860), the Halifax Light Infantry, and the Edgecombe Guards.²

The coming of war in April 1861 and the secession of North Carolina on May 20 resulted in a flurry of additional companies being formed in Halifax County. Evidently many men, like R. H. Walker, were ready "if the state has to be forced by Lincolmites" to take their place at the battlefield.³ Those companies already formed quickly rendered their services to the Confederacy with the Enfield Blues leading the way.⁴

¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 3.

²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 11.

³Tolbert, Ellis Papers, II, 637.

⁴Walter C. Allen, A History of Halifax County (Boston: Cornhill Press, 1918), 108, hereinafter cited as Allen, A History of Halifax County.

A list of companies formed mainly of Halifax County volunteers included the First North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Company I (Enfield Blues),⁵ the Third North Carolina Cavalry Regiment, Company G (Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen),⁶ the Twelfth North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Companies G (Halifax Light Infantry)⁷ and I,⁸ the Fourteenth North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Company A (Roanoke Minute Men),⁹ the Twenty-fourth North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Company D,¹⁰ the Forty-third North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Companies D and F,¹¹ and a company of the Seventy-fifth North Carolina Regiment.¹²

Halifax County contributed four men to the Confederate cause who achieved the rank of brigadier-general. Brigadier General Lawrence O'Brian Branch was unsuccessful in defending New Bern against Union

⁵W. J. Tancig (comp.), Confederate Military Land Units (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1967), 66, hereinafter cited as Tancig, Confederate Military Land Units.

⁶Louis H. Manarin and Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., eds., North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, projected multivolume series, 1966--), 227, hereinafter cited as Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops; Tancig, Confederate Military Land Units, 75.

⁷Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 195; Tancig, Confederate Military Land Units, 67.

⁸Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 218.

⁹Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 396.

¹⁰Allen, A History of Halifax County, 111.

¹¹Allen, A History of Halifax County, 112.

¹²Allen, A History of Halifax County, 114.

invasion. After the fall of that city he served under Lieutenant General A. P. Hill until his death at the battle of Antietam.¹³

Brigadier General Junius Daniel, born in Halifax, served in the United States Army until 1858. When the Civil War started, he sided with the Confederacy and was appointed colonel of the Fourteenth North Carolina.¹⁴ He was rapidly promoted, reaching the rank of brigadier general before his death at Spotsylvania, May 12, 1864.¹⁵

Born in Scotland Neck, William Ruffin Cox commanded a brigade of North Carolina troops in the Army of Northern Virginia. The final line of the North Carolina boast "First at Bethel, Farthest to the front at Gettysburg and Chickamauga, Last at Appomattox" stems from the reluctance of Cox's Brigade to surrender.¹⁶

The fourth brigadier general was David Clark, a wealthy planter from Littleton, who held this rank in the state militia. In January 1862 he was given command over the militias of seven counties with the responsibility of defending the Roanoke River.¹⁷

¹³D. H. Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina (Atlanta: Confederate Printing Co., 1899), edited by General Clement A. Evans, IV, 298-300, hereinafter cited as Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina; Allen, A History of Halifax County, 121; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 745-746.

¹⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 752.

¹⁵Allen, A History of Halifax County, 121; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 752; Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, 306-309.

¹⁶Allen, A History of Halifax County, 122; Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, 303-306.

¹⁷Allen, A History of Halifax County, 122; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 749.

Another officer of note from the county was the son of David Clark, Walter McKenzie Clark. Only fourteen years old and still a student at Hillsboro Military Academy when war broke out, Clark was selected as drill master at Camp Ellis (a camp of instruction in Raleigh).¹⁸ He served in the Confederate Army until resigning in 1863 to finish his studies at the University of North Carolina.¹⁹ Clark later rejoined the army at Weldon, entering into the Seventieth North Carolina Infantry Regiment, Junior Reserves. Commissioned the rank of lieutenant-colonel, he was "probably the youngest officer of that rank in either army, being then 17 years of age."²⁰

State defense of the county was addressed early in the war. On April 25, 1861 (before North Carolina had even seceded), Governor Ellis ordered guards to be established along the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad bridges. One such force was to be placed at the Tarboro bridge, and the other at Weldon by the Roanoke River bridge.²¹ Throughout the war state troops were stationed in the county. The principal concern was the protection of the railroad lines passing through the area.

¹⁸ Aubrey Lee Brooks and Hugh Talmage Lefler, eds., The Papers of Walter Clark (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), I, 5, hereinafter cited as Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers.

¹⁹ Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 52.

²⁰ Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, II, 593; Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, title page. Walter Clark is perhaps more remembered for his contributions to the state after the Civil War. His services include serving as Chief Justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court and editing The State Records of North Carolina and a source used repeatedly in this work, Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65.

²¹ Tolbert, Ellis Papers, II, 684.

Besides the large number of Confederate troops in and around Weldon at the various training camps, companies were stationed there on a more permanent basis. In January 1862 the Thirteenth Regiment of North Carolina Troops, Company D, was ordered to guard the railroad bridge at Weldon. This group had organized as North Carolina volunteers, Wilmington, Railroad Guard. Stationed at Wilmington, the company sent detachments to strategic points along the Wilmington and Manchester and the Wilmington and Weldon railroads for the period of 1862-1863.²² Company I of the Forty-first North Carolina Troops (the Third Regiment of North Carolina cavalry) pulled a short tour of duty at the Weldon bridge in the spring of 1862.²³ Weldon served as headquarters for the Fifteenth Battalion of North Carolina cavalry during the winter of 1863-1864. This outfit was retained as a state unit throughout the war. Its major responsibility while at Weldon was to search the northeastern North Carolina counties for supplies.²⁴ Other companies that served in the area include the Tenth Regiment, Company K, North Carolina Artillery²⁵ and various state and local defense groups.

At least two companies, E and H, of the Fifty-sixth North Carolina Regiment served as guards at the shipbuilding site of Edwards Ferry.²⁶

²²Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 264.

²³Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 245.

²⁴Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 643.

²⁵Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, I, 158.

²⁶Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, III, 331; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 395.

The most noted vessel constructed at this site during the Civil War was the ironclad C.S.S. Albemarle.

The presence of fortifications around the town of Halifax is recorded in entries of Mrs. Edmondston's journal.²⁷ Letters, along with the Edmondston diary, reveal that trenches encircled Weldon and that cannon placements were located around the town at key points. Young Walter Clark of the Junior Reserves wrote home of lying in the trenches around Weldon, expected to be attacked.²⁸ Soldiers were aided by impressed slaves in developing these fortifications.²⁹

Artillery strength in Weldon can be estimated by the study of mapped fortifications and the mention of cannon in the letters from soldiers stationed in the area. One soldier wrote home of the firing of 32-pounder guns at Weldon as a salute to Brigadier General L. S. Baker.³⁰ Frequently Mrs. Edmondston recorded hearing the gunners at Weldon practice, including their use of "Long Tom" and "Laughing Charlie," two Union guns captured at First Manassas.³¹ An 1863 map of

²⁷Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 331, 632.

²⁸Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 115.

²⁹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 351. Mrs. Edmondston wrote that her father refused to comply with the order that one-fourth of his field hands should be sent to Weldon to work on fortifications.

³⁰Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 122.

³¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 336, 516, 518.

Weldon's fortifications shows placements for thirty-six pieces of artillery.³²

Throughout the Civil War, Weldon served as headquarters for various military departments. Early in the conflict Lieutenant General T. H. Holmes placed his headquarters of the Department of Eastern North Carolina in the town.³³ This command was later held by Brigadier General L. S. Baker. He maintained the department's headquarters at Weldon during the closing days of the war.³⁴ General Robert E. Lee kept up with activities in the area. His correspondence reveals his attentiveness to Union movements on Fort Branch,³⁵ that could threaten the railroad. In the latter days of the war he expressed the belief that "the movement of the enemy upon the Roanoke, add to our difficulties."³⁶

The most noted officer to place his headquarters at Weldon was General P. G. T. Beauregard. In the spring of 1864, while defending

³²"Plan of fortifications around Weldon" sent in a letter of Colonel W. H. Stevens, March 12, 1863, map collection, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

³³Allen, A History of Halifax County, 115.

³⁴Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, V, 269; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 633, 659, 694, 701. Mrs. Edmondston was not at all impressed with General Baker. She referred to his drunkenness on several occasions and blamed him for the loss of the C.S.S. Albemarle.

³⁵Douglas Southall Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches: Unpublished Letters of General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A. to Jefferson Davis and the War Department of the Confederate States of America (New York: G. P. Putnam Sons; reprint ed., 1957), 306, hereinafter cited as Freeman, Lee's Dispatches.

³⁶Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, 360.

Charleston, South Carolina, General Beauregard received a telegram from the Confederate War Department ordering him to "repair with least delay to Weldon, N.C."³⁷ Arriving there April 22, 1864, the general was placed in command of the Department of North Carolina and Cape Fear, including Virginia south of the James and Appomattox rivers and North Carolina east of the Appalachian mountains. He quickly renamed this command the Department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia.³⁸ General Beauregard wrote to President Davis' military advisor, General Braxton Bragg, stressing the importance of this department and proposing that it be separated into three divisions under major generals.³⁹ Beauregard was concerned that only 350 state troops were stationed in Weldon at that time and suggested enlarging a permanent force at the strategic site.⁴⁰ However, the proposals he made were largely ignored.

While at Weldon, General Beauregard examined the line of earth-works,⁴¹ planned for defense of the area, and planned operations for southern Virginia. Except for a visit to Kinston, the first couple of days in May, his correspondence with the War Department, Jefferson

³⁷ Alfred Roman, The Military Operations of General Beauregard in the War Between the States 1861-1865 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1884), II, 193, hereinafter cited as Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 551; Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: T. Yoseloff; reprinted ed., 1956), G. T. Beauregard, "The Defense of Drewry's Bluff," IV, 195, hereinafter cited as Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders.

³⁸ Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard, II, 195.

³⁹ Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard, II, 196.

⁴⁰ Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard, II, 542.

⁴¹ Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard, II, 541.

Davis, and various generals places him in Weldon from April 22, 1864 until May 10, 1864 when he notified General Bragg he had just arrived in Petersburg.⁴²

The county also had local defense groups to aid in the protection of the area. In the fall of 1862, Patrick M. Edmondston attempted to organize such a company of home guard.⁴³ He had been given command of "Special Defense" of the Roanoke River by Colonel Collet Leventhorpe, Confederate States Army (stationed at Weldon).⁴⁴ On October 28, 1862 Edmondston met with a county group and explained that local defense was to consist of all men in the county over conscript age or exempt from the regular army. A committee was established to enroll men and to try to obtain men and money from the residents of five counties that bordered the river.⁴⁵ Although thirty-four men immediately volunteered, in November 1862 Edmondston still did not have the number of men needed to organize a company.⁴⁶

⁴²Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard, II. The correspondence reviewed is recorded in the appendix to Chapter XXXV, 539-553.

⁴³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 284. Patrick M. Edmondston had helped organize the 1859 company of Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen. He served as captain until October of 1861 when he was discharged with authority to raise a battalion. Failing to accomplish this, he desired an army appointment but settled for work with the local defense. Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 227, and Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 276.

⁴⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 122.

⁴⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 284.

⁴⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 293.

The old, established militia districts proved inadequate although they served the needs of the county in early 1861-1862. Fear of railroad sabotage led to the governor's call for the militia to guard the Weldon bridge in 1861.⁴⁷ This group, the 15th Regiment of North Carolina Militia, under Colonel David Clark, also aided in placing obstacles in the Roanoke River near Williamston to prevent enemy advances.⁴⁸ A measure was passed by the state to give special authority to colonels in the militia over area citizens. It allowed for the militia to be prepared to answer calls in a "moment's notice" without having to keep men in camp.⁴⁹ Difficulty with the militia system was largely a matter of whether the militia functioned as a state unit or was under the Confederate War Department. Confusion over payment of provisions provides an example. Sometimes payment was requested under the Adjutant General of North Carolina, sometimes under the ranking Confederate officer in the area.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 215.

⁴⁸J. G. Martin, Adjutant General to David Clark, August 12, 1861, David Clark Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as David Clark Papers; H. K. Burgwyn to Henry T. Clark, February 13, 1862, Governors Papers, Clark.

⁴⁹J. Martin, Headquarters to North Carolina Forces to David Clark, February 15, 1862, David Clark Papers. A letter in this collection from John Bevereux Q.M. Department, March 13, 1862, noted the promotion of Clark to brigadier.

⁵⁰S. Whitaker, Aide to Governor to General David Clark, June 20, 1862, Governors Letter Book, Henry T. Clark, Archives, Division of Archives and History, hereinafter cited as Governors Letter Books, Clark.

BATTALION OF LIGHT HORSE.

THE UNDERSIGNED HAVING BEEN COMMISSIONED by the President to raise a BATTALION OF "LIGHT HORSE," for the War, calls upon the young men of North-Carolina to come forward and volunteer for the purpose. Let those who have good horses come and bring them to aid in the defence of the country. Let those who have horses, but cannot come themselves, give or lend them to those who can come, and thus contribute material aid to those who would defend them in the enjoyment of their homes.

\$144 per annum will be paid for each horse in the Battalion, in two months instalments. They will be fed and cared for at the expense of the government, and if killed in action the value of the animal will be paid. Equipments for man and horse will be furnished, but each man must bring his rifle, gun, pistol, knife, or such arms as he may have, which will answer until the government can furnish a uniform weapon. *Energy of action*—action is what the country needs now—and the men of the country must show by their readiness to come forward, the determination which actuates them, never to be conquered.

The battalion will consist of six companies of sixty men each. Volunteers will, for the present, address me at Halifax, N. C., until suitable recruiting stations can be established.

P. M. EDMONDSTON,

1st Col. Com. Prov. Army C. S. A.

Raleigh, Feb. 25, 1862.

8—wif.

Illustration 2. Advertisement to Raise a Battalion of Light Horse. North Carolina Standard, Raleigh, N.C. Vol. XXVIII, no. 10, March 5, 1862.

It was not until Governor Vance called for and the state legislature passed the "Guard for Home Defense" act that home guards were successfully organized. This measure replaced the old militia units and called for enrollment of males between 18 and 50 that were exempt from the Confederate army.⁵¹ Enrollment in Halifax County took place at Dawson's Crossroads (approximately five miles west of Scotland Neck) on July 27, 1863.⁵² Again, Patrick Edmondston was placed in command.⁵³ Journal entries by Mrs. Edmondston noted several occasions on which her husband was drilling troops.⁵⁴ At times the Home Guard was called out by Governor Vance to meet raids (or rumored raids) in North Carolina. More than once these orders were impossible to comply with or were cries of "wolf." For example, on December 25, 1864, the governor ordered the Halifax County Home Guard to the defense of Wilmington. The guard turned out and hurried southward but was stopped at Rocky Mount by the lack of trains. Most returned home immediately and the scattered members that did try to continue discovered that the Union fleet had already moved away from Fort Fisher.⁵⁵

⁵¹Richard E. Yates, "Zebulon Vance as War Governor of North Carolina, 1862-1865," Journal of Southern History, III (February, 1937), 54.

⁵²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 442.

⁵³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 331.

⁵⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 504, 507; these are just two of many examples.

⁵⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 642, 649, 650, 659.

Mrs. Edmondston, a very vocal and opinionated woman, expressed her lack of confidence in the Home Guard. She was disgusted that her husband was not re-elected as an officer when the guard was reorganized in February 1865. She blamed this on the refusal of Patrick to "treat" or drink with his soldiers.⁵⁶ Even before he was ousted, she recorded that the group was "undrilled, old, feeble, and undisciplined."⁵⁷

Not all "patriotic" citizens of Halifax County were willing to serve in either the volunteer army or home guard. The governors' letter books are filled with appeals from mothers, wives, and the would-be soldiers themselves to be exempt from active duty. With each new conscript bill or advertisement, such as the one in the Tarboro Southerner calling for all white males between 17 and 18 and 45 and 50 not enrolled in other organizations to appear for medical exams to enter the 34th or 35th North Carolina Militia, Halifax County,⁵⁸ came a new flood of appeals. Reasons ran the gamut from "no one to care for wife and eight children,"⁵⁹ a petition from area women pleading that the only man in the surrounding area be exempt,⁶⁰ and being called in despite having

⁵⁶Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 671.

⁵⁷Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 630.

⁵⁸Tarboro Southerner, Vol. 1, no. 22, April 16, 1864.

⁵⁹Mary G. King to Henry T. Clark, February 14, 1862, Governors Papers, Clark.

⁶⁰Petition to Henry T. Clark, July 1, 1862, Governors Papers, Clark; this petition by women signers of Halifax County hoped to allow J. C. Randolph to remain at home. W. J. Teale to Henry T. Clark, July 12, 1863, Governors Papers, Clark.

supplied a "lawful substitute."⁶¹ One pitiful plea came from R. W. Hamilin. He was willing to serve the state in his appointment to take the tax list for the court and to serve on the committee to care for families of volunteers but begged to be exempt from active service as his large size would not permit him to drill.⁶² Even Mr. Edmondston, so intent on raising his own company, finally requested a certificate of disability as he could no longer stand the rigors of active army life.⁶³

Halifax County's military importance to the Confederacy rested largely on the major railroads that passed through the county and connected with other lines at Weldon. As the shortest, most direct route connecting Richmond with the lower South, the Wilmington and Weldon and the Weldon-Petersburg railroads were used extensively during the Civil War in the mobilization and transportation of troops and supplies.⁶⁴ Supplies for the battlefield came largely from the state of Georgia and the urban areas of Charleston, Savannah, and Wilmington. Wilmington, a key blockade-running port, supplied Southern troops with much needed items such as meat and woolen material for uniforms.⁶⁵ The

⁶¹ John H. Shaw to Zebulon B. Vance, January 12, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance; this writer claimed exemption from the conscription acts, having supplied a substitute July 30, 1862.

⁶² R. W. Hamlin to Henry T. Clark, February 22, 1862, Governors Papers, Clark.

⁶³ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 672.

⁶⁴ Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 54.

⁶⁵ Goff, Confederate Supply, 213.

need for organized, efficient movement of supplies by train was recognized early. A letter from General Robert E. Lee to John Ellis informed the North Carolina governor that a "Transportation Agent" had been appointed and stationed at Weldon "for the purpose of forwarding troops and supplies of the Confederate States to this (Richmond) and other points in Virginia."⁶⁶

As the war continued, the value of railroads to the war effort grew. From December 1863 until 1865, government trade for subsistence supplies in Virginia and eastern North Carolina greatly increased. Usually such trade involved the exchange of cotton and tobacco for meat.⁶⁷ Government efforts to supply troops with meat from the area increased to the point where the Subsistence Department needed between 600 to 800 bales of government cotton to be delivered to Weldon each week.⁶⁸

A commissary store house in Weldon was located adjacent to the tracks of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad.⁶⁹ Records maintained by Captain John Devereux, Commissary Department, for the Adjutant General's office reveal that large quantities of supplies were kept on

⁶⁶ Tolbert, Ellis Papers, II, 817.

⁶⁷ Goff, Confederate Supply, 166.

⁶⁸ Goff, Confederate Supply, 167; R. N. Scott and others, eds., The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 70 volumes, 1880-1901), Archer Anderson to Major J. W. Cameron, January 19, 1865, Series I, XLVI, Part 2, 104, hereinafter cited as Official Records (Army).

⁶⁹ Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 128.

STATE OF NORTH-CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF WAR AND MARINE,

RALEIGH, June 12th 1861.

SIR: You are hereby informed that the Governor has nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Military Board has appointed you a *Quartermaster of Post at Weldon & its dependencies Rank as Lieutenant.*

in the State Troops of North-Carolina, (authorized by "An Act to raise ten thousand troops," ratified May 8th, 1861.) You will immediately on the receipt hereof, please communicate through the Adjutant General's office your acceptance or non-acceptance, and in case of accepting, you will fill up and subscribe the certificate and oath herewith, giving your name in full.

Henry T. Clark
Warden. This is by
Secy

To *W. A. Hulse*

Quartermaster at Post Weldon and its dependencies
Rank as Lieutenant

Weldon N.C.

NOTE—Company officers are subject to the following provision in the above act:

SEC. 6 *Be it further enacted.* That the Governor shall by and with the advice and consent of the Military Board, appoint the commissioned officers provided for in this act (except the aids-de-camp.) The company officers shall be appointed and ordered to recruit their respective companies, and as soon as they can complete the same to sixty-four privates, with the required non-commissioned officers, and report the fact to the adjutant and inspector-general, then the commissions shall be issued and bear date from the time of their appointment. Should any captain fail to raise his company in a reasonable time the Governor, by and with the consent of the military board, may revoke his appointment.

(OVER.)

Illustration 3. Appointment of Quartermaster at Weldon, North Carolina, by Governor Clark, Henry T. Clark, Governors Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

hand for area training camps.⁷⁰ (See Appendix A.) Also, the store at Weldon was a logistical center for the forwarding of supplies to other areas of large troop concentration. Troops enroute to the battlefront could expect to draw their supplies while passing through Weldon.⁷¹ (See Appendix B.) In addition to food supplies, an ordnance officer was stationed by the railway early in 1861. W. W. Peirce gathered 102,000 ball cartridges from throughout North Carolina for distribution to state troops.⁷²

Not all matters ran smoothly in regard to supplying the commissary. J. W. Hinton wrote Governor Vance concerning a supply of bacon intended for Weldon that was long overdue. It appears the supplier, when threatened with a law suit for breach of contract, was able to produce the meat.⁷³ The removal of corn from the area became such a vital concern with General R. E. Lee that he issued an order specifically dealing with this matter. The order forbade the further removal of corn from the eastern North Carolina counties most accessible to

⁷⁰ Commissary Department: Accounts 1861-1865, 154-199, Adjutant General's Office, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

⁷¹ Commissary Department Letter Book May 21, 1861-November 8, 1862, W. Morrison to Captain John Devereux, June 17, 1861, 66, Adjutant General's Office, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

⁷² Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 500.

⁷³ J. W. Hinton to Zebulon B. Vance, May 17, 1864 and May 18, 1864, Private Collections, Zebulon B. Vance Papers, PC 15.4, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Vance Papers, PC 15.4.

the Confederate army unless authorized by the Acting Quarter Master or Quarter Master General.⁷⁴

Difficulty also developed concerning the system of transportation itself. Even though General Lee placed Mason Morfit in charge as transportation agent at Weldon, the authority Morfit possessed was over troops, supplies, and persons traveling under order.⁷⁵ The Confederate government's failure to view railroads as strategically important for military affairs resulted in the lack of a central coordinated control of the railroad system until late in the war. The railroads became so overcrowded with troops and government freight that corn could not be shipped in quantities to meet General Lee's needs.⁷⁶ That restrictions were attempted is evident by an 1863 appeal to Confederate Major General D. H. Hill to allow the passage of salt through Weldon, as the people of the Roanoke River valley depended on salt from Wilmington.⁷⁷ It was only as a last resort, and too late to be effective, that Special Order #10 was issued by General R. E. Lee on January 11, 1865. In it he requested Governor Vance to oversee compliance with the order that forbade shipping by vessel or rail any goods not needed for or requested by the government. It further stated that no person should use such

⁷⁴H. G. Hutchinson Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

⁷⁵Tolbert, Ellis Papers, II, 817.

⁷⁶Charles S. Carrington to Zebulon B. Vance, March 21, 1863, Governors Papers, Vance.

⁷⁷David A. Barner, Aide de Camp to Governor to Major General D. H. Hill, June 12, 1863, Vance Papers, PC 15.2.

Extract
Special Orders
No 300

Head Quarters
Department of Northern Virginia
8th Decr 1864

III.

The temporary interruption of the Rail Road in the Southern States has rendered the Army dependant for its supply of corn upon the sections of Country which are accessible to it. The immediate wants of the Army render it necessary to secure for its use all the available Corn in Eastern North Carolina and it is therefore ordered by authority of the Secretary of War that no corn shall be removed from that District including all the Counties under the control of Captain S. Woodson Wamble A. G. M. and the Officers who report to him without written permits under the authority of the Asst. Mr. Genl.

This order is intended not to interfere with the permission granted by the War Department to the producer of Corn to retain one fourth of their surplus crops free from impressment, but only to prohibit the removal of it from the district except under the permission above mentioned.

(Sgd) R. E. Lee, Genl.

Brig. Genl. A. R. Johnston
Asst. Mr. Genl. A. G. M.
Richmond

Illustration 4. Special Order No. 300, R. E. Lee, H. G. Hutchinson Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

transportation unless to accompany government supplies to their destination point and afterward only by approval of the officer receiving the supplies.⁷⁸

Toward the close of the war, approximately one-half of the food for General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia came from the port at Wilmington and was carried to the front by the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad.⁷⁹ In 1864 General Lee stressed the maintenance of what was sometimes termed the "life-line of the Confederacy,"⁸⁰ and advised the Quartermaster General to order the line used almost solely for shipping supplies from Charleston and Wilmington (imported goods) and subsistence supplies obtained in eastern North Carolina.⁸¹ In June 1864 Lee again stressed to Confederate president Jefferson Davis the need for gathering reserve corn at Weldon to be brought up to the troops in Virginia as needed.⁸²

A series of battles along the northern end of the Weldon-Petersburg Railroad during August 18-21, 1864 cut the direct supply line that

⁷⁸ Robert E. Lee to Zebulon B. Vance, January 11, 1865, Vance Papers, PC 15.6.

⁷⁹ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, third ed., 1973), 464, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina.

⁸⁰ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 169.

⁸¹ Goff, Confederate Supply, 215; James A. Seddon to R. E. Lee, June 24, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XL, Part 2, 684-685

⁸² Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, 285.

railroad provided for Confederate troops. Newspaper reports of engagements at Globe Tavern, Yellow House, Blick's Station, and Ream's Station (points along the railroad) were eagerly read by Halifax County citizens.⁸³ President Davis expressed fear to Lee that lodgement of the enemy between the general's troops and Weldon greatly increased the chance of attack on the blockade-running port of Wilmington.⁸⁴ Brigadier General L. S. Baker, commander of the Second District in the Department of North Carolina and South Virginia, wrote Governor Vance that with Union forces in control of the Petersburg end of the railroad, Weldon was "seriously threatened."⁸⁵ Situated as it is just south of the Virginia border, Union control of the Weldon rail center would open the way for a direct Northern invasion of inland North Carolina.

Understandably, the North was pleased with the Union seizure of the railroad at Petersburg. Edwin Stanton, Union Secretary of War, wrote to General U. S. Grant of the President's desire to express official gratification in the seizure of the "Weldon Road." President Lincoln felt the victory was "a heavy blow to [the] enemy."⁸⁶

⁸³ Richmond Examiner, August 18, 1864; Richmond Sentinel, August 20, 1864; G. T. Beauregard to R. E. Lee, August 20, 1864; Jefferson Davis to T. H. Holmes, August 20, 1864, 1192-1194; R. E. Lee to Sec. of War, August 22, 1864, 1194, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 2.

⁸⁴ Jefferson Davis to R. E. Lee, August 23, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 2, 1198.

⁸⁵ L. S. Baker to Vance, August 25, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 2, 1203.

⁸⁶ Edwin M. Stanton to U. S. Grant, August 19, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 2, 291.

General Lee informed the Confederate Secretary of War that he could continue to draw some supplies from the Wilmington and Weldon line by having them brought by rail to Stoney Creek, Virginia and then delivered to his forces by wagon. However, this was a slow, awkward, and unreliable means of supplying an army and the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad rapidly lost its importance to the Army of Northern Virginia. James A. Seddon, Confederate Secretary of War, issued orders sending supplies to the battlefield along a more circular but more protected route,⁸⁷ the Piedmont Railroad which was completed in the summer of 1864.⁸⁸ This route from Greensboro, North Carolina to Danville, Virginia connected Richmond with Atlanta.⁸⁹

In addition to the Confederate dependence on the Petersburg-Weldon Railroad, the Union realized the importance of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad as a link in the Confederate supply line. General George B. McClellan advised General Ambrose Burnside that part of the Union plan for the invasion of North Carolina in 1862 would concentrate on the destruction of the railroad, "A great point would be gained, in any event, by the effectual destruction of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad."⁹⁰ After taking much of the North Carolina coast, General

⁸⁷ Seddon to R. E. Lee, August 23, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 2, 1199.

⁸⁸ Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 85.

⁸⁹ Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 82.

⁹⁰ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 69; Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 92.

Burnside was recalled to Virginia before an advance could be made on the railroad.⁹¹

A second major campaign was planned against the railroad in the fall of 1862. This Union advance got as far north as Goldsboro, destroying the railroad bridge there and inflicting other minor damages. The Confederate defenses at this point halted the enemy and, as Southern reinforcements approached, the Union forces returned to their base at New Bern. Damages to the railroad were quickly repaired.⁹²

Although there were no further major campaigns, there were a number of raids conducted against the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. These raids had as their objective the destruction of the vital supply depot and key river bridge at Weldon. In the summer of 1863, several raids were made along the southern terminus of the rail line.⁹³ As the number of raids increased, the commanding officer at Weldon, along with those at Kinston and Kenansville, was authorized to stop any troops passing through for use as reinforcements if there was evidence of a raid.⁹⁴

⁹¹Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 93.

⁹²Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 145-149; Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, IV, 325-326; Price, "Railroads and Reconstruction," 93-94.

⁹³J. G. Foster to Maj. General H. W. Halleck, July 7, 1863, Official Records (Army), Series I, XXVII, Part 2, 859.

⁹⁴Braxton Bragg to Commanding Officers of Kenansville, Kinston, and Weldon, May 26, 1864, Official Records (Army), Series I, XXXVI, Part 3, 836.

Two land raids came close enough to the bridge and depot at Weldon to seriously endanger the rail center. The first took place in July 1863. At this time a force of United States cavalry under Colonel Samuel S. Spear attempted to destroy the railroad bridge at Weldon.

The Confederates learned of this advance, and Ransom's Brigade (then in Petersburg) under Brigadier General Matt W. Ransom of Northampton County was quickly returned to the Garysburg-Weldon area. General Ransom ordered two pieces of artillery to Boon's Mill (about ten miles from Weldon). Swamps in the area and the mill pond would force Union troops to cross the bridge at the mill if they were to continue on to Weldon. On July 28, 1863, while on a reconnaissance of the area, General Ransom was surprised by rapidly advancing enemy horsemen. Racing the Federal soldiers back to his own lines, the general discovered several of his men were bathing in the pond, unprepared to meet an attack. Fortunately for the Confederates, the Union charge halted while Colonel Spear turned his attention to the placement of his nine-piece artillery battery. Both sides exchanged fire for approximately two hours before the Union troops, their plan having been discovered, retired.⁹⁵

A prominent Northampton County plantation owner, H. K. Burgwyn, was greatly disturbed at the closeness of the raid. He sent

⁹⁵Accounts of this action are in Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 166-169; Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, II, 613-616 and III, 330; and "Racy Account of Boon's Mill," Roanoke News, March 10, 1910.

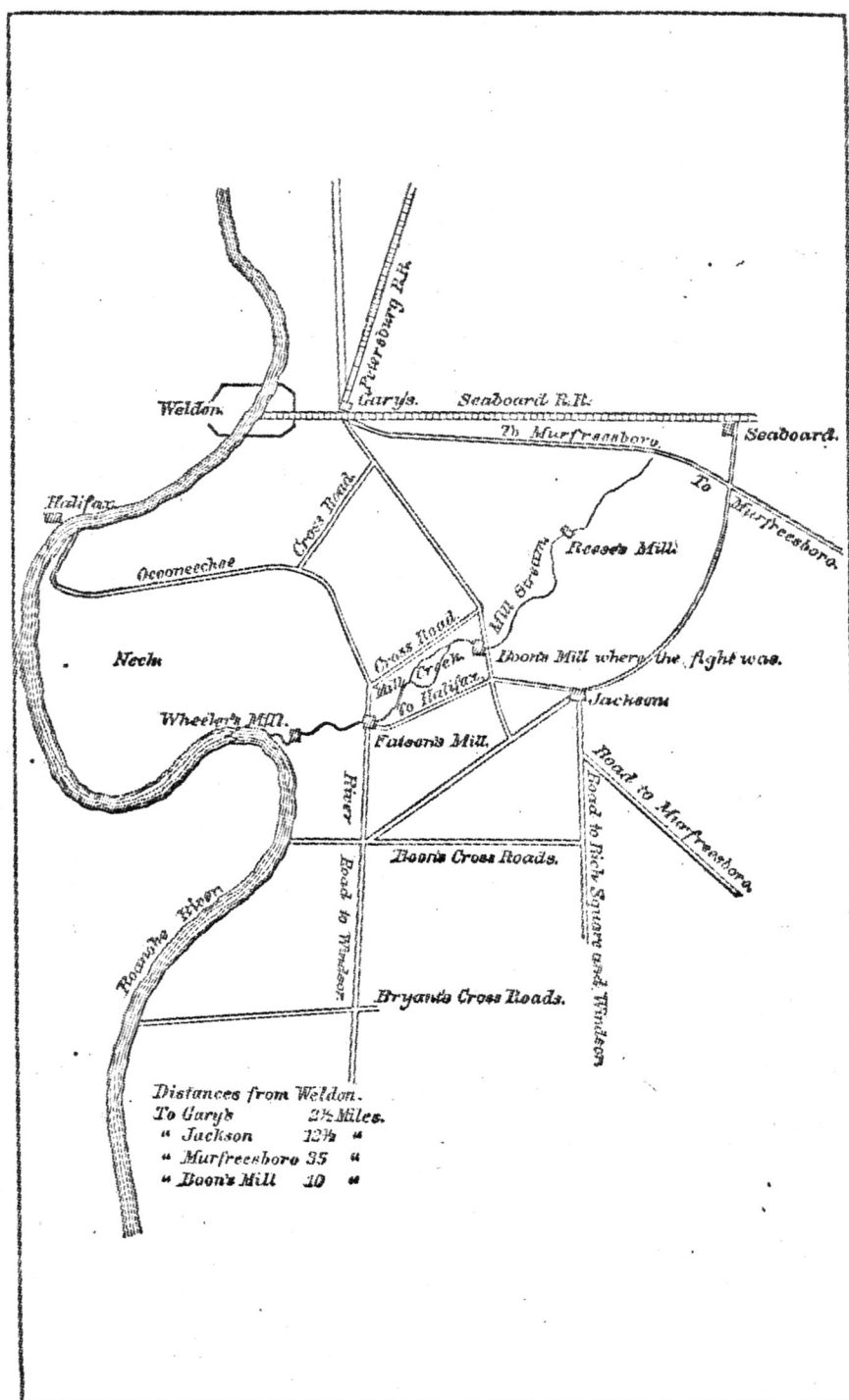


Illustration 5. Map of Northampton County, Site of Union raid halted at Boon's Mill Pond, H. K. Burgwyn to Major-General Whiting, August 1, 1863, Official Records (Army), XXVII, part 3, 1071.

THORNBURY PLANTATION,
Near Garysburg, N. C.,
August 4th, 1863.

John W. Syme, Esq.:

MY DEAR SIR: The raid upon Weldon brought me here very suddenly. The escape of Weldon was very narrow. Had Gen. Ransom been as slow as some of our commanders, nothing could have saved the bridge from being destroyed, and this whole country from being ravaged. Less than half an hour preserved it. Gen. Ransom had not time to detach his horses from his guns before the attack began by the enemy, who, under an active leader, had galloped up for several miles, while Gen. R. had to meet the attack at first with only 6 companies and a section of artillery. It is perfectly wonderful to witness the neglect of so important a position as Weldon, by the authorities; and to note the apathy of the inhabitants about here previous to the raid; but since they have met them face to face, since they have seen for themselves their conduct, their robberies, (even of the negroes, their watches, clothes, &c.) their lying treachery, and their unbridled licentiousness, which was committed in broad day and in the yards of private houses, etc., etc., they have all become "secession" and are for fighting to the last, to keep out such people from their country. I think, could the inhabitants of Wake, Rowan, Randolph and other counties who now pin their faith upon the *Standard*, once experience a Yankee raid, they would reject evermore its teachings with contempt, and turn from any kind of reconstruction with horror—death were preferable. Had Gen. Ransom commanded even but 500 cavalry in addition to his force, he could have captured a large portion of the enemy on their retreat, as they got drunk; but the General had to do his own scouting with his staff, being the only "cavalry" he had, and lucky he did so, otherwise our forces must have been surprised. The fact that the enemy have now advanced their base to the upper Chowan within 35 miles of Weldon, should awaken the closest attention of our authorities to the peril we are in. They promised a speedy return in great force.

Illustration 6. Letter to Editor on Local Defense. Raleigh Register, August 9, 1863.

recommendations to the commanding officer at Weldon calling for the use of natural barriers (swamps and ponds) along with a series of earthworks to establish an effective defense of Weldon on the north side of the Roanoke River in Northampton County. He stressed the need for such defense as the enemy base was then located at Murfreesboro, North Carolina, only thirty-five miles from Weldon. This plan was forwarded, strongly approved by the Weldon commander, to the Confederate Secretary of War.⁹⁶ However, the abortive Boon's Mill raid ended Federal attempts on the railroad for 1863.

The following year Walter Clark of the Seventieth North Carolina Junior Reserves wrote home of a small skirmish in the area. Stationed at Weldon in the fall of 1864, Clark's company received orders to meet an approaching enemy raid. Upon reaching Boykins Depot, Virginia artillery fire was heard in the direction of Murfree's Depot (Murfreesboro), once again under Confederate control. There the Confederates found that the raiding party had consisted of about fifty enemy troops. It was determined that these Union soldiers had not been intent on attacking Weldon but were sent to burn buildings and destroy Confederate supplies in the Murfreesboro area before returning to their base in Suffolk, Virginia.⁹⁷

The second raid that seriously threatened Weldon took place between March 28 and April 11, 1865. This was carried out under the

⁹⁶ H. K. Burgwyn to Major-General Whiting, August 1, 1863, Official Records (Army), Series I, XXVII, Part 3, 1070-1072.

⁹⁷ Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 125.

command of Colonel E. V. Sumner of the First New York Mounted Rifles, about 600 strong. Leaving Virginia, the objective of this raid was to destroy as much of the Seaboard Railroad line as possible. On his approach to Weldon, Colonel Sumner determined that Confederate forces there were too strong to allow destruction of the bridge. Therefore, he decided to tear up track of the Seaboard line about seven miles north of Weldon. Confederate troops discovered the Union force and brought men up the line on railroad cars. The Federal raiders were able to push back this attack but Colonel Sumner did not feel it was advisable for him to continue the raid.⁹⁸ Plans were made to return to the area with an increased raiding party.⁹⁹ The attack was not made, however, as the days of the Confederacy were few. The outcome of the war obvious, the destruction of further bridges and railroad track would be useless, if not harmful, to the Union cause.

During the closing months of the war, the importance of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad rested in its transportation of men and supplies within North Carolina. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston noted that over a four-month period in the winter of 1864-1865 provisions for sixty thousand men were located at railroad depots between and including Charlotte, Danville, and Weldon.¹⁰⁰ Soon after

⁹⁸ Report of Colonel E. V. Sumner, April 1, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVI, Part 1, 555-556; E. V. Sumner to Ord, April 5, 1865 and Geo. Gordon to Ord, April 5, 1865, Series I, XLVI, Part 3, 587.

⁹⁹ George Gordon to Major General Weitzel, April 8, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVI, Part 3, 660.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations Directed During the Late War Between the States by Joseph E. Johnston, General,

the fall of Petersburg, an officer stationed in Weldon wrote his wife that all supplies along the Seaboard and Petersburg Railroad had been brought to that town.¹⁰¹

After being defeated by Union forces at Bentonville, North Carolina, General Johnston concentrated his troops in the Smithfield area. From this position he would be able to place his forces in front of General W. T. Sherman's route into Virginia whether he (Sherman) decided to go through Raleigh or directly north through Weldon.¹⁰² The possibility of Sherman's forces moving up the Wilmington and Weldon line to join with Union troops under General U. S. Grant can be seen in a telegram to the Superintendents of Railroad and Telegraph at Weldon. This telegram requested that communication lines in Weldon be placed in working order to allow direct contact with Grant, and guaranteed payment for this service.¹⁰³ By this time Sherman would have had difficulty moving his troops up the damaged railroad. By April 1865 plans had been made by Confederates to evacuate Weldon as soon

C.S.A., edited by Frank E. Vandiver (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 375, hereinafter cited as Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations.

¹⁰¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 688.

¹⁰²Barrett, Sherman's March Through the Carolinas, 200.

¹⁰³L. M. Dayton to Superintendents of Railroad and Telegraph, Weldon, NC, April 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLII, Part 3, 287; Charles L. Price, "The United States Military Railroads in North Carolina, 1862-1865," North Carolina Historical Review, LIII (July, 1976), 253.

as supplies were removed from the depot,¹⁰⁴ and to destroy the railroad bridge spanning the Roanoke River.¹⁰⁵

Halifax County's proximity to railroad connections made it a logical site for training camps. The majority of these camps of instruction were situated in and around Weldon, including an area immediately across the Roanoke River in the township of Garysburg. The Scotland Neck Mounted Riflemen were stationed and trained at Camp Winslow,¹⁰⁶ presumably located in the eastern section of the county near Halifax.

William Dorsey Pender was appointed lieutenant colonel by the state's governor with the responsibility of establishing camps of instruction. Early in the war he was ordered to organize the camps near Weldon.¹⁰⁷ A untiring, faithful writer to his wife, Pender, on May 8, 1861, revealed he was not very impressed with Weldon: "This of all places is the most disgusting I have ever been. It is perfectly impossible to do anything with the men here. . . ." Although he anticipated numerous complaints from civilians and soldiers alike, Pender moved this early war camp across the river to Garysburg and began the construction of barracks. It was his intention to "keep the men away from

¹⁰⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 691.

¹⁰⁵Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 693.

¹⁰⁶Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 227.

¹⁰⁷William Dorsey Pender served with the Army of Northern Virginia, reaching the rank of major general before his death at Gettysburg. After his service as post commandant, he served actively in the field. His bravery and military abilities were noted often by Jefferson Davis, "Stonewall" Jackson, R. E. Lee, and A. P. Hill. Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, 334-337.

here (Weldon) and I hope away from liquor."¹⁰⁸ In his following letter, written six days later, Pender was much happier with his situation, "feasting on strawberries and sponge cake." He wrote that, if he were forced to stay at a camp, he preferred his present one to all others.¹⁰⁹ Evidence in both letters indicates that some of his extreme hostility to Weldon stemmed from his bitter disappointment at not being given a command at the battlefront.

Camps established in the Weldon area included Camp Ransom,¹¹⁰ Camp Holmes,¹¹¹ and Camp Floyd.¹¹² Letters home provide reference to at least two more near Weldon, Camp Robinson and Camp Pettigrew.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender, May 8, 1861, William Dorsey Pender Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Pender Papers. Several of these letters were edited and published under the title The General to His Lady: The Civil War Letters of William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender.

¹⁰⁹William D. Pender to Fanny Pender, May 14, 1861, Pender Papers.

¹¹⁰Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 115.

¹¹¹Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 117.

¹¹²Louis H. Manarin, ed., Guide to Military Organizations and Installations in North Carolina, 1861-1865 (Raleigh: North Carolina Confederate Centennial Commission, 1961), 3, hereinafter cited as Manarin, Military Organizations and Installations. Additional mention of camps of instruction appear in Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 18; Allen, A History of Halifax County, 115; and Abraham G. Jones to Family, October 9, 1862 and October 31, 1862, Abraham G. Jones Papers, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC, hereinafter cited as Jones Papers.

¹¹³George Phifer Erwin to sister, December 31, 1862 and January 11 and 13, 1863, George Phifer Erwin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Erwin Papers.

Others located in the Garysburg area directly across the river, as a result of the Weldon depot, included Camp Advance,¹¹⁴ Camp Hill,¹¹⁵ Camp Long,¹¹⁶ and Camp Vance.¹¹⁷ Volunteers for the Confederate States Army poured into these camps and various companies organized throughout the state were ordered to them for training.¹¹⁸

Letters from soldiers stationed in the area reveal that camp life in the county was not too unpleasant. Mention of building huts and log cabins with good chimneys, indicating sufficient shelter, appear in many letters¹¹⁹ and the agriculture of the area as well as the supply depot at Weldon should have adequately furnished the needs of the men. Soldiers often wrote home of deer hunting, fishing, visiting in local

¹¹⁴Manarin, Military Organizations and Installations, 1.

¹¹⁵Manarin, Military Organizations and Installations, 3.

¹¹⁶Jones Papers, October 31, 1862; November 13, 1862; Manarin, Military Organizations and Installations, 4.

¹¹⁷Jones Papers, October 9, 1862.

¹¹⁸Among the regiments formed in the area camps were the Fifteenth North Carolina Regiment, Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 494; the Fifty-ninth North Carolina Regiment (Fourth Regiment North Carolina Cavalry), Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 263; the Twelfth North Carolina Regiment, Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 106; the Thirteenth North Carolina Regiment, Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 275; the Fourteenth North Carolina Regiment, Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, V, 387; the Sixty-third North Carolina Regiment, Manarin and Jordan, North Carolina Troops, II, 367; and, after the measure was approved, the Seventieth Junior Reserves, North Carolina Regiment, Allen, A History of Halifax County, 113.

¹¹⁹George Phifer Erwin to sister, December 31, 1862, Erwin Papers; Edward Phifer to mother, Mrs. John F. Phifer, October 27, 1863, Edward Phifer Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Phifer Papers.

homes and dining. An example of camp fare, beef, cabbage, candied potatoes, and stewed tomatoes, was highly praised by one partaker.¹²⁰

In addition to drilling, duties of camp life called for filling the ice house for the sick,¹²¹ working on camp structures, and maintaining nearby fortifications.¹²² One bored soldier wrote of his desire to get work at the navy yard, or on the bridge, as he would "rather work than drill."¹²³ Not everyone was battle-hungry and glory seeking.

J. B. Gaither wrote home that he was quite content living off fish from the Roanoke River, his main concern being his desire for his battalion to be broken up. He feared such a large one as his would be used on the front lines in combat.¹²⁴

The training camps did experience a number of problems. Troops were subject to goods peddled at high prices by sutlers. Garysburg

¹²⁰Edward Phifer to Mrs. John F. Phifer, January 10, 1864, Phifer Papers; Diary 2, March 24, 1863-January 20, 1864, William Hyslop Sumner Burgwyn Diary, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Burgwyn Diary. This diary was started by a Union soldier, Burgwyn picked it up off a Virginia battlefield and continued with his own writings.

¹²¹Edward Phifer to Mrs. John F. Phifer, January 10, 1864, Phifer Papers.

¹²²Burgwyn Diary, August 20, 1863-October, 1863. These entries record work on fortifications around Weldon, Faisons Mill, and Garysburg by detailed soldiers and Negroes.

¹²³James H. Baker to father, June 24, 1864, James H. Baker Papers, Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, Durham, NC.

¹²⁴J. B. Gaither to sister, May 26, 1864, Gaither Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Gaither Papers; J. B. Gaither to sister, June 4, 1864, Gaither Papers.

was noted by one disgruntled Confederate as a "stinking little place."¹²⁵ Also, it is doubtful that Pender's goal of separating the men from the liquor was a complete success. Guards were placed at drinking bars in Weldon as "a sanitary measure."¹²⁶ Even so, drunkenness continued to plague the camps.¹²⁷ One poor soldier arrived in Weldon on Christmas 1862. He spent the day sleeping in a box car with the only notice of the holiday being the "drunken cry of some soldier 'Hurrah for Christmas.'"¹²⁸ The more rowdy often found themselves in the guard house. A worried mother appealed to Governor Vance concerning her son. The boy, not yet 17, had been arrested in a fight. It appears he brashly called a fellow soldier "conscript," resulting in a knife fight.¹²⁹

In a more serious note, a prisoner, ordered with eighty others to Castle Thunder by General Matt W. Ransom, was retained at Weldon. After nine months imprisonment, there were no charges against him and he appealed to the North Carolina governor for evidence against his character to be reviewed.¹³⁰ Lieutenant Edward Phiher, Company K, 49th

¹²⁵Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 256.

¹²⁶Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 280.

¹²⁷Louis Henry Webb to family, July 25, 1861 and July 29, 1861, Louis Henry Webb Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹²⁸George Phiher Erwin to sister, December 26, 1862, Erwin Papers.

¹²⁹E. Nistmen to Zebulon V. Vance, March, 1863, Governors Papers, Vance.

¹³⁰M. J. McSween to Zebulon B. Vance, May 3, 1864 and May 25, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance.

Regiment of North Carolina troops, was stationed near Weldon during October 1863. On October 13 he wrote home of six deserters being shot and one branded "D." A few days later he wrote of three men he knew: Lewis Adams, Lee Harper, and W. C. Shull. These men were to be tried for desertion and Phifer felt they, too, would be shot as "they shoot almost everyone they try, for deserting."¹³¹

The large number of men stationed in the camps around Weldon, in addition to the soldiers passing through to and from the battlefield in Virginia, made it necessary that medical facilities be located nearby. A post hospital was set up in Garysburg.¹³² Epidemics of measles there¹³³ added to the high death rate in area camps.¹³⁴ The rations supplied this hospital for one month, June 1-July 1, 1861, indicate a large number of men were treated there:

Bacon	243 lbs.
Flour	567 lbs.
Coffee	28 lbs.
Sugar	19 lbs.
Rice	40 lbs.
Vinegar	7 qts.
Molasses	7 qts.
Candles	5 lbs.
Lard	17 lbs.
Fish	141 lbs.

¹³¹Edward Phifer to mother, October 13, 1863 and October 15, 1863, Phifer Papers.

¹³²Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 136.

¹³³Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 266.

¹³⁴Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 271.

Fresh Beef	240 lbs.	¹³⁵
Meal	150 lbs.	

On May 16, 1861 Governor Ellis appointed Dr. Charles E. Johnson surgeon general of North Carolina. Dr. Johnson established North Carolina field hospitals in Virginia, a general hospital in Raleigh, and several wayside hospitals, including one at Weldon.¹³⁶ In September 1862 all North Carolina military hospitals were turned over to the Confederacy. The following year P. E. Hines, surgeon, was appointed by the Confederate government as medical director of North Carolina hospitals. His report indicated that the wayside hospital at Weldon was in operation until the end of the war.¹³⁷

Memoirs of a local resident, Mrs. Ida T. Wilkins, record the location of the wayside hospital. Mrs. Wilkins, a young girl in Weldon during the Civil War, claimed that the hospital was set up in a small Methodist church just west of the railroad station.¹³⁸ A short distance from where Mrs. Wilkins placed the church-hospital is a Confederate cemetery. The graves of approximately one hundred Southern soldiers are now unmarked except by a single stone indicating their burial in the area. Only one marker identifies a soldier there. Private Lee Burleyson (Thirteenth Battalion North Carolina Light Artillery, Company

¹³⁵ Abstract of Provisions 1861: Commissary Report, Garysburg, NC, Adjutant General's Office, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

¹³⁶ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 21; Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, IV, 624.

¹³⁷ Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, IV, 625-626.

¹³⁸ Campbell, Weldon Methodist Church, 4.

A) died in the Weldon hospital on October 15, 1864, and was buried in the cemetery. A stone bearing his name, regiment, and company was erected sometime after the turn of the century by a relative.¹³⁹

Even into the spring of 1865, some citizens continued to have faith in the Confederacy. Walter Clark, writing on April 7, 1865 that he had heard rumors of the fall of Weldon and feared for Halifax, still maintained stubborn hope of Southern victory.¹⁴⁰ Three days later he confirmed the evacuation of Weldon but added, "Our Army I am glad to say is Continually increasing."¹⁴¹ But the end was in sight as most civilians and soldiers well knew. All Confederate provisions and munitions along the Seaboard and Petersburg Railroad were brought into Weldon.¹⁴² Plans were made for the evacuation of the town as soon as these supplies could be removed.¹⁴³

Perhaps the following ballad is more realistic than Clark's hopeful view of the war. Recorded by a construction worker stationed at the Edwards Ferry shipyard, it reflects an attitude of despair and disheartedness. The writer, Richard Elmore, placed these thoughts on paper April 3, 1865, when the fate of the Confederacy was already sealed.

¹³⁹The author has visited this cemetery several times and recorded the area with photographs and slides.

¹⁴⁰Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 138.

¹⁴¹Brooks and Lefler, Clark Papers, I, 139.

¹⁴²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 688.

¹⁴³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 691.

Why am I so weak and weary who so fant my heated brow
 All around to me seemed darknedd tell me Comrods is this deth
 O how well I know your answer to my fate I'll meeakly bow
 If you'll only tell me truly who will care for Mother now

Soon with Angles Ill be marching with bright laurels on my brow
 I have for my Country falen who will care for mother now

Who will comfort Her in hurting who will dry a falling tear
 Who smooth Her wrinkled Forehead who will whisper words of chear
 Even now I think I see Her Kneeling praying for me how
 Can I leave Her in Her anguish who will care for mother now

Let this Knapsac be my Pillow and my mantle be the sky
 Hasten comrads to the Battle I will like a Soldier die
 Soon with Angles I'll be marching with bright laurels on my brow
 If you'll only tell me truly who will care for mother now

Soon with Angles I'll be marching with bright laurels on my brow
 I have for my country fallen who will care for mother now¹⁴⁴

During the war's final days, Brigadier General L. S. Baker commanded the Confederate forces in the Weldon area. The fall of Plymouth, Washington, Kinston, and Goldsboro made Weldon the last key rail center in eastern North Carolina still under Confederate control. General Baker was responsible for maintaining this position as well as gathering supplies for the Confederate army from the surrounding area. It was Baker's forces that met and repelled the last Union raid on the railroad that was directed at Weldon (Colonel Sumner's raid).

¹⁴⁴ Richard Elmore, Elmore Family Papers, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, Greenville, NC. Richard Elmore enlisted in the Confederate Army but being blind in one eye was discharged. He then served in construction on the ironclad, C.S.S. Neuse and in Wilmington under John Porter, Chief Naval Constructor. His ballad, penned April 3, 1865, is addressed "Edards Ferry, Halifax County." As there was Edards Ferry and review of several of Elmore's letters and ballads reveals him to be a notoriously poor speller, the author has assumed the site he intended was the shipbuilding site of Edwards Ferry, Halifax County.

On April 7, 1865 all guns, ordnance, and supplies were ordered removed from the north side of the Weldon bridge. Railway engines were brought into the town and preparations were made to fire the bridge. This was not done and the guns were carried back to their placements across the river to face the threat of Union cavalry under General P. H. Sheridan. On April 10, artillery and trains were again ordered into town and on April 12, 1865 Confederate forces evacuated Weldon.

The bridge was not burned by the retreating Confederate army. However, two days after troops had pulled out, panic-stricken citizens destroyed it. Before leaving, the Confederate army had searched out and destroyed any type vessel that could be used by Union troops to cross the river from the north bank. Citizens of the town held the faint hope that these two actions would prevent or at least delay the entry of Union forces coming from Virginia.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵Clark, Histories of North Carolina Regiments, V, 269-284; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 690, 693.

NAVAL OPERATIONS IN HALIFAX COUNTY

DURING THE CIVIL WAR

Naval operations within Halifax County focused on the Roanoke River. The significance of the river during the Civil War was summed up by Colonel Jones Frankle, United States Army, commanding forces at Plymouth in November 1864. In a letter to Commander W. H. Macomb, United States Navy, commanding the District of the Sounds, Colonel Frankle expressed fear of Union evacuation of the river and wrote, "The importance of the Roanoke River is apparent. From this place (Plymouth) the river is navigable nearly or quite to Weldon, the importance of which place, both on account of its railway connections and communications with the rebel army in Virginia and its water connection with the North Carolina sounds, is evident. . . ." He also pointed out the "fertility of the Roanoke Valley" and the dependence of Confederates on the area for supplies, as well as the danger of southern shipbuilding activities along the river.¹

Correspondence to North Carolina governor Henry T. Clark, early in July 1862, stressed the need for an ironclad on the Roanoke for "riding our waters of Yankees." Submitting a design for a vessel that could be rapidly built, Lieutenant W. T. Muse felt the difficulty of the task could be matched by the energy of the state. Lieutenant Muse

¹Robert Rush and others, ed., Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 30 volumes, 1894-1941, Colonel Frankle to Commander Macomb, November 24, 1864, Series I, IX, 93-94, hereinafter cited as Official Records (Navy)).

believed speed was the key, that what should be built was "an impromptu boat without regard to accommodations and nice workmanship."² Despite the enthusiasm of Muse, the most noted event of naval importance to occur in Halifax County, the building of the C.S.S. Albemarle, was not of his design. This vessel, an ironclad, was constructed at Edward's Ferry near the town of Scotland Neck. Gilbert Elliott and William P. Martin contracted with the Confederate Navy Department in the fall of 1862 to build the ironclad.³ Elliott, a nineteen-year-old contractor, engaged Peter E. Smith of Scotland Neck to be in charge of construction, and the entire operation was under the supervision of John L. Porter, Chief Naval Constructor of the Confederacy.⁴

Edward's Ferry, the location of the shipyard, was a cleared area along the river owned by the Smith family. Peter Smith was noted for not being "fond of farming," the traditional livelihood of the Smith family. Instead, he preferred to tinker with machinery and on September 20, 1861 purchased a steam saw mill.⁵ Evidently he was employed by the Confederate government before work on the Albemarle began because on April 28, 1862 he was contracted with and ordered to furnish what was necessary for completion of work "being done on the Roanoke."⁶

³William N. Still, Jr., Iron Afloat (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 150, hereinafter cited as Still, Iron Afloat.

⁴Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 214.

⁵Peter E. Smith Papers, September 20, 1861.

⁶Peter E. Smith Papers, April 28, 1862.

Smith's interests proved valuable in the construction of the ironclad. He used the resources of the area to commence building and during the work he invented a twist drill that cut drilling time on the iron plates from approximately twenty to four minutes.⁷ It is interesting to note that Smith's mechanical interests continued after the war and that he is credited with a number of inventions, two of which (a lighted buoy and a spark arrestor) were patented.⁸

In 1862 Union naval officers began to suspect the possibility of ironclads on the Roanoke. S. P. Lee, Rear-Admiral commanding the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, informed Union Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles of an expedition in the fall of 1862 to Hamilton in order to determine if Confederate gunboats were being built there. Federal troops occupied the then evacuated point of Rainbow Bluff and searched the surrounding area. Commander H. K. Davenport, commander of the Heztel and a senior officer in the sounds of North Carolina, seemed convinced that "the rebels have no ironclads on the Roanoke, and that they can not build on that river above Williamston, owing to low water, steep banks, and the want of necessary facilities." The same report indicated that Lieutenant-Commander C. W. Flusser was not satisfied with this theory. He firmly believed that vessels of this type were being constructed near Halifax.⁹ It is ironical that when

⁷Claiborne Thweatt Smith, Jr., Smith of Scotland Neck: Planters on the Roanoke (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1976), 117, hereinafter cited as Smith, Smith of Scotland Neck.

⁸Smith, Smith of Scotland Neck, 118.

⁹Report of S. P. Lee, November 14, 1862, Official Records (Navy), Series I, VIII, 180.

this ironclad did materialize Commander Flusser, chief of Union naval forces in the Albemarle Sound region,¹⁰ would be killed by a shell he supposedly fired himself as it deflected off the iron-plated casemate of the Confederate vessel.¹¹

Rumors concerning the ironclad were rampant. Rear-Admiral Lee received notification in August 1863 that the vessel was near completion¹² (an event that would not take place for about eight months). Correspondence of Union naval officers in North Carolina often included references to the ironclad. The tangled rumors led to nicknaming the supposed ironclad the "Roanoke sheep"¹³ and it was reported in December of 1863 that "the ram is a[s] great a mystery as ever."¹⁴ As late as February 1864, when the Albemarle was two months short of completion, S. P. Lee requested information on supposed land operations in conjunction with ironclads on the Neuse and Roanoke rivers.¹⁵ Major General Benjamin F. Butler, then commanding the Eighteenth Army Corps, Department of Virginia and North Carolina, replied "I do not much believe

¹⁰Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 175.

¹¹Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 218; Gilbert Elliott, "The First Battle of the Confederate Ram 'Albemarle,'" Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders, IV, 627; Still, Iron Afloat, 161.

¹²S. P. Lee to Major-General Foster, August 14, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 164.

¹³C. W. Flusser to Commander Davenport, October 9, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 230.

¹⁴Benjamin F. Butler to Rear-Admiral Lee, December 30, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 384.

¹⁵S. P. Lee to Commander Davenport, February 23, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 502.

in the ram, either in the Roanoke or the Neuse."¹⁶ However, he did propose a plan for the burning of the vessel, if it did exist, but naval officers in the area did not support this plan.¹⁷

Despite General Butler's seeming lack of interest, naval officers along the Roanoke had begun to take steps to destroy the "Roanoke sheep" before she could be completed. In August 1863 Rear-Admiral Lee pointed out to Major General J. G. Foster (then at New Bern) that Union iron-clads could not pass through Hatteras Inlet.¹⁸ He also stated that the fortifications at Rainbow Bluff plus low water in the river would make it impossible for the navy alone to reach and destroy the reported ironclad at Edward's Ferry.¹⁹ Lee stressed the need for military assistance and assured naval help as was feasible.²⁰

It appears that naval officers were unable to convince the army of the need for the destruction of the ironclad. Lieutenant-Commander Flusser was distressed that Foster's raid on the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad had not included an attack on Edward's Ferry.²¹ Foster's reply

¹⁶ Benjamin F. Butler to Rear-Admiral Lee, February 17, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 491.

¹⁷ S. P. Lee to Lt. Commander Flusser, April 4, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 584.

¹⁸ S. P. Lee to Major General Foster, August 18, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 164.

¹⁹ Report of S. P. Lee, August 17, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 162.

²⁰ S. P. Lee to Major-General John J. Peck, August 14, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 164.

²¹ C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, August 21, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 175.

to Rear-Admiral Lee concerning this was that his force was not adequate for the task and that premature military action could only result in Confederates strengthening their guard.²² It was not until September 1863 that notice was received from Secretary of War Edwin Stanton acknowledging the presence of the ironclad and giving Major General Foster the authority to use his (Foster's) own judgment in handling the "emergency."²³

Naval action against the reported ironclad included a request by Rear-Admiral Lee for two floating batteries to be built in the North and sent down to the Roanoke River.²⁴ Lieutenant-Commander Flusser outlined a plan for the use of torpedoes and obstructions.²⁵ While waiting for word from the admiral on this plan, he began assembling torpedoes and had boats readied for sinking "in case we hear that the vessel is more formidable or more nearly completed than we now think her."²⁶

²²J. G. Foster to S. P. Lee, August 23, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 180.

²³Edwin M. Stanton to Secretary of Navy Welles, September 19, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 211.

²⁴S. P. Lee to Gideon Welles, August 25, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 181.

²⁵C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, October 31, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 255.

²⁶C. W. Flusser to Commander Davenport, November 25, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 327.

Confederate defenses for the river included the obstructions, torpedoes, and land batteries.²⁷ Additional mentions of river fortifications to protect shipbuilding activities appear in the report of J. Innis Randolph, First Lieutenant, Engineers, Confederate States Army. During September 1862 he toured the river in search of sites to fortify. At Rainbow Bend he proposed a strongly fortified position. At this time only a small, poorly constructed battery was located here (this was the condition of the battery when Union forces captured it in 1862, after it changed hands again, Randolph's advice was taken and Fort Branch was constructed). Further up the river in Halifax County, the lieutenant selected sites at Bridger's Ferry, ten miles below Halifax, and at the Tillery plantation, seven miles below Halifax as suitable for defense. The advantages to these sites were their bluffs, thick timber, and the shallowness of the river near them.²⁸

Confederate troops were assigned to Edward's Ferry. At least two companies, E and H, of the Fifty-sixth North Carolina Infantry Regiment guarded the shipbuilding site.²⁹ In August 1863 Lieutenant-Commander Flusser reported to Rear-Admiral Lee that Confederates maintained a force of approximately 500 men at the shipyard.³⁰

²⁷ J. A. Seddon to Major General Whiting, October 5, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 797; Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881), II, 209.

²⁸ J. Innis Randolph to Captain C. H. Dimmock, October 3, 1862, Official Records (Navy), Series I, VIII, 185-187.

²⁹ Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, III, 331.

³⁰ C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, August 21, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 175.

Building on the Albemarle continued throughout 1863-64. The iron-clad was intended to clear and protect the Roanoke River and the Albemarle Sound. Built according to Chief Constructor John L. Porter's plans, the vessel extended 152 feet and had a 45-foot beam. The 8x10 inch frame timbers were of pine and the "ram" (prow) was of oak. The armor of the vessel was approximately four inches thick and two 200-horsepower engines were installed to propel her.³¹ According to informers' reports to Lieutenant-Commander Charles F. W. Behn of the U.S.S. Southfield, one of the engines installed in the ironclad came from the steamer Cotton Plant.³² The vessel's casemate contained two 100-pounder Brook guns.³³

The wood used in construction of the Albemarle was green, which resulted in leakage.³⁴ Heavily wooded river banks (substantiated by various references)³⁵ plus the proximity of Peter Smith's steam saw

³¹ Elliott, "Albemarle"; Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders, IV, 626; C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, March 27, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 569.

³² Charles F. W. Behn to S. P. Lee, September 8, 1863; Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 194; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 439. Entry for July 23, 1863 concerns two Northern deserters that had worked on and guarded the vessel and battery being built at Edward's Ferry. The two returned to Union lines with information on the shipyard.

³³ "The Rebel Ram Albemarle," New York Herald, April 15, 1865, hereinafter cited as New York Herald.

³⁴ William N. Still, Jr., Confederate Shipbuilding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 59, hereinafter cited as Still, Confederate Shipbuilding.

³⁵ Frank Moore, ed., The Rebellion Record (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1863), V. Doc. 148, 550.

mill indicate the probability that the unseasoned timber used came from local sources. According to Captain John N. Maffitt, the Albemarle's second captain, "the entire construction was one of shreds and patches. . . ." ³⁶ The inspection report in October 1863 by Chief Naval Constructor John S. Porter contained such unflattering phrases as "very rough, and inferior piece of work in labor and material." ³⁷

Mrs. Catherine Edmondston, wife of a local plantation owner, recorded in her diary that on October 24, 1863 Captain James Cooke and Gilbert Elliott had dinner at her home. During the meal the two naval officers told their hosts that the Albemarle had been towed to Halifax for completion. ³⁸ While being launched, the Albemarle suffered some damage, ³⁹ and as usual, this became a twisted rumor. The story that Lieutenant-Commander Flusser received was that she sank while being launched, a story he did not credit with much truth. ⁴⁰

Lieutenant Robert D. Minors, Confederate States Navy, inspected the Albemarle in February of 1864. He reported her near completion except for the iron plating. ⁴¹ Evidently the plating of the vessel

³⁶Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, IV, 223.

³⁷Jno. S. Porter to Office of Chief Naval Construction CS Navy Dept. Richmond, October 21, 1863, Adjutant Generals Papers, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC, hereinafter cited as Adjutant Generals Papers.

³⁸Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 482, 420, 439.

³⁹Still, Iron Afloat, 156.

⁴⁰C. W. Flusser to Commander Davenport, November 16, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 309.

⁴¹Still, Iron Afloat, 157.

at Halifax was well guarded. According to a report held by Union Brigadier General W. H. Wessells, 25,000 pounds of iron had been shipped from Wilmington to Halifax by rail. On board the same train were two well-to-do Southerners (one a Confederate officer). They were denied the right to see the vessel, being told that none but naval officers were allowed to visit the site.⁴²

Difficulty in securing iron plagued construction on the Roanoke. Builder Gilbert Elliott requested and had received Governor Vance's assurance of iron for a floating battery. When news of this reached John O. Whitford, president of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, he immediately appealed to the governor and had the shipment halted. Elliott then turned to the Secretary of Navy, Mallory, for forty tons to continue work, as negotiations with the governor had failed. Vance simply called for the work to stop.⁴³

Correspondence between Secretary Mallory, Governor Vance, and Flag Officer William F. Lynch, commander of the Confederate naval forces in North Carolina⁴⁴ throughout February and March 1863 concerned the obtaining of iron. Mallory pointed out the presence of 4,224 bars and 7,071 tons of iron at and below Launenburg, North Carolina. As there was no operation beyond that point, he requested the Navy Department be allowed to roll this into plates for the vessel and battery on the

⁴²S. P. Lee to Gideon Welles, February 26, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 507.

⁴³William P. Martin and Gilbert Elliott to Secretary of Navy Stephen Mallory, January 23, 1863, Adjutant Generals Papers.

⁴⁴Still, Iron Afloat, 150.

Roanoke. The plan called for the department to pay market value or replace the rails six months after peace was reached.⁴⁵ These terms were finally accepted by Governor Vance.⁴⁶ Other sources for iron included worn rails from the Wilmington and Weldon, and the Wilmington and Manchester railroads.⁴⁷

Despite the involvement of Flag Officer Lynch, tribute was given to Commander James W. Cooke on the successful completion of the Albemarle. Sent to speed up construction, his strong attempts to search out any available iron earned him the title "Iron Monger Captain."⁴⁸ In order to be near construction at Halifax and Edward's Ferry, Cooke and his officers resided at Peter Smith's plantation, Sunnyside, in the vicinity of Edward's Ferry.⁴⁹

The arrival of Commander Cooke at the Albemarle was an effort to override difficulties with Lynch and Elliott. Orders to Cooke made him responsible to the Navy Department, superseding his duty under Lynch.⁵⁰ The issue with Commander Lynch exemplified a problem the

⁴⁵ Secretary Mallory to Zebulon Vance, February 13, 1863, Governors Letter Books, Vance, Ch. VIII, Vol. 2, 153-154.

⁴⁶ Secretary Mallory to Zebulon Vance, March 9, 1863, Governors Letter Books, Vance, Ch. VIII, Vol. 2, 170-171.

⁴⁷ Flag Officer Lynch to Secretary Mallory, May 14, 1863, Governors Letter Books, Vance, Ch. VIII, Vol. 2, 231-232.

⁴⁸ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 215; Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, IV, 223.

⁴⁹ Smith, Smith of Scotland Neck, 177.

⁵⁰ Still, Iron Afloat, 152; S. R. Mallory to James W. Cooke, January 15, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 799-800.

Confederacy faced on all fronts--the power of state governors. Gilbert Elliott, evidently already at odds with Flag Officer Lynch, was outraged at the removal of the Albemarle to Halifax even though the heavy iron plates could be delivered by rail much closer to the Halifax naval yard. Lynch appealed to Secretary Mallory to be allowed to "take the Albemarle in hand for speedy completion." Difficulties he listed included proper payment of workmen and the dispersal of caulkers. Slaves had been hired as caulkers at Edward's Ferry and Elliott released them of their services when the vessel was taken to Halifax. As a result, according to Lynch, three weeks passed as the Albemarle remained immobile, needing additional caulking. Finally, Lynch complained of Elliott's failure to appear at the Halifax site to resume work.⁵¹

Elliott presented his side to Governor Vance and the governor declared the state would no longer furnish iron if Lynch was to continue in command.⁵² On receiving correspondence from the North Carolina governor, Secretary Mallory promptly sent copies to Commander Lynch. Flag Officer Lynch then turned to confront the governor, offering written evidence to disprove charges of incompetence lodged against him. He pointed out his efforts to have 435,000 pounds of rail sent to Atlanta and 125,000 sent to Richmond to be rolled into plates for the vessel that was to defend North Carolina waters.⁵³

⁵¹W. F. Lynch to Secretary of Navy Mallory, November 11, 1863, Adjutant Generals Papers.

⁵²Zebulon Vance to Stephen Mallory, November 28, 1863, Governors Letter Books, Vance, Ch. VIII, Vol. 2.

⁵³W. F. Lynch to Zebulon Vance, December 4, 1863, Governors Letter Books, Vance, Ch. VIII, Vol. 2.

As the controversy dragged on and work on the Albemarle halted, Chief Naval Constructor Porter was sent to the site to adopt the best means for completion. These "best means" resulted in a new contract with Elliott to be directed under Commander Cooke. Porter agreed that the removal of the Albemarle from Edward's Ferry was premature. His report tends to support the view that removal to Halifax of the vessel and private property needed to complete the work was both costly and unnecessary. The new contract awarded Elliott \$25,000, a sizable increase over the original \$10,000.⁵⁴

Commander Cooke also supported Elliott's stand. He was at a loss as to what Flag Officer Lynch had done to receive the praises of the Secretary of Navy,⁵⁵ though he was not so vocal as Elliott's claim that "If Flag Officer Lynch ever stood high as an intelligent, faithful, zealous and energetic officer, it is sadly regretted that he has now so completely lost his standing."⁵⁶ Mrs. Edmondston confided in her diary that the move of the vessel was the result that the "little great man Commander Lynch could not get a house large enough for his dignity

⁵⁴ Gilbert Elliott to Zebulon Vance, January 27, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance. In regard to releasing workers, Elliott stated he was under oath to release them when their service was no longer needed, and with the vessel and materials gone, they were no longer needed.

⁵⁵ W. Cooke to Zebulon Vance, January 28, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance.

⁵⁶ Gilbert Elliott to Zebulon Vance, January 27, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance.

short of the town and that bag of wind, Secretary Mallory listened to him. . . ."57

Construction continued under Commander Cooke's supervision. However, in July 1864, due to illness, he was replaced by Captain John N. Maffitt, formerly of the raider Florida. Used to the open sea, Maffitt, whose charge was then stationed at mooring in Plymouth, requested a change of command after two months. Command of the C.S.S. Albemarle was then given to Lieutenant A. F. Warley.⁵⁸ Evidently Cooke remained in command at Edward's Ferry because it was he that destroyed the shipyard there in April 1865.⁵⁹

Early in March 1864 a deserter revealed to Union naval officers on the Roanoke that the Albemarle was near completion.⁶⁰ This claim was backed up by a report of an elderly steamboat captain who estimated that the ironclad would be ready around the first of April.⁶¹ Late in March rumors surrounded the whereabouts of the vessel. One story reported that she had moved down to Hamilton but returned to Halifax

⁵⁷ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 482.

⁵⁸ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 227; A. F. Warley to S. R. Mallory, October 28, 1864, 624; List of Officers of C.S.S. Albemarle, July 6, 1864, 718; L. S. Baker to Beauregard, July 8, 1864, 719; Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX; Still, Iron Afloat, 212-213; Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 578.

⁵⁹ Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 690.

⁶⁰ H. K. Davenport to C. W. Flusser, March 6, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 535.

⁶¹ C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, March 16, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 553.

because of enemy torpedoes in the river. Flusser did not place much credence in this story. He felt that the ironclad remained in Halifax but was very near completion. He based his opinion on information gained from two Union cavalymen that had escaped from imprisonment in Warrenton, North Carolina. Their flight had carried them near Halifax where they were cared for by a local Negro, who informed them that he worked in the navy yard at Halifax. He assured them the Albemarle was still being plated, and because of lack of workers, would be finished considerably later than the contract date. Flusser felt the man miscalculated and that Union forces would soon meet the dreaded Confederate ironclad.⁶²

Lieutenant-Commander Flusser learned in January 1863 that a floating battery with eight guns was being built in conjunction with the building of the Albemarle.⁶³ An entry by Mrs. Edmondston for April 1, 1863 noted that the battery had had a difficult time. While being towed to a site to be iron plated (probably Halifax), it was carried past the landing and, in attempting to turn about, the vessel was damaged.⁶⁴

In June 1863 Union officers were provided with a description of the battery. It was constructed of fourteen-inch pine timbers and was approximately forty feet square. On two opposite sides were two guns each and on the remaining two, one gun was positioned on each side.

⁶²C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, March 30, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 577.

⁶³Report of C. W. Flusser, January 17, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, VIII, 474.

⁶⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 374.

A ten-foot casemate that enclosed the guns was to be plated with railroad iron.⁶⁵ A report by Secretary Welles, September 7, acknowledged the near complete state of the battery⁶⁶ and on November 30, 1863 the Confederate secretary's report of "Vessels Completed and Under Construction" noted that an ironclad floating battery had been launched on the Roanoke River and was ready to be armored.⁶⁷ Union intelligence dated July 7, 1864 reported the floating battery as completed and ready to cooperate with the Albemarle.⁶⁸

Finally, in the spring of 1864, the "terror of the South," as Lieutenant-Commander F. A. Roe of the U.S.S. Sassacus termed the ironclad, was ready for service. Ordered to support General R. F. Hoke's Confederate land forces in the seizure of Plymouth, the Albemarle headed for that town. During the trip workmen clammered over her, completing last-minute details.⁶⁹

Gilbert Elliott, the ship's contractor, accompanied her as a volunteer. His report of the battle account reveals the difficulty

⁶⁵C. W. Flusser to S. P. Lee, June 8, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 66.

⁶⁶Gideon Welles to E. M. Stanton, September 17, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 202.

⁶⁷Secretary of Navy Report, Stephen Mallory, November 30, 1863, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 798.

⁶⁸W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, July 7, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 240. Union intelligence of June 6, 1864 places the building of the battery at Weldon; Melancton Smith to S. P. Lee, June 6, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 145.

⁶⁹Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 217; Still, Iron Afloat, 158.

the ironclad had reaching the vicinity. She was halted three miles above Plymouth because of obstructions. Elliott scouted the river and determined that a freshet had raised the water level ten feet above the obstructions. The Albemarle entered within battle range April 19, 1864. Passing the land batteries at Fort Gray, the Confederate vessel was soon confronted by two Union vessels, the Miami and the Southfield. These two steamers under the command of C. W. Flusser were lashed together, the plan being to trap the ironclad between them. J. W. Cooke, commanding the Albemarle recognized the intention of the Union maneuver. He ran his vessel close to the southern bank of the river, then quickly turned and rammed the Southfield. The Confederate vessel was almost pulled down by her sinking opponent but, as the Southfield rested on the river bottom, she turned over, releasing the ironclad.

The remaining Union vessels defending the town, the Miami and two small gunboats, the Ceres and the Whitehead, continued to engage the Albemarle. However, the death of their commander, Flusser, by a deflected Union shell seemed to take the "fight" out of the Union sailors. The Union fleet retired from the town and entered the Albemarle Sound. During the river engagement General Hoke had been successful with his land operations. Confederate takeover of Plymouth also led to Union evacuation of Washington, North Carolina after a short seige by Southern forces.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 216-220; Elliott, "Albemarle"; Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders, IV, 625-627; Still, Iron Afloat, 158-162; The Southerner, Tarboro, NC, No. 24, Vol. 1, April 30, 1864. Attempts would be made by Confederates to raise the Southfield. W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, September 7, 1864, Official Records (Navy),

Although designed for shallow river and sound water, the success of the Albemarle at Plymouth coupled with the difficulty her sister ship, the C.S.S. Neuse (intended to operate against Union forces in New Bern), was having led General G. T. Beauregard to request the service of the Albemarle at New Bern.⁷¹ This would be a risky trip crossing the Albemarle, Croatan, and Pamlico Sounds, but Commander Cooke agreed with the request and set out the first of May 1864 for this objective.

On May 5, while headed down river with the steamers Bombshell and Cotton Plant, the Albemarle was confronted by a fleet of seven Union vessels. The Union ships were the four double-enders Mattabesett, Sassacus, Wyalsing, and Miami, and the three small steamers, the Whitehead, Ceres, and Commodore Hull. In the engagement that followed the Bombshell soon surrendered to Union forces and the Cotton Plant retreated up the river. Left alone, the Albemarle faced the Union fleet. Lieutenant-Commander F. A. Roe of the Sassacus decided to ram the iron-clad. This action rudely shook the Confederate vessel and gave the impression it would sink her. However, the Albemarle steadied herself, and while stuck fast to the Sassacus, Confederate gunners fired into wooden hull. Steam from damaged boilers on the Union vessel scalded

Series I, X, 440. On May 16, 1864 Commander Cooke of the C.S.S. Albemarle reported the raising of the Union guns off the vessel, two 9-inch Dahlgrens and one 100-pounder Parrott. J. W. Cooke to J. M. Brooke, Ordnance Department, May 16, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 640.

⁷¹G. T. Beauregard to Major-General Hoke, May 1, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 810.

many on the Sassacus but she was knocked free of the ironclad and drifted away from the battle. Other Union vessels failed to take advantage of the situation and eventually the engagement was halted. The Albemarle, iron plates ripped off, smokestack riddled, steering damaged, and the muzzle of one of her guns broken off, slowly headed up river for Plymouth. Although the actual engagement was a draw, Commander Cooke and his vessel were forced to turn back from their destination, New Bern,⁷² a cruise the C.S.S. Albemarle was fated never to make.

The Albemarle's reign over the Union river fleet was soon to end. While at Plymouth waiting repairs, command of the vessel had changed. Commander Warley had the ironclad moored at Plymouth and surrounded by a log boom. Confederates were not prepared for the actions of Lieutenant William B. Cushing, United States Navy. Cushing, already noted for his daring exploits, conceived and executed a plan that called for the destruction of the ironclad. Under cover of night, he and a few men ran at the boom in an open launch, slipped over the wet, slimy logs and exploded a torpedo under the iron plating with the use of a spar. Cushing was one of the two men to make good an escape and return to Union lines. Of the remaining volunteers, two drowned and the rest were taken prisoner.⁷³ On December 15, 1864 Union President Abraham

⁷² Daniel Ammen, Confederate Military History: The Navy in the Civil War, II (The Atlantic Coast) (Atlanta: Confederate Printing Co., 1889), VII, 204-210; Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 222-224; Elliott, "Albemarle"; Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders, IV, 628-633; S. P. Lee to Gideon Welles, June 27, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, IX, 769; Still, Iron Afloat, 164-165.

⁷³ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 231; W. B. Cushing, "The Destruction of the 'Albemarle,'" Johnson and Buel, Battles and Leaders, IV, 634-641.

Lincoln recommended that Congress send Cushing a vote of thanks for "The destruction of so formidable a vessel, which had resisted the continued attacks of a number of our vessels on former occasions, is an important event touching our future naval and military operations.

. . ."⁷⁴ The sinking of the Albemarle earned her the dubious honor of being the only Confederate ironclad destroyed by the Union (others being captured or destroyed by the Confederates themselves).⁷⁵

Although the Albemarle was the most famous vessel completed in Halifax County, she was not the only vessel on which construction was begun. Commander Cooke wrote Confederate Secretary Mallory of the need for another iron-plated gunboat. He suggested changes as a result of observing the Albemarle under fire. These changes involved two one-inch plates of iron (instead of two-inch plates), a draft of not over six and a half feet, and two broadside guns in addition to the fore and aft guns the Albemarle carried.⁷⁶ Mallory's correspondence with Cooke on May 26, 1864 informed the Confederate naval officer that as soon as iron plating could be obtained work would begin on another iron-clad on the Roanoke River.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Abraham Lincoln to Congress, December 15, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 619.

⁷⁵ Still, Iron Afloat, 214.

⁷⁶ J. W. Cooke to S. R. Mallory, May 8, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 627.

⁷⁷ S. R. Mallory to J. W. Cooke, May 26, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 659.

Gilbert Elliott and Company received a contract for this second ironclad on August 29, 1864. The agreement called for the construction of "one Gun Boat to be Iron Clad" to be completed in six months at Edward's Ferry. This vessel was to be 170 feet in length and have a thirty-foot beam. Commander Cooke's suggestion concerning the guns was acknowledged as the vessel was to carry four guns.⁷⁸ Chief Constructor Porter's report of November 1, 1864 noted that the contract for the four-gun ironclad had been drawn up and that the armor for this vessel would come from railroad iron in North Carolina. He also noted that the boilers as well as some of the machinery were ready at Richmond to be sent to the site at Edward's Ferry.⁷⁹

Scouted reports from various sources seem to have created confusion among Union naval officers on the Roanoke. On July 7, 1864, Macomb

⁷⁸ Confederate Naval Museum, Columbus, Georgia. Record Group 45, AD File, hereinafter cited as Confederate Naval Museum. The contract was signed by P. E. Smith, W. H. Smith, Gilbert Elliott, and Jno. L. Porter. The specifications for the vessel were drawn up by Jno. L. Porter, Chief Constructor, Confederate States Navy.

⁷⁹ Report of John Porter, November 1, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series II, II, 751; Gilbert Elliott to Zebulon Vance, May 11, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance; W. Cooke to Zebulon Vance, May 18, 1864, Governors Papers, Vance. In a letter to the governor, Elliott stated he had received word from Chief Naval Constructor Porter to build another ironclad requiring 3,000 tons to clad. Porter pointed out the need for the state to produce 275 tons of iron for rolling. Elliott pledged this vessel to be completed in six months now that "manifold disadvantages" the Albemarle was built under were removed and the path was "smooth" (Lynch?). Stressing the need for another ironclad in state defense, Elliott felt the availability of iron on the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad below Kinston. Commander Cooke supported the need for another ironclad and the view that needed materials could be easily taken from "refuse iron in NC roads."

reported "the new ironclad vessel at Halifax (NC) will be ready in three weeks or a month."⁸⁰ On July 22 he reported that a third ironclad was being built at Halifax.⁸¹ On September 4, 1864 it was reported by Commander Macomb that the Albemarle was waiting at Plymouth for the second ironclad, expected to be completed within fifteen days.⁸²

Since there seems to be no evidence to confirm the existence of a third ironclad, it is possible that the reports in July were delayed intelligence concerning the Albemarle or the floating battery. Instead of informers reporting a different vessel, perhaps it was the Albemarle herself, towed to Halifax for plating, that they were reporting. As for the vessel reported in early September, a Union prisoner captured when the Southfield sunk, escaped and reported to Commander Macomb that he had seen the vessel at Halifax and that it was not an ironclad but "intended as a tender to the Albemarle." He also mentioned the floating battery there.⁸³

Evidence does exist that reveals the construction of the second ironclad, although not completed, was well underway. Mrs. Edmondston and her husband resided a short distance from Edward's Ferry. She frequently recorded visiting the site and having Cooke and Elliott as

⁸⁰W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, July 7, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 240.

⁸¹W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, July 22, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 299.

⁸²W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, September 4, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 428.

⁸³W. H. Macomb to S. P. Lee, September 7, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, X, 440.

guests at her home. On February 20, 1865 she wrote, "At the Gunboat with Mr. E I had no idea how rapidly the work had gone on nor of what a fine large boat it is!"⁸⁴

Union General U. S. Grant was alarmed at the possibility of another ironclad being completed on the Roanoke. He wrote Secretary Welles concerning the matter and requested that a monitor be sent down and that consideration be given to raising the Albemarle for use against the shipyard.⁸⁵ Commander Macomb had also suggested either the raising of the Albemarle for use in the Union navy or her complete destruction to prevent Confederates from salvaging the guns and iron plating.⁸⁶ Rear-Admiral David Porter wrote Welles concerning Grant's letter and stated that General Grant "cannot be conversant with the hydrography of Hatteras Inlet, for none of our monitors can pass through there."⁸⁷ In more diplomatic terms, his reply to Grant assured the Union military officer that, if orders were followed, United States naval officers in North Carolina would not allow another "ram" to enter the Albemarle Sound.⁸⁸

⁸⁴Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 669.

⁸⁵U. S. Grant to Gideon Welles, January 24, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XI, 721-722.

⁸⁶W. H. Macomb to David Porter, November 6, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XI, 64.

⁸⁷David Porter to Gideon Welles, February 6, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 8.

⁸⁸David Porter to U. S. Grant, February 11, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 15.

With time running out for the Confederacy, work continued on the ironclad. Relaying intelligence to Porter, Macomb reported that two escaped prisoners had come to him with information on the vessel. According to a Negro that aided the escapees, he had worked on the ironclad under construction at Edward's Ferry and as of mid-March 1865 it was planked but had no iron plating.⁸⁹

Besides work on ironclads, other vessels were laid down in Halifax County during the war. The "Report of Vessels Now in Progress of Construction belonging to the Confederate States Navy Department November 1, 1864" by Chief Constructor Porter included a discussion of vessels at Halifax and Edward's Ferry. It noted that at the Halifax naval yard: "There is on the stocks and well advanced one gunboat of Light draft." Engines for this vessel, whose completion was expected in about two months, were waiting at the Richmond naval yard. At Edward's Ferry the report noted that "There is on the stocks another wooden gunboat of light draft and ready for launching." engines for this vessel, which would be armed with two guns, were at the site awaiting men from the yard at Richmond for installation.⁹⁰

April 1865 marked the end for the Confederacy. During the first days of the month, news of Union advancements closed operations at the Halifax County shipyards. Mrs. Edmondston recorded that on April 7, 1865 "Just at dark the whole hemisphere was suddenly lighted up with

⁸⁹W. H. Macomb to David Porter, March 28, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 87.

⁹⁰Report of Vessels Now In Progress, John Porter, November 1, 1864, Official Records (Navy), Series II, II, 751.

lurid flames whose origin none could be blind to. It was the gunboat!" The same entry noted that Commander Cooke paused at the Edmondston home long enough to inform them that he had indeed fired the vessel and was evacuating Edward's Ferry.⁹¹ The following day William Waggoner, attorney, officially recorded the "destruction by fire of the Iron Clad Boat." In accordance with the contract Gilbert Elliott and Company held, Waggoner determined what the Confederate government owed the company. It was his estimate that at the time of destruction the vessel was "7/12" completed.⁹²

A floating battery was of some concern to the Union navy in early April. It is unclear whether or not this was the same battery discussed earlier. Union worries were soon settled because on April 9, 1865, while on reconnaissance of the river, the U.S.S. Iosco located the battery. Apparently set adrift by withdrawing Confederates, the battery had been sunk by a torpedo. Only two or three feet of this square vessel were above water. To complete destruction it was burned to the water level.⁹³

On April 13, 1865 Commander W. H. Macomb reported to Rear-Admiral Porter of the destruction of the vessel at Edward's Ferry and of the floating battery; the evacuation of Weldon; and the Confederate guns

⁹¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 690.

⁹²Confederate Naval Museum. Certified letter by Wm. Waggoner, Act. N.C. April 8, 1865, Record Group 45, AD File, Confederate Naval Museum, Columbus, Georgia.

⁹³John C. Febiger to W. H. Macomb, April 9, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 107-108.

at Rainbow Bluff being thrown into the river. He concluded that "except for torpedoes the river is therefore clear for navigation."⁹⁴

The Union river fleet began the capture of remaining Confederate vessels along the Roanoke. The ill-fated Albemarle was raised and towed to Norfolk. Work had begun on this in March by Underwood and Company, but a month passed before she could be coaxed off the river bottom. The New York Herald for April 15, 1865 recorded her appearance near Norfolk. It stated that her machinery had suffered little damage and that "she is a regular leviathan, and can be put a full repaired at a very small cost."⁹⁵

Other prizes taken by the United States Navy included the Fisher and the Cotton Plant captured near Halifax.⁹⁶ Commander Macomb later added to the list the Skirwan and a "small steamer nearly finished on the stocks at the rebel navy yard at this place (Halifax)."⁹⁷ The final inventory and description of the vessels captured in the Roanoke River were turned over to Gideon Welles in June of 1865. This list included the steamer Cotton Plant, stern wheel; steamer Fisher, screw propeller;

⁹⁴W. H. Macomb to D. D. Porter, April 13, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 116.

⁹⁵New York Herald, 15 April 1865; John C. Febiger to Wm. H. Macomb, April 10, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 110; News and Observer, Raleigh, October 27, 1947. The article recalled the raising of the Albemarle and reports that in 1867 she was stripped down and sold to J. M. Leonard and Co. for \$3,200.

⁹⁶Jas. S. Thornton to Commander Macomb, May 14, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 151.

⁹⁷W. H. Macomb to Gideon Welles, May 22, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 148.

steamer Egypt Mills, screw propeller; one lighter, containing iron plating; and the Halifax, unfinished gunboat. Also listed were the Dolly and one lighter with iron plating which were sunk.⁹⁸

The description of the unfinished gunboat at Halifax which was "captured in the stocks and launched"⁹⁹ would seem to indicate the incomplete vessel was the Halifax listed above. The Fisher, also listed among the prizes, appears to have been built at Edward's Ferry.¹⁰⁰ According to reports by naval officials, this unfinished wooden gunboat (which mounted a pivot gun)¹⁰¹ must have been very near completion as she was retained by Commander Macomb for use in carrying supplies from New Bern to naval vessels in the upper North Carolina sounds.¹⁰²

In June 1865 Secretary of Navy Welles called a halt to the seizure of Southern property. Controversy built up over the confiscation of vessels and the cotton some of them had carried. The United States Naval Department had ordered the seizure of property of the Confederate Navy, but not private property.¹⁰³ This immediately led to citizens

⁹⁸J. C. Howell to Gideon Welles, June 27, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 165.

⁹⁹W. H. Macomb to Wm. Radford, June 24, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 164.

¹⁰⁰Statistical Data of Confederate Ships, Official Records (Navy), Series II, I, 255.

¹⁰¹John A. Brooks to Radford, May 15, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 152.

¹⁰²W. H. Macomb to Wm. Radford, June 19, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 159.

¹⁰³Gideon Welles to William Radford, June 23, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 163.

of the county proclaiming their rights had been violated. Owners of the Cotton Plant and the Egypt Mills claimed these were private vessels, a claim backed up by Peter Lawson, purchasing agent for the United States. He recommended that the two vessels along with the Fisher and Skirwan be returned to their owners to allow trade to resume on the Roanoke River.¹⁰⁴ Gilbert Elliott and Company also strongly protested the seizure of their property. The company claimed that the sawmill, lumber, and other property taken there were private property as the site at Edward's Ferry had not been a government shipyard but under government contract. In reporting this to Rear-Admiral William Radford, Commander Macomb expressed the opinion "I do not consider this claim worth anything; in fact, I think that this contract would render all the property of this firm confiscable."¹⁰⁵ Evidently Radford was of the same opinion. As for the steamers and cotton, Macomb stated that they once were private property but "whether purchased or seized by the rebels" they were "certainly rebel Government property."¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰⁴Peter Lawson to H. McCulloch, May 22, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 149.

¹⁰⁵W. H. Macomb to Wm. Radford, June 19, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 159. Peter Smith Papers, July 18, 1865. This involves a letter from Gilbert Elliott, Peter Smith, W. H. Smith, Jos. N. Smith, R. H. Smith, and W. R. Smith of Halifax to Secretary of Navy Gideon Welles requesting permission to raise a barge transport freight. The barge had been seized by the Confederacy and sunk as an obstruction.

¹⁰⁶W. H. Macomb to Wm. Radford, June 12, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 161.

inventory of June 27, 1865 reveals the above listed vessels were all at the navy yard in Norfolk.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ J. C. Howell to Gideon Welles, June 27, 1865, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 164-165.

CONCLUSION

"How can I write it? How can I find the words that have befallen us? Gen Lee has surrendered!"¹ The surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, followed shortly afterward by the surrender of General J. E. Johnston's forces ended fighting in the east. For some citizens, like Mrs. Edmondston, the end of the Confederacy was incomprehensible.² Perhaps it was not the actual downfall of the Confederate government as much as the inability to deal with the future or cope with a radically different lifestyle that so paralyzed the planter's wife.

The longing for the past was reflected in the gloomy note, "The future stands before us dark, forbidding, and stern whilst the happy past smiles back at us with the lustre of a vanished summer sunset. . . ." ³ However, the reality of defeat was brought home quickly to the citizens of Halifax County. A far fewer number of ragged, worn soldiers trudged homeward along the county roads and railways than had so handsomely and gaily marched toward the battlefront but a short time ago.

Inflation, taxes, and depletion of manpower had taken an economic toll on the county. Although United States naval vessels would soon be withdrawn from the Roanoke and the river returned to the fishermen and merchant vessels, the war marked the decline of river trade.

¹Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 694.

²Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 695.

³Crabtree and Patton, Journal of a Secesh Lady, 713.

Railroads, once repaired, would soon take over as the major agent for transporting people and goods.

The physical presence of the victor was soon evident throughout Halifax County. Union patrol posts were quickly established in the townships of Halifax, Enfield, and Weldon.⁴ Citizens of the county were now faced with the task of reconstruction.

⁴Allen, A History of Halifax County, 127.

APPENDIX A:

Commissary Department; Weldon, NC

Taken from survey of the Adjutant General's Office.
Accounts 1861-1865. Commissary Department, pp. 154-199.

Captain John Devereux, Weldon Department

<u>Item at Weldon Depot</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Issued</u>
3,974 lbs. beef	June 1, 1861	Garysburg troops
128,252 lbs. bacon	June 1, 1861	
67,848 lbs. bacon	July 1, 1861	20,982 lbs. to Garysburg
588 Bbls & 12 lbs. flour	June 1, 1861	213 Bbls & 52 lbs. to Garysburg
1,000 lbs. fresh bread	June 1, 1861	
907 bushels peas & beans	June 1, 1861	
5,598 lbs. rice	June 1, 1861	2,906 lbs. to Garysburg
472 lbs. coffee	June 1, 1861	246 lbs. to Garysburg
50 Hhds sugar	June 1, 1861	6,266 lbs. to Garysburg
18,836 lbs. sugar	July 1, 1861	
51 Bbls. vinegar	June 1, 1861	
32 gals. vinegar	July 1, 1861	
4,962 lbs. candles	June 1, 1861	3,400 lbs. to Garysburg
550 lbs. candles	July 1, 1861	
20,336 lbs. soap	June 1, 1861	2,025 to Garysburg
243 lbs. soap	July 1, 1861	
325 bushels salt	June 1, 1861	10 bushels to Garysburg
135 bushels salt	July 1, 1861	
1,054 gals. molasses	June 1, 1861	1 Hhds. to Garysburg
956 barrels fish	June 1, 1861	105 Bbls. to Garysburg
779 barrels fish	July 1, 1861	
4,155 lbs. dried fruit	June 1, 1861	
12 head cattle	June 1, 1861	
5,449 lbs. lard	June 1, 1861	1,970 lbs. to Garysburg
1,714 lbs. lard	July 1, 1861	
175,697 lbs. meal	June 1, 1861	34,900 lbs. to Garysburg
122,452 lbs. meal	July 1, 1861	

APPENDIX B:

Supplies forwarded from Weldon, NC

Taken from survey of Adjutant General's Office, Commissary
Department Letter Books, May 21, 1861-Nov. 8, 1862.

Captain John Devereux, in charge of forwarding of
supplies and funds to purchase supplies

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination</u>
\$572.66 (3076 lbs. bacon)	May 25, 1861	New Bern
100 bushels peas	June 3, 1861	New Bern
Sugar	June 5, 1861	New Bern
1,000 lbs. bread	June 7, 1861	New Bern
100 Sacks coffee	June, 1861	½ amount to Wilmington
100 bags coffee	June 13, 1861	New Bern
Fresh beef	June, 1861	Halifax
Rice	June, 1861	Wilmington
Beef	June, 1861	Halifax
Rice	June, 1861	Halifax
Molassas	June, 1861	Halifax
1,544 lbs. candles	June 12, 1861	Weldon
7,460 bushels flour		Weldon
2,500 lbs. soap		Weldon

A notice of supplies coming to Weldon from Richmond listed 50 barrels vinegar; 10,000 lbs. soap; 3,000 lbs. of aduactive candles; and 3,000 tallow candles. Orders to disperse were as follows:

Retain all tallow candles at Weldon
20 Bbls vinegar to Wilmington
10 Bbls vinegar to New Bern
10 Bbls vinegar to Raleigh
10 Bbls vinegar to Retain at Weldon
4,000 lbs. soap to New Bern
4,000 lbs. soap to Raleigh
2,000 lbs. soap to Retain at Weldon

Captain John Devereux dealt with local traders as evidenced by the June 10, 1861 authorization to purchase fresh beef, vegetables, and fish. Dealing with local farmers had its problems, especially over authority to purchase. One officer in Garysburg attempted to purchase goods on his own authority only to learn that the contracts of Captain Devereux, alone, would be honored. Captain Devereux also helped furnish supplies to the people of Halifax County. One request for bacon by Mr. W. H. Smith he was not able to fill, but offered to the people 250 Bbls. of fish available at Weldon.

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